



NEWS STATEMENT

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

NAEP Science Results Demonstrate Importance of Developing Next Generation Science Standards

Ability to Innovate and Compete Globally Linked To U.S. Science Knowledge

WASHINGTON – January 25, 2010 – On the day of the State of the Union address where President Obama is expected to discuss American competitiveness and the importance of innovation and education, the just-released National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation's Report Card, science scores offer a sobering reminder of how much work there is to be done to improve performance in science. The 2009 NAEP science results are based on a new assessment framework that assesses students' knowledge on physical, life, and earth/space sciences.

The results released today reveal that fewer than half of the students at the 4th, 8th and 12th grade level are proficient in science. Equally alarming is that very few students—no more than one or two percent--performed at the advanced level.

"Science drives innovation, which in turn drives the economy, said Stephen Pruitt, Vice President for Content, Research and Development. "Science is at the heart of the United States' ability to compete and lead, which of course means that all students—whether they become technicians in a lab, PhD researchers or simply consumers—must all have a solid K-12 science education."

Pruitt went on to note, "Today's NAEP results clearly demonstrate the need for improved science education grounded in next generation K-12 science standards. Science education should provide opportunities for all students to have science instruction that provides deep understandings of science content and practice."

Fortunately, the National Research Council (NRC) is taking the first important step in improving science education by drafting a conceptual science framework. A draft framework was released for public comment last summer and the final framework is expected to be released this spring. 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. More about the NRC work can be found at www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Standards_Framework_Homepage.html

Once the final conceptual framework is released, Achieve will lead, with states and other interested stakeholders, the development of 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 through 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.