



Buena Park School District launches citywide literacy initiative with free ebooks, games

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The Buena Park School District, the City of Buena Park and the Buena Park Library have jointly unveiled an ambitious citywide reading initiative that will make digital books, games and resources free and accessible to local families on their smartphones, tablets and computers.

The announcement of Buena Park’s Model Innovation City Initiative — billed as a first for Southern California — came Friday morning during a special literacy summit at Mabel L. Pendleton Elementary School. Superintendent Greg Magnuson (pictured), City Councilmember Dr. Elizabeth Swift and Buena Park Library District Director Mary McCasland used the opportunity to challenge all pre-K through third-grade children to read one million words by the end of the year.



They also detailed their new partnership with [Footsteps2Brilliance](#), creators of an early-learning mobile technology platform. That company’s library of ebooks, games and learning tools have been made accessible to every family with pre-K through third-grade students who live within Buena Park’s zip code and service areas.

The goal of the Model Innovation City Initiative is to promote reading proficiency by the third grade, which is a key benchmark for future success. Research shows children from low-income families hear about 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers before age 4, and more than 60 percent of children from low-income families don’t have access to books at home.

“Since 80 percent of parents own smartphones or tablets, our Model Innovation City is an innovative way to reach parents and extended families through devices they already own, and to connect school and home,” Superintendent Magnuson said. “We believe that the focus on early learning will help to eliminate the achievement gap and to get our students college and career ready.”

Visit the [Buena Park School District website](#) to learn more about the one million word challenge. Families within the Buena Park service areas can download the Footsteps2Brilliance app for free [here](#).