

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Binghamton City School District has received a \$4.3 million federal grant that will be used over the next three years to help develop literacy skills in preschool children. The funds come from the U.S. Department of Education's Early Reading First program.

"By enabling all children at a young age to acquire basic literacy skills, we are helping to open the door to a lifetime of learning and achievement," Hinchey said. "This federal funding will provide young children in Broome County with the tools they need to become early and avid readers, which will trigger their imagination and desire to learn. I am very grateful for the work that the Binghamton City School District and its partners are doing to help ensure that this next generation of young people will succeed in the short and long-term."

The federal grant will be used to support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and pre-reading development of preschool age children, particularly those from low-income families, through instructional strategies and professional development lessons that are based on scientifically-founded reading research.

Specifically, the funds will allow the Binghamton City School District Universal Pre-Kindergarten program to partner with the Johnson City School District, the Binghamton YMCA, and the Family Enrichment Network -- a Head Start provider -- to implement what is known as Project CLEAR (Creating Learning for Equal Access to Reading). The goal of the project is for all preschool children to experience an improved learning environment through articulated instruction in alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and print awareness. The program will provide a wide array of literacy and pre-reading activities for children.

The grant will also be used for professional development that will enable teachers to learn better ways to help young children develop literacy and reading skills.