



School District of **OSCEOLA COUNTY** FLORIDA

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In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Osceola School District Superintendent Melba Luciano will join Ilene Rosenthal, CEO of Footsteps2 Brilliance, Inc., for a reception at the White House for leaders who are making a difference for Hispanic excellence in education on Thursday, October 15. President Obama extended the invitation in recognition of the importance of early learning and Footsteps2Brilliance's Model Innovation County project, which is a literacy initiative that the Osceola

School District is kicking off with community support from Osceola County, the City of Kissimmee, the City of St. Cloud, and the Education Foundation - Osceola. The goal is to establish a community-wide literacy initiative to better prepare tomorrow's kindergarten students.

The Osceola School District, its governmental partners, and the Osceola County's Early Literacy Coalition are collaborating to improve early learning across the county through a partnership with Footsteps2Brilliance, an interactive, mobile literacy program. When the program launches in January 2016, all Osceola parents of young pre-kindergarten children will have unlimited access to the Footsteps2Brilliance program by downloading a free app on their smartphones and electronic devices. This program has been proven to increase academic vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills in children. The program was piloted for 45 days over last summer at participating public VPK sites. Results showed that students were exposed to over 3,760 books, which translated into more than 1,115,450 vocabulary words.

"Literacy is the key to learning," said Superintendent Melba Luciano. "Footsteps2Brilliance will provide a gateway for all of our Osceola County early learners, from cradle and beyond, to develop the skills and self-confidence they need to succeed in kindergarten."