



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

BALTIMORE

Community Snapshot

Baltimore's image, like the city itself, is a mass of contradictions. Television depicts the Maryland city as a nadir of urban despair, riven by the drug trade, crumbling housing and failing social institutions. John Waters' quirky movies, on the other hand, portray close-knit neighborhoods and lively characters befitting the nickname "Charm City." Baltimoreans see a place of tremendous energy, entrepreneurial spirit and committed residents working together to make this a great city for families to live in, work and grow.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The Grade-Level Reading initiative offers an opportunity to pull together the entire community — city and schools, nonprofits and businesses, faith leaders and philanthropists — for collective impact to dramatically change the trajectory for Baltimore's kids. To achieve these goals, leaders representing government, philanthropy, education, academia, health care and communities created a comprehensive strategy guided by the following principles:

- We must align existing strategies and new approaches so that they build upon one other to maximum effect
- We must offer universal strategies for all children, while finding ways to intervene with those most at risk and to recover those who need to get back on track
- We must engage parents, caregivers and community members
- We must braid and bundle our resources of time, talent and funding

Partnerships

The ambitious plan to ensure that more Baltimore children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade was submitted by the Baltimore Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a coalition that includes the Family League of Baltimore City, Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers, Baltimore City Public Schools and Office of the Mayor.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 620,000 residents
- Approximately 83,000 students
- 84 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- 11 percent of fourth-graders read at grade level (National Assessment of Educational Progress)
- Less than 5 percent are English language learners
- 72 percent graduation rate
- 67 percent are ready for kindergarten
- 26.5 percent of pre-K and 22.9 percent of kindergarteners are chronically absent
- Summer programming is available but not universal

GOALS

- Increase percentage of students reading at grade level to more than 80 percent
- Increase average attendance to 97 percent
- Increase school preparedness to 80 percent
- Increase availability of summer programming

"Every day, I like learning big new words in school," says Aiyanna, an elementary school student.

Kindergartner Liam says, "I go to school every day to see my teacher."