



Reading Recovery® Council
of North America

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MARCH 23, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GAO Report Provides Springboard for Oversight Hearings

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigative report on the \$6 billion Reading First program issued today again documents U. S. Department of Education mismanagement and interference with state and local control of curriculum, said Reading Recovery Council of North America (RRCNA) officials.

“Frankly, it’s disappointing to read about inadequate procedures and lack of controls. The average American wants children to learn to read using programs with proven effectiveness,” said Jady Johnson, executive director of RRCNA.

RRCNA was one of three organizations that filed a complaint with the USDE Inspector General. The Inspector General found multiple examples of federal interference in local curriculum decisions, selection of biased consultants, and unethical behavior of federal officials. In many areas of the nation, Reading Recovery was denied funding under Reading First. Reading First officials and consultants claimed that Reading Recovery was not scientifically based.

In contrast, Reading Recovery was recently recognized as an effective early reading intervention after a 3-year independent study by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), a branch of the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). See <http://www.whatworks.ed.gov>.

“Because of Reading First officials’ bias, tens of thousands of children were denied Reading Recovery lessons. The GAO report will provide a springboard for upcoming Congressional oversight hearings on Reading First. Correcting the problems in Reading First will help to restore integrity to federal education funding initiatives,” said Johnson.

Reading Recovery is a short-term reading intervention for first graders with the lowest reading achievement and is used in 7,500 schools in the U.S. In Reading Recovery, students work one-to-one with a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day. For students who complete the full series of lessons, 75% learn to read at grade level within 12-20 weeks and then continue their progress with good classroom teaching. In the 2005–2006 school year, the average Reading

Recovery teacher taught 8.1 Reading Recovery students and 41.4 students outside Reading Recovery.

Unlike commercial programs, Reading Recovery is a not-for-profit partnership of schools and universities. Since its introduction in the U.S. in 1984, Reading Recovery has served more than 1.6 million children, making it one of the nation's oldest scientifically based reading interventions. More than 15% of the nation's elementary schools with first grades now use Reading Recovery as their safety net intervention for children who might otherwise not learn to read. To learn more about Reading Recovery and its research base, visit www.readingrecovery.org.

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