

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**National Education Policy Organization Recognizes “Using Data”
for Helping Schools Narrow Achievement Gaps, Improve Achievement**

***Innovative, Collaborative Process Allows Educators to Leverage Data
to Move Schools From “In Need of Improvement”
to Learning Environments Where All Students Excel***

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Oct. 13, 2009 – Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has issued a national call for schools to use data to improve teaching and learning. In fact, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds that many districts are now in the midst of securing and spending are tied to using data to demonstrate the outcomes of the programs in which the federal dollars are invested.

While technology and other tools have put a wealth of data at educators’ fingertips, many still struggle with how to have a meaningful conversation about that information, what it means and how it can be used to improve achievement. A recent policy brief, published by the Alliance for Excellent Education, identifies “Using Data” from TERC as a professional development program that is helping schools around the country, particularly schools in high poverty areas, use data to improve teaching and learning.

The policy brief, “Achieving a Wealth of Riches: Delivering on the Promise of Data to Transform Teaching and Learning,” singles out Using Data as a program that helps schools narrow the achievement gap, improve student outcomes and change their cultures.

Developed by TERC, with a grant from the National Science Foundation and evaluated by independent researchers, Using Data has documented gains in student achievement in mathematics, science and other content areas and has been successful in narrowing achievement gaps between economic and racial groups, as well as increasing collaboration, data use and instructional improvement. The Using Data process takes teachers beyond the “why” and “what” of data-driven decision-making to the important question of “how.” Teachers learn how to use data to inform their day-to-day practice and to put every student on the path to success.

“We have been training educators in the Using Data process for nearly a decade,” said Diana Nunnaley, project director. “When school teams commit to the process, start having meaningful conversations about data and begin to use data to support decision-making, they see incredible change, not only in student achievement but in the overall culture of the learning environment and how teachers, principals, students and parents collaborate to achieve academic and personal goals.”

Janet Valeri, a principal in Nashua School District in New Hampshire, has seen just that kind of change in the two elementary schools she has led there. Six years ago, when Valeri was named principal of Amherst Street School, the elementary school was in its third year as a “school in need of improvement.”

However, after two years of involvement with Using Data, Amherst Street School emerged from being a “school in need of improvement” and today is seeing continued improvement in student achievement.

“It is really demoralizing for a school to be labeled a ‘school in need of improvement’ – or as many newspapers like to call them – “a failing school,” said Valeri. “The Using Data process made our school team feel that through the careful examination and use of data, we had control over what was happening.”

Now as the principal at Nashua’s Ledge Street School, Valeri has once again taken the helm of a changing environment, and Using Data is helping her team build a new school culture.

“Culture and climate don’t change unless you build capacity as a team,” said Valeri. “The Using Data process allowed us to do that at Amherst Street and is now helping us to transform Ledge Street as well.”

[A case study on Nashua School District’s experience with the Using Data process](#) is available on the Web site.

Schools that adopt the Using Data approach to building a collaborative culture based on data analysis participate in the Using Data Worksession Series, six customized full-day workshops over a few months or school year. At these workshops, school teams build data literacy skills, learning how to understand and respond to multiple data sources. They also build cultural proficiency and discover ways to expand learning

opportunities to diverse students based on data and monitoring. They participate in a data-driven dialogue where they review race, class and equity issues.

To read the complete Alliance for Education policy brief, go to <http://all4ed.org/files/AchievingWealthOfRiches.pdf>. For more information about Using Data, visit <http://usingdata.terc.edu/> or contact Jake Schlumpf at 617-873-9648, jake_schlumpf@terc.edu.

About TERC

Founded in 1965, TERC's mission is to improve math, science and technology teaching and learning. Each year, TERC's programs and products reach more than 3.5 million students in the United States and abroad. For more information, see www.terc.edu.

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