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**STATEMENT ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD:
*NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment Reading 2009***

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The results of this year's Trial Urban District Assessment serve to validate the bold reform agenda initiated in New York City and other urban districts, and now promoted by President Obama and Secretary Duncan, while reminding us that we have more work to do to ensure that every child graduates high school with the skills they need to thrive in college and careers.

First, I'd like to congratulate Beverly Hall and her team in Atlanta for the gains they continue to make on NAEP assessments. It's exciting to see large cities beginning to make real progress on NAEP reading assessments, which has traditionally lagged behind progress on math assessments. In New York City, we have made statistically significant progress since 2003 in both fourth and eighth grade math, and today's announcement shows that our fourth grade reading gains since both 2002 and 2003 have also been significant. Several cities, including New York City, have made significant gains in grade 4 and we now hope to continue to build on the promising signs we're seeing in grade 8.

Since 2002, fourth grade students across our nation and in large cities have made significant progress on NAEP reading assessments. During that period, New York City's fourth grade students gained a significant 11 average scale score points on the assessments, while the students in the rest of New York State—who are on average significantly less high-poverty and minority and who are taught to the same statewide standards—actually saw their average scale score decrease by 4 points. In the two years since 2007, the last time the assessments were administered, the city's fourth graders also made significant progress, increasing their scores on average by 4 scale score points. Only 4 TUDA districts—Boston, the District of Columbia, Houston, and New York City—have achieved significant progress in fourth grade reading since 2007.

Even though we still have a long way to go, we're moving steadily in the right direction. In New York City in 2002, an unacceptable 53 percent of our fourth graders were below *Basic* in reading, and only 19 percent of students were considered at or above *Proficient*. Today, 38 percent are below basic, while 29 percent are performing at or above *Proficient*.

And we've made these gains in a city with one of the highest poverty rates in the nation. Since 2007, our low-income students made significant gains of 6 scale score points in reading, placing New York City low-income students among the top-performing of those students in TUDA districts (even as low-income students in the rest of the nation have not achieved significant gains since 2007). Since 2002, our Black students have also made significant progress, gaining 11 scale score points in fourth grade reading.

In eighth grade, New York City's apparent gains are encouraging but clearly show there is much more work to be done to ensure that all of our students enter high school prepared for success. Since 2007, New York City eighth graders gained 3 scale score points on NAEP reading assessments. Since then, we've also seen our Black students increase their scores by 6 average scale score points, while our Hispanic students have increased their scores on average by 2 scale score points.

When Mayor Bloomberg was elected mayor of New York City, he inherited a disorganized and floundering school system that for far too long had failed to prepare our children to compete in an increasingly global marketplace. From day one, he set on a course to turn around a system of 1.1 million children that, for decades, had produced stagnant graduation rates that hovered below 50 percent, flat state test scores in reading and math, and an organizational structure that held no one accountable for results.

In 2002, he won control of the city's schools and launched the Children First agenda to transform the nation's largest public school system into a system of great schools. The effort has included expanding small schools and charter schools to provide more high-quality educational options for students, changing how schools are operated and supported, and giving principals greater control over how they run their schools while holding them accountable for results. These initiatives have made a real difference for New York City students. Achievement is up substantially, students and families have more and better choices, and schools are safer. Today, many of those same principles are being implemented in big cities across our country and are embodied in the reform agenda of President Obama.

As we begin the critical work of adopting rigorous Common Core Standards, today's results show that while there is a lot more work to do, urban districts that remain steadfastly committed to a bold reform agenda like New York's—no matter how popular or unpopular at the time—can help even the neediest students make real progress. And together, we will continue to build on that success. Indeed, aligning state standards to the rigorous requirements of the NAEP should help all of our states and cities improve their performance.