



## NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

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### **TOP 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS OUTPERFORM LOWEST ACHIEVING 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS IN MATH** *Nation's Highest Achieving 4<sup>th</sup> graders Performed Better Than the Lowest Performing 8<sup>th</sup> graders in National and State Math Assessment*

(Washington, D.C.) – The nation's highest performing fourth graders are outperforming the lowest achieving eighth graders in math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These results are detailed in *Raising Achievement and Reducing Gaps*, a recently released seven-year NAEP study commissioned by the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP).

“The NAEP results indicate the need for strong academic standards in our nations schools,” says Gov. Frank O’Bannon (D-IN), chair of the National Education Goals Panel. “The Panel is obligated to continue to hold our students to the highest standards of academic achievement as we endeavor to narrow the gap in performance.”

NAEP assessment provides national and state-by-state data on educational performance in core academic subjects on a four-year alternating cycle. Current data shows that in 1996 the national math average scale score for the top quartile 4<sup>th</sup> graders was 259.6 and for the bottom quartile 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the national average scale score was 223.98, reflecting a disparity in levels of math performance between the two grades. In this case a quartile refers to twenty-five percent of the children who took NAEP.

“Although our analysis shows that states are making improvements in mathematics, the achievement gap remains a vexing problem for the nation,” said John Barth, the Panel’s acting executive director. “The children in the bottom quartile of achievement face a significant disadvantage entering a job market that increasingly demands higher levels of skills and knowledge.”

#### **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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