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65% SOLUTION IS NO SOLUTION, REPORT SAYS

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Monday, April 10, 2006) — The “65% Solution,” a proposal to require that schools spend 65 percent of their budgets on in-class instruction, has no solid evidence to support its promise of increased student achievement, according to “A Policy Makers Guide to ‘The 65% Solution’ Proposals,” a report released by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University.

Report author Gerald Bracey found that school districts currently spending 65 percent or more of their budget on “in-class instruction” do not have higher achievement levels than districts that spend less. The “65% Solution” also has serious definitional problems, according to Bracey. For example, administrators, library/media services, guidance counselors, testing, and professional development for teachers would not be considered “in the classroom,” but football uniforms would be.

Bracey concludes that the “65% Solution” is a one-size-fits-all pseudo-reform that disguises a political agenda. It would make it harder for schools to adopt diverse strategies to increase achievement. Further, Bracey argues that “its reallocation formula assumes that current funding for schools is sufficient, an assumption contradicted by numerous successful ‘adequacy’ suits.” He recommends that:

1. Schools and school districts decide what outcomes they would consider improved performance, examine the research literature to determine what practices have been empirically linked to changes in those outcomes, and reallocate funds to attain the improvements; and

2. Schools allocate new funds or reallocate existing funds at the school level, with district oversight.

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