

The Baltimore Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

3rd GRADE READING SUCCESS MATTERS

“Today
a reader.
Tomorrow
a leader.”

- Margaret Fuller



What's Happening

Dear Grade Level Reading Coalition Members:

I hope you all are enjoying the Thanksgiving holidays! Since our Coalition meeting in October, the Campaign has been busy working to identify strategies in each of our core focus areas — school readiness, school, and extended learning opportunities. Over the next several months we will be working to ensure each of you has input into our proposed theory of change through work group meetings, a coalition meeting in late January (dates will be sent out soon), and individual meetings. Below is an update on our current work. As always, please let me know if you have any feedback or suggestions.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Manns". The signature is written in a cursive style.

*Kimberly Manns
Program Director*

School Readiness

In September and October, several Family Literacy Coalition (FLC) strategy meetings, preliminary data analysis, and a cursory literature review laid the groundwork for a draft school readiness strategy. Additional meetings with partners, broader FLC and GLR meetings, coordination discussions with Baltimore City's Early Childhood Advisory Council, expanded data analysis, and an in-depth literature review will further inform the content of the strategy. The 2005 Baltimore Action Plan for Achieving School Readiness, developed by BLAP, will serve as a core resource.

The strategy will address early literacy and adult literacy across health and education sectors, particularly targeting families at-risk of adverse birth outcomes and low school readiness. The final document will be a 5-year strategy that will serve as an implementation road map for FLC partners.

School

There are a variety of resources available to schools to help them improve their reading scores, such as City Schools' literacy plan and a number of strong community partners. Our best schools have figured out how to use these resources to integrate classroom instruction, afterschool programs, tutoring opportunities, and summer learning to produce positive outcomes for students.

The school work group plans to identify 5-8 schools that could benefit from improved coordination of resources allocated from different stakeholders in the grade level reading campaign, and work together with these school leaders and the district to develop a comprehensive approach that improves outcomes. Through this approach, we also hope to identify key areas of need and recommend additional interventions that can improve resource coordination in schools.

Review of the data suggests that long term gaps in reading achievement begin in first grade. We suggest that coordination strategies focus on increasing the number of first grade students reading on grade level as measured by the DIBELS and TRC assessments at the end of the school year. We also believe the cross cutting strategy for our work group and many others is improving student attendance.

Extended Learning Opportunities

The Family League, in partnership with National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), has completed an initial draft of a summer learning landscape analysis for Pre-K through 12th grade children in Baltimore City. The initial analysis identifies over 500 operational summer learning programs, with many of them focusing on the Pre-K through 3rd grade student population.

As part of this project, Family League and NSLA convened a group of stakeholders on November 18, 2013 to review the initial analysis. There were three important takeaways for the GLR campaign.

- Recommendation 1: GLR discussions to date have not focused on extended learning for non-school aged children. We are proposing a blend of the School Readiness and ELO workgroups to work on this issue.*
- Recommendation 2: The summer landscape analysis identified a wide variety of providers and models for literacy related programs ranging from book distribution and library programs to full day summer learning opportunities. Given the diversity, the School and the ELO workgroup will define a continuum of literacy interventions and recommend which interventions should be integrated into Baltimore's current portfolio of summer learning opportunities.*
- Recommendation 3: There are several potential opportunities to improve literacy outcomes for Baltimore City youth in 2014 including Read to Succeed. In February, the ELO group will present early wins for a 2014 literacy strategy.*