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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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One Hour Television Event Will Examine EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO

AIRING:

Wednesday August 23 7 to 8pm
KOB TV 4

News Stories on Education will run August 16,17,18,21 and 22 at 5pm

Monday September 4 9 to 10pm
KRWG TV 22 Las Cruces

*Closing the achievement gap is my top educational reform priority,
and I believe it is up to all of us, parents, teachers, business leaders and policy makers
working together to solve the problem.*

Dr. Veronica Garcia, Secretary NM Public Education Department

ALBUQUERQUE, NM —

In the wake of the release of the 2005-2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status for New Mexico's schools, many people are looking for ways to increase academic achievement for students in New Mexico. One year ago, New Mexico began an effort to give all children the **opportunity to succeed** by closing the achievement gap in education through a holistic approach that involves "community schools". What does this entail and how will it work? How will communities engage? How can diverse issues such as culture, language, poverty, hunger, and domestic violence enter into the conversation about test scores and educational standards in a productive and useful way for community and state leaders? The documentary, "Opportunity to Succeed" seeks to answer these

questions by highlighting programs across the state that have successfully responded to the challenges of these educational issues. The program was made possible by Youth Development, Inc. (YDI), the New Mexico Public Education Department, the New Mexico Human Services Department, and Orion International Technologies. It is being produced by Emmy © Award winning producer/director, Chris Schueler of Christopher Productions.

Opportunity to Succeed examines three areas that affect educational success: teachers, parents, and communities. It includes comments from experts in the field of brain development, sleep, nutrition and trauma that reinforce the issues presented. Taking a very positive slant, the show highlights several programs that are making a difference. From a Pre-K program in Albuquerque's south valley, to the only bi-lingual middle school in the state in Las Cruces, the documentary shows tangible examples of ideas that are changing education in New Mexico. "What was fascinating to me was the fact that we really had to hone down the number of incredible programs we covered because there were so many" said Chris Schueler, Producer/Director of program. "And many of them are national models."

"We feel this is the number one issue for New Mexico," said Chris Baca, President and CEO of Youth Development Inc. the main partner for the project. "Our future, both economically and socially, depends upon a strong and excellent educational experience for all our young people. This is why YDI has been so involved in trying to improve our educational system. And I think you will see, through this documentary, that there are some wonderful steps being taken that will pay dividends down the road."

"Our mission at KOB TV has always been to inform and educate the public," said Susan Connor, KOB TV Channel 4 Station Manager. "Opportunity To Succeed accomplishes that goal when it comes to education in New Mexico. By airing this program we hope parents will get a better understanding of the educational needs of their children and what they can do to help."

This program was extensively researched and involved several "think tanks" of experts and stakeholders who helped decide content and direction for the program. "Truly everyone we spoke with both on and off camera are concerned about getting our kids the best education possible," said

Schueler. “The real question is how to do that most effectively. Hopefully this project will shed some light on those options and keep the conversation at the forefront of every community.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

New Mexico Public Education Department has a guide to learn how to help at www.ped.state.nm.us. Click on “**School, Community & Parent Toolkit**”.

Parents interested in programs available can call Youth Development, Inc:

Head Start and Pre- K: 268-0024 Debra Baca

General Education Information: 242-7306 x 11 Analee Maestas

Videos may be ordered at www.ChristopherProductions.org

THE FOLLOWING PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:

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Chris Baca, President CEO Youth Development, Inc. (YDI) Phone: 242-7306 Email: cabaca@ydinm.org	Community Involvement
Dr. Luis Quinones, Chancellor La Academia Dolores Huerta Cell: 639-0717 Email: drnachoq@yahoo.com	Bilingual Education
Demetrious Giovas Gadsden Independent School District Phone: 882-6771 Email: dgiovas@gisk.k12.nm.us	Student Nutrition Program
Debbie Morgan, President New Mexico PTA Cell: 269-5481 Email: nmptadm@aol.com	Parent Involvement
Dr. Rick Meyer, Professor College of Education, UNM Phone: 277-6376 Email: rmeyer@unm.edu	Poverty and Education
Dr. TJ Parks, Superintendent Tatum Municipal Schools Cell: 370-3060 Email: tjparks@tatumschools.org	Community Interaction