



DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
SEAN M. CONNOLLY, COMMISSIONER

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## Departments of Education and Veterans Affairs Announce New Program to Recognize Schools that Educate Students about Veterans' Contributions

(HARTFORD, CT) – State Department of Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell and Veterans Affairs Commissioner Sean M. Connolly on Tuesday announced a new program to recognize and reward schools that do an exemplary job of educating students about the important contributions of veterans.

The program grew out of legislation passed in 2016 that requires the State Department of Education to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a special distinction for school districts that offer students opportunities to learn about veterans' contributions or collaborate with local veterans' organizations through classes, extracurricular activities, presentations, or symposiums. The program, called *Remembering Our Heroes – Teaching about Veterans School Recognition*, will launch next school year.

"It is critically important that our young people understand and appreciate the incredible sacrifice that our veterans have made for our freedom," said Commissioner Wentzell. "This program encourages schools to collaborate with local veterans' organizations to provide unique opportunities for students to learn about the contributions veterans have made through their service. It also reinforces the important notion that we should remember and honor our veterans not just on Veterans Day, but all year round."

"About one percent of the population currently serves and as a result, an understanding gap has been created between those whose lives are touched by service and those who are not," said Commissioner Connolly. "Part of bridging that gap between our civilian and military populations is through key programming like *Remembering Our Heroes – Teaching about Veterans School Recognition* and we are excited to team up with the State Department of Education to help solidify relationships between communities and the veterans who reside in them to benefit Connecticut students."

Criteria for schools seeking to earn the distinction include: effective and innovative teaching about veterans; lessons about veterans not just in social studies class, but in other subjects as well; inviting speakers from local veterans' organizations; student-led celebrations of Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and other veterans' events; and veterans-related projects that extend beyond the classroom. The program will have categories for elementary, middle, and high schools.

To support schools that want to participate in the program, the State Department of Education will post materials online over the summer, including sample lesson plans, ideas for projects, and a contact list for veterans' organizations across the state.

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