



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OFFICE DEPOT FOUNDATION, USA TODAY EDUCATION  
AND NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS  
LAUNCH MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM**

***Dream UP Program to Run for 16 Weeks at 75 Participating Schools***

McLean, Va. (Oct. 7, 2009) — USA TODAY Education and the Office Depot Foundation, in partnership with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), announce the launch of Dream UP, a 16-week career exploration program in 75 middle schools across the country.

The Dream UP Career Exploration Program integrates career awareness and exploration into students' middle school experience to help them start thinking about the future – and encourage them to stay in school as they get older. Beginning this fall, students at participating schools will explore, consider and select a potential career path by reading, researching and analyzing real-world information found through daily review of USA TODAY, the nation's top-selling newspaper. Students will study profiles of success and gain further insights on the latest in technology, business and industry trends.

Students will learn to identify and utilize 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce skills; create their own career portfolio with a clear understanding of their interests and career goals; gain knowledge of the types of education, experience, strengths and skills they need in order to achieve their career goals; write a 500-word essay about their "Dream Job;" and have the opportunity to win a day to experience it. Teachers in each school will select three top essays for submission to a national contest, where a judging panel will select five winners from across the country who will get to spend a day in their "Dream Job."

"One of the Office Depot Foundation's strategic objectives is to help children succeed in school – and in life," says its president, Mary Wong. "Far too many students drop out of high school and even middle school. When this happens, these young people can

permanently damage their chances for success. We believe that the Dream UP Program will play an important role in helping them see what they can achieve in their lives.”

“USA TODAY is so pleased to enter into such a valuable and robust partnership with the Office Depot Foundation and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,” said Diane Barrett, vice president of circulation, USA TODAY. “It is our mutual goal to provide young people with the resources that they need to be successful in their lives.”

With the support of the Office Depot Foundation, each participating classroom will receive daily copies of USA TODAY to help students explore different careers and workplace trends, along with a career portfolio workbook offering tools that students can use to meet the achievement goals of the Dream UP Program. Additionally, the program offers teacher lesson plans for each of the 16 Dream UP class sessions, outlining how the USA TODAY newspapers and the USA TODAY Dream UP career portfolio workbooks work together to help students assess their strengths and evaluate their career options.

The Dream UP Program is being implemented in the classrooms of National Board Certified Teachers across the country.

“NBPTS is pleased to partner with the Office Depot Foundation and USA TODAY on this initiative because it will provide students with a platform to plan for and follow through on their career aspirations,” said Joni L. Henderson, NBPTS vice president of development and external relations. “We know that National Board Certified Teachers have excelled at creating a culture of learning in schools across the country. The Dream UP Program will foster learning gains for students because it will offer the opportunity to improve strategic thinking skills.”

National Board Certification is a growing education reform movement that is reshaping American education. A voluntary assessment program designed to develop, recognize and retain accomplished teachers, board certification is achieved through a performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete.

Last year, the highly respected National Research Council found that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than those taught by teachers who have not applied or did not achieve certification. The congressionally mandated report also found that National Board Certification has a positive impact on teacher retention and professional development.

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**About USA TODAY**

USA TODAY was founded in 1982 with a mission to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation. Through its flagship newspaper and popular Web site, USA TODAY engages the national conversation and connects readers online through social media applications. USA TODAY, the nation's top-selling newspaper with a total average daily circulation of more than 2.1 million, and USATODAY.com, an award-winning newspaper Web site which launched in 1995, reach a combined 5.8 million readers daily. The USA TODAY news and information brand also includes: USA TODAY Education, USA TODAY LIVE, USA TODAY Mobile, and USA TODAY Sports Weekly. USA TODAY is owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI).

**About the Office Depot Foundation**

The Office Depot Foundation is an independent foundation (tax exempt under IRC Sec. 501(c)(3)) that serves as the independent charitable giving arm of Office Depot, Inc. In keeping with its mission, Listen Learn Care<sup>®</sup>, the Foundation supports a variety of programs that help children succeed in school and in life; enable civil society (nonprofit) organizations to become more efficient and effective; help people and businesses prepare for disasters, then recover and rebuild afterwards; strengthen local communities through grants, product donations and volunteerism; and encourage community development through entrepreneurship and economic innovation. Visit [www.officedepotfoundation.org](http://www.officedepotfoundation.org) for more information.

**About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**

NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization. NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching; creating and administering National Board Certification, a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards; and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts. Today, 74,000 National Board Certified Teachers are making a positive difference in the lives of students across the nation.