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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York State Education Department Approves St. HOPE Charter Petition
St. HOPE Expands Education Model Nationally

Sacramento, CA - St. HOPE announced today that the New York State Board of Regents voted unanimously to approve its charter petition to open a K-12 charter school in New York City. St. HOPE Leadership Academy is one of twelve new charters approved to open next fall. This approval formally launches the expansion of St. HOPE's education and community development model to inner-cities throughout the United States. The School will serve students in grades k-12 and will feature a rigorous standards-based curriculum, an extended school day and year, a defined character development program and low student to teacher ratios. St. HOPE Leadership Academy will open with 150 students in grades 5 and 6 on August 13, 2008.

"Today's charter approval is a victory for the hundreds of families who invited St. HOPE to New York City," said Ventura Rodriguez, St. HOPE Leadership Academy's founding principal. "It is also a validation of St. HOPE's success in Sacramento and the organization's nearly 20 year commitment to improving the lives of young people. The fact that the Board of Regents approved the School on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday makes this occasion that much more special. It is with great honor that I undertake the important responsibility of providing a high quality educational opportunity to the children of Harlem."

Now that the charter has been approved, St. HOPE Leadership Academy's founding team is focused on preparing for the first day of school. Student recruitment and staffing are two critical next steps in this process, as is continued community outreach. Also central over the next eight months will be putting in place the critical components of the School's educational program, including the New York State standards aligned curriculum, benchmark assessments and a comprehensive staff development program.

About St. HOPE

St. HOPE Academy began in 1989 as an after school program in a portable classroom at Sacramento High School. Founded by NBA All-Star and Oak Park native Kevin Johnson, St. HOPE is a nonprofit community development corporation whose mission is to revitalize inner-city communities through public education, civic leadership, economic development and the arts. Over the last 19 years, St. HOPE has dramatically improved educational outcomes in Oak Park as well as made a significant economic impact.

In 2003, St. HOPE formed St. HOPE Public Schools, a pre-K-12 independent charter school system that provides high-quality education to nearly 1600 students in six small schools. PS7 serves 350 students in grades K-8 and Sacramento High School, which houses four small schools on one campus, serves over 1200 students in grades 9-12. Through its Nonprofit Business Model, St. HOPE has also brought 11 businesses, over 200 jobs, and \$7.5 million in development projects to Oak Park.

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