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**SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IGNITE PROGRAM WINS
"PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT WORK" TOP HONORS**

ALEXANDRIA, VA- A Seattle Public Schools (SPS) program called "Involving Girls Now in Technology Evolution (IGNITE)" is the 2007 "Programs and Practices That Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers" Award winner. The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE), and the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) created the award to recognize local and/or state educational agencies, programs, and/or schools that have improved students' access to and completion of career and technical education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.

The SPS IGNITE program encourages females in high schools to enter technology-based professions. The goals for the program are to expose teenage girls to the depth of opportunities in technology careers, dispel stereotypes surrounding technology by networking teenagers with professionals, and provide an ongoing opportunity for girls to interact with women in the industry, including job shadowing, internships and mentoring. After six years of IGNITE, Seattle schools report 50 percent of high school technology classes are filled with girls, when they used to be comprised of only a few.

Honorable Mention went to St. Paul College in Minnesota for its respiratory care program, and Northeast Community College in Nebraska for its mentoring program. St. Paul College respiratory program is one of three public, two-year AAS programs in Minnesota that trains students to manage the ventilation of critically ill patients, providing acute and chronic care to those with pulmonary disease. The program has improved the access and success of men in this area of health care. The Northeast Community College mentoring program matches first and second year students by field for a year, and it provides nontraditional students with academic help and support. The students meet weekly for a brown bag lunch, and they discuss academic, career and personal issues.

Each of the programs will be recognized at ACTE, NASDCTEc, and NAPE conferences as well as during a briefing for the U.S. Congress and media on Capitol Hill in June. The programs also will be featured in a report that will highlight effective programs and practices for gender equity within career and technical education. The report will serve

as a useful resource for local and state educational agencies wishing to employ similar strategies to successfully prepare students for nontraditional, economically self-sufficient careers.

President Bush has proposed in his FY 2008 budget to reduce funding for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act by 50 percent and completely eliminate Tech Prep funds within the Perkins Act. The Perkins Act is a key source of support for programs like these that prepare students to enter nontraditional career and technical education programs. According to the 2006 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) report, nearly one-third of the fastest growing occupations will require an associate's degree or a postsecondary vocational certificate. In order to meet these needs, CTE programs are essential. CTE increases student engagement and the innovative integration of math, science and literacy skills, which will meet the needs of both employers and the economy as a whole.

For more information about the "Programs and Practices that Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers" Project please visit www.acteonline.org/about/awards/PPTWproject.cfm.

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