



When Arizona Reads, Arizona Thrives

**READ ON ARIZONA  
STRATEGIC LITERACY ACTION PLAN  
2013-2023**

**READ ON ARIZONA  
STRATEGIC LITERACY ACTION PLAN  
2013-2023**

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Introduction..... 2**

**The Building Blocks of Early Literacy..... 3**

**Arizona Literacy Data..... 4**

**Raising the Bar for Arizona’s Students..... 5**

**Barriers to Success..... 6**

**The Need for a Collaborative Early Literacy System..... 7**

**State Literacy Director..... 8**

**Read On Arizona..... 10**

**Current Literacy Services and Gap Analysis..... 11**

**Goals, Objectives and Outcomes..... 12**

**Strategies..... 13**

**Action Steps..... 17**

**The Process/Solution/Call to Action..... 18**

**Timeline..... 20**

**State and Regional Read On Arizona Partners..... 21**

**Read On Cities Network..... 22**

**Appendices..... 30**

- Appendix A: Read On City Toolkit and sample letter**
- Appendix B: Resources and Related Links**
- Appendix C: Arizona State Literacy Plan (developed by the AZ Depart. of Education) (separate document)**
- Appendix D: Arizona Infant Toddler Standards (separate document)**
- Appendix E: Arizona Early Learning Standards (Pending Revised) (separate document)**
- Appendix F: Arizona Common Core Standards- English Language Arts and Literacy (separate document)**
- Appendix G: Read On Arizona Community Solutions Action Plan, March 2012 (separate document)**

## Introduction

Arizona is facing a literacy crisis and it begins in early childhood.

Today the literacy skills demanded by 21<sup>st</sup> century work and learning environments are increasingly more complex. We are unsuccessfully preparing our children to meet that demand. In 2011, 42% of Arizona's fourth graders fell below basic reading levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Certain populations of students are disproportionately affected; 58% of Hispanic students, 65% of Native American students, 70% of students with disabilities, and 86% of students with limited English proficiency scored below basic.

Many of the almost 800,000 Arizona children under age nine face significant barriers to school readiness, including poverty (23%), difficulty speaking and understanding English (47.6%), and lack of exposure to books and other literacy resources.

Well-established research underscores the vital importance of addressing this crisis. Children entering kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed in school rarely meet the critical milestone of reading proficiently by third grade, a strong predictor of future academic and vocational success. And there is a high correlation between vocabulary size at age three and language test scores at ages nine in areas of vocabulary, listening, syntax, phonological awareness and reading comprehension. By age four, children from low-income families hear an average of 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

Success in addressing this crisis will require ensuring that young children in Arizona have strong learning experiences from birth through grade three, rich in literacy and language acquisition at school, at home, and in the community.

The key to Arizona's future is a statewide, community-based literacy project. Educators, families, businesses, public agencies, philanthropy and communities all have a role to play. Only when early literacy becomes everyone's responsibility will we have the kind of impact and change we need to see Arizona thrive.

**Read On Arizona** is a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations and community stakeholders committed to determining the gaps, identifying solutions, and implementing a collaborative early literacy approach to create an effective, systematic continuum of supports to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children ages Birth-8.

Read On Arizona builds on the momentum that was created around regional efforts in response to the National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and is broader in scope to address the significant challenges Arizona faces in reaching its grade level reading goals. The Read On Cities of Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma put together community solution action plans to address literacy challenges such as school readiness, summer learning loss, and chronic absence over a ten-year period. Connecting that work to the Arizona State Literacy Plan, a roadmap to improve language and literacy outcomes, Read On Arizona will direct us towards the bold but achievable goal of reading success for all of Arizona's young children.

## The Building Blocks of Early Literacy

Reading is the major foundational skill for all school-based learning, and reading proficiency by third grade is a crucial milestone in a child's future academic success. Third grade reading level is a strong predictor of ninth grade course performance, high school graduation and college attendance. According to the National Research Council for the National Academies, "Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from school."<sup>1</sup>

To achieve this important milestone, kids need to be on track for success from the time they start school. Research shows that children entering kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed in school rarely read proficiently by third grade.

### Language Development

Early language abilities are directly related to later reading abilities, and children develop these skills from birth. At four-to-five months, a child recognizes the sound pattern of his/her name. At eight months, a child distinguishes word patterns. At nine months, a child can hone in on native language and essentially becomes a language specialist.<sup>2</sup> Language development continues for toddlers and preschool age children, and the amount and diversity of verbal stimulation a child experiences affects the development of processing speed, later vocabulary and executive function. Preschoolers whose parents read to them, tell stories and sing songs tend to have richer language outcomes. They develop larger vocabularies, become better readers and perform better in school.

### English Language Learning

English Language Learners (ELL) are a complex group of students, with diverse educational needs, backgrounds, and languages. Some ELL students come from homes where no English is spoken, others have been exposed to or use multiple languages. Some ELL students have lived in the U.S. for over a generation. Some may do well in school while others struggle. Each ELL student falls at a different point in the spectrum and there is no one single strategy to adequately meet the educational needs of this group of students. Research demonstrates the potential of English Language Learners when they are served well can be enormous. A longitudinal study in British Columbia demonstrated that with an intentional and appropriate literacy curriculum ELL students can outperform monolingual students once they overcome initial challenges.<sup>3</sup> Strength in a child's first language is critical to their success in learning a second language. We need to support a rich and robust development of home language skills so that ELL students come to the classroom more prepared with the core knowledge and vocabulary in their home language that will help them to thrive as an ELL student.

**FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS:**

Every parent needs to know that one of the most important things they can do is give their children words. Between one and three is the time of most rapid language and vocabulary acquisition. The 30 million word gap identified by research begins at about 16 months. Reading is highly dependent on language ability, so children need to hear lots of words and have multiple opportunities to use them. The research is clear and supports that if children have varied opportunities and experiences to hear and use language, their brain develops the connections it needs to learn how to read.

If the adults who influence a child engage in behaviors that promote literacy and reading success then more children will be on track for reading proficiency by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Family partnerships play a critical role in the success of this strategy. Awareness of the importance of early literacy and practical tools and activities for parents and caregivers that could benefit most remains fairly low. These families can be guided to talk with their infants and toddlers and build vocabulary, community organizations can be trained to do developmental screenings in infancy, and families can be made aware to seek these supports for their children at the appropriate developmental milestone.

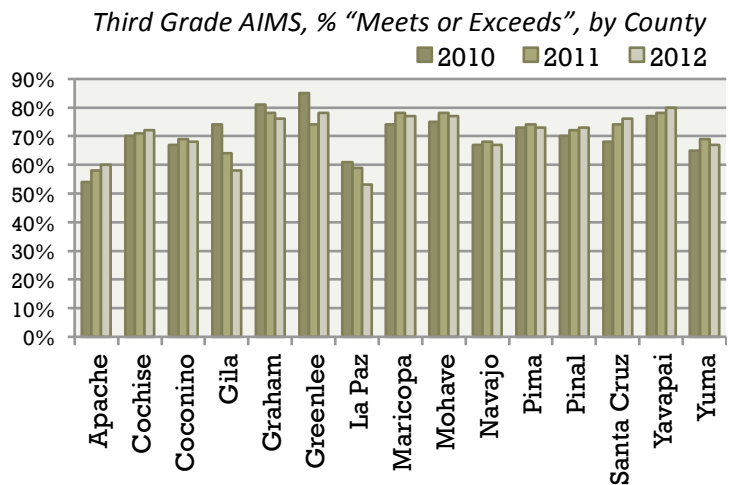
**Arizona Literacy Data**

**ARIZONA INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE STANDARDS (AIMS)**

In 2012, 75% of third grade students statewide were at “meets or exceeds” proficiency on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). This represents a gain of 15% over the last ten years, up from 60% of third graders at “meets or exceeds” in 2003.

Less encouraging, third grade reading levels of students in four Arizona counties (Gila, Graham, Greenlee and La Paz) declined over the previous three years, with fewer meeting or exceeding proficiency on AIMS in 2012 than in 2010. Other counties, such as Apache, Santa Cruz, Yavapai and Yuma, saw only a slight increase of about 5% in their scores since 2010, and a number of counties saw very little change in reading scores over the last three years.

There are trends in the AIMS results of student subgroups that should be looked at more closely to help direct and guide our literacy strategies moving forward. Proficiency ranges from 26% for English Language Learners (ELL) students to 84%



for Asian students, Caucasian students and students not receiving free or reduced-price meals. Among the

three racial/ethnic subgroups with proficiency rates below the overall rate, Native American students scored consistently lower than African American students and Hispanic students. ELL students and students with special needs had the lowest rates of proficiency.<sup>4</sup>

### **NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)**

In 2011, 42% of Arizona fourth graders fell below basic reading levels on NAEP, 32% scored at the basic level, 21% ranked at proficient and only 5% were designated as advanced. Ten years ago, 80% of Arizona's fourth graders scored below or at basic and 21% scored at proficient or advanced, in comparison to 26% at proficient or advanced in 2011.<sup>5</sup> This is significant, as the NAEP testing results will likely mirror the results of the soon-to-be-implemented Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment for the Common Core Standards.

In the most recent NAEP report card shows a consistent relationship between performance on vocabulary and performance on reading comprehension. Nationally, in 2011, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students performing above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading comprehension also had the highest average vocabulary scores. Arizona students performed below the national average in 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the area of vocabulary.<sup>6</sup>

## **Raising the Bar For Arizona's Students**

### **COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

The implementation of the Common Core Standards puts us on track to have the expectations and rigor needed to achieve and increase literacy skills of Arizona's children. Literacy is infused throughout every category of the new standards, a common thread among the four key skills of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century student: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.



Comprehension of a math word problem demonstrates key literacy skills. Reading the instructions of a simple science experiment and predicting the outcome demonstrates key literacy skills and reading a passage and being able to communicate (articulate) what was read and demonstrate comprehension will be a key component throughout a student's day not just in a literacy block.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), mathematics, social studies, English language arts, science, or any individual subject, require a student to have strong literacy skills if they are to achieve the outcome of academic and vocational success. The demand for the highest standards in reading and writing proficiencies is no longer optional. It is a necessity.

### **MOVE ON WHEN READING LEGISLATION**

Taking effect in the 2013-2014 school year, Move On When Reading (ARS-15-701) also raises expectations for our students. It requires schools to retain third-grade students who attain a "Falls Far Below" designation, the lowest reading level



category, on the AIMS test and who don't qualify for an exemption. An estimated 5% of Arizona students could be impacted by this retention policy, and additional 15% fall in the next lowest "Approaching" category. In all, more than 22,000 third-grade students are potentially at risk for not being at grade level. The adoption of these more rigorous standards underscores our highest aspirations for our students and also the extent of the challenge facing Arizona on the path to grade-level reading.

## **SCHOOL READINESS FOR ARIZONA'S CHILDREN**

It is estimated about 33% of incoming kindergartners nationwide enter school without the basic language skills they need to learn to read. In Arizona we don't have a baseline on school readiness for our children. There is a need to support the implementation of the common indicators and benchmarks for school readiness statewide and begin to identify a baseline so that we know what kind of improvement metrics we need in this area. First Things First is working with other state partners to move this work forward, and Read On Arizona should adopt and support the common indicators of school readiness they have identified.

According to the U.S. Census data released from 2011, in Arizona, 35% of three and four year old children were enrolled in a preschool program.<sup>7</sup> This puts Arizona far below the average for the country which is 47%. Evidence-informed research shows the lasting effects that preschool can have for children in regards to reading achievement and school success.<sup>8</sup>

## **Barriers to Success**

The following is a summary of some of the key challenges that have prevented an effective response to Arizona's early literacy crisis:

**1. A lack of information on critical factors involving early literacy prevents a more strategic and intentional approach to finding literacy solutions.** Community stakeholders have too little of the right data on existing literacy gaps in the system. Without such baseline data, it is impossible to devise strategic solutions.

There is also a specific need for focus on finding solutions for our English Language Learners, who comprise the largest subgroup scoring below basic on NAEP. Nearly 86% of students with limited English proficiency, 70% of students with disabilities, 65% of Native American Indian students, and 58% of Hispanic students scored below basic in 2011 on NAEP.

**2. A lack of communication and coordination among the dedicated educators, literacy providers, volunteers, and administrators working in Arizona's schools, public libraries, faith-based organizations and other non-profit organizations discourages opportunities to leverage one another's efforts.**

A more coordinated, integrated early literacy system with a priority on data-driven and evidence-informed programs that link to the standards outlined in the Arizona Literacy Plan, Arizona Infant Toddler Guidelines, Arizona Early Learning Standards, and Arizona Common Core Standards can be designed to transform the

system into one that can deliver a continuum of effective literacy supports and services for children ages Birth-8 in Arizona.

**3. There is insufficient access to quality programs that work.** Insufficient resources, as well as the ineffective leveraging of resources, constrains access to effective intervention strategies in early literacy development. As a result, far too many children enter kindergarten without the language and literacy skills needed to succeed and are seldom able to catch up.

In particular, a more balanced approach to literacy strategies for Arizona’s rural areas and urban centers is required to provide services and support to those students most in need. A focus on strategies that fill critical gaps such as: access to books, leveraging community resources, capacity building of early childhood educators and strong instructional supports, should be tied to caregiver education that focuses on the whole child.

**4. There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of early literacy and grade level reading.** The implementation of (ARS 15-701) “Move On When Reading” policy takes effect in the 2013-2014 school year. It requires schools to retain third grade students who attain a “falls far below” designation on Arizona’s AIMS reading assessment and that don’t qualify for an exemption. An estimated 4-5% of students could be impacted by this retention policy, and an additional 15% fall in the “approaching” category. Nearly 22,000 third grade children are potentially at risk for not being at grade level. According to a report by First Things First, Arizona ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percentage of parents who read daily to their children, ages birth to five.<sup>9</sup>

Incorporating daily literacy activities into family routines for a child is one of the biggest predictors of a child’s success in reading by third grade. Local, county, regional, and statewide leaders and the communities they represent need to make early literacy their highest priority so we can expand access to the quality literacy supports needed to make grade level reading a reality with early identification and intervention strategies, strong remediation supports, and effective accountability measures with the early literacy system.

### **The Need for a Collaborative Early Literacy System**

Arizona has a State Literacy Plan that is a roadmap to improving language and literacy outcomes, incorporating standards and guidelines for infants and toddlers, early childhood (3-5 year olds) and the K-12 Common Core Standards. The adoption of Common Core and the implementation of Move On When Reading present an opportunity, but they will not produce their intended outcomes without a continuum of effective literacy supports and services at every age level for children to stay on track with their development milestones around language and early literacy.

Organizations statewide are coming together to tackle the problem collectively. No one entity can make a dent in the stiff challenges we face in addressing reading proficiency for all of Arizona’s children. This collective and collaborative literacy effort will have a direct impact on the community by streamlining



efforts, expanding the reach and range of services, addressing community needs, maximize financial resources and improve programmatic outcomes through a shared vision and intentional commitment to results.

We can't continue to do things the same way and expect reading levels will change. We can't expect real improvements in literacy outcomes unless we know what works, there is fidelity in implementing what works, and an effort to bring them to scale with the same commitment to implementation.

## State Literacy Director

The position of State Literacy Director was created in early 2012 by a group of core partners consisting of the Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office, First Things First, Helios Education Foundation, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, and other philanthropic and nonprofit partners. The newly created position is intended to promote literacy throughout Arizona and work with existing nonprofits to build a continuum of literacy services for Arizona's young learners.

The Arizona Literacy Director will lead state efforts to methodically connect existing public and private early literacy investments and identify opportunities to address critical gaps. The Arizona Literacy Plan, Arizona Infant Toddler Guidelines, Arizona Early Learning Standards, and Common Core Standards provide the framework for the state's literacy directives and the director will ensure these efforts move forward.

The Arizona Literacy Director will also oversee the state's involvement in the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, assisting state and local planning efforts to implement strategies to increase grade-level reading proficiency by the end of third grade. The director will represent the state on literacy matters pertaining to children birth to grade 3 and communicate a message of urgency to elevate early literacy as a statewide priority.

### Major Responsibilities and Key Tasks:

- Work with stakeholder agencies to identify current language acquisition, emergent literacy, and literacy initiatives already in place in Arizona and identify critical gaps.
- Promote the Arizona Literacy Plan, Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Arizona Early Learning Standards, and K-12 Common Core Standards and ensure the goals are integrated into existing and new literacy initiatives.
- Lead a coalition of stakeholders to develop and implement a plan to promote early literacy investments in Arizona.
- Provide statewide guidance, information, and technical assistance on prevention, intervention and use of core curriculum and assessment to improve language and literacy outcomes.
- Promote the adoption and sustained use of evidence-informed early literacy learning practices throughout the state.
- Work with stakeholder agencies to make language acquisition, emergent literacy, and literacy a priority in state policy decisions.

- Oversee the state's involvement in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and work to embed early literacy messaging into existing public awareness campaigns.

The State Literacy Director has worked with the core partners in the development of this overall strategic literacy action plan for Arizona in an attempt to coordinate the existing initiatives and early literacy work within the state under one overall umbrella initiative called Read On Arizona.

The work of the State Literacy Director is at times broader than the scope of any one community or regional literacy initiative that works under the Read On Arizona heading. Read On Arizona builds on the momentum of the regional efforts initiated during Arizona's collective planning for the Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

The State Literacy Director will focus on connecting that work to the Arizona State Literacy Plan, a roadmap to improve language and literacy outcomes, and through that, Read On Arizona will direct us towards the bold but achievable goal of reading success for all of Arizona's children ages Birth-8.

## Read On Arizona

### MISSION

Read On Arizona is a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations and community stakeholders committed to determining the gaps, identifying solutions, and implementing a collaborative early literacy approach to create an effective, systematic continuum of supports to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children ages 0-8.

### FOUNDING PARTNERS

- Arizona Community Foundation
- Arizona Department of Education
- First Things First
- Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Helios Education Foundation
- Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

### VISION STATEMENT

A future where Arizona children have the skills they need to read, learn and succeed in college, career and life.

### VALUES STATEMENT

This collaborative is committed to:

- Data-driven decision making
- Effective, research-informed strategies
- Collaboration and intentional alignment and leveraging of existing services and resources
- Quality, effectiveness and fidelity to implementation
- Impact and continuous improvement for all

### VISIONARY GOALS

1. 100% of Arizona's third grade students reading at or above grade level , ensuring that every Arizona student is on track for college and career success.
2. Increase the percentage of children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the language and literacy domain so that every child is ready for school success.
3. Drive change through capacity building, group solutions, continuous instructional improvement, and integrated and coordinated systems.

### STRATEGIES

To achieve its goals and successfully address the state's challenges, Read On Arizona will undertake a ten-year strategic plan including the following critical components:

- Data Integration and systems linkages
- A statewide network of cities that prioritize early literacy Birth to age eight that links to grades 4-12

- Quality standards of effective practice, including a focus on English Language Learning, Family Partnerships and Professional Development specific to early literacy
- Advocacy and policy
- Awareness and community involvement

## Current Literacy Services and Gap Analysis

Read On Arizona's core partners surveyed literacy practitioners throughout the state to conduct a current services and gap analysis. One-on-one interviews with key program directors, school leadership, regional educators and community stakeholders were a key part of the gap analysis as well.

The follow are some of the preliminary findings from the current services and gap analysis survey:

**1. The early literacy system is fragmented.** Providers work hard to improve literacy levels and provide supports for the learners they serve, but they do so often times in their own silos with limited collaboration within a broader group or the necessary integration.

**2. Quality standards exist but are sometimes disconnected from the programs that could benefit.** There is a need for sharing effective practices in key areas that demonstrate the standards and are based on evidence-informed research.

**3. Outcomes are measured differently across program types, making it hard to communicate or effectively demonstrate impact.**

**4. There is little collective shared data to determine how many learners are receiving what kinds of services along the continuum, and so there is less ability to leverage resources.**

**5. Literacy services for English Language Learners, Native American learners and students with special needs are critical and most regions are not able to meet current needs.** A coordinated approach to serving these students with effective curriculum and services is crucial.

## Read On Arizona: Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

It is unacceptable that only 21% of Arizona’s kids are proficient readers by the time they get to fourth grade. It is an issue we have long been wrestling with, but with little progress. If we want to truly move the needle on third grade reading proficiency, it cannot be “business as usual”. We need to broaden the circle and include all stakeholders in the solution. We have to be intentional about the strategies and approaches and focus on the skills that matter most. We have to make early literacy a priority in all the environments that support children and students. This infusion of literacy throughout the classroom day, throughout the day of a child and in all the environments that influence a child, is the connected and coordinated alignment that Read On Arizona is determined to provide. Below are the goals, objectives and outcomes of the Read On Arizona initiative as well as specific strategies it will pursue over the next ten years.

GOAL:	OBJECTIVE:	OUTCOMES:
<p><b>Increase the % of students reading at or above grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 100% by 2023...</b></p> <p>Increase the % of children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the language and literacy domain</p> <p>Drive change through capacity building, group solutions, continuous instructional improvement, and integrated and coordinated systems</p>	<p>Create a continuum of literacy services for Arizona’s children ages Birth-8.</p> <p>Create and maintain links to existing efforts.</p> <p>Build alignment around a common early literacy agenda for cross-sector engagement and support.</p> <p>Work with stakeholder agencies to identify current language acquisition, emergent literacy, and literacy initiatives already in place in Arizona and identify critical gaps.</p> <p>Promote the Arizona Literacy Plan, Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Arizona Early Learning Standards, and Common Core Standards and ensure the goals are integrated into existing and new literacy initiatives.</p> <p>Lead a coalition of stakeholders to develop and implement a plan to promote early literacy investments in Arizona.</p> <p>Provide statewide guidance, information, and technical assistance on prevention, intervention and use of core curriculum and assessment to improve language and literacy outcomes.</p> <p>Promote the adoption and sustained</p>	<p>Improved language and vocabulary development for Birth-5 year olds to close the 30 million word gap</p> <p>Improved school readiness</p> <p>Improved 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency</p> <p>Improved 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading performance</p> <p>Improved 9<sup>th</sup> grade course performance</p> <p>Increase in high school graduation rates</p> <p>Increase in college attendance and graduation</p> <p>More students ready to work and meet the global demands of Arizona’s economy</p> <p><b>...a thriving, globally competitive workforce for Arizona</b></p>

	<p>use of evidence-informed early literacy learning practices throughout the state.</p> <p>Work with stakeholder agencies to make language acquisition, emergent literacy, and literacy a priority in state policy decisions.</p> <p>Oversee the state’s involvement in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and work to embed early literacy messaging into existing public awareness campaigns.</p>	
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

## Read On Arizona: Strategies

### 1. DATA INTEGRATION AND SYSTEM LINKAGES

Develop a collective approach to comprehensive baseline data and data analysis to devise strategies for improvement.

Facilitating Organizations: AZ Department of Education and First Things First

#### ACTION ITEMS:

- Adopt a strategic commitment to early identification and reading assessments earlier than 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Support the development and adoption of a Kindergarten Developmental Inventory Tool.
- Support the implementation of school readiness indicators and benchmarks.
- Identify quality literacy services and critical gaps through literacy assets survey and regional community scans.
- Make integration and system linkages a priority for the continuum to create a shared process that informs the collective work of all stakeholders.
- Create a data management and integration task force to focus on shared data, appropriate formative and summative assessments and performance-based analytics to disseminate common metrics with initiative partners to track improvement in literacy efforts.
- Determine what additional data needs to be gathered in order to make informed decisions regarding literacy solutions and guide analysis of data for program improvements aligned to standards.

## 2. READ ON CITIES NETWORK

Build a community of practice through a network of cities that make early literacy a priority.

Facilitating Organization in each Read On Community or City convenes and fosters collaborative effort

### ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop and support Read On Cities Network and implementation of pilot literacy strategies.
- Develop common metrics to measure success.
- Build and expand on existing collaborative and bring together innovative partnerships.
- Provide technical assistance to Read On Cities.
- Develop Toolkit for becoming a Read On City.
- Increase coordination between literacy providers.
- Increase access to and support the improvement of out of school/extended learning opportunities.
- Support and develop strategies to improve school attendance and decrease chronic absence statewide.
- Identify effective interventions for strategic focus areas (ELL, special needs, etc.) along the continuum and leverage existing services to maximize impact.
- Implement evidence-informed intervention strategies as early as possible.
- Disseminate effective practices implemented by Read On Cities

## 3. EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Implement strategies to develop and strengthen literacy and language acquisition along the continuum.

*The right program, at the right time, for each child.*

Facilitating Organizations: AZ Department of Education and First Things First

### ACTION ITEMS:

- Use the AZ State Literacy Plan, Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Arizona Early Learning Standards and K-12 Common Core Standards to develop standards of effective practices for literacy supports in identified areas such as English Language Learners, Native American learners, family partnerships, professional development, etc.
- Focus on making a priority language-rich curriculum coordinated for impact with a fidelity to implementation. The right program, for the right child at the right time in the right amount.
- Prioritize ongoing assessments and screenings as early as possible.
- Work with partners to extend literacy effective practices throughout the state.
- Provide links to educational resources and helpful sites for parents and early childhood professionals, elementary educators and engaged stakeholders.
- Develop and implement statewide volunteer program pilot (Reading Partners or Reading Corp., etc.).

**Family Partnerships:**

Increase the capacities (competence and confidence) and active engagement of families to be their child's first language and literacy teacher and support.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Link families to existing community resources and build awareness of literacy milestones.
- Develop a coordinated communication plan for literacy messaging to families around language and literacy skill acquisition for their child.
- Link family engagement efforts to language, literacy and reading.
- Develop a toolkit for parents and caregivers regarding Move On When Reading.

**Professional Development:**

Strengthen the practitioners/early childhood teacher training around early literacy AND reading instruction. Commit to an atmosphere of continuous improvement, peer learning.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Develop a community of practice collaborative model for literacy instructional support.
- Identify and develop effective school transition practices and alignment to standards
- Align higher education teaching programs and teacher training with the needs of the system in regards to literacy and reading instruction, both pre-service and in-service.
- Focus on teacher collaboration, peer learning, coaching across disciplines and grade levels around literacy.
- Work with partners to develop intentional, effective literacy training for educators, teachers, families and practitioners working with children.
- Develop a protocol and toolkit for joint professional development between preschool and kindergarten sites and build awareness of the alignment between early learning standards and common core standards.

**Ongoing Screenings and Assessments:**

**Strengthen the practitioners/early childhood teacher training around early literacy AND reading instruction. Commit to an atmosphere of continuous improvement, peer learning.**

- Appropriate developmental screenings and assessments as early as possible and ongoing at critical junctures (vision, hearing, asthma, speech and other developmental screenings)



#### **4. AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Increase awareness and depth of understanding of the importance of early literacy and grade level reading.

Facilitating Organizations: Flinn Foundation, Helios Education Foundation and Piper Charitable Trust

##### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Develop a coordinated and comprehensive communications plan for literacy messaging to families, practitioners, educators, and community stakeholders including a system of communication for sharing information with Read On Arizona network partners (e-newsletter, website, etc.).
- Initiate a statewide campaign for grade-level reading proficiency that includes literacy standards in ways that can be easily understood by all stakeholders involved in helping a child acquire the appropriate literacy skills (grassroots campaign: “Bring Me Words”; visual tool of literacy milestones ages Birth-8, etc.).
- Develop a collective statewide volunteer training model to effectively engage literacy volunteers in local schools.
- Develop Literacy Leadership Council for Read On Arizona to encourage cross sector support and engagement, made up of key community stakeholders. Meets annually for update on the “State of Early Literacy” from Read On AZ.
- Provide links to educational resources and helpful sites for parents and early childhood professionals, elementary educators and stakeholders.
- Develop an advocacy campaign for early literacy (expanded access to preschool, full day kindergarten, chronic absence, etc.).
- Create a policy agenda to support early literacy priorities.
- Change the conversation around early literacy in the broader context of social issues.
- Support the implementation of “Move on When Reading” retention policy by developing and supporting strong remediation strategies along with early identification and intervention strategies.

**Read On Arizona Action Steps:**

<b>ACTION STEPS:</b>	<b>TARGET DATE:</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>STATUS/DATE:</b>
Create AZ Early Literacy Advisory Board (AZELAB) to guide the work of the State Literacy Director.	July 2012	Founding Partners	Established July 2012
Implement a current services and gap analysis and community scans	Oct. 2012 - March 2013	Read On Arizona and community partners	In process
Develop Early Literacy Action plan, budget and resource development plan.	January 2013	State Literacy Director	Draft for review by AZELAB Dec. 2012
Build infrastructure and convene working groups *working groups will develop annual work plans	January 2013	State Literacy Director, AZELAB, task force groups	Ongoing
Develop Read On Cities Network, including a toolkit on how to become a Read On City	Ongoing	State Literacy Director	Network established; Toolkit draft form
Presentation to stakeholders: ADE, FTF, Piper Charitable Trust, Helios Education Foundation, Funders Collaborative Valley of the Sun United Way United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona United Way of Northern Arizona United Way of Yuma Arizona Ready Council Mayor's Education Roundtable League of Arizona Cities and Towns annual mtg.	Jan. – Aug. 2013	State Literacy Director	Pending
Provide Technical Assistance to Read On Cities and community partners	Ongoing	State Literacy Director and AZELAB	Ongoing
MOU with Founding partners	Jan. 2013	Founding partners	Jan. 2013
Read On Arizona Launch Event	Feb. 2013	ALL	
Support First Things First with technical assistance in infusing literacy strategies throughout programs and services	Ongoing	State Literacy Director and FTF	Ongoing
Support Arizona Department of Education with technical assistance in implementation of Move On When Reading	Ongoing	State Literacy Director and ADE	Ongoing
Develop Toolkit for families regarding MOR	Jan. 2013	Family partnership task force	In process
Read On Arizona presentation to Chambers and other local leadership and volunteer groups	Feb. 2013	State Literacy Director	Planning stage
Develop a multi-year statewide communications plan, website and e-newsletter	March 2013	State Literacy Director/Expect More Arizona	Begin discussions
Develop general coordinated volunteer training model to prepare literacy volunteers for literacy support in local schools.	Spring/Summer 2013	State Literacy Director ADE ABEC	Begin discussions with ABEC and ADE
Develop and implement grassroots social campaign promoting language/vocabulary development and reading.	Sept. 2013	State Literacy Director/Expect More Arizona	Ongoing
Identify, develop and implement statewide menu of volunteer options	Fall 2013/spring 2014	ADE, State Literacy Director, Core partners	In process
Convene Literacy Leadership Council.	Jan. 2014	State Literacy Director	Pending
Develop budgets and metrics for capacity projects and scalable pilots.	Ongoing	State Literacy Director, AZELAB and partners	In process
Ongoing resource development including federal, state, regional, corporate and philanthropic dollars.	Ongoing	ALL	In process

## The Process

This plan weaves together the strategic areas of focus that will guide the work of Read On Arizona over the next ten years. Each is action-oriented and results driven. Implementing the plan requires a coordinated multi-year effort with full and consistent participation from all stakeholder groups, including service providers, elected officials, businesses, the philanthropic community and the education system. Read On Arizona is actively building the collective literacy network of communities that can help transform Arizona. Read On Arizona stakeholders will work together using data and key benchmarks to monitor progress. Read On Cities and partners will establish specific measurable goals and track implementation strategies with data. Read On regions will share effective practices and the Read On Cities Network will become a community of shared learning.

Each year Read On Arizona will share the results with the Arizona Literacy Leadership Council to identify what strategies are moving the needle, lessons learned on the path to grade level reading as well as challenges and obstacles still to be addressed. The Arizona Literacy Leadership Council is made up of community leaders and stakeholders from across various sectors representing Arizona's vital industries, high education institutions, philanthropic organizations and public agencies committed to making early literacy a priority.

## The Solution

This strategic literacy action plan includes existing efforts and solutions from initiatives across Arizona. Hundreds were involved in creating and informing this plan's development. The plan is supported by a framework built around effective practices and quality standards as well as strategies for the entire continuum from ages Birth-8. It includes strategic areas of focus around: school readiness, early grade reading, effective practices, data integration and linkages, family engagement and partnerships, professional development and community involvement. The goal of Read On Arizona is to transform the early literacy system to one that is comprehensive, coordinated, aligned with district strategies and goals and measurable.

## Call to Action

To realize the visionary goal of 100% of third graders at or above reading proficiency we need everyone to play their part. Volunteer to read to a preschool class, tutor or mentor a student who needs help in building their literacy skills, adopt a community library or organize a local book drive. Family, friend and neighbor care, child care providers, preschools, elementary schools, afterschool and summer programs, community libraries and the local grocery store can all provide rich language experiences for young children and present opportunities to improve emerging literacy skills.

Most importantly, we have to actively change our behavior in how we value the development of early literacy skills. Improving the skills of Arizona's young children is everybody's business and everyone needs to play their part. Everyone has a part to play in transforming the literacy skills of Arizona's children.

**Every member of the community can:**

- Read to children.
- Promote the importance of early literacy whenever the opportunity arises.
- Volunteer with a literacy service provider.

**Business stakeholders can:**

- Incentivize employees to volunteer as a reader or tutor at a local school.
- Offer on-site literacy training to employees.
- Support Read On Arizona partners through financial and in-kind donations.
- Inform employees about early literacy and distribute articles and information around the issue.
- Host literacy fairs, conduct book drives, or sponsor family literacy events at local schools.

**Schools can:**

- Make a commitment to implementation with fidelity and through common core, that infuses literacy in every content area, continue to have high expectations for all students.
- Carefully monitor students for literacy needs and provide individualized attention when needed.
- Provide additional tutoring and referral to community-based literacy resources.
- Work with families and parents as full partners in the success of their child.

**Literacy providers can:**

- Commit to an effective practices framework.
- Make data collection, tracking and assessment a priority.
- Collaborate with providers within the early literacy system to ensure more children are served.

**Institutions of Higher Education can:**

- Help support the early literacy system through evaluation and assessment, curriculum development and training, etc.
- Make literacy instruction in pre-service curriculum and training for new teachers a priority.
- Partner on developing models for capacity building and research findings regarding literacy.

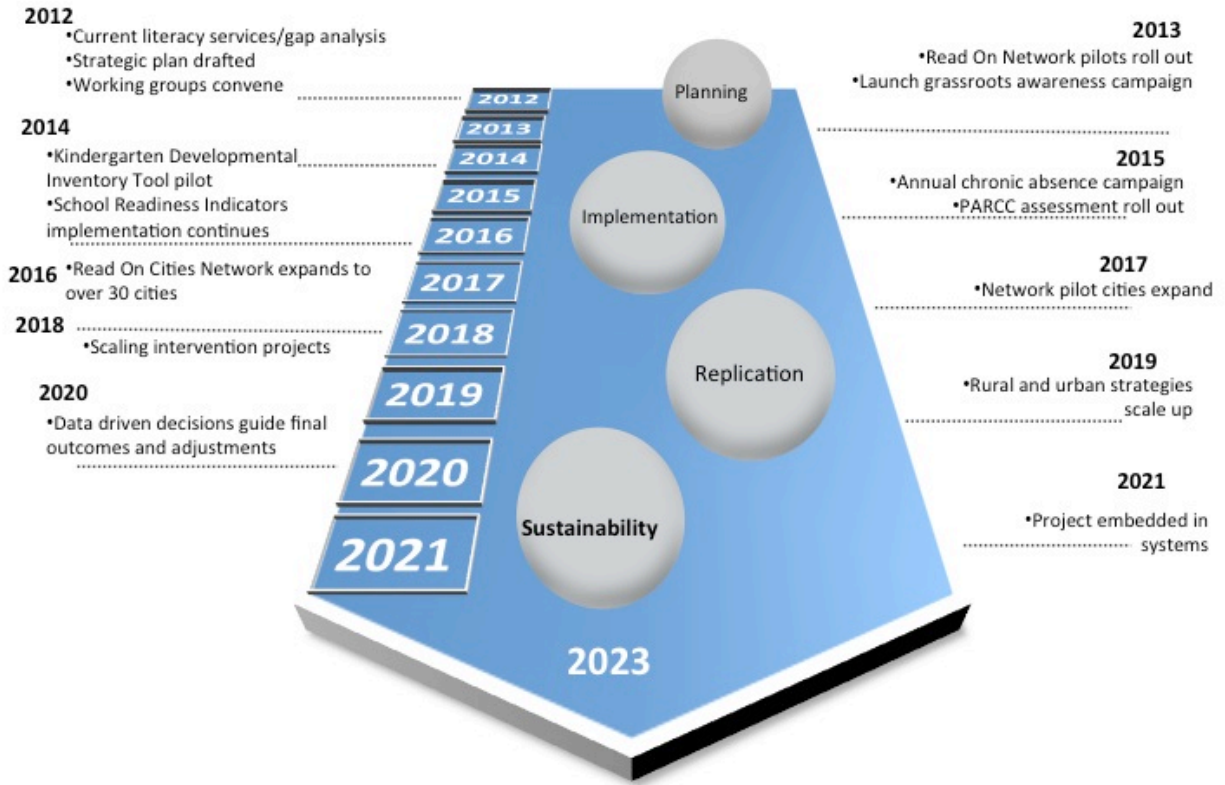
**Philanthropic organizations can:**

- Require service providers to connect to standards and work within the effective practices framework to improve program quality and outcomes.
- Include literacy as a priority across all program areas.
- Leverage national and local relationships to support Read On Arizona.

**Elected officials can:**

- Make early literacy a policy and funding priority to ensure Arizona thrives in a global economy.
- Use their leadership platform to promote literacy and build awareness.
- Mayors Education Roundtable can incorporate Read On Arizona's collaborative model into efforts across Arizona.

## TIMELINE: READ ON ARIZONA





When Arizona Reads, Arizona Thrives

**Founding Partners:**

Arizona Community Foundation  
Arizona Department of Education  
First Things First  
Head Start State Collaboration Office  
Helios Education Foundation  
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

**Core Partners\*:**

City of Goodyear  
United Way of Northern Arizona  
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona  
United Way of Yuma  
Valley of the Sun United Way

**Collaborative Partners:**

Achievement Learning  
Advocacy and Communication, Inc.  
America Reads  
Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children  
Arizona Business Education Coalition  
Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence  
Arizona Charter Schools Association  
Arizona Head Start Association  
Arizona Literacy and Learning Center  
Arizona Ready Education Council  
Arizona State Library  
Arizona State University, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College  
Association for Supportive Childcare  
AZ K-12 Center  
Boys and Girls Club  
BUILD Arizona  
Central Arizona College  
Chicanos Por La Causa  
Children's Action Alliance  
The Children's Museum of Phoenix  
Educare Arizona

Eight, Arizona PBS  
Elevate Phoenix/Phoenix Reds  
Expect More Arizona  
Experience Matters  
First Book  
Flinn Foundation  
Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning  
Governor's Office of Education Innovation  
Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council  
Hands On Phoenix  
International Dyslexia Association- AZ  
International School of Arizona  
Jumpstart  
KPMG  
Lakeshore Learning  
Leaps & Bounds, ASU  
Maricopa County Head Start  
Northern Arizona University, College of Education  
Parent Teacher Association of Arizona  
Paradise Valley Community College  
Phoenix Public Library  
Phoenix Reads  
Raising A Reader  
Reach Out and Read Arizona  
Reading Is Fundamental  
Rodel Foundation  
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Schools  
Sanford Inspire Program  
Southwest Human Development  
Southwest Institute for Families and Children  
Stepping Stone Foundation  
Target  
Toyota Family Literacy Program  
University of Arizona College of Education  
WestEd  
And more...

\*Convening role

## Read On Cities Network

**Read On Arizona is about creating communities of practice and collaboration.** Read On Arizona will develop a network of communities, towns, cities across Arizona that have a commitment to collaboration and a focus on early literacy. The initial four cities stretch from one end of the state to the other and represent the diversity within Arizona's geographic borders. Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma are the flagship Read On Cities.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading in early 2012 encouraged communities across the United States to develop community solutions action plans around third grade reading proficiency. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading targeted three challenges to students' reading success that are widespread, consequential and amenable to community solutions:

### **School Readiness:**

- Too many children from low-income families lack early interactions that foster linguistic development.
- Research show that children from low-income environments do not have the basic language skills that support reading success.

### **Attendance Gap:**

- Chronic absence is a problem for 1 in 10 kindergartners and first-graders nationwide; in some school districts, the ratio is as high as 1 in 4.
- For low-income children, chronic early grade absence predicts the lowest levels of achievement in higher grades.

### **Summer Learning Gap:**

- Summer learning experiences during the early school years impact academic achievement.
- 18% of low-income children vs. 29% of middle-income children participate in summer learning programs.
- Low-income children fall behind during the summer by as much as two months of reading achievement, while their middle-income peers make slight gains.
- Summer learning loss is cumulative.

Arizona submitted a collective statewide plan including four cities (Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma) to the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the Civic League's All America City Award competition. There were 144 communities that applied and Arizona was one of 32 finalists considered for All America city designation. It did not receive an All-America City Award but its statewide approach became a model for the Campaign and for other regional efforts throughout the United States.

The vision over the next ten years is to build a network of Read On Cities across Arizona focused on a collaborative approach to solutions in early literacy. The goal is to invite every city and town in Arizona to pledge to become a Read On City. Over the next ten years with a community approach real impact to

some of the challenges facing literacy can be made. And the solutions will be organic to the communities themselves. Rural or urban, public or charter... organic solutions will be driven by collaboration. In one community there might be a focus on extending the learning day for a child, in another it might be focused on strengthening the transition into kindergarten and for another it might be a commitment to increasing the number of books a child has access to or strengthening the curriculum for English language learners used from Pre-K to third grade.

Working with core partners such as First Things First and their Regional Partnership Councils along with the communities they serve there is an opportunity to provide technical assistance, access to research and data as well as literacy solutions meeting the organic needs of each community throughout Arizona.

These are the initial Read On Cities under the Read On Arizona umbrella:

- Read On Flagstaff
- City of Goodyear
- Read On Phoenix
- Read On Tucson/Sahuarita
- Read On Yuma





### **A Collaborative Literacy Project supported by the United Way of Northern Arizona**

Read On Flagstaff targets three neighborhoods in Flagstaff providing a range of strategies that promote increased literacy at the child, family, provider and community levels. This multi-strategy approach directly serves children and families, enhances skill development of literacy and childcare providers, and includes the development of the Read On Flagstaff Collaborative to promote community awareness and mobilize action towards every Flagstaff child reading at grade level or higher by the end of third grade.

The project's key strategies include:

- Providing home-based coaching to families residing in Flagstaff's Sunnyside, Greenlaw and Southside neighborhoods that engages parents of young children in their families' literacy development, connecting them to resources and providing tools that help families build cultures of literacy in their homes;
- Outreaching to early literacy providers to offer enhanced skill development and resources that assists them to integrate literacy development activities into their respective services;
- Forming a Community of Practice (CoP) as a forum for peer support and learning comprised of home-based and informal childcare providers, Literacy Coaches, KinderCamp teachers and co-teachers, and members of the Alliance for Children's Early Success;
- Providing small quality improvement grants to unlicensed, informal childcare providers who are not eligible for other QI grants;
- Operating the UWNA KinderCamp kindergarten transition program in each targeted neighborhood that evens the playing field and ensures participating children are poised for success on their first day;
- Increasing children's access to books by 1) expanding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, which gives each enrolled child one book a month from birth to age 5, and 2) giving families customized literacy kits;
- Building and supporting a local cross-sector collaborative that promotes community awareness, stimulates resources for additional family and community strategies, and mobilizes involvement in the national Grade Level Reading Campaign.

#### **Partners:**

Alliance for Children's Early Success  
Association for Supportive Childcare  
Boys and Girls Club  
City of Flagstaff  
Coconino Coalition of Children and Youth  
Coconino Community Education Report Advisory Committee  
Coconino County  
Coconino County of Superintendent of Schools

Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library  
Flagstaff Family Food Center  
Flagstaff Unified School District  
Native Americans for Community Action  
North County Healthcare  
Northern Arizona Council of Governments, Head Start  
Northern Arizona University  
Sunnyside Neighborhood Association



**A Collaborative Literacy Project Facilitated by the Valley of the Sun United Way**

**Community Awareness/Mobilization:**

- Community scan. Catalog and map programs focused on early literacy
- Awareness/Advocacy- Outreach with emphasis on Latino community
- Literacy Champions- Women’s Leadership Council book drive and reading events.
- Promotoras/Community Liaisons- Identify Community agency and develop/implement volunteer model

**Literacy Strategies (to be piloted in Balsz, Riverside and Alhambra school districts):**

- Early Development Instrument- pilot in Balsz and possibly Riverside.
- Literacy Parent Education- work with library to train volunteers to provide parent education in Phoenix Head Start. (includes sub-contracts with community providers capacity building)
- Reading Screenings: Evidence based screening tool used to determine literacy skills.
- Imbedding Literacy in Afterschool and summer programs- Develop evidence-informed literacy training programs.
- Early Intervention and Targeted Instruction- Teacher supports
- Pilot Raising A Reader in kindergarten classrooms in Balsz with take home book bag library program and family workshop with use of funding from Innovative Approaches to Literacy federal grant

**Teacher Excellence:**

- Offering professional development to center based, home based and Family Friends and Neighbor caregivers.
- Raising awareness and advocating for increased requirements for reading instruction for teachers.
- Developing materials, training and assist in coordination of a kindergarten transition program.

**Public School Based Activities:**

- Engage Read On Phoenix school districts in the implementation of the Early Warning System.
- Chronic Absenteeism Intervention- Assessment with Read On Phoenix school districts to respond to need; advocate for tracking and reporting of chronic absence and expand to preschool.
- Raise awareness around increased instruction time and extended school year model.

**Partners:**

Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence	City of Phoenix City Managers Office-Volunteer Office	Expect More AZ Everybody Wins! AZ
Arizona Literacy and Learning Center	City of Phoenix Human Services /Head Start	Experience Matters AZ First Things First
ASU Preparatory Academy Literacy Center	City of Phoenix Libraries	PBS, Educational Outreach Reading Basket Program
AZ K-12 Center	City of Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton’s Office	Riverside Elementary District Southwest Human Development
Association for Supportive Childcare	City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation	Stand For Children
Balsz Elementary School District	Educare AZ	
Children’s Action Alliance		



**A Collaborative Literacy Project Supported by the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona**

**Summary**

Read On Tucson will coordinate research-based strategies among community-based partners to work with three school districts: Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), Flowing Wells Unified School District (FWSD), and Sahuarita School District. Read on Tucson will ensure preschool, childcare teachers, and parents are familiar with readiness indicators, and can prepare children for kindergarten. Efforts to support students to maintain consistent attendance will include providing professional development supports to raise the quality of afterschool programs as well as assist schools in analyzing absenteeism data to identify chronically absent students. To prevent summer learning loss, strategies such as integrating literacy-based activities into afterschool and summer programs will be included. Additionally, Read on Tucson will advocate for, and support the expansion of proven innovative techniques such as year-round school among districts.

Read on Tucson is a collaborative effort to:

- **Close the gap** in reading achievement that separates many low-income students from their more affluent peers.
- **Raise the bar** for reading proficiency so that all students meet world-class standards.
- **Equalize the playing field** so that all children regardless of family circumstances meet higher standards.

**Timeline**

<b>School Readiness</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
CLASS Training	September 2012
TUSD PACE (Parent and Child Education) 6 classrooms identified for instructional support.	September 2012
UWTSA group meeting with PACE coordinator, teachers, Instructional Support Specialist and Make Way for Books (community partner).	October 2012
Instructional Support Specialist hired by TUSD.	October 2012
Coaching & Mentoring of PACE teachers	12 hours per week during school year (2012-13)
CLASS Observation in PACE Classrooms	November, December, May 2012-13
Make Way for Books (MWFb) provides a school-based literacy coordinator to work in 6 classrooms to assist with learning activities aligned with ADE, Common Core (as appropriate).	Ongoing during school year.
Combine early learning strategies & initiatives (e.g. Jump Start) in targeted school districts with UWTSA Read on learning pillars.	Ongoing
Dolly Parton Imagination Library for young children 0-5	Monthly over 5 years (2012-17)
MWFb compiles & distributes early literacy kits for families.	Ongoing during school year.

PACE classrooms receive 30 hard cover books	Ongoing during school year.
<b>Summer Slide</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Book distribution to preschool & K-3 children in targeted schools	Annually each May
Work with school districts for extended school time (e.g. extended day for struggling readers; year round school).	
Map summer learning programs & access to literacy resources in proximity to each targeted elementary school.	Ongoing
<b>Chronic Absenteeism</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Develop data sharing agreements between school districts and Read on Tucson to identify children at risk for chronic absenteeism.	2013
Home visits to families experiencing challenges with attendance.	
Connect children with poor attendance to high quality out of school time programs.	Ongoing
Volunteer Reading Tutors	January 2013
High quality out of school time programs	Ongoing
<b>Partner Collaboration</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Hold Read on Tucson partners meetings to further communication & facilitate strategy development, implementation.	Quarterly
Hold principal roundtable/forum to involve principals at targeted schools in Read on Tucson work in their schools	2013
<b>Marketing &amp; Public Relations</b>	
Work with Mayor's office to develop series of PSAs promoting reading & school attendance.	Ongoing
Expand role of Women Leading United (UWTSA philanthropic leadership society) in the full scope of Read on Tucson efforts.	Ongoing
Annual UWTSA Business Breakfast theme: Read On Tucson	February 2013
<b>Community</b>	
Develop profile of each Read on Tucson school to identify literacy assets and gaps in local areas.	September 2013 started (in development with partner feedback)
Early Development Instrument	2013

**Partners:**

Children's Action Alliance

City of Tucson, Mayor Rothschild's Office

Community Foundation for Southern Arizona

Diamond Family Foundation

First Focus on Kids Coalition

First Things First

Flowing Wells School District

LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc.

Literacy Connects

Make Way for Books

Pima Community College

Pima County Public Library

Pima County School Superintendent's Office

Sahuarita Reads

Sahuarita Unified School District

Social Venture Partners of Greater Tucson

Tucson Metro Chamber

Tucson Unified School District

University of Arizona College of Education

Women Leading United

Youth Development Coalition



When Arizona Reads, Arizona Thrives

### **A Collaborative Literacy Project Supported by the United Way of Yuma County**

Read On Yuma seeks to further the planning needed to ensure that children residing in the target neighborhoods read at grade level or higher by third grade. The project will focus on improving literacy and language acquisition for children in early childhood programs linking to aligning with Kindergarten and grades first through third. Read On Yuma will implement a multi-strategy planning approach in the identified neighborhoods with high poverty rates, to develop the Read On Yuma Collaborative, which will promote community awareness and mobilize action towards every Yuma child reading at grade level or higher. Once identified, early childhood centers and family child care homes in proximity to the project schools mapped will be the recipient of focused interventions with children, parents, and teachers accessing the family child care homes and early childhood centers in proximity to the schools identified to receive language and literacy interventions. The collaborative will plan and implement strategies to ensure that children residing in the target schools have access to the resources that will provide them with the best opportunities to be reading at grade level or higher by the end of third grade. Read On Yuma will promote community awareness and mobilize action towards every Yuma child reading at grade level by end of third grade.

#### **Goals, Objectives and Strategies:**

This project focused on the challenge of school readiness as it relates to needed resources for children, families, teachers and administrators to develop grade-level reading proficiency in children. During this planning phase, United Way of Yuma County will convene partners and providers to build support, assess capacity, and strategize implementation of the following goals:

1. Family supports for early literacy:
  - Ensuring school and community information for families is widely available.
  - Ensuring families have the skills to support child's literacy
  - Increasing family awareness and educational opportunities
2. Increase the number of early childhood teachers and volunteers that are highly competent in language development and instructional support.
3. Build and mobilize community members to volunteer, advocate and contribute efforts that will ensure all third grade students in Yuma achieve grade level standards by 2015
4. Increase transition strategies from Pre-K to K
5. Develop and support a collaborative reinforcing activities and track progress towards goals

Read On Yuma will employ the following strategies to support the project goals:

1. Complete an overall scan that will catalog and map programs focused on early literacy-increasing coordination and integration between programs and identifying gaps in literacy resources/programs for parents and children.

2. Expose key community partners to the best practice Kindercamp model used in Flagstaff to support the children most at risk during the summer months
3. Working with best practice models from other Read On communities, explore willingness to create transition plans between pre-K and kindergarten that delineate the resources needed to successfully prepare a student for kindergarten and outline strategies to coordinate the professional development of educators for the purpose of the student reading at grade level
4. Share the Balsz School District's model (a best-practice, Read On Community), data and outcomes of extending the school year to 200 days
5. Explore partnerships that could leverage the Read On objectives such as Expect More Arizona to increase awareness of parents, teachers and administrators about the importance of language acquisition and emergent/early learning practices. First Things First quality first dollars for professional development coaching and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to increase access to books.

**Project Outcomes:**

The intended outcome of Read On Yuma is an actionable plan to address grade level reading in Yuma County that is:

- Well supported by key partners and providers with the capacity to implement
- Aligned with other Helios investments to facilitate systemic impact
- Inclusive of a sustainable infrastructure

**Timeline:**

The Read On Yuma project will begin in earnest in November 2012. At that time a read on Yuma Coordinator will be employed to coordinate the efforts. It is expected that by April 13, 2013 will be have held convening of partners, conducted a community scan and will have an implementation proposal under development. The planning process is underway and a full Read On Yuma Implementation Plan will have resulted from the planning activities. The implementation plan will address sustainability and the long and intermediate term outcomes.

**Partners:**

Arizona Western College  
 Association for Supportive Child Care  
 Child and Family Resources  
 Cocopah Education Department  
 Crane Elementary School District  
 Expect More Arizona  
 First Things First  
 Nexgen  
 Northern Arizona University

Reach Out and Read Arizona  
 United Way of Yuma County  
 University of Arizona  
 Western Area Council of Governments  
 Yuma County Health District  
 Yuma County Library Main Branch  
 Yuma Elementary School District  
 Yuma School District One  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Read On City Toolkit and sample letter**

**Appendix B: Resources and Related Links**

**Appendix C: Arizona State Literacy Plan (developed by the AZ Dept. of Education) (separate document)**

**Appendix D: Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (separate document)**

**Appendix E: Arizona Early Learning Standards (Pending Revised) (separate document)**

**Appendix F: Arizona Common Core Standards- English Language Arts and Literacy (separate document)**

**Appendix G: Read On Arizona Community Solutions Action Plan, March 2012 (separate document)**

## **Appendix A: Read On City Toolkit:**

### **TAKE STEPS TO BECOME A READ ON CITY AND JOIN OTHER CITIES IN ARIZONA WHO ARE MAKING EARLY LITERACY A PRIORITY IN THEIR COMMUNITY.**

#### **TO BECOME A READ ON CITY:**

**Step 1:** Demonstrate an understanding of the challenges associated with achieving third grade reading proficiency for the children in you community

**Step 2:** Identify key community stakeholders that can work together to make significant improvements in early literacy (i.e., key stakeholders such as: city council, mayor, libraries, school districts, local head start, early childcare center, non-profits, etc.) Commit your lead public official to serving on the Literacy Leadership Council, convenes annually and is comprised of community leaders committed to improving early literacy.

**Step 3:** Determine a planning and convening process using a collaborative approach and a willingness to develop strategies to improve early literacy and grade level reading in the community with actionable steps to begin to address the problem. Strategic areas of focus could include: school readiness, early grade success, summer learning loss, chronic absence, family engagement, etc.

**Step 4:** Demonstrate a commitment to building awareness on the importance of grade level reading in the community

**Step 5:** Draft a letter of intent demonstrating a readiness to participate as a Read On City and to make early literacy a priority in your community. Please include name and contact information for a Read On City liaison (SEE SAMPLE LETTER BELOW.)

Every community or city is different in their approach and tactics but each of the Read On Cities demonstrates a collaborative approach to making grade level reading a priority in their community. Arizona Read On Cities are connected to technical assistance, access to research and forums, as well as a network of communities that share best practices and innovative solutions.

We encourage and invite you to become a Read On City today and join a statewide community-based literacy collaborative that will fill the gaps in early literacy and ensure Arizona's children have the literacy skills they need to succeed in school and in life. When Arizona reads, Arizona thrives!



SAMPLE READ ON CITY LETTER OF INTENT:

Date

Read On Arizona  
1202 East Missouri Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
Attn: State Literacy Director

RE: Read On Arizona- Designation as a Read On City (Sample letter)

Dear Read On Arizona:

I am submitting this Letter of Intent to Read On Arizona. I understand that by submitting this letter that our community is demonstrating a willingness to become a Read On City and make early literacy a priority in their community through a collaborative literacy project.

Sincerely,  
{Name of city/community}

Contact: {name and contact info of team or project leader}

After gathering a broad base of support and commitment among our colleagues in the public, private, civic, philanthropic, and/or faith communities, it is with great enthusiasm that {Name of city/community} requests to become a Read On City network member. We are ready to work together to address the challenges in improving reading achievement in our {city/community}-- particularly among our at-risk children—including developing solutions for certain critical areas of focus such as: school readiness, early grade success, family engagement, professional development, chronic absence, and summer learning loss.

Our collaborative of committed partners includes (provide name, organization name, and contact information. If available, you may also want to provide a summary description of the role of each partner. )

As we prepare to engage in this work, we are solidifying a commitment to assess the current status of grade-level reading in our community. We understand we need a coordinated and collaborative approach to address the issue of early literacy in our community.

We will identify goals and map progress as we work to ensure that children become proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Contact Name  
Organization  
Contact Information (email, address, phone number)

## Appendix B: Resources and Related Links

The following links provide additional information around early literacy for parents, caregivers and educators:

ADE (Arizona Dept. of Ed.)	<a href="http://www.azed.gov/k12-literacy/arizona-state-literacy-paln-home-page/">www.azed.gov/k12-literacy/arizona-state-literacy-paln-home-page/</a>
American Library Association	<a href="http://www.ala.org/alsc/issuesadv/borntoread">www.ala.org/alsc/issuesadv/borntoread</a>
Best Evidence Encyclopedia	<a href="http://www.bestevidence.org">www.bestevidence.org</a>
Campaign for Grade Level Reading	<a href="http://www.gradelevelreading.net">www.gradelevelreading.net</a>
Colorín Colorado	<a href="http://www.colorincolorado.org">www.colorincolorado.org</a>
Edutopia	<a href="http://www.edutopia.org/grade-level-k-2">www.edutopia.org/grade-level-k-2</a>
Florida Center for Reading Research	<a href="http://www.fcrr.org/">www.fcrr.org/</a>
Fred Rogers Center Early Learning	<a href="http://www.ele.fredrogerscenter.org">www.ele.fredrogerscenter.org</a>
Get Ready to Read	<a href="http://www.getreadytoread.org">www.getreadytoread.org</a>
Harvard (Lead for Literacy series)	<a href="http://www.isites.harvard.edu/lesaux">www.isites.harvard.edu/lesaux</a>
National Center for Family Literacy	<a href="http://www.famlit.org/ncfl-family-literacy/">www.famlit.org/ncfl-family-literacy/</a>
PBS Learning Media	<a href="http://www.pbslearningmedial.org">www.pbslearningmedial.org</a>
Reading Is Fundamental	<a href="http://www.rif.org/educators/">www.rif.org/educators/</a>
Reading Rockets	<a href="http://www.readingrockets.org/">www.readingrockets.org/</a>
Teaching Channel	<a href="http://www.teachingchannel.org/">www.teachingchannel.org/</a>
Thinkfinity	<a href="http://www.thinkfinity.org/welcome">www.thinkfinity.org/welcome</a>
What Works Clearinghouse	<a href="http://www.whatworks.ed.gov">www.whatworks.ed.gov</a>
Zero to Three	<a href="http://www.zerotothree.org/early-care-education/">www.zerotothree.org/early-care-education/</a>

---

<sup>1</sup> National Research Council for the National Academies, Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Temple University: *Language for Reading: Lessons from the Crib for the Classroom*, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Noni Lesaux and Linda Siegel, *Developmental Psychology: The Development of Reading in Children Who Speak English as a Second Language*, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Arizona Department of Education, Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS); Reading Assessments, 2008-2010.

<sup>5</sup> National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); Reading Assessments, 1992-2011.

<sup>6</sup> *Vocabulary Results from the 2009 and 2011 NAEP Reading Assessments*.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey.

<sup>8</sup> W. Steven Barnett (2008). *Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects: Research and Policy Implications*. National Institute for Early Education Research Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

<sup>9</sup> *Ready for School. Set for Life: Creating the Model Early Childhood System*; First Things First, 2011.