



# Center for Education Policy Research

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

February 3, 2017

Dear Superintendent,

At Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR), we think a lot about the challenges that education leaders face. We work hard to give you better evidence to support your decisions. That is why we are launching Harvard's first annual *National Evaluation of Curriculum Effectiveness* ([cepr.harvard.edu/curriculum](http://cepr.harvard.edu/curriculum)) to identify the textbooks and curriculum materials that are most effective in helping students achieve. This year, we are focusing on elementary math.

In the last few years, schools around the country have implemented new textbooks and curriculum materials in response to the new standards adopted by states. As educators, we feel an obligation to learn from those experiences, by comparing the learning gains of students that have been using different textbooks and curriculum materials. Education leaders need that evidence to ensure that students and teachers have the highest quality materials in the future. **But we need your help to collect accurate information that can improve the evidence base for everyone.**

By encouraging your schools to complete a survey about textbook and curriculum materials, you can make a real difference for future curriculum adoption decisions around the country.

**Will you help?**

### What does participation entail?

**In February, we will invite a small number of school in your district to take an online survey.** These brief surveys will ask principals to identify which mathematics textbooks are being used in fourth and fifth grade classrooms and the types and amount of support teachers are receiving to use those materials. Participation is voluntary and responses will be kept confidential. Each survey will take about 20-25 minutes to complete, and schools will receive \$50 compensation for completing it. The schools in your district that have been selected to participate in the study are listed on page 2 of this letter.

### What will you learn?

We will determine if there are systematic differences in the learning gains of students using particular textbooks and curriculum materials and share with you which textbooks seem to be associated with better student outcomes. We will also investigate the efficacy of particular materials for specific subgroups of students, such as English language learners (a group of particular concern to many schools with the recent change in standards.) Moreover, we will learn whether students performed better when their teachers received more training and support. See <http://cepr.harvard.edu/curriculum> for more information or contact Rachel Hitch, Project Director ([Rachel\\_hitch@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:Rachel_hitch@gse.harvard.edu), 617-496-9837).

Thank you for considering this request. We value your insights and appreciate the opportunity to learn from you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kane

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