



**For Release
June 28, 2005**

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NEKIA Unveils New Principles for Knowledge Use in School Improvement *Principles support the launch of new era of improvement & innovation in education*

WASHINGTON – The National Education Knowledge Industry Association (NEKIA) today unveiled a set of principles to guide the use of education knowledge in K-12 school improvement and to support the burgeoning education industry. The principles, which are unique in the field of education, are designed to boost the use of research-based knowledge in the classroom and create new collaborations between researchers, educators, and product developers.

“We believe that the effective use of knowledge should be a central organizing theme of school improvement policies and practices,” said NEKIA President Jim Kohlmoos. “It’s almost cliché to say that data and knowledge should shape policy and practice in education as they do in the fields of medicine and agriculture. Yet, one of the least understood concepts in education is the use of research-based knowledge in teaching and learning.”

In addition, given the heavy emphasis placed on scientifically-based research by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Education Sciences Reform Act, education knowledge is essential to sound policy and practice at all levels, Kohlmoos said.

To address this need, NEKIA over the past year conducted an extensive literature review and discussions with leading experts. The process demonstrated that current approaches to knowledge use in K-12 education are often hampered by a variety of conditions including:

- A serious disconnect among the research community, practitioners, developers, and policy makers.
- Inadequate capacity at the local and state levels to facilitate the effective use of knowledge in school improvement.
- A lack of cultural or institutional incentives to promote greater knowledge use.
- A lack of understanding of how knowledge can shape policy and practice.

In response to those impediments and flaws, NEKIA developed four principles upon which approaches to effective knowledge use should be based:

Principle 1: Useable Knowledge. Knowledge that is used to shape policy and practice should be derived from the best available empirical evidence, informed by sound professional judgment.

Principle 2: Key Stakeholders. The effective use of knowledge requires on-going collaboration among five stakeholder groups:

- **Educators** should be involved in all phases of the knowledge development and utilization process, not just as recipients of research.
- **Policymakers** need to develop the capacity to integrate knowledge into the decisionmaking apparatus.
- **Researchers** should focus on rigor, relevance, and replication in addressing practical questions of effectiveness based on the needs of educators and policy makers.
- **Developers and providers** should use the best available knowledge in developing and delivering their products and services.
- **Intermediaries** are needed to facilitate productive collaborations and relationships among stakeholders, help interpret and disseminate findings, conduct applied research, and provide capacity-building assistance.

Principle 3: Cumulative Processes. Effective knowledge use depends upon exchanges of data and information among the stakeholders, and a continuous process of research, application and adaptation. As knowledge is used and adapted, new knowledge is created and applied in a cumulative, iterative fashion.

Principle 4: High-Priority Policies. School improvement policies at the federal, state, and local levels should focus on the effective use of knowledge and create incentives to stimulate the demand for, and supply of, knowledge-based solutions.

NEKIA plans to continue its work in education knowledge use through policy development and communications activities such as interactive forums and publications.

“The nation is on the threshold of a new era of knowledge use in education, and NEKIA’s four principles will be instrumental in guiding us in this era,” said Chris Dwyer, chair of NEKIA’s board of directors and senior vice president of RMC Research. “This era will succeed as long as we have a robust knowledge marketplace with demand stimulated by increased federal investment and supply enhanced by a vigorous knowledge industry.”

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About NEKIA:

Founded in 1997, NEKIA is a non-partisan, non-profit trade association representing the emerging knowledge industry. NEKIA’s mission is to advance the development and use of research-based knowledge for the improvement of all children. The association’s members are committed to finding new and better ways to support and expand high-quality education research, development, dissemination, technical assistance, and evaluation at the federal, regional, state, tribal, and local levels. For more information, please visit www.nekia.org