



## NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Sherrie Edwards 202-842-3600 x223

sedwards@hagersharp.com

### **U.S. STUDENTS LOSE GROUND IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE BETWEEN 4<sup>TH</sup> AND 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADES**

*Student Cohort Performance Declines Compared to Other Countries Between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades*

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. students are less competitive internationally in math and science in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade than they were in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, according to the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP). The Panel's conclusions are drawn from the results of TIMSS-R. TIMSS-R is the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study –Repeat (TIMSS-R), the successor to the 1995 TIMSS.

“The TIMSS study gives a more accurate picture of how we are, or are not, competing internationally in math and science education,” says Gov. Frank O’Bannon (D-IN), chair of the National Education Goals Panel. “This underscores the need for the Goals Panel to keep math and science improvement at the forefront of the nation’s education dialogue.”

Students tested by TIMSS-R in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1999 are the same group, or cohort, of students who were tested by TIMSS in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 1995. The data shows that in math, students at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level in 1995 scored at the international average while the same group of students scored below the international average as 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 1999. In science, students at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level in 1995 scored above the international average while the same group of students was at the international average as 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 1999.

“TIMSS insights are valuable and should be used to change and improve deeply rooted educational practices,” said Vincent Ferrandino, Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. “Improving math and science instruction must begin with professional development for teachers and principals.”

International math and science achievement is one of the eight National Education Goals established by the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP). The Panel believes that international benchmarking in math and science education is crucial to the nation’s economic competitiveness.

“Every state should conduct an assessment of their math and science curricula,” said Dr. Gerald Tirozzi, Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. “U.S. students should always be among the world’s best and success in these subject areas is crucial to our students’ academic development and future well-being.”

#### **About the National Education Goals Panel**

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body consisting of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats from the federal and state levels of government. The Panel is 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; high school completion; teacher education and professional development; parental participation in the schools; adult 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.

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