

CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

Ensuring children are on track to succeed in school and life.

OVERVIEW

Third grade is a pivotal point in a child's educational journey.

From kindergarten through third grade, children learn to read. By fourth grade, they must be able to read to learn. In fact, a child's ability to read proficiently by the end of third grade is the strongest predictor of his or her school success. Children who aren't reading on grade level by this point are four times more likely to drop out of school – six times more likely if they have lived in poverty for a year.

In the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area, more than 5,500 third grade students were not reading at grade level during the academic year. At United Way of the Midlands, we believe this is 5,500 students too many. In order to ensure more children are on track to succeed in school and life, we are proud to support the expansion of the existing Campaign for Grade-Level Reading in Pottawattamie County into Douglas and Sarpy Counties.



United Way
of the Midlands



4X Children who aren't reading on grade-level by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school.

6X The same children are six times more likely to drop out of school if they have lived in poverty for a year.

HOW IT WORKS

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a national, collaborative effort by schools, communities, government agencies, business leaders, nonprofit leaders, and foundations to increase early reading proficiency. Through its focus on early literacy, the Campaign will help many more children, birth to age 8 and from low-income families, succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and a productive life in the community.

Under the leadership of the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium, United Way of the Midlands will support the Campaign by aligning resources and existing efforts to address three key challenges that can keep our young children, especially those living in poverty, from learning to read proficiently. In alignment with its 2025 goals, United Way of the Midlands also invests over two million dollars annually in programs that address these challenges:

School Readiness: Research shows that learning begins long before a child enters kindergarten. By providing early literacy resources and improving access to quality early-care environments, the Campaign ensures that children are ready for school and families are prepared to support their children's learning.

School Attendance: Elementary school children who are chronically absent are more likely to repeat a grade and struggle with grade-level reading. By monitoring attendance data, addressing attendance barriers and developing attendance plans with parents and caregivers, we can reduce absenteeism and keep children on track to succeed.

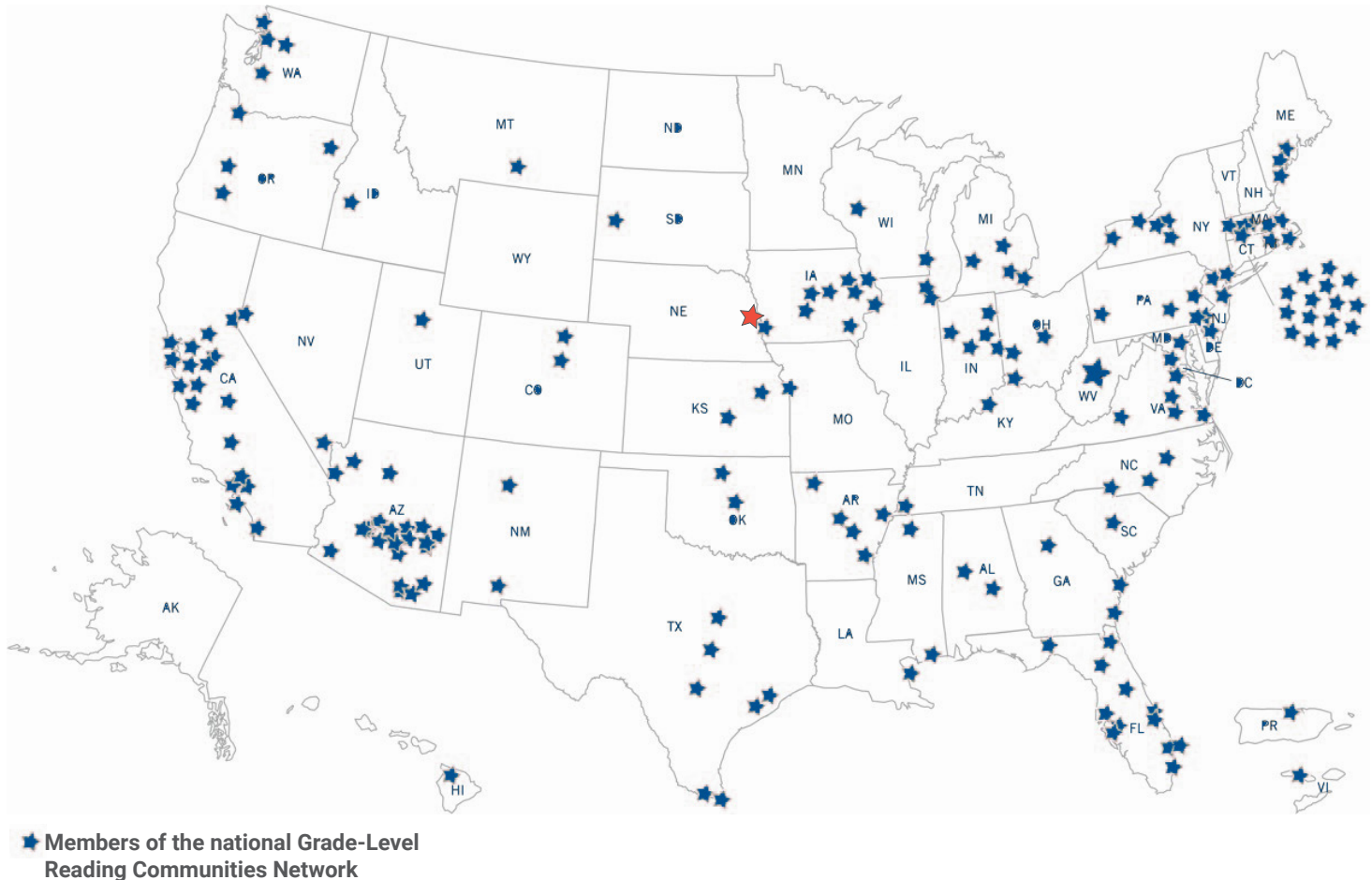
Summer Learning: Summer learning loss, or "summer slide," can occur when children do not have access to out-of-school learning programs, age-appropriate books at home or transportation to a library. The cumulative effect can leave low-income students two-and-a-half to three years behind their peers. By providing quality out-of-school opportunities and facilitating activities that reduce summer learning loss, we can help students maintain their progress toward third grade reading proficiency.

1st Omaha is the first community in Nebraska to implement the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading



TAKING IT TO SCALE

More and more communities across the country are recognizing the value in the Campaign's approach to grade-level reading. Since the Campaign launched in 2012, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Network has grown to include more than 300 communities, representing 44 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Alberta, Canada. By joining Pottawattamie County in this expansive network, Douglas and Sarpy Counties will receive the support needed to implement a Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP) that helps students across the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro increase their reading proficiency.



GET INVOLVED

You can help our community's students succeed in school and life! Donate to the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading through United Way of the Midlands today. Your gift will help us positively impact hundreds of kids in our community. Visit www.unitedwaymidlands.org/give.

For more information visit www.unitedwaymidlands.org/cglr.

"It has to be a lot of voices saying the same thing - being in school is important, helping children learn to read by the end of third grade is vital. We can't do it in siloes; we have to work together."

- Dr. Martha Bruckner, Executive Director of Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC)