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**Largest Milwaukee School Choice Network Announces Multi-Million Dollar Investments
in Upgrades and Innovation Initiatives**

*New HOPE Christian Schools Innovate Director
to focus on challenges facing education in Milwaukee*

MILWAUKEE – HOPE Christian Schools and Open Sky Education are rolling out a multi-million dollar upgrade and innovation plan following last year’s passage of historic funding of the Parental Choice Programs throughout the state – including an announcement of an exciting new staff position, HOPE Innovate Director. HOPE Christian Schools are the largest network of choice schools in Milwaukee and Racine. Today’s announcement pairs exciting improvements to HOPE’s existing schools while launching the process of innovative efforts that will drive change in education to improve the experience for students, parents, and teachers.

“The ripple effects of COVID have created major educational challenges for children in cities like Racine and Milwaukee. Historic funding increases for private school choice schools by Wisconsin’s elected leaders will allow us to deploy new resources for the children and families we serve,” said **Dan Depies, Chief Operating Officer of Open Sky Education and Interim Regional Executive Director of HOPE Christian Schools**. “In response to the needs of our community and the opportunity in front of us, we are proud to launch an initiative aimed at upgrading our current models and creating new ones. We remain committed to student development focused on Christ, College, and Character.”

HOPE UPGRADE INITIATIVE

HOPE Christian Schools will focus investments in developing strong leaders, expanding opportunities for staff, and expanding the programs we offer to students – including:

- Enhancing counseling supports and implementing scholar sense of belonging framework.
- Launching a high-quality HOPE athletic league.
- Increasing the art, music and STEM opportunities.
- Increasing support for our instructional staff by adding two full-time education leaders to the region to guide faith/character development and data-driven instructional practices.
- Formalizing career pathways that will guide career advancement and increased earning potential while creating new roles such as “learning guide,” “developing teacher,” and “master teacher.”

- Continuing to build consistency and collaboration across the HOPE Christian Schools network in key areas like coaching, data-driven instruction, student culture, and parent engagement.
- Continuing to invest in safety such as facilities upgrades, emergency communication standards, and school security resources.
- Broadening our strategies to attract and retain top teacher talent.

HOPE INNOVATE INITIATIVE

In recognition of the very challenging staffing climate – especially our community’s teacher shortage – and the learning gap that was significantly expanded during COVID, HOPE Christian Schools will also be launching a new initiative to focus on finding new solutions that will help address the teacher shortage and accelerate student learning.

HOPE Christian Schools will focus its innovation efforts on building new models which are at the cutting edge of how teachers teach and students learn. We will use the levers of flexibility and exceptional experience to confront the issues of teacher shortages and learning directly. Those include developing models that:

- Increase flexibility in the role, location, and modality of teaching.
- Increase flexibility in the location, modes, and time of learning.
- Provide students, parents, and educators with exceptional experiences.

To drive its *Innovate* initiative, HOPE Christian Schools is announcing a newly created position, the Director of HOPE Innovate, who will explore innovations that improve flexibility and experience and can address significant issues holding back Milwaukee education.

Andrew Neumann, CEO of Open Sky Education shared, “After 20 years of impact and growth within our communities, we’re striving to find new ways to utilize flexibility and exceptional experiences in our education models. By dreaming of new, innovative ways to deliver a high-quality education, we believe that we can effectively offer community-based solutions to the challenges that have existed over decades.”

Depies added, “By looking at how we can innovate with community-centric approaches, we can tackle the issue of absenteeism and teacher retention head-on in ways that will deliver the best outcomes possible for our students in Milwaukee and Racine.”

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