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LOCAL EDUCATION ADVOCATES ANNOUNCE UNIFICATION OF EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AND EDUCATE MIDLAND

Education is the baseline for growth and success. Every child deserves the best education available, regardless of their locale and socio-economic situation. This was the premise behind the creation of two separate education-focused organizations set up years ago by community members in Midland and Odessa.

Educate Midland was organized in 2015, with the sole purpose to support and enhance the offerings of the Midland Independent School District. One year later, Odessa community leaders organized the Education Partnership of the Permian Basin, aimed at improving the overall education offerings in the region, with Odessa public, private, charter and the higher education systems as their main focus area. Both organizations set their sights on the overall improvement of education, yet with differing areas of focus.

Through the years and while partnering on various projects, it became evident to the Organizations' leaders, as is the case with many things in the Midland-Odessa area, we are "better together". On **Tuesday, July 20th at 10:00a.m.**, a Press Conference will be held at the Region18 Education Service Center (Conference Room A/B), at 2811 La Force Blvd near the Midland International Airport. At that time, the Executive Boards of Educate Midland and the Education Partnership of the Permian Basin will officially announce the unification of the two organizations. These leaders will encompass this regional approach by having representation of leadership from Midland, Odessa and soon-to-be added area communities to truly encompass the regional outreach. The group has adopted the Education Partnership's ongoing mission creating a community where kids love to learn, teachers love to teach and people love to live, while striving to be the highest performing educational region in the state of Texas. With this goal in mind, it is the unified group's belief that these aims can only be achieved with the two largest communities in our region working together to lead this important charge.

"When our organization formed more than five years ago, we aspired to grow this into a regional effort. The timing is right to partner with our like-minded neighbors in taking this next step to focus on all students in our area," stated Lorraine Perryman, Education Partnership Board Chair. Other Board members include Collin Sewell, Pat Canty and Renee' Earls.

Educate Midland Board President Karmen Hendrix Bryant echoes Perryman's thoughts, as she has led her organization through this six-month research and deliberation phase. "We are excited to align and bring a true region-wide approach to collective impact in the Permian Basin," Hendrix Bryant said. Other Educate Midland Executive Committee members include Laurie Boldrick, Christine Foreman and Brian Stubbs.

This united entity will help improve educational outcomes in our region, cradle to career. Based on this new configuration, Dr. Adrian Vega will continue to serve as the Executive Director of the EPPB, with the addition of Mike Mills and Becca Myers, of EM, as team members. The staffs of the organizations have already been working together on several projects, include the POWER Bags benefiting newborns in both communities, as well as the Grow Our Own Network program, which focuses on strengthening educational pathways and experiences for students that are parallel to the workforce needs of our Permian Basin businesses.

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