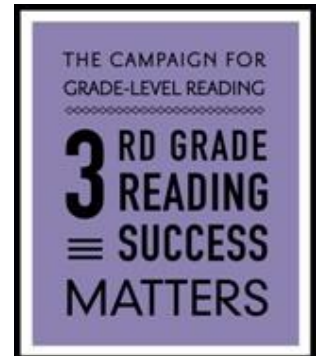


E³ Spotlight: Third Grade Reading - Putting it all Together for Success

The Challenge

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success.ⁱ Yet, only 28% of children are meeting this critical milestone in Central Texas.ⁱⁱ The Campaign for Grade Level Reading is a community-driven effort to address key barriers to achievement by promoting children’s readiness for school, regular attendance, and summer as a time to continue learning. Central Texas is participating in a national network of 350 school districts with 8 million students working on the Campaign for Grade level Reading.



MOVING GRADE LEVEL READING FORWARD IN OUR COMMUNITY REQUIRES SYSTEMIC ALIGNMENT:

- **Compiling data and research** to discover how we are doing as a community and where we need to focus efforts.
- **Connecting school-based efforts with community based efforts** and creating common goals.
- **Modifying policy to align with the common agenda**, while focusing on community responsibility and system change.

The Campaign is focused on three specific areas that address Third Grade Reading Success: School Readiness, Summer Learning Loss, and Attendance.

Percentage of Kindergartners who are not ready for school



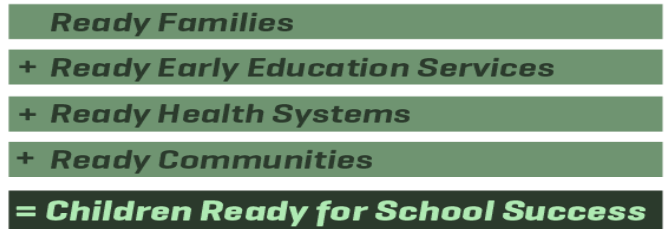
Central Texas

School Readiness

Children from low-income families begin school already behind. A recent Central Texas study revealed that only 40% of low-income children in the region were ready for school at the start of the 2011 school year. Only 50% of kindergarten students in the region were ready for school.ⁱⁱⁱ

In some high needs areas, only 13% of low-income children were considered ready for school.^{iv} Under the leadership of

United Way for Greater Austin’s *Success By 6*, an intensive planning effort in the Greater Austin Community that has produced a three-year **School Readiness Action Plan for Austin / Travis County**^v The success and future of our community’s children depends on a strong system of adult supports during the earliest years of a child’s life. No part of the equation can stand alone – nor can we succeed if one element of the equation is missing.



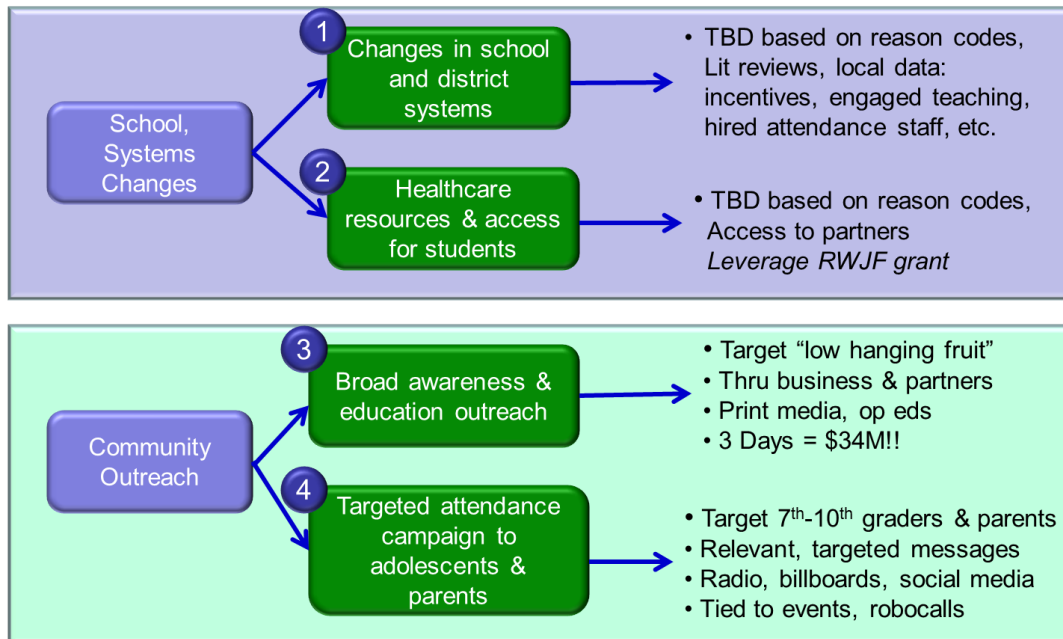
The entire community has had input in and been invited to take on the goals of the *Success by Six* plan to ensure all our children are ready for school. These areas of focus will be the basis for the School Readiness component of the Campaign.

For more information on the *Success by Six* plan, visit http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/our_work/education/srap.php

Attendance

Research shows that attendance has a demonstrated effect on academic performance, and absences in the Kindergarten have a strong impact on early literacy and reading skill, especially for low-income children. ^{vi} With the collaborative efforts of school districts, Central Texas Education Funders, and community leaders E3 Alliance has organized an in-depth research and community action initiative on attendance in Central Texas, using a two-pronged approach to look at both the schools and our community for ways to solve this issue of chronic absences. The goal of this attendance push is to increase overall attendance in the Central Texas region by 2%.

TWO-PRONGED ATTENDANCE OUTREACH



Summer Learning Loss

Without access to enriching activities, many children lose ground in their learning over the summer months. Children of low-income families lose as much as three months of reading comprehension skills over the summer. ^{vii}

Many community and school based efforts are underway to combat the persistent summer learning loss that effects our most at-risk students. Currently, most programs operate in isolation. With partners like the City of Austin, Travis County, KLRU (local PBS affiliate), The Literacy Coalition, ACE and many others, E3 Alliance is working with local area school districts to collect baseline data on summer learning loss and helping to scaffold a more collaborative framework of programs working with children over the summer months in order to develop shared goals and outcome measures for the children in our community.

The network for all of the above initiatives will include E3 Alliance, United Way for Greater Austin, City of Austin (including library services, parks and recreation, health and human services) , Travis County, Austin ISD, Del Valle ISD, and area non- profit organizations.

Our Goals

Focus Area	Specific Program
School Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the implementation of the Success by Six School Readiness Plan • The Kindergarten Readiness Study- identifying data trends based on the impacts of the changes in educational funding in Texas. In this case, the impacts of full-day, half-day or no pre-k on a child's readiness for kindergarten and beyond • Research potential for state and federal funding streams that can be used for early childhood initiatives.
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct additional research on pre-k programs based on utilization rates and levels of chronic absenteeism to identify bright spots and best practices in the region • Bring together stakeholders to codify best-practices and create a plan to scale regionally • Implement community-wide outreach programs to promote good school attendance as an important habit
Summer Learning Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an inventory of all existing programs in the Central Texas region that provide summer learning opportunities for young children (birth to 3rd grade) with a focus on literacy. • Create a collaborative network to identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of existing programs, as well as better coordinate potential new partnerships • Create or determine common measures to track summer learning loss and the effect programs have on summer learning.

ⁱ Hernandez, Donald J. *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. April, 2011. Available online: <http://www.gradelevelreading.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/DoubleJeopardyReport040511FINAL.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The Nation's Report Card, Reading 2011 Trial Urban District Snap Shot Report, Austin Independent School District Grade 4 Public Schools. Available online National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/dst2011/2012456XU4.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Assessing School Readiness, E3 Alliance 2011-2012.

^{iv} Children's Optimal Health, Young Children Volume II- United Way Capital Area Success by 6 Partnership: Are there neighborhoods where very young children are identified with developmental vulnerabilities? Available online: http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/our_work/education/sb6/documents/UWayMapReport.pdf.

^v United Way for Greater Austin School Readiness Action Plan For Austin / Travis County. Available online: http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/our_work/education/srap.php.

^{vi} Chronic Absence Working Paper, The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, 3rd Grade Reading Success Matters. Available online: http://www.gradelevelreading.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Chronic_Absence_2-25_r10HR.pdf.

^{vii} Campaign for Grade Level Reading, About the Campaign. Available online: <http://www.gradelevelreading.net/about/about-the-campaign/>.