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New  
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Schools

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **The American Institutes for Research to Merge with Prestigious New American Schools**

*Premier Education Research Organization Joins Forces with Ground-breaking School  
Improvement Nonprofit Working to Accelerate Learning in Public Schools*

Washington, DC – The American Institutes for Research (AIR) today announced its merger with New American Schools (NAS), wedding one of the nation’s premier education research organizations with a proven school improvement organization.

The two organizations are beginning a strategic alliance immediately, a move that will produce a full merger early in 2005.

“With NAS we can bring the most current research results into the classroom more quickly. AIR has long conducted important research in education with the goal of making sure their results have an impact upon student learning. New American Schools allows our findings to have a positive influence on students’ lives more quickly,” said Sol Pelavin, President and Chief Executive Officer of AIR.

“New American Schools in partnership with the American Institutes for Research now has the opportunity to create a powerful and unprecedented K-12 consulting practice built on the best education research,” said Mary Anne Schmitt, President of New American Schools.

The American Institutes for Research, founded in 1946, is a leader in behavioral and social science research. AIR is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization engaged in domestic and international research, development, evaluation, analysis, product development, training and technical assistance and assessment.

NAS was created in 1991 as a direct result of an Education Summit called by then-President George H.W. Bush and co-chaired by then-Governor Bill Clinton. The goal was to create demonstration schools that would serve as models for efforts to improve the quality of K-12 education. Key business leaders led the effort and they continue to apply proven business strategies to the NAS approach to turning around low-performing schools. Over the years, NAS has transformed into a K-12 consulting practice providing professional services to school districts, state departments of education, charter authorizers, foundations and education service providers.

The depth and reach of the education-related work conducted at AIR is significant and provides a tremendous data-driven engine propelling NAS' future efforts in the field. Of the nearly 900 staff at AIR, 530 are dedicated to education, a quarter of whom have PhDs. AIR spends approximately \$100 million a year on education research.

New American Schools will function as the consulting arm of AIR and will retain its distinct and recognizable identity in the education arena. Clients and partners can expect the same high-level of service with the added benefits of access to associated research. NAS will continue to function through its two primary departments organized around direct consulting to school districts (including charter authorizers) and states as well as to other education service providers.

Examples of AIR's work includes:

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:** AIR is working closely with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to make certain that the more than \$1.9 billion it has earmarked in grants for the education-related programs and projects are achieving their goals. AIR is taking the lead in evaluating the Foundation's national school networks grants, national districts grants, technical assistance grants and assessment development grant programs. In addition, AIR experts are assisting the Foundation in a detailed evaluation of its Early College High School Initiative.

**No Child Left Behind:** AIR is participating in two four-year longitudinal evaluations of the No Child Left Behind Act, the federal government's most sweeping change to public education in a generation. In the national study, AIR is examining four key components of NCLB: accountability, teacher quality, choice, and resource allocation. In the separate state study, the issues of accountability and teacher quality will be examined in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The studies will serve as a major source of data for the National Assessment of Title I, and will culminate in a report to Congress.

**Ohio K-8 Student Assessment:** The Ohio Department of Education has awarded AIR contracts to develop the state's assessment programs for Kindergarten through Grade 8. AIR is developing a comprehensive system of diagnostic and achievement tests in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Examples of NAS's work include:

**Leadership Development:** As part of a partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education, NAS provides assistance to three of New Jersey's Abbott school districts. NAS works collaboratively on the refinement of school system strategies and structures in support of lasting improvement. The goal of this pilot program is to provide support for the transformation of the State's Abbott Districts, which were identified in a series of landmark rulings by the New Jersey Supreme Court establishing the need to help the children of poor families in urban neighborhoods.

**Small High Schools:** NAS is currently guiding the creation of 14 new small high schools to replace three large, under-performing high schools in San Diego and assisting the district in devising innovative ways to provide services and support for more autonomous schools. The primary goals of this project are to increase the number of college-ready SDCS high school graduates, particularly among low-income and minority populations, and to improve students' post-secondary options, whether college, technical training or the world of work. This project is made possible through an \$11 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Middle-Grades Improvement:** As part of an unprecedented partnership formed to strengthen middle-grades schooling, NAS provides support and leadership to Middle Start, a school improvement program, and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, an alliance of more than 65 organizations dedicated to middle-grades reform. The project is made possible by a \$3 million W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant, allowing NAS to help refine Middle Start's programs and assist in ensuring its stability and growth while advancing the cause of middle-grades reform among policy makers and other external audiences.

#### **About New American Schools**

**New American Schools** (NAS) is a leading provider of professional services and investment in K-12 education, and is committed to helping all students succeed by shaping, supporting and sustaining system-wide innovation and improvement in learning. As a business-led nonprofit organization, NAS and its strategic partners provide support to state departments of education, school districts, charter authorizers, and networks of districts, offering key stakeholders the tools and external assistance needed to facilitate and sustain both student and adult learning.

On the Internet: New American Schools, [www.naschools.org](http://www.naschools.org)  
American Institutes for Research, [www.air-dc.org](http://www.air-dc.org)

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