



## PRESS RELEASE, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Rialto Unified School District  
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# District Unveils Proactive Blueprint to Get All Children Reading by 3rd Grade

**Rialto, CA** – On Tuesday, April 25, 2017, Rialto Unified School District Superintendent, **Dr. Cuauhtémoc Avila**, is hosting a Press Conference on *Footsteps2Brilliance Early Learning Literacy Innovation*, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Dr. Ernest Garcia Elementary School, located at 1390 West Randall Avenue in Colton.

At the Press Conference, Dr. Avila will unveil the District's exciting new bilingual English and Spanish Early Literacy Initiative that will be available through the use of smart devices to all residents of the District's attendance boundaries, including the city of Rialto and portions of Colton, Fontana and San Bernardino. Together, with the RUSD Board of Education, Dr. Avila will challenge the Rialto community to read one million words, by September 1, 2017.

The two hour Press Conference will also be a celebration of student performances, classroom visitations, the implementation of this Literacy Initiative, and attract local, regional and State leaders, including officials from the City of Rialto, which partnered with the RUSD at the beginning of the school year when the District adopted *Footsteps2Brilliance*.

"This transformative effort represents a commitment to families in our education community that every child will be a proficient reader by third grade," stated Dr. Avila. "We are preparing our future leaders before they take their first step into the classroom. I, along with this supportive Board of Education and knowledgeable District Literacy Team, are energized with the purpose of helping students enhance their literacy and comprehensive skills at an early age."

Through this initiative, local children, whether they are enrolled in the district schools or not, and their families will have free access to the award-winning *Footsteps2Brilliance* Early Literacy App in English and Spanish. The *Footsteps2Brilliance* Early Literacy App provides a comprehensive curriculum of over 1,000 English and Spanish books, songs, and games that are fun for children and easy for parents to use on any smartphone, tablet, or computer, with or without an internet connection. Since its initial launch in February, *Footsteps2Brilliance* has already inspired Rialto teachers and students to read more than 350,000 words by April 25, 2017!

Research shows that when parents/guardians are involved in their children's education, they achieve more, regardless of socio-economic level, ethnicity, racial background, or parent education level. By creating a bridge between the learning at school and the learning that occurs in the kitchen; the grocery store; the park; the car; or the doctor's office, *Footsteps2Brilliance* strengthens family, community, and school partnerships.

“At this unique moment in history, technology offers the opportunity to scale educational opportunity in an unprecedented way. Smartphones and mobile devices have become ubiquitous,” said Dr. Avila. “According to the PEW Foundation, more than 80 percent of parents/guardians own a smartphone or an electronic device, regardless of socio-economic status or race.”

This transformative literacy effort supports the *White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Students* and establishes a blueprint for districts around the nation to achieve early literacy success. The RUSD currently has a Latino enrollment of 83.51 percent, and growing.

“Dr. Avila introduced Footsteps2Brilliance Inc., and is seeking to leave an indelible legacy, impacting the lives of children and families throughout our education community for years to come,” said **Jasmin Valenzuela**, Lead Academic Agent, Liberal Studies, Literacy and Intervention.

**Ilene Rosenthal**, CEO of Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc., added, “The Rialto Early Learning Initiative is a transformative model for supporting all children – birth through third grade – toward academic success. Footsteps2Brilliance has a history of working with and empowering transformative leaders. We are delighted to fully support Rialto Unified School District in this effort to strengthen partnerships with parents and the greater Rialto community for maximum impact on child development and literacy during critical, formative years.”

For more information on the Footsteps2Brilliance’s Early Learning Literacy Innovation Press Conference, please contact Syeda Jafri, RUSD Media Service Director, at 909.820.7700, ext. 2123.



## **RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Dina Walker**, President, **Joseph W. Martinez**, Vice President, **Edgar Montes**, Clerk  
Members, **Joseph Ayala** and **Nancy G. O’Kelley**, Student Board Member, **Jawuan Collier**

**Dr. Cuauhtémoc Avila**, RUSD Superintendent of Schools