

## **Groundbreaking Study Confirms BELL Summer Program Featuring Houghton Mifflin Curriculum Increases Children's Reading Skills**

**BOSTON** — October 12, 2006 — The Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL) Summer program featuring Houghton Mifflin curriculum significantly increases low-income children's reading skills, according to a new Urban Institute study. Following a rigorous evaluation of children enrolled in BELL Summer in New York City and Boston, researchers concluded that children in the program improved their reading skills by about one month more than children in the control group.

"Thousands of low-income children began the new school year having lost reading skills since summer recess in June," said Earl Martin Phalen, chief executive officer, BELL. "The Urban Institute's evaluation of BELL Summer proves the summer is an incredible opportunity to help children who are underperforming in school achieve grade-level proficiency, develop as young leaders and enter school ready to excel in the fall."

Studies demonstrate that while all children learn at the same rate during the school year, children from low-income families lose the equivalent of two months' literacy skills and two months' math skills during the summer. In contrast, children from more affluent families actually gain skills from the opportunities that are available and encouraged for them. Compounded annually, these summer losses are a major reason why the academic achievement gap between low- and high-income children grows throughout the elementary school years, increasing from 65 percent in first grade to 96 percent in third grade.

BELL Summer provides children performing below grade-level with 240 hours of academic and social enrichment programming in New York City, Boston and Baltimore. Certified teachers implement scientifically based curricula from Great Source, and the Edusoft Assessment Management System from Riverside Publishing, both divisions of Houghton Mifflin. Children receive 72 hours of academic instruction in literacy and math, using *Summer*

*Success: Reading and Summer Success: Math* to help close the academic achievement gap.

"Programs that work are hard to find," said Duncan Chaplin and Jeffrey Capizzano, authors of the Urban Institute's *Impacts of a Summer Learning Program* report. "Our results suggest that the BELL program has positive and substantively important impacts."

The Urban Institute's *Impacts of a Summer Learning Program* report is available at <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411350>.

### **About BELL**

BELL is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to dramatically increase the academic achievements, self-esteem and life opportunities of children living in low-income urban communities. Headquartered in Dorchester, Massachusetts, BELL provides educational afterschool and summer programs to nearly 10,000 children annually. BELL began as a community service project by a group of Harvard Law School students, led by CEO and Co-founder Earl Martin Phalen. Learn more at [www.bellnational.org](http://www.bellnational.org).

### **About Houghton Mifflin**

Boston-based Houghton Mifflin Company is one of the leading educational publishers in the United States, with more than \$1 billion in sales. Houghton Mifflin publishes textbooks, instructional technology, assessments and other educational materials for elementary and secondary schools and colleges. The Company also publishes an extensive line of reference works and award-winning fiction and nonfiction for adults and young readers. With its origins dating back to 1832, Houghton Mifflin combines its tradition of excellence with a commitment to innovation. The Company's Web site can be found at [www.hmco.com](http://www.hmco.com).

### **About the Urban Institute**

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and educational organization that examines the social, economic, and governance challenges facing the nation.

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