

*Congressman Invited Assistant Secretary Meléndez to Tour and Observe Innovative Summer Enrichment Programs at School*

*Pine Bush, NY* -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today accompanied U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Thelma Meléndez for a visit to the Pine Bush High School. Hinchey invited Dr. Meléndez to the school so that she could observe the innovative summer enrichment programs in Pine Bush, which the congressman believes could serve as a model for school districts throughout the country.

"I am delighted to have Assistant Secretary Meléndez join me in Pine Bush to get a firsthand look at the high school's innovative summer enrichment academies," Hinchey said. "Pine Bush High School is leading the way with summer programs that help feed the specific interests of its students. In an increasingly competitive global economy, we have to make sure our youth are prepared to take on the careers and civic responsibilities of the 21st century. It means we've got to get young people thinking about their career prospects earlier in life and develop innovative models of education that inspire and challenge students to excel. That's why I invited Dr. Meléndez to tour the innovative summer enrichment programs at Pine Bush High School, which offer an excellent model that could be replicated throughout the nation with support and encouragement from the U.S. Department of Education."

The Pine Bush High School, located in Orange County, New York, serves a diverse student body drawn from three counties and seven towns. Under the leadership of Superintendent Philip Steinberg, High School Principal Aaron Hopmayer, and High School Assistant Principal Brian Lynn, Pine Bush High School has developed six separate voluntary summer enrichment academies to which students competitively apply, including the Leadership and Law Academy, Literacy and Education Academy, Science Academy, Medical Science Academy, Aviation Academy, and Summer Performing Arts Academy. The 17-day summer programs provide a unique opportunity for students to explore various careers and engage in hands-on learning at the guidance of experts from the school and surrounding region.

Dr. Meléndez was confirmed as assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education at the Department of Education by the U.S. Senate on July 24, 2009. In this position, she plays a pivotal role in policy and management issues affecting elementary and secondary education. She directs, coordinates and recommends policy for programs designed to assist state and local education agencies with improving the achievement of elementary and secondary school students.