



For Immediate Release

## **AMERICA'S CHOICE ADDS HARCOURT ACHIEVE'S "STECK-VAUGHN ELEMENTS OF READING: VOCABULARY" TO APPROVED CURRICULUM LIST**

*Standards-Driven School Reform Program Recommends Vocabulary Program for Use in Grades K-3*

**AUSTIN, TX--August 11, 2005**— Harcourt Achieve Inc. today announced that America's Choice recently added Steck-Vaughn's *Elements of Reading®: Vocabulary* to its list of recommended learning materials that support the America's Choice language-arts curriculum in grades kindergarten through three (K-3). The America's Choice School Design, a for-profit subsidiary of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), is one of the nation's largest comprehensive K-12 standards-based school reform programs.

With its addition to the list, *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* becomes a K-3 curriculum requirement for any elementary school that joins the America's Choice network. These include new partnerships in Mississippi, Georgia, Hawaii and New York. For existing members of the America's Choice network, *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* is a highly recommended option.

"Steck-Vaughn's *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* helps children acquire oral vocabulary that is critical for their future reading and writing success," said Lynn Harris, vice president, national sales manager for Harcourt Achieve. "We are delighted that America's Choice, with its emphasis on best-education practices, is recommending this product for use in its elementary schools."

"We wanted a program that helps students learn vocabulary conceptually rather than as discreet items of information," said Dotty Fowler, director of reading at America's Choice. "*Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* is easy for teachers to manage and provides a model for vocabulary instruction that they can use with other texts in various content areas."

Through partnerships with states, school districts, and individual schools, the America's Choice School Design helps some 325,000 students meet No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requirements. Many of the schools were low-performers that the America's Choice program helped turn around. The elementary school program focuses on standards-based curriculum and instructional strategies that build key literacy skills, convey core concepts, and enable students to apply what they know.

Schools that contract with America's Choice receive a list of recommended products, which they may purchase with Title I and Reading First (RF) dollars. Reading First is the primary national

initiative for improving reading in kindergarten through grade three classrooms. The initiative, which is part of NCLB, funds scientifically research-based reading programs.

### **Research Driven Literacy Program**

Harcourt Achieve developed *Elements of Reading* to meet the challenge of NCLB and National Reading Panel (NRP) guidelines. *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* is based on the research of Dr. Isabel Beck and Dr. Margaret McKeown and their years of classroom practice. Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction, the highly influential book by Beck, McKeown, and Linda Kucan, inspired the creation of the vocabulary module.

*"Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* offers proven tools and techniques for helping school-age children increase their vocabulary," said Beck. "Children learn, discuss, and use new vocabulary words through a variety of interesting activities. The importance of children acquiring a large and sophisticated vocabulary cannot be overstated. Vocabulary knowledge is very strongly related to reading achievement."

Components include a read-aloud anthology, photo cards, a word watcher chart, student work texts, and a teacher's guide. *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* is suitable for either whole-class or small-group instruction.

According to reviewers at the Florida Center for Reading Research, "The program embodies excellent literature that spans a variety of genres and is used to introduce the new vocabulary. Explaining the concepts of the words using everyday language, not stiff dictionary definitions, and connecting the words to known concepts is an important part of the program."

### **Increased FCAT Test Scores**

Prior to its official inclusion on the America's Choice recommended list, *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* was already in use in several America's Choice schools. The Enterprise Learning Academy in Jacksonville, FL began using the product at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year.

"It's a teacher friendly, easy-to-use addition to the skills block," said Kim Hayward, a literacy coach at the school. "Kids look forward to the daily sessions. They are using the robust, tier-two vocabulary words taught within the program in their oral language as well as their writing."

Teachers utilize the vocabulary module with their classes for 15 or 20 minutes a day. The program is now in its second year. Reading-vocabulary test scores for the school's third graders increased after a single year of use, based on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results.

### **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 Trade Publishers; Greenwood/Heinemann and Heinemann Global Library. For more information, please visit [www.harcourt.com](http://www.harcourt.com).

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