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College Summit Expands Program That Supports All High School Students Graduating Prepared For College Success

New Investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help College Summit support high schools in building college-ready culture starting in the 9th grade

WASHINGTON – College Summit, the award-winning nonprofit organization credited with helping low-income high school seniors navigate the college application process, announced today a \$4.8 million investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support the expansion of its senior year model to more schools across the country and launch a new pilot to extend their college-ready culture program to 9th -12th grade students.

For more than 10 years, College Summit has equipped a range of urban and rural school districts to build the kind of college-ready culture that helps more students stay on the college path through their senior year. The new investment enables College Summit to expand its proven 12th grade program to more regions of the country as well as develop and pilot a “Whole School” program that equips high schools to build college-ready culture from 9th-12th grade. The “Whole School” program will be designed, piloted, and refined this school year in partnership with public high schools in New York City and Baltimore.

“We help students make the connection between finishing high school and going to college as a way to achieve their dreams,” said J.B. Schramm, founder and CEO of College Summit. “This investment means many more students in underserved communities will get on the college path sooner and have a greater opportunity for college and career success.”

College Summit helps U.S. high schools raise their college-enrollment rates by providing seniors with a course in post-secondary planning, training teachers and counselors to build a college-ready culture, equipping the most influential students in the school to help their peers apply to college, and by collaborating with school leaders to manage and evaluate results. At the root of College Summit's social change model is the recognition that getting first-generation students to and through college is one of the most cost-effective ways to break the cycle of poverty in the United States. College graduates earn nearly \$1 million more over the course of their careers, and their children are almost twice as likely to go to college as non-graduates.

“It is critical that our high schools prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to master college-level material and succeed in the workplace,” said Jim Shelton, program director for education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “We applaud College Summit for their work to ensure that all students, regardless of income-level or background, are prepared not to just graduate from high school, but to go on to successfully complete their college careers as well.”

For the 2008-2009 school year, College Summit is partnering with 170 high schools serving 80,000 students, including 17,000 seniors. The organization works in 13 regions through partnerships with school districts including St. Louis, Oakland, New York City, Indianapolis, Miami, Kanawha County, WV, and Prince George’s County, MD. Partner schools are successfully raising their college enrollment rates school-wide.

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College Summit is a national nonprofit organization that helps high schools raise their college-enrollment rates by providing all seniors with a course in post-secondary planning, training teachers and counselors to build college-ready culture, equipping the most influential students in the school to help their peers apply to college, and helping school leaders manage and evaluate results. For more information about College Summit, please visit www.collegesummit.org

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