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For Immediate Release

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PEF President to Speak at Gates Conference on Increasing College Success

PEF president Dan Challener will speak tomorrow at a conference aimed at helping schools in the Washington DC area increase the number of their students who enroll in college. The conference, "Double the Numbers: Building Partnerships for Success" will be held in Washington, DC on April 29th and is sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Dr. Challener will participate in a round table conversation about best practices around the country. He was invited because of PEF's successful partnership with Hamilton County schools, which has resulted in an ever increasing number of high school graduates entering college.

In 2001 Hamilton County schools embarked on a comprehensive high school reform initiative entitled Schools for a New Society, funded with \$12 million from the Carnegie Corporation, PEF and local contributors. Schools for a New Society had four goals, one of which included a focus on increasing college enrollment. With help from the College Access Center, the Lumina Foundation, the Community Foundation, and the Partnership for College Access and Success, PEF and Hamilton County schools have created a broad partnership that has seen remarkable results:

- In fall of 2007, 73% of Hamilton County's May graduates enrolled in college. That number has risen from 69% in 2004.
- In 2004, 1313 members of the graduating class enrolled in colleges; in 2007, that number had jumped 16% to 1534.
- These graduates enrolled in 152 different colleges in 32 states and Canada.

"I'm honored at the invitation to participate in this discussion and at the opportunity to help another community that is struggling with some of the same issues that we have addressed," says Challenger. "It is our hope to share some insight that will help concerned leaders in Washington, D.C., find the same kind of improvements that we are seeing in Hamilton County."

Hamilton County's Public Education Foundation partners with Hamilton County Schools to help students succeed by offering professional training and coaching for teachers, principals and administrators; human and financial resources to promote research-based innovation; and research that promotes continuous achievement. In the past six years, PEF has helped to bring millions of dollars in supplemental, philanthropic funding to the school system.

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