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SENIOR STAFF

**Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, Director, Institute of Education Sciences—Biography**  
**ARCHIVED INFORMATION**

Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst was appointed by President George W. Bush to a six-year term as the first Director of the Institute of Education Sciences. The Institute was established within the U.S. Department of Education by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, which was signed into law November 5, 2002. The Institute conducts, supports and disseminates research on education practices that improve academic achievement, statistics on the condition of education in the United States and evaluations of the effectiveness of federal and other education programs. As director, Whitehurst administers the Institute, including the activities of the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance and the National Center for Education Research. He coordinates the work of the Institute with related activities carried out by other agencies within the Department and the federal government. He advises the secretary on research, evaluation and statistics relevant to the work of the Department. And, he engages in a variety of activities to encourage the use of scientifically based research in education policy and decision making throughout the United States.



[Print photo](#)

Whitehurst previously served as assistant secretary for the office of educational research and improvement, the predecessor to the Institute. In that role he established the What Works Clearinghouse, initiated new programs of research such as those in reading comprehension and preschool curriculum, upgraded the rigor of scientific peer review, promoted the use of scientific evidence throughout the Department of Education and spearheaded a historically unprecedented increase in the presidential budget request for education research.

Just prior to beginning federal service, he was Leading Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics and Chairman of the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He also served on the faculty of the University of New South Wales in Australia and was Academic Vice President of the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit. He was editor-in-chief of two leading scientific journals in his field: *The Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development and Developmental Review*.

During his career as a researcher, Whitehurst was the author or editor of five books and published more than 100 scholarly papers on language and pre-reading development in children. One of the techniques he developed, dialogic reading, is a widely used method of shared picture book reading that enhances children's language development. His work to identify preschool predictors of reading achievement has influenced curriculum for Head Start and pre-K programs and has led to the development of screening instruments to identify children with low levels of reading readiness. Throughout his academic career, his research focused on the development of knowledge and programs that might have a direct influence on the lives of children and families. Those goals continue in his role as Institute director.

Whitehurst was born and reared in Washington, North Carolina. He was educated in the public schools of Washington, received his undergraduate degree at East Carolina University, and obtained a Ph.D. in experimental child psychology in 1970 from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is married with two children.

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