

**Magnet Schools of America Announces Collaboration with National University to Expand Sanford Harmony**

*Innovative social emotional learning program for PreK-6 grades to be introduced to magnet schools across the country*

**Washington, DC June 29, 2016** – Magnet Schools of America is collaborating with National University to expand a nationwide initiative to introduce schools to Sanford Harmony, an innovative social emotional learning program that helps reinforce positive peer interactions among children. Already being rolled out to thousands of classrooms through National University’s leadership, the PreK-6 program provides easy-to-use lesson plans and resources at no cost to schools that encourage communication, collaboration, and celebrating differences among students.

Magnet Schools of America represents over 3,800 schools around the country and will collaborate with 75 schools to introduce Sanford Harmony during the first year of the partnership, targeting several districts and states across the country. The agreement - the largest to date with a national organization for the University - complements current efforts led by National University in coordination with other universities and organizations that have resulted in Sanford Harmony being adopted in more than 8,850 classrooms around the country, which represents over 180,000 students in 20 states.

“We are extremely pleased to be collaborating with National University to offer Sanford Harmony to the many magnet schools that stand to benefit from this valuable program that has already demonstrated significant impacts in classrooms around the country,” said MSA’s Executive Director, Todd Mann. “The mission of Sanford Harmony aligns strongly with the collective emphasis of magnet schools, which have their roots in encouraging culturally competent educational environments that model empathy, respect and collaboration.”

Designed to integrate seamlessly into learning environments, Sanford Harmony was inspired by businessman and philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, who saw a need for developing strong social and emotional skills in children as a way to improve relationships between adults. The PreK-6 research-based program, which includes classroom lesson plans, storybooks and activity prompts, was originally developed at Arizona State University. It has been found to encourage positive attitudes toward school, increased academic performance and empathy as well as reductions in stereotyping and aggression.

The private, nonprofit National University, which has the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school of education in the country, is now leading the national expansion of the program through collaborations with

other universities, a group called the Sanford Education Collaborative that is introducing the program to schools within their own regions. The program expansion phase, involves public and private schools in major school districts spanning from Los Angeles to New York City, as well as organizations such as local Boys and Girls Clubs, Head Start programs and a recent partnership with LA's BEST after-school enrichment programs.

"We are so very pleased to be collaborating with Magnet Schools of America to bring Sanford Harmony to their schools because it addresses such a critical need in our society," said Dr. Michael R. Cunningham, Chancellor of the National University System which includes National University. "In classrooms and after-school programs nationwide, Sanford Harmony is helping children of all backgrounds learn to respect each other and collaborate, creating a foundation that will last a lifetime."

### **About Magnet Schools of America**

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) is a nonprofit education association that represents more than 3,800 magnet schools serving 2.6 million students. MSA was founded in 1986 and authorized as a 501(c)3 in 1994. It supports and serves the leaders and teachers of magnet and theme-based schools, while promoting the development of new magnet programs and public schools of choice. It sponsors a national awards program, hosts professional development activities, and provides technical assistance through the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL). Its mission is to provide leadership for high quality, innovative instructional programs that promote choice, equity, diversity, and academic excellence for all students.  
<http://www.magnet.edu/>

### **About National University and its Sanford Education Center**

[National University](#), founded in 1971, is among the largest private, nonprofit universities in California with more than 150,000 alumni. The University, an affiliate of the National University System, offers programs through two Colleges and four Schools and it ranks as having among the Top Ten largest schools of education in the country. The University is also the home of the Sanford Education Center, established in 2014 through the generous support of philanthropist T. Denny Sanford to provide innovative programs in the nonprofit and PreK-12 sector. The Center, in coordination with universities around the country, is leading the national expansion of three initiatives: Sanford Harmony, Sanford Inspire and the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy. Learn more about the Center's initiatives here:  
<http://www.nu.edu/SanfordEducationCenter.html>