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DATA QUALITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED at Data Summit

National Organizations join forces to tap into the power of data to improve student achievement

November 17, 2005—Richmond VA: A national campaign to improve the quality, accessibility and use of data in education was launched today at the Council of Chief State School Officers and US Department of Education's Data Summit. The Data Quality Campaign is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to:

- Improve the collection, availability and use of high-quality education data, and
- Implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement.

The campaign aims to provide tools and resources that will assist states in their development of quality longitudinal data systems, while also providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among organization focusing on improving data quality, access and use.

Ten national organizations—Achieve, Inc, the Alliance for Excellent Education, Council of Chief State School Officers, The Education Trust, National Center for Educational Accountability, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Schools Interoperability Framework Association, Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services, State Higher Education Executive Officers—have signed on as Founding Partners in the campaign and have committed to working together to build support and political will among policymakers to:

- Fully develop high-quality longitudinal data systems in every state by 2009;
- Increase understanding and promote the valuable uses of longitudinal and financial data to improve student achievement; and

- Promote, develop, and use common data standards and efficient data transfer and exchange.

The campaign is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and managed by the National Center for Educational Accountability.

"Data is one of our best tools to measure learning and guide policy in states and across the country. Thanks to outstanding cooperation among its 10 founding members, the Data Quality Campaign will provide reliable information to help policymakers see where students are doing well, and where they need improvement," said Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. "We at the Education Department will continue working with the Campaign, and we look forward to the terrific results it will produce for students."

Longitudinal Data—data gathered on the same student from year to year—makes it possible to follow individual student academic growth, determine the value-added of specific programs, and identify consistently high-performing schools and systems worthy of study. The campaign will promote the ten essential elements of a longitudinal data system:

1. A unique statewide student identifier
2. Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information
3. The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth
4. Information on untested students
5. A teacher identification system with the ability to match teachers to students
6. Student-level transcript information, including information on courses complete and grades earned
7. Student-level college readiness test scores
8. Student-level graduation and dropout data
9. The ability to match student records between the Pre-K and post-secondary systems
10. A state audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability.

These ten elements are essential but not sufficient. Policymakers need to plan for a series of next-generation improvements, including the ability to connect school performance with spending; to connect education systems with employment and other systems; and to transfer records across states. In a state-of-the-art data system, it should be possible to transfer student records easily, protect student privacy,

develop clear data definitions and requirements, and organize the data system to facilitate data use and user-friendly reporting.

“CCSSO is delighted to be a founding partner of the Data Quality Campaign,” states CCSSO Executive Director G. Thomas Houlihan. “While states have been working strenuously to design and implement updated data systems, they cannot do it alone. Having a broad cross section of education organizations supporting state efforts is critical to making these systems a reality. We look forward to working with the other partner organizations to strengthen education data systems at all levels as a means of improving student outcomes.”

The Founding Partners of the Data Quality Campaign released the following resources and tools to support the campaign’s efforts at the Data Summit:

- *Measuring What Matters: Creating a Longitudinal Data System to Improve Student Achievement*—this brochure highlights the reasons why state data systems should incorporate longitudinal data to maximize the quality of information used in education
- *Creating a Longitudinal Data System: Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*—explains the essential elements and policy benefits of state longitudinal data
- *State of the State Data Systems*—provides a snapshot of every state’s progress in creating a longitudinal data system, as well as the policy implications based on the “completeness” of each state system. This information and analysis is based on a survey conducted in August 2005 by NCEA and supported by The Broad Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The results of the survey show that no state has all 10 elements, and only 8 states have at least 7 elements of a longitudinal data system.
- www.DataQualityCampaign.org—a one stop resource center that synthesizes and catalogs existing and new resources around education data.

“Each of the Founding Partners in this campaign is focused on improving student achievement. Access to, and use of quality longitudinal data is critical to this shared goal,” said Michael Hudson, President of The National Center for Educational Accountability, managing partner of the Data Quality Campaign. “Building better data systems is critical to the many national and state efforts underway to improve school performance.”

States are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to improve student achievement. But without quality data, they are essentially flying blind. Policymakers need to act now to put in place the policies and

resources to ensure that each state has a longitudinal data systems and the culture and capacity to translate the information into specific action steps to improve student achievement. The Founding Partners of the Data Quality Campaign are poised to help policymakers to build, support and use these longitudinal data systems.

For more information on the Data Quality Campaign and to access the just-released brochures and state survey results, visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org or email aguidera@just4kids.org

DQC Founding Partners

Achieve, Inc. (www.achieve.org)

Created by the nation's governors and business leaders, Achieve, Inc., is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise standards and achievement to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship. Following the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, Achieve created the American Diploma Project Network to spearhead a national movement to align standards, assessments, curriculum and accountability with the demands of postsecondary education and work. The ADP Network – a coalition of 22 states – collectively educates 48 percent of the nation's high school students.

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Alliance for Excellent Education (www.all4ed.org)

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a national policy and advocacy nonprofit organization that promotes high school transformation to make it possible for every child to graduate prepared for postsecondary education and success in life. The Alliance develops public policy recommendations based on proven research and promising practice and advocates for the adoption of effective policies at the federal, state, and local levels. Additionally, it works to generate public support for effective secondary school reform that leads to higher levels of achievement and attainment for all students.

Contact: Michelle Klink – mklink@all4ed.org or Sarah Holt – sholt@all4ed.org

Council of Chief State School Officers (www.ccsso.org)

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

Contact: Kara Schlosser – karas@ccsso.org

The Education Trust (www.edtrust.org)

The Education Trust works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college, and forever closing the achievement gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from other youth. Our basic tenet is this — All children will learn at high levels when they are taught to high levels.

Contact: Fredreka Schouten – fschouten@edtrust.org or Nicolle Grayson – ngrayson@edtrust.org

National Center for Educational Accountability (www.nc4ea.org or www.just4kids.org)

NCEA promotes higher student achievement by improving state data collection to support sound decision making; using data to improve schools by focusing communities on the potential of every school; identifying and promoting the practices that distinguish consistently high-performing schools from other schools; and conducting research on school improvement issues. The National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), national sponsor of Just for the Kids and managing partner of the Data Quality Campaign, was founded in 2001 through a collaboration of the Education Commission of the States, The University of Texas at Austin, and Just for the Kids.

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National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (www.nchems.org)

Through its more than thirty years of service to higher education, NCHEMS has been committed to bridging the gap between research and practice by placing the latest managerial concepts and tools in the hands of state policy makers and working administrators on college and university campuses. Particular areas of research and assistance to states are in the areas of finance policy, accountability and assessment, governance, and documenting how higher education meets public purposes. A clear commitment to the use of information to clarify and formulate state and institutional policy underlies all of the Center's work, and a special area of assistance and concern is the improvement and application of large-scale student unit record databases in higher education.

Contact: Peter Ewell – peter@nchems.org

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (www.nga.org/center)

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is the nation's only dedicated consulting firm for governors and their key policy staff. The NGA Center's mission is to develop and implement innovative solutions to public policy challenges. Through the staff of the NGA Center, governors and their policy advisors can:

- quickly learn about what works, what doesn't, and what lessons can be learned from other governors grappling with the same problems;
- obtain assistance in designing and implementing new programs or in making current programs more effective;
- receive up-to-date, comprehensive information about what is happening in other state capitals and in Washington, D.C. so governors are aware of cutting edge policies; and
- learn about emerging national trends and their implications for states, so governors can prepare to meet future demands.

Contact: John Blacksten – jblacksten@nga.org or Dane Linn – dlinn@nga.org

Schools Interoperability Framework Association (www.sifinfo.org)

The Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA) is a non-profit organization driven by pK-12 education technology stakeholders to revolutionize the management and accessibility of data within schools and school districts and states. The SIF open specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably and securely regardless of the platform hosting the applications. SIFA has united over 300 education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach.

Contact: Larry Fruth – Lfruth@sifinfo.org

Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services (www.schoolmatters.com)

Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services (SES) is an independent analytical service designed to help policymakers, educators, parents and taxpayers understand the relative performance of their school systems and maximize the impact of their resource allocation decisions. Available in Michigan and Pennsylvania since 2001, SES became available nationwide in March 2005, free of charge, as a project of the National Education Data Partnership. The Partnership is managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers with funding from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Broad Foundation through summer 2006.

The SES analysis is delivered via Standard & Poor's public website, www.SchoolMatters.com, which features academic, financial and demographic data for schools and districts in every state, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. Interactive tools on the site help education stakeholders use the data to inform their education-related decisions. SchoolMatters.com also features Standard & Poor's customized state and district performance reports and issue-focused analysis that provide empirical support for policy decisions.

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State Higher Education Executive Officers (www.sheeo.org)

The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) is a nonprofit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating boards and governing boards of postsecondary education. The mission of SHEEO is to assist its members and the states in developing and sustaining excellent systems of higher education. The work of over 1,500 public institutions is governed or coordinated by SHEEO boards and affects more than 10 million students, 70% of postsecondary education enrollment in the United States.

SHEEO's mission requires the careful collection, management and analysis of data and the dissemination of related information, research and policy studies. Decision-makers need dependable and valid information to improve performance. Successful higher education policy depends on shared information, effective relationships and substantive dialogue among governors, legislators, state education board members, and state higher education executives.

Contact: Hans L'Orange – hans@sheeo.org

Additional Quotes from DQC Founding Partners

“Before true accountability can be achieved, we must do a better job as a nation of following individual students from grade to grade, school to school, and from kindergarten to postsecondary education and the workplace. The Data Quality Campaign offers state leaders an important set of tools and resources for accomplishing this goal.”

– *Matt Gandal, Executive Vice President, Achieve, Inc.*

“Since the enactment of No Child Left Behind, the importance of data in education reform has grown tremendously. Unfortunately, many states have struggled to keep pace. The Alliance is pleased to join the Data Quality Campaign and aid its members in the drive to highlight the need for reliable data that can both identify problems and drive resources to the areas most in need, with the ultimate goal of improved student achievement.”

- *Bob Wise, President, Alliance for Excellent Education*

“Access to quality data is key in educational reform and improvement. SIFA is proud to be a part of the DQC and will support the work by aligning schools, states and software developers and vendors in our collective efforts as professionals to access and utilize this quality data. It is critical that the DQC work, targeted to state leaders, aligns with the data quality work that schools and local agencies do each day since the highest quality data exists at its source – the local classroom.”

- *Larry L. Fruth II, PhD, Executive Director, Schools Interoperability Framework Association*

“Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services has long been a proponent of improving the quality of education data, expanding public access to data, and promoting the proper use of data. Today, with the formation of the Data Quality Campaign, S&P along with its campaign partners can continue to help policymakers harness the power that comes from using quality data to improve student achievement.”

- *Thomas Sheridan, Vice President, Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services*