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Achieve Introduces Online Toolkit for Effective Business Involvement in Education Reform

New Web Site Features State-by-State Education Facts and Resources for Business Leaders

Washington, D.C. – Achieve, Inc., a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship, today officially launched the “Business Tools for Better Schools” Web site, www.biztools4schools.org, to serve as an online toolkit for more effective business involvement in America’s public schools. The goal of the online resource, which is geared primarily toward effective business involvement at the state and local level, is to energize and focus current efforts and to engage new business participation.

“There is no question that the business community has been, for over 20 years, a critical partner in education reform,” said Mike Cohen, president of Achieve. “Continuing – and expanding – business involvement in education reform is essential. We are pleased to be able to offer this valuable tool to help companies and business organizations get and stay involved in education reform.”

The GE Foundation supported the creation of the new Web site, which provides downloadable tools for effective involvement, including checklists and sample presentations, as well as snapshots of promising business-led education initiatives. The Web site also features information on state and local business organizations committed to education reform. Additionally, the site encourages companies and business associations to show their commitment to reform efforts by signing up as *Business Champions for Change*. Two early *Champions*, Business Roundtable and U.S. Chamber of Commerce, both played a major role in the development of the toolkit and will be instrumental in disseminating it to their state and local networks.

“The toolkit is an excellent resource to help state business groups and companies that are already engaged in philanthropic outreach mobilize their efforts on a larger scale,” said Arthur J. Rothkopf, senior vice-president and counselor to the president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “The more

businesses we can get involved, the better it is for our schools, our students and our nation's future.”

“Today, our nation’s public schools are educating and training the workforce and citizens of tomorrow,” said Susan Traiman, director of education and workforce policy at Business Roundtable. “Our companies know the important role schools play in the future vibrancy and strength of our economy, and we are proud to be a part of this important effort.”

The site highlights three of the business community’s top education priorities, which are: (1) ensuring that graduates are ready for work and college; (2) strengthening the science, technology, engineering and math pipeline; and (3) maximizing data-driven decisions in education.

“The business community has a vested interest in ensuring that our students are receiving the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in higher education and the 21st century workplace,” said Sandy Boyd, who, as vice president of advocacy and outreach at Achieve, spearheaded the development of the online toolkit. “Our hope is that this toolkit will demystify education policy and provide the road map needed to encourage more business leaders to engage effectively in education reform.”

To learn more about the Business Leaders Toolkit, visit www.biztools4schools.org.

To learn more about the ways Achieve, Inc. is helping to advance America’s public education system, visit www.achieve.org.

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Created by the nation's governors and business leaders, Achieve, Inc. is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship. Achieve was founded at the 1996 National Education Summit and has sponsored subsequent Summits in 1999, 2001 and 2005. At the 2005 Summit, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network, a coalition of 29 states committed to aligning high school expectations with the demands of college and the workplace. For more information, please visit www.achieve.org.