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The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Council Bluffs, Iowa, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Council Bluffs is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance, summer learning and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. With funding from the Iowa West Foundation, United Way of the Midlands and private donors, Raise Me to Read — the locally branded GLR campaign — has engaged over 40 local organizations to elevate the issue, align the community on grade-level reading and spearhead collectively developed strategies for the campaign. Council Bluffs' free community WiFi B-Link has been leveraged to support student success, and the coalition plans to expand its literacy promotion efforts to reach children in underserved communities. New literacy efforts, including book distribution programs and volunteer reading opportunities, will be directed at the Pottawattamie County Jail, the Centro Latino Center, the domestic violence shelter, permanent supportive housing programs and foster care settings. As a result of its efforts, Council Bluffs reports the following measurable progress for low-income children: From spring 2014 to spring 2016, Council Bluffs Community School District saw an increase in the percentage of children meeting kindergarten readiness criteria, from 82.2 percent to 92.7 percent. The percentage of first graders who were chronically absent went from 6.9 percent in 2012–13 to 5.3 percent in 2014–15. The percentage of second graders improving their reading proficiency levels over the summer increased from 7.7 percent in 2015 to 12.5 percent in 2016. There was also an increase in the percentage of third-grade children reading at the proficient level, from 28.7 percent in 2014 to 44.4 percent in 2016.

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