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Third Grade Reading Campaign for the State of Delaware

Community Solutions Action Plan

**Focused on Promise Communities in Wilmington, New Castle, Dover, Felton, Seaford,
Bridgeville, and Georgetown**

**Developed by the Delaware Grade Level Reading Campaign Coalition
Led by the United Way of Delaware (UWDE) and
Delaware State Board of Education (SBE) with Support from
the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)**

Submitted

July 19, 2017

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Part 1: Delaware Campaign Partners

Sponsoring Coalition Partners

The United Way of Delaware (UWDE) and State Board of Education (SBE) with support from the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) have developed a coalition of community partners who were actively engaged developing Delaware's Community Solutions Action Plan and will lead the implementation and evaluation (hereinafter referred to as the Delaware Grade Level Reading Campaign Coalition, i.e. Delaware GLRC Coalition.) The current partners include:

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware
- Caesar Rodney School District
- Children and Families First
- Christina Cultural Arts Center
- Christina School District
- City of Wilmington
- Communities in Schools
- Delaware Afterschool Network
- Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children
- Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
- Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families
- Delaware Division of Libraries
- Delaware Early Childhood Council
- Delaware Kids Count
- Delaware Readiness Teams
- Delaware 2-1-1
- Community Advisory Council for Evidence-based Home Visiting
- Nemours
- Red Clay School District
- Rodel Foundation
- Summer Learning Collaborative
- Sussex County Health Coalition
- University of Delaware
- Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

Support from Governor John Carney

During the process of developing the Delaware Grade Level Reading Campaign, a new governor was elected and the administration of key state agencies changed. What did not change was the commitment to helping all children be able to read by the end of third grade. In fact, Governor Carney has adopted grade level reading as a major initiative during his tenure as governor. The UWDE is actively working with the Governor's Policy Advisor and the new Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education to align efforts so that the Governor's vision for helping our children can be fully realized. With this level of commitment and support of the Governor, Secretary of Education, and the key partners in the Delaware GLRC Coalition, Delaware is well positioned to launch the Delaware GLRC to be successful in helping our children learn and thrive and to become a "pacesetter" of the future in the National Grade Level Reading Campaign.

School Districts

The Delaware GLRC Coalition will be working closely with the nine school districts that serve the children and families in the Promise Communities. Those districts include: Red Clay, Christina, Brandywine, Colonial, Capitol, Caesar Rodney, Woodbridge, Seaford, and Indian River. These districts will be actively engaged in the Campaign to plan and implement the strategies in the Campaign.

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Funding Partners

The UWDE and Delaware DOE will provide in-kind support to the operation of the Delaware GLRC Coalition. They will work closely with the coalition members to identify existing resources that will serve as the building blocks for implementing the Campaign strategies. In addition, the Delaware GLRC Coalition will actively seek funding from the public and private sectors and philanthropic community to support new initiatives to address the gaps identified in the planning process.

Part 2: Community Overview

More than half of the public school children in the fourth grade living in the eight Promise Communities to be the focus in Delaware's Grade Level Reading Campaign do not read on grade level as measured for proficiency by the statewide Third Grade Assessment in the English Language Arts. These children are at risk of failure in school, not being able to continue their education and become productive members of their communities. They are impacted by the trauma and toxic stress that is a part of everyday life in the communities in which they live. They are at risk of poor health outcomes, falling victim to chronic disease. They may eventually drop out of school either formally or informally and end up committing acts of crime and violence just to survive. They are poised to fall through the cracks that exist between the supports their families/caregivers are able to provide and the systems of state and community supports that are supposed to help them and their families stay on the path to success. The third grade reading gap did not start when the child turned nine years old and entered the fourth grade. The gap started long before that child ever set foot in a school. It started when that child was born into a high needs community and was raised by families/caregivers that may not have been able to provide the appropriate early learning opportunities to promote healthy growth and development. The gap was not detected because the parents may not have been aware of the availability of early developmental screening to help them know if their child was meeting the appropriate developmental milestones or where to go for help to prepare their child to be ready to learn. The child may have fallen further behind because he/she was not able to attend school everyday or did not have the opportunity to participate in learning experiences over the summer to help him/her maintain the gains made during the regular school year.

Over the last decade, Delaware has made significant investments in early childhood education. In 2011 the State allocated \$22 million to raise the quality of and increase access to early learning programs. This investment leveraged \$49 million in Federal Race to the Top funds. These resources increased the quality of early learning programs, coordinated a statewide an early childhood professional development system, and build the support of key stakeholders across sectors. There are services designed to help young children to be ready to learn, meet their developmental milestones, make the transition from childcare settings to school, have meaningful summer learning experiences, and ultimately learn to read on grade level; and to support their families/caregivers to be active partners in the process. There are services to help families address the social determinants of a good education, good physical and emotional health, and safe communities where every mom and dad has the opportunity to earn a living wage to support themselves and their families in a safe, stable environment. However, the quality of these services varies. They may not be available to every family who needs them or provided in a culturally competent manner. Often the services are not coordinated among service providers and/or systems. Families may not know that the services exist, how to access

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the services, or feel comfortable doing that. It is like the old adage, paraphrased as “being in the middle of the ocean without a drop of water to drink.”

Campaign Demographic Profile

In selecting the eight Promise Communities to be the focus of the Campaign, the Delaware GLRC Coalition examined baseline data, provided by the UWDE, on a number of indicators, including the number of children living in poverty, school enrollment, and the number of children living in female head of households. In addition, the third grade reading proficiency of children by elementary school was considered. Lastly, data was gathered on the number of adults and children receiving some form of public assistance through the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), on those children receiving services from the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF), and on those adults receiving services from the Delaware Department of Corrections (DOC). The highlights from the analysis of that data revealed the following profile:

Population Indicators in the Eight Communities	Number/Percent
Total population	318,610 or 35% of Delaware’s total population
Total number of children (birth through 18 years)	108,120 or 53% of all Delaware children
Total number of children enrolled in school grades K-12	almost 60,000
Total number of children living in poverty	52,956 or 49% of the total number of children living in the eight communities
Total number of children living in female head of households	almost 14,000
Total number of children receiving some form of public assistance	65,591 or 65% of all children receiving public assistance in Delaware
Total number of children active with DSCYF receiving child welfare, behavioral health, and/or juvenile justice services	4,555 or 60% of all children active with DSCYF
Total number of adults (over 18 years) active with DOC	12,270 or 67% of all adults active with DOC

(Data Sources: United Way of Delaware, Delaware Department of Education, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, and the Delaware Department of Corrections)

Part 3: Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP)

Assurance 1: The Problem, Assessment of Current Resources Available to Address the Problem, Conclusions

Problem Description

At the beginning of the planning process, the Delaware GLRC Coalition reviewed the baseline data on the key metrics to discern the current status and needs impacting ability of children living in the Promise Communities to master reading on grade level by the time they have completed the third grade. Their analysis revealed the following:

- **Grade level reading by the end of third grade** – 37% for low income students compared to 66% for non-low-income students; this rate essentially remains the same when measured in the eighth grade
- **Enrollment in highly rated childcare programs according to the Delaware Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System** – 59% of Delaware’s children living in high needs communities are enrolled in Delaware Stars rated child care programs compared to 72% of high-income families; there are still 45,000 children out of a total of 67,700 children under the age of 6 who are not enrolled and potentially need child care
- **Improvement in quality of early learning programs** – 58% of Delaware’s center-based early learning programs and 22% of family-based early learning programs are voluntarily participating in the Delaware Stars Quality Rating and Improvement Rating System; less than 50% of the early learning professionals working in these program have a bachelor’s degree or higher. (Note: Some states require programs receiving public subsidies participate in state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.)
- **Identification of developmental needs of children early** – over 80,000 children in Delaware have been screened for developmental needs since 2011; Delaware is one of 26 states that requires children to take a Kindergarten Entrance Assessment to see if they are developmentally on track
- **Delaware Student attendance in relationship to 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 4th Grade Reading Scores** – children who missed three or more days of school during the past month scored 12 points lower than those students who missed two or fewer days
- **Graduation within four years** – a rate of 3 out of 4 for low-income students compared to a rate of almost 9 out of 10 for non-low income Delaware students; children who are not able to read on grade level by third grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school by age 19

In addition, national data revealed that:

- **Achievement gap at age 4** – children from high need communities are exposed to 30 million fewer words than children from middle to high income families
- **Summer learning loss among children** - children living in high need communities lose on average three months of learning over the course of the summer months when compared to children from middle to high income families

To get the perspective of families on their needs and concerns about early literacy and school readiness, the UWDE surveyed families at a number of community events during May to October 2016. These events were aimed at helping families to become more aware of the literacy gap facing their children and actions they could take to get the needed supports to help their children bridge the gap that exists, including becoming vocal informed advocates. The analysis of the survey data revealed that families were concerned about the following:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Decision-making with child at the center, i.e. whole child approach2. Fair and equitable funding allocation to meet student needs |
|---|

3. Better educational environment with more personalization of instruction such as making education fun not test oriented, having smaller class sizes, having more student-teacher time
4. More emphasis on cultural competency through hiring more bi-lingual staff and professional development for parents, staff, and administrators
5. More social emotional learning and social work and mental health services and resources for students and parents in schools, e.g. Family Crisis Therapists, Counselors, Psychologists
6. More parent involvement, support and advocacy
7. Better integration of services and linkages between the school and community, including have more services co-located in schools, e.g. medical and mental health, more community liaisons, and more access to Delaware 2-1-1 Information and Referral Helpline
8. More after-school programs for children and youth

(Data Sources: Delaware Kids Count, Delaware Early Childhood Council, Delaware Department of Education, Rodel Foundation, United Way of Delaware, and Summer Learning Collaborative)

Current Resources Available to Address the Problem

In collecting baseline data on the early learning readiness of children living in Delaware's high need communities, the Delaware GLRC Coalition also assessed the current programs and services that were put in place to address the early learning needs of children and of their families for support. The following summary presents the highlights from the assessment:

1. ***Delaware STARS*** – partnership with Delaware Department of Education, Office of Early Learning, Delaware Early Childhood Council, University of Delaware, Rodel Foundation, and childcare providers to build a quality early childhood educational system grounded in evidence-based and promising practices through training, technical assistance, and financial incentives to childcare providers and establishing a quality rating system to help families select high quality programs for their children.
2. ***Delaware Readiness Teams*** – partnership with Delaware Department of Education to bring together early childhood programs, educators, and community and business leaders in 21 communities across the state to help build strong linkages connecting the services and supports for children from birth through third grade.
3. ***Delaware Early Learner Survey*** – an observation survey implemented in schools across the state at the beginning of kindergarten to provide families and educators an assessment of the developmental status of children as they enter kindergarten.
4. ***Early Literacy Promotion Programs such as First Book, Read Aloud Delaware, My Very Own Library, and Find a Book - DE*** – these programs are partnerships among the Delaware Division of Libraries, UWDE, public schools, Nemours Children's Health System, community organizations, and businesses to encourage early literacy by providing books to children living in high need communities throughout the state to encourage early literacy.
5. ***Home Visiting Programs*** – partnership between Delaware Department of Health and Social Services/Division of Public Health, Children and Families First, and Department of Education/Parents As Teachers to provide evidenced-based parent education support by trained professionals to families with new babies in their homes or community settings.

6. **Delaware 2-1-1 / Help Me Grow** – partnership with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services/Division of Public Health to encourage early developmental screening for young children to identify developmental delays that they may be experiencing and to provide information and referral support to their families to help them access services they may need to address the delays identified.
7. **Child Development Watch** – program operated by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services/Division of Public Health to provide services to children from birth to age three years with suspected developmental delay and children with established conditions at birth that are linked to developmental delay and their families to address the delays and help those children overcome the challenges they face in their growth, development, and learning.
8. **Child Find** – program administered through school districts in which families can have their children at least 3 years of age screened for developmental delays, such as a speech problem or a fine motor problem, at no cost.
9. **Health Ambassadors** – Community health workers employed through the Division of Public Health to provide health education to high risk, hard to engage, underserved populations in the high need communities of Delaware.
10. **Summer Learning Collaborative and Reading is Fundamental (Making Summer Smarter)** – partnership with 11 community centers/youth serving organizations in the City of Wilmington and other parts of the state to conduct summer learning experiences for children to reduce the summer learning loss that frequently occurs in reading and other academic skills.
11. **Stand by Me** – partnership with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services to help families learn basic financial management skills to better manage their personal finances and achieve economic stability.
12. **The Department of Education's Office of Early Learning Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership** – a partnership designated to serve a total of 72 infants and toddlers across Kent and Sussex counties by providing funding, support, professional development, and guidance to child care providers to support the high-quality, research-based Early Head Start program standards and the State Systemic Improvement Plan.
13. **Dual-Language Immersion** - programs that provide dynamic learning environments in which students learn literacy skills that support the work they do in academic content areas in two languages. Literacy development in both languages proceeds at a sufficient pace so that language skills are sufficient to meet greater academic demands in upper grades. Two-way immersion models in Promise Communities is an effective approach for ELS in Delaware to ensure that they are literate in the target language by the end of third grade.

In addition, the Delaware GLRC identified a number of professional development initiatives designed to support educators and administrators who are working on literacy in the schools. They include:

1. **Literacy Cadre** - comprised of reading specialists, literacy coaches and lead teachers who meet once a month to work on ELA/Literacy professional learning, materials, and resources for statewide use, including units, lessons, rubrics, professional learning modules, and eLearning courses.
2. **Literacy Coalition** - comprised of ELA/Literacy administrators; i.e., supervisors, directors, coordinators. This group meets once a month to guide and vet the work of the

Literacy Cadre, give feedback on statewide initiatives, create and share resources, and receive professional learning on agreed upon topics.

3. **eLearning Delaware** - uses a web-based model to provide effective, ongoing professional learning opportunities that lead to gains in teachers' content knowledge, improvements in their teaching practices, and an increase in the achievement levels of their students. All ELA/Literacy courses are delivered via the Schoology Learning Management System and appeal to a wide variety of audiences, such as: ELA and content teachers, principals, curriculum administrators, coaches, specialists, and librarians.
4. **State Network of Educators** - The Digital Library is a tool provided to support the Smarter Assessment suite of resources with materials for educators in K – 12. The State Network of Educators is comprised of a group of teachers who harvest resources to adapt or adopt and submit for posting in the Digital Library. This group of educators also trains teachers statewide on how to use the Digital Library.

Conclusions

The Delaware GLRC Coalition analyzed the needs of children and families living in high needs Promise Communities, examined the current early learning status of Delaware's most vulnerable children, and then compared that information with the current resources available to address the needs and promote early learning leading to English Language Arts Proficiency, including grade level reading by the end of third grade. Based on that analysis, the Delaware GLRC Coalition drew the following conclusions:

1. "Poverty remains a dominate force in limiting educational achievement" among children living in high need communities (Source: Delaware Kids Count, 2017)
2. Inability of some families to meet the basic needs of their children and themselves
3. Insufficient staff who are trained in evidence-based practices to address in early literacy gaps that exist with children living in high need communities
4. Insufficient number of young children who are being screened for developmental milestones and limited attention paid to ensuring that families with children with developmental needs are successfully connected to appropriate services
5. Limited access of children to evidence-based programs that focus on reducing summer learning loss, especially in reading that are available at no cost
6. Limited integration of programs and services and data sharing for children and families to ensure they get the services they need in a holistic manner when they need them for as long as they need them
7. Lack of effective implementation of processes to help families and children successfully transition from early learning programs to kindergarten
8. Lack of effective communication on the programs and services that are available and how to best access them
9. Lack of family engagement in developing the programs, services, and strategies needed to address gaps that impact early literacy, summer learning and school attendance
10. Lack of follow through on the promise of embedding cultural competency in all programs and services
11. Limited access to trauma informed practice, social emotional learning, social work, and behavioral health services in schools and early learning programs

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Assurance 2: Vision, Goals, and Outcomes

Considering its analysis of current state of early learning and school readiness, summer learning, and school attendance in Delaware, especially among the children and families who live the high need communities, the Delaware GLRC Coalition drew specific conclusions that it used to ground the vision, goals, and desired outcomes for the Delaware Grade Level Reading Campaign.

Vision

Ensure that all children (birth through age 8) are properly prepared and ready to achieve academic success and most importantly, are reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Desired Overall Outcome and Impact

More children from high need Promise Communities are reading at or above grade level at the end of first, second, and third grade.

Performance Indicator

English Language Arts Proficiency on the statewide assessment by third grade, including reading on grade level, improves from the current level of 37% to 46% by 2019. (Note: This indicator may be modified by the steering committee who will finalize the performance measurement plan.)

Goals

In order to achieve the vision and have the overall impact desired, the Delaware GLRC Coalition developed more specific goals and objectives to help children living in high need communities in three areas: school readiness, summer learning, and school attendance.

School Readiness

The specific goals and objectives in this area reflect a synthesis of goals from the Delaware Early Childhood Council's Strategic Plan, Vision Coalition Student Success 2025 Plan, and SBE Early Grade Literacy Campaign Plan and are aligned with the State Systemic Improvement Plan for the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative. These plans were developed with broad stakeholder engagement. They focus on the following:

Goal 1 – Ensuring a healthy start for all children with high quality developmental, vision, hearing, and literacy screening and expanded home visiting services.

Desired Outcome and Impact – More children are screened for developmental milestones and are connected to needed services if developmental changes are detected

Goal 2 - Supporting high-quality early childhood programs and professionals, birth through third grade, by improving the quality of the Delaware STARS initiative and investing in a highly skilled early childhood workforce and continuous professional development.

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Desired Outcome and Impact – More early learning professionals have increased skills to be more effective in helping children learn

Goal 3 - Advocating for an aligned and effective early learning system, birth through third grade, by strengthening family and community engagement in early learning; implementing unified learning standards and assessments; providing preparation and professional development for early learning and elementary professionals and administrators; and increasing the social work and behavioral health services and resources in early learning settings.

Desired Outcome and Impact – An early learning system is in place that actively engages families; has unified assessments and standards for learning grounded in evidence-based practice and trauma-informed practice; and provides access to additional early intervention, social work, and behavioral health services when needed.

Summer Learning

Goal 4 – Supporting accessible high quality summer enrichment programs for children, kindergarten through third grade, in school and community based settings with an emphasis on reading through the use of evidence-based or promising practices with common goals; providing access to supportive services to meet basic needs; and increasing the engagement of families in their children’s learning.

Desired Outcome and Impact – More children are enrolled in evidence-based academic enrichment programs during the summer and are able to sustain academic progress in reading.

School Attendance

Goal 5 – Advocating for a system of supports for early detection and intervention to improve school attendance among children, birth to third grade, by helping families to understand the importance of regular and on-time school attendance to the ability of their children to meet their developmental milestones and to address the challenges that impact their children being able to attend school regularly and on-time.

Desired Outcome and Impact – More children attend school regularly and on-time

Assurance 3: Strategies

The key overarching strategies developed by the Delaware GLRC Coalition to meet the goals and objectives and achieve the desired outcomes and impact across the three focus areas articulated above are summarized as follows:

1. Building on existing initiatives and partnerships to strengthen community assets where they exist and to address gaps in an environment of shared accountability and continuous quality improvement, such as with Delaware STARS early learning quality improvement system and with Vision Coalition Student Success by 2025
2. Embedding the principles of cultural competency and relevance in every aspect of the campaign
3. Significantly strengthening family engagement in all aspects of the campaign as families are the first teachers and health providers for their children by meeting them where they are and helping them to develop their assets and be empowered in helping their children succeed and thrive

4. Advocating for policy changes and funding to improve systems, services, and data sharing that impact the education, health, and well-being of children and families
5. Promoting multi-directional communication among families, schools, childcare centers, government agencies, and community organizations/service providers to strengthen relationships and build trust
6. Providing increased professional development for early learning and elementary school professionals and administrators to increase their knowledge and skills to help them implement developmentally appropriate practice in a culturally competent manner using the best evidence
7. Advocating for the “real” integration of services and supports among childcare centers, schools, public and private service providers, health care providers, and community organizations with afterschool and summer programs to foster a more responsive system of support for and with children and families
8. Using screening processes to detect early signs of problems that children and families may be experiencing and connecting them to needed assessments and services as quickly as possible
9. Engaging the larger community in a public awareness campaign with simple key messages through strategic partners, grassroots organizations, faith community, social media, and other channels to promote and advocate for everyone doing their part in helping children to be ready for school, attend school regularly, and participate in summer learning experiences leading to their being able to read by the end of third grade

A more detailed articulation of the strategies aligned with the goals, objectives, and outcomes are presented in the chart included as Appendix 1.

Assurance 4: Related Community and State Initiatives

In the State of Delaware there are a number of initiatives aimed at improving the outcomes of children and families that relate to the Delaware GLRC. The following summarizes the most relevant of those initiatives.

Delaware Early Childhood Council

The Delaware Early Childhood Council is a statewide council whose membership includes key stakeholders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors and the community at large and is appointed for terms by the Governor. Its mission is to “promote the development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to age eight, which provides the highest quality services and environment for Delaware’s children and their families.” It seeks to carry out its mission through strengthening the alignment of early childhood policies, programs, practices, standards, and financing; integrating service delivery across agencies and sectors; enhancing the State’s data and information system to fully incorporate early childhood and to use data for monitoring and improving services; coordinating a statewide across sector early childhood professional development system; increasing the quality of early learning programs as defined by evidence-based standards; and improving the alignment and level of funding across agencies to support a quality early learning system. In brief, its vision is “ready children, ready families, ready early care and education programs, ready schools, and ready communities.” (Source: Delaware Early Childhood Council)

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Delaware Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems/Collaboration of Improvement and Innovation Network (ECCS/COIIN)

This initiative is a part of the national initiative to build and implement systems of care that support family and community approaches to promote positive early development and early school success for young children. Administered by the Delaware Division of Public Health, the initiative seeks to strengthen Delaware's child mental health infrastructure by educating early childhood providers, parents and caregivers, service providers, health care providers, social groups, faith-based organizations, and the community as a whole on the adverse impact of toxic stress. It promotes early screening to identify adverse childhood experiences, using trauma informed practices and the brain science, and making appropriate referrals to needed services to help children and families strengthen their protective factors to become more resilient and thrive.

Delaware State Board of Education (SBE) Literacy Campaign

The Delaware State Board of Education strongly believes that in order to increase the number of students ready for college, career, and citizenship; it is imperative that we focus on improving grade-level literacy in reading by 3rd grade and mathematics by 5th grade for all Delaware students. The intent of Delaware SBE's literacy campaign is to promote grade-level literacy (reading and numeracy) through policy changes and empowerment of educators, students and families. The Delaware SBE Literacy Campaign, launched in 2014, is comprised of four focus areas – educator preparation programs, educator licensure and certification, birth to PreK initiatives and communication and community involvement. To date, the SBE has issued policy briefs in these areas, advocated for state legislation (SB 51) and regulations (Reg 290) to enhance educator preparation and licensure, in addition to sponsored several community workshops promoting literacy.

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC)

The goal of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission is to improve the educational success of Wilmington children. Wilmington children are currently served by four traditional and one vocational school districts and 17 charter schools. The Commission has advocated for the realignment of the traditional school districts so that all Wilmington children would be served by one school district. In addition the Commission is making the case that children from high need communities have more needs that impact their ability to learn and achieve, and therefore, schools that serve them need additional funding. It has been a strong proponent that the children and their families need holistic support to ensure that they are able to meet their basic needs through its Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee.

The Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee is partnership with leaders from New Castle County school districts and local schools, City of Wilmington government, Delaware Department of Education, Delaware Early Childhood Council, Rodel Foundation, and other education community stakeholders to identify the needs of children and families living in the high needs communities in the City of Wilmington that impact the ability of children to achieve educational success and implement strategies to address those needs, such as encouraging the use of developmental screening; advocating for more trauma informed practice in schools, childcare centers, and community organizations; and improving the transition of young children from childcare centers to school.

Delaware Afterschool Network

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The Delaware Afterschool Network is a network of youth-serving organizations whose mission is to expand and support high quality out of school programs, so Delaware's children and youth are safe, supervised, and prepared to lead productive lives through creating a long-term policy voice for afterschool programs, supporting policies that bolster high quality programs, and increasing public awareness regarding afterschool, out of school, and summer learning programs.

Delaware Pathways to Prosperity

The Delaware Pathways to Prosperity initiative, sponsored by the Delaware Pathways Steering Committee, a public-private partnership, is aligning career development and workforce readiness educational experiences to ensure that children and youth are on a well-defined pathway to college and careers as they progress through the kindergarten to 12th grade system. Children being able to read by the end of third grade is an essential milestone along the pathway.

Student Success 2025

The Vision Coalition in partnership with the Rodel Foundation developed a plan for the skills and attributes an educated Delawarean would need to have to be successful in 2025. Developed with extensive stakeholder and community engagement, the plan calls for supporting students to develop a passion for learning, commitment to the community, to become a multi-level communicator, and have an entrepreneurial spirit. In order to help students develop these attributes, Delaware will need an educational system in which learning is personalized from early learning throughout the life span to college and careers; has a system which emphasizes rational governance, alignment, and performance with fair and efficient funding; and provides strong educator support and development. Student Success 2025 outlines a number of recommendations for achieving the educational system needed for 2025 and supporting greater student achievement. The Vision Coalition with community stakeholders will continue to support implementation of the recommendations through advocacy and continued community engagement.

Every Student Succeeds Act Plan (ESSA)

Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015. ESSA provides federal funding for elementary and secondary education programs. The Act emphasizes rigorous academic standards, accountability, and equal access to college- and career-ready education programs for all students. It also provides states with greater flexibility, especially in the areas of accountability and school improvement, while maintaining an emphasis on student achievement for all students. ESSA requires states to have a plan for spending federal funds, for measuring the skills students learn, and for supporting students in making academic progress. The Delaware Department of Education worked with key stakeholders to build Delaware State ESSA Plan, aligned with and building on the strategic plans that have been developed for early childhood, pathways to college and career readiness, student success, special education, and educational equity. The plan articulates the State's vision for education that every learner will be ready for success in college, career, and life driven by a mission that every learner will be empowered with the highest quality education through shared leadership, innovative practices, and exemplary services. In order to carry out the mission, the plan established priorities to have engaged and informed families, schools, school districts, community organizations, and communities; rigorous standards, instruction, and assessments; high-quality learning opportunities; equitable access to excellent educators; and safe and healthy

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environments conducive to learning. The plan is purposefully high level and meant to serve as a guide in implementation.

State Systemic Improvement Plan for the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative

This initiative encompasses working collaboratively with targeted schools to establish systems of multi-tiered academic supports for reading and math to support students in an individualized manner through student centered learning environments, targeted interventions and supports while developing the skills needed to progress from elementary school to becoming college and career ready. This work supports school wide systems that give all students access to the appropriate academic interventions through a multi-tiered system of academic supports.

Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative

The Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative is a part of the Delaware State Innovation Plan to transform health and health care, resulting in improved health outcomes and reduced health care cost. It is being implemented by the Delaware Center for Health Innovation. The intent of the initiative is to organize local leadership councils in ten regions in the state, many of which align with the high need communities of the Delaware GLRC, to address the health needs of their regions, including promoting healthy lifestyles, improving behavioral health, and reducing chronic disease.

CDC Community Advisory Council

In November 2015, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) released an epidemiological study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which examined youth firearm violence in the city of Wilmington, Delaware. As recommended by the study, the Department convened an advisory council composed of key community stakeholders to provide recommendations on proposed evidence-based, integrated services to be provided to youth who are considered at high risk of committing violence.

In January 2017 the CDC Community Advisory Council issued its report with recommendations for reducing youth violence and promoting positive development among youth living in the City of Wilmington. When the Council studied that data on the antecedents of violence among youth, it concluded that youth success in school was the leading indicator for being able to predict which youth were on the verge of crisis for committing acts of violence. The Council made six key recommendations focused on fostering violence-free environments and positive opportunities for youth to connect to trusted adults, intervening with youth at the first sign of risk; restoring youth who have gone down the wrong path, protecting children and youth from violence in the community, and integrating services to help youth and their families access quality services they need as quickly and efficiently as possible to improve their outcomes. The Council has received broad-based support and is now partnering with government and community stakeholders on implementing pilots to make the recommendations a reality.

Assurance 5: Data Collection and Analysis to Track Progress

The ability to track short-term and long-term outcomes for the Delaware GLRC will be essential to implementing a results based accountability framework and achieving collective impact. The Delaware GLRC Coalition led by the UWDE and SBE with the Delaware DOE will work with the Delaware Departments of Health and Social Services and Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families; University of Delaware Partnership for Education; Delaware Early Childhood Council;

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Delaware Community Foundation; Rodel Foundation; school districts; health care community; Delaware Afterschool Network, and key community organizations serving children and families to implement the framework. The framework will include being able to measure if children and families are better off for having participated in the strategies and interventions of the Delaware GLRC in the implementation plan to be developed. The Delaware GLRC Coalition will look at the following questions:

1. Quantity of effort – how many children and families were reached in the interventions
2. Quality of effort – did we engage the children and families in interventions using evidence-based or promising practices
3. Quantity of effect – how many children and families actually completed the interventions
4. Quality of effect – how are the children and families better off for having completed the interventions

The Delaware GLRC Coalition has collected and analyzed baseline data on the status of children and families living in the eight targeted high need Promise Communities. Moving forward a steering committee of the Delaware GLRC Coalition will develop a performance measurement plan with quantitative and qualitative indicators with specific targets where possible to answer the questions in the framework and compare the results with the baseline established. The plan will include the processes needed with clearly articulated business rules to collect and analyze the data on indicators to be tracked. Many of the partners mentioned above will be implementing the strategies and, therefore, be able to collect the needed data. Every effort will be made to build on existing performance measurement and data collection processes so as not to duplicate efforts. The State agencies and schools have specific data sharing agreements in place that could be built upon to compile the majority of the data that would be needed. If special data were needed, separate agreements would need to be established to address those specific needs. After each analysis, the Delaware GLRC Coalition will interpret the results to be able to tell the story behind the data in terms of collective impact with children and families and to be to identify opportunities for continuous quality improvement.

Assurance 6: Sustainability and Community Engagement and Messaging

Sustainability

The sustainability of the Delaware GLRC is predicated on having stable funding sources for the core strategies, having strong partnerships in place, and engaging families and the community at all levels with consistent messaging.

The Delaware GLRC Coalition will use four key financing strategies to support implementation of the CSAP:

1. Improving the use of existing State and local funding – examine the current investments in those programs and initiatives that address the strategies outlined in the CSAP to ensure that they aligned with evidence-based and promising practices, being leveraged as effectively as possible, and are well-integrated to achieve the outcomes and impact desired
2. Allocating new State and local funding – advocate for new funding to support strategies that address the criteria above

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3. Maximizing federal funding – pursue federal discretionary grant opportunities to support the strategies
4. Public-private partnerships – leverage opportunities with key business and private foundations to support the strategies and address gaps for which public funds can not be used or are not available

The ultimate goal with financial sustainability is to ensure that existing resources are invested wisely to achieve the outcomes and desired impact and that the mix of funding supporting the key strategies are diverse enough that if one funding source is lost, the strategy could be continued at some level.

Partnership, Community Engagement, and Family Engagement

Strong partnerships are the core of the success that the Delaware GLRC Coalition has had to date in the planning of the CSAP. The Delaware GLRC Coalition had many building blocks in place on which to construct the CSAP. Delaware by virtue of its size should be called the “partnership” state because that is how work is done here. The size and complexity of the problems to be addressed dictates that no one organization can address them alone. This is especially true for the strategies to improve grade level reading for children in high need communities. The action plan details the partnerships that will be involved in implementing the strategies articulated and the projected timeline. What makes these partnerships different is that the Delaware GLRC Coalition has been able get the partners to rally around one overarching measure and several intermediate ones on school readiness, summer learning, and school attendance. They are ready to do their part to share accountability and work toward collective impact to help our children be able to read on grade level by the end of third grade. Finally, they have the Governor as their champion.

The most important aspect of engagement is the engagement of families in the GLRC. Early in the CSAP process the Delaware GLRC Coalition concluded that an overarching strategy had to be a two-generation approach. It realized it must help the families meet their basic and educational needs for them to be empowered to help their children. ***Every strategy must consider how the families will be engaged in a culturally competent manner and be successful in the process so that they will be active players in helping their children and partnering with the learning professionals to help their children.*** Families must be viewed as important members of the early learning team and supported in their roles on the team. Schools, early learning centers, and community organizations must create environments and use practices that encourage families to be involved. The Delaware GLRC Coalition will convene a family advisory committee to help them ensure that the family engagement work is authentic and meaningful to achieving the GLRC’s vision.

Messaging

The Delaware GLRC Coalition realizes the importance of engaging families and the larger community in this campaign with several key messages, including the following:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Importance of school readiness, including early literacy, social emotional learning, and a healthy start for all children. |
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2. Importance of supporting high quality early childhood programs with highly skilled professionals working with children.
3. Importance of having an aligned early learning system in which the childcare centers and community partners work closely with the K-3 schools.
4. Importance of summer learning, including supporting high quality reading and enrichment programs that are accessible to all children and helping families to take advantage of these programs.
5. Encouraging and supporting families to read with their children in the summer and throughout the year.
6. Helping families to understand the expectation and impact of on-time and regular school attendance on early learning.

The Delaware GLRC Coalition will use a variety of communication strategies, including social media and community events, ***to make the “tent” for the GLRC as large as possible so that every Delawarean understands the importance of helping children to read on grade level and what they can do to help.*** It will engage the Delaware Readiness Teams, school districts, Parents As Teachers, Parent Information Center, health care systems, child care providers, faith based organizations, pediatricians, parent-teacher organizations, and other partners that do community outreach to spread the messages of the GLRC. The intended outcome of the messaging campaign will be that everyone realizes that it is in their best interest that all children succeed in reading and in life and how that will positively impact the quality of life for all Delawareans. The more people who are invested in our children, the easier it will be mobilize the resources and make the policy changes needed to achieve and sustain the goals of the GLRC.

Part 4: Overview of the CSAP Development Process

Delaware GLRC Coalition started with the UWDE and SBE talking to key stakeholders in the Spring 2016 about the feasibility of mounting a statewide campaign focused in the high need communities. They also had the opportunity to survey families about the needs they saw and their dreams for their children. They concluded from the information gathered that there was sufficient need and interest to explore the opportunity further. They reached out to the national Campaign for Grade Level Reading through the Network Communities Support Center to learn about how to join the network and the best practices from the literature and the lessons learned from how other communities had developed their campaigns. UWDE did some additional research on how other United Ways around the country had been involved in campaigns in their communities. The SBE completed its research and made recommendations on how to address early literacy in Delaware. In the Fall 2016 UWDE and SBE convened a small group of stakeholders as a beginning steering committee to review the baseline data and information gathered thus far and to brainstorm what a campaign might entail. They summarized the information gleaned from that brainstorming to prepare a letter of intent for Delaware to apply for admission to the national GLR Campaign.

After acceptance, the next step was for the steering committee led by UWDE and SBE with the support of the Delaware DOE to expand its membership to engage more key stakeholders and form the Delaware GLRC Coalition. The Delaware GLRC Coalition invited the Network Support Center to attend the first meeting of the campaign coalition to orient the membership to the national GLRC, how to take the next steps to develop a Community Solutions Action Plan, and the

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best practices used in other states that could inform the Delaware plan development. During that meeting the Delaware GLRC Coalition reviewed the baseline data and began to brainstorm the building blocks for a Delaware campaign. Over the next four meetings of the Delaware GLRC Coalition the members worked on components of the CSAP, including vision, goals, objectives, strategies, timeline, and key members responsible for implementation. The Delaware DOE provided active support and guidance during this development process. Lastly, meetings were held with the Governor's Education Policy Advisor and other members of the Governor's Office to get their feedback and secure their endorsement. In July 2017 Delaware GLRC Coalition finalized the CSAP for submission to the Network Support Center.

Closing - Final Thoughts

The "Statisticks Lottery", a video produced by United Way of Central Carolina and distributed by the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading, sums it up best when it says that lotteries, zip codes, and luck should not dictate the future success of our children. It is not just the responsibility of the schools, but instead it is our collective responsibility to shape that future. Through this Community Solutions Action Plan, the Delaware GLRC under the guidance of Governor John Carney will mobilize the Delaware community to invest their time, expertise, and resources in helping our children living in the high need Promise Communities to "win" the statistics lottery of not letting where they live seal their fate but instead experience the promise that the community can offer.