



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Oakland Recognized as National 2013 Pacesetter for its Efforts to Promote Early Reading**

*National honor recognizes collaborative city-wide campaign to ensure more low-income students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade*

OAKLAND, CA – The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has selected Oakland Reads 2020 as a 2013 Community Pacesetter, an honor bestowed upon select communities nationwide that have set the pace in improving reading proficiency among its youngest students. This honor reflects the energy, mobilization and creativity the Oakland community has incorporated in its collaborative efforts. Thirty-seven communities across the U.S. were selected for this honor for 2013.

“Every child in this city deserves an opportunity to learn to read and write, and all of Oakland is invested in solutions that will assist them,” said Mayor Jean Quan. “Successful students can reach their dreams, strengthen our local economy, and help us reduce violence in our community. The Community Pacesetter designation demonstrates that we are on the right track and I’m proud to support this initiative.”

The Grade-Level Reading Campaign is a nationwide movement of local leaders, states, nonprofits, and foundations that focus on the most important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The 140 communities involved in this campaign have adopted a collective impact strategy, engaging the full community around the goal of supporting low-income children from birth through third grade.

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Acknowledging that schools alone cannot address all of the challenges that keep children from learning to read, these communities work with nonprofits and other partners to ensure that children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed, attend school regularly and keep learning through the summer months.

Oakland Reads 2020 launched in June 2013. It is a collaboration of the school district, city and local agencies, and a network of organizations committed to the success of early learners. Currently, only 42 percent of Oakland third grade students read at or above grade level. The initiative's goal is to double that percentage, resulting in at least 85 percent of students reading successfully by the end of third grade by 2020.

"The Oakland Reads 2020 collaboration is very much in line with the Oakland Unified School District's vision for thriving school communities where each child is supported to be ready to succeed in college and careers, and lead healthy and happy lives," said Curtiss Sarikey, Associate Superintendent of Family, Schools and Community Partnerships. "We are encouraged by the recognition of these valuable partnerships in Oakland."

Oakland Reads 2020 has mobilized the community to build a commitment and take action around four key pillars of reading success:

- **Kindergarten Readiness** – preparing young children to begin school ready to learn
- **School Attendance/Chronic Absence** – ensuring that children in grades K-3 regularly attend school
- **Summer Learning** – addressing summer learning loss with engaging programs
- **Family Engagement** – educating parents and providing support to engage them in their children's learning

For more information about Oakland Reads 2020's efforts, visit the Grade-Level Reading Campaign website's [Tell Our Story](#) page.

"We are impressed and inspired by what Oakland has accomplished so far," said Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and a senior vice president at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "With its commitment, resourcefulness and collaborative spirit, Oakland Reads 2020 truly is setting the pace and providing a model for communities across the nation who are seeking to give more children from low-income families a chance at a brighter future."

**About Oakland Reads 2020**

[Oakland Reads 2020](#) is a community initiative aimed at dramatically increasing the number of Oakland students reading on grade level by the end of the third grade. The initiative is comprised of the City of Oakland, the Oakland Unified School District and nearly 100 public and private organizations. It is currently supported by a collaborative group of funders that includes the Rogers Family Foundation, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, and the East Bay Community Foundation. Oakland Reads 2020 seeks to leverage and maximize resources, and welcomes participation and matching funds from other foundations and corporations.

**About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading**

Launched in May 2010, the [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. It focuses on reading proficiency by the end of third grade, a key predictor of high school graduation and a milestone missed by fully 80 percent of low-income children.

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