



For Immediate Release

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ENZI URGES REFORMS TO “READING FIRST” PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TO ENSURE CONTINUED SUCCESS

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today responded to a Department of Education (DOE) Inspector General’s (IG) report on the implementation of the “Reading First” program by encouraging the Secretary of Education to adopt the report’s recommendations in order to ensure the continued growing success of the program.

“Reading First is coming into its own as a program, but it still has some issues to resolve,” Enzi said. “However, the program is producing positive results for children who otherwise would have fallen far behind. I am pleased with the actions that the DOE is putting in place to address the seriousness of the Inspector General’s findings.”

“I hope that some of the actions taken to implement the program will not take away from the many successes that are now coming to light.”

In Wyoming, for example, the State Department of Education has reported significant gains in reading achievement across all grade levels, and attributed these gains to the Reading First program.”

Key findings of the IG study include:

- The Department did not select the expert review panel in compliance with the requirements of NCLB;
- The Department’s process to screen for conflict of interest was not effective;
- The Department failed to follow its plans for review of applications by not providing peer review comments to applicants; and,
- The Department included requirements in the criteria used by the expert review panels that were not specifically addressed in NCLB.

The report recommends that the U.S. Department of Education develop internal management policies and procedures, with advice from the Office of General Counsel, to

ensure that this and other programs will be administered in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Enzi said, "I am hopeful that these reforms will contribute to greater success for this program and others with similar purposes."

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