



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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## **Big Blue Reading Bus Celebrates Literacy During Read Across America Week** iHeartRadio joins the Connecticut Education Foundation to bring the joy of reading and free books to students in five Connecticut towns

The year's biggest literacy event rolled into Plainfield this morning to kick off the third annual Read Across America Reading Bus Tour to celebrate the joy of reading with hundreds of students.

The Connecticut Education Foundation (CEF), the nonprofit arm of the Connecticut Education Association, sponsors the fun, literacy extravaganza with partners, iHeartRadio and the National Education Association. The weeklong event delivers miles of excitement, guest readers, costumed characters, crafts, and literacy activities. More than 1,000 third- and fourth-grade students in East Hartford, Manchester, Killingly, Plainfield, and Sprague are given free book bags filled with school supplies, and the opportunity to select a new, free book of their choice.

"Our Reading Bus Tour is about encouraging children to read and turning them into successful, lifelong readers by showing them how exciting reading can be," said CEF President and CEA Vice President Tom Nicholas. "It's a week to have fun with the Cat in the Hat, tangle tongues with Fox in Sox, see The Places You'll Go, eat Green Eggs and Ham, count One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, and so much more."

### **Community support**

The bus tour is rolling through five towns in five days, celebrating Read Across America, a yearly initiative from the National Education Association, designed to motivate children to read and bring the joy of reading to students of all ages. The event is held the week of March 2, to celebrate the birthday of beloved children's author Theodor Geisel, commonly known as Dr. Seuss. The reading initiative has been so well received that it has expanded from a one-day celebration into a weeklong reading event with more than 45 million students, parents, and teachers participating in reading parties, community read-ins, activities, character parades, book fairs, and more.

"We know that reading is an important factor in student achievement and creating lifelong successful readers is critical for future success," says Nicholas. "Research shows that children who spend more time reading do better in school, and for that reason and so many others there is no more important gift than literacy."

CEF is proud to work with our passionate, caring, and dedicated teachers across the state to promote the importance of reading. This year we are excited to once again have the support of community sponsor, iHeartRadio.

“We are dedicated to supporting public school teachers and understand the importance of literacy and the need to instill a love of reading in our students and get books into their hands, said Renee DiNino, The River 105.9 on air personality and director of community affairs for iHeartMedia Connecticut.

DiNino who will read to students in Manchester on Tuesday, March 3, often travels to schools in the area to read a book near and dear to her heart, *Daisy Mae Finds Her Way*, which was inspired by DiNino’s own dog.

“The bus tour allows me to continue sharing my love of reading with students, while introducing an important message. The book *Daisy Mae Finds Her Way* promotes anti-bullying and the importance of being kind to people and animals,” she added.

### **The CEF Reading Bus Tour Schedule**

**Day 1: Friday, February 28, at 8:00 a.m.**, the CEF Reading Bus Tour kicks off a weeklong reading celebration in Plainfield. Beginning at 8:00 a.m., special guest readers will read *Be Kind*, by Pat Zietlow Miller and Jen Hill, to Plainfield Memorial School fourth-grade students. The Cat in the Hat, the Lorax, and other book characters will make a surprise appearance.

**Plainfield Memorial School  
95 Canterbury Road  
Plainfield, CT  
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Day 2: Monday, March 2**, the CEF Reading Bus Tour rolls into East Hartford, where students will celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday with popular costumed book characters, special events, and crafts aboard the big blue reading bus.

From 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., students at Franklin Mayberry Elementary School will hear the book *You Will Change the World One Day*, by June Peters.

The second stop on Monday is at Silver Lane Elementary School. Beginning at 1:00 p.m., guest readers will read *The Book Tree*, by Paul Czajak.

**Franklin Mayberry Elementary School  
101 Great Hill Road  
East Hartford, CT  
8:30 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.**

**Silver Lane Elementary School  
15 Mercer Avenue  
East Hartford, CT  
1:00-3:00p.m.**

**Day 3: Tuesday, March 3**, students at Waddell and Buckley Elementary Schools in Manchester will welcome the CEF Reading Bus tour, with special guest reader Renee DiNino, radio personality at iHeart Radio. DiNino will read the book *Daisy Mae Finds Her Way*, a story which was inspired by DiNino's own dog and promotes an anti-bullying message.

**Waddell Elementary School  
163 Broad Street  
Manchester, CT  
8:45 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.**

**Buckley Elementary School  
250 Vernon Street  
Manchester, CT  
12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Day 4: Wednesday, March 4**, the CEF Reading Bus Tour visits students at the Sayles School in Sprague. First and second grade students will hear the book *Milo and the Magical Stones*, by Marcus Pfister and third and fourth grade students will hear *Thank you, Mr. Falker*, by Patricia Polacco.

**Sayles School  
Sprague, CT  
8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Day 5: Thursday, March 5**, after covering more than 200 miles and visiting hundreds of students in four urban and rural Connecticut towns, the CEF Reading Bus Tour will make its final stop at the Killingly Memorial School. Guest readers will read the book *We're All Wonders*, by RJ Palacio.

**Killingly Memorial School  
339 Main Street  
Killingly, CT  
8:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.**

CEF has joined forces with the National Education Association and iHeartRadio to promote the Reading Bus Tour highlighting the importance of reading. The Plainfield Public School System, which owns the bus, has generously provided it for the weeklong event.

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For further information, contact Nancy Andrews at 860-725-6317, [nancya@cea.org](mailto:nancya@cea.org).

*Please note: In case of school delays or cancellations due to weather, the CEF Reading Bus will visit the school on the same day the following week, except for Plainfield, which has a snow date of Friday, March 13.*

### **About CEF**

*The Connecticut Education Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable foundation established in 1991 to help children and teachers with extraordinary personal hardships and students planning teaching careers. Visit [cea.org](http://cea.org).*

### **About iHeartMedia Hartford**

*iHeartMedia Hartford owns and operates WKSS-FM, WHCN-FM, WWYZ-FM, WUCS-FM, WPOP-AM, and is part of iHeartMedia. iHeartMedia is the number one audio company in the United States, reaching nine out of 10 Americans every month – and with its quarter of a billion monthly listeners, has a greater reach than any other media company in the U.S. The company's leadership position in audio extends across multiple platforms including 850 live broadcast stations; streaming music, radio and on demand via its iHeartRadio digital service available across more than 250 platforms and 2,000 devices including smart speakers, digital auto dashes, tablets, wearables, smartphones, virtual assistants, TVs and gaming consoles; through its influencers; social; branded iconic live music events; and podcasts as the #1 commercial podcast publisher globally. iHeartMedia also leads the audio industry in analytics and attribution technology for its marketing partners, using data from its massive consumer base. iHeartMedia is a division of iHeartMedia, Inc. (PINK: IHRTQ). Visit [iHeartMedia.com](http://iHeartMedia.com).*

### **About NEA**

*The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing nearly 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers. Learn more at [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org).*