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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Scientific Research Study on Benchmark Education Company's Literacy Program
Finds Students in Program Achieved Significantly Higher Reading Levels**

*Title I students and English Language Learners made the largest gains
in Reading on standardized tests*

PELHAM, NY, Nov. 17, 2009 - Literacy publisher [Benchmark Education Company](#) announced the results of a scientific research study, testing the effectiveness of its literacy program among third graders in a suburban public school district. During the study, conducted from September 2008 through May 2009, third grade students who received Benchmark Education's Differentiated Literacy Program with On-Site Professional Development achieved reading levels 44% higher than peers in their school district. Significantly, economically disadvantaged (Title I) third grade students who received the Benchmark Program achieved reading levels 82% higher than peers in the district. The study was conducted in the East Hartford (CT) Public Schools by Main Street Academix, an independent, university-based research company.

A key research finding was that Title I students who received the Benchmark Program improved as much or more than more affluent students. Also, Title I students in the lowest socioeconomic school receiving the Benchmark Program showed the greatest improvement in reading scores of any of the six elementary schools in the study.

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“The Benchmark Education program, both the multi-level instructional materials and the high quality, ongoing professional development, made a very positive impact on the development of our teachers in differentiating instruction,” said Debbie A. Kaprove, Assistant Superintendent of East Hartford Public Schools. “We saw improvement in our students’ literacy and language acquisition as measured on independent and state assessments as a result of our year-long collaboration. There were noticeable gains in the percentage of students who scored ‘At/Above Proficient’ on the state reading test—an average gain of 10 points—for students in the program this past year.”

Overall, third graders who received the Benchmark Education Program with long-term, on-site Professional Development at experimental schools achieved significant improvements of 31% to 62% as compared to students in the control schools that used other literacy programs. These gains were in Lexile reading level score, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) overall assessment score, and in each of the four MAP subtests produced by the Northwest Evaluation Association: Construct Meaning, Interpretation/Analysis/Evaluation, Word Recognition/Vocabulary, and Devices/Conventions.

“I was most impressed with the fact that the gains in Lexile scores and overall MAP scores were reflected in our state’s Mastery Test,” said Scott J. Nozik, principal at Dr. Thomas S. O’Connell Elementary School in East Hartford, one of the experimental schools in the research study. “After a year of using the Benchmark materials, and participating in perhaps the best ongoing professional development I have ever seen, our third grade students posted the highest scores on the mastery test since its inception in 2006. In addition to the third grade students reaching new heights in the percentage of students scoring at or above goal, our free/reduced lunch population also set an all-time high in the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency.”

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“Students who received the Benchmark Education program during the Main Street Academix research study had significantly greater improvements in literacy over the course of a single academic year across all variables measured,” said Jay Castelli, Vice President Marketing & Research, Benchmark Education Company. “The researchers noted that teachers contributed greatly to students’ success by enthusiastically adopting the Benchmark Program and implementing it with high levels of fidelity.”

Title I and ELL Student Successes

Some of the most dramatic results of the research study were among Title I students and ELLs. Grade 3 Title I students in schools using Benchmark programs gained an average of 144 points in Lexile Reading score compared to an average gain of only 79 points by Title I students in control schools using other literacy programs. The gain by Title I students using Benchmark materials also statistically matched the gain by other students in the same schools. The usual shortfall by Title I students was eliminated!

English Language Learners (ELLs) in schools using Benchmark programs gained an average of 148 points in Lexile Reading score compared to an average gain of only 112 points by ELLs in control schools using other literacy programs. ELLs in schools using Benchmark programs gained an average of 9.6 points in Overall Reading (RIT) score, the largest RIT score gain achieved by any of the subgroups studied.

More details about the study are available on [Benchmark Education’s](#) Web site under “Downloads and Resources.”

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Benchmark Literacy Program

For the research study, the experimental schools used Benchmark's high-interest literary resources for Grade 3 to differentiate instruction. Resources included: Early Explorers™ and Early Connections™ leveled texts; Bridges™ and Navigators™ leveled text pairs; English Explorers™ (Science and Social Studies themes) and Math Explorers™ leveled texts with audio CDs and Talking E-Books; Reader's Theater™ multi-levelled scripts; VCL Vocabulary Science, Social Studies, and Math posters, cards, and whiteboard CD-ROMs. A text-dependent comprehension question card and teacher's guide accompanied every book title.

As part of the literacy program, teachers received Benchmark's customized professional development, including an initial product training followed by monthly on-site coaching in whole-group and small-group differentiated instruction. Researchers noted that participants in the Benchmark Program professional development trainings thought they were *outstanding*. Literacy coordinators expressed that, *finally*, they were able to see more consistent implementation of evidence-based differentiated instruction in all their classrooms.

Benchmark Education Company

Benchmark Education Company (BEC), headquartered in Pelham, NY, produces research-based, proven-effective literacy materials for supplementary and intervention use with PreK–12 students, including gifted, on-level, and struggling readers; students with learning disabilities; and those still mastering English as a second language. Standards-aligned products and services, supported by Professional Development training, are designed to supplement core reading programs and help teachers enable each learner to succeed academically. BEC materials are used in over 15,000 schools and districts across the United States, in Canada, and abroad. Contact BEC at (877) 236-2465

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or visit www.benchmarkeducation.com.

Main Street Academix

Founded in 2002 by Dr. William Preble, a distinguished college professor, educational researcher, administrator, and author, the mission of [Main Street Academix](#) is to improve teaching and learning, school climate and safety, and school quality. MSA brings together a powerful mix of experienced educational leaders, researchers, writers, artists, graduate students, and facilitators eager to work closely with educational leaders, communities, and state agencies who are committed to school improvement. MSA is located in Henniker, NH, and works with educators and schools across the country.

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