



## Stockton Invites Schools and Mayors to Join Program to Help First Grade Readers

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**Galloway Township, NJ-** The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will partner with mayors and six elementary schools, two each in Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties, to help first graders develop a love of reading through the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mayor's Book Club program.

"This innovative model connects the school, parents, and community members, college faculty and teacher candidates," said William Dressel, executive director of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, whose Education Foundation is co-sponsoring the events. "Mayors become involved in the local schools to highlight the importance of early literacy," he said.

First graders who want to participate will read (or have read to them) eight books over a four-month period from February to May 2014. Mayors from each participating district will hold a kick-off event at the schools during the week of Jan. 20, and will visit the schools three times to read to students.

Each school in which students have read at least 1000 books will receive \$1,000 to be spent on books for their first-grade classroom libraries. Parents and teachers are responsible for recording the books read.

"This program is a model for how municipal government, school districts and an institution of higher learning can collaborate to provide and enhance literacy and achievement," said Claudine Keenan, dean of the Stockton School of Education.

Applications from schools and mayors are due by Nov. 1 and the two schools selected in each county will be notified by Dec. 2. To apply, respond online to [www.tinyurl.com/MayorbcApp](http://www.tinyurl.com/MayorbcApp).

The League of Municipalities Education Foundation provides all the books, as well as funding

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for student awards and catering for in-school celebrations in mid-May.

College faculty will work with the first grade teachers and School of Education students will also work in the six classrooms to read aloud and help in small group instruction during the spring semester.

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