

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEAMS UP WITH HILLSBOROUGH EDUCATION FOUNDATION,
TAMPA BAY CHAMBER, AND SCHOLASTIC FOR
STORYTIME ONLINE**

(April 27, 2020) TAMPA – Many young students enjoy listening to an adult read a book, especially when that adult immerses the listener into the pages and characters in such a way that encourages imagination, creativity, and fun. Unfortunately, not all children and youth have books at their fingertips, especially during a safer-at-home order as part of a global pandemic.










Hillsborough County School Board Member, Dr. Stacy Hahn, developed *Storytime Online*, an early education literacy initiative that connects schools, families and the public to the wonders of fiction books, provided by Capstone and launched in 2019. Each episode of *Storytime Online* features local dignitaries reading exciting books in which children can follow along from the comfort of their own home and access for free through myON.com. Recent participants have included Sheriff Chad Chronister, Mayor Jane Castor, WWE Superstar Titus O’Neil, and Dr. Hahn herself. Due to physical distancing orders, Dr. Hahn has been reading one book every day for *Storytime Online* on her Facebook page at 11 a.m. Those special episodes can be found on our district’s YouTube page under the *Storytime Online* playlist.

As a community, we should be concerned about the academic frustration of our more vulnerable students, some of whom already struggle with reading comprehension and now have even less access to books than before this health crisis. That is why Hillsborough County Public Schools has partnered with Hillsborough Education Foundation, Tampa Bay Chamber, and Scholastic in expanding *Storytime Online* to include special edition episodes with business leaders to run through June 30th.

To help formally promote this special edition Storytime Online initiative, you are invited to join via Zoom Hillsborough Schools Superintendent Addison Davis, School Board Member Dr. Hahn, and Hillsborough Education Foundation CEO Kim Jowell, as they welcome our first leader participant, Tampa Bay Chamber President & CEO Bob Rohrlack read *Whistle for Willie* by Ezra Jack Keats.

To be a part of this traditional book reading activity with a 21st Century twist, Chamber members can choose from a variety of approved book titles provided by Scholastic. If participants do not have access to a copy of their selected book, Hillsborough Education Foundation will supply a copy. *Storytime Online* will provide a sense of normalcy for students who lack reading experiences typically facilitated by their teachers, and help them continue to progress with their studies, and ultimately foster a love of reading.

Once videos are created and posted, Hillsborough County students and families will be able to access the recorded *Storytime Online* sessions through the District’s online learning platform (Clever), and on the YouTube channels of both HCPS ([HCPS YouTube Channel](#)) and Hillsborough Education Foundation ([HEF YouTube Channel](#)), as well as on the social media sites listed below for the School District, Foundation, and Chamber.

Tampa Bay Chamber	Hillsborough Education Foundation	Hillsborough Schools
 @tampabaychamber	 @educationfoundation	 @HillsboroughSch
 @TB_Chamber	 @hillsedufnd	 @HillsboroughSch
 @tampabaychamber	 @hillsedufnd	 @HillsboroughSch

For more information about the Hillsborough County Public Schools response to COVID-19, visit [HCPS COVID-19 Resource Page](#). For Hillsborough Education Foundation’s COVID-19 resources, visit [HEF COVID19 Resource Page](#).