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**Mark Dynarski**  
Vice President  
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 2393  
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393  
Telephone (609) 799-3535  
Fax (609) 799-0005  
www.mathematica-mpr.com  
**609-275-2397**

November 4, 2008

Robert Granger, Ed.D.  
Chair, National Board of Education Sciences  
The W.T. Grant Foundation  
570 Lexington Ave.  
New York, NY 10022-6837

Dear Mr. Granger:

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the report on the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) prepared by the expert committee of the National Board of Education Sciences. The WWC is committed to transparency and objectivity in assessing research, and we believe the committee's assessment points to our success in grounding our standards and processes in scientific principles while making them accessible to the public.

The report makes constructive recommendations that will bolster our efforts to expand and refine these standards and procedures. We agree that different topic areas should be applying the same standards, such as the degree of sample attrition and the equivalence of comparison groups, and are working now to create greater consistency between areas. We plan to develop standards related to the acceptable degree of study crossover (treatment group members not participating and control group members participating), and will explore using the QUORUM reporting format for documenting the flow of studies that have been screened. Already we are creating a handbook that will be available on the website and allow users to find a complete description of WWC standards and procedures in one document. And we want to identify and share best practices through outreach to other organizations carrying out systematic reviews.

Efforts to assess research validity using standards requires many decisions and no one set of decisions will be supported by all researchers. Nonetheless, we believe the WWC represents a concrete and useful tool by which evidence can support and further the work of educators. We want to continue our efforts to improve the WWC as a tool for educators and we appreciate the committee's suggestions that will help us in these efforts.

Sincerely,

