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MEDIA RELEASE

School Kicks Off 2009/10 Academic Year *BDJ STEM Academy Scholars Return to the Classroom*

Baltimore, MD (July 6, 2009) Students attending the Bluford Drew Jemison Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Academies in East and West Baltimore headed back to school last week to begin their 2009/2010 academic year.

Unlike most students who have off until the end of August, BDJ scholars return, in uniform, to the classroom for coursework in math and language arts for five weeks (mornings) in the summer. This is not “summer school;” it is part of their total days of instruction, which, at BDJ STEM, is 220 days a year versus the state required 180 days.

“It is a difficult adjustment, especially for our incoming 6th grade scholars (coming to school during the summer),” states Dr. Kirk Gaddy, CEO and Head of School.

“President Obama recently talked about how the traditional school year puts our young people at a disadvantage. The educational foundation we offer at BDJ STEM [extended day, week, and year] is rooted in this same thinking,” he continued.

BDJ STEM Academy, Inc. operates two campuses, both all-male, Baltimore City public schools: 1) a middle charter school in East Baltimore opened in 2007 and is now fully enrolled with 380, 6th-8th graders and 2) a middle/high transformation school in West Baltimore (this campus opened its doors with 60, 6th graders last week). African Americans account for nearly 100 percent of the students and over 80 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch (see stats on page 2). Students are accepted from neighborhoods across the city and are not vetted for academics (as Baltimore City public schools BDJ STEM must accept any student who wants to attend).

The schools are focused on the principals of a STEM education with an additional emphasis on language art. BDJ STEM began its school year last week with breakfast,

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assembly, classes and lunch from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. During the regular school year, the schools open at 7 with breakfast and assembly; instructional day from 7:35 am to 2:40 pm; extended day from 3 to 7 pm, including a full dinner (M-Th); and three Saturdays a month for 3 hours. The summer session, extended day, and Saturday sessions are mandatory for all students.

The media is welcomed to visit the school. Please contact Carl Stokes at 410-276-3270 (school) or 443-739-3097 (cell) to make arrangements.

BDJ Facts:

Two campuses:

East Academy: Middle Charter School, 6th-8th grades, 380 students

West Academy: Middle/High Transformation School, opened in 2009 with 6th grade to be fully enrolled 6th-12th grade in 2013

Demographics: 100% male; African American 98% (*East*) and 99% (*West*)

Free and reduced lunch: 81% (*East*)

Attendance: 95.5% (*East*)

6th Grade scholars MSA proficiency (2008: *East*): 68% reached proficiency in Reading; 51% in Math

School Day (*required of all students*)

Hours: 7 am to 7 pm

Meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Instructional day: 7:35 am to 2:40 pm (starts with breakfast and assembly at 7am), Monday-Friday

Extended day: 3 to 7 pm (includes dinner), Monday-Thursday

Extended week: Three Saturdays/month, 9 am to 12 noon

Extended year: Five-week mandatory summer session focused on math and language arts (mornings 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, with breakfast, assembly and lunch)

Days of instruction: 220 (state requirement is 180)

Curriculum: Language Arts (two periods per day), Math (two periods per day—students assessed daily); Science; Social Studies; Technology; Library Media; Reading and Writing Skills; Foreign Language (Spanish); Music; Physical Education; Visual Arts