



**For IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 9, 2006**

Contact: Larry McQuillan
(202) 403-5119

Rebecca Powell
(202) 403-6843

American Institutes for Research Establishes National High School Center, Launches Web Site at www.betterhighschools.org

WASHINGTON – The National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has recently launched its Web site at www.betterhighschools.org. The High School Center will serve as a central source of in-depth knowledge, expertise, and analysis on high school improvement.

The National High School Center is part of a national network of Content and Regional Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help build the capacity of states across the nation to effectively implement the provisions and goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The High School Center is one of five content centers covering a spectrum of topical areas especially relevant to NCLB and school improvement.

In funding the High School Center, the Department acknowledged the complex needs of high schools and the importance of promoting research and technical assistance that specifically address the high school context. In recent years a range of voices, from principals' groups to the National Governors' Association, have called for more attention to be paid to the challenges facing the nation's high schools.

Millions of high school students are at risk of academic failure, particularly those with disabilities, limited proficiency in English, or from low-income backgrounds. To address this challenge, NCLB emphasizes the need to use research-supported practices to help all students learn and become adequately prepared for college, work, and life. The High School Center will identify research-supported programs and tools that can improve practice in high schools and help all students learn. The High School Center will offer user-friendly products and high leverage technical assistance services to build the capacity of the Regional Comprehensive Centers to help states implement these programs and tools in more high schools across the country.

The High School Center will draw on AIR's extensive experience operating national technical assistance centers, as well as the knowledge its experts have gained by conducting large-scale evaluations of prominent high school reform efforts. AIR is one of the nation's largest and oldest not-for-profit social science research and technical assistance organizations and currently operates

the Institute for Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, and the Access Center – which provides information on scientifically based practices for students with disabilities in grades K-8. Recently, AIR has expanded its efforts to bring the benefits of its research to the field. In 2004 AIR launched a school district consulting group led by nationally recognized former superintendents who currently are providing guidance on high school improvement efforts across the country.

“We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the nation’s high school reform efforts by establishing a Center where anyone in education can turn to for reliable information,” said Sol H. Pelavin, AIR’s president and chief executive officer.

AIR will subcontract with several other leading education research organizations to establish the High School Center, including MDRC, Learning Point Associates, the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), WestEd, the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N), and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) at Clemson University.

About AIR

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research on important social issues and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of health, education, and workforce productivity.

###