



**For Immediate Distribution  
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**CREED LAUNCHES STRATEGIC INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE MORE PARENTS AND  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN EL PASO'S EDUCATION SYSTEM**

*A \$250,000 Walton Family Foundation Grant Creates Opportunity for El Paso Native Lorena  
Chavira to Transform Parent Engagement Across Borderplex Region*

**El Paso, TX** - The Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREED) announced today a new strategic initiative that will directly serve El Paso's students and parents and be spearheaded by its Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator (PCEC). The PCEC is a newly created role within CREED with support from a \$250,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation, to engage and mobilize parents around critical education issues impacting public school students in El Paso County, Texas.

In this unprecedented moment, it is more important than ever that we listen to parents and students," said Marc Sternberg, K-12 Education Program Director at the Walton Family Foundation. "CREED will ensure that families have a voice in the decisions that affect El Paso students, and can play an important role in designing the solutions their communities need."

As the Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator, Lorena Chavira, an El Paso native with a history rooted in K-12 education, will work with parents and community members such as parent teacher associations, elected officials, faith leaders, civic leaders, neighborhood associations and students groups with the goal of increasing involvement, engagement and advocacy on k-12 public education initiatives.

"Right now, our community is paying attention to education efforts under a new lens. As students begin the year with both remote and in-person learning, the role parents and community leaders play is critical," said Chavira. "I look forward to helping CREED engage parents across El Paso, to empower them to be more involved in educational decisions so that all students have access to a high-quality education. Parents are the most important advocates for their children, and it's my job to ensure they have the tools to use their voice to champion positive change."

CREED is one of the only non-profit organizations in El Paso that is exclusively focused on public education, and it works proactively across all nine independent school districts, the charter sector, and higher ed to increase educational attainment for all students.

"We are pleased to welcome Lorena Chavira into the Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator role," said Amy O'Rourke, Choose to Excel Director for CREED. "Given her extensive background in education - both in the classroom and in administrative and leadership roles - we are confident she will bring parents to the table, hear their stories, and empower them to be the change agents that will push for excellence and equity within our schools."

Prior to accepting the PCEC position, Chavira worked in both a traditional independent school district as well as a high performing charter public school network. She saw first-hand the opportunities presented to both parents and students to help them succeed and increase long-term performance in the classroom.



“When CREEED first set its goal of raising educational attainment in the El Paso region, we knew that we would need to build a strong coalition of informed parents,” said Richard A. Castro, CREEED Board Chair. “Unfortunately, too few parents have the information they need about school performance in the region, the options that are available to them and their children, and, most importantly, the types of questions they should be asking school board representatives and superintendents on the quality of the education provided to their children. We are grateful that the Walton Family Foundation, a prominent national philanthropic organization, is joining our efforts to see more of our young people graduate from high school, college, and become college and career-ready.”

Castro explained that school systems with strong school-family-community partnerships are better equipped to tackle pressing education issues. [Research shows](#) that when parents are engaged in their children’s education, students not only perform better academically and have better attendance records, but they also are more likely to pursue higher education.

### **About the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development**

The Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED) is a not-for-profit organization focused on increasing the number of high-performing seats in El Paso’s public education system. This is accomplished by investing in initiatives that are creating measurable outcomes to close the achievement gap for El Paso students. CREEED supports organizations, initiatives, and policies that prepare students to succeed in college and in our future workforce. CREEED’s efforts are focused on increasing the quality of education that students receive in El Paso. Our efforts fall into three categories: Increasing Student Attainment; Increasing Teacher Talent & Leadership Development; and Increasing Parent and Community Engagement. For more information visit [www.creed.org](http://www.creed.org).