



Six Local Schools and Mayors to Join Stockton, League of Municipalities to Help 1st Grade Readers

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**Contact: Maryjane Briant
News and Media Relations Director
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Maryjane.Briant@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4593**

Galloway Township, NJ - Six area schools and the mayors of their towns will join The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey to help first graders develop a love of reading through the 5th Annual Mayor's Book Club program.

Mayor Jesse Tweedle and the South Main Street School in Pleasantville, Mayor James "Sonny" McCullough and the Davenport Elementary School in Egg Harbor Township, Mayor Ed Mahaney and the Cape May Elementary School, Mayor William Pikolycky and the Woodbine Elementary School, Mayor James T. "Tim" Shannon and the Millville Elementary School and Mayor Robert Campbell and the Downe Township Elementary School will participate in the 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' Education Foundation, which 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 read at least 1,000 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. Stockton College faculty will work

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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.

The League of Municipalities Education Foundation will provide all the books, as well as funding for student awards and catering for in-school celebrations in mid-May.

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