

FLORIDA
GRADE-LEVEL
READING
CAMPAIGN

3RD GRADE READING
SUCCESS MATTERS

FLORIDA GRADE-LEVEL READING CAMPAIGN POLICY PLATFORM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A significant number of children – about 64 percent nationwide and more than 80 percent of those from low-income families – are not proficient readers by the end of third grade. This has significant and long-term consequences not only for each of those children, but also for their communities and our nation as a whole. Florida students' reading performance once outpaced the national average, but growth has recently plateaued. Performance on 4th grade reading in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) grew steadily from 1998 to 2008, but, over the last four years, Florida's score has not exceeded 60% on the Florida Standards Assessment (FLDOE, 2018), with just 57% of children reading proficiently at third grade.

To address this critical challenge, the Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign (FGLRC) builds from and works in strong partnership with local grade-level reading campaigns that are leveraging resources to create promising community strategies that inform the statewide direction, work, and policy recommendations.

The Florida Children's Council, with funding from the Helios Education Foundation, serves as Florida's state network lead for Florida's Grade-Level Reading Campaign. In addition to the local campaigns that work together through the Community Leaders Network, the FGLRC includes the Policy Thought Leaders Network and the Business Alliance for Early Learning, which engages private sector leaders on grade-level reading issues in partnership with the Florida Chamber of Commerce/ Florida Chamber Foundation and other key business leaders. The FGLRC focus mirrors the three primary tenets identified by the national campaign that have been proven to strengthen grade-level reading success and are particularly critical in Florida: school readiness/early learning, absenteeism, and summer learning loss.



Policy Thought Leaders Network

An essential part of Florida's multi-faceted campaign is the Policy Thought Leaders Network, which includes public, non-profit, and private sector leaders who identify potential new system strategies to support continued student achievement. Over the course of three years, the Policy Thought Leaders convened and completed an intensive review of systemic data and policy that impacts kindergarten readiness, absenteeism, and summer learning. Throughout this process, the Policy Thought Leaders consulted with the Department of Education, the Office of Early Learning, and the Department of Health.

EARLY LEARNING

Implement a statewide accountability structure by:



Increasing coordinated early childhood assessment system capacity for School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten and Kindergarten readiness to ensure children are making developmentally appropriate learning gains.



Investing in continued quality improvement in School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten to improve kindergarten readiness.



Ensuring ongoing analysis and use data to inform decision-making.

SUMMER LEARNING

Create targeted funding for summer reading programs that utilize Florida and national promising practices by:



Creating competitive grant process for districts to implement summer reading camps for VPK-3rd grade, laying the foundation for a Summer Reading Camp Allocation statewide.



Designing and supporting implementation of the Summer Reading Camp Allocation utilizing promising practices from Florida and nationally.



Requiring minimum standards for publicly funded out-of-school time programs.

ATTENDANCE

Develop statewide policies to strengthen absenteeism data, analysis, and family support services by:



Developing a consistent definition of absences statewide.



Expanding access to supports helping children who have been absent so they do not fall further behind.



Building the capacity of teachers and schools to support children and families with K-3 absenteeism issues.

For details on the policy recommendations, a full copy of the policy recommendations is available on the Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign website: <http://floridaglr.net>. For more information, please contact the Campaign through the website or by contacting the Florida Children's Council at (850) 921-4494, ext. 305.