

Jan. 29, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Texas SBOE Lists *On Our Way to English* for Adoption**

### **Planning, Paperwork Pays Off for Publisher**

AUSTIN, Texas – After an exhaustive process that entailed almost four years of preparation and hundreds of pages of governmental paperwork, Harcourt Achieve’s *On Our Way to English* was selected as one of only three English language programs the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) approved to list for adoption in 2004.

Rigby, an imprint of Harcourt Achieve, created *On Our Way to English* to help students in grades K–5 learn English well enough not only to succeed in their schoolwork but also to perform well on today’s high-stakes standardized tests. The program systematically and explicitly teaches English language learners (ELLs) to read and write, as opposed to assuming that it will happen through oral language, classroom interaction and shared reading.

Developed by a team of noted ELL authorities and respected educators, the program is based on rigorous research and proven methods, and meets the needs of growing English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual populations in schools. To meet accountability needs of schools, the program is correlated to state and national ESL and content standards.

“What’s really different about *On Our Way to English* is that it is the first program to place as much emphasis on ELLs’ English literacy development as was previously given primarily to language acquisition,” says Harcourt Achieve President and CEO Tim McEwen.

“The basic problem is that a lot of these kids were learning enough to speak English. But you can speak a language and be totally illiterate. *On Our Way to English* fills that gap. Finally there is a way for students to learn to read and write well enough to perform on grade level.”

The SBOE adoption process is not for the impatient publisher or the lackluster program. This listing alone is the result of nearly four years of research, writing, editing, publication proclamations, bid material applications, strict correlations and “many, many other smaller deadlines,” McEwen says.

That wasn’t the end of the process, though. Next, *On Our Way to English* and other competing programs faced the scrutiny of a handful of teachers tasked with evaluating the program based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards. That’s when, by necessity, many publishers withdrew from the adoption process because, according to McEwen, “they simply didn’t meet the TEKS standards.”

Only then did SBOE officials step in to review the remaining titles and make final decisions regarding which programs to list for adoption.

Texas is one of 22 states in which school districts cannot use state funds to buy a program unless the SBOE has first approved the material.

That’s why companies such as Harcourt Achieve develop certain programs with TEKS and other standards in mind. The only problem is that – from product conception to adoption listing to school purchases – the process can take years. And during this time, the educational market can change.

“The ELL experts we consulted to develop this program know their field and the market,” McEwen says. “That’s why we were able to foresee the need and develop a product to meet that need at the right time.”

### **About Harcourt Achieve**

Harcourt Achieve produces learning solutions and content that fundamentally and positively changes the lives of young and adult learners. Published under the Rigby 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 and reading skills, allowing learners to meet and exceed expectations. These targeted resources assess, remediate, strengthen and enhance skills and reading development. The Rigby imprint offers progressive learning solutions for reading instruction that provide differentiated instruction to match students’ instructional levels. These products are based on strong instructional pedagogy that supports teachers as they actively guide and assess student progress. 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 PreK 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 Canada; Harcourt Religion Publishers, Harcourt Trade Publishers,

Greenwood/Heinemann and Heinemann Global Library. For more information, please visit [www.harcourt.com](http://www.harcourt.com).

**Contact Information:**

Harcourt Achieve

Jeff Johnson

Director of Marketing Communications

512-795-3215

[jeff.johnson@harcourt.com](mailto:jeff.johnson@harcourt.com)