

For immediate release

Contact: Tessie Tumacder
(650) 328-1745

Delaware Begins Rigorous Test of Web Support for Proficiency-based Foreign Language Instruction

1,700 students to participate in scientific research on the effectiveness of ClassPak from Language Learning Solutions

Palo Alto, CA (December 6, 2004) -- Empirical Education Inc announced today the initiation of a statewide experiment in Delaware schools, the first scientific research project in a three year program recently funded by the US Department of Education. The project will provide the Delaware Department of Education with scientific evidence for the effectiveness of web support for proficiency-based foreign language instruction.

This research puts Delaware in the forefront of the utilization of rigorous scientific methods to inform local adoption decisions. The project grew out of a statewide initiative to set standards for foreign language and to evaluate online assessments and related instructional tools. Secretary of Education, Valerie Woodruff explained: "This research is an important part of our development of standards and assessments in this area. We are pleased to have this opportunity to use our assessments to find out if proposed instructional approaches will be effective ways for our schools to help all students attain our proficiency standards".

Using the kind of randomized experiment called for by the No Child Left Behind Act, the research will be a rigorous test of the impact of ClassPak, a program developed by Language Learning Solutions. LLS, a leader in the language proficiency assessment, is affiliated with the University of Oregon's Center for Applied Second Language Studies. Kyle Ennis, Vice-President for Education and Technology at LLS said, "The research project will do more than give Delaware a rigorous test of our product. It will provide us all insights into how it works for teachers and students with a wide range of backgrounds and incoming skills."

Empirical Education is conducting the experiment as part of a three-year project funded under the ED's Institute of Education Sciences program in Finance and Management. The grant is supporting the refinement of methods that states and districts can use to pilot products scientifically as part of a data-driven decision process. Denis Newman, president and founder of EEI said "We are excited to be partnering with the Delaware DOE in answering a research question that came out of their existing initiative. We see such cooperative pilots as a process that will improve the conversation between educational agencies and publishers." Experiments are starting up in several other states as part of the ED-funded program as well as through commercial funding.

About Empirical Education Inc.

EEI is focused entirely on scientifically based research on the effectiveness of K-12 instructional programs. Three members of the What Works Clearinghouse Technical Advisory Board assist the company, assuring that the research is objective and takes advantage of current best practice in experimental design and analysis.