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Evaluation Tool for Aligning Open Education Resources
To Common Core Standards Now Available at OER Commons

WASHINGTON – November 15, 2011 – Achieve and the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) today announced a new tool for users to rate the quality of open education resources (OER) for teaching and student learning. The tool will allow educators to rate the quality of these resources for teaching and student learning, align these resources to the Common Core State Standards, and evaluate the extent to which the individual resources align to specific standards.

"There are millions of open education resources on the Internet, and we now have a way to evaluate their quality," said Stephen Pruitt, Achieve Vice President of Content, Research, and Development. "This tool will help educators identify the potential effectiveness of the resources and predict if they will help students become college- and career-ready."

"This tool dramatically increases the value of open resources by enabling educators to align content to the Common Core Standards directly within OER Commons," said Lisa Petrides, president of ISKME. "Now educators can use curated lesson plans, courses, and learning modules with readily available information about how these materials meet the highest standards for learning."

OER Commons, publicly launched in February 2007 by ISKME, provides a curated library and knowledge base for the search and discovery of open educational resources. Created with and for educators, students, and self-learners, OER Commons provides useful classroom materials that help students engage with rigorous subject matter. As a network for teaching and learning materials, the OER Commons offers engagement with resources in the form of social bookmarking, tagging, rating, reviewing, and online professional development to use OER.

To help states, districts, teachers, and other users determine the quality of the resources, Achieve created a series of evaluation rubrics. These rubrics are available online at http://www.achieve.org/oer-rubrics. To allow users to apply these rubrics and evaluate the quality of instructional resources, Achieve partnered with ISKME to develop this online evaluation tool.

OER Commons is now hosting the tool and its resulting evaluation data on www.oercommons.org. ISKME is also making the Achieve OER Evaluation tool available and providing technical support to other organizations who would like to use the rubrics for resources found outside of OER Commons, ensuring a rich dataset of Common Core-aligned content across the Web.

The release of this tool comes after the U.S. Department of Education's recent announcement of the Learning Registry on Monday, November 7 at the State Education Technology Directors Association Leadership Summit in National Harbor, Md. The Learning Registry is a joint effort between the federal government, nonprofit agencies, and private companies to create a permanent network of digital learning resource providers.

Educators and school administrators from across the country at the state and district level have been trained to use the Achieve OER Evaluation Tool, and have provided an initial pool of rating metadata. This metadata will be shared through the Learning Registry with other interested repositories.

Created in 1996 by the nation's governors and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization based in Washington D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless. In 2005 Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network. Starting with 13 original states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning key policies with the demands of college and careers. Achieve partnered with NGA and CCSSO on the Common Core State Standards Initiative and a number of its staff served on writing and review teams. More recently, Achieve was selected to manage the PARCC assessment consortia. The 25-state PARCC consortia were awarded Race to the Top assessment funds to create next generation assessments in math and English aligned to the CCSS. For more information about the work of Achieve, visit www.achieve.org.

The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (www.iskme.org), located in Half Moon Bay, Calif., is a global leader in research and practice around data use, open education, and social learning in the education sector. An independent, non-profit organization established in 2002, ISKME is well-known for its OER Commons initiative (www.oercommons.org), as well as its award winning international research on knowledge management in the education sector.