



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Matt Maurer or Lani Poblete  
(202) 955-9450

## **Report Examines Early Effects of School “Restructuring” – No Child Left Behind’s Ultimate Sanction for Chronically Underperforming Schools**

### ***Replacing Principals & Staff Is Most Popular Option For Michigan Schools Among The First To Restructure; School Officials Report Lack of Funding Necessary For Job***

WASHINGTON – November 9, 2004 – For the first time, several states are moving to “restructure” chronically underperforming schools, the No Child Left Behind Act’s ultimate sanction for struggling schools.

Restructuring has been used as a lever by some districts to bring about needed changes, but these changes are not quick and easy to implement, according to a report analyzing restructuring policies and practices in Michigan and highlighting restructuring efforts at three schools. In addition, there is little evidence to suggest which restructuring strategies will lead to improved student performance, and concern among school officials who say they lack the resources necessary to do the job, according to the report from the Washington, D.C.-based Center on Education Policy (CEP), which can be found online at [http://www.cep-dc.org/fededprograms/Michigan\\_Nov2004.pdf](http://www.cep-dc.org/fededprograms/Michigan_Nov2004.pdf).

So far, replacing principals and staff is by far the most popular restructuring option in Michigan, selected over other state-approved options by an overwhelming majority (63 percent) of the 101 schools in the state undergoing restructuring. In contrast, just 15 percent of schools chose to adopt an external school reform model, 14 percent hired state-trained coaches, and 12 percent appointed governing boards to take over schools. Meanwhile, no schools chose to close and reopen as a charter school or to suspend the principal’s office. The state of Michigan also chose not to take over any schools, due to a lack of capacity in the state’s department of education.

Regardless of the approach pursued, many school and district officials said that they do not have enough resources to restructure their schools effectively, according to the report. Despite the \$45,000 implementation grants that the state awarded to schools with approved restructuring plans, many school officials report that they do not have enough Title I dollars to fully implement their plans and are relying instead on general operating funds. Other cash-strapped schools have had to forgo some changes altogether that educators believed would raise achievement, such as reducing class size which would cost more than \$45,000.

“Restructuring poses an immense task for states and districts, which will require significant resources and time to carry out the job successfully,” says Jack Jennings, director of CEP. “States must also monitor restructuring efforts closely to determine which strategies will lead to lasting, positive impact for schools and which may have little effect on performance.”

The schools studied are among the first in the nation to be restructured due to Michigan’s well-established accountability system that was in place prior to NCLB. Having missed state achievement targets for the fifth consecutive year in 2002-03, the schools were placed in restructuring in 2003-04. Other states with

newer testing and accountability systems, such as Idaho and Nevada, currently have no schools in restructuring.

The report will be updated annually as part of CEP's ongoing, comprehensive study of federal, state, and local implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, which will also include the release of a comprehensive national report in March 2005.

*Based in Washington, D.C. and founded in January 1995, the Center on Education Policy is a national, independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. The Center does not represent any special interests. Instead the Center helps citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create conditions that will lead to better public schools.*

The report, along with additional information on CEP, its publications and its work, is available on the web at <a href="http://www.cep-dc.org">www.cep-dc.org</a> .
---

###