

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

SAXON MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH SHOWN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN RECENT INDEPENDENT STUDY OF TEXAS SCHOOLS

Saxon Students Outperform Non-Saxon Students on State's Standardized TAAS and TAKS Tests

AUSTIN, TX—October 3, 2005— An independent research report released today by Harcourt Achieve, Inc. indicates that Texas students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades who used *Saxon Middle School Math* programs achieved higher performance levels on statewide assessments than non-Saxon users. In addition to improving their math skills in middle school, Saxon users performed better on high school exit exams. This suggests that students retained what they learned over time. Performance scores for minority, economically disadvantaged, special education and at-risk Saxon students also reflected these findings.

Planning, Research & Evaluation Services (PRES) Associates, Inc., an independent education research firm based in Jackson, Wyoming, conducted the archival study, using rigorous, quasi experimental design to evaluate the instructional effectiveness of *Saxon Math* programs for middle-school learners. The study, “The Relationship Between *Using Saxon Middle School Math* and Student Performance on Texas State Assessments,” examined achievement data from 1994-2002 and followed longitudinal student progress over the seven years. In general, sixth grade students covered in the study used *Saxon 7/6*, seventh graders used *Saxon 8/7* and eighth graders used *Algebra ½*.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandates that educational materials purchased with public funds must be proven by scientific research to improve student achievement in the classroom. In an effort to meet NCLB criteria for investigating education programs within a scientific research paradigm, the PRES evaluation was carefully and rigorously designed to result in the best possible evidence regarding program effectiveness.

“The results were very consistent and all the analyses came out positive,” said PRES President and Director of Research and Evaluation Dr. Mariam Manley. “*Saxon Middle School Math* was particularly effective with disadvantaged minorities and special education students--in part, I believe, because of its looping or continual practice design. Another advantage is that Saxon is user friendly for teachers and does not require extensive professional development. A first-year teacher can hit the ground running with Saxon. I think this is why we found Saxon was just as effective regardless of the amount of time it was used by individual schools.”

In conducting the statistical analysis of Texas state assessment data, PRES controlled for prior performance and economic status. The educational research firm identified 15 middle and high schools that used *Saxon Math*. Based on key demographics, the state of Texas subsequently matched these schools with 15 non-Saxon-user schools that were randomly selected for comparison.

Saxon students showed significant growth in Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) math performance from sixth to eighth grade. Growth was not dependent on how long a school had used the program; schools that had just begun to use the Saxon program in 1998 performed as well as schools that had been using it since 1993. Minority, economically disadvantaged, special education and at-risk Saxon students had a higher TAAS learning index than non-Saxon users.

PRES also analyzed results from Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), including the TAKS tenth grade exit-level exam. A higher percentage of Saxon students met the TAKS math minimum requirements than the non-Saxon group. Compared with the control group and students statewide, the Saxon learners performed better on all math objectives measured by the TAKS.

Saxon uses a spiraling instruction design rather than a unit based approach, and topics are revisited throughout the curriculum. “The Saxon program was created and field tested with the intent to develop a program that would encourage frequent practice and problem solving, skills retention, linkage of concepts, and most importantly help all students succeed,” said Tim McEwen, president of Harcourt Achieve. “The PRES study confirms that we are on the right track.”

Copies of the PRES report are available at:

http://saxonpublishers.harcourtachieve.com/HA/correlations/pdf/s/SXMath_Middle_TX_research_web.pdf

For more information on Saxon Middle School Math please visit www.harcourtachieve.com

For more information on Planning, Research & Evaluation Services (PRES) Associates, Inc., please visit www.presassociates.com

About Harcourt Achieve

Harcourt Achieve produces learning solutions and content that fundamentally and positively change the lives of young and adult learners. Published under the Rigby, Saxon 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 Rigby imprint offers progressive learning solutions for core reading and English language learner instruction that provide differentiated instruction to match each student’s instructional level. The Saxon imprint offers the nation’s best selling and most thoroughly researched skills-based mathematics program for grades K-12, as well as popular

phonics, K-3 spelling, and early learning programs. The Steck-Vaughn imprint offers easy-to-use, innovative learning solutions that accelerate content-area knowledge, reading skills, and preparation for standards-based tests, allowing learners to meet and exceed expectations. For more information, please visit www.HarcourtAchieve.com.

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