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NEW REPORT ON COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING POLICY
Offers Roadmap for State Education Officials

STOWE, Vt, July 18 -- A new report released today discusses how state leaders in K-12 education are rethinking policies to allow students to advance competency-based approaches that allow any time, everywhere learning for today's youth.

"We are proposing what amounts to a vital change in current methods of instruction and measurement so that students can move ahead when they demonstrate knowledge," said Susan Patrick, co-author of the report and president of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL).

"Unfortunately, many states and school districts are still handcuffed by rigid regulations that prevent them from moving toward the student-centered, performance-based approach," Patrick said. "This report offers guidance and practical recommendations for state education policymakers."

Titled, *Cracking the Code: Synchronizing Policy and Practice for Performance-based Learning*, the report was unveiled at the Summer Institute of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in Stowe, Vermont. Co-authored by Chris Sturgis, a principal at MetisNet, the report is based on policy recommendations made by education innovators during the 2011 Competency-based Learning Summit convened by iNACOL and CCSSO earlier this year.

The report recommends that states begin to transform policies from "rigid compliance" to "enabling policies," by offering seat-time waivers or "credit flex" policies that allow for the flexibility to offer competency-based learning in K-12 education.

A "comprehensive policy redesign" would require competency-based credits, personalized learning plans, information technology, professional development, and quality-control in support of individual student growth for accountability, while aligning higher education with K-12 competency-based efforts. The report also offers states a number of approaches toward tackling emerging state policy issues in order to speed the transition to a competency-based approach.

Sturgis said, “With state leadership creating the necessary policy conditions to enable children to progress when they have mastered skills, we will finally be able to overcome the inequities of our current education system.”

“Competency-based learning is essential to a future for students in the United States to remain globally competitive, and this transformation in enabling policy must begin at the state level,” said Patrick.

The report is available at www.inacol.org.

About iNACOL

iNACOL is the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership association based in the Washington, DC area with more than 3,800 members. iNACOL is unique in that its members represent a diverse cross-section of K-12 education from school districts, charter schools, state education agencies, non-profit organizations, colleges, universities and research institutions, corporate entities and other content and technology providers (www.inacol.org). iNACOL hosts the annual Virtual School Symposium (VSS). VSS 2011 is being held Nov. 9 - 11, 2011 in Indianapolis, IN (www.virtualschoolsymposium.org).