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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MINNESOTA CRADLE-TO-CAREER PARTNERS RECEIVE \$350,000 THROUGH \$20 MILLION GRANT PROGRAM BY NATIONAL NONPROFIT STRIVETOGETHER TO USE DATA TO IMPROVE RESULTS FOR KIDS**

*The Education Partnerships Coalition, led by Generation Next, is one of 16 winning initiatives that will tackle systems changes needed to help children and families living in poverty move up the economic ladder*

**Minneapolis, MN** — The Education Partnerships Coalition (EPC), a group of organizations focused on eliminating opportunity gaps in Minnesota, has received \$350,000 from StriveTogether, a national nonprofit working to bring communities together around data to make decisions and improve results for kids.

The grant award is part of StriveTogether's Cradle to Career Community Challenge, which seeks to create local change to enable economic mobility. The program's goal is to strengthen and align the many systems, such as education, employment, health, and housing, that shape opportunity for children and families in America.

Generation Next, a coalition of civic, business and education leaders from Minneapolis and Saint Paul, is the lead agency for the grant. "We are honored to work with our StriveTogether and Promise Neighborhood partners across the state on this Cradle to Career Community Challenge," said Michelle Walker, Executive Director of Generation Next. "The EPC has been a valuable resource for bringing together urban and greater Minnesota communities around collective action for our children and youth."

"We are grateful for the recognition of our work as national leaders in cradle-to-career success," said Sondra Samuels, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Northside Achievement Zone, a partner in the Education Partnerships Coalition. "With the support from StriveTogether, I am confident that this Coalition will be able to amplify our results to provide more families with the support they need to thrive."

The EPC is comprised of StriveTogether partnership organizations Generation Next (Minneapolis, MN), Austin Aspires (Austin, MN), Every Hand Joined (Red Wing, MN), Northfield Promise (Northfield, MN), and Partner for Student Success (Saint Cloud, MN). Additional organizations in the EPC include the Northside Achievement Zone (Minneapolis, MN), the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (Saint Paul, MN), and Growth & Justice (Saint Paul, MN).

The EPC will use its grant award to support a new generation of parent advocates and build support for this work in communities across Minnesota. Grant money will be used to expand local and state advocacy efforts and empower communities statewide to access innovative,



data-driven, locally controlled strategies that seek to combat Minnesota's abysmal opportunity gaps. As part of the grant, the Coalition will match StriveTogether funding with local support.

"From Saint Cloud to Saint Paul, this Coalition has proven that when communities come together to create solutions around the biggest challenges they face, everyone wins," said Adam O'Doherty, Executive Director of Saint Cloud's Partner for Student Success. "I am excited to partner with parent advocates to pass policies that support our children and work with communities to develop collective impact solutions across this state."

Through the Community Challenge, more than \$20 million over the next three years will fund projects across the country that aim to shift public policy and engage the systems needed to help students progress from kindergarten to postsecondary completion and finding a job.

"Education is key to a strong economy, and every child should have the opportunity to achieve his or her fullest potential, but existing systems don't always support the success of students, particularly students of color and those from low-income families," **StriveTogether President and CEO Jennifer Blatz** said. "Using the common language of data, we can create better, more equitable systems to improve outcomes for major milestones in every child's life. Our Cradle to Career Community Challenge will enhance and expand the real, lasting results underway across our 70 communities."

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### **About the Education Partnerships Coalition**

*The Education Partnerships Coalition uses the collective impact model to build the civic infrastructure in local communities needed to drive meaningful change and deliver measurable results for Minnesota's children across all races and income. The Coalition's work reaches over 61,000 children across Minnesota.*

### **About Generation Next**

*Generation Next is a coalition of civic, business and education leaders from across Minneapolis and Saint Paul dedicated to closing achievement and opportunity gaps. Generation Next uses rigorous data analysis and community engagement to identify what works and replicate the most promising practices.*

### **About StriveTogether**

*StriveTogether leads a national movement of 70 communities to get better results in every child's life. We coach and connect partners across the country to close gaps by using local data, especially for children of color and low-income children. Communities using our proven approach have seen measurable gains in kindergarten readiness, academic achievement and postsecondary success. The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network reaches 10.4 million students, involves 10,800 organizations and has partners in 30 states and Washington, D.C. Visit [www.strivetgether.org](http://www.strivetgether.org).*