

For Immediate Release

The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

3RD GRADE READING
SUCCESS MATTERS

Contact: Norman Black
301-656-0348

30 COMMUNITIES HONORED AS “PACESETTERS” IN EARLY READING WORK

*Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Recognizes Network Members
for Making Progress on Student Outcomes*

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 20, 2015 – Thirty communities across the nation have been named 2014 “Pacesetters” by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, recognizing their measurable progress in addressing some of the problems low-income children face in becoming proficient readers. Each of the 30 honorees produced results in improving student outcomes in at least one of three focus areas: increasing school readiness, reducing chronic absenteeism and improving summer learning among low-income children.

The Pacesetter honorees were selected from among 76 communities in the Grade-Level Reading Communities Network that participated in a series of activities in 2014 designed to strengthen their work. Across the country, communities completed rigorous self-assessments of their progress, mobilized local constituencies through events such as Summer Learning Day and Attendance Awareness Month and updated their Community Solutions Action Plans.

The 2014 Pacesetter Communities include:

Fresno, CA
Stockton-San Joaquin, CA
Tahoe Truckee, CA
Bridgeport, CT
Hartford, CT
New Britain, CT
Delray Beach, FL
Sarasota, FL
Tampa, FL
Waukegan, IL

Ames, IA
Quad Cities, IA/IL
Council Bluffs, IA
Des Moines, IA
Dubuque, IA
Marshalltown, IA
Topeka, KS
Holyoke, MA
Pittsfield, MA
Springfield, MA

Kansas City, MO
Gulfport, MS
Wake County, NC
Paterson, NJ
Las Vegas, NV
Buffalo, NY
Providence, RI
San Antonio, TX
Richmond, VA
Roanoke, VA

Detailed profiles describing each community's progress are available on the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading's website at <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-network/pacesetter-honors>.

"The growth and progress that we're seeing across the Campaign network is nothing short of inspiring," said Ralph Smith, the managing director of the GLR Campaign. "These Pacesetters truly represent hope for American educational attainment, particularly for children from low-income families. Whether it's preparing kids for kindergarten, attacking the 'summer slide' or boosting elementary attendance, these communities are demonstrating that we all can make a difference."

National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders, and four-fifths of those from low-income families, are not reading proficiently. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a milestone on a child's path to high school graduation and later success because it marks the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Students who have not mastered reading by that time are more likely to drop out of school and struggle throughout their lives.

The award winners are part of a nationwide campaign – now operating in 167 communities -- that is committed to increasing the number of low-income children who are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. The Grade-Level Reading Communities Network now includes 2,100 local organizations at work in 41 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We can't expect our public school systems to solve this problem on their own," Smith added. "If we're going to close the achievement gap, we need mobilized communities – like these Pacesetters -- working with schools, city agencies, nonprofits, civic leaders and parents to focus on third grade reading."

Next month, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading will honor eight states – Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa and Ohio – with Pacesetter awards for their work in addressing the goals of the Campaign.

All of the Campaign's Pacesetter communities and states will be formally recognized at a reception on April 24, 2015, at a Funder-to-Funder Huddle hosted by the Campaign in San Francisco.

Launched in May 2010, the [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. For media inquiries, contact Norman Black at norman@thehatchergroup.com or 301-656-0348.

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