

February 7, 2017

Dear Principal:

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* (<http://cepr.harvard.edu/curriculum>), to determine whether some textbooks and curriculum materials are more effective in helping students achieve. This year, we are focusing on elementary math.

In the last few years, schools around the country have adopted new textbooks and online 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.**

Your school has been selected to participate in this study

By taking the time to complete a survey about textbook and curriculum materials in your school, you can make a real difference to the education of students across the country.

Will you help?

What does participation entail?

Your voluntary participation involves very minimal time commitment, no advance planning, and no financial cost.

- In February we will email you a link to an online survey and ask you (or a designated representative) to describe the textbook or other curriculum materials used in 4th and 5th grade math classrooms. The email will come from me (Tom.Kane@gse.harvard.edu) and the subject line will be "Harvard survey on math textbooks"
- The survey will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.
- Your school will receive \$50 compensation upon survey completion. You can use this payment as you see fit.
- Your district leadership has been informed about this study, and we will be sure to follow any required procedures.

With participation from leaders like you, we can determine if there are systematic differences in the learning gains of students using particular textbooks and curriculum materials and we will be able to share with you which textbooks seem to be associated with better student outcomes. Moreover, with our supplemental teacher survey (*see attachment for more information*), we will also be able to learn whether and how these curriculum materials support teachers' instructional methods and the learning needs of their students.

We know how busy you are and sincerely appreciate your consideration of this request. Please email Rachel Hitch, Project Director at textbook_study@gse.harvard.edu if you have any questions about the survey or the research study. We truly value your insights and appreciate the opportunity to learn from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Thomas Kane
Walter H. Gale Professor of Education and Economics
Faculty Director, Center for Education Policy Research