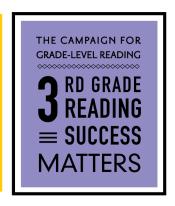
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING COMMENDS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR JOINING FORCES TO LAUNCH THE BOOK-RICH ENVIRONMENTS INITIATIVE

NEW INITIATIVE AIMS TO BOOST EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN PUBLIC AND HUD-ASSISTED HOUSING

WASHINGTON, **D.C.** January 5, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) today announced the launch of the Book-Rich Environments Initiative, a collaborative effort to establish strong, local coalitions that support public housing agencies (PHAs) nationwide with providing diverse, high-quality books and literacy support to children and families living in public and HUD-assisted housing.

In a letter to HUD Secretary Julián Castro, Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading remarked:

"The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading applauds HUD and ED for the collaborative effort to ensure more hopeful futures for children living in our nation's public housing communities. Today's launch of the Book-Rich Environments Initiative serves as a powerful affirmation of your commitment to have public housing serve as a platform and portal for early learning and early school success. That commitment is being endorsed and embraced not only by many of the nation's public housing agencies but also by civic and community leaders in the more than 285 GLR Network communities in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. On their behalf, we thank you and your team for your vision, leadership and persistence in bringing the Book-Rich Environments Initiative from inkling to fruition.

As promised from the outset of the planning period, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading will do its part to ensure the success of this important initiative. We intend to spark a network-wide effort in GLR communities to support those public housing agencies that step up to the opportunity. In the spirit of your collaboration, we already have recruited an impressive array of national partners whose involvement will help to provoke and harness the energy, local knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders — book distribution programs, public libraries and museums, and businesses small and large. Moreover, our early outreach to community

foundations and other funders assures us that these local coalitions will have access to the resources needed to sustain successful efforts over time.

In closing, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is pleased and honored to have the opportunity to take up this post-launch role. Having been inspired by the HUD/GLR memorandum of understanding to recommend the interagency collaboration and then serving as one of the initiating partners, it seems totally appropriate to stay the course and work with our partners to mobilize the local coalitions that are critical to realizing the potential and fulfilling the promise embedded in this breakthrough initiative."

In his letter to Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr., Smith also remarked:

"The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading applauds ED and HUD for the collaborative effort to ensure more hopeful futures for children living in our nation's public housing communities. Today's launch of the Book-Rich Environments Initiative serves as a powerful affirmation of your commitment to leveling the playing field so that zip codes will not decide our children's future and fate."

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading acknowledges the important contribution and support of the following partners:

- Age of Learning ABCMouse.com
- Book Harvest
- Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- First Book
- Jumpstart
- Mind in the Making
- myON
- National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

- National Book Foundation
- Public Library Association
- Raising A Reader
- Reach Out and Read
- Reading Is Fundamental
- Scholastic
- Too Small to Fail
- Urban Libraries Council

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading also acknowledges and applauds the Pacesetter role of the Leadership Cohort of PHAs:

*in a GLR Community

- Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH
- · Housing Authority of Billings, MT
- *Boulder Housing Partners, CO
- *Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville, TX
- · Cambridge Housing Authority, MA
- *Chandler Public Housing Authority, AZ
- *Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH
- Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa,
- Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH
- *District of Columbia Housing Authority, DC
- Durham Housing Authority, NC
- Edinburg Housing Authority, TX
- *Fort Wayne Housing Authority, IN
- *Fresno Housing Authority, CA
- Gregory Housing Authority, TX
- Harlingen Housing Authority, TX
- *Houston Housing Authority, TX

- *The Housing Authority of Kansas City, MO
- *Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, CA
- Housing Authority of the County of Marin, CA
- *Nampa Housing Authority, ID
- *New Bedford Housing Authority, MA
- *City of Phoenix Housing Department, AZ
- *Housing Authority of the City of Pocatello, ID
- *City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, VA
- San Diego Housing Commission, CA
- Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin, CA
- *Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo, CA
- *San Antonio Housing Authority, TX
- *Sarasota Housing Authority, FL
- *Springfield Housing Authority, MA
- *Housing Authority of the County of Stanislaus, CA
- *Tacoma Housing Authority, WA
- *Tampa Housing Authority, FL
- Topeka Housing Authority, KS

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading also acknowledges and applauds the leadership and contributions of the Initiating Partner Team:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- · Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Indian Housing
- Erica Gonzalez, Senior Policy Advisor
- Maria-Lana Queen, HUD Liaison, Federal Interagency Youth Initiatives, Community and Supportive Services Grant Manager, Office of Public and Indian Housing
- Kevin Solarte, Special Assistant

U.S Department of Education

- Leslie Cornfeld, Special Advisor
- Jocelyn Logan-Friend, Program Specialist
- Dr. Sylvia Lyles, Deputy Director
- Alise Marshall, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Secretary

Campaign For Grade-Level Reading

- Ernestine Benedict, Chief Communications Officer
- Patrick Corvington, Senior Fellow
- Alicia Maldonado, Senior Consultant
- Ralph Smith, Managing Director
- Ginger Young, Founder and Executive Director of Book Harvest

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. Since its launch, the campaign as grown to more than 240 communities, representing 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,100 local organizations (including 130 United Ways and 250 state and local funders). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow us on Twitter @readingby3rd.