

ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

SEATTLE AND SOUTH KING COUNTY CITIES



Community Snapshot

Seattle and King County in northwest Washington state boast one of the best-educated adult populations in the nation, but only one in four county residents with a bachelor's degree or higher was born there. High-tech firms attract talented people to the area from other states and even other countries. Alongside these industries, the region boasts some of the most beautiful nature sites in the country, including the Cascade Range, several islands and scenic rivers. The reliance by local industries on outside talent poses a significant economic risk and highlights the need to build a home-grown, well-educated workforce.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The region describes itself as being program rich but system poor. There are many programs to improve school readiness, summer learning loss, attendance and, ultimately, third-grade reading proficiency. However, much work needs to be done to build an early learning system that aligns the multitude of service providers and programs around common goals related to improving third-grade reading, that tracks outcomes in a manner that clearly identifies issues and progress and that coordinates the investment of resources through the initiative. To accomplish this, the Road Map Project has outlined the following objectives:

- Build and sustain a major regional commitment to improving grade level reading and develop broad public awareness efforts to make third-grade reading a regional priority
- Identify existing programs that demonstrate improved outcomes for low-income children, English language learners and children of color that can be brought to scale
- Improve data availability and usage so that programs and organizations can more easily track results and use data for continuous improvement

Partnerships

The Road Map Project partners include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Puget Sound Educational Service District, Technology Access Foundation, Green River Community College, OneAmerica, League of Education Voters, City of Seattle Office of Education, United Way, South King Council of Human Services, the Seattle Foundation, Southwest Youth & Family Services, University of Washington, Kent School District, Seattle Community College, Puget Sound Educational Service District, Education Results Network, Birth to 3rd Grade Work Group, ELL Work Group, libraries and city governments.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1,054,676 residents
- 25,000 students
- 54 percent of students are low-income
- 66 percent of students read at grade level
- 17 percent are English language learners
- 78 percent graduation rate
- 71 percent of students miss 10 days or less in a school year
- Numerous organizations in the region offer educational summer programs

GOALS

- 90 percent of students miss fewer than 10 days in a school year
- 87 percent of third-graders reading at grade level
- Determine baseline of school readiness and improve quality of licensed child care
- Launch *Let's Read!* this summer

"The Road Map Project operates in an environment that is program rich but systems poor...we believe much work needs to be done to build an early learning system that aligns the multitude of service providers and programs around common goals."