Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a key predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, more than 80 percent of children from low-income families miss this crucial milestone. The statistics are even worse for low-income English Language Learners and children of color.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by funders, nonprofits, government agencies, business leaders, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more low-income children succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. The GLR Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation — grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The GLR Campaign's 2020 goal:

• Sustainable momentum trending toward more low-income kids reading on grade level by the end of third grade and closing the gap with their more affluent peers.

• Increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently by the end of third grade in 12 states or more.

With that goal in mind, the GLR Campaign seeks “wins” in the form of (1) broad-based support for and investment in “on-track” child development, learning and literacy across the early years and early grades; (2) widespread community engagement, civic action and citizen service to find and implement community solutions to barriers to student success; and (3) local, state and federal policy reforms to strengthen, scale and sustain improved child outcomes and school success for children in low-income families.

The GLR Campaign’s message has resonated with a broad cross-section of public officials and organizations:

• In 35 states, governors, legislators and/or chief state school officers have put a “stake in the ground” on grade-level reading by the end of third grade. Third-grade reading is one of six goals of President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative.

• Mayors and school district leaders too are making grade-level reading a priority. The U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously passed resolutions calling on mayors to combat chronic absence...
momentum is building

More than 285 communities in 42 states across the nation, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,300 local organizations and 250+ state and local funders, including 130 United Ways.
and to promote summer learning opportunities. Superintendents are signing on to the Make Every Day Count Call to Action.

- The number of sector-leading organizations signing on has grown from three in May 2010 to more than 60 today. America’s Promise Alliance (over 400 corporations and social-sector organizations), Council of Chief State School Officers (58 members), National League of Cities (state municipal leagues representing more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (110,000 teachers in all 50 states including the District of Columbia as well as some international teachers), United Way Worldwide (1,300 affiliates) and YMCA of the USA (serving 10,000 neighborhoods) are among the Campaign Partners.

Civic leaders and active citizens in communities across the nation are stepping up and responding to the call.

- Local coalitions of leaders and citizens in 285+ communities formed sponsoring coalitions that developed and are implementing Community Solutions Action Plans around the challenges of school readiness, attendance and summer learning. Promoting healthy, on-track development and supporting successful parents are embedded in coalition efforts. These members of the GLR Communities Network: have populations ranging from 50,000 to 500,000; hail from 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and encompass 350 school districts with 8 million plus K–12 students, about 16 percent of all public school students.

- More than 2,300 groups, organizations and institutions are part of the local coalitions. Among them are public and nonprofit agencies, libraries, museums, community foundations, United Ways, literacy coalitions and local businesses. Over 250 regional, state and local funders, including 130 United Ways, are supporting grade-level reading efforts in Network communities.

The cluster of issues pertaining to the GLR Campaign and grade-level reading has been the focus of thousands of news articles, feature stories and commentaries in print, television, radio and social media.

The GLR Campaign serves as the “backbone” organization for the ongoing mobilization around grade-level reading:

- The Campaign’s Network Communities Support Center serves as a hub for peer exchange, broker offering tools and technical assistance to help Network communities execute their plans, and accelerator of the scope and pace of change.

- The GLR Communities Network serves as a distribution channel for what works and links civic sphere solutions to local efforts around quality teaching, school improvement and education reform.

- Working with co-investors and partner organizations, the Campaign develops, pilots and launches aligned program and policy reform initiatives designed to advance and accelerate progress toward achieving the goal of more low-income children reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

@readingby3rd
Our Recipe for the Successful “Big Tent” Mobilization Around Grade-Level Reading

- An enabling narrative that pushes against paralysis and gridlock
- A broad and deep consensus around high school graduation
- The common-sense translation of research into accessible messages
- Goals and targets that are ambitious, achievable and actionable

Our “Both/And” Strategy for Investment, Engagement, Civic Action and Policy Advocacy

- Focus on the early years and on the early grades
- Focus on learning during school hours and on learning opportunities beyond school hours
- Focus on the children and on the adults in their lives
- Focus on program outcomes and on the hand-offs
- Focus on grade-level reading and on STEM

Success Factors

- Shared ownership of the result
- Joint accountability for its attainment
- Commitment to reach the lowest quartile
- Local solutions to the data challenges
- Resources tilting toward what’s working
- Taking up the stewardship obligation