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**CREED SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN EL PASO**

Choose to Excel Summit focused on best practices for improving education outcomes

EL PASO, TX - The Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREED), with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, hosted a two-day summit to discuss the need and opportunities to improve educational attainment in the greater El Paso region. The *Choose to Excel Summit* convened over 50 regional and national education leaders to discuss data-driven ways to increase the number of El Paso students who graduate from high school with the skills needed to obtain a postsecondary degree or credential.

“As the CREED commissioned [60x30 El Paso](#) report identified, we have significant achievement gaps that need to be closed within the region, including having some of the lowest high school graduation and postsecondary attainment rates in Texas. We are actively investing in initiatives that accelerate the change we need in our region,” said **Richard A. Castro, Chairman of the CREED Board**. “We are excited to work with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on ways improve student achievement here in El Paso.”

Richard Castro welcomed attendees to the *Choose to Excel Summit*, the first of its kind to be held in El Paso. The sessions highlighted best practices and successful outcomes achieved in other regions facing similar educational challenges.

"Every student should have access to a high-quality education regardless of place or background so that they can graduate high school ready to succeed in college and the workforce," said **Don Shalvey, Deputy Director at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**. "The *Choose to Excel Summit* and our support of CREED is the kind of education work we at the foundation believe in—it is about facilitating productive collaboration and sharing what’s working so that all students can benefit."

Among topics discussed were diversifying the number of high-performing schools in the region, strengthening the educator talent pipeline, and increasing student and parental engagement. The topics were chosen to specifically address some of the most pressing challenges the region faces in education and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

"Having spent over four decades in education in El Paso County, I know and have personally experienced the educational hurdles we face," said **Sylvia Hopp, former Superintendent for San Elizario Independent School District**. "I have also experienced the joys of seeing our students succeed in our schools and in college. Today's Choose to Excel Summit offered insight into how we can move our education system forward and get more students to achieve that feat."

In addition to El Paso Mayor Dee Margo and community and education leaders from El Paso County, the summit convened representatives from the Texas Education Agency, Teach for America New Mexico, Relay Graduate School of Education, over eleven public charter school organizations, and more.

The summit concluded with an open discussion among attendees to reflect on the presentations and data covered during the summit. The *Choose to Excel Summit* is the launch of a continued initiative by CREEED to partner with regional and national organizations to increase educational attainment for El Paso and advance education through innovative and data-driven models of success.

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