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**THREE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS RECEIVE EARLY LITERACY GRANT
FROM LIBERTY BANK FOUNDATION**

MIDDLETOWN, CT — Public school districts in Bristol, East Haven, and Waterbury have been awarded three-year grants from the Liberty Bank Foundation to provide early literacy programming for at-risk students in grades Pre-K through 3. The \$30,000, three-year grants were awarded under the foundation’s Early Literacy Grants Program, which is in its second cycle.

The Liberty Bank Foundation introduced the Early Literacy Grants program in 2013 as a means of addressing the achievement gap between students of low income and their more affluent peers. It provides three-year grants of up to \$30,000 to fund creative supplemental literacy programming at elementary schools in Liberty Bank’s service area. The goal of the grant program is to ensure that students are reading at grade level by grade 3—an important milestone.

“Liberty Bank Foundation’s Early Literacy Grant Program addresses the achievement gap between students of low income and their more affluent peers,” said Sue Murphy, executive director of the Liberty Bank Foundation. “By helping children read at grade level by the time they enter fourth grade decreases the risks of them falling behind in school, dropping out, and experiencing even more negative outcomes later on.”

The grant to East Haven School District will implement the Wilson Foundations program in all pre-K and grade 2 classrooms. Foundations provides teachers will high quality professional learning and support so they have the skills and tools needed to help students become fluent, independent readers.

Bristol Public Schools will use the funds to support the Summer Literacy Camp at Edgewood School. Struggling readers will attend a comprehensive summer program where they will receive intensive, systematic small-group instruction using proven practices to reduce summer learning loss and achieve proficiency on the literacy assessment for their grade level. The program will be based on exploring nature and protecting the environment and will incorporate parent interaction and participation.

The grant to Waterbury Public Schools will be used to support the Jump Start for Kindergarten Program. Jump Start provides intensive remediation to selected Pre-K children who will benefit from continued instructional intervention during the month of July to avoid a lapse in instruction prior to kindergarten entry.

Since its inception in 1997, the Liberty Bank Foundation has awarded over \$9.5 million in grants to nonprofit organizations within Liberty Bank's market area. The foundation seeks to improve the quality of life for people of low or moderate income by investing in three areas: education to promote economic success for children and families; affordable housing; and nonprofit capacity building. Along with its grantmaking, the foundation strives to foster the convening and collaboration of nonprofits, funders, business, and government to address community issues.

Established in 1825, Liberty Bank is Connecticut's oldest mutual bank, with almost \$4.4 billion in assets and 55 banking offices throughout the central, eastern, and shoreline areas of the state. As a full-service financial institution, Liberty offers consumer and commercial banking, home mortgages, insurance, and investment services. Named as a "Top Workplace" by the Hartford Courant for four consecutive years, Liberty maintains a longstanding commitment to superior personal service and unparalleled community involvement.

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