

Contact: Carole Bausell
202-223-8555 (ex.16)
cbausell@serpinstitute.org

WASHINGTON, D.C.
June 16, 2010

PRESS RELEASE

SERP AWARDED CLOSE TO \$20 MILLION FOR READING COMPREHENSION R&D

The SERP Institute of Washington, D.C. is the recipient of a grant for \$19,352,000 from the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

The Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute (SERP) is launching a five year program of research and development on reading comprehension, thanks to a \$19,352,000 award from the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The SERP study, *Catalyzing Comprehension through Discussion and Debate*, aims to explore the cognitive processes underlying reading comprehension and to develop promising interventions in an area of reading that many consider poorly understood.

The study will be led by an impressive array of scholars including Catherine Snow, Kurt Fischer, and Robert Selman of Harvard University, Jonathan Osborne of Stanford University, Lowry Hemphill of Wheelock College, and Suzanne Donovan of the SERP Institute. Four districts have signed on as partners in the work – Boston, Brockton, and Falmouth public school districts in Massachusetts, and the San Francisco Unified School District in California. Both Boston and San Francisco are SERP Field Sites, where sustained programs of research and development are underway.

The work will focus on the 4th through 8th grades, where many students begin a downward spiral due to their inability to read with understanding. The researchers will study critical processes that contribute to reading comprehension but are often overlooked: perspective taking, complex reasoning, and academic language skill. They will craft extensive supports for teachers to use promising strategies that capitalize on structured classroom discussion and debate.

The project represents an extension of work that members of this research team have been conducting for several years under the auspices of the SERP Institute and with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, Inc., the Spencer Foundation and the John S. and Cynthia L. Reed Foundation. Now as recipient of an award under the Reading for Understanding Research Initiative Grants competition, the SERP team will become part of an IES R&D network focused on the development of reading comprehension from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12.



SERP recruits from among the nation's most accomplished researchers and designers to work in collaboration with school district professionals to solve urgent problems of practice, and to improve education outcomes for students across the nation.