

**For Immediate Release**

The Campaign for  
**GRADE-LEVEL  
READING**  
.....  
3RD GRADE READING  
SUCCESS MATTERS

**Contact:** Norman Black  
301-656-0348

## **PBS AND CPB HONORED AS “PACESETTERS” IN EARLY READING WORK**

### ***Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Recognizes Public Media’s Commitment to Supporting Early Learning***

AUSTIN, Texas, May 13, 2015 – Today at PBS’ Annual Meeting with member stations from across the country, PBS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) were recognized as 2014 Pacesetter Partners by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, cited for their long-standing and rich contributions to early learning and helping kids read at grade level by the end of third grade.

“The Campaign is privileged to have these leaders in education among our most valued partners in the effort to ensure that more children from low-income families get the start they need on the path to school and life success,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CGR). “PBS – with support from CPB – is unmatched as a source of outstanding educational content for millions of young children, parents and early educators.”

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical 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 high school and struggle throughout their lives. National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders, and four-fifths of those from low-income families, are not reading proficiently.

The Campaign has identified three key challenges to early reading success: too many children starting kindergarten not ready for school; too many children missing too many days of school and too much instructional time, and too many children losing ground over the summer and returning to school further behind than when they left.

In honoring the two organizations, Patrick Corvington, Senior Fellow at the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, cited a number of recent initiatives by PBS and CPB “that demonstrate their commitment to the youngest and most at-risk children.” For example, the free, bilingual [PBS Parents Play & Learn App](#) helps parents build their children’s early literacy and math skills through games that turn everyday experiences like grocery shopping into learning opportunities.

More than 30 PBS stations across the country also participated in grade-level reading campaigns in their local communities in 2014. The local stations contributed Public Service Announcements, public affairs programming and workshops for parents and educators, Corvington noted in the presentation. Further, thanks to a partnership between PBS, CPB, the U.S. Department of Education, Congress and local public television stations, the Ready To Learn Initiative is providing high-quality content across multiple forms of media to promote early learning. In addition, through public media's American Graduate initiative, stations across the country are working with community partners and schools to address the challenges faced by at-risk youth and develop long-term solutions focused on the importance of a strong foundation in math and literacy skills.

Earlier this year, the GLR Campaign awarded 2014 Pacesetter honors to 30 individual communities across the country, citing their measurable progress in addressing at least one of the three challenges to early reading success emphasized by the Campaign. The Campaign also awarded 2014 Pacesetter honors this year to eight states across the nation that were cited for their broad efforts to improve early reading achievement among children from low-income families.

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.

# # #