

NEWS RELEASE



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Florida High School Students Gain Literacy Skills with *Read On!*

Enhanced Reading Skills Improve Students' Performance in All Academic Subjects

AUSTIN, TEXAS (Jan. 25, 2007) – More than half a million students drop out of school every year, often because they lack the literacy skills necessary to keep up with the high school curriculum. Research shows that 70 percent of students entering ninth grade, and 60 percent of students entering 12th grade, read below grade level. Steck-Vaughn, an imprint of Harcourt Achieve, offers educators an answer to the adolescent literacy crisis with *Read On!*, a research-based reading intervention software program specifically designed for high school and adult learners.

Based on years of proven classroom success, *Read On!* provides a well-defined, instructional path for struggling adolescent readers. After *Read On!* assessments place students at the appropriate level, they develop reading skills through lessons in reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, reading fluency, and phonological awareness. *Read On!* is organized into 10 instructional levels, from foundational to 10.5, addressing the needs of readers at all levels.

Florida officials assign each school a letter grade based on how well students perform on the state's learning standards. Educators at Palm Beach County School District's Wellington High School discovered first hand the influence literacy has on student achievement, when the Florida Department of Education gave the school a "B" grade in 2004-2005. Jeannette McCauley, Wellington High School's Reading Department Head, enlisted the help of *Read On!* to improve reading skills among struggling students at her school. After using the program for just one year, the school achieved an "A" grade in 2005-2006.

"Receiving a 'B' from the Florida Department of Education opened our eyes to the relationship between reading skills and student achievement," said McCauley. "Implementing *Read On!* at our school allows educators to address the reading needs of all students, and ensures they have the vocabulary and comprehension skills necessary for all academic subjects. I have no doubt that *Read On!* contributed to the success our students experienced in school last year."

With more than 1,000 hours of instruction, *Read On!* provides a variety of stimulating content to motivate readers. The incremental, scaffolded approach engages students, imbuing them with a sense of success that motivates them to continue. The program constantly assesses a student's progress and prescribes an individualized, self-paced program of differentiated instruction. To accelerate reading gains, the student is redirected to prior levels of instruction when necessary.

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“Attitude is the most difficult obstacle to overcome when teaching adolescent readers. After years of struggling, students lack the confidence and desire to give reading another chance,” said McCauley. “With the engaging lessons from *Read On!*, students ask if they can finish a lesson when the bell rings, or choose to use the program after school hours. For the first time students are motivated to learn, allowing them to gain the skills they need to be successful in life.”

Recognizing that each struggling reader is unique, *Read On!* creates a personalized learning plan for each student that includes a strategic mix of assessment, instruction and developmental learning experiences. The program also addresses individual learning styles by offering instruction and practice through a variety of experiences, using auditory, visual and tactile instruction to ensure each student has multiple opportunities to learn.

Read On! is an effective, affordable way for schools to address the needs of struggling readers. The program’s quick start-up features enable easy implementation, eliminating the need for training sessions. With minimal assistance needed to get the program up and running, *Read On!* provides educators with easy access and fast results. *Read On!* also offers built-in scalability, allowing an unlimited number of students to be added to the program at no additional cost.

Read On! may be purchased as a complete package with 10 program levels, or as individual program levels, which range from RA (Foundational) to IA (10.5). For pricing or additional information about *Read On!*, visit www.steckvaughn.com/readon.

About Steck-Vaughn

Steck-Vaughn, an imprint of Harcourt Achieve, publishes instructional materials that accelerate learning for struggling primary, secondary and adult education students. Offering a wide range of skills building and targeted intervention programs, the Steck-Vaughn imprint provides educators with easy-to-use material that improves content-area knowledge, reading skills and preparation for standards-based tests. For more information, visit <http://steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com>.

About Harcourt Achieve

Harcourt Achieve produces learning solutions and content that fundamentally and positively changes the lives of young and adult learners. Published under the Steck-Vaughn, Saxon and Rigby imprints, its products are based on a developmental philosophy that assesses learner’s skills, matches them to appropriate content and accelerates them to meet and exceed expectations. For more information, visit www.harcourtachieve.com.

Harcourt Education is a global education provider serving students and teachers in PreK through grade 12, adult learners, and readers of all ages. The Harcourt Education companies include Harcourt School Publishers; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Harcourt Achieve (including the Rigby, Steck-Vaughn, and Saxon imprints); Harcourt Assessment; Classroom Connect; Harcourt Trade Publishers; Greenwood/Heinemann; and Harcourt Education International. For further information, please visit www.harcourt.com

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