



News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Palencia Turner
Urban Education Partnership
(213) 622-5237 x 274
pturner@urbanedpartnership.com

Nelly Rodriguez, Ed.D.
Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools
(213) 943-4934
nrodriguez@laalliance.org

Elizabeth Zamora
Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative
(323) 266-0882
ezamora@bhlc.net

NEW NATIONAL POLL SHOWS AMERICANS RANK PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A TOP CONCERN

Urban Education Partnership, Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative, and Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools participate in Give Kids Good Schools Week to give Los Angeles the opportunity to take action

Washington, DC (October 16, 2006) — Despite rising concerns about world events, a national poll released today finds that the American public ranks public education, along with the Iraq war, as their top concern. The poll comes as Americans across the country take part in *Give Kids Good Schools Week*, part of a national campaign to give Americans the information, knowledge, and power they need to take action to improve public schools.

On Monday, October 16, Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative will join communities across the country to celebrate *Give Kids Good Schools Week* by presenting an Education Accountability Forum at Breed Street Elementary School where parents, students and teachers will meet their School Board Member Monica Garcia and engage in a community conversation about the educational priorities at Boyle Heights public schools.

--more--

Give Kids Good Schools Week, October 16-22, follows the recent launch of *Give Kids Good Schools*. The goal of this campaign is to guarantee a quality public education for every child in the nation. Urban Education Partnership, Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative, and Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools are partnering with their national association, Public Education Network, to implement *Give Kids Good Schools* in Los Angeles, Calif.

“We are excited to participate in this national campaign to inspire the American public to act in support of public schools,” said Peggy Funkhouser, Interim President and CEO of the Urban Education Partnership. “In many Los Angeles area schools, we have worked to ensure that the voice of the public is heard in discussions about our public schools. We hope with this campaign that more of our community members will get involved.”

“The Alliance is proud to partner with Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative and Urban Education Partnership to promote the *Give Kids Good Schools* campaign in Los Angeles. Together we will help raise local community awareness and support of quality public education through several venues,” stated Judy I. Burton, Alliance President and CEO. Details of promotional activities are included in the GKGS campaign Web site and at each organization’s Web site.

“The Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative is proud to partner with other local education funds in the *Give Kids Good Schools* campaign. We urge the public to become informed about the important issues that impact the education of our youth,” says Elizabeth Zamora, Executive Director of the BHLC. “The static dropout rate at our lowest performing schools is a decades long crisis that must be addressed by all stakeholders in our community; we need to use our voices and our votes to take action now.”

The poll – conducted by Lake Research Partners and The Tarrance Group and commissioned by Public Education Network, a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to quality public education for all children – surveyed 1,000 registered voters and has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

The poll also revealed a mostly sour mood on the part of the American public on public school performance. More than half of Americans (57 percent) reported they were either “frustrated” or “concerned” with the direction of America’s public schools. They strongly believe that every child has a right to a quality public education, yet not every child is receiving one. They also believe that there are real and serious consequences if every child does not receive a quality public education.

The poll found that Americans do believe that everyone, not just parents, has a role to play in improving public schools. And, everyone is responsible for holding elected officials accountable for their actions on public education. Yet an overwhelming majority, 72 percent, believes that elected officials are not held accountable.

The first annual *Give Kids Good Schools Week* will give community members across the country an opportunity to begin getting involved and holding elected officials accountable for the quality of their local public schools. Los Angeles will join communities across the country to provide opportunities for individuals to take action and discuss new ideas about what communities can do to improve their public schools by holding community meetings, encouraging community members to sign the *Give Kids Good Schools* pledge, and other locally-driven events.

“*Give Kids Good School Week* is the heart of our campaign – a time of year to show Americans in communities nationwide how they can play a meaningful role in improving public education throughout the year,” said Wendy D. Puriefoy, President of the Public Education Network. “Events across the country this week will spark a national dialogue about public education and send a clear message that quality public schools for every child are a top priority.”

Give Kids Good Schools is a multi-year effort to build a constituency of Americans who will use their voices and votes to achieve the goal of quality public education for all children. Individuals can log on to GiveKidsGoodSchools.org throughout the year to stay informed about issues that impact public schools and find ways to take action to improve public schools in their community. # # #

Founded in 1984 as the Los Angeles Educational Partnership, the **Urban Education Partnership** (www.urbanedpartnership.org) became one of the first education improvement organizations in Los Angeles and has stayed at the forefront of the movement nationwide. The Partnership’s mission is to help students in high-need schools improve their academic achievement by partnering with educators, parents and the community. The organization focuses its efforts in two areas that have consistently been demonstrated to positively impact student achievement: transforming secondary schools to create more effective teaching and learning environments and connecting parents and communities to schools to overcome learning barriers. Each year, the Partnership serves more than 2,500 educators and 75,000 students from pre-kindergarten through high school in high-poverty, multicultural communities.

The **Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools** (www.laalliance.org) is a nonprofit charter management organization committed to open and operate a network of excellent small high-performing 9-12 and 6-8 public schools in historically underachieving, low income, overcrowded communities in Los Angeles. The Alliance currently serves over 1600 students and families through seven charter schools (six high schools and one middle school) that are already outperforming area schools that students would have otherwise attended. The vision of the Alliance is to create a network of 20 high performing schools over the next five years and ultimately create a network of up to 100 public schools that will serve as highly accountable models of innovation with highly qualified teachers guided by core principles based on what research has shown to be the best educational practices.

The **Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative** (www.bhlc.net) is a community-based school reform effort focused on engaging parents in the educational process, developing student leadership, providing instructional supports to the teachers and principals of the Roosevelt School Family and strengthening the connections between community-based organizations and the schools. The mission of the BHLC is to increase student achievement in Boyle Heights K-12 public schools. The BHLC works with the Roosevelt School Family (the feeder pattern of 14 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 1 high school), serving approximately 21,000 students.

Public Education Network (www.PublicEducation.org) is a national constituency of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build public support for quality public education for poor and disadvantaged children in low-income communities across the nation. PEN and its 79 LEF members work in 34 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico on behalf of 11.5 million children in more than 16,000 schools, seeking to bring the community voice into the debate on quality public education in the firm belief that an active, vocal constituency will ensure every child, in every community, a quality public education. In addition, PEN’s international affiliates serve more than 7 million children in Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines.