Education Commission of the States to Present Blueprint to Help America's Students Achieve Global Success

Nation’s Education Leaders Gather to Address Student Performance Internationally

DENVER, CO – Top education leaders from across the 50 states will gather in Austin, TX, June 30 – July 2, at the 2008 National Forum on Education Policy. With a focus on transforming education for the 21st century, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) will introduce an action guide for states, districts and local schools to align policies for world-class student performance and achievement.

At the forum, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings will talk about what is needed to produce a generation of students prepared to succeed in a “global knowledge economy.” Spellings states, “Thanks to No Child Left Behind, we now know where students and schools are doing well and where we need to improve. We must use this information to support further innovation and positive change.”

A stellar panel of experts, including some involved in the original “A National At Risk” report will discuss ways the nation can take decisive action now to boost student achievement and competitiveness in the global marketplace. Twenty-five years after this landmark federal report warned about the rising tide of mediocrity in U.S. public schools, its alarm continues to echo in today’s education reform climate.

Recognizing this national dilemma, ECS will introduce a blueprint to move the United States back into the position of global leader in education. “We want states to spend less time comparing to one another and spend more time comparing to high-performing countries,” explains Roger Sampson, ECS president.

The blueprint aligns education policy with international performance; articulates both context and content to sustain an education system focused on world-class achievement; and maps to and builds upon standards, instruction, professional development and assessment.

The forum also will address some of the key education challenges facing states, including early learning; transforming high schools; increasing high school graduation and student success rates in college.

Vicki Phillips, director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will share insights from the foundation’s eight years of working to improve high school graduation rates and college readiness.

“Working with our partners in 47 states and the District of Columbia, we have seen exciting progress in schools that embrace higher expectations and standards and more support for students and teachers,” said Phillips. “But there are still far too many schools in America where graduating and going to college are the exception rather than the norm. Increasing our graduation rates is a good start, but we must work together to make sure that all our young people have access to world-class teachers and the rigorous preparation needed to succeed in college, career and life in the global economy.”
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate compact devoted to education. ECS helps governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. A nonprofit organization, ECS (www.ecs.org) was formed in 1965 and is located in Denver, Colorado.

Equipping Education Leaders, Advancing Ideas