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Smart Horizons Career Online Education Superintendent of Schools Participates in Today's White House College Opportunity Summit

President Obama, the First Lady Michelle Obama, and Vice President Biden Convene Nation's Education Leaders to Focus on Increasing College Opportunities for First-Generation, Low-income and Underrepresented Students

New Partnership-Greater Phoenix Collective Impact Network-Responds to Crisis of Disconnected Youth

WASHINGTON-December 4, 2014- With the crisis of disconnected youth affecting 1 in 7 young people in America, our leading thinkers, innovators and organizations must work together to create a collective impact. In an effort to further this important discussion, Smart Horizons Career Online Education Superintendent of Schools Howard Liebman, Maricopa Community Colleges Chancellor Rufus Gasper, Maricopa Corporate College President Eugene Giovannini, and Cengage Learning CEO Michael Hansen today joined President Obama, the First Lady, and Vice President Biden at the White House College Opportunity Summit. The event brought together the nation's education, business and nonprofit leaders to collaborate and share best practices for increasing college opportunities for first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students.

The Summit will focus on building sustainable collaborations in communities with strong K-12 and higher education partnerships. Invited participants are required to pledge new commitments that encourage college going, dramatically improve persistence and increase education completion.

As part of the Summit, the Obama Administration announced an expansion of the Greater Phoenix Collective Impact Network-a partnership between Smart Horizons Career Online Education, Cengage Learning/ed2go, the Maricopa County Community

College System, Maricopa County Educational Service Agency-MCESA and the Phoenix Public Library. The partnership was created to identify comprehensive solutions in response to the crisis of disconnected youth in Phoenix - where more than 250,000 students are impacted.

The Greater Phoenix Collective Impact was designed to increase high school graduates' college and career readiness by providing 18-to-24-year-old students with an entry-level workforce certificate and accredited high school diploma through Career Online High School. This innovative partnership will serve as a model to advance the goals of the College Opportunity Day, and ensures dialogue and best practice among a broad constituency. Goals of the expanded alliance include:

1. Recruit upwards of 10,000 disengaged students, enabling an additional 2,000+ students to complete high school.
2. Reduce the 250,000 disconnected youth in Maricopa County by 5% annually.
3. Reduce the ratio each year of disconnected youth in a major US city (currently 1 in 7 nationally; 1 in 5 in Phoenix; 1 in 3 in South Phoenix).

"Making education more accessible is a crucial step to improving dropout and unemployment rates in our country," said Dr. Howard Liebman, Superintendent of Schools for Smart Horizons Career Online Education. "We need to work together to build relationships between communities and local academic institutions to focus on increasing both college attendance and completion rates and to help students develop the skills necessary to be success in the professional world."

"Education is a transformational driver, and student-focused, engaging learning solutions are key to empowering our youth to be successful in the classroom and the workforce," said Michael Hansen, Chief Executive Officer, Cengage Learning. "Working with our partners, we are committed to making education more accessible, and we are honored for the opportunity to join President and Mrs. Obama today in advancing this initiative."

"The mission of the Maricopa Community College System is to emphasize smooth transitions to four-year institutions and to provide occupational programs that lead to jobs and careers," said Rufus Glasper, Chancellor, Maricopa Community Colleges. "As a result of the Greater Phoenix Collective Impact, and with the support of the Obama administration and our partners, our commitment will provide advancement opportunities for students in our community who otherwise may not have access to quality education and career training."

"Our young people are the future of our country and a large number of them are facing tremendous challenges in graduating and entering the workforce," said Eugene Giovannini, President, Maricopa Corporate College. "Through the Greater Phoenix Collective Impact and White House College Opportunity Summit, we are able to come together in partnership to deliver alternative solutions and greater opportunities for earning high school diplomas and online career programs to make real progress in the lives of students."

About Cengage Learning/ed2go

Cengage Learning is a leading educational content, technology, and services company for the higher education and K-12, professional and library markets worldwide. The company provides superior content, personalized services and course-driven digital solutions that accelerate student engagement and transform the learning experience. Cengage Learning is headquartered in Boston, MA with an office hub located in San Francisco, CA. The company operates in more than 20 countries around the world. www.cengage.com.

About Maricopa Community Colleges

The Maricopa Community College system includes 10 colleges - Chandler-Gilbert, Estrella Mountain, GateWay, Glendale, Mesa, Paradise Valley, Phoenix, Rio Salado, Scottsdale and South Mountain. It also includes the Maricopa Skill Center, Southwest Skill Center, Maricopa Corporate College and several satellite campuses and business/industry, technical and customized training institutes. www.maricopa.edu.

About Maricopa Corporate College

From entry-level to executive training, MCOR delivers market-relevant, customized workforce solutions and education for employees in virtually every industry sector. Through a strategic business partnership model, MCOR assesses workforce training needs and develops and delivers customized and integrated solutions to meet those needs throughout all levels of an organization. MCOR is part of the Maricopa Community Colleges - one of the largest higher education systems in the nation with nearly 250,000 students, and a model of excellence internationally.

For more information on Smart Horizons Career Online Education please visit <http://www.shcoe.org/>

For media inquiries please contact James McCusker at media@shcoe.org or 203-585-4750.

For more information on how to cover the Summit, please contact Media_Affairs@who.eop.gov and include "**College Opportunity Summit Coverage**" in the subject line.

Mission

Smart Horizons Career Online Education is committed to preparing students for the workforce and post-secondary education by delivering innovative career-based education in a supportive, engaging environment.

Vision

To provide a pathway to future career or educational opportunities by reengaging individuals without a high school diploma back into the educational system.

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About Smart Horizons Career Online Education

Smart Horizons Career Online Education (SHCOE), founded in 2009 and located in Pensacola, Florida, is a private, AdvancED/SACS accredited online school district. AdvancED/SACS district accreditation signifies that SHCOE and all of its schools are fully accredited and that SHCOE is recognized across the nation as a quality school system. SHCOE offers 18-credit, career-based high school diploma programs that are designed to prepare students for entrance into the workplace. Career certificate offerings include Childcare Education, Office Management, Protection Services, Homeland Security, Transportation Services, Professional Skills, Retail Customer Service Skills, and Food & Customer Service Skills. For more information, visit our website at www.shcoe.org, call our office at 855.777.4265 or email us at info@shcoe.org