



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 14, 2017

## **School Specialty Partners With Listenwise to Offer Listening Skills Platform to Support Student Comprehension and Literacy Development**

*Listenwise Premium Harnesses the Power of Listening to Introduce Complex Language, Vocabulary and Topics*

**GREENVILLE, Wis. – Feb. XX, 2017** – Listening is a core component of new literacy standards and assessments. According to the [International Listening Association](#), while listening is critical to academic success— it is the communication activity that receives the least amount of classroom instruction. To bolster this critical skill, [EPS Instruction and Intervention](#), a division of [School Specialty](#), Inc. (OTCQB: SCOO) (“School Specialty,” “SSI” or “the Company”), today announced a partnership with [Listenwise](#), an award-winning listening skills company that harnesses the power of listening to advance literacy and learning in all students.

EPS will add Listenwise Premium to its portfolio, which pairs high-quality curriculum-aligned listening content with learning tools and listening comprehension assessments, to its lineup of classroom literacy and intervention resources. Listenwise Premium provides insights into student understanding and scaffolding for language acquisition and literacy. New, automatically scored formative assessments allow teachers to test student listening skills and identify areas that need improvement.

“By welcoming Listenwise to the School Specialty family, we are now offering teachers access to an innovative and effective listening platform that will help them strengthen students overall comprehension,” said Bodie Marx, senior vice president of sales and product development, School Specialty Curriculum.

A 2014 study published in the “International Journal of Speech Language Pathology” suggests a growing number of children are struggling to build adequate reading comprehension skills due to poor listening comprehension skills. Listening comprehension is a fundamental building block to reading comprehension and literacy and effective listening skills are found to have a positive impact on problem solving, planning and evaluation and focused attention.

Listenwise also provides robust literacy supports to make academic language accessible for English Learners and lower performing readers. Interactive transcripts, tiered vocabulary, and reduced speed audio improve comprehension and expand vocabulary, which will help advance intermediate and advanced English Learners’ reading and listening skills. Listenwise also helps to prepare these students for state testing of listening standards.

“We are excited to partner with a publishing company with such a long tradition of excellence,” said Monica Brady-Myerov, CEO, Listenwise. “Combining the talents of Listenwise and EPS provides

teachers with easy access to an impressive portfolio of high-quality resources and learning tools. Our award-winning listening comprehension quizzes and lessons fit perfectly within EPS's family of literacy tools.”

#### **About EPS Instruction and Intervention**

EPS provides targeted instruction and intervention solutions to support, supplement, and enhance the diverse educational needs of K-12 teachers and students. For more information on EPS and its proven programs including Wordly Wise 3000®, S.P.I.R.E.®, iSPIRE™, and Explode The Code®, visit <http://epsbooks.com>

#### **About School Specialty, Inc.**

School Specialty is a leading distributor of innovative and proprietary products, programs and services to the education marketplace. The Company designs, develops, and provides educators with the latest and very best school supplies, furniture and both curriculum and supplemental learning resources. Working in collaboration with educators, School Specialty reaches beyond the scope of textbooks to help teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators ensure that every student reaches his or her full potential. Through its SSI Guardian subsidiary, the Company is also committed to school, healthcare and corporate workplace safety by offering the highest quality curriculum, training and safety and security products. Finally, through its SOAR Life Products brand, the Company offers thousands of products that sharpen cognitive skills and build physical and mental strength in fun and creative ways. From childhood through adulthood, they help individuals live life to the fullest – engaged, happy and well. SOAR Life Products is a customized offering for hospitals, long-term care, therapeutic facilities, home care, surgery centers, day care centers, physician offices, and clinics. For more information about School Specialty, visit [www.schoolspecialty.com](http://www.schoolspecialty.com).

#### **About Listenwise**

Listenwise is an award-winning listening comprehension platform. We harness the power of listening to advance literacy and learning in all students. Our collection of podcasts and public radio keeps teaching connected to the real world and builds student listening skills at the same time. The curriculum aligned podcasts are paired with learning tools and listening comprehension assessments to transform them into rigorous academic content. Students are motivated by the interesting real world stories, and Listenwise provides the literacy supports and differentiated instruction necessary for diverse classrooms including ELLs and reluctant readers. Find more information at: [listenwise.com](http://listenwise.com)

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