GET GEORGIA READING
COMMUNITY ACTION WORKBOOK
INTRODUCTION

About the Get Georgia Reading Campaign

Two-thirds of Georgia’s third graders do not read proficiently. That has significant and long-term consequences for all Georgians, because low achievement in reading affects our economy, our safety, and our health. The end of third grade marks the critical time when children shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Children unable to make this shift face serious barriers for future learning, because they can’t grasp half of the printed fourth-grade curriculum and beyond, including math and science. Therefore, low achievement in reading is a systemic crisis that calls for innovative solutions to complex issues.

Unwilling to yield any longer, the governor and first lady came together with Georgia’s leaders in 2013 to take on third-grade reading proficiency—not only as an education issue, but as an urgent priority for all who care about children’s health and well-being.

Get Georgia Reading is a growing collaboration of over 100 private and public partners rallying people, organizations, and communities to apply a common agenda as a framework for action. The Campaign represents a new way of working together across Georgia, across sectors, across agencies and organizations, and across the early years and early grades, using data to inform decisions.

Together, they developed a clearly defined common agenda to create the conditions for every child in Georgia to become a proficient reader by the end of third grade. The common agenda consists of four research-based pillars that work together to provide a platform for success, as seen in the diagram to the left.

The purpose of this Community Action Workbook is to support communities as they move forward to engage more partners in firmly rooting the four pillars locally by adopting strategies and actions specific to their needs.

Agenda 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Opening — Welcome & Purpose of the Event 10 minutes
Part 1 — Campaign Overview & Setting the Context 1 hour
Part 2 — Identifying Pillar Stakeholders 1 hour and 10 minutes
Lunch Break 45 minutes
Part 3 — Creating a Shared Vision 1 hour
Break 10 minutes
Part 4 — Developing Clear Action Plans 1 hour and 15 minutes
Closing — Commitment & Inspirational Story 10 minutes
OVERVIEW

Setting the Campaign Context (1 hour)

Welcome & Inspirational Talks

Sandra Deal
Georgia’s First Lady
https://geo.ga/Hemiss

Ralph Smith
Senior Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation; Managing Director, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
https://geo.ga/3GRtzy

Arianne Weldon
Director, Get Georgia Reading Campaign
https://geo.ga/tcK1oT

As you listen to the following leaders share why this work matters, write down any key ideas or insights and why this effort to get all children reading by third grade matters to you.

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PART 1

Exercise: Reviewing Local Data for Indicators

The goal of this exercise is to understand the multiple variables impacting progress and specifically to examine the data from a local perspective.

Review the handout with local data for indicators. Write any observations or insights below.

What story does our data tell?

Discussion:

What stands out to you about these data points?

How might the conditions impact achievement for children in your county?

BRIEF COMMUNITY REPORT OUT

What were the common themes shared among the group?
PART 2

Identifying Pillar Stakeholders (1 hour and 10 minutes)

Lightning Talks: Framing the Four Pillars

Talk With Me Baby
Baby Ella Video
https://goo.gl/ngme2P

Emily Rubin
Director, Educational Outreach Program,
Marcus Autism Center
https://goo.gl/VpSWPx

Martha Ann Todd
Executive Director, Governor’s Office
of Student Achievement
https://goo.gl/3GRzkv

As you listen to the following talks that frame the four pillars, write down any key ideas or insights about the connection between a child’s growth and development and literacy.

Who in our community can help?

Exercise: Stakeholder Mapping

The goal of this exercise is to identify important local stakeholders who can join in the effort to get all children in your community reading proficiently by third grade.

Looking at the indicators from your local data, identify key stakeholders who must be part of creating the desired outcomes and map their relationships to one another. Start by writing as many stakeholders down as possible on Post-It Notes, then organize them into clusters on a flip chart and draw connection lines. (There are two colors for notes: gold for already engaged stakeholders and purple for needed partners.)

Think about:

Who is already engaged in this work? (List roles.)

Who needs to be at the table? (List all stakeholders.)

Write down all stakeholders that come to mind such as libraries, YMCAs, housing authorities, Collaboratives, and parents. Share and cluster common stakeholders, using lines to connect them.

Discussion:

Did you identify partners you might not have thought about before today?

What was new and different?

LUNCH BREAK (45 minutes)
PART 3

Creating a Shared Vision (1 hour)

Lightning Talks: Deep Dive into the Four Pillars

As you listen to the following leaders further illuminate the four pillars, write down any key actions and insights.

Peggy Walker
Judge, Juvenile Court, Douglas County
https://goo.gl/p6HHJD

Fran Gary
CEO, Amerigroup Georgia
https://goo.gl/1t7Jh

Garry McGiboney
Deputy State Superintendent for Policy, Georgia Department of Education
https://goo.gl/YoVoJI

How will we measure success?

Exercise: Creating a Shared Vision

The goal of this exercise is to help identify markers indicating progress, starting from birth, along the path to reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

Looking at the timeline of the ages of children along the path from birth through age 8, individually brainstorm and write down markers indicating progress along the pathway to reading proficiently by the end of third grade; use only one marker per Post-It.

Consider markers at the child, family, community, and systems levels. For example:

Child: healthy births as indicated by low rate of preterm births
Family: access to resources and support to ensure healthy physical and social-emotional development
Neighborhood/Community: availability of high-quality affordable child care for working parents
Systems: education, health, and social policies

Go around the table and review one by one, plotting markers on a timeline from birth through age 8.

Indicate which pillars can ensure a child reaches each marker by tagging the Post-It Notes with pillar stickers, keeping in mind that more than one could apply to each. Take a photo of your markers and tweet using the #GetGAReading hashtag.

BREAK (10 minutes)

In preparation for the next exercise, select the pillar you are most interested in. We will divide into four groups to focus on these pillars after the break.
Exercise: Developing Clear Actions

The goal of this exercise is to brainstorm actions by pillar, then cluster and sort them to focus on the top 10.

Step 1) Brainstorm actions for stakeholders at the local level. Using one action per Post-it, write down what you and other stakeholders can do to support and strengthen this pillar in your community. Take into account:

• the markers indicating progress along the timeline from birth through age 8,
• your personal and professional experience,
• reflections on what you heard during today’s talks and videos,
• ideas you’ve seen work well in other communities as well as new ideas, and
• the resources you and other stakeholders can bring to the table in support of this pillar.

Step 2) Cluster common actions, then come to a consensus on the top 10 with the most energy and engagement behind them. Some may be immediately actionable, while others may require energy to develop them.

Step 3) Write your top 10 actions on the flip chart. Your table host will bring these to the display area so that all pillar actions are gathered for voting.

What key actions should we take to support each pillar?
Developing Clear Action Plans (continued)

Step 4) Break and Voting (10 minutes)
You will receive five voting dots. Review all actions for each pillar and vote for five of them based on the following criteria (must meet at least one):

- The action is achievable within a defined timeframe (90 days, one year, two years, etc.).
- There is a clear ask of a stakeholder (not a vague ask of multiple stakeholders).
- The action describes specific steps to take (for example, not simply parent engagement).
- The action uses resources wisely and creatively, leveraging existing partnerships.
- The action helps reach the hardest-to-reach children.
- The action has a measurable impact.

Step 5) Pillar groups come back together to review and discuss the voting results for the top activities. Each group will identify the top five actions for its pillar and write them on a poster; the same action may be listed under more than one pillar.

Take a photo of your pillar team holding the final top-five poster and tweet using the #GetGAReading hashtag.

COMMITMENT

Which actions will you take?

Pledge Commitment
Become a champion for the Get Georgia Reading Campaign by filling out a pledge card with the actions you are committing to take immediately following the summit.

Actions I commit to take and the difference they will make:

Closing Inspirational Story

Hayward Cordy
Executive Director, Oconee Regional Education Service Agency

https://goo.gl/uiG6wv
SPEAKER & PARTNER BIOS

BETH CAPUSON ➤ Coordinator, Seminole County Family Connection Collaborative
Beth Capuson has been with Seminole County Family Connection Collaborative, a member of the grade-level reading cohort, since 2008. Seminole County has dramatically raised their children’s reading scores by identifying struggling students at an early age and giving them the individual attention they need to improve.

HAYWOOD CORDY ➤ Executive Director, Oconee Regional Education Service Agency
Dr. Cordy has several years’ experience in education, having served as a superintendent of schools and an elementary, middle, and high school principal; directed programs for children with serious emotional behavioral disorders; and provided educational opportunities to first-generation college students. He also mentors and assists with supervising students enrolled in the Oconee RESA Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy.

SANDRA DEAL ➤ First Lady of Georgia
The daughter of educators, First Lady Sandra Deal has dedicated her life to encouraging childhood education. As a Georgia public school teacher, she taught for more than 15 years and retired as a sixth-grade middle school teacher in Hall County. She has furthered those efforts in her role as Georgia’s First Lady, and promoting literacy has been one of her top priorities.

CAITLIN DOOLEY ➤ Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Georgia Department of Education
Dr. Dooley has several years of experience in education, having worked as an elementary classroom teacher, teacher educator, educational researcher, and professor at Georgia State University. Dr. Dooley has authored over 50 publications and led projects to investigate children’s literacy learning, literacy instruction, digital literacies, teacher learning, and education policy.

BRENDA FITZGERALD ➤ Commissioner, Georgia Department of Public Health
Dr. Fitzgerald oversees state public health programs and directs the state’s 18 public health districts and 159 county health departments. Enmeshed in the Get Georgia Reading Campaign since its inception, she became the first Commissioner of Public Health to identify grade-level reading as a public health crisis. Dr. Fitzgerald, a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist and a Fellow in Anti-Aging Medicine, has practiced medicine for three decades.

FRAN GARY ➤ President, Amerigroup Georgia
Fran Gary is responsible for all aspects of Amerigroup health plan operations in Georgia, ensuring that members receive access to high-quality care and strengthening relationships in the community, with the state and among providers.

LUCKY JAIN ➤ Neonatologist, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
Dr. Jain is a specialist in respiratory disorders of newborns, focusing particularly on late preterm infants and those born by voluntary Cesarean section. Already a caring physician and pediatrician, after having a heart attack himself several years ago, Dr. Jain has become an even stronger advocate of compassionate patient/family care.

AMI KLIN ➤ Director, Marcus Autism Center
Dr. Klin’s primary research focuses on the social mind and the social brain. These studies include novel techniques such as the eye-tracking laboratories co-directed with Dr. Warren Jones, which allow researchers to see the world through the eyes of individuals with autism.

GARRY McBONEY ➤ Deputy State Superintendent for External Affairs and Policy, Georgia Department of Education
Dr. McBoney has been a champion for children for many years, having served in several local, district, and state-level education positions as well as numerous boards and committees dedicated to improving outcomes for children.

EMILY RUBIN ➤ Director, Educational Outreach Program, Marcus Autism Center
Emily Rubin is a speech-language pathologist specializing in the neuroscience and social competence of individuals with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, and related social learning disabilities. Her work currently focuses on supporting community-based educational systems to build internal capacity for serving children and adolescents with autism and related developmental disorders.

RALPH SMITH ➤ Senior Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation; Managing Director, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Bringing together “unusual allies” and “unlikely champions” has been a hallmark of Ralph Smith’s work. As managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading since 2010, Smith is forging consensus around ensuring that children reach the critical developmental milestone of reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

PEGGY WALKER ➤ Judge, Juvenile Court of Douglas County
Judge Walker has served as the full-time Juvenile Court Judge of Douglas County since 1998. Under her leadership, the court received a federal partnership grant that funded a Family Drug Treatment Program serving parents with substance abuse problems who had children from birth to age 5. The Douglas County Juvenile Court received federal funding to join the ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Teams Project in 2010.

ARIANNE WELDON ➤ Director, Get Georgia Reading Campaign
Arianne Weldon uses her background in public health to encourage Campaign partners to apply an epidemiological approach to promoting reading proficiency for young children. By using data to identify patterns of risk and protective factors related to language and literacy development, Weldon has helped change the conversation about what is needed and what is possible in creating a new future for Georgia’s young children.

Check out all lightning talks on the Get Georgia Reading YouTube channel: https://goo.gl/jw8Lst
Inspiration & Continuation

In September of 2015, nearly 200 Georgia state and local leaders gathered for a two-day summit to deepen their understanding of the research and best practices to get children reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Participants heard from experts across the state and listened to stories about the challenges and opportunities to Get Georgia Reading. These lightning talks illuminated the four-pillar framework and helped identify key partners, important stakeholders, and clear actions that were necessary in implementing them.

Now these lightning talks and design-thinking exercises are available for every community in Georgia to use as a tool for energizing their own partners and stakeholders to align around key actions that will help all kids be on a path to reading proficiently by the end of third grade.
By 2020, all children in Georgia will be on a path to reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.

Get Georgia Reading
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

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