



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Brian Turmail
202/842-3600 x 222

TELECONFERENCE SHOWS HOW STANDARDS WORK

“Rising to the Test” Broadcast Highlights Successful Practices in All Types of Learning Environments

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 6, 2000) – The National Education Goals Panel today hosted a nationally televised teleconference titled “Rising to the Test: Meeting the Challenges of Standards, Assessment and Accountability.” The live in-studio forum examined three school systems to highlight what works in standards-based education reform.

“Since the beginning of the standards-based education reform movement ten years ago, some have come to question its effectiveness,” said Governor Tommy Thompson (R-WI), chair of the Panel and moderator for today’s teleconference. “During the course of the teleconference, it became clear that no matter the type of school, wealthy or poor, urban or rural, and large or small, standards can serve as a framework for empowering all students to learn.”

Standards-based education reform relies on setting clear guidelines for what students should know, measuring their performance towards those goals and holding students, teachers and administrators accountable for performance. Some who question the value of standards have argued that by setting the bar high some students will be left behind, and that assessments, which usually take the form of standardized tests, inevitably lead to a dumbing down of the curriculum and “drill and kill” teaching to the test.

At **Henrico County Schools**, just outside of Richmond, VA, teachers at Baker Elementary and Hermitage High School are using creative teaching approaches and collaboration – not drill and kill – to excel on Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL) exam. **Fort Recovery Local Schools** in Mercer County, OH, aggressively pursues grants and community involvement to provide a curriculum that integrates technology and traditional teaching so well that graduation rates are at 99.9 percent. And, **Mount Royal Elementary/ Middle School in Baltimore**, MD has created an environment that demands outstanding achievement from every one of its inner city students. As a result, their fifth grade students performed better on the Maryland Student Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) than any other students in the state.

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The three sites were selected to represent the broadest possible diversity of school environments. Henrico County Schools is a relatively affluent school system in a growing suburban community with an increasingly diverse population. Fort Recovery Local Schools has less than a thousand students in all three of its schools, is located in rural western Ohio and has relative stability in its student population. And Mount Royal Elementary Middle School, is located in inner city Baltimore, a school system struggling to meet the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged students.

Joining Governor Thompson were Hugh Price, the president and CEO of the National Urban League and Patte Barth, senior associate with The Education Trust. Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School was represented by principal Mark Frankel, grade 4-5 science teacher Linda Eberhart and Baltimore City Public School's Chief Academic Officer Betty Morgan. Superintendent Pat Neikamp, elementary principal Nancy Knapke, middle school teacher Becky Miller and high school senior Nick Kaiser represented Fort Recovery Local Schools. And, Henrico County Public School's representatives were superintendent Mark Edwards, Baker Elementary principal Kaye Thomas and Hermitage High principal Glenn Blackburn.

The teleconference was the final part of a yearlong examination of what works in standards-based education reform that included a teleconference in April on the use of Baldrige criteria in education and field hearings in Los Angeles, CA; Burlington, VT; Atlanta, GA and Chicago, IL. During their December 7 meeting, the members of the Goals Panel will release a report on the findings of the first teleconference and four field hearings and policy recommendations based on those findings.

Copies of *Rising to the Test: Meeting the Challenge of Standards, Assessment and Accountability*, will be made available within one week of the teleconference broadcast. To download a copy from the Goals Panel website, please visit www.negp.gov or to order a video cassette, please call Burt Glassman at (202) 842-3600 x 222.

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. To learn more about the Goals Panel, please visit www.negp.gov. 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 U.S. students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

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