



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Pearson Takes the Lead in Helping States Ensure Teacher Candidates Possess Skills to Teach Reading**

*Evaluation Systems Group First Teacher Licensure Testing Company  
to Develop Tests of Reading Instruction Competency*

**HADLEY, Mass. – June 10, 2009** – Pearson continues to lead the nation in helping states ensure teachers understand how to teach reading, most recently with a new teacher licensure test in Connecticut and an updated version of the nation’s first test of reading instruction competency in California, in addition to the pioneering assessments in Massachusetts, Virginia and in the new NES<sup>®</sup> (National Evaluation Series) program.

This May, Connecticut launched its first test of reading instruction competency for all teachers seeking early childhood or elementary certification. Currently, California is updating the reading instruction test that it launched more than a decade ago. States have collaborated with the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson because of its demonstrated track record of success in assessing reading instruction competency in state teacher licensure testing programs. Evaluation Systems has accomplished this through its dual focus on the essential knowledge and skills required to learn how to read and on the comprehension strategies required to learn from reading across the curriculum.

As the first major teacher licensure testing business to have developed a test of reading instruction competency, Evaluation Systems earned high praise in a 2006 report from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) that examined the alignment of teacher certification testing with the essential components of reading instruction. In “Report on Licensure Alignment with the Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction,” the reviewers concluded that the Pearson tests in Massachusetts, California and Virginia were aligned with the five components of effective reading instruction – phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency.

“Research supports that it is critical that children develop effective reading skills in the early grades,” said William Gorth, Ph.D., president of the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson. “For more than 10 years, we have taken the lead in helping states ensure that educators they certify are prepared to teach reading – through our custom teacher certification testing programs and, more recently, with the development of the NES.”

The Evaluation Systems group launched the country’s first reading instruction competency test in collaboration with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in 1998 – the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). The revised RICA will be launched beginning in August 2009.

“As the first state in the country to launch a test of reading instruction competency, California has long had a commitment to ensuring that the educators that we put in our classrooms have the knowledge and skills important for providing effective reading instruction,” said Dale Janssen, executive director, Commission on Teacher Credentialing in California. “After our record of success using the RICA to ensure that California educators are prepared to help our students build literacy skills, we are pleased to collaborate with Evaluation Systems to develop the new version of the RICA, reflecting our state’s new content standards.”

Massachusetts launched its test in 2002. Working with Evaluation Systems, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed its Foundations of Reading subject matter knowledge test to measure the reading instruction knowledge of candidates seeking licensure as early childhood and elementary teachers, as well as teachers of students with mild disabilities. The Massachusetts test has been used as a model for similar tests by states across the country, including its neighboring New England state, Connecticut.

In May, Connecticut launched its new test of teacher reading instruction competency: the Connecticut Foundations of Reading test. Developed in collaboration with Evaluation Systems, the test assesses candidates’ knowledge and skills in the foundations of reading development, the development of reading comprehension, and reading assessment and instruction. This new test is closely aligned to Connecticut reading standards, as reflected in Connecticut’s Blueprint for Reading Achievement

(2000) and *Beyond the Blueprint: Literacy in Grades 4–12 and Across the Content Areas* (2007).

Virginia has also made teacher reading instruction competency a high priority. The Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA) was launched in 2004 and is designed to measure the five components of effective reading instruction – phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. More than 3,000 candidates for licensure as elementary and special education teachers and reading specialists take the VRA each year in Virginia.

Building on this trend of assessing candidates' skills in reading instruction competency in its custom teacher certification testing programs, Evaluation Systems' new contemporary, 100 percent computer-based testing program, the NES, includes a scientifically based reading competency teacher certification test: Essential Components of Elementary Reading Instruction. This test addresses all of the essential components of effective teaching identified by top education organizations such as the International Reading Association and the National Reading Panel.

For more information about the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, go to [www.PearsonSchool.com/EvaluationSystems](http://www.PearsonSchool.com/EvaluationSystems). More information about the NES is available at [www.NEStest.com](http://www.NEStest.com).

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