



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Texas Education Agency Chooses Steck-Vaughn and Renaissance Learning as Among Nine Program Providers for New Texas Intensive Reading Initiative

Read Now with Power Up!, an Intensive Reading Intervention Solution, Motivates Struggling Readers Through a Combination of Innovative Instruction and Advanced Progress-Monitoring Technology

AUSTIN, TX – March 24, 2006 – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) selected ***Read Now with Power Up!***[™], jointly produced by Steck-Vaughn and Renaissance Learning[™], Inc., for inclusion in the state's Intensive Reading Initiative/Intensive Math Initiative (IRI/IMI) list of approved curriculum materials. To support the initiative, the Texas Legislature allocated funds for the 2005-2007 school years to campuses with the most difficulty in improving reading and/or math achievement. The IRI funds are earmarked for students in grades 4-7 who read below grade level and fail to meet the TAKS (Texas Assessment on Knowledge and Skills) test standards.

Harcourt Achieve, publisher of Steck-Vaughn's educational learning materials and content, and Renaissance Learning, Inc., (Nasdaq: RLRN), provider of computerized assessment and progress monitoring tools for pre-K–12 schools, collaborated to create ***Read Now with Power Up!*** The new research-based program integrates the best of Steck-Vaughn's *Power Up!*[®], reading curriculum with Renaissance Learning's *Read Now*[®] assessment software and is designed to accelerate achievement for students reading significantly below grade level. The program's

instructional model ensures a common approach to supporting struggling readers and builds teacher capacity.

“TEA’s intensive reading initiative addresses the special needs of readers in grades 4-7 who are falling through the cracks,” said Tim McEwen, president and chief executive officer of Harcourt Achieve. “To help these students succeed, *Read Now with Power Up!*, aligned to all 15 Reading Next goals, combines systematic, scaffolded instruction with daily progress monitoring.”

High interest fiction and nonfiction books are at the heart of the program. Each book centers around a compelling, age-appropriate theme for struggling readers. *Read Now with Power Up!*’s interactive software reinforces reading strategies for the students and provides ongoing assessment of a student’s reading progress.

“The program is flexible, engaging and affordable,” said Terry Paul, chief executive officer and president of Renaissance Learning, Inc. “*Read Now with Power Up!* can be implemented in different instructional environments to meet a teacher’s specific time and scheduling requirements. Our web-based progress-monitoring technology empowers teachers to respond quickly to each student’s individual needs. Teachers have at their fingertips a robust management system for tracking and managing student data.”

For more information on *Read Now with Power Up!*, visit www.ReadNowPowerUp.com. For more information on the Texas Intensive Reading Initiative and *Read Now with Power Up!* visit www.SteckVaughn.com/TexasIRI.

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Renaissance Learning, Inc.

Renaissance Learning, Inc. is a leading provider of computerized assessment and progress monitoring tools for pre-K-12 schools and districts. Renaissance Learning products give students and teachers continuous feedback to inform instruction and help teachers and administrators motivate students, dramatically accelerate learning, and improve test scores. Renaissance Learning has seven U.S. locations and subsidiaries in Australia, Canada, India and the United Kingdom. For more information visit www.renlearn.com.

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 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 <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 <http://www.harcourt.com/>.