

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mayor Mike McGinn and Interim Superintendent Dr. Susan Enfield announce citywide school attendance campaign**

*“Be Here. Get There.” will encourage students to go to school by using incentives, a public education campaign using local and national hip hop artists like Macklemore and Wiz Khalifa, and sports figures like NBA player Jamal Crawford*

October 3, 2011 (Seattle, WA) – Mayor Mike McGinn announced the launch of the *Be Here Get There*, a research-driven, incentive-based campaign designed to raise awareness and improve academic achievement by improving citywide school attendance.

“Research has shown that students with more than 20 absences per year have less than a one in five chance of graduating from high school,” said Mayor Mike McGinn. “Chronic absence in our schools should be a concern for everyone. We can and must do better for our students.”

*Be Here Get There* is a joint initiative of the City of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, the Alliance for Education, and Get Schooled to raise awareness of the importance of going to school using community-wide education and incentives. The campaign will address the chronic absenteeism currently affecting public schools across Seattle and help improve academic achievement, boost overall student success and cultivate a lifelong passion for learning.

“This campaign is a way to bring the community together to work towards a shared goal of improving outcomes for students,” said Interim Superintendent Susan Enfield. “In the 2009-2010 school year, only 62 percent of students met our attendance goal. It will take all of us working together to meet Seattle Public Schools’ goal to have at least 80 percent of students with fewer than 10 absences by 2013.”

The *Be Here Get There* campaign aims to make schools engaging and attractive to students by rewarding positive behavior. To help the campaign reach students, Get Schooled is starting wake-up calls. These calls will feature a friendly message about school attendance from celebrities like NBA Player Jamal Crawford and hip hop artist Wiz Khalifa.

“Students today are heavily influenced by social media and pop culture. These celebrity wake-up calls tap into that and give students the extra encouragement they need to get them out of bed and off to school on time.” said Get Schooled’s Executive Director, Marie Groark.

Students can sign up for the wake-up calls by visiting, <http://getschooled.com/wakeup>.

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The campaign will also make use of healthy competitions at the school and classroom level to get students energized to go to school. To learn more about some of the contests and incentives planned for October, visit <http://getschooled.com/Seattle>. The Get Schooled Seattle website will simultaneously track school attendance, allowing students at schools across the city to see how they compare. Partial list of sponsors include Molly Moon's, Pagliacci Pizza, Starbucks, Raleigh Bicycles, Pacific Science Center, Experience Music Project, KEXP, KUBE 93, KISS FM, and more to be announced throughout the campaign. The campaign will be actively seeking prize donations throughout the school year.

Beyond incentives and competitions in schools, *Be Here Get There* will focus on strategies for schools, students, families and the community, as well as the shared responsibility to improve attendance. The campaign will address chronic absenteeism in ways that meet the needs of students, families and schools.

Recommendations for school staff to encourage consistent attendance in students include acknowledging students by name and providing engaging learning experiences. For families, the *Be Here Get There* campaign will increase awareness of attendance policies and provide support and contingencies for those struggling with attendance.

"We listened to the community when they said they wanted to improve educational outcomes for Seattle students," stressed McGinn. "*Be Here Get There* is just one piece of the larger puzzle to address chronic absenteeism. It's something that we can do right now. With commitment, collaboration and a community-wide approach we can succeed in getting more students in the classroom."

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