

CURRENT COMMUNITY-WIDE CAMPAIGNS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN



The Campaign for Grade Level Reading

The Campaign is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on the most important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade.

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn, and to master the more complex subject matter they encounter in the fourth grade curriculum. Most students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in the later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma. Yet two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders are not proficient readers, according to national reading assessment data. This disturbing statistic is made even worse by the fact that more than four out of every five low-income students miss this critical milestone.

Although schools must be accountable for helping all children achieve, providing effective teaching for all children in every classroom every day, the Campaign is based on the belief that schools cannot succeed alone. Engaged communities mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and assist parents in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to serve as full partners in the success of their children are needed to assure student success.



Promise Neighborhoods

Promise Neighborhoods, established under the legislative authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Education Program (FIE), provides funding to support eligible local entities to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities by:

1. Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood;
2. Building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center;
3. Integrating programs and breaking down the agency “silos” so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies;
4. Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood and;
5. Learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program.

There have been three rounds of Promise Neighborhood grants since 2010, and 20 states and the District of Columbia are actively working to significantly improve results for children and revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods.



New York's Community-Based Cradle to Career Partnerships

SUNY views education as a continuum that begins at birth and is carried on through school, college, career, and even into retirement. SUNY's Office of the Education Pipeline is establishing a series of systemic and sustainable regional education networks across the state and bringing together partners who have signed on to strengthen this educational continuum. SUNY's partners include leaders in Pre-K-12 schools, higher education, business and industry, community organizations, government leaders, parents and other stakeholders who are committed to helping children succeed from birth through careers.

In partnership with Strive, SUNY is helping communities all around the state to adapt a framework for civic infrastructure to serve as the foundation of their cradle to career efforts. Partnerships have officially launched in Albany, Astoria/Queens, Clinton County, Geneva, Harlem, and Rochester; many more are starting to take shape, including Bedford Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, Farmingdale, Mohawk Valley, and Yonkers. Together these local partnerships form the SUNY New York State Cradle to Career Alliance - the first statewide network in the nation.



The Early Development Instrument

Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a school readiness tool developed by researchers and teachers from the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University. It has been mandated throughout Canada for the past ten years and is also used in 30 countries including Australia, New Zealand, Holland, UK, Egypt, Chile, Mexico and Jamaica. It was brought to the U.S. by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and United Way Worldwide. The EDI is an on-line survey with a 120-item checklist that is completed by Kindergarten teachers about five months into the school year. Surveys take 10-15 minutes for each child. Teachers reflect on the "whole child:" 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social knowledge and competence; 3) emotional health and maturity; 4) language and cognitive development; and 5) general knowledge and communications skills, which align with the national school readiness goals. No individual child is identified on the EDI or shared with researchers. The data are not reported back by student, classroom or school. Instead, the data are reported by neighborhood which helps the community focus on specific areas of need in specific neighborhoods. The process is best guided by a coalition of schools, child care programs, businesses, government, pediatricians, library, clergy, and social service agencies. It should also include neighborhood residents who care about children. Localities also use Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) which helps identify organizational assets as well as individual gifts and talents.