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Contact: Brian Turmail
202/842-3600
bgturmail@aol.com

***National Education Goals Panel Awards Gold Stars to Eight States for
their Reading Improvement***

Five States Honored for Greater than Expected Growth in Reading Scores

WASHINGTON, DC (October 26, 1999) – The National Education Goals Panel awarded its Gold Star for improvement to seven states and one territory today for their improvement over time in 4th grade reading. The eight states are Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi and the Virgin Islands. Also today, the Goals Panel honored four states and the District of Columbia for their greater than expected rates of growth in reading achievement between 4th grade in 1994 and 8th grade in 1998. They are Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Louisiana and New York.

The announcement came today during a press conference in New Britain, Connecticut where the National Education Goals Panel released its report *Reading Achievement State by State, 1999*. The report is a compilation of states' reading achievement as measured in the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The report presents a decade of NAEP reading data in a format that enables state policy makers to monitor:

- Educational progress over time;
- Whether students are performing as well as those in other states; and,
- The extent to which all sub-groups of students in their state are achieving at high levels.

“We know that it is not easy for states to show improvement on NAEP. Frankly, it is a tough test, and the Goals Panel has purposely set an ambitious performance standard,” said Kentucky Governor Paul E. Patton, chair of the National Education

Goals Panel. “We urge states to continue participating in NAEP, to redouble their efforts to raise student academic achievement and to recommit to the tough standard set in the third National Education Goal.”

A Gold Star was awarded to eight jurisdictions for their improvement in reading achievement at the 4th grade level on the NAEP exam from 1992 to 1998. “Improvement” in reading achievement is measured by a statistically significant change in the percentage of students in a grade level scoring at the Proficient or Advanced levels. Gold Stars can only be awarded at the 4th grade level this year because that is the only grade level that has been assessed by NAEP in reading more than once.

The National Education Goals Panel honored five states for their greater than expected growth in reading rates between 1994 and 1998. The states honored by the Goals Panel made gains that were significantly higher than the national average between grades 4 and 8. Growth was measured in terms of the increase in average NAEP reading scale scores at the 4th grade level in 1994 and the 8th grade level in 1998.

To download a copy of *Reading Achievement State by State, 1999*, please visit the National Education Goals Panel web site at www.negp.gov.

About the National Education Goals Panel

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal and state officials made up of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the President.

The eight National Education Goals call for greater levels of: student achievement and citizenship; high school completion; teacher education and professional development; parental participation in the schools; literacy and lifelong learning; and safe, disciplined, and alcohol-and-drug-free schools. The Goals also call for all children to be ready to learn by the time they start school and for US students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement by the year 2000.