



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

September 10, 2002

Honorable Patricia Schroeder
President
Association of American Publishers, Inc.
50 F Street, NW, Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Schroeder:

Thank you for your letter concerning the "Analysis of Reading Assessment Instruments for K-3" released through the Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement at the University of Oregon. I assure you that the findings of this study do not in any way represent an "approved list" of assessments for use under the Reading First program. Rather, this analysis examines the technical qualities of a group of K-3 assessments, not their suitability for use in connection with Reading First.

The use of instructional assessments is a key component of the Reading First program. It is through the use of ongoing assessments with proven validity and reliability that classroom teachers can measure where students are and monitor their progress. Reading First requires the administration of screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessments so that teachers can effectively screen, identify and overcome reading barriers facing their students.

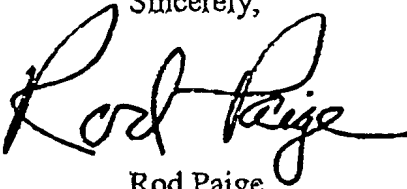
In their applications for Reading First grants, States must demonstrate how they will evaluate the appropriateness, validity and reliability, and alignment of assessments that will be used as part of the State's Reading First program. Reference to the University of Oregon analysis is not sufficient information to meet the review standard for this criterion. In fact, the expert review panel has found proposals that merely assert the intention to select assessments from the analysis not to meet the required standard. Conversely, proposals have been found to meet or exceed the required standard without any reference to this analysis.

As I indicated in my previous letter to you, there is no approved list of instructional materials for use in connection with the Reading First program, and I assure you that this includes instructional assessments. The Department will further clarify this point in a notice on the Reading First website (www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst). Please feel free to contact the Reading First program office at (202) 401-0113 or Reading.First@ed.gov should you require any additional information.

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I appreciate your continued interest in the Reading First program, and your ongoing support for the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod Paige". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rod" and last name "Paige" clearly legible.

Rod Paige