



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

CINCINNATI/NORTHERN KENTUCKY

Community Snapshot

The region that gave America Skyline Chili and a make-believe radio station called WKRP has also come up with one of the more innovative ways to boost reading by young people. The Cincinnati metropolitan area spreads across the Ohio River to Northern Kentucky. While Cincinnati's population totals just less than 300,000, the region's population was more than 2.1 million, according to the most recent census. Although the size of the region creates challenges, it also provides opportunities to improve the educational system and reading test results.

Community Solutions Action Plan

Education, business and community leaders have joined together to launch a multi-year, multi-dimensional campaign in seven counties, two states and 19 school districts to significantly improve third grade reading success and sustain that success through each student's academic career. These leaders have come together based on a core belief, rooted in compelling research and data, that early reading success is one of the most relevant academic milestones for young children and a leading predictor of future academic success, including high school graduation and postsecondary completion rates.

The campaign is working to meet an ambitious goal that every child will be reading successfully by the end of third grade by 2020 by:

- Targeting disadvantaged students and high need schools
- Pursuing collaborative action in the areas of school readiness, attendance and summer learning
- Building broad-based community will and expanding existing volunteer efforts (e.g., coordinated tutoring)
- Establishing focused district synergy to improve school attendance
- Committing to ongoing data collection and analysis to support the entire work of the campaign
- Further aligning advocacy and financial resources around strategies that have proven effective

Partnerships

More than 70 leaders have joined The Strive Partnership and the Northern Kentucky Education Council in launching this initiative. Key regional leaders have been working together to improve outcomes for students, cradle to career, for several years. They include the 19 school district superintendents; community, corporate and private funders who invest in education throughout the region; college and university presidents in Ohio and Kentucky; business, nonprofit, and faith leaders; and advocates and elected officials.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Approximately 2,138,000 residents in Greater Cincinnati area
- 48 percent of students are below poverty line in Cincinnati; 23 percent are below poverty line in Northern Kentucky
- 70 percent of Cincinnati and 81 percent of Northern Kentucky students are reading proficiently in the third grade
- 81.9 percent graduation rate in Cincinnati and 77 percent in Northern Kentucky
- 58.3 percent of children scored "average" and 15.4 percent of children scored "advanced" on state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in Literacy
- 95.8 percent attendance rate in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky
- New summer learning collaborative being created

GOALS

- Significantly improve third grade reading success
- Improve kindergarten readiness by 3 percent each year
- Reduce school absence rates by 5 percent
- Make sure every child has access to high-quality summer learning

"We believe these ambitious, but achievable goals, will enable us to build a community in which every