

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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State Board of Education Wins Federal Approval of Key Reading Program *California will receive \$132.9 million in 2002-03 under Reading First Program of NCLB*

SACRAMENTO – The State Board of Education today won approval of funding for its Reading First application under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, resulting in \$132.9 million in 2002-03 to help California schools improve student achievement in reading.

The U.S. Department of Education noted that approval of California's application means the state will receive \$871 million over six years, subject to congressional appropriations and successful implementation.

"This is tremendous news for California school children," said State Board President Reed Hastings. "Reading is the gateway skill. And the Reading First funding will go a long way to help California's school children to be able to read as soon as possible, especially our kids in high-poverty, low-performing schools."

The Reading First program is one of the major educational reforms included in the NCLB, which became law in January. The State Board, as the designated state educational agency under NCLB, approved the funding application in May and immediately submitted it to the USDE.

"NCLB sets out ambitious timelines, and we intend to meet everyone of them," Hastings said. "In general, California has been on the leading edge of NCLB preparation. Education Week has called us one of the 10 most prepared states, and today we are thrilled that the California Reading First application is one of the first such state plans to win federal approval."

Hastings said that the State Board will continue to work with key offices and officials – including the USDE, the Legislature, Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin and the California Department of Education, and Education Secretary Kerry Mazzoni -- to ensure California students benefits early and often from NCLB.

The Reading First program mandates that states use scientifically proven methods of reading instruction to be eligible for funding. In that regard, California was well-positioned to be one of the first states to win Reading First funding.

State Board-adopted English-Language Arts content standards, newly adopted instructional materials for reading, and new professional development programs for teachers and principals, are all centered around the scientific research on how children learn to read. As a result, California has successfully established an instructional system designed to offer guidance to teachers on the delivery of a comprehensive, standards-based and scientific research-based instructional reading program.

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