

OVERVIEW

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR Campaign)

A Record of Achievement and Promising Momentum

The GLR Campaign is recognized widely for: (1) attaining extensive reach into a broad range of communities and constituencies; (2) becoming an intentional community of practice and an effective peer learning network; and (3) developing a strong track record as a distribution channel for dissemination and replication of proven and promising programs, strategies and models.

These accomplishments are important markers of progress as the GLR Campaign seeks to mobilize local funders and broad coalitions of civic and community leaders to become actively engaged in assuring more hopeful futures for children from low-income families by increasing their prospects for early school success. While each community charts its own course, the GLR Campaign — by serving as a catalyst, backbone and facilitator of opportunities for peer learning — has contributed to building a dynamic network of “places with plans” committed to data-informed and broadly inclusive “big tent” efforts to find and implement community solutions to the challenges that account for double-digit gaps in reading proficiency and early school success.

GLR CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS

- **344 communities in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada**
- **3,900+ local organizations, 250+ local funders, including 160+ United Ways, and 56,000 volunteers**
- **37 states where governors, chief state school officers or other policy leaders have put a “stake in the ground” around third-grade reading**
- **60 sector- and field-leading GLR Campaign partners and allies**
- **187 communities report measurable progress in at least one community solutions area; 47 report measurable progress in all three solutions areas and overall grade-level reading**

Looking Ahead: Building on Progress to Realize Bigger Outcomes, Larger Impacts and Sustainable Scale

Although the progress to date provides clear reason for optimism, it also must be acknowledged that, currently, “progress” is defined and measured consistently with the better-known of the two challenges captured in the GLR Campaign’s 2020 goal — that of moving the needle. The longer-term challenge focuses on closing the reading achievement gap. At present, double-digit gaps persist and coexist with good progress in every state and almost every GLR community. Overcoming this challenge and achieving increments of positive change large enough to move the needle *and* close the gap will take: a “bigger outcomes” approach that aggregates and aligns efforts across and between solutions and focus areas for impact and scale; and addressing serious barriers that can impede success, such as fragmentation and duplication of efforts, proliferation of silos and the difficulty of accessing and effectively utilizing data that is being experienced by Network communities.

<p>GLR CAMPAIGN’S 2020 GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A promising trend line and sustainable momentum trending toward closing the reading proficiency gap• At least a dozen states and 24 communities have increased by 100 percent or more the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently by the end of third grade

Looking ahead — as the need to achieve bigger outcomes, larger impacts and sustainable scale takes center stage — over the next three years the GLR Campaign will:

- *Continue to serve as the catalyst for a growing movement to lift up grade-level reading, promote parent success and address the health determinants of early school success as powerful levers to disrupt intergenerational poverty and as the backbone entity for a network of collective impact initiatives to improve grade-level reading.* The GLR Campaign plays a catalytic role by: promoting an enabling narrative about the importance of grade-level reading and community solutions that are ambitious but achievable; encouraging public officials and civic and community leaders to put a stake in the ground around grade-level reading; and building a “big tent” of stakeholders and supporters. In its backbone role, the GLR Campaign: guides the strategic vision and direction; develops communications and messaging; supports cross-sector engagement; coordinates among partners; promotes aligned policies; and develops shared measurement. Among the specific activities envisioned will be:
 - Continuing to leverage the GLR Campaign’s bully pulpit and its significant social media and messaging capacity to promote increased public awareness, understanding and urgency around the importance of supporting parent success and the reality that healthy child development is a critical determinant of early school success;
 - Building out strategic partnerships that can advance the work around parents and health. With respect to parents, this will include acting on the results of the upcoming Consultative Conversation with large parent-facing organizations and expanding current partnerships with groups such as the National Head Start Association and YMCAs. On the health side, the GLR Campaign is exploring opportunities to raise up the health determinants with national education partners and allies, including the AFT and school nurses associations, and assessing opportunities with WIC, FQHCs and children’s hospitals;
 - Continuing to collaborate with the Early Learning Lab and others, including New America Foundation, Too Small to Fail and the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, around ways that technology can promote parent success;

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- To reach some of the most vulnerable children and families, continuing to foster engagement of the public housing sector through key partnerships such as those with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials and special outreach such as the Book-Rich Environments Initiative; and
 - Working with program and funding partners to find innovative ways to align, link, stack and, where indicated, integrate proven and promising programs with the intent to find the combinations of sequence, dosage, duration and programmatic focus that will produce larger impact.
- *Provide technical assistance and strategic support to GLR Network states and communities to create proof points of success and scale.* The GLR Support Center, the field services arm of the GLR Campaign, functions as: a “hub” of peer exchange, learning and relationships across communities and states; a “broker” of access to technical assistance, tools and offers from Campaign Partners; an “accelerator” of local efforts through incentives and catalytic opportunities; and a “distribution channel” for important ideas and innovations, as well as promising and proven programs and models. The GLR Support Center strives to be the one-stop, fast-track resource that can provide Network communities with answers to key questions:
 1. What is the short list of essentials that will combine to predict the desired result (increases in school readiness and decreases in chronic absenteeism and the summer slide)? What are the blueprints for achieving population-level impact on these measures?
 2. What are the proven and/or promising programs, strategies and practices connected with each essential? What are the best models for aligning, combining and integrating such efforts? How should they be sequenced and stacked?
 3. What capacities, competencies and infrastructure are needed to implement the portfolio programs, strategies and practices across and within systems and organizations?
 4. What policies and multisector partnerships are necessary to enable, scale and sustain these programs, strategies and practices?
 5. What does success look like and how do we drive with data to ensure that we are making measurable progress for low-income children?

As the GLR Campaign increases its efforts to harness more fully the experiences, ideas and energy of the Network into a high-impact collaborative learning enterprise capable of answering these questions and using that information to aggregate, scale and sustain solutions to the early reading proficiency gap, it will:

- Building upon the deep experience garnered from functioning as a hub for peer learning and the GLR Campaign’s growing success as a distribution channel for proven and promising programs, develop an enhanced GLR Network Learning for Impact System by aligning and integrating the portfolio of activities, products and tools currently utilized by the GLR Support Center for its “hub” and “distribution channel” roles; and
- Through support from the Overdeck Foundation and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, work with Declara, a strong data partner, and a consultative group of GLR communities to co-design and co-develop an online tool that will provide a continuously updated, on-demand source of curated content about what’s happening across the Network, foster greater connectivity between and among communities, and serve as the linchpin of the enhanced GLR Network Learning for Impact System.

- *Inform, activate and assist state- and community-facing funders.* Philanthropy's leadership, influence, voice, dollars and stewardship can be critical elements in realizing large-scale, sustainable change. The GLR Campaign encourages and assists local funders to make their essential contribution to improving outcomes for children in the early years and early grades by:
 - Continuing to provide information and tools to help those funders: (1) understand what is working, where and why to encourage replication and scaling of effective programs and practices; and (2) address key challenges such as sustainable financing to address the health determinants of early school success, including through Medicaid;
 - Monitoring and sharing emerging work and knowledge that can inform efforts by local grade-level reading funders;
 - Continuing to provide opportunities for funders to learn from and with each other, including hosting annual Funder-to-Funder Huddles for current and prospective local and GLR Campaign enterprise investors, leading experts, public officials and program representatives — to learn about what is working, share experiences, engage in joint problem solving about how to address challenges and explore opportunities and avenues to advance and accelerate the work;
 - Continuing to monitor federal and state policy and keep funders briefed on key opportunities and levers; and
 - Continuing outreach to and exploration of alignment with groups such as Exponent Philanthropy, CFLeads and Grantmakers In Health.

Key Personnel

Ralph Smith is the GLR Campaign's Managing Director. Ralph has worked in philanthropy for over 20 years as Executive Vice President, Senior Vice President and Director of Planning and Development at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. He served on the boards of the Council on Foundations, the Foundation Center, Venture Philanthropy Partners and the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation. Previously, he was a tenured member of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and he served as a Cabinet Officer (Chief Operating Officer/Chief of Staff/Special Counsel) of the School District of Philadelphia, a senior advisor to Philadelphia's mayor and senior consultant to Jim Rouse's Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.

Other key team members include:

— Sandra Avila, Director of Operations. Sandra's responsibilities include budget and cash management, vendor management, and support for broader outreach and engagement efforts. Sandra has served as a Senior Consultant with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, managing a grant portfolio to help build relationships with a variety of national policy, civic, and service delivery. Prior to her work with the Foundation, Avila directed outreach in a variety of public interest settings on social justice issues, including managing external relations for the Office of the United States Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank.

— Ernestine Benedict, Chief Communications Officer. Ernestine serves as the lead orchestrator of the GLR Campaign’s strategic communications, including digital communications, media and public relations, brand management and promotion, publications and events. Previously, Ernestine served as chief of communications for the District of Columbia Public Schools and vice president of marketing and communications for Reading Is Fundamental.

— Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Senior Consultant. Elizabeth works to engage policy and advocacy networks in promoting local, state, and federal policy reforms to strengthen, scale, and sustain improved child outcomes and school success for children in low-income families. In her role as Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Elizabeth is Co-Chair of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, which is providing overarching leadership for the implementation of Rhode Island’s successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant. Previous positions include Policy Director for the City of Providence, Housing Court prosecutor, and consultant to the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, The Rhode Island Foundation, and the Women’s Prison Mentoring Project.

— Ron Fairchild, Director, GLR Support Center. The GLR Campaign retains the Smarter Learning Group (SLG) via a performance-based contract to lead and manage the GLR Support Center. Ron, who is SLG’s President and CEO, has been responsible for development and operation of the GLR Support Center since its inception in 2012. Prior to his role with the GLR Campaign, Ron served as the founding CEO of the National Summer Learning Association and the executive director of its predecessor organization, the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University. His earlier positions include serving as the director of education programs for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and as an education associate with the Public Education Network. He is also a former public school teacher.

— Yolie Flores, Chief Program Officer. Yolie directs the GLR Campaign’s school readiness efforts and the Successful Parents Initiatives. Previously, she was an elected member and Vice President of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education and served as CEO of the Los Angeles County Children’s Planning Council.

— Carolyn Lyons, Director, Strategic Initiatives. Carolyn’s responsibilities include the development and management of partnerships. Among specific initiatives Carolyn manages are More Hopeful Futures and the GLR Campaign’s collaboration with the Super Bowl Host Committees, beginning with Super Bowl 50. Previously, she was President of Strategies for Children, a leading early childhood advocacy and policy organization which under her leadership was acknowledged as the MA Non-Profit Organization of the Year. She has served in several executive positions in global telecommunications and media.

— Hon. Barbara O’Brien, Senior Fellow. O’Brien directs the Campaign’s work to advance policy reforms that will help achieve improved child outcomes and school success for children from low-income families. Previously, she served as Colorado’s 47th Lieutenant Governor and was President of the Colorado Children’s Campaign.

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