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**Contact:** Kari Shellhorn  
shellhorn@itstrategies.com  
(202) 585-0235

**Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Highlights Importance of ICT Literacy  
at U.S. Department of Education Leadership Summit**

**ST. LOUIS (March 10, 2004)** – The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, an alliance of education, business and government leaders working to address the education needs and challenges of work and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, today highlighted the importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Literacy during a summit of education leaders hosted by the U.S. Department of Education. In accord with the summit theme, “Empowering Accountably and Assessment Using Technology,” the Partnership led a panel discussion introducing the concept of ICT Literacy and exploring the methods and implications of its assessment.

“Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be equipped with the skills to meet the challenges of an increasingly global marketplace,” said Timothy J. Magner, board member for the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and executive director of K-12 Education for Microsoft Corporation. “ICT Literacy – the demonstration of learning skills through the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century tools – is critical to student success in school and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.”

“When thinking about how to evaluate the demonstration of ICT Literacy, there are numerous examples where business and industry have successfully integrated technology into subject mastery,” Magner continued. “The Partnership is working closely with educators, business leaders and policymakers to provide guidance that will help schools, districts and states assess ICT Literacy and ensure that students can use 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to effectively demonstrate learning skills, while mastering core subjects”

The Partnership’s panel participants included Sheryl Abshire, chair elect for CoSN and administrative coordinator of technology for Calcasieu Parish School System in Lake Charles, LA; Missy Buschnell, an educator with Calcasieu Parish School System in Lake Charles, LA; Diny Golder-Dardis, executive director of JES & Co. and director of research and development for the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills; and Timothy J. Magner, Executive Director K12 Education, Microsoft Corporation.

“In today’s technology infused learning arenas it is important that we accurately gauge a student’s abilities to effectively use technology to support and improve learning,” said Sheryl Abshire, secretary of CoSN and administrative coordinator of technology for Calcasieu Parish School System. “As educators and administrators, it is critical that we assess where we are in this process in order to accurately plan and implement programs to assure that every student is capable and competent in using 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to solve 21<sup>st</sup> century problems.”

(MORE)

The Secretary's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Leadership Summit in St. Louis was attended by education leaders from state and local education agencies and schools. U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige delivered the keynote presentation examining leadership and NCLB. This is the first in a series of two technology leadership summits hosted by the U.S. Department of Education. The summit was designed to strengthen the implementation of NCLB and provide guidance and strategies for decision-makers who are developing accountability and assessment systems.

### **About the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a unique alliance of education, business and government leaders working to fully address the education needs and challenges of work and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Partnership currently has eight member organizations: Apple Computer, Inc., Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation, National Education Association, SAP and Time Warner Foundation. The effort is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. The Partnership has issued a free report, *Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, and companion *Milestones for Improving Learning and Education (MILE) Guide for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* to articulate a collective vision for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and make recommendations on how to define and integrate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into K-12 curricula.

Based in Washington, DC and Tucson, Arizona, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a joint project developed and administered cooperatively by Infotech Strategies and JES & Co. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a tax-exempt 501 (c) 3 organization. More information can be found at [www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org).

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