



**CONTACT:**  
**Claudia Feurey**, CED New York  
(212) 688-2063 ext. 242  
**Mike Petro**, CED Washington  
(202) 296-5860

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 – 10:00 a.m.**

**BUSINESS LEADERS PROMOTE TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**  
**Committee for Economic Development Explores “Measuring What Matters”**

WASHINGTON, DC, FEBRUARY 20, 2001 – As President George W. Bush and Congressional leaders unveil testing and accountability as a key element of educational reform, a group of some 220 business and education leaders today released a report exploring how to use assessment to improve student achievement. The Committee for Economic Development (CED) report, *Measuring What Matters*, strongly supports measurement and accountability as tools for focusing education on results, while providing guidance on how these tools should be used and improved.

“CED Trustees are convinced that we cannot improve what we cannot measure,” said Ed Rust, Jr., Chairman & CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies and Co-chair, CED Education Subcommittee. He added, “Properly designed and aligned tests are vital tools for managing and evaluating efforts to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education that prepares them for college, for the workplace, and for lifelong learning to keep up with the rapid pace of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

CED’s report, the result of more than a year of research, calls tests that are valid, reliable, and fair the best means of charting the country’s progress toward the goal of improved academic achievement. It applauds the efforts underway in virtually every state to specify academic standards and measure student learning. CED cautions, though, that assessment and accountability systems capable of driving school improvement are still in their formative stages. More work must be done to ensure that tests are good measures of learning, that students are provided with adequate preparation, that teachers and other educators are prepared to translate the testing information into improved instruction, and that accountability systems accurately reflect how well schools are doing in boosting student performance.

“We see this report as a guide to help legislators on both sides of the debate think smarter about testing,” said Roy Bostock, Chairman, B/com<sup>3</sup> Group, Inc. and Co-chair, CED Education Subcommittee. “The CED report is important because it is more than a mandate to test, it is a call to approach testing as a means of transforming education into a performance-oriented enterprise rather than one focused on inputs and rules.”

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report stresses that tests are a means, not an end, to school reform. They contribute to improving academic achievement by providing:

1. Information to guide day-to-day instruction and identify effective educational reforms.
2. A basis for holding educators and students accountable for performance.
3. A means for monitoring educational progress.

The CED report urges policy makers in Washington and the states to keep the following in mind as they craft testing and accountability provisions:

- Tests should be used and improved now – rather than waiting until tests are “perfect.”
- Standards should be uniformly rigorous and substantive, and assessments should measure the rich array of knowledge and skills embedded in such standards.
- Policy makers should respect professionally-developed testing standards when designing and implementing assessment and accountability systems, including using tests only for purposes for which they have been validated.
- Tests are most useful when tied to the standards that states and districts have set for what students should know and be able to do.
- Accountability systems that reward and sanction educators must be designed carefully to get the incentives right. This means distinguishing the contributions of teachers and schools to student learning from factors outside their control. It also means ensuring that accountability models are accurate and reliable indicators of educators’ performance.
- Holding students accountable requires providing them with adequate academic preparation for tests tied to promotion or graduation and with intensive instruction if they initially fail.

- Standards, assessment, and accountability policies should be regularly reviewed, using independent evaluators to help identify problems and best practices and to monitor the intended and unintended consequences of policy changes.
  
- A performance-based educational system built on measuring student achievement costs money. Investments will be needed for improved tests and test administration procedures, for information systems that make results available to educators and the public in useful formats, for training in how to use performance data to improve instruction, and for assistance to schools and students whom tests show to be poor performers. Congress should be mindful of the implications of imposing unfunded mandates on states for testing and measurement.

#### About CED

CED is an independent, nonpartisan organization of more than 220 business and education leaders dedicated to policy research on major economic and social issues and the implementation of its recommendations by the public and private sectors. CED is committed to improving the growth and productivity of the U.S. economy, a freer global trading system, and greater opportunity for all Americans.

For a full copy of CED's report, please visit [www.ced.org](http://www.ced.org).