

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **RIGBY LITERACY OBTAINS HIGH RATING FROM NATIONAL READING EXPERTS**

*Rigby Literacy Ranks Among Top-Scoring Comprehensive Reading Programs Evaluated by University of Oregon Criteria*

AUSTIN, TX – May 2, 2005--A report released today by Harcourt Achieve, Inc., indicates that *Rigby Literacy (2004)*, an alternative core reading program, obtained a high rating on *The Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*. The guide, created by the National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators at the University of Oregon, is an aid for educators and parents to evaluate school reading programs. The evaluation was conducted by six national reading experts under the direction of the Educational Research Institute of America (ERIA).

When compared with other programs evaluated using the Oregon criteria, *Rigby Literacy* now ranks among the top-scoring comprehensive reading programs. "The results of the review were very positive across each of the reporting areas," said Kimberly Munroe, director, ERIA. "In addition, the results of this review of *Rigby Literacy (2004)* show significant increases from the scores received by the earlier edition of the *Rigby Literacy* program, suggesting that the revisions made to the program were indeed effective at attaining a more systematic, focused approach to instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency, while maintaining an emphasis on including motivating fiction and nonfiction books to engage early readers."

When asked about the evaluation, Bill Wilkinson, director of research at Harcourt Achieve said, "I think this is exactly the way the system is supposed to work. When we saw the evaluation of the 2000 edition, we acted quickly to refine the program and bring it in line with Oregon's evaluation criteria. Now reading specialists in programs such as Reading First, have another option to use when it comes to ensuring that every child is reading on grade level by third grade." Copies of the report are available at

[www.harcourtachieve.com/Pages/articles/RigbyLit\\_ERIA\\_research\\_web.pdf](http://www.harcourtachieve.com/Pages/articles/RigbyLit_ERIA_research_web.pdf)

#### **National Reviewers**

The six reviewers who completed this thorough and objective review of *Rigby Literacy (2004)* were representative of varied positions of expertise within early reading and representative of geographic regions across the United States. Reviewers included: a California District Literacy Coordinator, a Florida K-5 Reading and Language Arts Specialist, a Georgia District Literacy Coordinator, a former Michigan State Department of Education coordinator and English

Language Arts Content Specialist, a Minnesota District Literacy Leader, and a New York City elementary school principal. By scoring the 2004 *Rigby Literacy* program so highly across the various items within the *Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*, reviewers have provided data to confirm that the updated program provides and supports early literacy instruction that aligns with what scientifically based research has proved to be effective.

### **Description of the Evaluation Tool**

To complete their evaluation of *Rigby Literacy*, reviewers used *The Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*. This tool was developed by Dr. Deborah Simmons and Dr. Edward Kame'enui from the University of Oregon as part of a project of the National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (NCITE), a federally funded national center that worked with publishers and developers of basal programs from 1990-2000.

The tool was created in order to aid states, districts, and schools in the selection of research-based reading programs. The tool is separated by grade level (kindergarten through grade 3). Within each grade level, as the foundation of its organization, the tool uses the five elements identified by the National Reading Panel (2000) as fundamental to early reading instruction. These five elements include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

*The Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis* is the primary tool being used by many Reading First states. It was also included as part of the Secretary of Education's Leadership Academies (2001- 2002). The Oregon Reading First Center used the tool to evaluate a number of comprehensive reading programs for the State of Oregon and reported the results on their website.

### **About Harcourt Achieve**

Harcourt Achieve produces learning solutions and content that fundamentally and positively change the lives of young and adult learners. Published under the Rigby, Saxon and Steck-Vaughn imprints, its products are based on a developmental philosophy that assesses learners' skills, matches them to appropriate content and accelerates them to meet and exceed expectations. The Rigby imprint offers progressive learning solutions for core reading and English language learner instruction that provide differentiated instruction to match each student's instructional level. The Saxon imprint offers the nation's best selling and most thoroughly researched skills-based mathematics program for grades K-12, as well as popular phonics, K-3 spelling, and early learning programs. The Steck-Vaughn imprint offers easy-to-use, innovative learning solutions that accelerate content-area knowledge, reading skills, and preparation for standards-based tests, allowing learners to meet and exceed expectations. For more information, please visit [www.HarcourtAchieve.com](http://www.HarcourtAchieve.com).

Harcourt Achieve is part of Harcourt Education, a global education provider serving students and teachers in Pre-K through grade 12, adult learners and readers of all ages. The Harcourt Education companies are Harcourt School Publishers; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Harcourt Achieve; Harcourt Assessment; Classroom Connect; Harcourt Religion Publishers; Harcourt

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