

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Rhode Island Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation make
\$1.8 Million Commitment to The Learning Community
to Spur Reading Achievement**

*Five local elementary schools to receive three years of
free professional development support*

CENTRAL FALLS, RI -- The Rhode Island Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation today announced grants totaling \$1.8 million to expand The Learning Community's nationally-recognized professional development work in reading for free to five area public elementary schools. The Learning Community, one of Rhode Island's highest performing high poverty schools, has received national recognition for its partnership with the Central Falls school district, where reading scores increased through innovative, proven strategies for boosting reading achievement.

With this financial investment, The Learning Community's professional development consulting group, The Teaching Studio, will provide customized professional development in reading to five Rhode Island public elementary schools at no charge for three years. In addition, schools will receive \$20,000 for materials to support the work. Schools will be invited this spring to begin preparatory work during the 2012-13 academic year. Interested schools are encouraged to contact The Learning Community directly to learn more.

"The Rhode Island Foundation continues to spur innovation in public education, and we are pleased that the Kellogg Foundation has joined us to invest in The Learning Community," said Neil Steinberg, President and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation, which granted The Learning Community \$880,000. "We have seen investments in The Learning Community produce measurable results in Central Falls and we know that other districts will benefit from partnering with The Learning Community."

"As a national foundation, we scan the country for promising practices," said Arelis Diaz, Program Officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, based in Battle Creek, Michigan. "We are thrilled to build the strategic growth of The Learning Community's work. It is truly a remarkable example of innovation and effectiveness in school change."

The Kellogg Foundation has committed \$900,000 to The Learning Community to support The Teaching Studio's professional development work in reading.

“These grants are an incredible endorsement of teacher leadership in school improvement. With this support we can offer our services for free to five partner schools, and we are excited to identify schools that would like to join us,” said Meg O’Leary, Co-Director of The Learning Community and a member of the project’s leadership team.

Consulting administrators, teachers and reading specialists from The Learning Community will work with their grade-level counterparts in five partner schools. Through observation, debriefs, intensive planning and training sessions, systems used to make dramatic achievement gains at The Learning Community will be shared over the next three years. These systems include:

- Support for teachers in implementing proven reading instructional techniques directly in classrooms
- A reading safety net to support students falling below national benchmarks
- Quarterly formative assessments and data analysis systems
- Grade-level tools including key units of study, lessons plans and an on-line video library of instruction – all aligned to Common Core standards
- Support for reading specialists and administrators to implement systems building-wide
- \$20,000 for materials, selected by each partner school, to support the work

Schools or districts interested in learning more about participating in this project are encouraged to visit <http://teachingstudio.thelearningcommunity.com> or call 401-305-3357.

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About The Teaching Studio at The Learning Community

The Teaching Studio is the professional development consulting group of The Learning Community, one of Rhode Island’s highest performing high poverty schools. The Learning Community, a K-8 public school, was founded in 2004 as an excellent school and as a center for professional practice to share what works. This center, The Teaching Studio, provides a range of customized ways for teachers, schools and districts to improve instruction and see measurable gains in student achievement. The Teaching Studio’s work with the Central Falls public schools has received national attention. Now, with generous support from The Rhode Island Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation, The Teaching Studio is poised to partner with other local schools to improve reading. For more: <http://teachingstudio.thelearningcommunity.com>

About The Rhode Island Foundation

The Rhode Island Foundation is a philanthropic and community leader dedicated to meeting the needs of the people of Rhode Island. Founded in 1916, the Foundation is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the United States, and is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. In the past decade the Foundation has made grants of nearly \$256 million to well over one thousand organizations. Since 2010, public education has been one of the Foundation’s signature priority areas, supported through grants, advocacy, partnerships, and leadership. The Foundation has been a proud supporter of The Learning Community since its founding in 2004. For more: <http://www.rifoundation.org>

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Mich., and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success.

For more: <http://www.wkkf.org>