

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This year, your child's school will be taking part in a study of supplemental reading comprehension programs for fifth-grade students. There are four programs altogether. The goal of the study is to find out how much these programs improve children's reading skills. The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring the study, and it will be carried out by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and three other firms that are well known for their education studies. (Please see the enclosed brochure for more details on the study.)

Some schools in the study will continue to teach reading using only their regular curriculum. Other schools will add one of the supplemental comprehension programs to their regular reading instruction. To decide which schools will use only their regular program and which will use one of the four other programs, we will pick school names as you would pick names in a lottery. If your child's school is chosen for one of the four reading programs, his or her teacher will be trained to use that program and will spend about 30 minutes a day teaching reading comprehension according to that program.

To see how much the reading programs help, we will test your child in reading three times: at the beginning and end of the 2007-08 school year. During the year, we will also collect information on your child's attendance and any extra language or reading help your child may receive. We need this information even if your child's school uses only its regular reading program because your child is important to the study either way.

All information on your child will be kept confidential. For example, we will never refer to students by name. No one—not parents, school personnel, or anyone else—will be able to get information on your child, except as required by law, regulation, or court order.

If you do not want your child to take part in the study, please call Mathematica's toll-free number, 1-888-535-0283, or send a note to your child's school within the next week. You may mail this note to the school or give it to your child to take to his or her teacher. ***If you and your child agree that he or she will be in the study, you do not need to do anything.*** Even if you do give your consent now, your child may still withdraw from the study later, without penalty.

If you have any questions about the study of reading comprehension programs, please contact Dr. Wendy Mansfield, the deputy study director, at Mathematica's toll-free number, 1-888-535-0283. Thank you in advance for your help with this important study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jerry West
Study Director