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NATIONAL REPORT CARD RESULTS SHOW GAINS FOR FLORIDA'S 4th, 8th GRADE CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

Florida -- September 26, 2007 -- According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report released yesterday, 8th graders attending public charter schools across the country are showing strong gains in reading and math.

Florida's fourth and eighth-grade charter school students scored well on the NAEP. Fourth-graders outperformed their peers at traditional public school in both reading and math; 8th graders scored higher in reading. Overall, students in Florida surpassed the national average in both fourth grade reading and mathematics and, matched the national average for eighth grade reading.

The report -- known as the "The Nation's Report Card" -- indicates that charter school students' performance, in both math and reading, increased at a faster rate than that of their peers in traditional public schools. While a gap in eighth-grade math remains between charters and traditional public schools, it has all but closed in eighth-grade reading.

African-American and low-income charter eighth-graders also registered larger reading and math gains than their peers in traditional public schools. In eighth grade reading, for example, African-American charter students gained eight points compared to a one-point gain by their counterparts in traditional public schools. This strong gain means that African-American charter students now score three points higher on the NAEP scale than their peers in district-run schools. Latino charter students are outperforming their non-charter counterparts in reading and math across the board. Most notably, Latino eighth-grade charter students hold a 10-point advantage in reading and an eight-point advantage in math.

Please note that all NAEP results should be viewed with some caution, because:

1. The NAEP is meant to tell us where we currently stand as a nation on student achievement; establish nationwide historical trends in student achievement; and see how states compare to one another. It is not designed to assess *school* effectiveness, and particularly about a diverse group of schools that operate under 40 different state laws and hundreds of different authorizers.
2. The charter sample is quite small (about 5% of charter schools were surveyed in the 2003 NAEP). It likely includes a considerable number of new charter schools, which typically take time to establish solid achievement, according to research by the Brookings Institution and other groups. In 2003, about half of the entire charter sample were schools less than 3 years old.
3. Most important, NAEP is a "snapshot" that does not take into account students' prior academic achievement. Scores may reflect prior strengths or weaknesses rather than the impact of the school that students currently attend. Studies in Florida, Texas, and California indicate that charter school students arrive significantly behind their peers in other public schools.

For more information regarding Florida's performance on the 2007 NAEP Reading and Mathematics, visit www.nationsreportcard.gov. For charts depicting Florida's NAEP results (PDF, 128KB), visit <http://www.fldoe.org/asp/naep/naep2007.asp>.

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