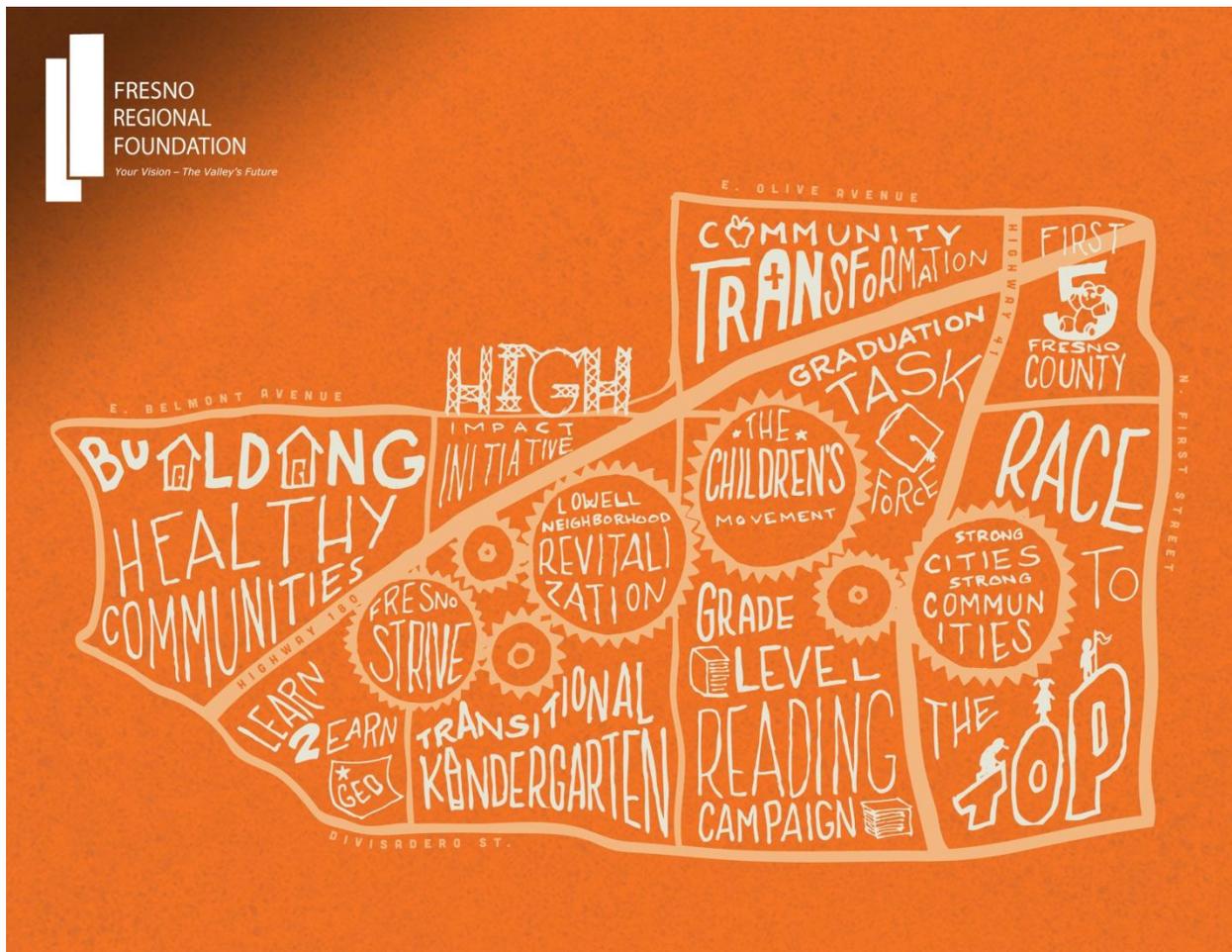


Fresno's Campaign For Grade Level Reading



"It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

-Frederick Douglass

A PROFILE OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AND CENTRAL FRESNO

A place of beauty, a place of bounty, a place of struggle, a place of growing opportunity...

For decades the San Joaquin Valley, and its largest city, Fresno, have shouldered the burden of advancement for the country, and to some extent, the world. Our fields, sprayed with chemicals for maximum yield, feed a hungry globe. Our cotton covers many backs. Our milk nourishes families. Yet, our region suffers from great poverty and has great needs, and is often overlooked by northern and southern California for public, philanthropic and private investment.

Agriculture in the Valley has drawn hardscrabble families escaping the Dust Bowl and the bravest of souls from Mexico and farther south who crave a better life for themselves and their families. Our massive Ag industry, which produced \$37.5 billion in 2010, has shaped our region for better, and for worse. While the Ag industry may boast record years of yield and profit, many still struggle to provide for their basic needs.

The residents of Fresno lag behind fellow Californians on many fronts. Per capita income in Fresno hovers around \$20,000 (2010 U.S. Census), which is far below the rest of California at \$29,000. Twenty-five percent of households live in poverty, and our current unemployment figure of 15% reflects our community's struggle to recover from the economic downturn of 2008, as compared with the rest of California (11%) and the nation (8%). Many Valley residents lack higher education as well, where only 16% of people have a Bachelor's degree or higher. (A Portrait of California, 2011)

To break this cycle of entrenched poverty, our community is determined to invest in children 0-8 as well as discover and develop strategies to provide poor families access to education, health, and job opportunities that are their best chance at avoiding poverty.

Our focus

In the neighborhoods of Central Fresno, the need is overwhelming. The neighborhoods surrounding Lowell, Jefferson and Webster elementary schools (93701 zip code) contain some of the most persistent and concentrated poverty areas in the United States.

According to a 2006 Brookings Institute Report, the Lowell/Jefferson/Webster neighborhood community is an "extreme poverty neighborhood" with 49% of the individuals in this community living below the poverty line of \$15,219.00

for a family of three. During the past 50 years, this community has been neglected as more affluent residents settled in the rapidly developed north and east sections of Fresno. Irresponsible growth and inequitable distribution of resources have left many neighborhoods in crisis and with few amenities to support healthy and thriving families. The neighborhoods are broken and rundown, and residents have had little recourse to address the situation.

EARLY CAMPAIGN VICTORY

FRESNO CITY COUNCIL
ADOPTS GENERAL PLAN
UPDATE WITH A FOCUS
ON REVITALIZING
FRESNO'S NEGLECTED
URBAN CORE.

Neglect has crippled these neighborhoods, but Fresno has learned it must reinvest in its urban core in order to be a healthy, desirable city. This lesson has come from government, as well as residents who have come forward to share how they need parks, street lights, grocery stores, access to public transportation in order to lead productive lives. The essential message is: “You cannot expect healthy people from unhealthy places.”

After more than eight hours of moving public testimony, the Fresno City Council, in an unprecedented move, voted against the Building Industry Association’s recommendation and approved an infill development General Plan. This was not only a win for the environment, the economy and health of people living in distressed neighborhoods, but it was also indicative of a movement building in Fresno. The Fresno Grade Level Reading Campaign is capitalizing on this momentum to bring needed improvements in the educational outcomes of our children.

The three target neighborhoods of the Fresno Campaign are home to a predominantly Latino population, which comprise more than 75% of the area’s residents, compared to less than 50% for both Fresno and California. Language plays a prominent role, with more than two-thirds of the neighborhood area (69%) not speaking English at home. Of this population, 70% speak only Spanish (Healthy City, 2011.)

Lowell, Jefferson and Webster also experience a large amount of transiency. About 80% of residents are renters. This deprives the communities of the stability that leads to better quality of life, and opportunities that lead to relationship building, trust and advocacy.

Seven- and eight-year-old children living in this area face lives that are a statistical nightmare: The majority will drop-out before graduating from high school and most will live on public assistance at some point in their lives. They are the most immediate and vulnerable targets for gang recruitment and perpetuation of gang activities, a significant percentage will be incarcerated at some point, many will develop substance abuse problems before they are 12, and most will never develop more than minimal job skills.

The levels of destitution are painfully evident: Consensus exists among local leaders (both grassroots and government) that troublesome statistics are attributable to a low-wage economy, lack of skills among the workforce and teenage pregnancy; these factors are most often cited as the root causes for the low quality of life in Central Fresno.

Although our community faces obstacles, Fresno is also armed with strong leadership and partnerships to tackle the issues addressed above.

In addition to the Fresno City Council’s adoption of Alternative A for the General Plan update, the city has developed a Revitalization Plan specifically focused in the Lowell/Jefferson neighborhood.

Fresno was selected as one of six cities for a federal government pilot initiative: Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2), which aims to strengthen local capacity and spark economic growth in local communities. The federal team, representing a dozen agencies, has been working with local

governments, the private sector, and other institutions to leverage federal dollars and support the work by local government. The initiative has been a great asset to Fresno, essentially creating a direct line of communication with officials at the White House, who are leading SC2.

The California Endowment is making a 10-year, \$1 billion investment in only 14 communities in California, including the Central/South West Fresno area; strong campaign partner Reading and Beyond has received a \$500,000 Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant in this target zone. Reading and Beyond is currently applying for a 10-year, \$10 million implementation grant.

FRESNO'S CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE LEVEL READING

Led by Fresno Regional Foundation, Fresno's Grade Level Reading Campaign believes strong organizational and community relationships, systems change, strategic investment and best practices that address school readiness, attendance and summer learning loss will close the achievement gap between poor children and children of color and their more affluent classmates.

Compelling research has shown that reading on grade level by the third grade is one of the strongest indicators of future academic success and high school graduation. For the Valley to see success, we must do a better job educating our populace and providing opportunities for advancement in society.

FRESNO'S DATA DASHBOARD

Data will be collected by Fresno's Grade Level Reading Campaign partner, Reading and Beyond, and analyzed by the Center for Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Dissemination (CREAD) at California State University, Fresno. The Campaign has established a data sharing Memorandum of Understanding with Reading and Beyond to ensure access to data over the course of the Campaign.

WHAT FRESNO'S CAMPAIGN WILL MEASURE:

- Number and percent of children 0-5 years old who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.
- Number and percent of early care providers who are trained in the evidenced-based Program of Infant/Toddler Care training by West Ed.
- Number and percent of children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures.
- Number and percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or publicly-funded preschool.
- Number and percent of students, grades K to 3rd, who are enrolled in summer intervention and enrichment activities.
- Number and percent of students at or above grade level in English language arts according to California standards.
- Attendance rate, using the Chronic Absence framework, of K-3 students.

- Graduation rate as measured by the number of students that graduate from high school in proportion to those that do not graduate.
- Number and percent of students who graduate with all the coursework required to attend the University of California and California State University colleges.
- Number and percent of students who graduate with a diploma
- Number and percent of students who obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.
- Number and percent of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school.
- Student mobility rate, as collected by Fresno Unified School District
- Student mobility rate of children living in public housing, as collected by the Fresno Housing Authority
- Number and percent of students who say they have a caring adult in their life.
- Number and percent of families who read to their children, encourage their children to read, and talk to their children about college.
- Number and percent of students with home and school access to broadband internet

THE PROBLEMS

California’s Disinvestment in Education and the Prison Crisis

Just as the number of our children reading at grade level inspires outrage, so does the spending priorities of the state of California. Two recent reports, *Disinvestment in Education: California Spending News* by the California Budget Project and *The Price of Prisons in California* by the Vera Institute for Justice, when reading together, paint a disturbing reality of the investments of our state’s resources.

The fact that California will spend five times as much to imprison someone than it will invest in educating a child is a problem. Fresno, as one of 17 communities in California participating in the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading, is part of a powerful group which can voice our desire to see greater investment in upstream solutions to our educational and financial crises, not to mention avoid huge amounts of unnecessary suffering for our children and their families.

California, as one of the most populous and powerful states in the nation, educates one in eight children in the United States. It is hard to imagine a greater opportunity than now to create a movement for our future through advocating for a good education for California’s children.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**ANNUAL INVESTMENT IN
K-12 EDUCATION PER CHILD**

\$8,908

**ANNUAL COST TO
TAXPAYERS TO INCARCERATE
SOMEONE FOR A YEAR:**

\$47,421

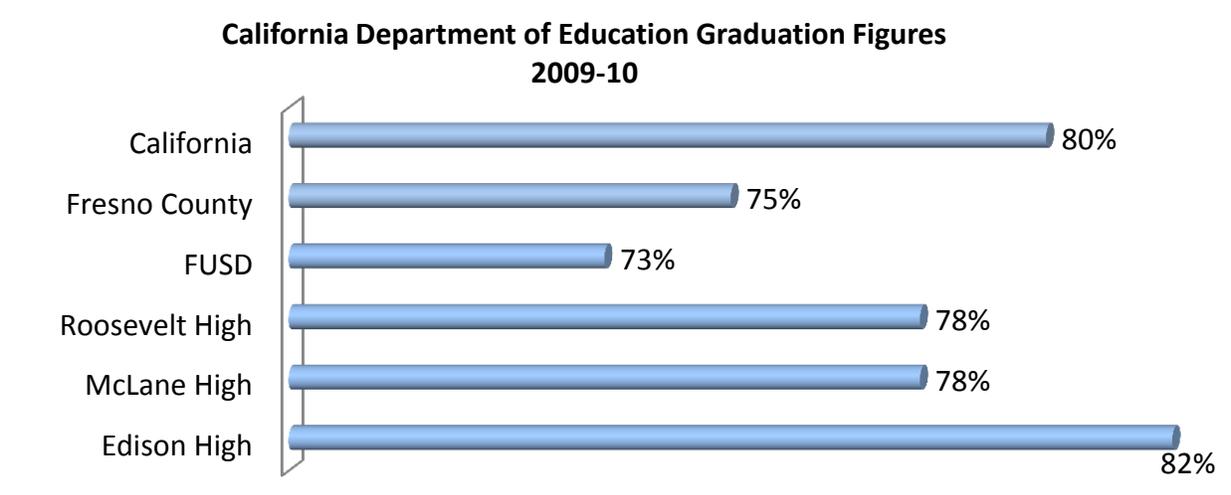
Sources: California Budget Project:
School Finance Facts and The Price
of Prisons, Vera Institute for Justice

High School Graduation

Fresno is facing a dropout crisis. Too many of our young people are not graduating from high school and advancing to lead healthy, productive lives. Over the past year, community members have been asking the school district to make the issue a priority, and offered to help address the problem as well.

Leaders in every sector feel the impact of a poorly educated population—Businesses looking to find qualified employees, law enforcement and the justice system encountering too many wayward youth, and social services and government confronting the avalanche of need for public assistance.

After a scathing newspaper series ran in the Fresno Bee on Fresno’s dropout rate, Fresno Unified’s Superintendent created a 35-member High School Graduation Task Force made up of elected officials, parents, community-benefit organizations, government employees, educators and youth.



This group met several times in early 2012 and in June and submitted 15 recommendations to the Fresno Unified School Board of Education for adoption. The Board and FUSD are still in the process of developing priorities based on the task force recommendations, but have allocated \$2 million for implementation. Several members of Fresno’s Campaign team served on the task force and were instrumental for incorporating several proven dropout prevention strategies as they pertain directly to children 0-8:

1. “Teachers and school staff must ensure every student knows how to read and write at grade level by the third grade.”
2. “Teachers and school staff must work with families to ensure that every student is in school, in class and engaged in learning every day.”

Goals for High School Graduation and College

The Fresno Campaign is very concerned with the outcomes of Fresno’s high school students. Graduation rates, projected by some measures, are as low as 53%, which represents a crisis in our community. To ensure the Campaign focuses on high school students, it has set the following goals:

1. Increase by 80% the number of students graduating in four years at Edison, Roosevelt and McLane high schools.
2. Increase by 100% the number of students at Edison, Roosevelt and McLane who graduate high school ready to enter the University of California and California State University systems.

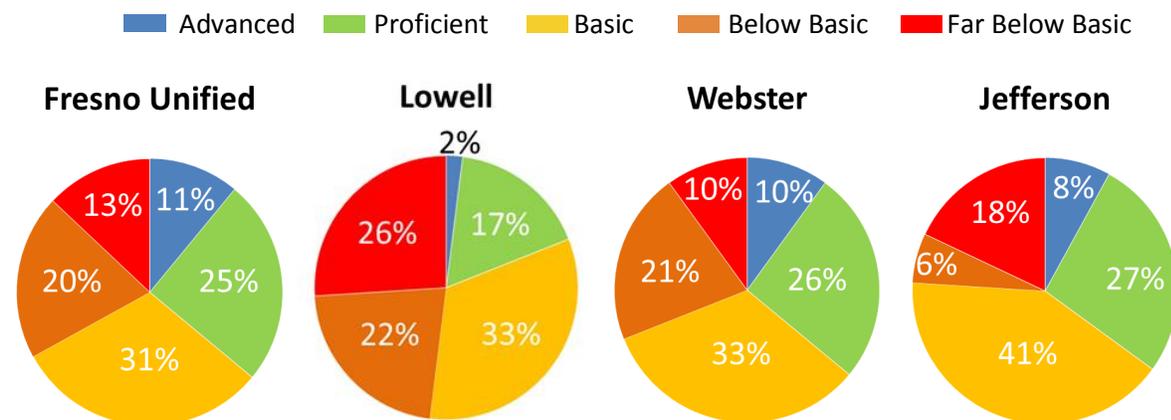
The percentage of students who graduate from high school in Fresno Unified ready for college is a grave concern for our community. Of the 2010 graduating class, only 26% percent were ready to enter the University of California or California State University systems, according to data from the California Department of Education. When you break this number down by race, Asians: 37%, Whites: 34%, African Americans: 21% and Latinos: 19%, it becomes apparent there is a large achievement gap between Latino and African American students and their Asian and White classmates.

With so few of our students ready to enter college, it should be no surprise that according to the 2011 report by the Measure of America only 16% of Fresno residents hold a Bachelor’s degree or more of higher education.

The Campaign and many people in the community understand that it is not realistic or prudent to expect all children to go to college. Recommendations from the Graduation Task Force called for increased attention to vocational education. An important component of this approach is all students should graduate with the credits needed for college, even if they do not end up attending a four-year university. The Campaign believes this will help prevent disinvestment in students who appear to be low-achieving, which would effectively sabotage their ability to attend college.

DATA ON THIRD GRADE READING

Looking at the state of third grade reading levels in the district and in our target zone of the Lowell/Jefferson/Webster neighborhood acts as a warning sign of challenges to come. Strong evidence shows that third grade reading is one of the key indicators of high school graduation. The 2011 test scores below are a call to action for our community.



GOALS FOR THIRD GRADE READING

BY 2020, FRESNO WILL INCREASE BY 100% THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN READING BY THE THIRD GRADE, AND WILL SCALE SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE VALLEY.

With the exception of Lowell, the target schools of Jefferson and Webster currently mirror the district in terms of third grade reading achievement—the percent of children scoring proficient or advanced on California Standards Testing (CST) was 36% in 2011. Lowell currently lags significantly behind the district with only 19% percent of third graders reading on grade level. In alignment with the national Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Fresno believes it can increase the number of third graders reading on grade level by 100% by 2020. The Fresno Campaign’s goals for grade level reading by the third grade are: Lowell: 38%; Jefferson: 72%; and Webster: 72%.

DATA ON SCHOOL READINESS

For children to enter school healthy and ready to learn, they must have access to preschool and childcare services to nurture development. Despite increasing numbers of education-based programming, the community is in great need of quality pre-K services.

In Fresno County, as of 2008, about 2,385 families and 3,180 income-eligible children are on a waiting list for subsidized early childhood education, and it’s projected that by 2020, Fresno’s population of children 1-13 will grow by 25% to a total of 250,000 children, according to the Fresno County Office of Education’s Preschool Master Plan.

Lack of data on school readiness is a major challenge for our community. One of our key local funders, First 5 Fresno County, is a public organization that was created in 1998 when California voters passed Proposition 10, known as The Children and Families Act. First 5 Commissions ensure that all children 0-5 are born healthy and raised in nurturing homes and communities where they can grow up healthy and reach their full potential.

The Commission has long advocated for and offered to fund a uniform kindergarten assessment. When plans for implementation of an assessment appeared it had support from several superintendents, the Commission voted to fund it in May 2012. Implementation of the Kindergarten Student Entry Profile (KSEP) is scheduled for fall 2012 in the four largest school districts in Fresno County: Fresno, Central, Sanger and Clovis. The KSEP will be administered to 70% of all incoming kindergarteners in the county, providing crucial data on the state of children when they start school. The disaggregated data, which the superintendents have agreed to share with community partners, will guide strategic investments in early childcare and learning environments to ensure that children are ready to learn when they enter school. Data for analysis will be available as soon as November 2012.

GOALS FOR SCHOOL READINESS

After implementation, the next step is collection and analysis of the KSEP results. Then, the Campaign and its partners will design targeted strategies to address the individual needs of young children to help prepare them for kindergarten.

In subsequent years, the goals will be to refine existing curricula and direct funds to programs and practices that are showing results, and scale them up to other communities in Fresno and the Central Valley.

Our planned timeline follows:

- By late 2012, Fresno will have data on the state of children when they start kindergarten.
- By the end of 2013, our community partners will have analyzed the data and created a comprehensive plan to improve the quality of preschool programs.
- From 2014 to 2020, we will aim for 100% improvement in the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn from 2014 levels.

STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Fresno's Grade Level Reading Campaign has coalesced around one key aspect of moving the needle: systems change. For years, scarce dollars have been allocated to services that have not been evaluated for effectiveness or implemented with fidelity.

The Fresno Grade Level Reading Campaign will align with the efforts of Fresno County Office of Education, the Fresno County Early Care and Development Local Planning Council, Children's Services Network, First 5 of Fresno County, and the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation to create a Fresno-based comprehensive local early learning and school readiness network. Furthermore, the Fresno Grade Level Reading Campaign will integrate with Fresno's current early learning network and will develop a plan to expand and enhance early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through third grade.

In September 2007, the Fresno County Office of Education and community partners created a comprehensive voluntary preschool plan for children four years of age in Fresno County. The result of this work is an inclusive, networked and articulated plan of action.

The overarching dimensions of the goals of the plan are as follows:

- **Program Quality and Monitoring:** to develop both a Quality Rating System and a workforce mentoring system so that the centers of excellence can be expanded countywide.

EARLY CAMPAIGN VICTORY

**UNIFORM KINDERGARTEN
ENTRY ASSESSMENT TO BE
IMPLEMENTED IN FALL 2012
BY FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS
SERVING 70% OF FRESNO
COUNTY KINDERGARTENERS.**

- **Articulation and Coordination:** to develop a plan that aligns preschool to K-12 institutions by acquiring input from personnel in both sectors of education along with the engagement of parents.
- **Parent and Community Engagement:** to create neighborhood hubs connecting preschools, parents and elementary schools and to engage parents, including increased involvement from fathers in home-based support of children’s learning.
- **Workforce and Professional Development:** to integrate a system of ongoing consultation and mentoring for existing and new personnel entering the early education workforce while coordinating program requirements and transition among post-secondary institutions offering degree and certificate early care and education programs.

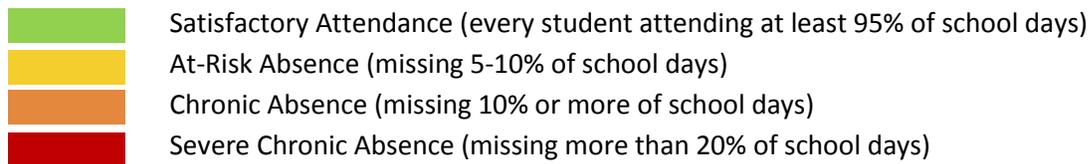
DATA ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE: AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE VS. CHRONIC ABSENCE FRAMEWORK

Like the vast majority of school districts across the country, Fresno Unified monitors and reports on school attendance solely in terms of Average Daily Attendance (ADA), which is the ratio of students attending on any given day in relation to total enrollment.

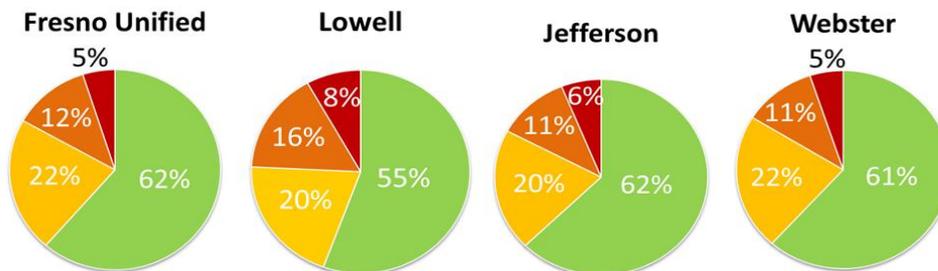
Over the past year, the Fresno Campaign has participated in the Chronic Absence Network, a California working group of four communities (Fresno, San Francisco, Marin and Silicon Valley) where following framework for school attendance was introduced:

EARLY CAMPAIGN VICTORY

IN JUNE, FRESNO UNIFIED REQUIRED SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE AN ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY IN THE SINGLE PLAN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.



Over the course of Fresno’s participation in the Chronic Absence Network, our team quickly learned that tracking ADA alone can mask significant attendance issues at many schools, and as well as district-wide. For example, the Average Daily Attendance Rates for Lowell, Jefferson and Webster are 94%, 94% and 95%, respectively. When we reran the figures using the chronic absence framework, we discovered a different perspective on student attendance rates:



GOALS FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Fresno Campaign has several short-term goals (2012-2014) for school attendance including:

- Fresno Unified School District’s adoption of the Chronic Absence framework where the following definitions for every student apply:
 - Satisfactory Attendance (attending at least 95% of school days)
 - At-Risk Absence (missing 5-10%)
 - Chronic Absence (missing 10% or more)
 - Severe Chronic Absence (missing more than 20%)
- Evaluation and modification of attendance protocol and the establishment of more proactive guidelines when students miss school, including excused and unexcused absences as well as tardies.
- The creation of an attendance tracking system that will build on Fresno Unified’s sophisticated ATLAS data system. This new system will be accessible to school principals, teachers and support staff and will generate alerts for teachers and schools to take action for students with attendance issues.
- Leverage Fresno Unified’s High School Graduation Task Force Recommendation #3: “Teachers and school staff must work with families to ensure that every student is in school, and engaged in learning every day,” to help the district and community address the issue of chronic absence.
- Provide professional development for principals and teachers on chronic absence reduction strategies
- Modify and improve parent engagement strategies including curriculum on school attendance for parent education programs such as FUSD’s Parent University and the Parent Institute for Quality Education.
- Develop public outreach and talking points to effectively message chronic absence to parents and the community.

LONG-TERM GOALS FOR ATTENDANCE

- At least 70% of kindergarten through third grade students attending school at least 95% by 2020.
- Individual schools decrease by 20% the percent of children missing more than 10% of all school days annually.

STRATEGY FOR ATTENDANCE

For the past year, the Fresno Regional Foundation has participated in a California working group to study school absence in our community. With funding from FRF, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, the Fresno team is learning about chronic absence and its effects on student achievement, and has developed an action plan with the school district to implement best practices.

The Superintendent has continued his support for implementing the chronic absence framework and has dedicated district resources to the formulation of a K-12 attendance improvement plan. The plan, already underway, includes:

- Interview bright spots schools within the district and uncovering best practices already in place, which was completed in March 2012.
- Incorporate attendance improvement plan into school's Single Plan for Student Achievement, which was completed in June 2012.
- Create a message for parents, teachers, principals, FUSD and the community about their role in promoting attendance, to be launched in fall 2012.
- Interviewing struggling schools and identifying supports needed.
- Augmenting FUSD's data management system, ATLAS, by adding a proactive attendance alert system for use at school sites by administration and teachers.
- Modifying parent education curriculum to include the chronic absence framework and data on the effect school attendance has on student achievement.
- Providing professional development for school principals and staff for implementation of the chronic absence framework.

The Campaign is collaborating and sharing data with Fresno Unified and Reading and Beyond to track attendance data using the chronic absence framework. The Campaign will also continue to advocate for the inclusion of Lowell, Jefferson and Webster in the district's pilot group for attendance reform.

DATA ON SUMMER LEARNING

During the course of gathering information for our Community Solutions Action Plan, the Fresno Campaign discovered that while many summer intervention programs exist, information was not readily accessible and required some digging to uncover. The accessibility of information begs questions about how parents, who are not familiar with the school system, are able to successfully navigate and advocate for their children who are in need of additional supports and help.

At Lowell, 90 K-3 students who tested far below basic and below basic in English Language Arts (ELA) attend 16 four-hour days of summer intervention. At Jefferson, 63 K-3 students attend 16 four-hour days of summer intervention. At Webster, the school provides a 10 four-hour days of intense intervention for incoming K-6 students who showed deficiencies in English Language Arts (ELA) the previous year. In the summer of 2011, that number was 460 students.

PACESETTER HONOR

**FRESNO IS HONORED TO
BE A RECIPIENT OF A
PACESETTER AWARD IN
2012 BY THE NATIONAL
GRADE LEVEL READING
CAMPAIGN.**



Also in 2011, Fresno Unified also provided summer intervention and enrichment programs for 70 3rd, 4th and 5th grade Lowell students who tested far below basic and below basic in ELA. These students attend for a full-day for five weeks at the After School University program at California State University, Fresno (CSUF). The program is run by the California Teaching Fellows and serves a total of 650 3rd, 4th and 5th graders in Fresno Unified. The program includes bus transportation to and from CSUF, as well as breakfast and lunch for students free of charge.

After School University currently evaluates students in math weekly to track progress, and program directors have expressed interest in evaluating gains in reading as well. This program, with its duration and blend of intervention and enrichment, has potential to serve as a model. The Campaign is interested in monitoring progress in reading evaluation to see if the program is effective at increasing students’ reading levels.

GOALS FOR SUMMER LEARNING

The Fresno Campaign’s goal for summer learning is focused on increasing access to summer intervention and enrichment programs in the target zone, with a focus on high-quality, evidence-based instruction. Due to the extreme poverty of the region, summer programs are necessary for all students, not just those who are testing low and qualify for intervention. Compelling research shows that poor children who achieve gains during the school year often lose those gains in the summer due to a lack of enrichment summer activities.

	Students (free and reduced-priced lunch)	Total K-6 Enrollment
Lowell	98%	429
Jefferson	95%	456
Webster	98%	401

STRATEGY FOR SUMMER LEARNING

Since funding for school district programs are used solely for students in need of intervention, and are constantly being reduced by budget cuts, the Campaign will look to partner with local CBOs and other partners offering high-quality, evidence-based summer programs for students in the target zone. The Campaign will continue to identify existing programs in the area, if they are high-quality and/or evidence-based. If enough programs that meet that description do not exist, the Campaign will support promising organizations such as Reading and Beyond, the Boys and Girls Club, the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission to develop the expertise and capacity to meet the need of the students in the target zone.

Campaign partner Reading and Beyond is in the process of developing standards and quality criteria for various forms of educational programming, which will provide the Campaign with the framework to assess and develop CBOs to meet this need. The quality assurance work referred to as the “Seal of Effectiveness” will help create predictable and consistent standards of quality of summer programs in the target zone, and hopefully, help raise the quality of programming throughout Fresno.

For the 2012 Youth grant cycle, the Fresno Regional Foundation has incorporated the goals of the Campaign by adding selection criteria aimed at connecting applicant's programs with existing initiatives such as the Grade Level Reading Campaign and Promise Neighborhoods. Applicants who do so, will be more competitive when reviewed for funding. The Campaign will continue to work with funders to incorporate early childhood education and related supports into their funding priorities.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

Meeting the needs of English Language Learners and their families is very important to the Fresno Campaign. Successfully teaching and interacting with this population has significant implications for the San Joaquin Valley, California and the rest of the United States. As non-native English speakers continue to grow in numbers in the U.S. population, the educational system and our communities are responding to this demographic shift and must respect and understand the values and culture of a diverse population.

In 2009, Fresno Unified's English Learners Task Force put together a report to address the needs of English Learners. The task force offered seven recommendations:

1. **Effective Teaching Practices:** Instructional practices that produce high levels of student achievement
2. **Professional Learning:** Formal training and coaching support for teachers, administrators, and support staff
3. **Student Placement System:** How students are assigned to programs and courses
4. **Student Monitoring System:** Review progress in English language acquisition and academic achievement
5. **Structured English Immersion Program:** Refine the model for Structured English Immersion Programs PreK-6 and 7-12
6. **Additional Programs:** Instructional Programs for English Learners at the Beginning, Early Intermediate, and Intermediate English Language Development (ELD) Levels
7. **Community and Parent Involvement:** Collaborate with parents and other stakeholders and keep them informed about the District's work on behalf of students

Currently, FUSD has chosen to focus on recommendations one to three, which prioritize professional learning opportunities for teachers. This work is very important, but the Campaign would also like to see more attention given to recommendations four and seven, which focus on tracking progress of English Learners more carefully and aggressively, and increasing efforts to engage parents and community in children's education.

One area of particular interest to the Campaign is the process of English Learner reclassification. Under the current system if a student is classified as an English Language Learner and is not reclassified as proficient, which is common, the student will likely not be enrolled in the classes needed to be college ready. Parent education on this issue is very important, because if parents of English Language Learners do not know about the reclassification process, their children may not be on track to get the courses

they need to attend a four-year university no matter how well they master English, test and get good grades.

Given the large immigrant population of our target neighborhoods, many students who attend Lowell, Jefferson and Webster are English Learners. The chart below shows the number of students who are English Learners, students redesignated Fluent English Proficient, and total enrollment. Of all K-12 English Learners district-wide, 76% speak Spanish as their first language, followed by Hmong (18%), Lao (2%), and Khmer (Cambodian) (2%).

	Total Enrollment	English Language Learners (% of total enrollment)	Students redesignated (FEP)
Lowell	429	217 (48.9%)	13 (5.1 %)
Jefferson	456	218 (45.1%)	28 (10.0%)
Webster	401	183 (42.8 %)	17 (8.2 %)
FUSD	74,831	17,793 (23.8%)	1,816 (9.1%)

Also, for every school that has at least 21 students who are designated as English Learners, the school must form an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). The ELAC advises the principal and school staff on programs and services for English learners, and the School Site Council on the development of the Single School Plan for Student Achievement. The Campaign and its partners will engage each school site ELAC to learn more about how to meet the needs of students who are learning English, and will engage partners, such as Reading and Beyond and the Parent Institute for Quality Education, who have staff dedicated specifically to meeting the needs of English Learner students and families.

EXISTING INVESTMENTS AND ASSETS IN LOWELL, JEFFERSON AND WEBSTER

Fresno’s recent designation as a Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) site by the federal government has been an excellent partnership. These federal teams work with local governments, the private sector, and other institutions to leverage federal dollars and support the work being done at the local level to encourage economic growth and community development. Fresno’s Grade Level Reading Campaign relates directly with this endeavor, namely through the SC2 team’s support of the Mayor’s Lowell Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

Partner and local funder, First 5 of Fresno County has pledged investments in the amount of \$500,000 in the target zone for programs geared for children zero to five years, including Reach Out and Read, Nurse-Family Partnership, Teen Parent Support Program, and FUSD efforts to align early learning programs with kindergarten standards.

\$263,000 in federal and state dollars for afterschool and summer programming at Lowell Elementary.

Lowell, Jefferson and Webster are located within The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities Zone, which was launched in a total of 14 communities throughout the state. This initiative is premised on changing the health of individuals while changing the communities they live in. Since its launch they have provided funding in the amount of \$2 million in the target zone.

The largest nonprofit in Fresno and the second largest community action agency in the country, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) has several programs and investments within the target zone including, Early HeadStart; HeadStart; a public charter school for high-risk 9th through 12th grade students called School of Unlimited Learning; Home Energy Assistance and Energy Crisis Intervention Programs; Foster Grandparents Program; Farmers Markets; Health Services Clinic; Women Infants and Children (WIC); a Youth Shelter; and Local Conservation Corps (LCC) to name a few. Over the next fiscal year, EOC's level of investment in Lowell, Jefferson and Webster is estimated at \$2.3 million.

Reading and Beyond has programs and investments within the target zone along the cradle-to-career continuum, including after-school programming; one-on-one reading intervention and academic mentoring for school-age children (Kindergarten through 8th grade). This organization also serves as the lead agency of Fresno's Promise Neighborhood (PN), and has moved PN staff to the Chicano Youth Center in the target zone. Other programs at Reading and Beyond include: Parent involvement and education with a focus on navigating the school system and early literacy support for children aged 0-5 year and workforce development and case management for youth through adults.

Just over the past two years, Reading and Beyond invested more than \$200,000 during their PN planning year to prepare for implementation for 2013. The grant announcements are expected in November or December 2012 for a 10-year, \$10 million award from the U.S. Department of Education, but if an award is not received, lead agency Reading and Beyond has committed to implementation of Promise Neighborhoods regardless of the federal award.

CONNECTING FOR SYNERGY

Like many other cities in the country, the achievement gap between poor children and their peers persists, and if anything, has widened. Yet in spite of these challenges, one positive development is the recent convening of the leaders of local initiatives including:

- **Grade Level Reading Campaign**, led by Fresno Regional Foundation, will increase the number of children reading on grade level by the third grade through coalition building, systems change and strengthening of effective services.
- **Promise Neighborhoods Planning Grant**, led by Reading and Beyond, will create a cradle to career spectrum of services and support for families in the Lowell, Jefferson and Webster neighborhoods in Central Fresno, with a focus on improving educational and life outcomes for children and youth.
- **Fresno Unified School District's Graduation Taskforce**, led by Fresno Unified, is a group of 35 community stakeholders who formulated 16 recommendations. Fresno Unified has since allocated \$2 million to implement the task force's recommendations.
- **The Children's Movement**, led by First 5 Fresno County, is a local and state-wide effort to organize parents, child advocates and community members to unify around a common agenda on behalf of children.
- **The Children's Agenda**, led by Central California Children's Institute, provides a framework to advance the well-being of children in the San Joaquin Valley through six goals: Communities and

families are ready for children, nurturing parents and caregivers, children ready for school, healthy, safe and secure youth, engaged and connected youth, and youth prepared for life.

- **Building Healthy Communities**, led by The California Endowment, is a 10-year, \$1 billion plan to make 14 communities, including Central/Southeast Fresno, healthier by improving employment opportunities, education, housing, neighborhood safety, unhealthy environmental conditions, access to healthy foods and more.
- **Strong Cities, Strong Communities**, led by the City of Fresno, is a federal interagency collaboration that aims to increase the capacity of local government and support Mayor Swearingin's plans for economic development and downtown revitalization. Fresno is one of six pilot cities across the country.
- **Lowell Neighborhood Revitalization**, led by City of Fresno, aims to increase homeownership, bring all dwellings up to code, decrease crime, increase student achievement, improve transportation and energy efficiency in this historic, distressed neighborhood on the edge of downtown Fresno.
- **Downtown Revitalization Plan**, led by the City of Fresno, aims to achieve a thriving and prosperous downtown through great planning and design, investment and development, sustainable funding and management and attracting increased food traffic with events.
- **Fresno Stewardship Initiative**, led by the Fresno Business Council, aims to develop, steward and execute a community agenda for the Fresno region, assist leaders and institutions to incorporate the community agenda into their work and create coordination and communication between multiple sectors and other key partners.
- **Community Transformation Planning Grant**, led by Fresno County Department of Public Health, is developing an advocacy and policy-change plan focusing on tobacco-free living, active living and healthy eating, farm-to-institution food financing, increased preventative health services, healthy and safe environments and new technology to share real-time data and connect partners and communities.
- **American Graduate**, led by Valley PBS, is a public media initiative to improve graduation rates by engaging civic and business leaders, local school districts and other community partners to generate understanding about the risk factors and what caring adults can do to help.
- **Fresno STRIVE**, led by the Compact Board, aims to strengthen educational and support systems for all children and families to improve student academic success and better prepare them for college, training and careers.
- **Regional Jobs Initiative**, led by California State University, Fresno, focuses on decreasing the unemployment rate by bridging the gap between industry clusters, Fresno County Workforce Investment Board, and educational institutions.

This convening was the first time the leaders of these efforts gathered in the same room together and were able to better coordinate to achieve greater impact in the community.

From a systemic perspective, one very positive development has emerged from the reduction in resources: funders and service providers have to make more strategic investments, and along with this came sensible but often reluctant practices: collaboration, alignment and integration.

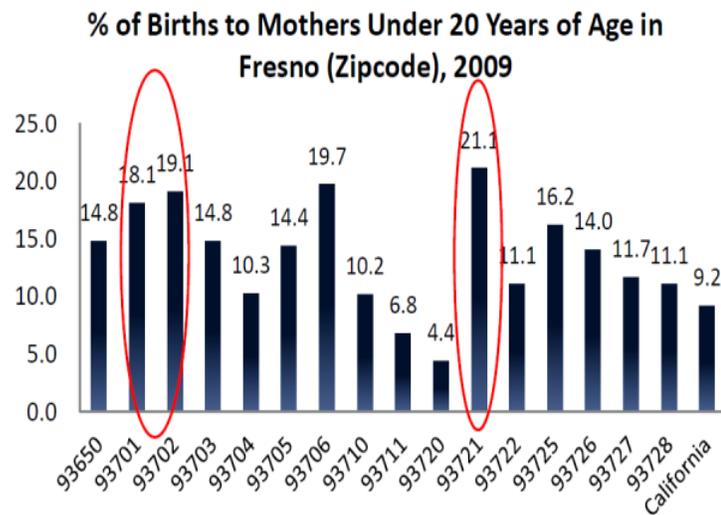
From its inception more than two years ago, the Fresno Regional Foundation has been an active planning partner for the Fresno Promise Neighborhood grant. The hope of the Harlem Children’s Zone as the anecdote to generational poverty and destitution resonated with our community, and for the last two years, a small, dedicated group of leaders undertook the task of bring the initiative to Fresno.

The Campaign will also benefit from the Fresno Regional Foundation’s ongoing work with the Chronic Absence Network (CAN). Technical assistance and support from CAN, which includes Attendance Works and the Hatcher Group, share many common clients with the Campaign, Fresno included, making the goals, tactics and resources deployed seamless between CAN efforts and the Campaign. Since attendance is a key lever of the Campaign, the work will continue to radiate more broadly into the community as more information is shared with our partners through the Campaign.

For the past five years, FRF has also engaged a Teen Pregnancy Prevention grantmaking initiative and community leadership role, including significant grants to organizations serving the feeder high schools in the targeted region. Recognized for its effective engagement of youth and the community in reproductive health and youth empowerment, Fresno Barrios Unidos, located in Central Fresno, has received more than \$400,000 from FRF over the past four years.

TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

As the Foundation continues to deepen its knowledge of the connection between grade level reading and teen pregnancy, we will act as the convener of leaders in these two arenas so they can enrich and support each other’s work. The data below illustrates why addressing teen pregnancy in the target zone is imperative in order to advance the work of the Campaign. The columns circled in red indicate the zip codes (93701, 93702 and 93721) within the Campaign target zone.



LINKING PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS TO JOBS IN THE VALLEY

Given the Fresno Campaign’s assessment of the educational and economic needs of families, we decided that a critical need to address is linking the local educational systems to job opportunities in the Valley.

In 2009, a Brookings Institute report, “Five Myths about Our Land of Opportunity,” by Isabel Sawhill and Ron Haskins compellingly point to three milestones that, if achieved, will greatly increase person’s odds of avoiding poverty:

1. Graduate high school
2. Work full-time
3. Delay pregnancy until marriage

The goals of the National Campaign and Fresno's Campaign are very focused on the issue of graduation through three grade reading and other efforts, and Fresno Regional Foundation is thoroughly entrenched in strategies to reduce teen pregnancy. The one area that our team believes warrants more attention in our local efforts is preparing students for jobs in the local economy.

This work requires robust communication, research and innovation between the sectors to transform our region through diversification from our sole economic driver of agriculture. Other organizations and community leaders are already engaged in this work, and the Fresno Campaign sees its roles as helping leaders see the connection of these three issues in helping families avoid poverty and achieve greater prosperity. The Fresno Campaign will also leverage its partnerships in the educational system and workforce development agencies to advocate for efforts that link the student education to emerging economic sectors in the Valley.

ACCESS TO DATA

The Fresno Grade Level Reading Campaign, with the Fresno Regional Foundation as the lead, has a joint Memorandum of Understanding in place with eight key partners and data holders: Fresno Unified School District, Fresno County Office of Education, First 5 Fresno County, Reading and Beyond, Fresno Housing Authority, City of Fresno, the Parent Institute for Quality Education and Central Valley Afterschool Foundation. (For full document, please see Appendix). Not only does this document ensure access to key data and indicators, it also provides clarification on partner agencies' roles for the Campaign, and the expectation of participation over the course of the Campaign.

Reading and Beyond will be not only sharing data with the Campaign, but augmenting its data dashboard to include metrics specific to tracking and achieving the Campaign's goals. Reading and Beyond will be developing an annual "report card" to share progress on several metrics, including information and data relevant to the Campaign, from which separate reports can be generated for the Campaign.

The Campaign and FRF are also engaging in data sharing conversations with the leaders of the numerous initiatives currently focusing wholly or in part, on school readiness, attendance and summer learning in the target zone for the Campaign.

SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Fresno Campaign is confident it will achieve the goals set out in our plan. With the backing of the Mayor, Fresno Unified School District, local funders including First 5 Fresno County, the Fresno County Office of Education, the Fresno Housing Authority, parent organizations and Promise Neighborhoods, the Campaign has the support of more than 60 agencies. The convening of initiatives also ensures the

leaders of time-limited new infusions of funding are coordinating, sharing data and aligning resources and efforts.

As our community leadership role evolves, FRF is aligning our growing grantmaking program to support initiatives such as CAN, Promise Neighborhoods and other communitywide efforts. The Foundation's participation in these endeavors has deepened our understanding of educational issues in our community, and has helped FRF gain expertise and confidence in this area. This work, past and ongoing, will help inform our strategy in developing funding priorities.

Fresno's Campaign is dedicated to addressing the key barriers and deficiencies that have hampered our community's ability to provide a quality education for children. We are focused on addressing many systemic issues, and well as supporting an increase in effective practices to improve early literacy.

THE CSAP PROCESS

This process has been invaluable in galvanizing support for a concrete, tangible and highly significant goal: to ensure children are reading on grade level by the third grade. Our community understands this issue, understands its potential for transformative impact, and is ready to take action.

When the announcement of the Campaign was made in 2011, the Foundation sent out a call to the community for support. In less than a week, we received more than 30 pledges. In the subsequent weeks, FRF set up meeting with key partners, to establish priorities, and later met with elected officials, local Community-Benefit Organizations (CBOs), parents, school principals, district officials, neighborhood association representatives, grassroots leaders, local funders, and others.

Dedicated to this issue, but new to the work, the Foundation engaged many stakeholders, and integrated with efforts with the most effective literacy-focused CBO in Fresno: Reading and Beyond. Their patience and guidance informed all aspects of the CSAP, from strategy to data collection, and they remain one of our strongest partners going forward.

Although our excellent partners helped us avoid any major missteps as we learned to navigate this work, the Foundation is still becoming aware of the assets already in place and how to fully utilize and connect them all in a coordinate effort. We see this as our greatest challenge. Fresno is learning that our community is a community of abundance, and many of the remedies to our ills lie with empowerment from within.

Respectfully submitted,



Dan DeSantis, CEO

Fresno Regional Foundation

APPENDIX

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
FRESNO REGIONAL FOUNDATION, FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, READING AND BEYOND, FIRST
5 FRESNO COUNTY, FRESNO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, PARENT INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY
EDUCATION, FRESNO HOUSING AUTHORITY, CITY OF FRESNO and CENTRAL VALLEY AFTERSCHOOL
FOUNDATION**

I. Purpose

The above listed parties agree to develop common strategies and expectations regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of Fresno’s Grade Level Reading Campaign. The parties also agree to share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign to improve grade level reading by the third grade through school readiness, student attendance and summer learning.

II. Whereas,

Too many children from low-income families begin school already far behind. The research also shows that these children are less likely to be read or spoken to regularly or to have access to books, literacy-rich environments, high-quality early care, and prekindergarten programs. As a consequence, these children may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their middle-income peers before reaching kindergarten. Research shows that such interactions are critical for language development, an important precursor to literacy.

Too many children from low-income families miss too many days of school. Research has found that one in 10 kindergarten and first grade students nationwide misses nearly a month of school each year in excused and unexcused absences. These students can ill-afford to lose time on task, especially in the early years when reading instruction is a central part of the curriculum.

Too many children lose ground over the summer months. Without access to the enriching activities available to more-affluent peers, research shows that children from low-income families lose as much as three months of reading comprehension skills over the summer. By the end of fifth grade, they are nearly three grade levels behind their peers.

III. Goals

The goal of this agreement is to increase the number of third graders in the San Joaquin Valley scoring proficient or advanced on California Standards Test from school years 2013 to 2020 by 100%. The initial focus will be on children attending Lowell, Jefferson and Webster elementary schools, with intent to scale effective strategies and programs to other schools and communities throughout the Valley.

IV. Specific Duties

- a. Fresno Regional Foundation:
 - i. Act as primary convener and coordinator for Fresno’s Grade Level Reading Campaign.
 - ii. Provide human and financial resources to support the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and FRF, integrating when appropriate.

- iv. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - v. Lead the evaluation process of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - vi. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- b. Fresno Unified School District:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and FUSD, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- c. Fresno County Office of Education:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and FCOE, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- d. Reading and Beyond:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and Reading and Beyond, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- e. First 5 Fresno County:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and First 5 Fresno County, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- f. Parent Institute for Quality Education:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and PIQE, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign’s strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- g. Fresno Housing Authority:
- i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and the Fresno Housing Authority, integrating when appropriate.

- iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign's strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- h. City of Fresno:
 - i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and the City of Fresno, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign's strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.
- i. Central Valley Afterschool Foundation:
 - i. Participate in periodic meetings for strategic planning and implementation.
 - ii. Share aggregate data to advance the goals of the Campaign.
 - iii. Coordinate strategy and resources in common areas of alignment between the Campaign, its partners and the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation, integrating when appropriate.
 - iv. Assist in periodic evaluation of the Campaign's strategies and programs.
 - v. Act as an active ambassador for the Campaign and its goals.