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51 New Communities Join the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

THE CITY OF CALGARY BECOMES FIRST CANADIAN COMMUNITY TO JOIN MOVEMENT TO BOOST CHILDREN'S LITERACY, EARLY LEARNING AND EARLY SCHOOL SUCCESS

Washington, D.C., July 31, 2017 – Fifty-one 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: Maricopa (unincorporated areas) and Northern Pinal Counties, Ariz.; Orange, San Diego and Santa Barbara Counties, Calif.; St. Lucie County, Fla.; six Georgia counties; Sioux City, Iowa; Durham and Rowan Counties, N.C.; and the City of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. Delaware and Kansas have also joined as statewide networks.

The six new counties in Georgia that have recently joined the GLR Network — bringing the total number to 54 — are partnered together through Get Georgia Reading, a statewide GLR Campaign. The new counties are Baker, Cobb, Mitchell, Randolph, Spalding and Troup.

The new statewide GLR network, Kansas Reading Roadmap, is working in 28 counties including Allen, Barton, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Cloud, Crawford, Dickinson, Elk, Finney, Franklin, Greenwood, Harvey, Jefferson, Labette, Lyon, Marshall, Montgomery, Morris, Olathe, Osage, Pottawatomie, Reno, Riley, Sedgwick, Stevens, Sumner and Wyandotte. The Kansas Reading

Roadmap works in partnership with the Kansas State Department of Education, the Department for Children and Families, 34 local school districts and local partners.

Delaware joins the GLR Network with seven Promise Communities: Bridgeville, Dover, Felton, Georgetown, New Castle, Seaford and Wilmington, bringing the number of states participating in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading to 43.

Calgary, Alberta, joins the GLR Campaign as the first GLR Network member from outside the United States. Calgary Reads is leading the effort, which now involves more than 14 coalition members. The effort was initiated after a visit by a GLR Campaign staff member in the fall of 2015 funded by the United Way of Calgary and an anonymous donor.

"We are thrilled to welcome the newest members of our growing network of communities," said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. "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 300 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 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 GLR Campaign has grown to include more than 350 communities, representing 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada — with 3,800 local organizations and 250 state and local funders (including 168 United Ways). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow the movement on Twitter @readingby3rd.

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