

## THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE

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### **FORDHAM HAILS MOVE TOWARDS COMMON STANDARDS, WARNS OF PERILS**

Washington, D.C. (December 19, 2008) – The National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers and Achieve, Inc. today released a report, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*. Leaders of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute praised this step towards multi-state, even national standards, while cautioning that the next steps must be executed carefully and correctly.

“Though America's belated moves toward international benchmarking and ‘common’ state standards face many perils--done wrong, they could reignite ‘culture wars’ and sacrifice vital U.S. curricular values on the altar of nebulous skills--this is a tremendously important initiative,” said Fordham president Chester E. Finn, Jr.. “That it's happening outside the federal government avoids some hazards. Now the partner organizations must move expeditiously but wisely through those that remain. I applaud their willingness to do so.”

Michael J. Petrilli, Fordham’s Vice President for National Programs and Policy, said that this “bottom-up” approach to common standards—with states, rather than the federal government, leading the way—is the one most likely to result in a positive outcome. “The states are where the real action is in k-12 education, and it’s exciting to see governors grab the mantle of leadership on this important issue.” Petrilli added, “Now what’s key is that the process lead to a ‘race to the top,’ rather than a slide toward the lowest common denominator.”

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute is a non-profit think tank dedicated to advancing educational excellence in America's K-12 schools. The Institute promotes policies that strengthen accountability and expand education options. It has been a long-time advocate of national standards and tests, as well as a founding participant in the American Diploma Project. Fordham’s 2006 report, *To Dream the Impossible Dream: National Standards and Tests for America’s Schools*, helped pave the way to today’s development. More information is available at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net).

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