



**For Immediate Release**  
**February 1, 2018**

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Chandler Owdom  
Virginia Bankers Association  
804-819-4707  
[cowdom@vabankers.org](mailto:cowdom@vabankers.org)

Cathy Mitchell Plageman  
Read to Them  
804-334-5872  
[cathy.plageman@readtothem.org](mailto:cathy.plageman@readtothem.org)

Nancy Tait  
Read to Them  
804-389-1360  
[nancy.tait@readtothem.org](mailto:nancy.tait@readtothem.org)

**Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation Contributes \$25,000 as a Statewide Sponsor  
of Virginia Reads One Book**

**Glen Allen, VA** — The Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation (VBA) has contributed \$25,000 as a sponsor of Virginia Reads One Book, a statewide program that will support more than 40,000 public school students and their families from 41 districts across Virginia as they read the same book on the same schedule starting Monday, February 5 — the day after Super Bowl LII. On this day, all participating schools will receive their new books and follow along as a mystery reader from the Washington Redskins, through a partnership with the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, reads the first chapter aloud on an exclusive video cast. The VBA is one of several sponsors of this initiative, a program from Richmond-based Read to Them, and other sponsors include the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, Virginia Council on Economic Education and Tackle Reading.

The VBA's contribution will directly support the participation of 15 elementary schools and more than 8,000 students and staff across the Commonwealth. In addition to the contribution by the VBA, two Virginia banks made contributions to the program at local schools. Kilmarnock-based Chesapeake Bank is the proud sponsor of Lancaster Primary School in Kilmarnock and Ginter Park Elementary School in Richmond. Roanoke-based Bank of Botetourt partnered with the VBA to sponsor Eagle Rock Elementary School.

"The students will each receive their own copy of *The Lemonade War* — a chapter book by Jacqueline Davies," says Read to Them Programs Director Cathy Plageman. "The students take their books home and read a chapter with their families each night. They are literally all on the same page as everyone follows the same schedule."

"Virginia Reads One Book is designed to help schools and communities build reading habits — to increase both student literacy and family literacy," says Plageman. "With *The Lemonade War*, students and families are also introduced to financial literacy as Evan and Jessie discover the skills they need to run their lemonade stand businesses."

“The program not only boosts students’ reading abilities, but it shows them reading is fun in an atmosphere that strengthens family and community interactions,” says Plageman. “With the support of the VBA, the schools receive a book for every student and complimentary staff copies, both family literacy and financial literacy activities, school assembly suggestions, teacher resources, and both family and community engagement tools. These resources turn a book into a community experience so everyone can enjoy and share the story. Some schools have also ordered Spanish versions of the book to give to students.”

Virginia Bankers Association President & CEO Bruce Whitehurst stated, “the VBA is thrilled to be able to sponsor Virginia Reads One Book in this first year. This program builds on other financial literacy efforts that banks participate with in their communities, including Teach Children to Save, Get Smart About Credit and the VBA Bank Day Scholarship Program. We were drawn by not only the financial literacy focus of the book, but also the idea of bringing families together through this program.”

Virginia schools and school systems supported by the VBA:

- Amelia County Elementary School, Amelia County
- Crestwood Elementary School, Chesterfield County
- Drew Model Elementary School, Arlington
- Eagle Rock Elementary School, Botetourt County
- Grace Miller Elementary School, Fauquier County
- Heritage Elementary School, Lynchburg City
- Hilda J. Barbour Elementary School, Warren County
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Prince William County
- Northumberland Elementary School, Northumberland County
- Rhea Valley Elementary School, Washington County
- Richmond County Elementary School, Richmond County
- South Elementary School, Prince George County
- Tappahannock Elementary School, Essex County
- Westhaven Elementary School, Portsmouth City
- Suffolk City Staff

All Virginia Reads One Book schools will also be invited to participate in Kathryn Starke’s [Tackle Reading program](#).

For specific press opportunities, please email [mmcdearmon@vabankers.org](mailto:mmcdearmon@vabankers.org).

### ***About Virginia Bankers Association Education Foundation***

The Virginia Bankers Association (VBA) formed the VBA Education Foundation in 2007 with funding from the majority of VBA member banks for the Walter Ayers Fund for Financial Education. The Foundation’s mission is to improve personal financial literacy and economic education in all public and private schools in the Commonwealth. The Foundation recognizes the importance of economic education and financial literacy in Virginia and supports the banking industry as a key participant in these areas. For more information, visit [www.vabankers.org/vba-education-foundation](http://www.vabankers.org/vba-education-foundation).

### ***About Read to Them***

**Read to Them** is a Richmond based non-profit promoting family literacy. A growing body of research shows that children who are read to learn to read more easily and become better readers. Literacy skills provide the basis for a lifetime of learning and productivity. For more information, visit [www.readtothem.org](http://www.readtothem.org).

###