



# **HMH response to “Lessons in (In)Equity: An Evaluation of Cultural Responsiveness in Elementary ELA Curriculum”**

Conducted by the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC) at NYU Steinhardt’s Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

# Introduction

HMH believes that culturally responsive education is critically important and deserves dedicated attention, resources, and ongoing work. Defined by **limited scope, flawed methodology, and lack of qualified personnel** with expertise in reading pedagogy, **the EJ-ROC report is irresponsible, and it is inaccurate in its characterization of *HMH Into Reading*.**

## **The review is based on less than 5% of HMH's *Into Reading* and omits critical program components.**

The *Into Reading* content reviewed represents **less than 3% of overall content for 1st grade and less than 5% for 3rd and 5th grades.** Despite this, the report is inaccurately positioned as a comprehensive and definitive review of the program.

For example, key aspects of our program that provide specific culturally affirmative supports for teachers, multilingual learners, and students needing accommodations were not included in the review. This includes a Program Guide which provides support for teachers on how to make materials more culturally responsive, point-of-use supports for multilingual learners, and additional resources available in our digital materials.

Of particular note, also not included in the content reviewed is a 4-page spread by educator and culturally responsive leader, Dr. Tyrone Howard, titled *Relevance Matters: Culturally Responsive Teaching in the ELA Classroom*. This important content occurs immediately before the place within the program that EJ-ROC chose to begin the review.

## **The review panel was not independent and did not include educators with expertise in reading pedagogy.**

The review was not conducted by independent reviewers, and EJ-ROC does not share the criterion used to select panelists. The report states that the reviewers were from within NYU Metro Center's own network, but provides no further information regarding selection methodology. Further, the evaluators are identified by aliases only, and therefore HMH is unable to verify any specific credentials.

Any analysis of elementary school reading materials should employ pedagogical expertise in how to teach all students to learn to read and reflect a comprehensive understanding of grade-level appropriateness when introducing complex texts, vocabulary, and abstract concepts. This understanding is critical to ensuring alignment as to age-appropriate ways to represent cultural responsiveness in materials.

## **The report is not grounded in research best practices.**

HMH routinely works with third-party reviewers and research organizations. Best practices in the curriculum review space include a notification that a review is underway, an opportunity to provide materials for review to ensure access to all components, and an opportunity to provide feedback. None of these opportunities were provided by EJ-ROC.

## **In selecting only three reading programs, the review offers an uneven portrait of the instructional landscape.**

By focusing on only three providers, the results do not represent a comprehensive view and draw anecdotal conclusions. HMH materials undergo a rigorous review process for ensuring cultural responsiveness, led

by our Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer and our Office of Equity & Inclusion. Curriculum decision-makers in school districts across the country are looking for help making decisions and should understand that a program or company's exemption from this report does not imply approval from EJ-ROC.

## **HMH is deeply committed to developing culturally responsive materials.**

*HMH Into Reading* contains carefully curated, high-quality text and features diverse authors and literature selections that represent people from various backgrounds, communities, and environments. Developed with teacher feedback, its student-centered activities encourage and create many opportunities to share cultural perspectives and language connections. The curriculum also encourages teachers to embrace differences, honor home languages, and consciously make cultural considerations when planning and teaching.

HMH is committed to providing affirming learning resources that make each and every student feel respected, important, and proud. Our materials undergo years of careful research and rigorous review to ensure cultural responsiveness and equitable representation. Programs are designed to be broadly inclusive, reflecting the current demographics of young people in the United States—this applies to respectful representation across race and ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, geography, socio-economic status, family structure and much more. We believe that all students should be able to see themselves and the possibilities for their future success reflected in the resources they use at school.