



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kristan Willingham
Essilor of America
214.496.4463
kristan.willingham@essilorusa.com

Alexis Medina
REAP Business & Consumer Media
amedina5@stanford.edu
561.445.8685

Paul Gerber
REAP Ophthalmic Media
paulgerber@comcast.net
630.983.7652

**ESSILOR AND STANFORD UNIVERSITY TO STUDY LINK BETWEEN VISUAL
CORRECTION AND SCHOOL SUCCESS IN CHINA**

Research to raise awareness of importance of visual correction

DALLAS & PALO ALTO, CA – May 2, 2012 – Thousands of eight- and nine-year olds in hundreds of schools in rural Northwest China are to be part of a research project to show the impact of eye care and eyeglasses on educational performance. Parents, teachers and eyecare clinicians are involved in the research, which also seeks to address the cultural bias in rural China that wearing eyeglasses causes a child’s vision to deteriorate. The research is being sponsored by Essilor and conducted by the Rural Education Action Project (REAP), a partnership between Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and the Chinese Academy of Sciences Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy.

According to Hubert Sagnières, Essilor chairman & CEO, “The impact of uncorrected vision on both the individual and society is enormous. Children who do not see well perform less well in school and this will impact the course of their life. By measuring the incidence of uncorrected vision and the educational impact of providing eyeglasses to students with vision problems, we hope to raise awareness in China of the importance of visual correction.”

Essilor and Stanford University to Study Link Between Visual Correction and School Success in China / Page 2 of 2

Said Stanford professor of economics and REAP co-director, Scott Rozelle, Ph.D., Senior Fellow of the Freeman Spogli Institute, “Although China has achieved nearly universal primary school enrollment, studies suggest most eye problems in Chinese children are uncorrected. A study in one district in Beijing found that only one in five children with vision problems had eyeglasses. In rural areas children with vision problems are even less likely to wear eyeglasses. A commonly held view in China is that wearing eyeglasses causes children’s vision to deteriorate. There may also be other economic imperatives and cultural norms that keep children from being tested for eyesight problems and fitted for eyeglasses.”

Eric Bernard, president of Essilor China, said, “Today there is very little reliable data on the extent to which academic performance may be improved by providing eyeglasses to children who need them. This two-year study will provide invaluable data on this correlation as well as understanding the impact of providing vision care education to parents and teachers. The research will also experiment with different ways of delivering eye care to students. This will help us work with the eyecare professionals and the appropriate ministries and authorities in China to help develop solutions that meet the needs of this population.”

The research will be presented to China’s State Council and Ministry of Education. In addition to academic papers, the research will also be the basis of presentations to media, clinical conference and to schools of public health in China.

About Essilor

Essilor is the leading manufacturer of optical lenses in the United States and is the market leader in progressive, high-index and anti-reflective coated lenses. A pioneer in the development and production of ophthalmic lenses, Essilor employs more than 9,000 people throughout North America. Essilor manufactures optical lenses under the Varilux[®], Crizal[®], Xperio[®], DEFINITY[®], Thin&Lite[®] and other Essilor brand names. Essilor Laboratories of America (ELOA) is the largest, and most trusted, optical lab network in the U.S. and offers a wide choice of services and lens brands, including Essilor premium lenses, to eyecare professionals across the nation. Essilor of America, Inc. (Essilor) is a subsidiary of Paris-based Essilor International, a publicly held company traded on the Euronext Paris stock exchange (Reuters: ESSI.PA).

About REAP

REAP conducts experiment-based research to help policy makers enact effective solutions to China's educational and health challenges. Their offices are in Palo Alto, California, and Beijing. For more information, visit <http://reap.stanford.edu>.

###