



## **Business Tools for Better Schools: Why Your Company Should Be Involved in America's Public Schools**

**Today's students are tomorrow's workforce. As employers and the key customers of public education, the U.S. business community has a vested interest in making sure that all American students leave high school prepared to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace and global economy. However, America's public school system has not kept pace with the demands of the competitive global economy.**

- The United States loses \$2.3 billion a year in lost productivity from high school graduates requiring remediation in reading and math in college and the workplace. (Source: Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006)
- More than 80 percent of employers say they experience difficulties hiring qualified workers; only half are satisfied with the skills of their current employees. (Source: National Association of Manufacturers, 2005)
- Only 12 states require all high school students to complete a high school curriculum that will prepare all graduates for work and college. (Source: Achieve, Inc., 2007). More than 55 percent of recent high school graduates say high school did not fully prepare them for work. (Source: Achieve, Inc., 2005)

**American students are falling farther behind on national and international performance assessments.**

- The percentage of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders scoring at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress Science Assessment *declined* over the past decade, from 24 percent in 1996 to 20 percent in 2005. (Source: National Assessment of Education Progress, 1996-2005)
- Among fifteen year olds in 2003, 23 out of 40 competitor countries outscored the United States on math literacy and 24 countries outscored the United States on problem solving. (Source: Program of International Student Assessment, 2003)

**Business involvement in education reform helps improve education performance, which benefits both corporate America and our public education system.**

- Companies that invest time and company resources to education help maintain a competitive edge in the global economy; improve the pipeline of qualified employees; grow the U.S. economy and build a customer base; and open more doors for America's youth.
- It is no accident that the states making the most progress in raising achievement are the same states with long-term business-led efforts to focus education policy on the practices that get results.
- Business participation in local and state education reform efforts also provides government officials, educators and students with a realistic view of the skills required for success in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace.
- The "Business Tools for Better Schools" Web site and initiative provides strategies and resources to enable the business community to partner successfully with policymakers, school districts, parents, students and educators to improve education performance.