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Education Policy Research Unit

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

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**NCLB'S SCHOOL EVALUATION SYSTEM IS FLAWED REFORM TOOL,
REPORT CONCLUDES**

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Tuesday, September 26, 2006)— Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the school evaluation system central to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, is fundamentally flawed and should be suspended until the premises underlying it can be confirmed or refuted by solid, scientific research, according to University of Vermont Professor William J. Mathis.

NCLB mandates that schools make Adequate Yearly Progress on state standardized tests en route to having all children reach proficiency standards by 2014. Mathis' policy brief, "The Accuracy and Effectiveness of Adequate Yearly Progress, NCLB's School Evaluation System," released by the Education Policy Research Unit at Arizona State University, examines the controversies surrounding the implementation of AYP and the proposals to improve it.

"Although [U.S. Department of Education] Secretary [Margaret] Spellings has claimed the law is 99.9 percent pure, the scientific evidence tells another story," Mathis said. "Modest experiments with growth models, minimum group sizes, graduation rates and discussion of national standards simply distract from rather than solve the inherent shortcomings of the AYP system. In fact, many of these changes may make the system perform even less accurately."

He concludes that:

- NCLB's 100-percent proficiency goal is unattainable.
- Current proposals to improve AYP, such as value-added models, cannot resolve the system's underlying problems.

- AYP is underfunded and the system fails to provide adequate programs aimed at off-setting the impact of poverty; therefore, schools attended by the neediest children are penalized disproportionately.

Find this document on the web at:

http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/epru_2006_Research_Writing.htm

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