



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTER SACRAMENTO

Category: Campaign Leadership

In January 2011, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson announced his plans to make the city, California's capital, the first community in the country where every child reads on grade level by the end of third grade.

At that time, only 39 percent of Sacramento third graders were reading on grade level. And as Mayor Johnson pointed out in his State of the City address, the city's problem with third grade reading proficiency was not "just an inner-city problem amongst Black and Latino kids. To the contrary, there is not a single zip code in the city of Sacramento in which the vast majority of third graders are proficient."

The Sacramento READS! Literacy by Third Grade Campaign is working to combat this. Less than two months after Mayor Johnson's speech, the campaign started reviewing the city's literacy data, seeking best practices, meeting with potential stakeholders and bringing these partners together for community-wide discussions about the city's assets and areas of need. Through this, Sacramento READS! defined its role as a community convener and organized working groups focused on school readiness, summer learning and attendance. These working groups developed a citywide action plan that was begun in September 2011.

The local campaign also helped to focus the community in developing the City-Schools Collaborative, a partnership of Sacramento's five local school districts, Mayor Johnson and other leaders. The Collaborative serves as a forum for districts to learn from each other and develop collaborative strategies to boost third grade reading across the city.

Sacramento READS! has fostered media partnerships to help raise awareness of the literacy crisis and engage the community in solutions. In August 2011, the campaign hosted a resource fair, sharing materials about the importance of early literacy and resources from organizations that are working to boost reading proficiency with more than 1,000 parents, children, local leaders and community members. In the same month, Sacramento READS! also launched a volunteer campaign to engage reading tutors and soon after the campaign started providing volunteers to Reading Partners, a local tutoring program.

STRATEGIES

- Created mayoral goal of ensuring that all children read by grade level by the end of 3rd grade
- Established Sacramento READS! Literacy by Third Grade Campaign
- City-Schools Collaborative brought together five school districts and civic leaders to strategize and work together