



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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E3: Employers for Education Excellence Announces Partnerships for Five New High Schools

Portland, OR – E3: Employers for Education Excellence is pleased to announce new partnerships with five organizations to develop new, high achieving and equitable small high schools as part of the Oregon Small Schools Initiative. Partnership schools will receive technical and coaching assistance from E3 staff to help with school design, curriculum writing and professional development. In addition, E3 will provide funding for the schools in grants ranging from \$150,000 to \$500,000 over the next three years. The Initiative is generously funded by the Meyer Memorial Trust and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The partnership schools, one opening August 2006 and four planning to open in the fall of 2007, include:

Oregon Coast High School of the Arts (ORCO Arts), North Bend, Oregon. This school is applying for a charter with the North Bend School District, and when approved will establish a college-preparatory curriculum offering a hands-on, experiential learning environment. Emphasizing the visual and performing arts as an effective tool to engage students, the school design will promote growth in self-esteem and self-confidence, and prepare students to become well-rounded, thoughtful citizens of the 21st century. Classes will be project-based and will

incorporate multiple real-world learning experiences, such as science field studies, internships, and community performances, and the curriculum will reflect the diversity of students the school will serve.

Jefferson County Educational Enhancement Center (JCEEC), Madras, Oregon. A magnet school in Jefferson County School District 509-J, JCEEC will develop a creative learning environment that prepares students to succeed in the global community through innovative programs – and relationships with peers and the community – that challenge and encourage all to attain their potential. Inspired by the Big Picture school model, relationships will be a primary focus in JCEEC educational strategies, and staff will provide an atmosphere in which community involvement and cultural diversity are encouraged and highly respected.

Leadership and Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School (LEP), Portland, Oregon. Opening in August 2006, LEP seeks to serve underachieving and disengaged students entering high school by offering a rigorous, integrated, college-prep curriculum in a personalized school setting with extensive academic supports. Through the study of leadership and entrepreneurship, students will develop a strong sense of self efficacy, social responsibility, and an entrepreneurial spirit. The school will use technology, project-based learning, advisories, and community-based learning experiences to prepare all students for college, careers, and citizenship, close the achievement gap, and increase graduation rates.

Media Arts and Communications Academy (MACA), McMinnville, Oregon. MACA, a magnet school in the McMinnville School District, believes all students, regardless of ethnicity, native language, gender, socio-economic status, or disability; deserve an education that prepares them for postsecondary opportunities and a living family wage. Communications and digital literacy skills gained will have broad applications for students, and media arts and technology through its high interest to students will serve as a gateway to learning across all content areas. A clearly articulated college credit path and abundant opportunities for dual high school/college credit will be an integral part of the educational program at MACA.

Medical Magnet High School (MMHS), Beaverton, Oregon. MMHS will serve as a community partner for access to health sciences education. The school will access a part of the community that is typically underrepresented in the science, technology, and health fields. Students at MMHS, their families, and the community overall will access a focused, high quality education

that prepares and engages them on their pathway to an education beyond high school. Focusing on professional skills, foundational health career knowledge, and a wide base of experiences, MMHS hopes to build a strongly relevant program that prepares students for college and careers.

“We are very pleased to announce these partnerships,” said Karen Phillips, director of the E3 Oregon Small Schools Initiative. “We are excited about working with each of the schools and helping them create new and innovative high school models that prepare all students for success in college, careers and life.”

Selection of the five partnership schools was made by the Oregon Small Schools Advisory Cabinet and was based on many factors, the most important being the alignment of the school design to provide academic rigor, positive relationships, and relevant curriculum and to prepare every student for success in postsecondary education.

Melinda Boyle, Jefferson County School District administrator, said, “The Jefferson County School District is very honored to have the opportunity to work with the Oregon Small Schools Initiative and E3 on our new high school. We are committed to preparing all students for college through rigor, relevance, and relationships, and confident that we can make a tremendous difference in the education of our students!”

“E3 brings the designers of Oregon Coast High School of the Arts (ORCO Arts) two valuable assets, said Shannon Souza, Small Schools Coordinator. “Access to best practices to successfully close the achievement gap between high-risk students and peers, and the rigorous utilization of business management tools that American corporations have relied on for years to tailor their services to the needs of an ever evolving market. The combination of these assets enables us to create a world class educational environment with a distinctive Bay Area identity fostering self respect in our students and pride in our community.”

The E3 Oregon Small Schools Initiative is among the leading efforts in the nation, redesigning high schools across Oregon to better prepare students for success. The Initiative is currently working with fourteen partner schools, both existing large high schools that are converting into smaller schools, and new schools just starting up.

Phase two of the initiative is focused on developing innovative new high schools. The Initiative’s primary goals are to increase graduation rates, better prepare students for post-secondary education, and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers.

Many Oregon education leaders and organizations have endorsed the E3 Oregon Small Schools Initiative, including the Oregon Department of Education, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon School Boards Association, Oregon University System and the Oregon Education Association.

The Initiative is administered by E3: Employers for Education Excellence, an Oregon based not-for-profit organization founded in 1996 by the Oregon Business Council. E3’s mission is to dramatically improve student learning and achievement in Oregon schools.

For more information, visit the E3 website at www.E3smallschools.org.

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