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News Release

Date: April 27, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW WEBSITE TO HELP SCHOOLS, PARENTS, COMMUNITIES IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A new website launched today by a national organization dedicated to academic improvement uses student achievement data and interactive analysis tools to help educators, parents, policy makers, and community members raise student performance in Hawaii's public schools.

The *Just for the Kids – Hawaii* website (www.just4kids.org) went live today following a press conference at Dole Middle School, where key features of the site

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were unveiled. “*Just for the Kids – Hawaii* is a powerful tool that will add to what the state is already doing to raise academic performance at public schools,” explained Mike Hudson, president of the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), national sponsor of *Just for the Kids*, a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 to raise academic standards and improve public education.

The *Just for the Kids – Hawaii* website provides users with a wealth of information about Hawaii’s public schools. Student achievement data is available for all public schools in the state, including charter schools. In addition to offering views of each school’s academic achievement by grade and subject – useful in monitoring effects of education policies and programs – the site includes successful practices from higher-performing schools and classrooms that can be helpful to other schools.

“*Just for the Kids* is an important step toward increasing the transparency and accessibility of educational data in Hawaii,” said State Schools Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto. “The proper use of the *Just for the Kids* website will assist schools in directing the implementation of best practices based on effective, working models in our higher achieving schools.”

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Just for the Kids worked closely with the state Department of Education, the Hawaii Business Roundtable and the Hawaii P-20 Initiative to develop the *Just for the Kids – Hawaii* website. The Harold K.L. Castle Foundation provided funding for the site.

“We think it’s important to invest in education,” noted Mitch D’Olier, president and chief executive officer of Kaneohe Ranch Co. and the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.

“Programs like *Just for the Kids* will help educators prepare children to lead successful, fulfilling lives in the challenging world that awaits them.” The Broad Foundation provided support to NCEA for the 20 State Best Practice Studies, which included the state of Hawaii.

Key features of the *Just for the Kids – Hawaii* website include:

- **Opportunity Gap Bar Charts** – Grade level and subject specific charts that show where a school is academically and where it can go by looking to the level of achievement at top comparable schools.
- **Top Comparable Schools Tables** – Helps users to identify schools that are similar to theirs and that are doing better in various subject areas.
- **Multi-Year Summary Charts** – Shows a school’s progress from year-to-year.
- **Best Practice Framework** – Interactive links on a common best practice framework allows users to study results found in higher-performing school districts, schools and classrooms.
- **Self-Audit** – Web-based group self-audits are available to help educators and community members compare the practices at their schools to higher-performing schools and set common priorities for student or school improvement.

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“The quality of Hawaii’s public schools affects all of us. *Just for the Kids – Hawaii* is a tool that everyone can use – educators, parents and community members – to build higher-performing schools that will increase opportunities for all Hawaii public school students,” said Carl Takamura, executive director of the Hawaii Business Roundtable.

In 1995, *Just for the Kids* developed a comprehensive, data-driven school improvement model that analyzed student achievement data to determine benchmarks for individual schools. Under this model, *Just for the Kids* also identified and investigated the highest-performing schools to determine the reason for their success and provided training sessions to help educators implement those practices. In 1999, *Just for the Kids* began expanding, and in October 2001, the maintenance and expansion of *Just for the Kids*’ school improvement model was undertaken by the National Center for Educational Accountability.

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