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Contact: Brendan Williams-Kief
bwilliamskief@ncee.org 202-378-2210

New Reports Outline Key Teacher Policies and Practices Among PISA Top Performers that Boost Student Achievement

*Model of Teacher Development Used by Top Countries Tied to Broad Changes in School
Organization, Much More Effective Than U.S. Model*

Washington, D.C.- The National Center on Education and the Economy's (NCEE) Center on International Education Benchmarking (CIEB) released two new reports today revealing how the US model of teacher professional learning far underperforms key competitor countries. The studies point to highly successful education systems in which teacher professional learning is built into the everyday work of teachers as a primary lever for school improvement and meaningful career pathways as an essential driver of teacher quality.

"When teachers have strong incentives to get better and better at their work, and they are given the opportunity to work together every day in teams to improve student achievement, they never stop seeking and finding information that can help them do a better job," said NCEE President and CEO Marc Tucker. "Professional development in the top performing systems is built directly into the way teachers do that work every day; it is not something that happens in workshops. Teachers in these systems want to improve their practice because their progression through the system's well-defined career pathways is dependent upon their effectiveness as professionals.

"Like attorneys, engineers, architects and other professionals in the United States, they want the added compensation, responsibility, authority and, most of all, esteem and status that comes with the recognition of greater expertise. Professional development is the way they get that expertise."

Leading Australian researcher Ben Jensen's report, *Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems*, analyzed the professional learning systems in four high-performing systems. Shanghai, British Columbia, Singapore, and Hong Kong all score near the top of all jurisdictions tested in mathematics, reading and science on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

While these systems are quite different, the key to all of them is that collaborative professional learning (teachers working with other teachers to improve curriculum, instruction, school climate, etc.) is built into the daily lives of teachers and school leaders. This is reinforced by policies and school organizations that:

- Free up time in the daily lives of teachers for collaborative professional learning
- Create leadership roles for expert teachers who both develop other teachers and lead school improvement teams
- Recognize and reward the development of teacher expertise

- Enable teachers and school leaders to share responsibility for their own professional learning and that of their peers.

Former Shanghai Normal University President and Shanghai Education Commission Deputy Director Minxuan Zhang's report, *Developing Shanghai's Teachers*, offers an insider's perspective into the world-leading Shanghai education system. Just four decades after the end of the Cultural Revolution, which closed all of China's schools, Shanghai now stands atop the PISA league tables. Zhang played a central role in developing both the Shanghai education system as it now exists, and Shanghai Normal University, one of only two teacher preparation institutions in this sprawling metropolis of 25 million people.

Chief among the elements of Shanghai's success has been its highly organized and articulated teacher development system. Zhang describes teacher development in Shanghai as a triangle, with the teacher career ladder, in-service training and development, and performance appraisal as the three sides. Each side of the triangle is connected to and reinforces the other sides. Shanghai's career ladder provides financial motivation and a progression pathway for teachers. The in-service training enables teachers to move along the ladder. Performance appraisal evaluates and recognizes teacher performance at each step of the ladder.

"Both of these important reports are part of a series on teacher quality systems in top-performing countries that we have commissioned," said Betsy Brown Ruzzi, director of NCEE's Center on International Education Benchmarking. "The work CIEB is supporting in this series will serve as a rich resource for the education policy and practitioner community as it works to improve education in the U.S. and around the world."

In addition to the reports released today, researchers have collected authentic tools used by the systems highlighted to assist policymakers and practitioners interested in adapting lessons learned for their own context and culture. The tools are available at www.NCEE.org/cieb.

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The National Center on Education and the Economy was created in 1988 to analyze the implications of changes in the international economy for American education, formulate an agenda for American education based on that analysis and seek wherever possible to accomplish that agenda through policy change and development of the resources educators would need to carry it out. For more information visit www.ncee.org.

The Center on International Education Benchmarking, a program of NCEE, conducts and funds research on the world's most successful education and workforce development systems to identify the strategies those countries have used to produce their superior performance. Through its books, reports, website, monthly newsletter, and a weekly update of education news around the world, CIEB provides up-to-date information and analysis on the world's most successful education systems based on student performance, equity and efficiency. Visit www.ncee.org/cieb to learn more.