

# IMPLEMENTATION OF READING PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND  
ACT (P.L. 107-110), FOCUSING ON THE READING FIRST AND OTHER  
LITERACY-RELATED PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

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JUNE 13, 2002

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## IMPLEMENTATION OF READING PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

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THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2002

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD-430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Kennedy (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kennedy, Gregg, and Collins.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. We will come to order. Today, we hold the second in a series of oversight hearings we plan on the new bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in January. We held the first hearing on the overall status of the implementation on April 23rd.

This morning, we have the opportunity to focus on the implementation of the Reading First program and other literacy-related programs.

Reading is the foundation of learning and the golden door to opportunity. Too many children fail to read at an acceptable level. For the students who do not learn to read well in the early years of elementary school, it is virtually impossible to keep up in the later years. We are grateful that the administration, especially the First Lady, have made reading a priority.

Parents and teachers want reading programs that work—that help children master the basics, comprehend the material, and learn to love to read. That is why the new law supports a wide variety of programs that are research-based with proven effectiveness, including small group, classroom-based, and one-on-one tutoring, as well as professional development for teachers and attention to the lowest achieving children.

The law does not pick and choose among programs, but allows for home grown strategies that meet the needs of the children in individual districts. As long as any program or strategy is proven effective, it can be funded, and it is important that the U.S. Department of Education implement the law in this spirit.

We cannot expect better reading achievement by limiting the options that schools have to address the leading reading needs of children. We should focus on the quality of their strategies and the results achieved.

The new law will only be successful if the implementation of each of its components is successful and if each of the programs are fully funded.

We made a down payment on school reform last year. We have a continuing and growing obligation to provide the resources that teachers and students need and deserve. Even with the last year's increases, the funding for the Title I still leaves 6 million needy children behind. I am deeply concerned that the budget for next year proposes to cut funding for public school reform and divert resources to private schools.

These cuts are producing a double-whammy on schools. While the budget underfunds education, the State budget shortfalls and declining local revenues are resulting in cuts to school districts across the country, forcing the teacher lay-offs, elimination of summer school programs and other cuts to services for children.

We cannot ask more of students, teachers, and schools, yet provide them less help in meeting the goal of leaving no child behind. We must work together to ensure that schools and communities receive more resources, not less, so they get the support they need to succeed. The Nation's children deserve no less.

We welcome Under Secretary Gene Hickok to our first panel of the hearing today, and we look forward to learning about the Department of Education's progress in implementing the Reading First program and other literacy-related programs.

Senator Gregg?

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR GREGG

Senator GREGG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for holding this hearing.

I believe firmly the Reading First program represents one of the most significant reforms included in the No Child Left Behind Act. As we all know, reading scores of our students are abysmal. Forty percent of the fourth graders score below the basic and National Assessment for Education progress scores, scoring below basic means. These children are virtually illiterate. These scores are even more dismal when you break them out by poverty. Sixty percent of school children score below basic.

Furthermore, we know that 90 percent of learning disabilities are directly related to a child's reading deficiency. If many of these children were exposed to good reading programs, we could very well see a significant reduction in the number of children who would be classified as learning disabled.

Reading and comprehension provide the foundation for all learning. We cannot move onto history, science or even mathematics if we do not have a firm foundation in reading. The sad truth is that there is no reason why these scores should be so low. We have ample data, scientific data published by the National Research Council and the National Reading Panel on how to teach children to read. We now know, through scientific research, that many parents and teachers have known for years that phonics works, kids must be taught to recognize letters and the words that they make.

The President, in conjunction with the Congress, overhauled an expanded an existing reading program and the Reading Excellence Act to make it a more rigorous program, now referred to as the

Reading First Act. Last year, we tripled—tripled—the funding for reading, from \$286 million during the last year under President Clinton to \$976 million in the year 2002 under President Bush.

The vision behind Reading First is right on target. We must dramatically change our reading, how reading is taught, and that change must be systemwide in order to yield the results that we are looking for; that is, that all children, not 30 percent, not 40 percent, not 50 percent, but all children be ready to read, and be reading, at their grade level by the time they exit the third grade.

Since the law was intended to leverage systematic change, the emphasis is to change reading instruction in the classrooms, rather than one-by-one. Programs that provide individual supplemental support are an important component of the successful reading instruction when such support is provided in conjunction with an overall classroom instruction in reading.

The Reading First program rightly requires States and school districts to use reading programs and instructional practices that incorporate the techniques and strategies that scientifically-based research reading has shown to be elemental to the success of reading programs. This includes phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Now that we know what works, we can no longer simply support reading programs that have been used in the past, unless, of course, they incorporate the key ingredients to successful reading instructions. If we are to meet our goal that all children should learn to read by the end of the third grade, we must be both selective and flexible in choosing reading programs that work.

I applaud the administration for focusing on reading. Their commitment to improving reading for all children is evidenced not only by the historic increase in funding, but by the fact that the Department of Education hit the ground running. Guidance for the Reading First program was the first of the No Child Left Behind programs to be issued. In addition, the Department held workshops and symposiums on effective reading practices for States and school districts.

I look forward to hearing from our second panel of witnesses, all of whom are reading teachers, as to what reading strategies they use in their classrooms.

This should be an excellent hearing, and I appreciate the chairman holding it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.  
Senator Collins?

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COLLINS

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling this hearing on the implementation of the Reading First initiative contained in the No Child Left Behind Act.

We share a commitment to ensuring the successful implementation of the Reading First program and to ensuring that every child is able to read, for reading is truly the gateway to future academic success. We know, from research, that effective reading instruction and intervention in early childhood are crucial to providing the proper foundation for future success. If a child's reading difficulties are detected early and she or he receives help, that child has a 90-

to 95-percent chance of becoming a good reader. On the other hand, if intervention occurs too late, that is, after third grade, the chances of that child ever becoming a good reader plummet.

For this reason, investment in early reading programs, and particularly in our teachers, is one of the best ways to ensure that we leave no child behind. In fact, I have often said that the best way to ensure that we leave no child behind is to teach every child to read.

I am very proud of the success that we have had in my home State of Maine in teaching our children to read. Maine leads the Nation, year-after-year, on national reading tests, and I think we can learn a lot from the programs of Maine, and I am very pleased that the chairman has invited a teacher from Maine to testify on our second panel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We will proceed. I want to just mention one item, Mr. Hickok, and that is about the important meeting today you are holding about the implementation of supplemental services. It was brought to my attention, and I just bring it to yours, that the PTA, the major parents' organization, was not invited by the Department, and you might check that out, if you would.

Mr. HICKOK. I sure will.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Reed and I sent a note to the Secretary a few weeks ago, and we received a very commendable response about the importance of the parents in education. It mentions that you are taking a series of actions to ensure the views of parents are considered as we implement the law, and it goes on indicating the Secretary's strong views and the importance of parent involvement.

But I bring that to your attention for your information that parents were not included in the meeting, and you can pursue it in whatever way.

Mr. HICKOK. I will definitely.

The CHAIRMAN. We look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF EUGENE HICKOK, UNDER SECRETARY,  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Mr. HICKOK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will certainly follow up on that information. I appreciate you giving it to me.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for the chance to be with you today to talk about the reading initiatives under No Child Left Behind. We, as you have all stated, considered these reading initiatives to sort of be the cornerstone of No Child Left Behind. Because as all of you stated, I think with eloquence, the fact is, if we are going to make that pledge real in this country, probably the single most important thing for us to do is make sure the children can read at an early age.

I will submit my testimony for the record. Just a few things from my testimony.

Reading First focuses on what works, and that is very important because we know what works in reading. In a lot of areas of education, we are still learning what works, but in reading we know what works, and it is past time that we focus on what works.

We know that the research tells us that there are five inter-related components to sound instruction in reading: They are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and reading comprehension. All of these have to be a part, in varying ways, of a comprehensive approach to reading instruction.

State plans that are funded under Reading First will have to demonstrate their ability to address these components in a comprehensive and effective manner, but as has also been stated, the Department has no pre-approved list of programs or providers or vendors. Our goal is to look at each plan on its own merits, using the criteria that I just referenced, making sure that each plan reflects the needs of the State, as that State can best address the need to make sure children can, indeed, read.

While the majority of the Reading First funds will be used to improve reading instruction to the district in the school level. Each State may reserve up to 20 percent of its total allocation to carry out effective activities for professional development. We know that far too many of our good teachers need professional development on reading instruction, technical assistance, and administration and reporting.

So our goal here under Reading First is certainly to change the way reading instruction takes place at the classroom level, but it really is to also enter in a new age of reading instruction so that all instructors have a better sense of what needs to be done to make sure no child is left behind.

As far as implementation, I appreciate Senator Gregg's comments about how quickly we have attempted to get this out to the field. The fact is, within weeks of the President's signing No Child Left Behind, we held a series of Reading Leadership Academies, and virtually every State came to one of these academies, a team of folks, where they received 2 days of intensive instruction on Reading First, Early Reading First, application information, etc. They were very successful. We have had lots of positive feedback on those.

On April 2nd of this year, the Department released the application instructions and nonregulatory guidance, and the application package also included criteria for the review of State applications. We have sent out publications. I will just show two: One was done by the Department, that is "Put Reading First." It has received a lot of positive feedback. It is all over the country; and, then, frankly, a very excellent one put out by the American Federation of Teachers called "Teaching Reading is Rocket Science," which I think is not only an interesting title, but probably a pretty accurate one—excellent publications that have received a lot, a lot of interest at the grassroots level.

On May 13th, just last month, the Department announced the names of more than 70 national experts and practitioners who will serve as the review panelists. As you know, the legislation calls for panelists to be chosen for various organizations and fields, and they are already busy trying to review the applications we have received in an attempt to make good on the potential of Reading First.

So I will stop with my comments now, except to point out two things, if I might. I believe it was Senator Collins, maybe all three

of you, mentioned the test scores in the Nation and how the test scores, NAPE scores, in particular, demonstrate that while we have, as a country, sent a lot of money into instruction, the fact is our test scores demonstrate a very flat performance level, a very disturbing performance level on reading.

I always like to point out the faces behind the test scores. I do not want to get too dramatic here, but if I could, just for a second, take you to a school I visited, before I became Under Secretary of Education, in Philadelphia, a city I care a great deal about.

In that school, I can take you to a third- or fourth-grade classroom—let's say a fourth-grade classroom. If you walk in that school with me today, you will see a group of kids who are excited, as fourth graders typically are, a group of kids in a bright, colorful classroom, with drawings on the walls and books everywhere, a teacher who is dedicated to those kids, and as you look into those kids' eyes, you will see the kind of hope, and opportunity, and potential that every child has in this great Nation.

But as you look at those kids, and let's say, for the sake of illustration, maybe they are 25 or 30 kids, let's say 30 kids in this classroom, and as you look in their eyes, remember that in this classroom perhaps 26 of those 30 kids cannot read at a third- or fourth-grade level. And yet, at the end of this school year, probably all 30 will go on to fifth grade, and as they go along, they will be passed on and on through a system, and gradually far too many of those 30 will fall by the wayside.

This is not about blaming anybody, but I think we need to remember those faces behind those numbers and make reading the kind of national priority that the President, the House, and the Senate say it should be, and that is what Reading First is all about.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hickok may be found in additional material.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much. We certainly hope that that school will, and those children, will have the opportunity to be covered by the program as well.

Let me ask you, Secretary, if you can tell us about the status of the State Reading First applications. I would be interested in how many States have applied for the Reading First grants to date.

Mr. HICKOK. I got the latest update just this morning as I walked into the hearing. At this point in time, we have 31 applications, from 29 States, American Samoa and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, at this point in time.

The CHAIRMAN. Have any been accepted or any been rejected?

Mr. HICKOK. None have been accepted yet, in terms of final decision, and none have been rejected.

I would refrain from using the term "rejected" in the sense that what we will be doing with the States, as we get applications, if there are problems with the application with regard to how the peer review process judges the application against the criteria and the law, then our goal is to go back to the States and work with them to get their applications where they need to be.

In the end, that will be a process that goes on, and on and on because our goal here is for every State to participate, and every

student, every child to have some success with this. So our hope is there will be no rejections in the end.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is certainly our hope. We would like to work with you to make sure we are going to get funding to the States for quality programs, as you have outlined, but we want to work with you to find out the ones that are getting approved right away. We would like to understand what the quality programs are doing and how they are going. The other ones that are not making the grade, we would like to know what the Department's view is going to be with regards to them, as you bring them along—what is the emphasis, what sort of opinions are involved in this, so that we have a way of understanding that.

We will work out process with you, so we can follow that.

Mr. HICKOK. Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN. On the Early Reading First, could you tell us a little bit about how the status of that program is moving along.

Mr. HICKOK. Well, guidance is out there. Applications are being accepted. It is a competitive grant program, and it has really got two components, if you think about it. It is aimed at getting the earliest learners prepared to go to school prepared to learn how to read. So it is more of a preparation program than a reading program, quite literally; and, second, there is also a professional development aspects because these children need instructors and providers that have a good set of skills to be able to accomplish that purpose.

It is very much underway. It is early now to say where we are going to be in terms of total numbers of awards given.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you had applications? You do not have a—

Mr. HICKOK. Not yet.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your expectation about applications?

Mr. HICKOK. As far as numbers?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. I mean, when do you expect to get your first sort of applications, general time to consider them, and when do you think that they might support—

Mr. HICKOK. We expect to have the process underway soon, and fully funded, and fully engaged by December—the end of this year.

The CHAIRMAN. Last week I had an opportunity to attend, briefly, the First Lady's first Conference on School Libraries. School Libraries supporters are an impressive group of people from the Department, national people, individuals, leaders that have thought a lot about the role of the libraries and are very, very supportive of it.

On our committee, I think we can all agree, that Senator Reed, from Rhode Island, has been clearly our strong leader on this issue.

We are reviewing now the hopes for these school libraries, and the importance that are given that we have the national attention they deserve, and at the resources they need. The President's budget includes is a \$12.5-billion request for school libraries—level funding. I know that money is not everything, and I know there were some differences about whether we ought to have any school library provisions in No Child Left Behind, but I am interested in how the Department intends to follow up on the First Lady's excel-

lent conference that she had and how you think that that can be best achieved with the resources that are going to be available.

Mr. HICKOK. The First Lady's conference generated, within the Department, as well as outside, a great deal of conversation about school libraries, and libraries, generally. In my previous life, as Secretary of Education in Pennsylvania, in that State I had responsibility for oversight of libraries, too, community libraries.

One thing I think that is relatively common across the Nation is that, as we look to better usage and better equipment in our libraries, our school libraries, we need to also recognize that the library community has got several dimensions that sometimes they do not relate to each other too well. You have got the university or academic libraries, you have got community libraries, and then you have school libraries. In far too many places, they do not talk to each other.

So one of our goals would be to find ways, strategies, to sort of leverage those resources so that you have a far more comprehensive approach that can only end up benefiting school libraries, to a great extent, and where you have a lot of duplication, get rid of the duplication so you have better use of existing resources.

So, really, it is a combination of leveraging the funding, but also leveraging the ideas in those three different, but related, communities.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gregg?

Senator GREGG. Yes, you said these proposals would be peer reviewed. What is the peer group made up of?

Mr. HICKOK. The legislation, the law says that individuals have to be chosen from various organizations, and let me get that information for you. The Secretary's Office, the National Institute for Literacy, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and they should be experts in the acquisition of reading skills, cognitive signs of language and reading processes—

Senator GREGG. Is that group up and running?

Mr. HICKOK. Yes, they are.

Senator GREGG. They have been named, the individuals have been named?

Mr. HICKOK. They were named. Their names were released sometime in May. They met in May, as a group, to learn about the application process, to get know one another. They are now reviewing applications, as we receive them, in groups of five.

Senator GREGG. I was interested to read, I think it was a couple of days ago, in some article, the report on the Annenberg contribution, the billion dollars, and how there was a feeling that its impact had been marginal because the money had been spread too thinly. Of course, we are dealing here with a program that is approximately a billion dollars. I am wondering if we are going to have that same problem with this program, that it will get spread too thin across all of the States. Is there some way to focus the dollar so we get more of a product?

Mr. HICKOK. I think a couple of responses.

First of all, one reason that we have this unique combination of a State formula grant, but a peer-review process, is to make sure

that the resources do get spent in a way that we have a lot of confidence will end up in results.

Second, the way the money is then subgranted out to school districts and the accountability provisions that have to be part of any State plan, the goal there is also to make sure that there is a way to follow the implementation. In other words, we do not just give the money to a State, and the States to the districts and then to hope good things happen. Part of the comprehensive plan is to follow the implementation ongoing and also to have assessments to make sure we know whether or not success is taking place. It is very targeted, very targeted to the most needy students and the most challenged situations.

And then, of course, as I mentioned in my testimony, a lot of money is reserved for State activity so that you have got professional development, instruction at the local level targeted and State activity aimed at transforming the way the State understands its obligation with regard to reading for young people.

Senator GREGG. Is this peer-review process going to base its evaluation on phonics?

Mr. HICKOK. It is going to base its evaluation on the five components that I mentioned, and phonics is one of those components.

Senator GREGG. Two of those are basically phonics.

Mr. HICKOK. Well, phonics and phonemic awareness, and you are probably better to ask the experts that will come after to me on reading about the difference between those two things. But as I understand it, phonics is the ability to make the sounds that letters are all about, and phonemic awareness is the ability to relate text to sounds. Again, that is my very modest understanding of the difference.

But there are five components to reading instruction that need to be in place. The thing to remember, the experts told me as well, is that the degree to which those components are in place will differ with regard to the children's needs. The goal here is that every child needs all five of these components, but they might need emphasis on various aspects of those.

So it really will have to be a combination of scientific research and understanding the needs of the individual students as they are getting the instruction they need.

Senator GREGG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Collins?

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Secretary, first, let me join my colleagues in commending the Department for acting quickly to implement this landmark legislation. I know that represents a great deal of work and commitment on your part, the Secretary's part, and all of the Department, and we thank you.

In your written testimony, you indicated that the administration will not create any list of approved programs and that you will support a variety of paths, provided that they are based on scientific research. Reading experts tell us that different techniques work well with different children, and therefore I think it is imperative that we give flexibility to the States and to local schools, as long as they are using reading programs that have proven to be effective.

There are concerns, among some States, that the Department may attempt to limit funding for certain programs, despite their proven effectiveness. Maine has devoted considerable resources during the past 8 years to the Reading Recovery program as being an important part of Maine's commitment to meeting high standards for literacy for children.

Maine has approximately 350 Reading Recovery teachers who are providing services to meet the needs of first-grade students, with intensive one-on-one instruction as part of an overall approach to reading. As I indicated in my opening comments, we have had a lot of success.

Is there anything in the guidance that the Department has given so far that would preclude funding for Reading Recovery programs.

Mr. HICKOK. No, there is not, and I want to make sure that that is pretty well understood, not just by the committee, but by everybody. I mean, the fact is we will have, if I might say so, we do not have a dog in this fight. Our only goal is to make sure that whatever is being done at the State and local level results in students being able to read by Grade 3.

The real sad part of the story is, while we do not have a whole lot of knowledge about some things in education, we know about reading, and yet in far too many places, we are not successful. So the goal here is to transform the culture of education with regard to reading.

Reading Recovery, as far as I know, can be a part of that transformation. It has to be able to make its case, within a State application, the way everybody else does, in terms of those five components.

The goal here is to transform the classroom and the instruction, but as I said just a moment ago, it is also to recognize the individual needs of individual students. The goal would be preventative programs, so the need for intervention and remediation is limited, but that does not mean that reading recovery or any other successful program that has got the science and can demonstrate it in an application cannot be a part of this. The goal here is that end to success.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. I very much appreciate those reassurances.

In your testimony, you also indicated that Reading First funds will focus on providing increased levels of professional development. I think that is absolutely critical. Other than involved parents, a well-qualified, well-trained teacher is the most important prerequisite for a student's success.

We, in Maine, are now embarking on the challenge of designing a statewide professional development program for K through 3 teachers, as well as statewide professional development for all K through 12 special education teachers. Have any models been developed by the Department to give assistance to the States in developing professional training programs for reading teachers and for special education teachers?

Mr. HICKOK. Well, the Reading Leadership Academies talked about that issue, both in terms of Reading First, Early Reading First and professional development, and I can make sure that we get to you whatever models or examples that would be helpful.

I would like to highlight something in professional development, and that is that in far too many places, we have recognized a real need in professional development and in teacher preparation to understand better the components of reading instruction.

Just as I took you a few moments ago to the school in Philadelphia where you saw a lot of hollow hope, I can take you to a school somewhere else where the teachers are very excited and glowing about the success they have had in the classroom, and yet, when you look at the test scores on reading, maybe 40 percent of their kids cannot read. They do not realize, even though the data is there, that they are not having the kind of success they should have.

Again, not to blame anybody, they are lacking the background, the skills, and the knowledge they need to have successful reading for their kids, and that is evidence that that professional development challenge is a very important one. We are eager to help anybody on that.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank you very much. We know, the challenges that we are facing with cutbacks in school budgets all over the country.

A very touching story was this story about a first grader, Alec Oswald from California, who wanted to unwrap a Playstation II, when he celebrated his 7th birthday. But instead of putting a video game on his wish list, the student asked his guests—his young friends—to give money they would have spent on gifts to his cash-strapped school. And he arrived at the school with a present for the principal, Andy Tunnel [ph], and it was a check for \$275 so that they could keep his teachers.

There are a lot of things that we cannot obviously get the States to change, they are going to make judgments and determination, of their own, but these children are out there that need our help. It is on our watch every year, if they are not getting this kind of treatment and attention. We have a good program to improve education, but we want to make sure that we are going to get it right and provide the resources for it.

I think Senator Collins pointing out that these comprehensive, science-based, strategies which in terms of reading are so important is critical. So many different facets are necessary to get children to learn to read well, but it takes investments, and we are all going to have to try and do our bit on this.

I do not want to unduly raise this with you, Mr. Hickok, but it is something that I do not want to let an opportunity go by without mentioning the importance of making sure that we are going to have the resources to do the good work that we have agreed to all do together.

We thank you very much for being here.

Mr. HICKOK. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Our second panel consists of reading teachers from across the country.

First, Ruth Nathan, a reading specialist and third grade teacher from the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. She also works as a language literacy consultant in California. In addition, she teaches classes on literacy at UC Berkeley. We are pleased to have

Dr. Nathan today not only to share classroom experiences, but also to share what she has found to be effective practices through her research.

I would like to welcome Elizabeth Primas, a reading specialist for Bowen Elementary School here in Washington, DC. She has been a teacher for 26 years. Her expertise is working with teachers' aides to try to ensure that students learn how to read early and learn how to read well. We are pleased Ms. Primas is here today to share personal stories what happens in the classroom and what is needed to ensure that no child is left behind.

And then we have Patricia Rhodes, who I would ask if Senator Collins would like to introduce.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my pleasure to introduce Trisha Rhodes from Bar Harbor, Maine. Ms. Rhodes is a reading teacher specialist and a teacher leader for the Reading Recovery Program. She is based at the Conners Emerson School in Bar Harbor, a school that I happened to visit just a couple of weeks ago, and had the pleasure of reading "Blueberries for Sal" to a group of first and second graders.

Ms. Rhodes received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maine in speech communication, and later went on to receive her master's degree in reading and language arts from the university. She is certified as a literacy specialist, a K through 8 classroom teacher and a speech and language clinician.

She decided some time ago, after teaching for several years, that she could have more impact by helping children at an earlier age, and she became trained in the Reading Recovery Program and has worked in this capacity for the past 11 years. Over the past 3 years she has both taught Reading Recovery to children and provided professional training for other teachers.

So I am very pleased she is here, and I appreciate the chairman inviting her.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Thank you very much.

We will start from Ms. Nathan, and then Ms. Rhodes and Ms. Primas.

**STATEMENTS OF RUTH NATHAN, READING TEACHER, ALAMO, CA; TRISHA RHODES, READING RECOVERY TEACHER, HANCOCK COUNTY CONSORTIUM, BAR HARBOR, ME; AND ELIZABETH PRIMAS, READING SPECIALIST AND TEACHER, BOWEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, DC.**

Ms. NATHAN. Thank you. Well, first of all, thank you for inviting me to be here. I am a third grade classroom teacher, and I work also—

The CHAIRMAN. Could you bring that mike just a little closer? Thank you.

Ms. NATHAN. So I have my third grade classroom in San Ramon. And I also work with second-language learners, quite a few of them in the Napa Valley, as a reading specialist there. And I work with many teachers in California, through the Berkeley Reading, the Reading Certificate Program.

And what I would like to say today is I would like to give you some clear recommendations about this Reading First Initiative. I honestly believe that all kids can learn to read. No one needs to

be left behind, and hopefully, if we do it right, there will not be too many children that have to recover, that if we can a good job from the get-go, we are going to have more kids reading. So my remarks, I want to talk a little bit about how we have got to be kid centered. Everything we do has to be based on the way children learn, and more so than how teachers feel. Do you know what I am saying? We all want to be creative, but we need to take a look at the data, and so I am going go address that with my three hats that I wear.

I want to ensure that the framework that we use, whatever frameworks we look at, have to be evidence-based, that they also must be trustworthy, they must be based on accurate assumptions, for example, about the way kids learn to read. We need to know models of how kids learn to read and we need to know models of how you read, how expert readers read, and which I tried to outline in the testimony I submitted. That is what you asked for. I do not support any particular model. I use everything that I can with all the kids that I teach. But we always go back to the data, and I will get to that again when I talk about my three jobs. The third thing is, whatever we do, in terms of these frameworks, they have got to be cost effective. We cannot be spending thousands and thousands of dollars on a limited number of kids. So we need to be cost effective so that we do not leave anyone behind.

Let me explain the issue of the kids-centered in framework with my three hats. With my work in Napa Valley, I will give you a typical scenario. I work in four different schools out there, and one of the fourth grade classrooms is loaded with kids who are second-language learners, who have been in this country since they were in kindergarten and cannot read. And in that class you might have 32 children—actually that is what we have—and in that group of kids that cannot read, many of them are second-language learners, and I might have 12 of those children. When I first went out there, those fourth grade teachers—and we are talking about the importance of professional development—did not have a clue as to what to do. They have been through the universities, and there are very, very few classes really on how to teach reading and about the five subprocesses that Secretary Hickok mentioned. The teacher did not know the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics, and there is a huge difference. And they did not know how to help these second-language learners become fluent. And again, I will come back to those subprocesses.

But also vocabulary development being taught explicitly, comprehension being taught explicitly. We know so much, as the National Reading Panel report clearly shows. We have all of the stuff out there that we need. We just need to put it to real good use, and professional development is key.

So what we were doing in Napa was we went back to the alphabets first. These kids could not negotiate the text. They could not read the words. And we went back and worked with them with a program that looked at the beginning as it were scripted which all teachers do not like. You know, “Do not give me a scripted program.” At least that is what people say. Not these teachers. They were so happy because they did not know what to do, and so in Napa they started working with that scripted program, but soon, the more they worked with it, the freer they could be till we had

those kids up and running doing Readers Theater. It is all about the teacher, the tools. See, a framework can be, it is sort of like haiku or a sonnet. Sometimes a structure can create a situation. If you have a structure there you can be creative, but these teachers had no framework.

The second hat. In my situation in third grade, I worked in a middle to upper middle class school. When I first came there, out of my 20 children—and this is incredible to me—8 of those kids were struggling as readers, in a situation where most of them should not have been. So what we did, when I got there, was we looked at the data. We went back and watched and saw what was happening to these kids. We talked to the kindergarten teachers, the first grade teachers, and we changed the program. Now we are in a situation where we have one particular program that has a strong framework that looks kind of scripted, but is not, because the teachers had had a lot of professional development in our district through the Consortium in Reading Excellence in California. Now, we only have a program—and Senator Kennedy might be interested in this—in K-2, because everybody is reading. By the time we are done with second grade in my school now, we can and are free to use literature as much as we want, and even now the second grade teachers, well, all the teachers use literature, but what I am saying is the framework that we needed was good enough in our K-1-2 to just get everybody up to par. This year we have no second grader that is not at grade level. It had never happened. Second story.

Third story. I do teach, through the extension, through UC Berkeley, the introductory course to language and literacy. I just completed a class with 30 teachers. They are all coming to this because some of them say their educations were not enough and they just did not, again, even have the vaguest idea what to do, and half of them did know. A lot of them have had a lot of training with a lot of good programs, including Reading Recovery. So I say to them, “Why are you here?” Well, Reading Recovery teachers will tell you they are lifelong learners. They are the best and the brightest. I love them whenever I get them in my class. But they did say to me in the class—because we went back and used evidence-based articles. We went back, not only the National Reading Panel Report, but we went and read the articles that the report is based on, not all of them, but some articles in each one of the sub-processes. Even my Reading Recovery teachers said they learned anew.

I think, going back to what I have said, we need to be kid-centered, center on the data, and we need to have a framework that is evidence based, and absolutely, I agree with you, we absolutely have to have the best teacher training because—and if I can close with going back to the Napa story, the teachers that I was working with there, that I gave a program too, I said, “Here is the way we will do it. You go ahead”—because I had to leave and I was not going to be back for 2 weeks—“You begin to get your feet wet with this program and just deliver it as best you can, and I will come back in 2 weeks, and here is what I will do, I will watch you teach, and I will take notes. And then I will teach. I will give you feedback, and then I will do a lesson the next week.” And that is what

I did, and it was amazing. I watched them teach, and the kids, as I watched and as I took the notes, they were dying on the vine. It was not box. They got the program. And they could do a little bit with it, but you could tell what they needed was what I had, the tools. They needed professional development.

So what I did was, on the next lesson, I took the same program and I tried to bring it to life using the tools that I have like word sorts, Phase Q texts, Readers Theater. And they saw where I was headed. There is no box that is going to teach anybody. There is no one program. It takes teachers that know what they are doing.

So thanks very much for inviting me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nathan may be found in additional material.]

The CHAIRMAN. Very, very helpful. Thank you.

Ms. Rhodes?

Mr. RHODES. Chairman Kennedy and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak from both personal and professional experience to what works for children learning to read.

My career as an educator began as a speech and language teacher. Later I became certified as a classroom teacher and a literacy specialist. Then I taught 7th and 8th grade literature and language arts for 3 years. It was these experiences that led me to pursue training as a Reading Recovery teacher.

Even with my background in language development and my training as a literacy specialist, I was frustrated with my inability to reach my struggling readers and bring them up to grade level. I knew they were being left behind. This led me to search for information about teaching children how to read in the early stages of learning. When I read about Reading Recovery, I was excited and impressed because Dr. Clay shared my beliefs that early intervention is crucial to reach children before they fail, and she had created a program of professional development based on scientific research.

I asked my district to train me as a Reading Recovery teacher, and that training significantly added to my ability to teach emergent readers. My teaching was so successful that the decision was made to train Reading Recovery teachers in most of the schools in my district. Due to the high quality of ongoing training in Reading Recovery, all of the Reading Recovery teachers in my district have emerged as leaders in their schools. They have formed teams with classroom teachers and special educators to create more effective reading programs, and to establish standards and assessments in their individual schools and for our district as a whole. The result has been positive systemic change with Reading Recovery working with a variety of classroom approaches. An image to consider is that of a tricycle. The largest of the three wheels is classroom instruction, and the two smaller wheels are short-term early intervention, such as Reading Recovery, and long-term continuing support, such as special education. This image is helpful because it both illustrates the importance of classroom instruction and the importance of support services for low-achieving students in order for the educational process to work.

I have been teaching for 18 years, and 12 of those years have been spent teaching the lowest-performing first grade children how

to read and write. I teach children every day, and the growth I see, not only in their ability to read and write, but in feelings of self esteem, is impressive. I have experienced firsthand the two positive outcomes of Reading Recovery. These are: the ability for children who are the lowest achieving at the beginning of first grade to accelerate into the average performance range of their classmates in just 30 to 50 hours of instruction; and (2) the early identification of the few children who will need long-term support through special services to ensure that no child is left behind.

Reading Recovery has served more than one million children since implementation in the United States in 1984. Reading Recovery meets the standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act. It includes the essential components of reading instruction, meets the definition of scientifically-based research, and uses rigorous assessments. It explicitly incorporates the essential components of reading instruction into every lesson including: comprehension, fluency, vocabulary development, phonemic awareness and phonics, teaching letters, sounds and word parts, and how to use them in figuring out a word. Reading Recovery is closing the gap for at-risk learners.

In losing, I want to thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for children who need the most help learning to read and write. More eloquent, however, are the thanks of parents and children whose lives were changed by Reading Recovery, and I will close with their words because they say it all.

From a parent, quote: "I just wanted to say thank you. Jason has just finished first grade, and I am happy to say that he is reading on grade level. He got on the school's honor roll during the second 9 weeks. Then he went on to the principal's high honor roll during the third 9 weeks. He just got his end-of-year report and was reading on a level 18. He still reads every night, and reminds me if we forget. His love for reading is unbelievable. Reading Recovery builds more than just the ability to read. It builds the child's belief in themselves. I have become a huge advocate in my community. I am doing everything I can to spotlight this program so that all parents are aware that it is out there." End quote.

And this from a 15-year-old former Reading Recovery student, quote: "I still remember how I felt in first grade when many of my friends were reading and I just could not figure it out. I began to feel embarrassed and discouraged about school. I was then fortunate enough to be identified for Reading Recovery help. Right away I began to feel successful and feel like a reader. I cannot imagine what school might have been like without this invaluable support." End quote. And I will be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rhodes may be found in additional material.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Primas?

Mr. PRIMAS. Thank you, Senator Kennedy and members of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee.

I am Elizabeth Primas, a reading teacher and change facilitator for the District of Columbia Public Schools, and a member of the International Reading Association's Urban Diversity Initiative

Commission. I am currently assigned to Anthony Bowen Elementary School in Southwest Washington, DC. I am a product of the DC. Public School system and continued my education at DC. Teachers' College, Trinity College and George Washington University. I have been employed by the DC. Public Schools for approximately 26 years and have worked as a change facilitator for the past 5 years. In that capacity I work with teachers, aides and children to attempt to provide a quality education to all students.

My job has required me to assist teachers in implementing the reading program, Success for All. To facilitate that, I have provided professional development and administered assessments every 8 weeks to determine if students were making continuous growth and progress. In the last 5 years we have gone from 16 percent of children on or above grade level to more than 22 percent of students school wide. And almost 53.1 percent of first graders and 48.7 percent of second graders are on or above grade level, an increase of 23.9 percent of first graders since we started and 5.3 percent of second graders in that same year of 1999 is where we were.

It is my responsibility to select reading materials that match groups' reading abilities and to identify students who show signs of having difficulties in acquiring reading skills and strategies, such as phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension. Once students are identified as needing additional assistance, it has been my role to assign a tutor that will be able to work with the teacher and student to provide additional time on task to either help the child catch up or keep up with the reading group. While in theory this is just what a student may need, in reality, this is a very difficult task to accomplish. First, tutors, normally educational aides or para-professionals, have not had sufficient training to conduct a reading lesson with those children, who actually need the best and brightest teachers to guarantee their success. In addition to not having the best trained individuals working with those most in need, far too often these aides are not available to tutor since they are holding classes because there are no funds available for substitutes, or funds are available for substitutes, there are no substitutes available. And finally, when the child is pulled out to receive the prescribed 20 minutes of one-on-one tutoring, the child is actually missing some other aspect of the teacher's direct instructions, perhaps in math or another critical subject area.

At Bowen Elementary School we recognized the problem and have tried to make adjustments and adaptations to bridge the gaps for those students who experience difficulties. We have recruited and trained individuals from organizations to provide volunteer tutoring and mentoring services for students in grades one through six. Bowen has been able to attract approximately 350 volunteers from all walks of life to donate an hour during the school day, often during their lunch hour, to develop a relationship with a student and stick with that child all year.

While in general progress is slow, with the exception of 1 year, it has been consistent. However, progress has not been sufficient for many of the students to reach desired grade level goals. Two students come to mind, and they are both at the very extremes of the educational spectrum.

One sixth grade student that has been at Bowen for her entire elementary school experience has tested at the eleventh grade reading level in combined reading vocabulary and comprehension, while another sixth grade student only at the third grade level. The difference may be apparent. The first child, FG, attended Bowen from prekindergarten through sixth grade, and has done well in school consistently. Her mother and grandmother have been very supportive and she enjoys reading, math and science. Student AC, the second child, attended Bowen for a few years and then went to live with his father, who put him in a different school. After several years, and actually just a few months ago, he returned to Anthony Bowen to live with his mother and a new stepfather. With his latest move he acquired not only a new stepfather but a new brother and two cousins had to come live with him because their mother was unable to care for them.

I bring these two students up because sometimes it is not enough to have a research based program because no program meets every child's needs. It is not enough to have your school overrun with volunteers who, while well intentioned, are still using time that should be instructional time with the teacher, tutors that should be in addition to the teacher, not instead of the teacher. Tutorial programs should be offered in noninstructional time slots, before school, after school or during the lunch hour. It is not enough to test every student every 8 weeks because testing does not, in and of itself, provide sufficient motivation for students to do better, and standardized tests do not usually provide sufficient diagnostic information to determine what deficits need to be remediated to advance the student.

As a result of all of the assessments, the volunteers and interaction with teachers, children and parents, I have made some generalizations that I believe are true across all classrooms when it comes to the teaching of children.

The solution is not the number of volunteers who provide random services, however well intentioned they may be. It is not the packaged programs, research based or not, one size does not fit all. When you look at students who consistently make the grades, they are those who have a support systems, and the key supports are stability of home, caring and involved parents, and most importantly, extensive classroom libraries and highly qualified teachers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Primas may be found in additional material.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, a very, very helpful panel covering a number of different aspects of the challenge.

I will start. Ms. Nathan, in your testimony you say, "I want to say that all teaching must occur in classrooms and schools that are safe and where children are well-fed, that they are rich in love, respect for children, they have school, classroom libraries filled with recent books for all types of readers, at many grade levels, and they cover many knowledge domains."

Is it your sense that we need to do more in terms of school libraries and upgrading these school libraries?

Ms. NATHAN. Yes, absolutely. I read online a good deal of the text of Mrs. Bush's meeting, and I thought it was very important, absolutely. We need current books. We need especially a lot of nonfiction. Actually, many libraries have a lot of current fiction. It is the nonfiction, biographies that inspire kids. But I will tell you, it is not just the libraries because you can have a huge classroom library, and you can have a huge school library given to you, but what if the teacher does not read the books? I read every night, actually every morning, 5 o'clock, a child's book, every day of the year. That means that I can hook my kids, so during that dear time, which is am very worried about, sustained silent reading, and I went on and on in my testimony about it, I do not care what anyone says, I am not giving it up. But the reason that it works in my classroom is that I read the books, I can hook kids with the books that they really care about, I can find out what their interests are, and make sure that we order those books.

Do you understand what I am saying? It is not just the library, it is teachers that read the books. And also the kids, as I said in my testimony, help each other because they have time to share the books they love in school. But, yes, we need more books.

The CHAIRMAN. Good, good, good.

Ms. Rhodes, I understand that some researchers have written a letter that Reading Recovery is not evidence based, and I understand 102 researchers have written a letter saying it is evidence based. What is your comment?

Mr. RHODES. I would say that it has a strong research base. The structure and design of it are consistent with a large body of substantial research on reading and writing behaviors, and it uses systematic empirical methods to collect data annually on all children, and it is reported in numerous peer-reviewed research articles or research reviews that offer support.

Reading Recovery is different from a lot of programs in that it is highly accountable. Each child's progress is measured using standard, valid and reliable tests of letters, words, sounds and reading books.

I think the hardest thing for a Reading Recovery teacher to realize is that she is also a researcher, and watching them transform to not only being a teacher but to being a researcher is really quite exciting.

And the continued progress of children after Reading Recovery has been externally validated in countries all over the Nation. In Maine we just recently completed a longitudinal study on fourth graders, using our Maine State assessment, and what we found was that 84 percent of Reading Recovery children, who successfully completed their series of lessons, met the State standards in reading in fourth grade. What to me was even more amazing was the 74 percent of the children who did not successfully discontinue, but who needed more kinds of long-term support, also successfully met the State standard.

So I think that it is very accountable, it has the research to back it.

The CHAIRMAN. Very, very helpful comments.

Ms. Primas, when you look at your school, I am thinking again about funding, could we do more with the professional development

for the teachers? We have heard a great deal about the importance of professional development, more in terms of books in the library, after-school programs that give focus to children who have fallen behind in terms of reading?

Mr. PRIMAS. Absolutely. That is the key to us making progress. The progress that we have made in the last 5 years, all teachers were required to take additional workshops. That makes a smattering of improvement. But this year, because of the Reading Excellence Act, all of our pre-K through third-grade teachers took two full graduate credit reading courses, and we jumped. So just with the same reading program, but just additional training to the teachers, we made those big increases.

Last year we actually dipped, and I said in my testimony that, with the exception of 1 year, we had continuous progress, but slow. This year, as we finished our testing, 68 percent of our first graders are now on grade level, as opposed to 20 percent our first year, but the really great increase was this year, with those teachers getting additional training. It is not enough for us to just train the pre-K through third grade teachers. Our fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade teachers are getting those kids who still cannot read. They need the training, also, and every teacher needs the training, regardless of their competent area.

The CHAIRMAN. That is powerful, powerful testimony.

And you all talk about this comprehensiveness that we are looking for, and professional training is such a key, libraries are such a key, different ways or approaches for children, different children learning at different speeds and making this responsive to children in this comprehensive way is just so important. It is going to take investment too. We just cannot do this on the cheap, and I think you have been very helpful in spelling out some of these very important needs.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to have to depart, but Senator Collins has been very gracious, as she always is, and is willing to chair the remainder of the hearing, which I am very appreciative of.

Thanks, Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know I have always wanted to be the chairman of this committee. [Laughter.] So, even if it is just temporary, I am honored to conclude the hearing, and I thank you for holding it.

First, let me thank all of you for your testimony. It is so important for us, as policymakers, to hear from you who are actually out there day in and day out teaching children to read, helping other teachers to be effective. Oftentimes, we hear from people who are not on the front lines, and it is great to have your testimony.

I also want to point out there are many reading experts in the audience today, but one of them is from my home State of Maine, and since I am now chairman, I get to acknowledge that she is here. So I want to welcome Dr. Paula Moore from the University of Maine, who is an education expert, and who has accompanied Ms. Rhodes here today.

Ms. Nathan, I was very interested in hearing your discussion of the classroom with a great number of children for whom English was not the first language. The face of Maine has changed in the

past 5 years so that several of our communities, particularly Portland and Lewiston, have seen an influx of immigrants and refugees who do not speak English.

Do you think, since that phenomenon is really happening in communities all across the United States, that our colleges of education need to do more to train teachers to deal effectively in teaching reading and other subjects, as well, to children for whom English is not the first language?

Ms. NATHAN. Yes, of course. I mean, I agree with that. We have a whole system in California the CLAD System, that trains every teacher, no matter what subject, on specific strategies for second-language learners. It ends up that the strategies for second-language learners are actually good for everybody, but you need to make it real, and you need to connect with their lives, and with their culture. Yes, so I would agree with that.

Senator COLLINS. That has been a real challenge for some communities because the teachers, while excellent teachers, just have not had the experience of dealing with—

Ms. NATHAN. If I can go just a little further, one of the things I would like to add is that we are having a lot of success with helping children understand, you know, that whole issue of phonemic awareness—actually, I love the term alphabetics. I do not know why. Phonemic awareness in phonics is just such a mouthful, but the alphabetics of a language, the sounds, for example, in Spanish maybe there are—well, let's take Korean.

I was working with Korean teachers the other day. Maybe there are about 24 sounds, 26 letters. It is real important for those kids to know which sounds in their language are the same as ours, which sounds are different and where there is no transfer. So it is important for teachers to know that.

Also, the way those sounds are spelled, in Korean, there is a lot of one-on-one correspondence, as there is in Spanish, as well, in their home languages, but in our language, because of the history of English, and the many languages that comprise it, especially with the vowel system, there are several ways to spell a sound. That is the big ah-ha that a lot of our second-language learners need, and that is where phonetic awareness, helping a child hear the sounds in our language and then very clearly showing the children how those sounds are spelled is what is really making a difference in California.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Ms. Rhodes, before the hearing, we talked a little bit about the effectiveness of early reading programs and early intervention in helping to identify children who have reading difficulties before they become part of the special education program, because we know that with early intervention, that in many cases we can help a child become a good reader and avoid the need for special education. But it is my understanding that if a child becomes involved in the special education program, the chances of that child leaving are less than 5 percent.

Could you comment on the relationship between early reading programs and avoiding the classification of a student as needing special education and the resulting costs of that classification?

Mr. RHODES. Certainly. First of all, I would like to say that there will always be some children who need something different than what the classroom has to offer because they learn in a different way.

What we have found about Reading Recovery, when we look at it in terms of cost effectiveness, is that it has greatly reduced the amount of children who are qualified for LD in reading and who end up being retained in first grade specifically because of reading.

Last year, we had 86,000 children who successfully completed Reading Recovery in the United States, and only 137 of those 86,000 children were placed in special education for reading or writing at the end of first grade, and also only 194 of these 86,000 children were retained in first grade because of reading difficulties.

So I think there is a high correlation between early intervention and lowering the numbers in special education. I think the latest brain research shows us, again, the significance of intervening very early with children. So, yes, I think there is a high correlation.

Senator COLLINS. Teachers also tell me that there is a window of literacy that is open particularly before third grade and that if you teach a child to read before third grade, the chances of that child becoming a good reader are extremely high, but that if the intervention occurs after third grade, it is much more difficult to help the child become a fluent reader, that that window of literacy slams shut.

Could you comment on that? Is my understanding correct?

Mr. RHODES. Yes, and again I would refer to the brain research. I mean, I think it is amazing that Dr. Clay did her work way before all of the newest information that we have now on the brain imaging and things like that, but what we know is that those neuro pathways are created very early, and whether the language, reading or many kinds of learning and thinking, the brain is expanding so rapidly very young that that is the time to intervene, and by third grade those neuro pathways have been set, and it is very difficult at that time to change them.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Ms. Primas, I was very interested in your comments because they reminded us of the importance of a stable home life for students, as far as creating an environment that is conducive for reading.

Another important element is access to books at home. In Maine, the Maine Humanities Council has teamed up with some of our hospitals so that every new mother goes home with a little tote bag containing two books, so that we know that that child will have at least two books in the home.

Furthermore, some pediatricians have followed that up with each well-child visit, another book is given to that child. I think that is just such a wonderful program.

I do not know whether that is just in Maine or whether other States and the District of Columbia have similar programs, but could you comment on the need to get books into the home, not just into the school library.

Mr. PRIMAS. That is one of the key things I have spoken about in the past. There are some pediatricians nationwide who every time your child comes in, the child gets a little book. There are

some OB-GYNs who give a book every time you come for a prenatal visit so the parent is beginning a library. So that is critical.

We also have other clubs like RIF, Reading Is Fundamental, that gives children books two or three times a year every year that they are in school so that they do have books. This year, our school participated with the Pick and Roll, with the Wizards, and so they were given the motivations to read. So we have got kids going to the library, and they have got t-shirts signed by the Wizards, and they have got basketball cards.

So there are a lot of programs around the country that encourage kids to read and actually put books into their hands and into their homes. If a child is read to even in vitro we know they will tend to come out more calm and more prepared to hear the language that they are going to be hearing in books because the language we usually speak is a little different from book language. Many kids may have a vocabulary that they come to school from that is not in the books. That is a nice way of putting it.

So we need kids to hear book words and book language, and it really helps them, so that when they see those words in print, they have a point of reference and can understand what it means.

Senator COLLINS. It is my understanding that children who are read to at home or much more likely to become early readers; is that correct?

Mr. PRIMAS. The research says that is correct. In fact, what we have done, and many schools have done it, and the research-based programs have already indicated that in order for a child to become a good learner, they need to hear reading modeled, so that most programs have the teacher, if there is no one else, read to them every day. So 15/20 minutes every day before they start their reading lesson, teachers model good reading by reading to the children.

Also, many of our volunteers, we do not want them to teach skills. We want them to read to the children, read with the children and let the children see that I am reading for fun. I am not reading because I have a book report. I am not reading because it is my homework. I am reading because it is fun, and so that is really what we want the kids to learn.

Senator COLLINS. I was going to ask you that very question because I assume that is what you have your volunteers do is to read to the children.

Mr. PRIMAS. They read as a partnership. At the beginning of the year, a volunteer may be doing most of the reading. They are kind of start light. So they give all of the support to the kids to begin with, and then as the child feels more comfortable and says, I want to read this page, okay, you read that page, and if you need help I will just tell you the word. I am not going to just sound it out, but I will just give you the word so it is not a struggle.

And then toward the end of the year, we find the volunteers are just listening. They are not reading. They may be selecting books that their kids read at home and bringing them in and introducing them to kids or the kids may be going, This book is real good. I am going to read this one to you.

So we really want them to start off doing more support, and at the end of the year, let the kids take the ball and run with it.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

I want to thank all of you for your testimony today. It has been very helpful to us, as we commit the resources to making sure that every child does have the opportunity and, indeed, does learn to read.

I have visited almost 100 schools in Maine, and my favorite thing is reading to children in the elementary schools. There is nothing I like better. I hope that, although I would have no idea how to teach them how to read, that by telling them how much I enjoy reading, by reading to them, that I can help inspire a love of reading.

So thank you for all of the work that you are doing. You have contributed enormously to our hearing today.

The committee record will be held open for 5 days for members to submit written statements and any questions for the record. There may be additional questions for the record that we will submit to you in writing, but I thank you very much for being here, and this hearing is now adjourned.

[Additional material follows.]

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EUGENE W. HICKOK

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Department's implementation of the Reading First program, authorized under Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Reading First is the largest—and yet most focused—early reading initiative this country has ever undertaken, and is an academic cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind legislation. I am pleased to share with you the Department's efforts to ensure the successful implementation of Reading First and to ensure that all students learn to read well by the end of third grade.

Reading First provides an opportunity for every State to apply scientifically based research—and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research—to teach all children to read. Reading First will provide the necessary assistance to States and their districts to establish instructional programs based on scientifically based reading research for students in kindergarten through third grade. Reading First funds will also focus on providing increased levels of professional development, to ensure that all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to teach reading effectively, and to screen, identify and overcome reading barriers facing their students.

Reading First focuses on what works and will support proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. Scientifically based reading research has identified five essential components of reading instruction. This research demonstrates that children need explicit and systematic instruction in and mastery of these five interrelated areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and reading comprehension strategies in order to become proficient, successful readers. Reading First focuses instructional methods and materials, assessments and professional development on these areas. Programs funded under Reading First will have to demonstrate their ability to address these components in a comprehensive and effective manner. However, as the Department has stated openly and repeatedly, there is no list of programs or materials that are “pre-approved” for use under Reading First. Indeed, while only proven, scientifically based programs and strategies may be funded and while we must keep the quality bar very high, a variety of paths may lead to making the goals of Reading First a reality.

One of the most powerful aspects of the Reading First program is the opportunity States will have to reserve a meaningful portion of their award to build and maintain the requisite statewide capacity to teach all children to read by the end of third grade. While the majority of Reading First funds will be used to improve reading instruction at the district and school levels, each State may reserve up to twenty percent of its total allocation to carry out activities related to professional development, technical assistance, and administration and reporting. This funding will allow States to build a true internal capacity related to scientifically based reading instruction. This significant level of funding will provide States with the resources to extend this reading initiative and to improve instruction beyond the specific districts and schools that receive Reading First subgrants. Within each State, the expanded K-3 reading infrastructure made possible by Reading First funds can and will be leveraged statewide. While Reading First subgrants are appropriately targeted to each State's lowest-performing and most disadvantaged students, teachers throughout each State will develop the skills and receive the support they need to teach all children to read well. Over the course of the six-year grant period, millions of dollars will be dedicated to this purpose, and all children will benefit from what is known about effective early reading instruction.

As helping States and local school districts ensure that all children are reading at grade level or above by the end of third grade is one of President Bush's highest priorities, the Department has developed and maintained a meticulous timeline for the implementation of the Reading First program. Within weeks of the President's signing of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Secretary held a series of Reading Leadership Academies. These Academies, attended by teams from nearly every State and territory, provided an in-depth, multi-day opportunity for States to learn more about the specifics of the Reading First program, as well as to hear from some of the Nation's leading experts on scientifically based reading instruction.

On April 2, 2002, the Department released application instructions and non-regulatory guidance for the Reading First program. The application package also included the criteria for review of State applications. Reflecting both the critical need to improve reading instruction for this country's lowest-performing students and the complexity of the Reading First legislation, the review process for Reading First

State grants is designed to hold all State plans to a consistent, rigorous standard. The Department anticipates that all States will participate in the program; however, State plans must satisfactorily address all program requirements before funds are awarded. To this end, the Department held Reading First grant writers' workshops on April 15 and April 22, 2002 to provide States with additional information on the application and review process. Using national activities funds, the Department supported the attendance of State representatives at these workshops. The Department also awarded a contract to provide technical assistance to States throughout the application process. States are already taking advantage of this individualized assistance available to them as they develop their Reading First plans. Support will also be available through this contract for States that need additional assistance in meeting the approval criteria.

We have established an application submission and review schedule that meets the needs of both the States aiming to receive Reading First awards when the funds become available on July 1 and of those States in need of more time to develop high-quality plans. The Department began receiving applications from States on May 1, and has scheduled four rounds of review that will allow States with approved applications to receive funding on July 1. State applications received after these four rounds will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received.

On May 13th, the Department announced the names of the more than seventy national experts and practitioners who will serve as review panelists. The Secretary, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) selected these expert panelists, as required by the Reading First legislation. The panelists include people with expertise in the acquisition of reading skills; the cognitive science of language and reading processes; prevention of reading failure; scientifically based reading research; professional development; school leadership; classroom teaching; curriculum development; early intervention; psychology; assessment, measurement and evaluation; reading and learning disabilities; special education; and management and accountability. The panelists received focused training on the specific program requirements and review process and criteria in May.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the rapid and successful implementation of the Reading First program is a primary focus of the Department. We have worked vigorously and enthusiastically to provide States with the guidance, resources and support they need to develop high quality plans to improve K-3 reading instruction for all of our country's children. As we have met with States at our Secretary's Reading Leadership Academies, Reading First grant writers' workshops, and other events across the country, we have been consistently impressed and gratified at their energetic commitment to developing thoughtful Reading First plans that can be successfully implemented and will result in improved student achievement.

Scientifically based reading research has shown us what works in teaching young children to read. Through the Reading First program, and with your continued support, States, districts and schools can dramatically improve student achievement.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF RUTH NATHAN

It's both a pleasure and honor to be here today a pleasure because I am deeply committed to the idea that all children can learn to read, and an honor because I am fully aware that other highly qualified teachers might be testifying rather than myself. Thank you for inviting me.

My name is Ruth Nathan and I teach third grade at Rancho Romero Elementary in Alamo, California. Alamo is a small, middle to upper-middle class town in Northern California. I've also taught migrant children in Florida, children of farmers in Iowa, professors' children in Wisconsin, and in Michigan I've taught in neighborhoods that have mixtures of children from around the world. You might find it interesting to know that I also teach Introduction to Language and Literacy for UC Berkeley's Reading Certificate Program, offered through their extension; and that I've earned a doctorate in the teaching of reading from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

Given your charge, the implementation of the Reading First Program included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the best thing I can do is to outline several of the research-based teaching practices that I use in my own classroom, as you've asked, as well as practices I model for colleagues and graduate students. I'll do this in the light of what we know about the reading process as it occurs in real time. By "real time," I mean what goes on as we actually read. After briefly discussing reading models that account for what we think happens while we're reading, per

your request (Part I), I'll outline best teaching practices (Part II), and conclude with what, in my opinion, a reading program the federal government might sponsor needs in order to be effective.

#### PART I—READING MODELS: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE READING IN REAL TIME

Assuming that you are all competent readers, research from many different paradigms has shown us that as you read you look at all the words and recognize most of them automatically. While this might seem obvious, thirty years ago folks weren't so sure. It was hypothesized that you used context to such a great extent that you only needed to sample words on the page. Now we know this isn't so: You look at all the words on the page and for the most part recognize them instantly and without much effort. Your automatic word recognition power leaves you with plenty of attention to focus on comprehension, which is sometimes easy and sometimes very difficult, as well as analyze, synthesize, and evaluate your understanding.

The reading process that I've described is interactive. For example, the words you read interact with each other at the phrase and sentence level so you know what they mean, and at the paragraph and text level, too, so you understand the bigger picture. At the word and phrase level, for example, if you read "off the record," you know the word "record," preceded by "off the" means "not for public consumption," as opposed to "record," something that spins around and let's you hear songs. The reading process is compensatory as well as interactive. This means that readers must compensate when one area of the system is weak. For example, when you're reading an article from another agency or a summary of legislation and come across a word you don't know the meaning of, you may examine the context and see if you can figure it out, or you could think hard about what you know on the topic and guess what the word means. My third graders do this, too, not only to figure out a word's meaning, but my weaker readers who have trouble decoding a word use the context to guess what a word says. Of course, there's a cost for compensation at the word recognition level: it takes attention away from comprehension. With attention allocated to figuring out how to say a word, there's often a loss to understanding. If this compensatory practice is a too-frequent strategy, my less-skilled readers have trouble comprehending. This, in turn, can, and does, affect their desire to read, which will ultimately affect their vocabulary growth, concept development, self-esteem in our digital society, and motivation to learn through reading. Some call this the Matthew Effect, which translates to "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer." It's my job to see to it that my kids all get "rich" insuring that their word recognition is automatic—fast and accurate. It is also my job to make sure all my students feel that can turn to books anytime they want: to learn, for personal enjoyment, or to read to a brother, sister, cousin, or younger friend.

#### PART II—BEST TEACHING PRACTICES

The reading models I've outlined that have helped us teachers—administrators, policy makers, and parents—understand reading as an interactive-compensatory process have led teachers and other educators to propose many hypotheses about best teaching practices. Of late, many teachers look for research-based practices whenever possible. To base practices on guesses about what works is to leave children at risk. We need to test our hypotheses, and we need to find out for whom they work best and for whom they don't work at all.

A few years ago a report emerged, the Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read, which was an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Many teachers, myself included, use the report as a resource for selecting classroom practices we use to teach reading. It's amazing how many programs come to us, and how many inservices are delivered, that have little, if any, research base. Often the data offered is just correlational (this program is good because kids who use it score very high in their reading achievement), as opposed to causal (this program is very good because we've tested it, and we find that compared to other programs, or no program, kids do significantly better in reading achievement using our program).

I'm testifying here today because I've been successful in teaching children to read and helping even my less-skilled readers want to read. Below, I'd like to 1) define the areas of reading those of us who teach reading to classrooms full of kids attempt to cover, 2) why each area is important, and 3), and name the characteristics of strategies that work, sharing a few along the way.

Before beginning, however, I want to say that all teaching must occur in classrooms and schools that are safe and where children are well-fed; that are rich in love and respect for children; that have school and classroom libraries filled with recent books for all types of readers at many grade levels, and that cover many

knowledge domains. This last point is important. Knowledge is power, and much of this power comes from being read to, being talked to a whole lot, having many experiences so that comprehension is easier, and eventually becoming well-read oneself. In addition, it's important to remember that good, on-going assessment helps us define what our students need to learn, and that information from assessments needs to be used as we—teachers—plan instruction.

WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO COVER, WHY, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE WITH EXAMPLES

There are basically five sub-processes of reading: phonemic awareness, and phonics (the alphabets of reading instruction), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. After explaining what each process is, I'll explain why it's important, give you a few characteristics of effective instruction, and share an example or two of typical classroom practice. On a few occasions, I'll explain why a particular reading strategy for a subprocess might be one I'd avoid, and why.

Phonemic awareness (PA) is the ability to notice and think about and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. Children might know that a cat is a warm, furry animal that they might pick up, but early on they need to come to the understanding that the word "cat" has three sounds, /c/ /a/ /t/. Knowing this will be essential to their reading development. We know that most children don't become phonemically aware on their own, they need to be taught, and there's a huge body of research on practices that work. These practices are explicit and move up a phonemic awareness continuum.

In the classroom, phonemic awareness work is noisy and explicitly taught! A quiet, pre-k or kindergarten classroom where kids are supposedly doing pa work isn't a classroom that's involved in pa work. In successful classrooms, you'll see explicit instruction: kids are matching pictures that begin with, or end with, the same sounds; or they're moving chips into little sound boxes—a box at a time—as the teacher says, for example, the three sounds in cat, "c/ a/ t/." Children will be saying these sounds, too, and moving a chips—or sometimes even moving letters—into little boxes from left to right as sounds in words are said. Another common practice, in addition to explicit instruction (not instead of), is to encourage children to write notes to people they know, even little stories. Writing helps young children think about the sounds in words they say. English Language Learners benefit from phonemic awareness work, too, because pa is based on concepts, not on any certain set of specific sounds.

Work can begin in their home language and quickly transfer to English. The bottom line, what you need to know and understand, is that phonemic awareness has to be explicitly taught to children who need this instruction, which is most; and then practiced in real situations, like when it's used by young children to write as best they can, and when teachers or caregivers teach youngsters to say tongue twisters (Peter Piper picked . . . ) and nursery rhymes for fun. Tongue-twisters and rhymes attune the ear to the sounds in words.

Even my third graders need to be phonemically aware, not just young children, and this point is very important. For example, if my third graders are learning how to spell "receive" they've got to know how many sounds there are in that word. This will help them understand my explanation of why the word "receive" has seven letters, but only five sounds. Even older children need to be phonemically aware to use a dictionary to pronounce unknown words. Dictionaries show students word sounds in code first, and only after they see how many sounds there are, can they use the code at the bottom of the page to pronounce the word!

While phonemic awareness does not insure success in reading, or spelling, it is at the core of both processes. Pa is not an endpoint, but as you've seen, knowing that words are made of sounds helps students understand phonics instruction, can help them learn to spell, and can even help them learn to use the dictionary. Students who don't get explicit and systematic phonemic awareness instruction are at risk for learning to read, especially children who must learn to read in school.

### *Phonics*

As I've said earlier, phonics is the systematic relationship between letter sounds and the way sounds are spelled. There are about 43 sounds in English, and about 100 different frequent spellings of those sounds. Phonics needs to be taught explicitly and systematically. Phonics is a tool that allows children to become proficient readers who recognize words effortlessly and rapidly, and who don't need to use context to guess at words very often. Beginning readers use phonics skills to pronounce words that are not readily recognized. As students progress in their reading development, they draw on other word attack skills, such as the recognition of sight words, the recognition of word parts (such as syllables; roots, prefixes, and suffixes; and

common letter groupings called phonograms [ook, aid]), and the use of context to confirm pronunciations and resolve ambiguity. Children need to learn these sound/symbol relationships and how to use them very well in order to read (decode) and to write (encode).

Guessing what a word might say using picture cues is not reading. Guessing at words we don't recognize by using context takes attention, thus reduces available attention to understand. While context use is a strategy for recognizing words as wholes or by a first letter, whole word reading doesn't work for long: there are thousands upon thousands of words in our language. Phonics, like phonemic awareness, is not an endpoint. Knowing sound/symbol relationships frees kids from needing to use context to guess what words say and allows most of their effort to go toward comprehension. Research has shown us that systematic instruction in phonics is better than any sort of random or nonsystematic instruction or no instruction at all.

In the classroom, phonics instruction should be context based. Kids need to use what they've learn about sound/symbol correspondences right away, in books and in short rhymes or texts, that use the sounds just learned.

[If we're working on "B"s and "A"s and "T"s, we don't ask kids to read the word: can. We work on words like "bat" and "at." And we give them practice using the tools that they are learning, so that they see the efficacy of those tools and they begin to see and discover the routineness and some of the patterns in our language. Phonics instruction is most effective when it's begun in kindergarten or first grade.

The above quotation in no ways suggests, that kindergarten and first graders only need to be exposed to little books with the sound/symbol correspondences they've learned; it only means that a good portion of the reading material available to them needs to be based on what's been taught. We know full well that a few children learn to read on their own—that they gallop ahead of any given teacher's program, but this is really quite rare. Also, children delight in pattern books they can memorize (e.g. Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you see?), which are full of words they couldn't recognize if they hadn't memorized the text; and in hearing great children's literature, so that they'll want to learn on their own and be able to talk about books with their friends.

Phonics instruction in the classroom is sometimes all class, but often small group, and individually designed, as needed. You'd know phonics instruction was going on if you saw a teacher explicitly using those sound boxes I mentioned in the phonemic awareness section of this short review, but in the sound boxes you'd always see the letters used to spell each sound. Children will probably be reading little books that give them practice in using the sound/symbol correspondences they've learned, often called decodables. Sound/Spelling cards will probably be visible (cards with letter sounds accompanied by a picture and typical sound/spellings); word walls with word families would be up (cat, bat, sat, pat; boil, soil, toil), sight word walls would also be seen, walls with words not spelled phonetically—words children just need to know, like "should" and "of." English Language Learners would have the benefit of teachers who speak their language and/or who know strategies that will work for them. Teachers of ELL students need to know which sounds from a home language transfer to English, which sounds, don't, and where there's no transfer at all.

### *Fluency*

A student is fluent if he or she reads quickly and with expression. "Like music, it consists not only of rate, accuracy, and automaticity, but also of phrasing, smoothness, and expressiveness. Some say it's the most neglected sub-process of reading. Fluency is important to comprehension because we comprehend using chunks of information, and when students read word-by-word, it's harder to hear and understand the connections between words, and then, of course, between phrases and whole paragraphs.

Research shows that repeated monitored oral reading practice can improve students' fluency. Fluency, as phonemic awareness and phonics, needs to be taught explicitly. One way to do this is to begin by providing kids with a fluid model of what a given text sounds like, and these stories or articles need to be at the student's independent reading level (about 95% accuracy). In my classroom, I provide a taped version of stories and I add slashes between phrases. My students who are not fluent/ practice reading/ to the phrase marker/ fluidly.// Later/ they read/ the same text/ without the markers.// In addition to many fluency programs that are available, teachers often use readers' theater to do what's been suggested above. I certainly do. I model what the script sounds like, and students practice over and over again until they can perform their readers' theater play. ELL learners benefit, especially, from fluency work that uses drama because they get involved with the problems and solutions of characters in stories and feel more light-hearted and more willing to learn the target language.

In addition, students need plenty of time to practice reading in order to build fluency. Unfortunately, a lot more research needs to be done on the best way to conduct sustained silent reading a practice where kids just read. One reason we need more research is that teachers will tell you sometimes their lowest kids just flip through picture books, or content picture encyclopedias, and so on during “just reading” time. Fortunately there are many good books that show teachers how to turn their sustained silent reading time into worthwhile time for all children. The bottom line is that teachers have to read a lot of books in order to know which books to suggest to whom. Also, my students share summaries of books they love. We all need to figure out a way to research best practices for “just reading,” because most of us, myself included, allot from 20-45 minutes a day for the practice. That’s a huge amount of time, and we need to make sure all kids are using it to full advantage. While I’ve made inroads, I’m sure I could learn more.

#### *Vocabulary*

Your vocabulary consists of words you need to know to communicate. We have an oral vocabulary, words we use when we talk; and a reading vocabulary, words we know if we encounter them in print. Students who have a large oral vocabulary benefit when they read because they can better understand the text’s message. When students have a large oral vocabulary, they benefit when they read because they can match up an unknown word with something they’ve heard before. For example, because my third graders do a lot of hands-on science, when they come to scientific words in their textbook, they can get close enough to saying these words, using word analysis and phonics, to recognize the word they’d used orally in their science-project discussions.

In the classroom, we want to see vocabulary taught directly and indirectly. Kids have to learn about three to five thousand words a year, too many to learn in direct lessons. In direct instruction, teachers usually introduce the words they think need teaching (highly useful words in a story or article that the context doesn’t support). This is followed by discussing the word, reading it in the context its used, and often using a graphic organizer that illustrates the word’s category, its characteristics, examples of ways to use the word, and what the word is like or not like. You’ll also see many strategies that help students understand a word’s root and all the words related to it. Roots are very generative; take “mem,” for example, which means “mindful of.” In about two minutes you could probably name at least forty words related to this root (e.g. memorize, remember, memo, etc.). You’ll also notice that many ELLs are very adept when it comes to using roots, more so than most English speakers, so teachers need to take advantage of this. Teachers also spend a good deal of time getting students in the habit of examining context to understand a word’s meaning.

Though students can learn words through direct instruction, we must remember that students learn most words indirectly, through reading and hearing new words spoken by their parents, teachers, and friends. This is even more reason for teachers across the country to design research that shows the value of reading a lot in school. These days kids are often busy after school with sports and lessons, or they’re in daycare centers that often don’t support literacy activities, such as reading and writing. Also, we want to pay attention to programs and teacher practices that get kids reading outside of school, looking always for the research base that would support the practice, whatever it might be.

#### *Comprehension*

All else that I’ve discussed leads us to the end point, text comprehension. We know that good readers are purposeful and active when they read. They read for a purpose and they’re always thinking and working through the text. Their brains are very active while they are reading. The National Reading Panel Report identified seven strategies that research shows work well, and I use them all explicitly: 1) teaching kids to monitor their comprehension (know when they’re understanding what they’re reading and know when comprehension is breaking down, and what to do about it); 2) cooperative learning (letting students instruct or interact over the use of reading strategies); 3) teaching them to use graphic and semantic organizers, which are small maps that show the structure of the text they’re reading; 4) teaching them how to answer questions they ask themselves as they read and where to look for answers they ask themselves or that are asked of them); 5) being able to generate questions about what they’ve read; 6) teaching children to recognize story structure (Is it a narrative? Is this exposition compare/contrast? chronologically ordered? etc.); and 7) summarizing (identifying the main idea, knowing when a detail is not a main idea, excluding redundant information, etc.). In addition, many of these strategies have also been effectively used in another category, “multiple strat-

egy instruction,” where students and teachers flexibly use several strategies at once. This has been very hard to do, but I’ve found that if I give students pictures of the strategies we’ve learned (a summarizing logo—for example, a table with legs—at the same time as they see a visualizing logo (two eyes with a think-bubble), they know to summarize and then visualize their summary—or they can visualize the passage first, and then summarize.

If you walked into a classroom, you’d be able to pick out a teacher who uses comprehension strategies that are research-based rather quickly. First, during reading time you might see small, guided reading groups, where students use literature or anthologies, or sometimes poems, to teach or practice a new strategy. If ELL learners are in the room, or even if you’re in area where there is diversity of any kind, you might notice many books written by authors who come from other countries other than our own and used in guided reading sessions. Additionally, you might see charts with strategy instruction tool belts; you might see collections of graphic organizers; you’d probably see evidence of reading-across-the-curriculum, because there’s not enough time in the day to get in all the comprehension strategy instruction that needs teaching. You’d also hear a lot of talk using comprehension strategies all throughout the day, especially as the kids try to understand what they read on the Internet, as well as during their literature study circle time. During read alouds, you’d notice that 1, and most teachers, stop sometimes as we read and to talk about how we’re comprehending the story if there’s a confusing part, or how we’re feeling about characters, or what we’re learning that’s new in a nonfiction book.

Someplace in the room, you might see a Question-the-Author charts, too, if the teacher has to use textbooks, which most of us do. Question-the-Author charts are lists of queries the children and I ask as we try to figure out what the textbook is saying. I used to write all the queries myself (e.g. Why do you think the author put this graph right here?), before the kids read; but now, while I still write queries prior to teaching, I find we all benefit from writing queries together as we stumble over difficult textbook writing.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, if you were to ask me what I’d look for such that no child would be left behind in reading, I’d say that the federal government should only invest in comprehensive, effective reading programs: Here are questions I’d ask and /or guidelines I’d consider.

1. Is there money set aside for teacher preparation and/or inservice that teaches research-based strategies? It’s been my experience as I work with classroom teachers through my university work, at my school, and in schools for whom I consult (four this year, in the Napa Valley), that many are under-prepared to teach reading. It doesn’t seem to matter how these teachers have been prepared—there, are holes they need filled that are basic, not subtle. By basic, I mean understanding the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics. By basic, I mean knowing the linguistics of English and how English is alike and different from the languages their students speak. By basic, I mean how to choose vocabulary words to teach, given an article or textbook, and explicit strategies that work. By basic, I mean knowing children’s literature such that they can hook specific kids with specific books. By basic, I mean how to use a teacher’s manual to teach comprehension strategies, and how to use children’s literature to teach strategies. This work is very, very hard! I would demand that any grant, if it includes a teacher preparation segment, address these issues, and that teachers understand how much they have to do in explicit ways. (See #3, below.)

2. If grants that come to you include a program, ask to see the research that supports the program and that the program shows teachers how to teach all the sub-processes both explicitly and implicitly. If the program has no research base, don’t consider it. If a program acknowledges that it’s evidenced-based, check it out. Also, all programs should include a professional development strand that works. Not all day, one day, affairs! We’ve got a lot of research on how to conduct professional development that works. Good professional development requires extended time for initial training, includes discussions of research how children learn to read as well as instructional strategies, coaching, and regular meetings.

3. Make sure that any grant includes many methods for teaching second language learners, while at the same time deeply honoring student’s home traditions and beliefs. Students need to have the advantage of having teachers who use effective ELL strategies, and these strategies should be research based.

4. Promote whole school approaches. While a whole school may not choose the same programs, everyone in the school needs to be talking the same language and

everyone needs to have the same focus. For example, our school is focusing on comprehension strategy instruction. Everyone is reading books during the summer related to comprehension instruction, and during the summer we're going to build our plan.

5. Any grant should involve parents, who are then encouraged to participate in their children's education. Teachers should make special efforts to open communication with parents by encouraging them to take an active interest in their children's learning and in their school work. Regarding learning, parents can read to their children, and programs can show parents how to do that. Parents can be encouraged to take their children places, so their background knowledge expands. Parents can monitor their children's homework, request reading for homework, and take their children to the library. If parents don't speak English, any program written into a grant should include letters to parents in the language the parent's speak; activities for parents to do at school with teachers and students, and activities to do at home should be outlined; and there should be opportunities for parents to volunteer. Parent involvement correlates with reading achievement, and until further research has been done, logic would have us act upon this correlation.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the children of this country.

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF TRISHA RHODES

Chairman Kennedy and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak from both personal and professional experience to what works for children learning to read. My career as an educator began as a speech and language teacher. Later I became certified as a classroom teacher and a literacy specialist. Then I taught 7th-8th grade literature and language arts for three years. It was these experiences that led me to pursue training as a Reading Recovery teacher. Even with my background in language development and my training as a literacy specialist, I was frustrated with my inability to reach my struggling readers and bring them up to grade level. I knew they were being left behind. This led me to search for information about teaching children how to read in the early stages of learning. When I read about Reading Recovery I was excited and impressed because Dr. Clay shared my beliefs that early intervention is crucial to reach children before they fail, and she had created a program of professional development based on scientific research.

I asked my district to train me as a Reading Recovery teacher, and that training significantly added to my ability to teach emergent readers. My teaching was so successful that the decision was made to train Reading Recovery teachers in most of the schools in my district. Due to the high quality of ongoing training in Reading Recovery, all of the Reading Recovery teachers in my district have emerged as leaders in their schools. They have formed teams with classroom teachers and special educators to create more effective reading programs and to establish standards and assessments in their individual schools and for our district as a whole. The result has been positive systemic change with Reading Recovery working with a variety of classroom approaches. An image to consider is that of a tricycle. The largest of the three wheels is classroom instruction and the two smaller wheels are short-term early intervention such as Reading Recovery and long-term continuing support such as special education. This image is helpful because it both illustrates the importance of classroom instruction and the importance of support services for low-achieving students in order for the educational process to work.

I have been teaching for 18 years and 12 of those years have been spent teaching the lowest performing first grade children how to read and write. I teach children every day, and the growth I see, not only in their ability to read and write, but in feelings of self esteem, is impressive. I have experienced first hand the two positive outcomes of Reading Recovery. These are: 1) the ability for children who are the lowest-achieving at the beginning of first grade to accelerate into the average performance range of their classmates, and 2) the early identification of the few children who will need long term support through special services to ensure that no child is left behind.

About Reading Recovery: Reading Recovery has served more than one million children since implementation in the United States in 1984. Reading Recovery is:

A short-term (12 to 20 weeks) early intervention that helps lowest-achieving first grade children develop effective strategies for reading and writing at grade level.

Intensive, daily one-to-one instruction for thirty (30) minutes that supplements the child's classroom learning.

An integral component of a comprehensive literacy program that is compatible with all classroom teaching approaches.

A year-long training course and on-going training for every year that the teacher teaches children Reading Recovery.

Accountable with program evaluation that counts every child, monitors results, and makes changes based on results.

Available in Spanish, French, and under development in other languages around the world.

Reading Recovery and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): Reading Recovery meets the standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act. Reading Recovery includes the essential components of reading instruction, meets the definition of scientifically-based research, and uses rigorous assessments. Reading Recovery is closing the gap for at-risk readers. It explicitly incorporates the essential components of reading instruction into every lesson, including comprehension, fluency, vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, and phonics (teaching letters, sounds, and word parts and how to use them in figuring out a word).

Reading Recovery has a strong scientific research base. The structure and design of Reading Recovery are consistent with a large body of substantial research on reading and writing behaviors that began in the 1960s and continues today. Research on Reading Recovery uses systematic, empirical methods to collect data annually on all children receiving service. Reading Recovery is reported in numerous peer-reviewed research articles or research reviews that offer support for various aspects of Reading Recovery.

Accountability: Reading Recovery is highly accountable. Every child's progress is measured using standard, valid, and reliable tests of letters, words, sounds, and reading books. The continued progress of children after Reading Recovery has been externally validated in many states, school districts, and schools around the nation. In Maine, for example, a recent longitudinal study at the University of Maine found that 84% of Reading Recovery children who successfully completed their series of lessons met the state standards in reading in fourth grade. These results for the lowest achieving children who received 30 to 50 hours of one-to-one instruction in the first grade are very impressive.

Cost Effectiveness: The immediate impact of Reading Recovery can be felt in the school system in the form of reduced grade retentions and referrals to special education or other long-term academic support services. Of the 86,000 children who successfully completed Reading Recovery in the United States in 2000-2001, only 137 were placed in special education for reading or writing instruction at the end of grade one. In addition, only 194 of these 86,000 children were retained in first grade because of reading difficulties.

Resources: Two-thirds of schools with Reading Recovery report using federal funds to assist with the cost of implementation. Reading First funds are important, but they are not the only answer to every child's reading difficulties. All parts of the NCLB Act must receive adequate funding for every eligible child to be served, and states and local educational agencies must be able to choose programs like Reading Recovery to meet their students' learning needs.

In closing, I want to thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for children who need the most help learning to read and write. More eloquent, however, are the thanks of parents and children whose lives were changed by Reading Recovery. I will close with their words, because they say it all:

Parent: I just wanted to say thank you. Jason has just finished 1st grade and I am happy to say that he is reading on grade level. He got on the school's honor roll during the third nine weeks. Then he went onto the principal's high honor role during the third nine weeks. He just got his end of year report and was reading on a level 18. He still reads every night and reminds me if we forget. His love for reading is unbelievable. Reading Recovery builds more than just the ability to read. It builds the child's belief in themselves. I have become a huge advocate in my community. I am doing everything I can to spot light this program so that all parents are aware that it is out there.

From a 15-year old former Reading Recovery Student: I still remember how I felt in first grade when many of my friends were reading and I just couldn't figure it out. I began to feel embarrassed and discouraged about school. I was then fortunate enough to be identified for Reading Recovery help . . . Right away I began to feel success and feel like a reader . . . I can't imagine what school might have been like without this invaluable support.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH V. PRIMAS

Thank you, Senator Kennedy, and members of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. I am Elizabeth Primas, a reading teacher and change facilitator for the District of Columbia Public Schools and a member of the International Reading Association's Urban Diversity Initiatives Commission. I

am currently assigned to Anthony Bowen Elementary School in Southwest Washington, DC. I am a product of the DC Public School System, and continued my education at DC Teachers' College, Trinity College and George Washington University. I have been employed by the DC Public Schools for approximately 26 years, and have worked as a change facilitator for the past 5 years. In that capacity, I work with teachers, aides and children to attempt to provide a quality education to all students.

My job has required me to assist teachers in implementing the reading program, Success For All. To facilitate that, I have provided professional development, and administered assessments every 8 weeks to determine if students were making continuous growth and progress. In the last five years we have gone from 16 percent of children on or above grade level, to more than 22 percent of students school wide. Almost 53.1 percent of first graders and 48.7 percent of second graders are on or above grade level, an increase from 23.9 percent of first graders in 1999 and 5.3 percent of second graders that same year.

I select reading materials that match groups' reading ability, and I identify students who show signs of having difficulties in acquiring reading skills and strategies such as phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. Once students are identified as needing additional assistance, it has been my role to assign a tutor who can work with the teacher and student to provide additional time on task to either help the child catch up or keep up with the reading group. While in theory this is just what a student may need, in reality this is a very difficult task to accomplish. First, tutors, normally educational aides or paraprofessionals, have not had sufficient training to conduct a reading

The Testimony of Elizabeth V. Primas of the District of Columbia Public Schools lesson with those children who actually need the best and brightest teachers to guarantee their success. In addition to not having the best trained individuals working with those most in need, far too often these aides are not available to tutor since they are holding classes because funds are not available to hire substitutes, or substitutes are not available even if funds are available. And finally, when the child is pulled out to receive the prescribed 20 minutes of one-on-one tutoring, the child is actually missing some other aspect of the teacher's direct instruction, perhaps in math or another critical subject area.

At Bowen Elementary School, we recognized the problem and have tried to make adjustments and adaptations to bridge the gaps for those students who experience difficulties. We have recruited and trained individuals from organizations to provide volunteer tutoring and mentoring services for students in grades one through six. Bowen has been able to attract approximately 350 volunteers from all walks of life to donate an hour during the school day, often during their lunch hour, to develop a relationship with a student and stick with that child all year.

While in general progress is slow, with the exception of one year, it has been consistent. However, progress has not been sufficient for many of the students to reach desired grade level goals. Two students come to mind, and they are both at the very extremes of the educational spectrum.

One sixth grade student who has been at Bowen for her entire elementary school experience has tested at the eleventh grade reading level in combined reading vocabulary and comprehension, while another sixth grade student tested only at a third grade level. The difference may be apparent, student FG attended Bowen from prekindergarten through sixth grade, and has done well in school consistently. Her mother and grandmother have been very supportive and she enjoys reading, math and science. Student AC attended Bowen for a few years and then went to live with his father who put him in a different school. After several years, a few months ago he came back to live with his mother and stepfather. With his latest move he also acquired a new brother, and two cousins who came to live with his mother because their mother was not responsible enough to take care of them.

I mention these two students because sometimes it is not enough to have a research based program, because no program meets every child's needs. It is not enough to have your school full of volunteers -who, while well intentioned, are still using time that should be instructional time with the teacher., and should be in addition to the teacher not instead of the teacher. (Tutorial programs should be offered in non-instructional time slots—before school, after school or during the lunch hour). It is not enough to test the students every eight weeks, because testing does not in and of itself provide sufficient motivation for students to do better, and standardized tests don't usually provide sufficient diagnostic information to determine what deficits need to be remediated to advance the students.

As a result of all of the assessments, the volunteers and interaction with teachers, children and parents, I have made some generalizations that I believe are true across all classrooms when it comes to the teaching of children.

The solution is not the number of volunteers who provide random services, however well intentioned they may be. It is not the packaged programs, research based or not, because one size does not fit all. When you look at students who consistently make the grade, they are those who have a support system, and the key components are stability of home, caring and involved parents and, most importantly, extensive classroom libraries and highly qualified teachers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR KENNEDY FROM EUGENE W. HICKOK

*Question.* The President's budget provides \$100 million more for Reading First, and I support that. But, overall, it cuts programs in the No Child Left Behind Act. Specifically, it cuts funding for literacy and teacher professional development programs such as level-funding Early Reading First, cutting Even Start by \$50 million, level-funding the School Library program, and level-funding Title II of ESEA which supports teacher quality and class size reduction.

In addition to these budget cuts, communities are facing increasing numbers of children in poverty and drastic state budget cuts to education. How can we expect more from teachers, schools and students without more resources? Shouldn't we do more—not less—to help them achieve?

*Answer.* It is possible to argue about funding for specific programs—we made some tough decisions following September 11 but a look at the big picture shows that we are continuing to provide strong support for education. The \$1.4 billion increase requested for the Department for 2003 will cap an extraordinary and unprecedented \$15 billion or 41 percent increase just since fiscal year 2000.

Similarly, our \$1 billion increase for Title I will result in a \$3.4 billion or 43 percent increase since 2000, while our \$1 billion increase for Special Education Grants to States caps a \$3.5 billion or 71 percent increase over the same period. Particularly since a lot of this new money has yet to hit our schools the massive increase for 2002 is for the school year beginning next fall I think its pretty hard to make the case that the Federal government isn't doing its share when it comes to dollars for education.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) was not just, or even most importantly, about the size of the Federal investment in education, but rather about increasing our return on that investment. Frankly, we don't have a lot to show for the \$190 billion that we have invested in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act since 1965, and dramatic growth in State and local funding for education over the past decade also has failed to either raise overall student achievement or to close the achievement gap for poor and minority students.

We believe the combination of the very substantial new funding provided over the past three years and the reforms in the NCLBA will make a real difference in improving the performance of our schools and the achievement of all students.

For teacher quality programs, the 2003 budget will provide resources under a number of programs that States and school districts can use to improve teacher quality in various subject areas. Some of these are major formula grant programs, such as Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies and Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, that give States and local educational agencies (LEAs) flexibility to use the strategies that will best help them to improve teacher quality and thereby raise student academic achievement. In return for this flexibility, LEAs are required to demonstrate annual progress in ensuring that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects within the State are highly qualified.

The Administration's fiscal year 2003 request provides a 25 percent increase over 2001 funding for programs that are focused solely on improving teacher quality. In addition, the 2003 request includes \$1 billion increases for Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies and IDEA State Grants, which will enable States and LEAs to raise their investments in teacher professional development. For example, with the ESEA requirement that LEAs spend between 5 and 10 percent of their Title I allocation on professional development, the 2003 request would ensure that well over \$500 million is targeted to this purpose.

One of the main tenets of the President's plan for reforming elementary and secondary education is to ensure that all children read well by the end of the third grade. While Even Start's family-centered approach to school readiness supports the Administration's goal to improve children's reading skills, the budget request targets increases to the Reading First State Grants program, which finances direct in-

struction for students in kindergarten through third grade that is based on scientifically based reading research in order to improve their academic skills. The mixed evaluation results for Even Start support the lower request level.

The two previous evaluations of the Even Start program focused on evaluating the components and outcomes of the Even Start model, which integrates early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education. On measures of literacy used in both of these evaluations, participating families consistently made gains each year. However, results from an experimental study during the first evaluation showed no difference in achievement between those who participated in Even Start and those who did not.

The Department anticipates that we will award approximately 175 Early Reading First grants with fiscal year 2002 funds. The fiscal year 2003 request, along with strong dissemination efforts, will maintain the momentum for early literacy efforts that are based on scientific reading research. This program also complements the Reading First State Grants program, for which the Administration is seeking \$1 billion in fiscal year 2003, an increase of \$100 million. Combined with funds from other Federal early childhood education programs, including Title I preschool programs, Even Start, Special Education Preschool Grants, Special Education Grants for Infants and Families, and Early Childhood Educator Professional Development, the Administration believes that the fiscal year 2003 request provides a significant investment in pre-kindergarten programs.

[Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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