



**For Immediate Release**

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**Napa County Office of Education**

**Digital Early Learning Program Receives Statewide Recognition**

***Partnership with NapaLearns and Napa Vintners Association***

***Recognized by Association of California School Administrators***

Napa, Calif. – April 5, 2016 – The Napa County Office of Education innovative Digital Early Learning (DEL) program has received the 2016 “Partners in Educational Excellence Award” from the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). ACSA is the largest umbrella organization for school leaders in the United States, serving more than 17,000 California educators. ACSA's Partners in Educational Excellence Award recognizes exemplary school-community partnership programs.

According to the ACSA announcement, “ACSA is proud to recognize the 2016 state award recipients. We offer our sincerest congratulation to all nominees, who without exception represent the excellence and commitment of California's educators.”

NCOE, in collaboration with two community non-profit organizations NapaLearns and the Napa Valley Vintners Association, is making a concerted effort to use digital early learning to narrow the achievement gap facing children entering Kindergarten. In Napa County many children enter Kindergarten with smaller English vocabularies than their middle and upper income peers. Research has shown that children from upper income households are exposed to 30 million more words by the time they enter Kindergarten than children from low income households. Follow up research found these early differences highly predictive of reading success as well as future academic performance.

Dr. Barbara Nemko, Napa County Superintendent of Schools, said, “Napa is known throughout the state as a leader in intra-county collaboration, which is reflected in the work we’ve been able to do for preschool students and their families. Thanks to the Vintners and NapaLearns, we are focusing on our preschool population and the urgency of closing the achievement gap before they enter school. Napa County Office of Education, in partnership with NapaLearns, purchased a Footsteps2Brilliance site

license in perpetuity, allowing us to provide this outstanding resource at no cost to any resident with a preschool child, both now and in the future.”

The collaborative funding and resources of the partnership led to the development of the NCOE Digital Early Learning program available for free to all preschool age children in Napa County. While a variety of digital materials are used, the cornerstone of this initiative is Footsteps2Brilliance (F2B) an innovative digital early literacy application with 161 engaging and animated e-books and over 200 related educational games. The materials, in English and Spanish, read themselves to the children by highlighting the written words as they are being spoken and requires the children to interact with the stories and activities.

Families and teachers interested in signing up for Footsteps2Brilliance can visit <http://www.napacoe.org/footsteps-2-brilliance/> or call Lori Hill, DEL Coordinator, at 259-5925.

*The Napa County Office of Education - your partner for educational excellence - is a flexible, county-wide educational resource that offers a broad range of student services in response to changing community needs, supports and collaborates with local school districts, and disseminates research-based best practices to educators locally and statewide.*

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