

For Immediate Release

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PIER Joins the Connecticut State Department of Education to Strengthen Connecticut/ Toulouse Partnership

December 12, 2004. New Haven, CT ♦ Connecticut educators traveled to Toulouse, France, from December 6 to 10, 2004, to review the first two years of bilingual exchange program reaching over 2,000 students in 30 schools in France and their 30 partner schools in Connecticut. The delegation was led by Mary Ann Hansen, World Language Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education, and included two professionals from the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, Janet Headley, Manager, Programs in International Education Resources (PIER) and Mireille Déchelette, Director, Resource Center for the Teaching of French at Yale.

"This partnership aligns perfectly with recent legislation to internationalize K-12 education in Connecticut," noted Mary Ann Hansen, World Language Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education.

The educators conducted an in-depth review of the two-year-old partnership between the Connecticut State Department of Education and its counterpart, the Académie de Toulouse, located in a business hub in southwestern France near the Pyrénées. The Connecticut/ Toulouse partnership promotes alliances and exchanges between educational institutions at all levels. Toulouse and Connecticut are exceptionally well matched in terms of diversity, quality of education, and business enterprise.

Students and teachers in the Connecticut-Toulouse partner schools will work on projects of common interest via the internet. All projects are bilingual, English and French, so they expand language skills while building friendships and cultural understanding. Beyond the virtual projects, Hartland Elementary in northwestern Connecticut received 18 students and teachers from Toulouse in April 2003 and in exchange, sent sixteen students and teachers to Toulouse where they stayed with local families and visited their partner school for one week in February 2004. Still other partnerships have resulted in teacher exchanges such as one between Bassick High School in Bridgeport and the Lycée Professionnel Clément de Pémille.

On March 22, 2005, the French Ambassador to the US will come to New Haven, hosted by Yale University and the Connecticut Department of Education to mark the establishment of the Resource Center for the Teaching of French at Yale and the Toulouse partnership. In addition to Department of Education, State legislators and Yale faculty and administrators from Connecticut, Rectrice Belloubet-Friere, Inspectrice générale d'anglais, Mireille Golazsewski, and Toulouse partnership coordinator, Serge Girouy, are expected to attend.

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