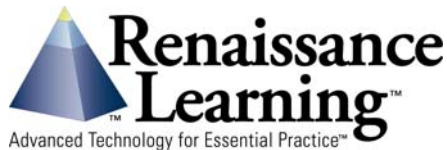


# NEWS RELEASE



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## **Texas Education Agency Approves *Read Now Power Up!*™ for Intensive Reading Instruction**

**WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI and AUSTIN, TX – August 19, 2008** – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has selected *Read Now Power Up!*™, jointly produced by Renaissance Learning, Inc. and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Supplemental Publishers, for inclusion in the state’s Intensive Reading Instruction (IRI) list of approved curriculum materials. To support the initiative, the Texas Legislature allocated funds for the 2008-09 school year to campuses with the most difficulty in improving reading achievement. The IRI funds are earmarked for students in grades 4-8 who read below grade level and fail to meet the Texas Assessment on Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test standards.

Renaissance Learning, Inc., the leading provider of computerized assessment and progress monitoring tools for pre-K–12 schools, and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Supplemental Publishers, publisher of Steck Vaughn’s educational learning materials and content, collaborated to create *Read Now Power Up!* The research-based program integrates the best of Renaissance Learning’s *Read Now*® assessment software with Steck Vaughn’s *Power Up!*® reading curriculum, and is designed to accelerate achievement for students reading significantly below grade level. The program’s integrated model ensures an effective approach to supporting struggling readers and building teacher capacity.

“The combination of Steck Vaughn’s reading curriculum, and our progress-monitoring software is ideal to address the special needs of struggling readers, and provides teachers with the necessary components to facilitate rapid improvement in their students’ reading skills,” said Steve Schmidt, president and chief operating officer of Renaissance Learning. “By providing immediate feedback and data of students’ performance, teachers can pinpoint problem areas for struggling readers and help their students succeed.”

This comprehensive reading intervention program offers fiction and non-fiction books on topics that are of interest to older students. Comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, phonemic awareness, and the reading-and-writing connection are taught through small group instruction, whole group activities, and guided independent reading practice.

“*Read Now Power Up!* strengthens decoding and language comprehension skills with high-interest books at reading levels appropriate for struggling readers,” said Susan Canizares, President and CEO of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Supplemental Publishers. “By gaining reading confidence, students can progress from learning to read, to reading to learn.”

To qualify for IRI’s list of approved curriculum, programs must focus on improving reading performance for struggling students in grades 4–8. They must also include comprehensive research-based reading instruction; assessment and performance outcome measures; data-driven instruction systems; and professional development in the implementation and use of the program.

For more information on *Read Now Power Up!* and the Texas Intensive Reading Initiative, visit [www.renlearn.com/rnpu/TexasIRI](http://www.renlearn.com/rnpu/TexasIRI) or [www.SteckVaughn.com/TexasIRI](http://www.SteckVaughn.com/TexasIRI).

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## **About Renaissance Learning, Inc.**

Renaissance Learning, Inc. is the world's leading provider of computer-based assessment technology for pre-K–12 schools. Adopted by more than 75,000 North American schools, Renaissance Learning's tools provide daily formative assessment and periodic progress-monitoring technology to enhance core curriculum, support differentiated instruction, and personalize practice in reading, writing and math. Renaissance Learning products help educators make the practice component of their existing curriculum more effective by providing tools to personalize practice and easily manage the daily activities for students of all levels. As a result, teachers using Renaissance Learning products accelerate learning, get more satisfaction from teaching, and help students achieve higher test scores on state and national tests. Renaissance Learning has seven U.S. locations and subsidiaries in Canada, India, and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit [www.renlearn.com](http://www.renlearn.com).

## **About Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Supplemental Publishers**

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Supplemental Publishers is a division of Boston-based Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, a global education company with approximately \$2.5 billion in combined revenue. The Company publishes a comprehensive set of best-in-class pre-K–12 educational solutions, ranging from research-based textbook programs to instructional technology to standards-based assessments for students and educators. The Company also publishes an extensive line of reference works and award-winning literature for adults and young readers. With origins dating back to 1832, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt combines its tradition of excellence with a commitment to innovation. For more information visit [www.hmhsupplemental.com](http://www.hmhsupplemental.com).