From: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 5:56 PM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov
Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Topic Areas, Beginning Reading Review, Reference
ID Number: 2076267247

info@whatworks.ed.gov, this email was automatically sent through the Contact
link on the WWC website.

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Sent: Friday, May 21, 2010 10:36 AM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: Re: What Works Clearinghouse (WWCPC 2175)

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Subject: What Works Clearinghouse (WWCPC 2175)
To: [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, May 21, 2010, 9:34 AM

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From: WhatWorks
Sent: Monday, May 24, 2010 4:18 PM
To: WhatWorks
Subject: Re: What Works Clearinghouse (WWCPC 2175)

Dear Mr. Griffin,

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Quality Review Team is preparing a written response to your May 21st email. The Quality Review Team responds to concerns raised by study authors, curriculum developers or other relevant parties about WWC reviews published on our website. These quality reviews are undertaken when concerned parties present evidence that a WWC review may be inaccurate. When a quality review is conducted, a researcher who was not involved in the initial review undertakes an independent assessment of the review/study in question. The researcher also investigates the procedures used and decisions made during the original review. If a quality review concludes that the original review was flawed, a revision will be published. These quality reviews are one of tools used to ensure that the standards established by the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) are upheld on every review conducted by the What Works Clearinghouse.

Thank you,

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Subject: IES Website: Contact Us: Topic Areas, Beginning Reading Review,

Reference ID Number: 2076267247

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September 2, 2010

Mr. John Griffin

Reference: QR20100010

Dear Mr. Griffin:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the WWC Beginning Reading topic area. In response to your email, we conducted a quality review. The WWC Quality Review Team responds to concerns raised by study authors, curriculum developers, teachers, or other relevant parties about WWC reviews published on our website.

In your email, you expressed concern regarding the limited number of reading programs that have been shown to be effective based on research consistent with WWC standards. In conducting our quality review, we determined that the following programs were determined by the WWC to be effective in improving general reading achievement for K-2 students: Accelerated Reader, Classwide Peer Tutoring, Little Books, and Success for All. In addition, Reading Recover has been determined by the WWC to be effective for at-risk K-2 students. You can access the WWC Intervention Reports for these programs at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/Topic.aspx?tid=01.

In your email, you asked whether curriculum developers were involved in the creation of WWC standards. The standards were created by an independent research firm working collaboratively with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences. The standards are based on scientifically sound, rigorous research practices.

Your email could be read to implicitly suggest that the WWC is responsible for the lack of reading programs that have been shown to be effective based on research consistent with WWC standards. The creation of reading programs and research on their effectiveness is outside of the scope of the WWC, which was created to assess the evidence on effectiveness. However, WWC staff frequently interact with teachers, other education professionals, researchers, and curriculum developers and, in the course of these interactions, WWC staff learned that WWC standards have actually promoted the creation of high quality research on effectiveness. As you might expect, the curriculum developers value the WWC rating their programs as effective. For this reason, they are now more likely to commission high-quality research on effectiveness. In addition, curriculum developers who find their programs are not effective may adjust their programs and then reassess effectiveness. In this manner, the WWC may actually contribute to the development of effective programs.
Your email could also be read to question the value of a WWC finding that a program has “no studies meeting WWC standards.” On the contrary, WWC staff learned from school districts that these findings are helpful in decisions about adopting programs. In particular, the WWC provides a resource to these districts that helps them to assess research claims made by people seeking to sell a program.

I hope this letter has addressed your concerns. If you have other concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the WWC through info@whatworks.ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Deborah Reed
WWC Quality Review Team
Dear Mr. Griffin,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised in your May 21 message to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

Thank you,

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