

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mr. Jose Frisby or Mr. Steve Carvalho

Phone: (520) 805-1261

Cell: (520)236-6590 or (520) 236-6701 respectively



RESPONSE FROM OMEGA ALPHA ACADEMY

Charter School in Douglas Responds to Press Release Written by Department of Education

(DOUGLAS, AZ, MAY 22, 2009) – Omega Alpha Academy has always, and will continue to, comply with both Arizona and Federal law which requires it to educate only Arizona residents. Every student at Omega Alpha Academy has presented evidence, *in a form approved by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE)*, demonstrating residency. Both the ADE and State Board for Charter Schools have audited Omega Alpha twice and found the school to be in total compliance. The school has honored every request made by the Department for information and has never been found in violation until yesterday, when the Department made its very public announcement before advising us of their intentions.

After a lengthy investigation in 2005, the ADE concluded that Omega Alpha's practices complied with the law and documented that compliance in a letter dated October 17, 2005. In May 2008, Omega Alpha again opened its books and records to the ADE and mailed to the Department the enrollment records for all 528 of its students. At that time, Omega Alpha advised the Department of its desire to comply with the law and assured the Department in writing that the school would cooperate with any investigation or supply any additional information the Department believed necessary.

Since that time Omega Alpha Academy has received no indication from the ADE that the school is doing anything wrong. Rather, Superintendent Horne has decided to issue a press release claiming that the Department has "conclusive" proof that Omega Alpha is educating students who reside in Mexico. This conclusive proof is in the form of an edited video that is neither time nor date stamped. Where a student goes before or after school is entirely up to the student, and to suggest that a video showing students crossing the border is somehow conclusive proof that those students are not residents of Arizona is to ignore the reality of cross border traffic that occurs every day in our community. Furthermore, it has been implied that the vans shown in the video are affiliated with Omega Alpha Academy. To set the record straight, these vans have no affiliation whatsoever with Omega Alpha.

In our border town, we have many students crossing back and forth between Arizona and Mexico. Omega Alpha's mission and purpose is to provide a quality education to its students. We welcome attention on how our school is moving its students academically forward, and while doing so will always follow both Arizona and Federal law. If the ADE believes that Omega Alpha is admitting students improperly, it only needs to contact the Academy and advise us of its findings. We are audited by the State every year and have indicated every desire to cooperate with both the ADE and State Board for Charter Schools to comply with all pertinent regulations and laws. Omega Alpha stands ready and willing to share its records whenever necessary to review our residency verification process. If we are doing anything that is not consistent with the law, we will immediately change that practice.

About Omega Alpha

The mission of Omega Alpha Academy is to be among the top ten academically achieving schools in Cochise County.