



## **Pennsylvania Shows Broad, Consistent Improvement in Test Scores Only State with Rising Test Scores Across the Board**

HARRISBURG, PA—August 19, 2009—Student achievement has risen across the board in Pennsylvania according to a 50-state study of test results by the Center on Education Policy (CEP), an independent nonprofit organization. From as early as 2002 to 2008, Pennsylvania showed gains on its state reading and mathematics tests at grades 4, 8 and 11, the Washington, D.C.-based group found. Pennsylvania also made improvements at the basic, proficient and advanced levels of student achievement.

Pennsylvania was the only state in the CEP study with rising test scores across the board—at all three grade levels and all three achievement levels in both reading and math. Twenty-five states, including Pennsylvania, had the three or more years of comparable test data needed to analyze trends at all the grades, achievement levels, and subjects covered by the study. The other 25 states did not have as complete a set of trends because they had made changes in their testing programs within the past three years that affected the comparability of their data.

“Not only is it impressive that Pennsylvania’s schools have made such consistent improvement since 2002, but they also show gains at the high school level where nationally there is a serious problem,” said Jack Jennings, president and chief executive officer of CEP.

While many states showed across-the-board gains at the elementary and middle school levels, Pennsylvania was one of only five states to demonstrate gains in high school at all three achievement levels and both subjects (out of 25 states with necessary data). Among all states, gains were less prevalent at the high school level.

“The most important point of this analysis is that Pennsylvania has made solid progress in test scores between 2002 and 2008,” emphasized Jennings. “Pennsylvania’s results look good in our study, and the state is also in the top tier of states in its performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.” Comparisons with other states have to be done carefully and include information in addition to test results, Jennings noted, because “every state has a different test, different cut scores, different curriculum standards, and different demographics.”

For three years, CEP has been conducting a unique study of all 50 states’ test results in reading/English language arts and math. This multi-year research, supported by charitable foundations and advised by a diverse panel of national experts, is the most comprehensive analysis ever done of state test results.

The full report from CEP and profiles of test score trends for all 50 states are available on CEP's Web site at [cep-dc.org](http://cep-dc.org). The report, the first in a series of CEP publications on achievement trends to be released this year, is titled, *State Test Score Trends Through 2007-08, Part 1: Is the Emphasis on "Proficiency" Shortchanging Higher- and Lower-Achieving Students?*

**To request a copy of the report or to speak with Jack Jennings, head of CEP,** please contact Chloe Louvouezo at 202-955-9450 ext. 320 or at [clouvouezo@communicationworks.com](mailto:clouvouezo@communicationworks.com).