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School District of Philadelphia Realizes Mathematics Improvement With Curriculum Reforms Aligned With Holt Math Materials

PHILADELPHIA – November 8, 2004 – Holt, Rinehart and Winston today announced that the School District of Philadelphia recorded an 11.1 percentage point increase in the number of eighth grade students scoring in the Advanced/Proficient performance level in the math portion of the PSSA during the 2003-04 school year, the first year that *Mathematics in Context (MiC)* has been used throughout the district. Holt has partnered with the School District of Philadelphia in a mathematics education reform effort for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, and provided training and support on how to use the *MiC* program during the 2003-04 school year.

Mathematics in Context, published by Encyclopaedia Britannica and distributed by Holt, was selected by the School District of Philadelphia in 2003 as the curriculum that most closely aligned with state standards and district Core Curriculum for middle school mathematics education. *MiC* was aligned with the district's Core Curriculum, pilot tested in 2002/03, and implemented district-wide for the start of the 2003/04 school year. Holt provided more than 150 hours of professional development training for middle school teachers and provided ongoing curricular support during the year. District officials expressed elation that their efforts at mathematics education reform yielded the expected results, improved PSSA scores, at year-end.

“We are very pleased that our redesigned mathematics curriculum and reform projects resulted in such a substantial increase in PSSA scores for our eighth grade students,” said Cecilia Cannon, Officer for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development for the School District of Philadelphia.

“*Mathematics in Context* proved a strong base for our Core Curriculum, and Holt provided the needed curricular support to ensure a successful district-wide implementation.”

“Holt congratulates the School District of Philadelphia for its successful implementation of *Mathematics in Context*, and for achieving gains on the PSSA that exceeded district expectations,” said Judy Fowler, president of Holt. “Holt will continue to offer program support in the coming years, and we look forward to seeing continued gains throughout the district.”

Teachers throughout the district participated in workshops on implementing *MiC* in the classroom, curriculum alignment, pedagogical best practices, and informed assessment. This extensive professional development program ensured that teachers were familiar with the Core Curriculum and would be comfortable using it, knowing that *MiC* met core program materials needs of the district. The program was deemed so successful that the School District of Philadelphia hosted administrators and

teachers on school tours during the 2004 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Annual Conference. District leaders also spoke at NCTM workshops and panel discussions touting exemplary mathematics programs.

Mathematics in Context is aligned with NCTM's *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*, and it draws students into learning with engaging problems that make mathematics meaningful. *MiC* was collaboratively developed by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Freudenthal Institute of the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands. An international advisory committee, which included mathematicians and educators, ensured that the curriculum was consistent with the NCTM standards. This alignment with standards was instrumental in securing funding and recognition by the National Science Foundation — a federal agency dedicated to advancing science and mathematics education.

About Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Holt, Rinehart and Winston is a leading publisher of textbooks and educational materials for grades six through 12 and is part of Harcourt Education, a global education provider serving students and teachers in PreK through grade 12, adult learners, and readers of all ages. The Harcourt companies are Harcourt School Publishers; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Harcourt Achieve (including the Rigby and Steck-Vaughn imprints); Harcourt Assessment; Classroom Connect; Harcourt Canada; and Harcourt Trade Publishers. For further information, please call (800) 992-1627 or visit www.hrw.com or www.harcourt.com.

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For More Information:

- Jennifer Harrison, for Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 916-716-0636, jennifer@JHarrisonPR.com
- Patti Smith, Holt, Rinehart and Winston: 512-721-7809, patti.smith@hrw.com
- Joe Lyons for School District of Philadelphia, 215 299-7850, jl Lyons@phila.k12.pa.us