



OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-LAUNCH PERIOD “ROAD TESTING” PLANS AND REACHING AT LEAST 50,000 CHILDREN

More Hopeful Futures, to be launched in 2017, will be the next phase of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading’s (CGLR) decade-long effort to increase reading proficiency among children from low-income families. Over the next three years, CGLR and key partners will “road test” plans for the initiative, reaching at least 50,000 children during this period with an enhanced package of screenings and supports designed to accelerate ongoing efforts to improve school readiness, school attendance and summer learning. The effort will build on the early progress and ongoing work of the more than 160 communities across the nation that are part of CGLR.

The “road test” is one of three interlocking strategic decisions underlying the commitment made by CGLR at the 2015 gathering of the Clinton Global Initiative America, where CGLR was recognized as a “featured commitment-maker” for its proposal. The strategic decisions include:

- Doing more than simply “doubling down” on the efforts to address the challenges of readiness, attendance and summer learning that have been, and will continue to be, central to the Campaign. The work will be strengthened by building on the lessons and experiences thus far and by an explicit focus on parent and family success, the health determinants of early school success, finding technology solutions and reaching children living in public housing;
- Assembling and engaging a coterie of the most highly regarded programs showing results for children and families; and
- Making a quick start, real-time pre-launch road test of plans for More Hopeful Futures, working in partnership with a dozen funders, 35 communities in six states nominated by these funders to be trailblazers and “pacesetters,” and 25 organizations offering exemplary programs

Even as these partners take the first steps toward More Hopeful Futures, the community nomination process will continue over the next 18 months, with additional funders, communities and states expected to join the effort. It is envisioned that, by the time More Hopeful Futures is launched in 2017, at least 100 communities in no fewer than 15 states will be part of the initiative.

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BACKGROUND

The enduring hope that education will provide a pathway out of intergenerational poverty now confronts a deeply troubling reality: too many children from low-income families are falling outside the reach of schools. These are the children who start school so far behind their peers that the odds are that they will never catch up, the children who miss so many days of school and so much instruction that they fall further behind during the school year, and the children who lose ground every summer and return to school in September further behind than when they left in June.

That is why finding and promoting community solutions to the readiness, attendance and summer learning challenges has been the focus of the CGLR, a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and more than 160 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. It focuses on reading proficiency by the end of third grade, a key predictor of high school graduation and a milestone missed by fully 80 percent of low-income children.

BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE, LESSONS LEARNED AND NEW KNOWLEDGE

The design of the emerging initiative that will be road tested reflects, incorporates and builds upon important lessons learned from the early work of the communities in the Grade-Level Reading Network, the insights gleaned from almost five years of continuous crowdsourcing and the knowledge from emerging science, research and practice innovations.

On a substantive level, the intentional two-generation emphasis reflects growing appreciation for the reality that promoting parent and family success is essential to achieving student success, and the explicit inclusion of health-related strategies acknowledges the impact of health issues on early learning, especially with respect to readiness and attendance. The imperative and value of using high-tech as well as high-touch strategies also has become clear, given the number of children and families who must be reached, and plans therefore include exploring technology as a pathway to scaling up effective practices and models.

The design further reflects what has been learned about the essential contributions that key groups can make:

- The expanded role of local funders reflects the understanding that they are key to success, scale and sustainability, bringing not only dollars, but also local knowledge, leadership and voice.
- Having a small group of communities field-test ideas and plans in advance, as the “pacesetter” cohort will do, will provide real-time, real-world feedback so that those ideas and plans can be refined for a smoother rollout of the More Hopeful Futures Initiative itself. This approach, used during the formative stage of what became the GLR Communities Network, was a source of valuable peer guidance as

additional communities developed their Community Solutions Action Plans (CSAPs)¹ and came on board.

- Engaging a group of highly regarded organizations as Program Partners, rather than looking at each program in isolation, and bringing them together in “places with plans” that have hospitable environments create the opportunity and impetus for aligning, linking and, where feasible, bundling their programs for greater impact.
- Bringing together thought and practice leaders from a range of fields, as the More Hopeful Futures Commission will do, not only can facilitate timely access to expertise but, even more important, will encourage dialogue and deliberation that may help find antidotes to the barriers posed by disciplinary silos and fragmentation.

ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PARTNERS

The Funders

A dozen funders in six states (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa and New York) have pledged to invest \$34.6 million across the “pacesetter” cohort they have nominated and to help identify additional resources to support the expansion and replication of effective programs. The funders also will work with their nominees to update their CSAPs and to help them embrace a more extensive and intensive approach to increasing school readiness, improving school attendance and enhancing summer learning.

The “Pacesetter” Cohort

Each of the “pacesetters” will update its CSAP and then implement strengthened approaches to address the challenges of readiness, attendance and summer learning and to assure an explicit focus on parent and family success, the health determinants of early school success, reaching children living in public housing and using technology solutions. Among the anticipated approaches will be: increases in the number of low-income children receiving developmental, health, dental and vision screenings; identification of hazards in the home that contribute to asthma; greater access to summer learning supports and summer nutrition; and a multi-media outreach effort to ensure that parents, caregivers, child care providers and early educators have ready access to the information, tools and supports they need to ensure early literacy and healthy development of the children in their care.

It is anticipated that the “pacesetters” will be trailblazers and national leaders, creating proof points of the value and effectiveness of comprehensive, integrated efforts to help more low-income children become successful readers.

¹ Communities in the GLR Communities Network, from which the “pacesetter” cohort is drawn, have formed broadly inclusive sponsoring coalitions and have completed a rigorous process to develop a blueprint — known as a CSAP — for increasing the number of low-income children reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Many Network communities recently completed a Community Self-Assessment to take stock of progress and refine and refresh their original CSAP.

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The Program Partners

Twenty-five highly regarded organizations offering exemplary programs to date have agreed to be Program Partners. Where practicable and appropriate given local needs and plans, Program Partners will give priority consideration for expansion and replication to the “pacesetter” cohort. Further, these organizations have agreed to work together to align, link and even bundle their programs with a goal of achieving greater impact.

The More Hopeful Futures Commission

A group of thought and practice leaders drawn from many sectors, including a number of the Program Partners, will provide advice and guidance to CGLR regarding the ongoing development of the More Hopeful Futures initiative and will add their insights and counsel to the expertise that is emerging in the communities as the work proceeds. Commission members also will serve as co-conveners of “common enterprise learning networks,” bringing together programs to promote dissemination of information about promising practices and models, enhance collaboration and coaching across the “pacesetter” cohort, and identify opportunities to provide more aligned, linked and bundled support and intervention services to children and families.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

CGLR will support the “pacesetter” cohort by: (1) identifying and aggregating opportunities to scale-up and replicate the most proven and promising programs and models offered by national partners and those involved in CGI Commitments to Action; (2) providing opportunities for cohort members to serve as key advisors and leaders of learning opportunities for future More Hopeful Futures sites; (3) offering specialized assistance and support with regard to continually revising local action plans to ensure larger-scale success and sustainability; and (4) promoting the cohort as potential sites for additional investment. Complementing the More Hopeful Futures Commission, CGLR will establish and actively manage issue-specific “common enterprise learning networks.” Lastly, CGLR will develop, manage and curate a national learning community of funders, partners, communities and states to learn from each other and to help inform progress at both the local and national levels.

REACHING AT LEAST 50,000 CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

CGLR and its partners are committed to reaching at least 50,000 low-income children over the next three years with an enhanced package of screenings and support designed to accelerate ongoing efforts to improve school readiness, school attendance and summer learning. Among the anticipated elements in that enhanced package are:

- Increasing by at least 20 percent the number of low-income children who receive developmental, health, dental and vision screenings before age 3, leading to a 15 percent reduction in the number of children starting school with undetected developmental delays, physical ailments and vision and hearing impairments;

- Increasing the number of dental screenings by 25 percent and the number of “healthy home audits” to identify asthma triggers, leading to 15 percent fewer children missing school due to tooth pain or asthma;
- Increasing by at least 20 percent the number of struggling and marginally proficient readers with access to high-quality online coaching and tutorial supports over the summer, leading to at least 25 percent of these children enhancing their reading skills over the summer rather than falling further behind; and
- Increasing by at least 20 percent the number of low-income children having access to summer nutrition programs that can help them stay healthy.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is honored to undertake the pre-launch phase of More Hopeful Futures in partnership with:

- Cedar Valley United Way / R.J. McElroy Trust
- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo in partnership with Read to Succeed Buffalo, Say Yes Buffalo, Green & Healthy Homes Buffalo and Buffalo Promise Neighborhood
- Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque / Every Child/Every Promise
- David & Laura Merage Foundation
- First 5 Santa Cruz County / United Way of Santa Cruz County / 50 Fund, the legacy fund of the San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 Host Committee
- Marvell-Elaine Reads / Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- Mid Iowa Community Action
- Read On Arizona
- United Way California Capital Region / 50 Fund, the legacy fund of the San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 Host Committee
- United Way of Central Iowa
- United Way of New York City / ReadNYC
- United Way of Story County

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