



# PRESS RELEASE

555 13th Street, NW • Suite 500 - West • Washington, DC 20004  
{phone} 202 783 3668 • {fax} 202 783 3672 • {email} info@ncee.org

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Nicole Cohen at 202/378-2125**

## Report Documents Impressive Performance of America's Choice School Design

### Highlights What Works in School Improvement

(Washington, D.C.) A new report documents outstanding student-achievement gains by the America's Choice<sup>®</sup> School Design (ACSD), one of the nation's largest comprehensive school-improvement programs. The report, "Results! From Schools, Districts, and States Using the America's Choice Design," contains important insights for schools facing the demands of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

One large-scale study cited in the report focuses on the performance of the America's Choice program in Rochester, New York, where over half the city's schools are using the America's Choice model. The study was conducted by the highly regarded, University of Pennsylvania-based Consortium for Policy Research (CPRE). It found that students in America's Choice schools out-performed students in other Rochester schools by an average of 17 percent a year in reading in grades 4 through 8, and by an average of 26 percent a year in math, even though the America's Choice schools served greater percentages of disadvantaged students.

The study also found that the America's Choice program diminished the achievement gap between white and minority students and had a "particularly powerful" effect on the performance of Rochester's lowest-achieving students.

The America's Choice School Design was created in the 1990s by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), a Washington, DC-based non-profit organization and a leading advocate of standards-based school reform. It draws on the best educational practices in the United States and on extensive research by NCEE on the most effective education systems in Europe, Asia and Australia.

The program stresses the alignment of standards, instruction and assessments. It includes powerful, standards-based curricula in English language arts and mathematics developed by America's Choice experts. These curricula include unique double-period catch up courses for students who are many years below grade-level

(more)

standards. The America's Choice program also includes unusually intensive professional development for educators that uses highly successful, research-based teaching strategies and complements the program's extensive on-site technical assistance.

"We've used the lessons we've learned from the world's most successful education systems to construct programs proven to turn around low-achieving schools and to make good schools great," said Judy Coddling, director of the America's Choice program. "With the right strategies, low-performing schools can meet — and surpass — state standards."

The ACSD is in use in 547 schools serving approximately 350,000 students in 97 school systems in 16 states in every region of the country in SY 2003-04. The program serves 375 elementary schools, 150 middle schools, and 22 high schools.

Another study cited in the report, a "meta-analysis" of 232 school reform studies by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Johns Hopkins University found that the effect size for America's Choice schools was nearly triple that of the average school reform model, meaning that on average an America's Choice student scoring at the 50th percentile would move to the 60th percentile on standardized tests in a single year.

The report also takes readers inside seven schools that have raised student achievement dramatically under the America's Choice program. They range from P.S. 160 in Brooklyn, New York, to rural Summerville Middle School in Georgia, Castle Park High School in Chula Vista, California, and suburban Twin Lakes Academy Elementary in Jacksonville, Florida. The schools have achieved impressive results while serving different populations of students.

In addition to the America's Choice School Design, the National Center on Education and the Economy sponsors the Workforce Development Program, the National Institute of School Leadership, and the NCEE Policy Forums.

The report and other information about the America's Choice School Design are available at <http://www.ncee.org/pressroom/>. To learn more about the results of the Americas Choice program, go to <http://www.americaschoice.org/results>.

###