

For Immediate Release

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Schools Across Region Improve in Five-Year Proficiency Report

(Pittsburgh, PA – January 10, 2007) The new year and beyond look bright for southwestern Pennsylvania students, according to a report just released by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its affiliate, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The report, *Proficiency by 10: Five-year Report Card on Fifth-Grade Proficiency in Reading and Mathematics in Southwestern Pennsylvania*, is available online at www.schoolgrades.info.

For the last five years, the Allegheny Conference and its affiliate have released an annual report card grading progress toward the goal that every 10 year-old in southwestern Pennsylvania be proficient in reading and math by the year 2010. Prompted by poor school performance and a lack of accountability, the goal was established to promote education quality and to prepare a skilled regional workforce. The annual report card grades each school in the 10-county Pittsburgh region and Mercer County based upon the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores of fifth graders. Individual school report cards highlighting student performance in 2006 are available at www.schoolgrades.info.

The just-released five-year report focuses on the emerging trends in school proficiency since the establishment of the “Proficiency by 10” goal and the changes in the education system during this period. The most notable change was the federal 2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which mandated school accountability for student performance. The five-year report shows that the region is on track to meet the NCLB goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014.

“The five-year report identifies improvement across the region over time, which is encouraging. Meanwhile, the 2005-2006 grades indicate that southwestern Pennsylvania is consistently outperforming statewide proficiency levels,” said Michael Langley, CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. “However, we still have obstacles to overcome. Educating our children is the first step in creating a workforce that can answer the call of opportunity in our region’s high-growth sectors – advanced materials, life sciences and information technology. Achieving 100 percent proficiency in reading and math skills is a critical component of preparing future workers that employers need as they grow in the Pittsburgh region.”

Allegheny Conference on Community Development and Affiliates

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its Affiliates – the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania – work together to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life in the region.

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