

For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:
Bill Toomey
(818) 952-1760

**OPTIONS FOR YOUTH & OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING NARROW
ACHIEVEMENT GAP, OUTRANK MOST PEER SCHOOLS**

***Scores Improve Across the Board for Hispanic, African American
And Low-Income Students Once At Risk of Dropping Out***

PASADENA, Calif. (April 18, 2007) – Recent performance results from the state’s largest group of independent study charter schools reveal dramatic success – both in terms of similar schools scores and in bridging the achievement gap among minority and low-income students, Options for Youth (OFY) and Opportunities for Learning (OFL) charter schools announced today.

“Our programs have significantly narrowed the achievement gap between white and minority students,” said Tom Goodman, superintendent for both programs. “We have closed the gap to about half that of the state and local averages.” Additionally, the schools showed tremendous progress, ranking well above most schools with similar student population in California based on API scores. In fact one ranks 10, two rank 9 and three rank 8, said Goodman. Two other charters are not ranked because they fall under an alternative assessment model that does not track API score, he said.

In fact, he noted, that out of 9,833 California schools, the OFL charter that serves South Central Los Angeles was one of just 39 schools to increase their similar schools rankings from a 4 to an 8 in a single year.

OFY and OFL’s test scores exceed the test scores of all but one of the state’s top continuation schools deemed “models” in 2007 by Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell.

The schools’ academic success is translating into support from their chartering districts, which have recently renewed their charters, expanded the number of new learning centers, and even authorizing a new charter to serve homeless students in South Central Los Angeles and other areas with large homeless and displaced student populations.

“There is a huge need for effective programs like ours,” Goodman said. “ We look forward to working with the state and local communities we serve to continue our mission of serving the needs of students at risk of dropping out of high school.”

#

About Options for Youth: OFY was founded in 1987 to provide quality educational services to thousands of at-risk students, primarily ethnic minority and low-income teenagers, pursuing academic recovery so that they can stay in school, continue their education, and earn high school diplomas. Changes in society, in the family unit and in the workplace have spurred the need for and growth of innovative instructional programs such as charter schools to meet the diverse educational needs and lifestyles of students, particularly in urban centers. For more information: www.ofy.org

About Opportunities for Learning Charter Schools: OFL is the operating name of three independent, WASC accredited charter schools with 26 learning centers located throughout Southern California. OFL and its sister organization, Options for Youth Charter Schools, currently serve more than 25,000 students each year; thousands more are on waiting lists. Established by lifelong teachers and educators, John and Joan Hall in 1999, OFL began serving at-risk students who dropped out or were at risk of dropping out of school. Over time, it has expanded its focus to become an innovator in the development of educational options, curriculum, programs and administrative services tailored to the needs of independent study and designed to expand opportunities for at-risk students. For more information: www.emsofl.com