



**National Council for Community
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Council for Community and Education Partnerships’ GEAR UP Conference Celebrates Ten Years of Success

WASHINGTON, DC • July 30, 2009 — The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) held its annual conference last week in San Francisco, California. Over 1,850 professionals heard the Honorable Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco give welcoming remarks and discuss his commitment to helping close the student achievement gap through active partnerships and collaborations. The conference convened for three and a half days of concurrent sessions, speakers, and networking opportunities for the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and college access community. Delegates from across the United States and international guests participated in informative discussions on the GEAR UP community’s ongoing work to improve college access for low-income students.

“This year’s NCCEP/GEAR UP conference marks a milestone for NCCEP as it celebrates ten years of leadership in college access programs, and we are delighted that Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan sent Greg Darnieder to represent him and speak on his behalf,” said Dr. Hector Garza. “Greg is a life-long champion of college access and we are happy that he is working on issues that are at the core of NCCEP’s mission,” Dr. Garza stated.

Keynote speakers included Tony Wagner, Sean Covey and Laura Rendón. Wagner, who serves as Co-Director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and has authored multiple publications, spoke on methods to improve critical communication skills. Dr. Rendón, Chair of NCCEP’s Board of Directors and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University, addressed the importance of educating the whole student and gave a powerful reading from her latest publication, *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy*. “Dr. Rendón’s multi-media presentation was incredibly moving and creatively explained the need for teachers to embrace wholeness, multiculturalism, and contemplative practice in the classroom,” explained Peter Stephens, NCCEP’s Executive Vice President. Covey, author of the international bestseller *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, stressed his belief in active engagement to maximize learning. Covey’s focus on “inspiring greatness in youth” sent a powerful message to attendees regarding teen confidence, motivation and decision-making.

Other highlights included over 160 peer-led concurrent sessions and the NCCEP Youth Leadership Summit, a four-day leadership workshop. Congressman Chaka Fattah (PA-2) engaged in a dialogue with the 34 students who were selected as 2009 Youth Leadership Scholars. “The Congressman continues to lead in education reform and is critical to GEAR UP’s success and high profile as the leading college access program for low income youth,” commented Dr. Hector Garza, NCCEP’s president. Congressman Fattah also met directly with Mexican Under Secretary for Basic Education Jose Fernando Gonzales Sanchez who led the Mexican Delegation along with Mexican Senator Judith Diaz. The 125 person Mexican delegation attended three days of specially designed briefings, a site visit to GEAR UP College for Kids at the City College of San Francisco and sat-in on sessions aimed to explain further the GEAR UP model and to increase the cooperation and professional ties between U.S. and Mexican educators. “NCCEP is dedicated to finding opportunities for GEAR UP students to have access to exchange programs that will help them become global citizens. The GEAR UP model of cooperation and collaboration will enhance the close working relations between U.S. and Mexico especially in social diplomacy – we are forging ahead with educational reforms that are producing results,” explained Dr. Garza.

Also featured at the conference were product demonstrations, a Gallery Walk, a vibrant Chinese and Mongolian cultural presentation by students from the Francisco Middle School, and networking receptions. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education held four pre-conference sessions specific to GEAR UP grantees on Sunday, July 19.

The conference was generously sponsored by: CollegeEd, a College Board program; CoBro Consulting; ACT, Inc.; GEAR UP for Excellence; Quantum Learning Network; Intellectual Transition Facility; and Texas Instruments. And a special thank you to our hosts and friends at the Hilton San Francisco for their gracious hospitality and unfailing attention to detail.

For additional information and to learn more about NCCEP, please visit <http://www.edpartnerships.org>.

About NCCEP: NCCEP maintains offices in Washington, DC, and Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and leads education reform efforts in both countries. NCCEP works with education partnerships funded by the U.S. federal government, the government of Mexico, public and private foundations, and corporations from both the United States and Mexico to enhance college access programs and educational reform. For more information about NCCEP, please visit <http://www.edpartnerships.org>.

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