The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by funders, nonprofits, government agencies, business leaders, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more low-income children succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. The GLR Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation — grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The GLR Campaign’s 2020 goal:

• Sustainable momentum trending toward more low-income kids reading on grade level by the end of third grade and closing the gap with their more affluent peers.

• Increase by 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently by the end of third grade in 12 states or more.

With that goal in mind, the GLR Campaign seeks “wins” in the form of (1) broad-based support for and investment in “on-track” child development, learning and literacy across the early years and early grades; (2) widespread community engagement, civic action and citizen service to find and implement community solutions to barriers to student success; and (3) local, state and federal policy reforms to strengthen, scale and sustain improved child outcomes and school success for children in low-income families.

The GLR Campaign’s message has resonated with a broad cross-section of public officials and organizations:

• In 34 states, governors, legislators and/or chief state school officers have put a “stake in the ground” on grade-level reading by the end of third grade. Third-grade reading is one of six goals of President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative.

• Mayors and school district leaders too are making grade-level reading a priority. The U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously passed resolutions calling on mayors to combat chronic absence.
How to DISRUPT intergenerational poverty?

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

3rd grade READING proficiency

3rd grade READING proficiency

GRADUATE high school
postsecondary studies
college
military
career

essential assurances
QUALITY TEACHING in every setting
SEAMLESS SYSTEMS of care, services and family supports, 0-8
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS to barriers faced by the children least likely to succeed

investment strategies
(Time, Talent, Dollars)
ENCOURAGE PROOF POINTS of success and scale
BUILD THE BIG TENT of stakeholders and champions
ENGAGE PHILANTHROPY to invest more in what works

milestones
by 2015/2016
• Progress on the strategies
• Progress on the messaging
• Progress on leading indicators

by 2020
• A promising trend line and sustainable momentum toward closing the early achievement gap
• A dozen states or more have increased by at least 100% the number of low-income children reading proficiently by the end of third grade

momentum is building

More than 160 communities in 41 states across the nation, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,100 local organizations and 250+ state and local funders, including 118 United Ways.

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and to promote summer learning opportunities. Superintendents are signing on to the Make Every Day Count Call to Action.

- The number of sector-leading organizations signing on has grown from three in May 2010 to more than 60 today. America’s Promise Alliance (over 400 corporations and social-sector organizations), Council of the Great City Schools (representing 67 large school districts serving nearly 7 million children), National League of Cities (state municipal leagues representing more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns), United Way Worldwide (1,300 affiliates) and YMCA of the USA (serving 10,000 neighborhoods) are among the Campaign Partners.

Civic leaders and active citizens in communities across the nation are stepping up and responding to the call.

- Local coalitions of leaders and citizens in 160+ communities formed sponsoring coalitions that developed and are implementing Community Solutions Action Plans around the challenges of school readiness, attendance and summer learning. Promoting healthy, on-track development and supporting successful parents are embedded in coalition efforts. These members of the GLR Communities Network: have populations ranging from 50,000 to 500,000; hail from 41 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and encompass 350 school districts with 8 million plus K–12 students, about 16 percent of all public school students.

- More than 2,100 groups, organizations and institutions are part of the local coalitions. Among them are public and nonprofit agencies, libraries, museums, community foundations, United Ways, literacy coalitions and local businesses. Over 250 regional, state and local funders, including 118 United Ways, are supporting grade-level reading efforts in Network communities.

The cluster of issues pertaining to the GLR Campaign and grade-level reading has been the focus of thousands of news articles, feature stories and commentaries in print, television, radio and social media.

The GLR Campaign serves as the “backbone” organization for the ongoing mobilization around grade-level reading:

- The Campaign’s Network Communities Support Center serves as a hub for peer exchange, broker offering tools and technical assistance to help Network communities execute their plans, and accelerator of the scope and pace of change.

- The GLR Communities Network serves as a distribution channel for what works and links civic sphere solutions to local efforts around quality teaching, school improvement and education reform.

- Working with co-investors and partner organizations, the Campaign develops, pilots and launches aligned program and policy reform initiatives designed to advance and accelerate progress toward achieving the goal of more low-income children reading on grade level by the end of third grade.
Our Recipe for the Successful “Big Tent” Mobilization Around Grade-Level Reading

- An enabling narrative that pushes against paralysis and gridlock
- A broad and deep consensus around high school graduation
- The common-sense translation of research into accessible messages
- Goals and targets that are ambitious, achievable and actionable

Our “Both/And” Strategy for Investment, Engagement, Civic Action and Policy Advocacy

- Focus on the early years and on the early grades
- Focus on learning during school hours and on learning opportunities beyond school hours
- Focus on the children and on the adults in their lives
- Focus on program outcomes and on the hand-offs
- Focus on grade-level reading and on STEM

Success Factors

- Shared ownership of the result
- Joint accountability for its attainment
- Commitment to reach the lowest quartile
- Local solutions to the data challenges
- Resources tilting toward what’s working
- Taking up the stewardship obligation
Track the Right Data

- Familiarize health care and advocacy groups with trends and data about school attendance.

Address Health Needs

- Can work together to give children and families health care and advice.

Fix Transportation

- Can organize car pools. "We provide transportation for kids in need to classes and school." (2021)

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 4th Grade?

- Likely to read proficiently by the end of 4th grade.

Why It Matters

- 61% of kindergarten and 4th grade are chronically absent in some districts. This means our future leaders aren’t getting the education they need to succeed in life.

Who Is Affected

- Many of our country’s students miss 10% of the school year—report 15 days a year is just two days over.

In the Early Grades

- Many of our country’s students miss 10% of the school year—report 15 days a year is just two days over.

Where Are We Now

- Of Kids Chronically Absent by Grade Level

- Of Kids Chronically Absent by Grade Level

What We Can Do
Parents with the means invest more time and money than ever before in their children while lower-income families, which are now more likely to be headed by a single parent, are increasingly stretched for time and resources.

During the summer months, disadvantaged children tread water at best or even fall behind. It’s what we call “SUMMER SLIDE” while better off children build their skills steadily over the summer months.

SUMMER LEARNING LOSSES accounts for about two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading.

How Summer Learning Can Help CLOSE the Achievement Gap.

SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS TARGETED TO LOW-INCOME STUDENTS can help close the achievement gap that has been attributed, at least in part, to cumulative learning loss during the summers and that has been shown to be steeper for low-income students than for others.

Longitudinal studies indicate that the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after participation.

Engage in nurturing and affirming “back and forth” interactions.

Engage children in enriching summer activities at home or in the community.

Encourage, support and model healthy eating and fitness.

Use technology to facilitate ongoing learning, especially during the summer months.

Recognize and address health and environmental hazards in the home.

Establish an expectation and a plan for daily school attendance, even when families move.

Track and assess progress toward early developmental milestones.

Enrich their children’s vocabulary and promote a love for reading.

Seek intervention and support at the earliest signs of attendance issues.

First teacher and brain builder

High-touch and high-tech manager

Best advocate and coach

Most important role model

Supporting Parent Success

School Readiness

Attendance

Summer

Track and

Attainment

School Readiness

Supporting Parent Success
Managing children's asthma helps them reduce absences.

More children ATTENDING school regularly.

Reading Success by the End of Third Grade

Summer food programs keep kids healthy when school is out.

Physical activity helps children pay attention and learn.

Managing children's asthma helps them reduce absences.

Breakfast in the classroom improves attendance and learning.

Regular dental care prevents lost learning time.

Screenings catch developmental, hearing and vision problems before they interfere with learning.

Social and emotional development builds curiosity and supports learning.

Prenatal care supports early brain development.

More children LEARNING in the summer.

More children READY for kindergarten.

The Health Determinants of Early School Success

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