



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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New Bedford Mayor's Office Launches New Citywide Literacy Initiative, 'New Bedford Reads'

Initiative Led by Mayor Jon Mitchell with Scholastic, New Bedford Public Schools and Community Partners Highlights the Importance of Early Literacy to Grow a Community of Readers in New Bedford

New Bedford, MA – June 6, 2017 – The New Bedford Mayor's Office today announced the launch of "**New Bedford Reads**," a new literacy initiative to promote the importance of early literacy and grow a community of lifelong readers throughout the city. Spearheaded by Mayor Jon Mitchell, the initiative is developed in collaboration with community partners and Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education, and media company. Beginning this summer, New Bedford Reads will raise awareness for the importance of reading aloud to children from birth, provide families with increased access to books, encourage kids to choose books they want to read, and empower the community with the tools to promote early literacy.

For more information about the New Bedford Reads literacy initiative, including tips for reading with children, book lists, literacy milestones, and ways for community organizations to support literacy, visit: www.newbedford-ma.gov/newbedfordreads

"New Bedford is pleased to collaborate with Scholastic to provide access to books for kids in our city at an early age," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "The support of our public schools and community organizations in helping this initiative reach as many families as possible means putting more books into the hands of kids early in their lives, which we know is directly tied to improved outcomes for them as students."

According to research from the American Academy of Pediatrics, exposing children to literacy-rich environments and experiences during their first three years is critical to brain development and helping young children reach their full potential. Beyond age three, grades K–2 are also vital to achieving reading proficiency. Research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than their peers. To foster a culture of literacy starting from birth, the New Bedford Reads initiative will offer resources and activities for students, families, and community members beginning this summer:

- More than 12,500 books donated by Scholastic will be distributed to children 0–8 years old.
- Students will participate in the [Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge](#)[™], a free online and mobile summer reading program dedicated to encouraging kids to read more books over the summer, log daily reading minutes, and “take a reading adventure.”
- The New Bedford Public Library and the New Bedford Housing Authority will host a series of free literacy events.
- Community partners will attend a professional development day to discover strategies for promoting early literacy through their organizations.

Other community partners that are supporting New Bedford Reads include New Bedford Public Schools, Southcoast Hospitals, the New Bedford Housing Authority, Joseph Abboud Manufacturing, the New Bedford Free Public Library, the Immigrants’ Assistance Center, United New Bedford, and members of the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance.

For more information about Scholastic, visit the Company’s online media room at <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com>.

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