



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

AUG 13 2002

Lucille M. Linde, Ed.D.
President and Director
Developmental Learning Center, Inc.
1954 Eighteenth Avenue
Greeley, Colorado 80632-5208

Dear Dr. Linde:

Thank you very much for your letter to President George W. Bush regarding accountability in education. We appreciate hearing your views on this issue. The White House has referred your letter to the Department of Education for review, and I am pleased to respond.

Your dedication to our Nation's children and your long-term efforts to understand how children learn and the factors that make learning difficult for many is impressive. I have reviewed all of the materials that you have sent and very much appreciate your focus on making sure that no children are left behind in school.

In your letters, you recommended that President Bush and Secretary of Education Rod Paige require that the assessment and motor-perceptual training programs that you have developed be provided to all children across the country who are having difficulties learning. You have proposed that teachers be trained to administer an Ocumeter pretest, provide motor-perceptual training linked to the results of the assessment, and then administer an Ocumeter posttest to determine if students need more training and to document the effects of the training for accountability purposes.

While this is a laudable goal, the Department of Education does not have the authority to mandate specific assessment and instructional/intervention programs for use in the public schools. Such decisions are made at the State and local school district levels. Therefore, you may wish to approach State educational agencies or school districts directly with your proposal.

As you may be aware, as States and local school districts make decisions regarding which programs to use in their schools, they will now be focusing on scientifically based reading research. This new focus is the result of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, in which President Bush and Secretary Paige wanted to make sure that screening, diagnostic and classroom based assessments and instructional materials, programs, learning systems and strategies to promote learning in public schools have

been evaluated and found to be effective on the basis of rigorous scientifically based research. A major reason for this focus was the recognition that for many years, assessment and instructional programs, including early intervention programs, generally have not been rigorously or scientifically evaluated. Because of this, children have been provided with many programs based on beliefs and untested assumptions that failed to promote learning.

Over the past two decades, a great deal has been learned about the types of scientific research methods that can be applied to promising educational innovations (e.g., assessment and instructional programs) to make sure that they clearly benefit students. The No Child Left Behind legislation provides an overview of these research principles and defines the criteria that exemplify the use of scientifically based research. Specifically, scientifically based reading research is defined as research that:

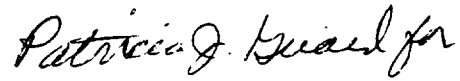
- (A) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and,
- (B) includes research that:
 1. employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
 2. involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and to justify the general conclusions drawn;
 3. relies on measurement or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
 4. has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

I am enclosing a copy of the relevant section of the No Child Left Behind legislation. As States and local school districts begin to make decisions about which assessment and instructional programs they want to purchase and support with Federal funds, they will be searching for programs that have been found to be effective on the basis of published scientifically based research.

Therefore, we recommend that you contact a researcher or team of researchers that specialize in the development of assessment instruments and the development and evaluation of instructional programs and intervention protocols to assist you in developing the appropriate research methodology and design to adequately test the efficacy of your materials. At a minimum, the data obtained from these tests should either be published in a peer-reviewed journal or evaluated through a rigorous, objective and independent review.

We wish you the best in evaluating the Ocumeter and the MPT program using the standards set forth in the No Child Left Behind Legislation. Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of our Nation's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie S. Lee".

Stephanie S. Lee
Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure