

**WETA and WHUT Examine the Future of Education in
Rethinking High School with Soledad O'Brien Town Hall Event at Howard University**

One-Hour Special Will be Live-Streamed September 15 and Broadcast Locally in Washington, D.C.

[September 9, 2016; Arlington, VA] – Greater Washington public television stations WETA and WHUT are partnering to produce the one-hour town hall event *Rethinking High School with Soledad O'Brien*, which will feature a moderated panel discussion with students, teachers, education leaders, and parents on innovating high school education. The event, held at the Founders Library on the historic campus of Howard University, will stream on Facebook live on Thursday, September 15 at 5:30pm ET, with a future television broadcast via local Washington, DC stations WETA and WHUT.

Rethinking High School with Soledad O'Brien seeks to broker a meaningful dialogue around public education in America and how to improve its prospects for the future. Topics covered will include current curriculum standards; the effectiveness of teaching technologies; and the need for new innovative solutions. Featured panelists include Kaya Henderson, D.C. Schools Chancellor; Andrew Rotherham, co-founder and partner at Bellwether Education Partners, a national nonprofit organization working to support educational innovation; and Tony Wagner, an Expert In Residence at Harvard University's new [Innovation Lab](#) and author of "Most Likely To Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for The Innovation Era." Audience participation will include dozens of administrators, parents, students and teachers such as Aris Pangilinan, who has taught STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) for 21 years at Francis L. Cardozo High School in Washington, D.C.

The one-hour special will broadcast Tuesday, October 4 at 8:00pm ET on WHUT TV; and on a date to be determined on WETA TV 26.

Moderator Soledad O'Brien is an award-winning journalist and founder and CEO of Starfish Media Group, which will co-produce the special with WETA, WHUT and Bounce AEG. O'Brien is also the host of *American Graduate Day*, a live television event broadcast from the Tisch WNET Studios at Lincoln Center airing on September 17 from 2:00-6:00pm on public television stations. The broadcast is the culminating event Spotlight Education Week – a special week of primetime education-themed programming beginning September 12, 2016. She anchors Matter of Fact, a political magazine program produced by Hearst TV and distributed by Sony Pictures TV.

In the lead-up to the September 15 town hall event, O'Brien will participate in a Twitter Q&A discussion to answer questions on the topic of how innovation can play a role in enhancing high school learning, using the hashtag #rethinkinghighschool and @soledadobrien.

“This is a critical conversation that requires the efforts of all stakeholders,” O’Brien said. “I’m looking forward to listening and pushing teachers, administrators, parents, students, policy makers and the greater community about what specifically needs to be done to move the needle in innovating learning for high school students.”

“Access to education is at the cornerstone of why Howard University and WHUT exist. Having this discussion at Howard University continues Howard’s legacy of almost 150 years of being at the forefront of the discussion of education in this country. We, at WHUT, are proud to be a part of bringing this discussion to our community and the country,” notes WHUT General Manager, Jefferi K. Lee.

“Education and learning are pillars of the WETA organizational mission,” WETA president and CEO Sharon Percy Rockefeller comments, “We’re honored to gather the public for a valuable discourse in our hometown, with the hope that the conversation will continue across the country.”

The livestream for *Rethinking High School with Soledad O’Brien* will be available Thursday, September 15 at 5:30pm ET via the Facebook pages of WETA, WHUT and American Graduate public television stations across the country. Viewers are encouraged to join the conversation on social media using the #rethinkinghighschool and @soledadobrien.

Rethinking High School with Soledad O’Brien is a co-production of WETA, WHUT, Starfish Media Group and Bounce AEG. Support provided by XQ Institute Super School Project.

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About WETA

WETA Washington, D.C., is one of the largest producing stations of new content for public television in the United States. WETA productions and co-productions include *PBS NewsHour*; *Washington Week With Gwen Ifill*; *The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize*; *The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song*; *In Performance at the White House*; documentaries by scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; and films by Ken Burns, including *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, *The War*, *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*, *The Central Park Five*, *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History* and *Jackie Robinson*. The WETA studios and administrative offices are located in Arlington, Virginia. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at www.weta.org. On social media, visit www.facebook.com/wetatvfm on Facebook or follow @wetatvfm on Twitter.

About WHUT

Howard University Television was founded in 1980 in Washington, D.C. as WHMM. At its inception the station became the first public station in the United States to be licensed and operated by a historically black college and university (HBCU) - Howard University. The station broadcasts reach over 2 million households in a 60-mile radius. The station endeavors to underscore Howard University’s overall mission in its commitment to excellence, leadership and public service. For over 35 years on air WHUT has become a leader in broadcast communications by providing quality programming for the Greater Washington, D.C. viewing community that is relevant and informative, while offering exceptional professional training in television production, engineering and management. For more information, please visit www.whut.org.

About Starfish Media Group

Starfish Media Group is a leading production and distribution company focused on real stories, authentic characters, and rich storytelling told across a broad range of content formats and media platforms. SMG and Soledad O'Brien report and produce series, documentaries, digital content, and live events. O'Brien is also anchor of "Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien," a magazine show distributed by Hearst TV and Sony Pictures TV, and reports for HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel." Founded in 2013, SMG explores critical social issues, including the divisive issues of race, class, wealth, opportunity, and poverty and the personal stories of people who face these obstacles and attempt to overcome them. Starfish continues to produce the highly acclaimed 'Black in America' and 'Latino in America' series, originated by O'Brien when she was an anchor at CNN.

About Bounce AEG

Bounce AEG is an award-winning broadcast production division of The Anschutz Entertainment Group, the world's leading sports and entertainment company. In addition to this year's forthcoming production of "The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song," Bounce AEG has produced one-of-a-kind live events including the annual "MusiCares Person of the Year" special during GRAMMY Week, "The National Christmas Tree Lighting" and several episodes of the acclaimed PBS series, "In Performance at the White House." The Bounce team also specializes in brand integration and marketing — working with high-end luxury firms on launching and maintaining their overall brand status. Tim Swift is founder and CEO. More information about Bounce AEG is available at www.bounceaeg.com.

About American Graduate

American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen is public media's long-term commitment to supporting community-based solutions to help young people succeed in school and life. Made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), more than 100 public television and radio stations have joined forces with over 1,700 partners across 49 states to elevate the stories of youth and the supportive adults that help them succeed. Through American Graduate, public media, with its unique position as a trusted resource and important partner in local communities, provides a critical platform to shine a light on pathways to graduation and successful student outcomes. National and local reporting, both on air and online is helping communities understand the challenges and community-driven solutions associated with the dropout crisis. Public forums, town halls, and community conversations are activating discussions between community leaders, educators, and more.

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