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## Press Release

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

### **KENDRICK LAMAR, JAMES HARDEN AND MTV'S SWAY REWARD AND INSPIRE BETHEL HIGH STUDENTS**

**Bethel, AK (August 30, 2013)** – Students in Bethel, Alaska, were recognized today with a star-studded celebrity event for their victory in a national competition demonstrating their commitment to college readiness. Hosted at Bethel Regional High School, the activities included a rally hosted by hip hop artist Kendrick Lamar and MTV VJ Sway, a basketball clinic by NBA player James Harden and a leadership training course hosted yesterday afternoon by Taco Bell® CEO, Greg Creed.

In the spring of 2013, Get Schooled, a national non-profit, sponsored the three-month competition involving 325 high schools in 14 states aimed at improving college readiness. The friendly competition was supported by USA Funds.

In Alaska, the Alaska College & Career Advising Corps (ACAC), a program of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, funded by the U.S. College Access Challenge Grant, actively engaged students at all eight ACAC schools in the competition. In Bethel, the student council spearheaded the effort by mobilizing their peers to participate in the competition and prepare for college.

As a result of their efforts, Bethel's students seized the top prize, coming together to achieve a 100 percent participation rate in activities such as Twitter chats with college experts and college exploratory sessions. Most importantly, more than 80 percent of its graduating seniors worked with their College & Career Guide to apply to college or technical schools.

In total, four Alaska College & Career Advising Corps high schools placed in the top 15. Close behind BRHS, North Pole high school tied with Validus Preparatory Academy, the Bronx, NY, for second place. Lathrop High School in Fairbanks takes 11th place, and Skyview High School in Soldotna landed in 15th.

“In the beginning, a lot of students thought our school was too small, and we didn't have a chance,” said former Bethel student leader Alfred Wallace, 18, now a freshman at the University of Alaska Anchorage. “But once we came together as a unified student body, we realized that we

could compete with students from all over the country. By winning, we were able to show that all it takes is motivation and energy, and even the small town of Bethel can succeed in a national competition.”

Get Schooled, and its partners, the Taco Bell® Foundation for Teens™, and Viacom, are recognizing the extraordinary efforts of Bethel Regional High School’s staff, students and community.

“Bethel is an example of what can happen when an entire community comes together to support students in reaching their goals,” said Marie Groark, executive director of the Get Schooled Foundation. “Get Schooled, Taco Bell and Viacom are excited to show Bethel’s teens that their hard work and commitment to creating positive futures did not go unnoticed.”

### **About the Alaska College & Career Advising Corps**

The Alaska College & Career Advising Corps (ACAC), a program of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, funded through the US College Access Challenge Grant Program, places recent college graduates into target high schools where they provide classroom presentations, group workshops and one-to-one advising aimed at increasing the number of Alaska students who enroll in and complete college or career training.

### **About Get Schooled**

Get Schooled is a non-profit organization that directly engages and motivates students to graduate from high school and succeed in college. Get Schooled is the premiere education brand for young people – linking students with high quality, cutting edge resources and tools they need to succeed. Get Schooled has developed a track record of success because it engages with young Americans using the media, technology and popular culture that is an integral part of their lives. Get Schooled's work is boosted by partners like Viacom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In its first three years, Get Schooled has engaged more than 3 million young Americans and has built a network of more than 600 middle and high schools.

### **About Taco Bell Corp.**

[Taco Bell Corp.](#) (“Taco Bell”), a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc., (NYSE: YUM), is the nation's leading Mexican-inspired quick service restaurant. Taco Bell serves made to order and customizable tacos, burritos, and specialties such as the exclusive [Doritos® Locos Tacos](#), gourmet inspired [Cantina Bell® Menu](#) and lower calorie [Fresco Menu](#). The company encourages customers to “Live Más®,” both through its food and in ways such as its [Feed the Beat®](#) music program and charitable organization, the [Taco Bell® Foundation for Teens™](#). Taco Bell and its more than 350 franchise organization have nearly 6,000 restaurants across the United States that proudly serve more than 36 million customers every week.

### **About Taco Bell® Foundation for Teens™**

Taco Bell® Foundation Inc., also known as Taco Bell® Foundation for Teens™, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation committed to inspiring and enabling America's teens to achieve más through its programs, partnerships, and direct financial assistance. Every year, the Foundation serves more than 100,000 teens in more than 180 communities across the country and awards more than 300 grants and scholarships focused on education and career preparedness. Since 1992, the Foundation has awarded more than \$42 million in support of more than 1,000 teen-serving organizations in the U.S. through customer, franchisee, employee and vendor-partner donations. For more information visit [tacobellforteens.org](http://tacobellforteens.org), and find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TacoBell4Teens>.

### **About Viacom**

Viacom is home to the world's premier entertainment brands that connect with audiences through compelling content across television, motion picture, online and mobile platforms in over 160 countries and territories. With media networks reaching approximately 700 million global subscribers, Viacom's leading brands include MTV, VH1, CMT, Logo, BET, CENTRIC, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., TeenNick, Nicktoons, Nick at Nite, COMEDY CENTRAL, TV Land, SPIKE, Tr3s, Paramount Channel and VIVA. Paramount Pictures, America's oldest film studio and creator of many of the most beloved motion pictures, continues today as a major global producer and distributor of filmed entertainment. Viacom operates a large portfolio of branded digital media experiences, including many of the world's most popular properties for entertainment, community and casual online gaming.

For more information about Viacom and its businesses, visit [www.viacom.com](http://www.viacom.com). Keep up with Viacom news by following Viacom's blog at [blog.viacom.com](http://blog.viacom.com) and Twitter feed at [www.twitter.com/Viacom](http://www.twitter.com/Viacom).

### **About the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education**

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) is the state's higher education agency. ACPE promotes access to and success in higher education through college & career planning services, financial aid, and consumer protection.

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