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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DIRECT INSTRUCTION

P.O. Box 11248

Eugene, OR 97440

Phone: 541-485-1973

FAX: 541-683-7543

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June 25, 2008

Anita A. Summers, Chairperson and
Paul T. Decker, President and CEO
Mathematica, Policy Research Inc.
P.O. Box 2393
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393

Dear Drs. Summers and Decker:

I write to express my deep concerns with the material posted on the What Works Clearinghouse, which was established "to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education." I understand that Mathematica has now assumed responsibility for the Clearinghouse. I also know that Mathematica has a well established reputation for high quality research. I write to you in the hope that this correspondence can help you correct the errors in the current reports and establish future review procedures that are in accordance with standard scientific practices. The goals of the What Works Clearinghouse are too important to allow a flawed review process to continue or faulty reviews to be posted. None of us wants parents or schools to be given faulty information about the most effective curriculum for their students.

I am a sociologist with many years of experience in quantitative research and recently began working with the National Institute for Direct Instruction. In beginning to familiarize myself with the area I, of course, reviewed major analyses of Direct Instruction. As you no doubt know, in recent years, meta-analyses have become the most commonly accepted method for examining large bodies of research literature. The most recent meta-analysis of the achievement effects of comprehensive school reform models was conducted by Geoffrey Borman and associates (2002, *Review of Educational Research*). Their examination found that Direct Instruction was the most researched of any of the models and had the most studies conducted by third parties (those not affiliated with the developers). As they put it, "the research base for Direct Instruction is very extensive and of very good quality" (p. 187). Among the many different models used in their analysis, Direct Instruction had the strongest evidence of effects on student achievement.

In my reviews I found that this conclusion simply echoes that found in earlier meta-analyses and literature reviews. The overwhelming conclusion of the education community for many years, based on solid experimental evidence, is that Direct

