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**STATEMENT ON 2005 NATIONAL AND STATE SCIENCE RESULTS
FROM THE NATION'S REPORT CARD™**

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What have we learned from the 2005 results?

Following similar results reported last fall in math and reading, younger students throughout the country continue to make gains in science. These gains suggest that the improved, research-based reading instruction that has become a national initiative – and the central focus for current reform efforts in most states – appears to be paying off. Elementary students who are more able to understand instructional materials and assessment questions may be better prepared to achieve in math and science, as well as in reading.

These young students, their parents, and their teachers should be proud. As better-prepared fourth-graders continue in their schooling, we all hope that they will raise American achievement results when they reach middle and high school – because the performance of current high schoolers is troubling.

Given the 2005 results on the national assessment, complaints that too many high school graduates are ill prepared for technical careers should not come as a surprise. Calls for increased rigor in the secondary school curriculum are understandable. High school reform initiatives are likely to accelerate.

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Flat or declining performance of older students is not good news. It seems obvious that as a country we need to better understand how to prepare students for remediation-free post-secondary education and training. The number of high school graduates who will need to repeat middle or high school course content in college will not likely decline without improved results. Hopefully, ongoing attempts by the National Assessment Governing Board and others to more closely link high school achievement to preparedness for further learning will help.

In 1957, the launching of the Sputnik satellite prompted a call to action that successfully put greater emphasis on mathematics and physical science instruction in our nation's schools. In a world made infinitely smaller and more competitive by the technological advances of the last half-century, these results from The Nation's Report Card should redirect attention to the major challenge of preparing students for technical careers in today's economy.

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