

**For Immediate Release
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**National High School Center Announces National Expert Panel on
High School Improvement**

Washington, DC – The National High School Center announced its nationally renowned working group representing award-winning practitioners, distinguished researchers, and senior staff from national education organizations and foundations, to share best practices on pressing issues in high school improvement.

The Friends of the National High School Center Working Group, a voluntary, distinguished panel of experts, convened its first meeting to begin to collaborate and work together on challenging issues facing high schools. Serving as “critical friends,” the group will provide guidance and direction as the National High School Center offers high school-related assistance to the Regional Comprehensive Centers, a national network developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

Members include:

- **Nancy Ames**, *Education Development Center*
- **Ann Coles**, *Pathways to College Network*
- **David Ferrero**, *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*
- **Naomi Housman**, *National High School Alliance*
- **Stephen Luke**, *National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities*
- **Jill Martin**, *Principal, Thomas B. Doherty High School and 2007 NASSP/MetLife National High School Principal of the Year*
- **Monica Martinez**, *KnowledgeWorks Foundation*
- **John Nori**, *National Association of Secondary School Principals*
- **Nancy Reder**, *National Association of State Directors of Special Education*
- **Maria Santos**, *New York City Department of Education*
- **Becky Smerdon**, *Urban Institute*
- **Catherine Walcott**, *WestEd*

“The creation of this group is critical in advancing the current high school landscape. Each member brings a unique experience, valuable knowledge, and a desired skill set to the table,” commented Joseph R. Harris Ph.D., Interim Director of the National High School Center.

Members will serve on informal working groups on selected high school-related topics and will formally meet again in March. More information regarding the members of the Friends of the National High School Center Working Group is available at <http://www.betterhighschools.org/about/friends.asp>.

About the National High School Center

The National High School Center (www.betterhighschools.org), established in 2005, serves as a central source of expertise on high school-related issues for all students, with a special focus on students with disabilities, students with limited proficiency in English, and students at risk of school failure. The National High School Center is housed at the American Institutes for Research, located in Washington, DC, and serves the Regional Comprehensive Centers, a national network developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Subcontractors include Learning Point Associates, MDRC, the National Center for Educational Accountability, and WestEd.