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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DUBS HOUSTON A “GREAT CITY”

Houston READ Commission and Houston Community College partner to lead Adult Education Great Cities Summit

(Houston, Texas) March 16, 2010 – We always knew Houston was great. Now, it is official.

The U.S. Department of Education has selected Houston, TX to be one of the five Great Cities in the United States for its leadership in adult education efforts, a result of Houston READ Commission’s and Houston Community College’s joint application to the Adult Education Great Cities Summit.

This distinction gives Houston access to key stakeholders in education to assess the city’s literacy needs, which have not been reviewed since the 1992 National Institute for Literacy survey, concluding that one in three adult Houstonians is functionally illiterate.

Once the current literacy needs are reexamined, Houston will work with the U.S. Department of Education to create action plans to address those needs; access federal resources to support the implementation of its action plans; and establish collaborative partnerships to ensure a lasting presence in that nation’s educational agenda.

Through a series of face-to-face and virtual meetings, this Summit will explore the needs and concerns of adult education students, teachers, and local program administrators in large, urban settings.

About the Adult Education Great Cities Summit

Students, regardless of geographic location, should graduate from high school prepared for college and/or a career and have the opportunity to complete at least one year of postsecondary education. To achieve these goals, educators, including adult educators, must dramatically improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. Reaching these goals in urban settings will require new thinking and thoughtful conversations among federal, state and local adult education leaders.

About Houston READ Commission

The Houston READ Commission is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to lead and mobilize a coalition of literacy providers and resources to improve the literacy landscape of Houston.

Established in 1988 by the Mayor and City Council, the Houston READ Commission oversees the Mayor's Coalition for Literacy, an association of more than one hundred and fifty literacy sites in Houston. These member organizations, known as literacy providers, strive to eliminate illiteracy by offering educational services geared toward the specific needs of their communities. The Houston READ Commission's goal is to support and ensure providers' effectiveness.

Houston READ Commission advocates for the importance of literacy to the endurance of our city's and our country's economic and intellectual success. Establishing partnerships with the public libraries and the school districts and fostering relationships with the Mayor's Office and all of City Council, the READ Commission demonstrates that supporting literacy in Houston addresses the root cause of low employment, crime, high drop-out rates and excessive health care costs. By sponsoring literacy, these fundamental and influential systems of government, community and civic services support economic growth, help reduce crime, and improve education statistics in our great city.

About Houston Community College

Houston Community College (HCC) is the fiscal agent for the Houston Literacy Consortium, the largest recipient of federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funds and state appropriated funds for Adult Education in Texas. The Houston Literacy Consortium is comprised of HCC and eleven nonprofit community organizations and provides free adult education services to nearly twelve thousand adult learners annually.