



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Report of the National Literacy Panel for Language Minority Children and Youth available**

Washington, DC. July 5, 2006. The long-awaited Report of the National Literacy Panel for Language Minority Children and Youth is now available. The full report is published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. This research review was funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development and was conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and SRI International, under the leadership of Diane August, who was principal investigator. An Executive Summary of the panel's findings is available at [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org).

The panel was appointed in 2002 by the U. S. Department of Education to conduct a review of the research on the literacy development of English language learners. The review is particularly important because U.S. schools now serve more than 14 million children from households where English is not the primary language, and because No Child Left Behind—the federal education law—requires that federally-funded educational programs be supported by research. Various national studies indicate that second-language learners have not fared well in U.S. schools when it comes to reading achievement.

The panel included major scholars in second language learning and literacy and was chaired by Timothy Shanahan, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and current president of the International Reading Association. Panel members deliberated for three years before completing their work. The report they prepared analyzes existing evidence on teaching reading and writing to language-minority students and identifies gaps in the available research. Among their findings are:

- It is possible to improve the literacy learning of English language learners.
- Explicit instruction in key aspects of literacy, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing, is beneficial, but such instruction must be adjusted to effectively meet the needs of second-language learners.
- Language-minority students who are literate in their first language do better in the acquisition of English literacy.

Peggy McCardle, Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, writes in a foreword to the book that this report is "important" and that "it will contribute to an ongoing, national effort to...address the educational needs of language-minority children." Other scholars describe

it as a "must read book," "unprecedented and thorough," and say that it represents a "blueprint for a long-term research agenda."

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. is a scholarly publisher specializing in high-quality books on literacy aimed primarily at the research community. They are publishing the National Literacy Panel report under the title *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners*, edited by Diane August and Timothy Shanahan. To place an order for this book online, please visit LEA's website at [www.erlbaum.com/august](http://www.erlbaum.com/august).

For more information,

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#### **About CAL**

The Center for Applied Linguistics is a private nonprofit organization working to improve communication through better understanding of language and culture. Established in 1959, CAL has earned a national and international reputation for its contributions to the fields of bilingual education, English as a second language and foreign language education, literacy education, dialect studies, language policy, refugee orientation, and the education of linguistically and culturally diverse adults and children. CAL's staff of researchers and educators conduct research, design and develop instructional materials and language tests, provide technical assistance and professional development, conduct needs assessments and program evaluations, and disseminate information and resources related to language and culture. For more information about CAL, visit [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org).

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