



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **CREED RAISES \$20 MILLION TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN EL PASO REGION**

*Funds will support organization's Choose to Excel initiative and innovation in local school districts*

El Paso, TX - The Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREED) announced today that to date it has raised \$20 million dollars to support its effort of increasing educational attainment for all El Paso County students. The organization, which was created in 2014 by business and community leaders to help close persistent education gaps in the region and create a robust workforce, will leverage this funding to implement its Choose to Excel initiative and continue supporting local school districts.

“The funds we have raised so far are a testament of our region’s ability to come together and tackle the problems that keep our children and economy from thriving. This has been a community effort and I’m proud that El Pasoans are stepping in to say - we must strengthen our K-12 school systems so more of our students go on to obtain a postsecondary degree or credential and successful careers,” said Richard A. Castro, Chairman of the CREED Board.

Since its founding, the organization has invested in local district initiatives that prepare students for college and the future workforce. CREED supported the launch of Girls Who Code chapters at Parkland High School, Northwest Early College High School, and El Paso High School. CREED also created a teacher scholarship program, and has worked with local school districts, the University of Texas at El Paso, and El Paso Community College, to increase the number of teachers in the region with the credentials and skills needed to teach dual-credit courses in local high schools.

This year, CREED also released the very first regional study assessing where the region stands in meeting the 60 percent postsecondary attainment goal set by the state’s 60x30TX initiative, and steps the region must take to meet this attainment goal.

“We are proud to be a resource and partner for our local school districts and invest in the innovative programs they are delivering our students. There is often a misconception that we are a charter-only organization and that is not true. We work holistically to improve all systems of education in our region,” said Eduardo Rodriguez, CREEED’s Interim Executive Director.

The funds raised will support implementation of the organization’s *Choose to Excel* initiative. The initiative will focus on three core areas to rapidly accelerate attainment in the region through the creation of a portfolio of high-performing schools, strengthening the pipeline of educators in the region, and creating more opportunities for parental engagement.

“When we say a portfolio of high-performing schools, we mean increasing the number of schools in our region that are producing high results for students and graduating a high percentage of their student population at college-ready levels as determined by national standards,” said Woody L. Hunt, CREEED Vice Chairman. “We also want to support our local educators with the training and supports they need to create innovative teaching experiences that put our students on path to success.”

The organization set an initial fundraising goal of \$30 million to support its efforts and has been cultivating relationships with national education funders to bring additional resources to El Paso. As part of Choose to Excel, the organization recently partnered with The Gates Foundation to convene over 70 regional and national education leaders to discuss the current state of education in El Paso and data-informed solutions to improve educational attainment.

“As proud fourth generation El Pasoans, we are invested in the future success of our region and people,” said Luke Lowenfield, General Manager of Casa Kia and Vice President of Casa Auto Group. “That is why we are proud to support our region’s education infrastructure and students. Our hope is that by strengthening the preparation of students in our K-12 schools, we can provide future generations with the opportunity to obtain a postsecondary degree, have a successful career, and give back to El Paso”

“It’s refreshing and exciting to see national leaders and funders taking a serious look at El Paso and the education of our students. Our students represent the future and diversity of America, and we are proud of the work CREEED is doing to transform our region into a leader in education,” said El Paso City Mayor Dee Margo.

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**About the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED):**

CREEED is a not-for-profit education policy and advocacy group focused on creating measureable outcomes and dedicated to closing the achievement gap for El Paso County students. We accomplish this goal by investing in policies, programs, and metrics that prepare students to succeed in college and our future workforce