

## **Rigby Education and Wireless Generation Announce Strategic Partnership and Innovative Early Reading Assessment Product - the Rigby Reading Assessment System Powered by mCLASS Technology**

Harcourt Company Teams with Wireless Generation for New Mobile Observational Assessment Solution

SAN FRANCISCO, May 1

Rigby, a division of Harcourt Supplemental Publishers and a leading publisher of supplementary educational products, has teamed with Wireless Generation, a producer of breakthrough mobile observational assessment software tools, to develop the Rigby Reading Assessment System. The new system is powered by Wireless Generation's mCLASS(TM) technology. It will be available in Fall 2002 and will be demonstrated at the International Reading Association meeting in San Francisco on April 29 - May 2.

Rigby Reading Assessment System combines Rigby's leading leveled books and benchmark assessment instruments with Wireless Generation's breakthrough software platform for mobile classroom assessment -- mCLASS. Rigby's proprietary benchmarking assessments, until now available only in paper-and-pencil formats, can now be administered on Palm OS handheld devices, thus freeing teachers from time-consuming record-keeping duties.

The software instantly tabulates all the data, "synchs" to the Web-based mCLASS system, and provides instant reports on students' progress across a range of literacy skill areas. Options include longitudinal reports at the individual student, class, building, and even the district level. The Rigby Reading Assessment System can be used with any reading curriculum. It is designed to allow teachers to administer a full battery of benchmark observational assessments, including oral reading records, comprehension rubrics, phonics inventories, and reading behaviors checklists using special "benchmark" Rigby leveled readers that are included with the system.

Steven Korte, President of Harcourt Supplemental Publishers, said, "We believe the Rigby Reading Assessment System sets a new standard for K-2 reading assessment at a crucial time. Serious issues of accountability in schools are moving quickly down to the lower grades, and more and more assessment is now occurring in grades K - 2. Thanks to our partnership with Wireless Generation and its mCLASS mobile assessment platform, we can now offer teachers the right tool for benchmark assessment and provide administrators the student progress data they need."

"This partnership reflects the clear focus of Harcourt's eLearning strategy on products, tools and services that meet real customer needs and help teachers integrate technology into the day-to-day classroom," said Ann Foster, Harcourt's Vice President of eLearning.

The product will be distributed by Rigby; Wireless Generation will provide training, data, and support services.

Said Larry Berger, CEO of Wireless Generation, "We are delighted that Rigby, a top player in the field of early reading and assessment, has recognized mCLASS as the technology platform of choice for observational reading assessment. Our young company was founded to help teachers. We're thrilled that a company with Rigby's large and loyal customer base and extensive distribution network will be helping our assessment technologies reach so many teachers so quickly."

The Rigby Reading Assessment System package will include, for each teacher, easy-to-use Palm-based software, a Palm OS computer, leveled benchmark books, and one year of Web-based data services.

#### About Rigby

Rigby Education, an imprint of Harcourt Supplemental Publishers, is the premier provider of reading/language arts resources for the elementary grades, and provides outstanding professional development courses, customized workshops, and training.

Harcourt Supplemental Publishers is part of Harcourt, Inc., a leading provider of instructional materials and standardized tests for grades K through 12. Other Harcourt companies include Harcourt School Publishers, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Classroom Connect, Harcourt Trade, and Harcourt Educational Measurement. For further information, please visit <http://www.rigby.com> or <http://www.harcourt.com>.

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#### About Wireless Generation

Wireless Generation is a privately held company, founded in late 2000 on the belief that teachers and school administrators deserve a new generation of highly mobile, easy-to-use tools that support their assessment and management needs and lead to greater accountability.

Wireless Generation is located at 26 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010. The company can be reached at 646.336.5451 and the Web address is <http://www.wgen.net>.

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