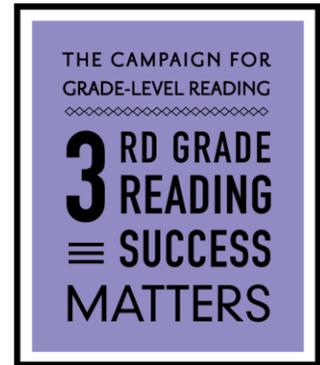


NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORTY-FIVE NEW COMMUNITIES JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING *GEORGIA EXPANDS READING INITIATIVE TO 37 COUNTIES*

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 2, 2016 – Forty-five new communities have joined the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR Campaign), a nationwide movement to increase early reading proficiency.

The newest communities to join this collaborative effort include: Boulder County, Colo.; Brevard County, Fla.; 37 counties in the state of Georgia; Cortland County, N.Y.; West Medford, Ore.; Wyoming Valley, Pa.; Newport, R.I.; Dallas, Texas; and Martinsville-Henry County, Va.

The 37 counties in Georgia that have newly joined the GLR Network are partnered together through Get Georgia Reading, a statewide GLR Campaign comprised of people, organizations and communities that applies a common agenda as a framework for action so that all children in Georgia become proficient readers by the end of third grade. The counties include: Baldwin, Bibb (Macon-Bibb), Brooks, Catoosa, Charlton, Clarke, Colquitt, Cook, Crawford, Crisp, DeKalb (East Lake and Kirkwood Neighborhoods), Echols, Elbert, Emanuel, Fulton County (South and Southeast Atlanta), Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hancock, Henry, Houston, Jones, Lowndes, Macon, Monroe, Murray, Newton, Peach, Polk, Richmond, Seminole, Telfair, Terrell, Twiggs, Washington, Whitfield and Wilkinson.

Additionally, the City of Atlanta and Glynn County (including Brunswick) have bolstered their local GLR Campaign efforts through an updated Community Solutions Action Plan, expanded reach and additional funding to increase their impact.

“We are thrilled to welcome the newest members of our growing network of communities and see momentum continuing to build,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. “Their commitment to this vital mission comes at a critical time when nearly half of the children in the United States under the age of 5 (the years of greatest brain development) live

in extreme poverty. Together, we will do what it takes to ensure our nation's most vulnerable children have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.”

Each of the new GLR Campaign communities has committed to targeting early literacy as an urgent priority and developed a comprehensive action plan to put its youngest citizens on the path to success. National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders (four-fifths of whom are from low-income families) are not reading proficiently. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone toward high school graduation and success in later life 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. By 2020, the GLR Campaign aims to increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently at the end of third grade in a dozen or more states.

The communities' action plans address three underlying challenges that can keep young children, especially those from low-income families, from learning to read proficiently:

- School readiness — too many children are entering kindergarten already behind
- School attendance — too many young children are missing too many days of school
- Summer learning — too many children are losing ground academically over the summer

Membership in the GLR Communities Network gives these local initiatives access to experts and policymakers focused on early literacy, assistance in addressing the challenges that keep many children from learning to read and opportunities to share and learn best practices from communities across the country. More than 2,300 local organizations now are at work in more than 285 communities comprising the GLR Communities Network.

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

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. By 2020, the GLR Campaign aims to increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently at the end of third grade in a dozen or more states. Visit gradelevelreading.net and follow the movement on Twitter [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd).

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