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New Report Finds Nearly 38% of U.S. Schools Do Not Make Adequate Yearly Progress Under NCLB

AYP Trends Available for All 50 States and D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. . April 28, 2011. The share of public schools that did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in raising student achievement under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) reached an all-time national high of about 38% in 2010, according to a new report by the Center on Education Policy (CEP). This marks a rise from the estimated 33% of public schools that failed to make AYP in 2009. But the percentage of schools falling short has changed only modestly over the past five years, the report notes, and would have to more than double to reach the Obama Administration's projections that more than 80 percent of schools will fail to make AYP next year.

Between school years 2005-06 and 2009-10, the national percentage of schools not making AYP rose from 29% to an estimated 38%, and in two of the interim years, the percentage actually declined. AYP is the measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of NCLB. To make AYP, schools and districts must annually meet state-set targets for the percentages of students scoring proficient on state tests and other indicators. Schools that fall short for two or more years must undergo a series of interventions outlined in the federal education law.

The achievement targets are rising steeply this year in many states, so we may soon see more schools not making AYP, said Jack Jennings, CEP's president and CEO. But it would take a huge and unprecedented jump to get to where more than three-fourths of schools aren't making AYP.

In twelve states and the District of Columbia, at least half of the public schools did not make AYP in 2010, CEP found, and in a majority of the states at least one-fourth of the schools fell short. The report, which includes tables with AYP trend data for every state, also revealed wide differences in the percentages of schools not making AYP in 2010—ranging from about 5% in Texas to about 91% in D.C. The report cautions, however, that AYP results are not comparable between states because of variations in states' tests, cut scores for proficient performance, demographics, and other factors.

Some might be surprised that the percentage of schools not making AYP isn't higher, but each state's method of determining AYP is complex, and many factors may have kept these numbers from soaring, said Jennings.

A companion background paper by CEP analyzes how the numbers of schools not making AYP have been influenced by changes in state testing policies and cut scores for proficiency on state tests, rising state achievement targets, the federal safe harbor provision, growth models, and other factors.

The background paper reviews AYP trends in 10 states with some of the most dramatic AYP trends, including those with the greatest increases and the greatest decreases. The states included in the analysis are California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington.

While many assumed that the AYP provisions of NCLB would make it easier to make meaningful comparisons across states, policy variations among states make that virtually impossible, Jennings said.

The report, *Update with 2009-10 Data and Five-Year Trends: How Many Schools Have Not Made Adequate Yearly Progress?*, and the companion background paper, *State Policy Differences Greatly Impact AYP Trends*, are available for free at www.cep-dc.org.

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Based in Washington, D.C., and founded in January 1995 by Jack Jennings, 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.