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# Andrew Balson Joins Match Beyond as Chief Executive Officer

## *Balson Will Spearhead Organizational Growth and Drive Match Beyond's Mission to Empower Young Adults to Earn Post-Secondary Degrees*

**BOSTON** — Match Beyond, a division of Match Education that provides personal coaching and job placement services to high school graduates and GED-recipients seeking Associates and Bachelors degrees from Southern New Hampshire University's College for America, today announced that Andrew Balson has joined the organization as Chief Executive Officer. In this role, Mr. Balson will lead the startup organization's committed team with experience in education, workforce development, and coaching in empowering low-income young adults to earn their college degrees and prepare for and obtain middle class employment.

"Andrew is the best choice to lead Match Beyond as we seek to grow the opportunities for young people to achieve their educational goals," said Stig Leschly, Chief Executive Officer of Match Education. Match Beyond was incubated within Match Education and remains one of its operating units.

"Andrew has the passion for education, belief in young adults and management experience to take Match Beyond, and the students we serve, to the next level. We are delighted that he's accepted the position, and look forward to working with him to ensure our students have the support that they need to succeed in achieving their college dreams," added Leschly.

Mr. Balson, 48, has a demonstrated, long-standing commitment to educational equity and the mission of Match Beyond. He comes to the organization with more than two decades of experience as a successful business leader and extensive experience working with nonprofit organizations focused on educational achievement.

Mr. Balson previously served as Chair of the Board of Directors of Citizen Schools, a Boston-based organization that partners with public middle schools in low-income communities nationwide to expand the learning day through academic mentoring and skill-building apprenticeships. Citizen Schools is a leader in expanded learning time (ELT), partnering with 31 schools in seven states to help students achieve significant learning gains. Mr. Balson also served on the board of Generations Incorporated, a nonprofit intergenerational literacy organization that unites older adults and youth to ensure students have a strong literacy foundation by first grade, and are reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

"I am excited to join Match Beyond and help further the organization's important mission of

empowering students to earn their degrees, while preparing them to succeed in the twenty-first century workforce," said Balson. "I know the power of education to open doors that lead to the American Dream. I look forward to building Match Beyond to help students — no matter their background — achieve their educational goals and build pathways to successful careers and lives."

While many studies have shown that a college degree is becoming increasingly essential to land jobs in the American workforce, nearly three-quarters of low-income college students drop out and never obtain their degrees.

Match Beyond is specifically designed to address the challenges to degree completion that many low-income students face, and prepare students for twenty-first century job opportunities. The organization provides students in the greater Boston area with individualized support, personal coaching, and jobs placement services to drive successful college completion through a format that is uniquely low-cost, flexible and relevant.

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**About Match Beyond**

The mission of Match Beyond is to enable low-income young adults in Boston to achieve their college degrees and attain middle class employment. By working to assist students with degree completion at a low, affordable cost and prepare them for the workforce through professional and technical training and "career-track" jobs, Match Beyond helps to create opportunity for hundreds of young adults in the Boston area. To learn more, visit www.matchbeyond.org.

**About Match Education**

Match Education is an engine of discovery and applied innovation in education. We operate high-performing urban public charter schools, a unique graduate school of education that trains teachers for high-poverty schools, and a hybrid college and jobs program that seeks unprecedented degree completion rates and employment outcomes. Out of this applied work, we refine, validate empirically, and eventually disseminate new ideas and practices on core questions in education reform. To learn more, visit www.matcheducation.org**.**