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Education Policy Research Unit

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Study Predicts at least 85 Percent of Great Lakes Schools Will Be Labeled “Failing” by 2014

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Wednesday, September 14, 2005) — Fewer schools in the Great Lakes region were labeled “failing” this year. That will change, however, if the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) continues to be the driving force behind the measurement of school and student success. Most schools in the region will be labeled “failing” by 2014, according to “The Impact of the Adequate Yearly Progress Requirement of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act on the Great Lakes Region,” a study released by the Great Lakes Center for Educational Research and the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University.

The study is the first multi-state research to use actual state data to predict how schools will fare under No Child Left Behind current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. The authors, Edward C. Wiley, University of Colorado-Boulder; William J. Mathis, University of Vermont; and David R. Garcia, Arizona State University, assessed how much gain schools made in 2003-2004 and used these data along with each state’s established growth expectations to predict how many schools will meet the federal requirement of 100 percent proficiency on state high-stakes tests by 2014.

Regardless of the growth expectations set by the Great Lakes states, the research findings are clear: At least 85 percent of the schools in the Great Lakes region will be labeled “failing” by 2014. The state-by-state predictions are:

- **Indiana:** Under the best case scenario, it is projected that 54 percent of schools will fail by 2014. Under a more realistic scenario, 80 to 85 percent of schools will fail.
- **Wisconsin:** Under the best case scenario in, it is projected that over half of the schools will fail by 2014. Under a more realistic scenario, 84 percent of schools will fail.

- **Ohio:** Under the best case scenario, it is projected that almost half of the schools will fail by 2014. Under a more realistic scenario, close to 80 percent of schools will fail.
- **Minnesota:** It is projected that 85 percent of schools will fail by 2014.
- **Michigan:** Under the best case scenario, it is projected that half of the schools will fail by 2014. Under a more realistic scenario, almost every school will fail.
- **Illinois:** Under the most optimistic scenario, it is projected that over 65 percent of schools will fail by 2014. Under a more realistic scenario, that number is closer to 85 percent.

“It’s fail now or fail later,” said Teri Moblo, Director of the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. “Under the current system, schools are destined to be labeled as failing and there is no way around it. The question isn’t *will* schools fail, it’s *when* will they fail. Without increased flexibility in the AYP requirements and a focus on the underlying reasons why students do not perform well on such tests, we will continue to invest huge amounts of time and money in a system where failure is guaranteed.”

The authors point out that AYP measures the success or failure of schools and students solely on high stakes test scores in basic academic areas. They point out that the special needs and learning styles of students are not taken into account; that the impact of poverty and diversity on a school’s ability to achieve AYP is not addressed; that testing and sanctions for not making AYP do not address the underlying causes of poor test performance; and that in order to meet yearly AYP goals, states are forced to direct their increasingly limited resources toward the administering and scoring of standardized tests, estimated to cost between \$1.9 billion and \$5.3 billion for 2002-08.

The study goes on to recommend ways to increase student learning and improve AYP results:

- Develop programs that include families, community, and health providers, and that strengthen childcare, early education, summer and after-school activities, and technical education, among other vital and essential services.
- Dedicate adequate funding for remediation and social infrastructure, to overcome disparities and meet student educational needs.
- Create realistic, comprehensive school evaluation systems that involve a variety of evaluation methods.
- Set realistic standards linked to external expectations and grounded in research.
- Use aggressive confidence intervals and subgroup sizes to measure rates of growth.
- Modify the standards and growth expectations for special education, non-English speaking, and migratory students.

Find this document on the web at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0509-109-EPRU.pdf>

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