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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SCHOOL-IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
MEETS BLUE-RIBBON PANEL'S STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVENESS**

**Middle Start Recognized as a Research-based School Improvement Design in the
National Catalog of Comprehensive School Reform Models**

New York, NY – Middle Start's comprehensive school improvement program passed a rigorous review coordinated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and is now included in the national *Catalog of School Reform Models*.

"We've carefully documented the implementation and effectiveness of our school improvement model for years now, and we're delighted that Middle Start is endorsed by leading school reform organizations," said Patrick Montesano, Vice President and Co-Director of the Center for School and Community Services at the Academy for Educational Development where the Middle Start National Center is located.

An independent panel reviewed the evidence submitted by the AED Middle Start National Center on the model's comprehensiveness, scale-up, implementation assistance and evidence of effectiveness, and recommended it for inclusion in the national Catalog of School Reform Models, a joint venture of the Northwest Lab and the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. The catalog is the reference guide most frequently used by states, districts, and schools for information about school reform programs and the services they provide.

"It's very rewarding that an independent panel of researchers and technical assistance providers found that the Middle Start model meets a high standard," said Pritha Gopalan, the AED program officer at the Middle Start National Center who manages research and evaluation.

Middle Start submitted standardized test scores from Middle Start CSR schools in Michigan to support its application, among other documents. Analysis of the data indicated that students' scores on the 2002 MEAP test, when compared to scores from all other high-needs schools with seventh and eighth grade students, were higher in the gate keeping areas of reading and math.

For more information about the Catalog of School Reform Models visit:
www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/modellist.asp

About Middle Start

The Middle Start initiative combines on-site coaching and professional development and partner resources to strengthen student achievement in schools with middle grades. Guided by current research and practice emphasizing the developmental needs of young adolescents, Middle Start upholds the three goals that create the foundation for student success – academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity– and it does so through small learning communities; team structure; effective curriculum; student-centered instruction; meaningful student assessment; reflective review and self-study; as well as sustainable and meaningful partnerships. The Middle Start National Center at the Academy for Educational Development provides leadership and support to regional Middle Start partnerships and school networks. For more information visit www.middlestart.org

About the Academy for Educational Development (AED)

Founded in 1961, AED is an independent nonprofit organization committed to solving critical social problems. AED works with schools, school systems, families, and community-based organizations on comprehensive school and community improvement initiatives, as well as programs addressing specific education issues.

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