



*\*\*If you are a reporter interested in covering any of these events, please contact [meghan.pianta@nbcuni.com](mailto:meghan.pianta@nbcuni.com) \*\**

## **EDUCATION NATION ON-THE-ROAD COMES TO NEW ORLEANS**

*Beginning April 12, NBC News brings an education "power week" to New Orleans with a series of education-focused events and programming*

*NBC News' Hoda Kotb and Rehema Ellis join WDSU in engaging New Orleans in the national conversation about the future of America's education system*

*New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu to participate in opening ceremony*

NEW YORK, NY—April 8, 2013— In an effort to continue the national conversation about how to help prepare America's students for success, NBC News is bringing "Education Nation On-The-Road" to New Orleans beginning April 12, 2013. The NBC News team will spend a week in the city, partnering with its affiliate station, WDSU, to ignite a public dialogue about new efforts in the region and across the state to improve student outcomes. During the week, NBC News and WDSU will air education-focused programming and host a series of special events that bring New Orleans-area business and civic leaders, elected officials, educators, parents and students together to share information, exchange ideas and inspire change. All "Education Nation New Orleans" events will be held at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA).

"I am very excited to welcome NBC News and Education Nation to New Orleans" said New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "Thanks to the hard work of students, parents, teachers and education leaders, New Orleans leads the nation in educational innovation with over 80 percent of students attending charter schools. The results are a major decline in dropouts, higher rates of parental satisfaction, and double-digit student achievement gains in nearly every subject. We look forward to sharing the work New Orleanians are doing to meet the demands of the 21st century."

To kick off "Education Nation New Orleans," on Friday, April 12, at 9:00 AM/CT, NBC News will host an **Opening Ceremony** emceed by WDSU's Sula Kim, with participation from New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Education Nation General Manager Soraya Gage, WDSU President & General Manager Joel Vilmenay, Louisiana Recovery School District Superintendent Patrick Dobard, NOCCA President & CEO Kyle Wedberg, W.K. Kellogg Foundation Executive Vice President for Operations & Treasurer La June Montgomery Tabron, Hugo the Hornet, the NOCCA Jazz Ensemble, and area students.

Then, beginning at 1:30 PM/CT, NBC News and WDSU will host a **New Orleans Summit**, featuring a series of panels including: "Early Learning: Sowing Seeds for Success," "K-12: Lessons for the New

Orleans Experience,” and “Job One: Preparing Louisiana to Compete in the 21st Century Economy.” The Summit will be hosted by NBC News’ Hoda Kotb and WDSU Anchor Sula Kim. WDSU will air “**Job One**” live from 4:30-5:00 PM /CT. All summit panels will stream live on [EducationNation.com](http://EducationNation.com).

On Saturday April 13, Rehema Ellis and WDSU's Sula Kim and Blake Hanson will host a **Teacher Town Hall**— a unique educator-only forum that brings together local teachers of all levels for a frank and open discussion about what works in the classroom and how to address the top challenges facing the region’s education system. Teachers will be invited to participate in-person and online with the ability to provide comments and feedback through EducationNation.com and social media platforms. The Teacher Town Hall will be televised live on WDSU from 6:00-7:00 PM/CT and streamed live on [EducationNation.com](http://EducationNation.com) from 6:00-7:30pm PM/CT.

On Sunday, April 14, Rehema Ellis, Sula Kim and Blake Hanson will host a **Student Town Hall**, bringing together hundreds of New Orleans-area students to discuss their experiences in the classroom and their hopes for their own education. This special event, which is new to the tour this year, will air on WDSU from 4:00-5:00 PM/CT and streamed live on [EducationNation.com](http://EducationNation.com) from 4:00-5:30 PM/CT.

"The 'Education Nation On-The-Road' tour has engaged communities across the country to come together and try to find solutions to both local and national education issues. We are excited to partner with the WDSU team to expand the dialogue about how we can improve education in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana," said Soraya Gage, General Manager of Education Nation.

“We’re thrilled to collaborate with NBC News to bring Education Nation to New Orleans,” said Joel Vilmenay, President & General Manager of WDSU. “Education Nation has been at the center of fostering productive conversations around solutions and, through this important initiative, we look forward to extending our shared commitment to this vital issue.”

In addition to these events, from April 8-19, the “Education Nation” bus will travel throughout the region as WDSU reporters highlight examples of education innovation in action.

“Education Nation New Orleans” is supported by Lead Sponsor the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Supporting Sponsors including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Chevron Corporation and University of Phoenix; and Knowledge Partner NBC Learn.

#### **About "Education Nation"**

"Education Nation" seeks to create a thoughtful, well-informed dialogue with policymakers, thought leaders, educators, parents and the public, in pursuit of the shared goal of providing every American with an opportunity to achieve the best education in the world. These discussions cover the challenges, potential solutions and innovations spanning the education landscape. By providing quality information to the public, NBC News hopes to provide information to Americans so they can make decisions about how best to improve our education system both in the near and long terms, and to shine a spotlight on one of the most urgent national issues of our time.