FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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High School Transcript Workgroup Proposes
XML Standard as Education Community Standard
Public Comment Period Now Open

February 22, 2006 (Washington DC) ~ The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce that the High School Transcript Workgroup of the Standards Forum for Education has proposed its High School XML Transcript as an approved and recognized education community standard.

"I'm excited about posting this proposed national standard for the XML High School Transcript. It is the result of over a year's worth of weekly conference calls and three face-to-face meetings of the workgroup that developed this schema," states John T. "Tom" Stewart, Member of AACRAO's SPEEDE Committee; Retired College Registrar from Miami Dade College in Florida; and Co-Chair of the High School Transcript Workgroup.

"I am very pleased that a process of community-wide collaboration has created an open standard for exchange of High School academic achievement records," says Bruce Marton, Associate Director of SIS at the University of Texas at Austin; Member of AACRAO’s SPEEDE Committee; and Co-Chair of the High School Transcript Workgroup. "A collaboration of High Schools, Colleges, State Education Agencies and Information System Providers has produced a standard that provides for national interoperability and best practices while preserving local flexibility and control."

The workgroup is comprised of a wide range of representatives from state agencies (including California, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma), college and university admissions officers and registrars, and high school counselors and registrars. It allows the sending of a high school's data for a student that postsecondary schools need to make timely and appropriate admissions decisions, as well as being able to provide important data to state agencies.

Together, the National Council of Higher Education Loan Program's (NCHELP) Electronic Standards Committee (ESC), PESC's Standards Forum for Education, the Office of Federal Student Aid of the U.S. Department of Education, and the American Association of Collegiate
Registrar and Admissions Officer’s (AACRAO) Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange (SPEEDE) Committee, and the entire education community have worked closely over the past few years to develop an objective, sound process for approving standards (see http://www.PESC.org/info/Policies-Procedures.asp.)

With the development work completed and submitted on January 23, 2006, the High School XML Transcript is now immediately ready for public comment period. The complete submission can be accessed at http://www.PESC.org/Workgroups/HSTranscript/. The public comment period begins Thursday February 23, 2006 and will be thirty (30) calendar days. Public comment period expires at the close of business on Monday March 27, 2006. All comments, from the PESC Membership and the public, shall be made in the form of an e-mail to the PESC Executive Director at: Sessa@PESC.org. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:

1) Responder name and appropriate contact information;
2) Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or represent those of a group the responder represents;
3) Nature of the responder’s interest in the standard (what is the issue and why is it important?);
4) Element(s) of the proposed standard with which issue is taken;
5) Changes suggested to resolve the issue(s).

The Submission Letter, Business Case and History Letter, and PESC Response Letter are all posted to the website and will also be attached to next edition of the Standard.

The Process

Within 30 calendar days after the close of the public comment period, the Change Control Board (CCB) of the Standards Forum for Education will address and consider all public comments and make, in consultation with the High School Transcript Workgroup any necessary revisions. All public comments will be posted to the PESC website during the review process. The CCB’s consideration/revision period expires on April 26, 2006 unless extenuating circumstances exist which require further deliberation.

Once any changes resulting from the public comment period have been incorporated, the CCB will recommend to the Standards Forum’s Steering Committee and the PESC Board of Directors that the Specification be submitted to a vote by the PESC Members. The Board will have seven (7) calendar days to approve the submission or refer it back to the CCB with specific instructions for further work. The PESC office will issue electronic ballots to the official contacts of voting Member organizations.

Completed ballots, including the reason(s) for any rejection, shall be returned to the PESC office via e-mail attachment, fax, overnight delivery, or U.S. Postal Service within ten (10) business days. PESC staff is responsible for the tabulation of the ballots; acceptance of the Specification as a
standard requires an affirmative vote of at least 80% of all votes cast. Once the Members accept the Specification, the Board of Directors will within seven (7) calendar days ratify the vote, publish/post all necessary documents and communications, and implement version control on all documents. Approved standards are freely accessible on the PESC website (www.PESC.org).

For more information, please visit www.PESC.org.

About PESC
Established in 1997 and located in Washington, D.C., the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is a non-profit, community-based, umbrella association of colleges and universities; professional and commercial organizations; data, software and service providers; and state and federal government agencies. PESC’s mission is to lead the establishment and adoption of data exchange standards in education. The goals of the mission are to enable the improvement of institutional performance and foster collaboration across educational communities in order to lower costs, improve service, and attain system interoperability.