



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Malden Launches Innovative City-Wide Early Reading Challenge Using Mobile Phones

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On Friday, September 27, Superintendent David DeRuosi and Mayor Gary Christenson, from the City of Malden, will hold a 9:30 a.m. press conference at Malden City Hall (Room: City Council Chamber) to unveil an innovative city-wide early learning reading challenge using smart phones, tablets, and computers. Dr. DeRuosi and the Malden School Committee are creating a Malden Parent University, and are challenging all pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children to read one million words by the end of the year. The City has partnered with *Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc.*, an early learning mobile technology platform, to provide a library of eBooks and educational games to every family within the Malden urban zip code.

Research shows that the greatest disparity of knowledge among children is the vocabulary gap – the number of words a child knows from birth through third grade. Children from low-income families hear 30 million fewer words before the age of 4 than their more affluent peers. This problem is compounded by the fact that 61% of low-income children have no children’s books in their homes. No single strategy offers a greater return on investment than providing early learners with the tools needed to read proficiently by third grade. Every \$1 dollar spent on quality early childhood interventions produces a \$14 to \$17 return.

“Mayor Christenson and I recognize the importance of bringing literacy to the children of Malden. By developing a Parent University, it is our hope to build a strong literacy partnership with the parents of our community. We recognize the value of including parents in the process of educating their children. Footsteps2Brilliance provides the platform to support this partnership,” states Malden Superintendent David DeRousi.

Malden Mayor Gary Christenson adds: “I commend Dr. DeRuosi for bringing us together to implement this unique interactive learning tool that will assist our kids in achieving

academic success. The collaboration will not only help promote the initiative, but will help gain greater buy-in and community support.”

“Malden’s city-wide early learning initiative is a transformative model for the United States. By using the smart phones and tablets that parents already own, Malden is able to economically provide all parents with the tools they need to prepare their children for success in school and in life,” according to Ilene Rosenthal, CEO of *Footsteps2Brilliance®*, Inc.

**About Malden Public Schools:** Dr. David DeRuosi, Jr. is Superintendent of Malden Public Schools. The Malden Public School System is committed to the belief that all children can meet challenging expectations through a partnership between home, school and community. Its teachers, support staff, and administrators share a common focus, which is to prepare our students to be independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners. As students matriculate through its schools, they are encouraged to work hard, respect others, appreciate the diversity that surrounds them and strive for academic excellence. In short, Malden Public Schools prepares graduates to be active participants in a global world.

**About *Footsteps2Brilliance®*:** *Footsteps2Brilliance®*, Inc. is the breakthrough early learning platform that accelerates early achievement by uniting the power of mobile gaming technology with the latest in cognitive research. *Footsteps2Brilliance®* provides enticing, interactive, 24/7 learning experiences that digitally link school and home to give students the edge they need for success in school today and the world tomorrow. [www.footsteps2brilliance.com](http://www.footsteps2brilliance.com)

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