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Texas Schools Project Partners on National Supplemental Educational Services Study

Richardson, TX (August 5, 2009) – Title 1 public schools that have not achieved adequate yearly progress in increasing their students’ academic achievement for three years are required, under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, to offer extra academic assistance, also known as Supplemental Educational Services (SES), to their students. These services are paid for through Title I funds. Tutoring offered outside the regular school day is one example of an SES program.

Texas Schools Project (TSP), a state-designated education research center at The University of Texas at Dallas, is partnering with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research to perform a national study of SES in five large, urban school districts: Dallas, TX; Austin, TX; Chicago, IL; Milwaukee, WI; and Minneapolis, MN. Dr. Nidhi Mehrotra of TSP will be responsible for two of these sites, Dallas Independent School District, starting in year one of the study, and Austin Independent School District, starting in year two.

The purpose of the study is to improve student learning and achievement by identifying successful approaches in the organization and management of SES programs within school districts and effective strategies for the design and delivery of SES programs by approved SES providers.

SES has been broadly used throughout the U.S. since 2002 as a mandatory intervention for students of Title 1 schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress, a large percentage of whom are low-income students. Previous research on out-of-school-time programs confirms that high-quality programs can improve student educational outcomes. “SES is one key way schools can narrow the achievement gap and provide additional educational opportunities for poor and minority students,” said Dan O’Brien, TSP Director. “There has been little research, though, in determining which SES programs work best and how SES might improve its services for these students.”

The study is multi-dimensional, engaging in the analysis of various facets of SES. A primary focus will be to investigate what type of impact SES has on student achievement. Additionally, researchers will evaluate what types of SES programs are most successful in delivering positive student achievement outcomes. They will also examine whether students who are in most need of SES are in fact participating in SES programs offered, what factors are influential in parent and student choices regarding SES participation, and what opportunities are available to state and local educational agencies to increase the effectiveness of SES programs.

“Low-income and disadvantaged students are disproportionately represented in schools that have been identified for improvement under NCLB, and thus, they also may have the most to gain if the effectiveness of SES can be improved through additional research,” said Carolyn Heinrich, director of the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and principal investigator of the study.

The study, which begins this fall, will take place over four years. It is being funded by The Institute for Educational Sciences, a division of the U.S. Department of Education. TSP’s portion of the grant is approximately \$570,000.

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