



NEWS STATEMENT

CONTACT: Sandy Boyd, Achieve, (202) 419-1542 or sboyd@achieve.org

NAEP Results for Urban Districts Show Poor Science Achievement

Schools in large urban districts further behind nation in science performance--limiting students' options in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)

WASHINGTON – February 24, 2011 – Today the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the nation's report card, released the results of its Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in 4th and 8th grade science. In addition to the nationwide NAEP science results released at the end of January, NAEP also studies results from seventeen urban school districts who are participating in a multi-year study of the feasibility of a trial district-level NAEP.

The NAEP urban district results show that fourteen of seventeen districts in the study scored below the national average for the 2009 NAEP assessment for 4th grade science. Sixteen of seventeen scored below the national average for the 8th grade science assessment. Equally alarming is the large percentage of students scoring at basic or lower. The report card shows that 44 percent of 4th graders at schools in large districts fall below the standard for basic proficiency in science, compared to 29 percent nationally. At the 8th grade level 56 percent of large district students fell below basic compared to 38 percent of their peers nationally. In addition, no district had greater than 1 percent in the advanced range. Students of color and economically disadvantaged students in large urban districts continue to underperform compared to their national peers.

“As the January NAEP science results showed, fewer than half of all students are proficient in science. Today's results of large urban school districts paint an even grimmer picture of the inequitable distribution of quality science education across the country,” said Stephen Pruitt, Vice President for Content, Research and Development at Achieve.

Pruitt, who leads Achieve's work in science, also said, “To ensure that all students have access to postsecondary education, 21st century careers, and can understand the world around them requires that they have a solid science education. Science is key to research, innovation and America's ability to create new jobs and compete. We must to a better job of making sure ALL students, no matter where they reside, have access to a

science education that will provide a foundation for their future, no matter what their future plans may be.”

An important starting point for improving K-12 science education is making sure that it is grounded in top notch science standards. Fortunately, the National Research Council (NRC) is taking the first important step by drafting a conceptual science framework. The Framework for Science Education is being created by a committee of 18 experts convened by the NRC who represent expertise in the natural sciences, learning sciences, learning and teaching, curriculum, assessment, and education policy. The NRC conceptual framework will be grounded in scientific research and science education. In other words, getting the science right which is critical to getting the next step, the K-12 standards, right. More about the NRC work can be found at http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Standards_Framework_Homepage.html

Once the final conceptual framework is released in spring of 2011, Achieve will lead the development, with states and other interested stakeholders, of the next-generation science standards that are faithful to the NRC Framework, internationally-benchmarked, and rigorous.

There is interest in many states in revising their science standards and the standards developed in this process will create a solid foundation for states in those efforts. The goal of this process is to create K-12 science standards that can serve as a rich and meaningful foundation for the next generation—and ensure America’s continued ability to innovate and lead in a global economy.

To learn more about Achieve, visit www.achieve.org.

#

Created in 1996 by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization based in Washington D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless. In 2005 Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network. Starting with 13 original states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers. Achieve partnered with NGA and CCSSO on the Common Core State Standards Initiative and a number of its staff served on writing and review teams. More recently, Achieve was selected to manage the PARCC assessment consortia. The 25 state PARCC consortia was awarded Race to the Top assessment funds to create next generation assessments in math and English aligned to the CCSS. For more information about the work of Achieve, visit www.achieve.org