

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

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24 New Communities Join Movement to Boost Early Learning

THE STATE OF DELAWARE JOINS WITH SEVEN GRADE-LEVEL READING COMMUNITY COALITIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 29, 2018 – Twenty-four new communities have joined the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (GLR Campaign), a nationwide movement to ensure early school success for children from low-income families.

The newest communities to join this collaborative effort are: Prescott, Ariz.; seven communities in Delaware; 10 Georgia counties and metropolitan regions; as well as Southeast Mississippi (Hattiesburg/Lamar County); Orange County, N.C.; Westchester and Putnam Counties, N.Y.; Erie County, Pa.; Nashville, Tenn.; and Dodge and Jefferson Counties, Wis.

For the first time, the state of Delaware is highlighted on the map with the seven communities of Bridgeville, Dover, Felton, Georgetown, New Castle County, Seaford and Wilmington committing to build momentum toward closing the reading proficiency gap. When launching the Delaware GLR Campaign with the United Way of Delaware, Governor John Carney said, “Third-grade literacy is critical to the future success of our students...I look forward to the work of our nonprofit and community partners to tackle this important issue.”

The 10 new counties and metropolitan regions in Georgia joining the GLR Network — bringing the number to 66 — 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 new counties include: Bartow, Carroll, Cochran-Bleckley, Greene, Jefferson, Rome-Floyd and Tattnall. The city of Gainesville, the Greater Columbus-Phenix Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Atlanta Region have also joined the Get Georgia Reading initiative.

In addition to the communities that are new to the GLR Campaign, the Northern Nevada Campaign Coalition has expanded and now involves 13 counties across the region.

“We are thrilled to welcome the newest members of our growing GLR Network of communities and to see momentum continuing to build,” said Ralph Smith, managing director of the GLR Campaign. “Their commitment to this vital mission comes at a critical time when too many children are falling beyond the reach of schools. We need systems that can assure 24/7/365, two-generation supports and interventions. By taking up this challenge, each of these communities commits to do more, to do better and to make a difference in assuring more hopeful futures for the next generation.”

The new GLR Campaign communities have committed to targeting early literacy as an urgent priority and developed comprehensive action plans to put their youngest citizens on the path to early school success. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone toward high school graduation and success later in 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, school attendance and summer learning — along with focusing on parents and healthy child development, prioritizing children and families in public housing, promoting systemic solutions to data challenges and employing technology to achieve bigger outcomes and sustainable scale.

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 more than 360 communities in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada.

A complete list of GLR communities is available at gradelevelreading.net/communities.

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities 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 GLR Campaign has grown to include more than 360 communities, representing 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada — with 3,900 local organizations and 450 state and local funders (including 185 United Ways). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow the movement on Twitter [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd).