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National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools is a collaborative effort of Education Commission of the States, ETS, and Learning Point Associates.

- Work with policymakers and education and community leaders to develop and implement promising solutions grounded in research
- Stimulate the growth and dissemination of research-based knowledge about the problem and potential solutions.

The partnership's inaugural background report, *Qualified Teachers for At-Risk Schools: A National Imperative*, also released today, reviews the status of efforts nationally to address the quality of teaching in at-risk schools, summarizes the research and calls for the issue to be a national imperative.

The report points out, for example, that National Center for Education Statistics research shows nearly twice as many teachers in high-poverty schools have three or fewer years of teaching experience than those in low-poverty schools. Another study cited, by researcher Richard Ingersoll, found significantly more teachers in high-poverty schools lack a major or a minor in their content area than teachers in more affluent schools. In mathematics, for example, 43% of teachers in high-poverty schools lacked a major or minor, compared to 27% in low-poverty schools.

“A significant body of research confirms that what happens in the classroom can make or break a student's chances of academic success,” said Michael Nettles, vice president of ETS' Policy Evaluation and Research Center. “This is particularly true when it comes to quality teaching. Numerous studies have found that at-risk students succeed, and even excel, when taught by highly qualified teachers.”

“Our challenge, then, is to get these quality teachers into the classrooms where they're needed most – and then keep them there,” he added.

The National Partnership will collaborate with the Teaching Commission, Education Trust, National Governors Association, Hunt Institute and other organizations interested in improving the quality of teaching in hard-to-staff schools.

“ECS is delighted to be part of this collaboration, which has chosen as its focus one of the most critical issues facing our education system today,” said Piedad F. Robertson, ECS president. “Our communities and states, and our nation as a whole, simply will not make the progress we need if *all* of our children are not educated to the best of their abilities.”

Warner also highlighted a new Virginia pilot program aimed at getting better teachers in the neediest schools. The Virginia Teacher Retention Initiative will give \$15,000 bonuses and other incentives to teachers who agree to work in schools that have difficulty hiring and retaining effective teachers. The program also will provide annual \$3,000 bonuses to highly qualified teachers already teaching in participating hard-to-staff schools. In addition, schools that reduce the failure rate on Virginia's Standards of Learning tests by at least 10% during the second year of the pilot will receive grants equal to \$200 per student, half of which must be used for salary incentives for all faculty members.

For more information on the National Partnership or the inaugural report, see www.ecs.org/NPTARS, www.ncrel.org/quality or www.ets.org. A National Partnership Web site is under development.

PARTNERS:

The Education Commission of the States (www.ecs.org) is a 40-year-old nationwide, nonprofit organization recognized for its ability to facilitate the exchange of information and innovations for the improvement of education through public policy. ECS' cross-role constituency includes governors, state legislators, chief state school officers, state higher education executive officers, state board members, business leaders and other key education leaders.

Learning Point Associates (www.learningpt.org) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to helping educators improve student learning by equipping them with research-based strategies that meet their needs and produce results. Founded in 1984 as the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Learning Point is grounded in nearly 20 years of successful research-based solutions for educators and policymakers.

ETS (www.ets.org) is the world's largest private educational testing and measurement organization. Its mission is to advance quality and equity in education worldwide. Its products and services measure knowledge and skills, promote learning and performance, and support education and professional development.

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