



## NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Insert Date

Contact: Debra Silimeo

202/842-3600 or [dsilimeo@hagersharp.com](mailto:dsilimeo@hagersharp.com)

### **Department of Defense School System's Success Provides Lessons for State and Local Systems *Study Offers Eight Ways To Enhance Student Achievement***

**WASHINGTON, DC** (Date TBD) – Strategic planning, accountability and smaller schools are key factors for raising student performance and closing the achievement gap between white and non-white students, according to a new National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) study of the highly successful Department of Defense (DOD) school system.

Student performance at DOD schools ranks among the best in the nation. The DOD system has also successfully narrowed the achievement gap between white and non-white students. The NEGP study, conducted by the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University, looks at why DOD schools are so successful, and provides eight policy recommendations for state and local school systems.

“The DOD formula may be one of the best kept secrets in education, until now,” said Indiana Gov. Frank O’Bannon, chairman of the National Education Goals Panel. “We recognize that the DOD school system is unique in some ways, but there are important lessons for all schools. Educators across the nation should take a close look at these recommendations for improving the academic achievement of all students and closing the achievement gap.”

The report, “March Toward Excellence: School Success and Minority Student Achievement in Department of Defense Schools,” acknowledges that DOD schools face challenges similar to many public schools, including high rates of poverty with half of the students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Most of the students have parents with no more than a high school education. In addition, military families often are transferred, so students move from school to school frequently. On the other hand, DOD schools are unique in their serious commitment of resources, professional staff development, and required parent involvement.

If the DOD schools were combined and considered one state, they would rank the same or near the top-performing states on standardized tests conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

According to the report, schools throughout the nation can benefit from the DOD model. The report recommends:

#### *1. Centralized direction setting balanced with local decision-making*

By centrally establishing clear directions, goals, and targets without dictating methods for achieving results, schools systems can create a mix of top-down and bottom-up decision-making. Principals and teachers know what they are expected to accomplish and are held responsible for achieving those goals. The strategic planning process is aligned with the eight National Education Goals.

-more-



## NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

### *2. Policy coherence, structural alignment, and efficient flow of data*

School assessment systems are embedded within a coherent policy structure that links instructional goals with accountability systems supported by professional training and development programs.

### *3. Sufficient financial resources*

State and local public education officials must acknowledge the crucial importance of sufficient resources.

### *4. Staff development*

Professional development activities should be job-embedded; consistent with an individual school's improvement goals; and based on student needs and teacher interests.

### *5. Small schools*

Smaller school size could lead to enduring education benefits, particularly for minority students in civilian schools.

### *6. Academic focus and high expectations for all*

Emphasize individual student achievement with high expectations for all students. Provide educational programs that target lower-achieving students for in-school tutoring and homework assistance after school.

### *7. Continuity of care for children*

The DOD pre-school and after-school programs are model programs for the nation.

### *8. "Corporate commitment" to public education*

Employers should re-evaluate workplace policies that hinder parental involvement in schools.

*For the complete study, see the NEGP Web site, [www.negp.edu](http://www.negp.edu).*

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

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal and state officials comprised 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; increased rates of high school graduation; higher levels of adult literacy; 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.

###