

Photos by Kendra Port

Governor Gina Raimondo greets students at Blackrock Elementary Wednesday morning.

Reading and leading

Gov. Gina Raimondo, State Police Superintendent Ann Assumpico among guest readers at Blackrock Elementary

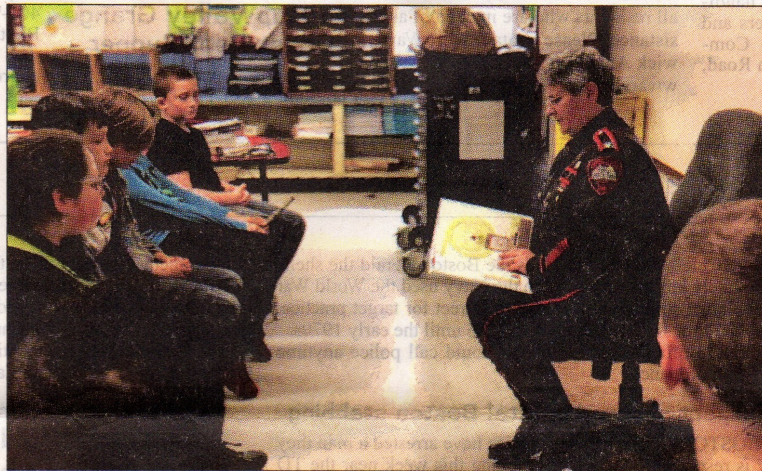
By **KENDRA PORT**
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COVENTRY – As part of her proclamation issued this week recognizing April 9 through 13 as Reading Week 2018 in Rhode Island, Governor Gina Raimondo made a stop at Blackrock Elementary School in Coventry on Wednesday morning to serve as a guest reader and promote childhood literacy.

Guest readers for reading week also included Rhode Island State Police Superintendent Colonel Ann Assumpico, Coventry Superintendent Craig Levis, North Providence Assistant Superintendent and former Tiogue Elementary Principal Louise Seitsinger, Coventry School Committee Vice President David Florio and member James Pierson, Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Principal Joseph Lucian, Tiogue Elementary Principal Domenic Giusti, Coventry Schools Director of Curriculum Don Cowart, Lynn Sisson, Channel 6 Meteorologist Jeff Desnoyers, Nancy Gormley, John Smith, Gus Gomes, Pat Palmieri, Coventry Police Officer A.J. Medeiros, Orthodontist Dr. William Gordon, Tim Chace, Frederick Shockaert, Jayne Bailey and Gary Asher.

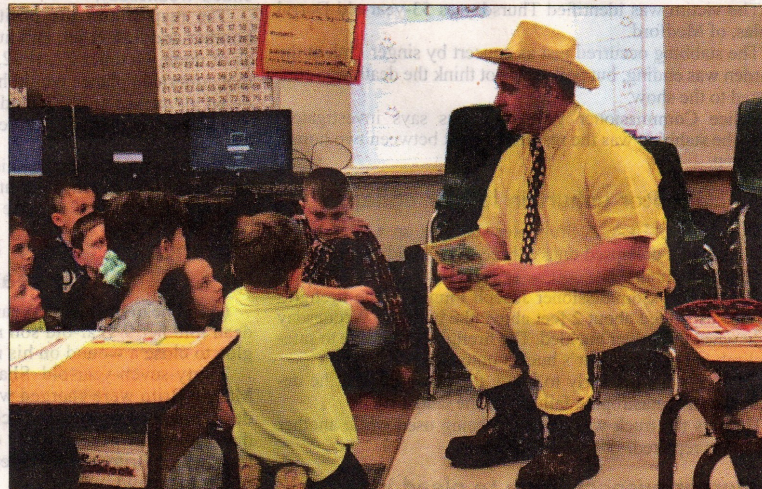
Raimondo recently implemented the Third Grade Reading Challenge, a plan launched in September 2016 to double the number of students reading proficiently by

See **READ**, page A3



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Above: Rhode Island State Police Superintendent Colonel Ann Assumpico, a Coventry resident, reads to students at Blackrock Elementary School for Reading Week. Below: Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Principal Joseph Lucian, dressed as The Man in the Yellow Hat from Curious George, reads to a group of students.



Read

Continued from page A1

third grade by the year 2025.

"When we empower students to become fluent, joyful readers by the third grade, we set them on a path for success in school and in life," said Raimondo. "I issued this challenge and reconvened the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet because I recognize that early literacy is absolutely essential to the academic achievement of all students and is a key factor in our collective economic success."

As part of Blackrock's Reading Week festivities, every year they host a school-wide parade featuring the

many guest readers who have been invited to come in. The readers marched through the school halls and classrooms while the loudspeaker played "Be our Guest." Afterward they read to students in different classrooms.

Students participated in activities throughout the week and dressed as their favorite characters from Peter Pan on Wednesday, the theme of Reading Week this year at Blackrock. Images of Peter Pan, Captain Hook and Tinkerbell hung from the ceilings, and a cardboard cut-out display was set up in front of the main office.

"We have been so excited for today," said Blackrock Elementary Principal Alicia Reniere. "Some of the guest

readers come back year after year and it ends up feeling like a big family reunion."

Reniere said the Reading Week festivities at Blackrock, including the parade, date back at least 12 years, probably before her tenure at the school.

"It's been a great local tradition and we look forward to the community being able to participate," she said.

This week students completed daily trivia questions and were awarded prizes. The school also held periodic "Drop Everything and Read" sessions throughout the school day this week. They played Peter Pan Bingo using words from the story and movie, and got "Bee

Bucks" as rewards. On Friday students will attempt to read with only a flashlight, and each student will receive one free book thanks to the school's Title I funding. On Thursday, Author Tara Williams will be visiting the school from 6 to 8 p.m., as well as a book illustrator.

Teachers hung signs on their classroom doors including students' responses to the prompt: "What I don't want to do when I grow up." Each night this week students also received "Peter Pan Passes" reminding them to read 20 minutes a day. For science students studied shadows, and in social studies they talked about islands and pirates. In music students created pan flutes with

straws.

"This is just another great event where community members come into our schools," said Levis. "If you look at the kids, the level of engagement is amazing. Communities will see value in the educational process if they participate in it and that's important. This is just a small way to celebrate Coventry Schools."

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