

THE FACTS ABOUT...

Far too many young people are struggling through school without having mastered the most essential and basic skills in reading. On the 2000 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), over 85 percent of all fourth-graders in high-poverty schools scored below the “proficient” reading level. Fortunately, scientifically based reading research has identified the critical components that are essential for teaching young children to read.

As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, President Bush put forward a new comprehensive effort called **Reading First**, a \$900 million state grant program which promotes the use of scientifically based research to provide high-quality reading instruction for grades K-3, in order to help every student in every state become a successful reader.

Reading First will provide assistance to state and local education agencies to apply scientifically based reading research – and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research – to improve reading instruction for K-3 students and to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade.

State education agencies from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible to submit applications to receive a **Reading First** grant.

As outlined in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, state applications will undergo a thorough review by an expert panel, which was chosen by the secretary of education, the National Institute for Literacy, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health. These reviews will be used to make funding recommendations to the secretary and to provide comments and technical assistance to the states.

Members of this panel have training, expertise and experience in the following areas:

- ✓ Training teachers how to teach reading using methods based on scientific research;
- ✓ Developing research-based curricula for effective reading instruction;
- ✓ Developing research assessments;
- ✓ Teaching reading in the early grades; and
- ✓ Promoting research based reading programs to policymakers on the local, state and national levels.

On Tuesday, May 7, Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced the names of 75 individuals who will serve as **Reading First** review panelists and will be tasked with reviewing and recommending state applications for \$900 million in *Reading First* grants.

This **Reading First** panel represents a diverse group of individuals from across the country including states such as California, New York and Texas, which have some of the nation’s largest school districts, a well as Alabama, Iowa and Virginia, which have experience with the challenges facing many rural areas.

READING FIRST

Members of the *Reading First* review panel bring a vast amount of experience, knowledge and training from all areas of education. These members include research experts from universities across the country; education practitioners including teachers and school administrators; and representatives of education organizations who have made significant contributions toward improving the quality of education in America.

The *Reading First* review panel includes individuals with specific expertise in the following fields: acquisition of reading skills; the cognitive science of language and reading process; 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.