

# Everett Launches Innovative Reading Challenge Using Mobile Devices: City Teams with Footsteps2brilliance to Boost Literacy

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By Independent Staff



Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary Education Mitchell Chester (center) presents Mayor Carlo DeMaria (left) and Superintendent of Schools Frederick F. Foresteire (right) with citations from Governor Deval Patrick recognizing Everett's designation as a Model Innovation City for its partnership with the Footsteps2Brilliance. For complete coverage of the announcement, including details on the Mayor DeMaria and Superintendent Foresteire's Million Word Challenge,

The City of Everett and the Everett Public Schools (EPS) are partnering with an innovative early-learning company to help bolster literacy efforts and accelerate student achievement during the vital years between pre-school and third grade.

Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc. is providing every family in Everett with free access to a mobile technology platform providing eBooks and games that greatly improve reading and vocabulary skills in young students. And Mayor Carlo DeMaria and Superintendent of Schools Frederick F. Foresteire are challenging students to maximize the technology by reading one million words by the end of the summer.

The announcement was made on Wednesday, May 7 at Everett High School, where school administrators, teachers, students and elected officials gathered to applaud the expanded collaborating between EPS and Footsteps2Brilliance. Among those in attendance was Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester, who complimented Everett's leadership for its "commitment to staying ahead of the curve" and "making sure your students enjoy a 21st-century education."

State Senator Sal DiDomenico and State Rep. Wayne Matewsky were on hand to present the EPS with proclamations for its designation as a Model Innovation City, which is given to district's that provide a "turn-key, citywide solution to address the third grade reading dilemma by utilizing the Footsteps2Brilliance Mobile Technology Platform to cost-effectively scale Pre-K through third grade literacy apps to every family in a school district's jurisdiction."

Footsteps2Brilliance CEO Ilene Rosenthal spoke passionately about the "third grade reading dilemma, which refers to the overwhelming data illustrating how important it is for students to be reading at grade level by the time they're third graders. "The grand challenge is Washington right now is, how can we get every child reading at grade level by third grade," she said, adding that students who fall behind in the earliest of grades are "in danger of never catching up."

Footsteps2Brilliance is a breakthrough early-learning platform that accelerates achievement among our youngest students by using mobile gaming technology with the latest cognitive research. Footsteps2Brilliance provides enticing, interactive learning experiences that digitally link school and home to give students easy access to fun and education eBooks and games that greatly improve literacy skills and increase a student's vocabulary.

The EPS has utilized Footsteps2Brilliance for the past two years, and during last week's presentation Curriculum Director Janice Gauthier, Adams School pre-K teacher Christine Dattoli, and Keeverian School kindergarten teacher Louise DeSisto talked about how well it's been utilized and how successful it's been on the individual, grade and district levels.