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NEWS ALERT

For Immediate Release

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TESTING QUESTIONS?

CER RELEASES "THE NEW GENERATION OF STANDARDIZED TESTING"

(Washington, DC 10/17/00) Although some news reports would suggest that testing was alien to American education and opposed by parents, a recent *Public Agenda* survey shows there is little evidence of the widely reported "backlash" against standards and standardized testing. Seventy-one percent support testing during elementary school years as a way to help identify struggling students early so they can get help.

In fact, 19 states now offer comprehensive testing, aligned to state standards, in at least three grade levels. And the number is growing, because parents and communities want accountability for their schools.

Now, for the first time, the current pass rates for those tests have been compiled in one place, in a new paper issued by the Center for Education Reform.

The paper, "*The New Generation of Standardized Testing*," provides a national analysis of the range of statewide testing and points out that the new generation of tests, aligned to state standards, are an important accountability measure because they gauge how much of the content a student has actually learned.

Testing also provides an indication of how far American education must travel for children to meet the standards set by educators. In a comparison chart, the CER paper provides data showing the pass-rates in 19 states offering tests in at least three grade levels. Test scores range from 10 percent in the 10th grade Missouri Assessment Program Math Test to 90 percent in the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 4th and 10th grade reading programs, although the tests and their standards may differ greatly, making comparisons impossible.

"What makes the new breed of tests important is that they are aligned to state standards and have real consequences," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform. "They help identify weaknesses in student learning and can be used to forge effective strategies to help children learn."

Copies of "The New Generation of Standardized Testing" are available for \$5.00 (free to members) by calling The Center for Education Reform at (202) 822-9000 or by visiting <http://www.edreform.com/>

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at www.edreform.com.