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FOR RELEASE
July 14, 2005

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Urban Schools Contribute to National Student Achievement

New Report Shows Racial Achievement Gaps Closing Among 9-Year Olds

WASHINGTON, July 14 – A new federal report today shows significant gains since 1999 in the reading and math achievement of the nation’s students and a substantial narrowing of the racially-identifiable achievement gaps—headway that the Council of the Great City Schools attributes, in large part, to the progress that the nation’s largest urban public school districts have been making.

In recent years, urban school progress has outpaced national student achievement gains, according to the Washington-based coalition of urban school districts, which serve a disproportionately large share of the nation’s African American and Hispanic students, who posted the largest gains on the new national assessment.

“These new scores could not have occurred without the relentless efforts, hard work, and growing progress of the nation’s urban schools,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

The federal study, *The Nation’s Report Card – NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress*, shows national student achievement trends in reading and mathematics for 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds since the 1970s, based on the 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress long-term trend assessment.

The 9-year-olds showed substantial gains in math and reading, with significant achievement gaps closing among white, African-American and Hispanic students of this age group. Racial achievement gaps also narrowed among 13-year-olds in math.

“This is good news for American education and further evidence that the nation’s urban public schools are making a dramatic turn-around,” says Casserly.

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