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15 STATES AWARDED \$250,000 GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Washington, D.C., January 8, 2002 -- The Education Commission of the States and four other organizations have awarded \$250,000 grants to 15 states to help them strengthen the ability of superintendents and principals to be strong instructional leaders.

The 15 state recipients are Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia.

The three-year grants are being awarded by the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) National Consortium. Funded by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, SAELP focuses on developing state-level policies and practices that strengthen local school officials' leadership skills.

Other consortium members are the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures and National Association of State Boards of Education.

"ECS is honored to be a part of this consortium and is looking forward to helping the 15 selected states develop and implement new policies that will improve the practice of principals and superintendents," said Ted Sanders, ECS president. "This is an unusual opportunity to leverage the resources and expertise of national organizations, as well as a select group of states, to focus on developing the next generation

of policy related to education leadership."

The selected states will develop policies to help principals and superintendents to focus on quality instruction that will improve student learning. Specifically, they will address the following six strategies:

- Business priorities and practices - giving high priority to providing school- and district-level leaders with the tools they need to be strong instructional leaders
- Candidate pool - increasing and diversifying school and district leadership applicants
- Education and professional learning - improving preservice and professional development programs
- Licensure, certification and program accreditation - promoting better licensing and certification processes for school leaders, and improving the accreditation process for higher education-based leadership training programs
- Professional practice conditions - improving contracting and bargaining practices, salary and compensation programs, performance review processes and incentive programs for strong leaders
- Governance structures - improving the political and governance settings that affect the climate for education leaders.

SAELP is the centerpiece of the Wallace Funds' national LEADERS Count initiative, a five-year, \$150 million commitment to place quality leadership at the core of school reform and to build a new field of knowledge that helps improvements spread on a broader scale. The objectives of LEADERS Count are to attract and place a broader pool of able candidates for school leadership, to strengthen principals' and superintendents' ability to improve learning, and to create conditions that allow principals and superintendents to perform as effective leaders.

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The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a national, nonprofit organization that helps governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. A nonpartisan organization, ECS was formed in 1965 and is located in Denver, Colorado.