



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Announces \$18 Million to Help New Haven and Bridgeport Kids Prep for College

Governor M. Jodi Rell and Connecticut Department of Higher Education Commissioner Valerie Lewis announced today that the state has been awarded a 6-year, \$18 million federal grant to help thousands of youngsters in Bridgeport and New Haven middle and high schools prepare for college.

“These funds will help low-income students prepare for success in college and provide college scholarships for eligible high school seniors,” Governor Rell said. “This money will literally help thousands of middle and high school students in Bridgeport and New Haven to gear up and get ready to further their education.

“My primary focus as Governor is on growing jobs, and by starting early in preparing our students for the rigors of college, we are helping to insure that our young people stay in school and get better quality jobs in the future.

“Mathematics has been proven to be the major gatekeeper to college admission and graduation, and this program aims to make certain that students’ math skills are as sharp as they can be.

“The employees at our state Department of Higher Education deserve great credit for their efforts in attaining this large grant. Their hard work will pay off many times over in the years to come and will help to bring about positive change for thousands of our young people.”

“It is our privilege to help students and schools succeed,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Valerie Lewis. When the school doors open this week, we want all those who enter classrooms in New Haven and Bridgeport to know the dream of a college education can be real with some hard work.”

The grant will enhance programs in the state’s GEAR UP Project. GEAR UP stands for "Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs." Begun in 1999, GEAR UP now serves students in grade 7 - 10 in 24 schools.



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Academically, the Project emphasizes that students take Algebra I as early as the 9th grade and as many upper level math courses as they can in high school. Financially, one-third of the Project's funds each grant year, are utilized to provide participating students with college scholarships.

The Project provides services to approximately 8,000 students in Bridgeport and New Haven enrolled in target middle or high schools. The Project helps schools to enhance the rigors of their curriculum and advance school improvement plans.