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**National Indian Education Study Reveals Largely Stalled Progress,
Widely Varying Cultural and School Experiences**
NAEP Scores Flat in Math; Gains Shown in 8th Grade Reading

(WASHINGTON, DC) -- More than a third of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) fourth- and eighth-graders in the United States score below the *Basic* level in math and reading, and their progress since 2007 is largely stalled, according to the National Indian Education Study (NIES) released today.

The two-part study, which focuses on both the educational progress and experiences of AI/AN students, also reveals details about these students' cultural exposure, academic aspirations, school conditions and curriculum.

"This report is important because it shines a light on a group of students whose struggles have received very little attention," said John Q. Easton, Director of the Institute of Education Sciences. "There remains a wide and persistent gap between the achievement of Native students and White students."

This two-part study was first conducted in 2005 and again in 2007 and 2009. In addition to reporting results for the overall AI/AN population, results were broken down by race/ethnicity, eligibility for the National School Lunch Program, gender, and type of school. Public schools are categorized according to the proportion of AI/AN students—"high density" is 25 percent or more AI/AN while "low density" is less than 25 percent AI/AN. The report also shows results for AI/AN students attending schools administered by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

NIES Part I

NIES 2009 Part I uses data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted in 2009. A national sample of approximately 9,300 AI/AN students at grades 4 and 8 participated in the 2009 reading assessment, and 9,000 participated in the mathematics assessment. In addition to the national results, the study includes results for the following 12 states with relatively large populations of AI/AN students: Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington.

Findings include the following:

- The 2009 average reading score for 4th grade students was not significantly different from that of 2007 or 2005. The 2009 average reading score for 8th grade students was higher than in 2007 but not statistically different from 2005.
- Half of AI/AN students scored below the *Basic* level in 4th grade reading; in 8th grade, 38 percent scored below *Basic*. In reading, 20 percent of AI/AN 4th grade students scored at or above *Proficient*. In 8th grade, 21 percent scored at or above the *Proficient* level.
- The 2009 average mathematics score was not statistically different from that of 2007 or 2005 in either grade. In math, 34 percent of AI/AN 4th graders scored below *Basic*, while 44 percent of 8th graders scored below this level.
- In mathematics, 21 percent of 4th grade students scored at or above *Proficient*. In 8th grade, 18 percent scored at or above *Proficient*. In both reading and mathematics, AI/AN students in low-density public schools scored higher than those in high-density public schools or BIE schools.
- The 12 states ranged widely in performance of their AI/AN students. For example, in 4th-grade reading, 62 percent performed at or above the *Basic* achievement level in Oklahoma compared with 27 percent at this level in Alaska.

NIES Part II

NIES 2009 Part II explores the educational experiences of AI/AN students. Students, teachers, and administrators provided information about their communities, the integration of AI/AN culture into their classroom practices, and interactions between the school and the AI/AN community.

Findings include the following:

- Fifty-seven percent of all 8th grade AI/AN students overall indicated that they plan to go to college full-time in their first year after high-school, and 19 percent plan to join the military. In BIE schools, 29 percent of 8th graders plan to join the military.
- Forty-three percent of all 4th-grade AI/AN students, and 32 percent at 8th grade, had teachers who reported integrating Native American culture and history into the reading and language arts curricula once a month or more; these percentages were higher in high-density public school and BIE schools than in low density public schools.
- About 80 percent of AI/AN students overall reported that people in their school never or hardly ever use their native AI/AN language. In BIE schools,

about a quarter of students reported hearing their native language every day or almost every day.

The full report for Part I and Part II, as well as the NIES Data Explorer can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nies/>.

NIES is sponsored by the Office of Indian Education, within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics within IES. This report was ordered in 2004 to assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in meeting challenging academic standards in a manner consistent with tribal traditions, language, and culture.

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