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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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TEXTBOOK ADOPTION NEEDS SECOND LOOK *Process Not Serving Children*

(Washington, DC 5/21/01) Flawed statewide textbook adoption processes are weakening the quality and accuracy of K-12 textbooks, and hurting the education American children are receiving.

This is the conclusion of a new paper "The Textbook Conundrum: What are the Children Learning and Who Decides?" issued today by The Center for Education Reform.

Major findings note that, while each state has specific academic standards, textbooks tend to be geared to the needs of only three specific states – California, Texas, and Florida – because these states engage in a statewide adoption and account for 30 percent of the K-12 market. Because of these long-standing practices, new or smaller textbook companies have little chance against the "Big Four" publishers who control 70 percent of the industry.

"The result is an increasing trend toward texts that are long on visual gimmicks, short on factual information, and homogenized in content," remarked CER president Jeanne Allen. "And this result is having a 'trickle down' effect, weakening the classroom instruction by teachers who are more often than not reliant upon these books for a *de facto* lesson plan."

Allen observed that, in another finding that questions the status quo of textbook adoption, of the top 10 performing states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only one has a statewide adoption program for textbooks. But of the bottom 10 states, nine have textbook adoption on the state level, underscoring the importance of wider flexibility in choosing texts that are right for children.

"The Textbook Conundrum" looks at the adoption process, who decides, what other considerations come into play and takes a look at textbook errors – and what corrective actions are taken once discovered. CER offers solutions to the "Conundrum" that include increased flexibility on the local level, and an increased emphasis on the importance of content rather than political correctness.

Copies of "The Textbook Conundrum: What are the Children Learning and Who Decides?" are available on-line on the CER website at [http:// www.edreform.com/](http://www.edreform.com/) or by calling the Center at (202) 822-9000 at a cost of \$5.

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at <http://edreform.com>.