



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rob Link Abbey Harris February 27, 2019
215-4750 office 215-4579 office
320-2108 cell 705-1681 cell

Let's Read, Knox County!

Mayor Jacobs to Launch ReadCityUSA with Read Across America Day Celebration and Library Card Drive

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs will host a school-wide assembly with Knox County Schools Superintendent Bob Thomas at 8:15 a.m. on Friday, Mar. 1 at New Hopewell Elementary (727 Kimberlin Heights Rd.) to help kick off Read Across America Day in Knox County and introduce his ReadCityUSA initiative.

After leaving New Hopewell, Mayor Jacobs will visit five additional schools across the county. He will finish his day at the Bearden Branch Library (100 Golf Club Rd.) where he invites the public to join him from 4-6 p.m. at a birthday party for Dr. Seuss. The whole family can enjoy snacks, refreshments, crafts and activities including *Hop on Pop* bubble walk, *Green Eggs and Ham* tic-tac-toe and a *Cat in the Hat* photo booth. All family members attending are encouraged to sign up for a library card, which offers access to millions of books and resources including animated read-along picture books and preloaded video players and tablets.

Mayor Jacobs is working with Knox County Schools, Knox County Public Library, Great Schools Partnership, and many other organizations to help make Knox County one of the best read and most literate communities in America.

Knox County Schools is ranked in the top tier for its third-grade reading proficiency rates in Tennessee (28 out of 144), but it is seeking to raise the rate from 40% to 75% by 2025. One challenge the school system faces is the disparity in Kindergarten readiness. Chances of success are much greater for children who are read to and exposed to literacy initiatives in the home than children for whom access to books and language is more limited.

ReadCityUSA is the mayor's community-wide family literacy initiative designed to support and encourage parents and caregivers as their child's first and most important teachers. The program will promote reading challenges, provide tips and resources and convene community partners to promote literacy.

"We have great schools that do an excellent job of working with students, but the truth is that we ALL need to be on board to make literacy a top priority. Everything builds on a child's ability to read. Making positive gains here will impact the community immensely from helping build a skilled labor force to improving quality of life for all," said Jacobs.

###