

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Community Solutions Action Plan – Regina, SK
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
June, 2019

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a coalition of funders, communities and non-profit partners who are focusing on reading proficiency by the end of grade three, an important predictor of high school graduation and future career success. A coalition of stakeholders in Regina, Saskatchewan, supported by United Way Regina, have worked on identifying problems and proposing strategies and solutions to address the challenges of school readiness, attendance, and summer/after-school learning that are barriers to reading proficiency for low-income children and their families in our community. Equally important is a focus on supporting parents and caregivers, as their child's first teachers, with the tools and information they need to support their children's early development. The health determinants which affect children's development and early literacy and school success, from prenatal care through infancy and beyond, also serve as a core element of the Campaign.



The *Community Solutions Action Plan* (hereinafter *Action Plan*) functions as the application for membership in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and outlines community-based strategies, solutions, and desired outcomes in the challenge areas of School Readiness, School Attendance, and Summer and After-School Learning, all of which impact early childhood literacy and reading proficiency.

Basic Data and Community Overview

Presents a snapshot of the community size covered by the Campaign, including student demographics (Pre-K–Grade 12) in the following school districts:

- Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 (Regina Catholic Schools)
- Regina School Division No. 4 of Saskatchewan (Regina Public Schools)
- Includes names of coalition members, partners and local funders
- Includes a narrative of the history, character, strengths, and challenges of our community

Assurance #1 – The Problem

Provides data (such as the following) on the current reality and recent patterns and also includes a comprehensive list of community services and supports:

- High school graduation rates
 - In Regina Public Schools, 79% of all students graduated on-time (within three years of starting Grade 10), while 43% of FNMI¹ students graduated on-time and 88% of non-FNMI students graduated on-time in 2017–2018

¹Note: FNMI students are those who choose to self-identify as First Nations (Registered/Treaty/Status Indian, Non-Status Indian), Métis, or Inuit/Inuk.

- In Regina Catholic Schools, 89% of all students graduated on-time (within three years of starting Grade 12), while 62% of FNMI students and 93% of non-FNMI students graduated on-time in 2017–2018
- Reading proficiency in the early grades in the City of Regina in the 2017–2018 school year
 - 66.6% of students in Grade 1 were reading at or above-grade level
 - 70.8% of students in Grade 2 were reading at or above-grade level
 - 74.4% of students in Grade 3 were reading at or above-grade level
- Attendance rates
 - In Regina Public Schools, 86% of all students in all grades had at least 80% attendance, and 72% had 90% attendance or higher, while 66% of FNMI students had at least 80% attendance and 48% of FNMI students had 90% attendance or higher in 2017–2018
 - In Regina Catholic Schools, 92% of all students in all grades had 80% or higher attendance, and 79% had 90% or attendance or higher, while 81% of FNMI students had at least 80% attendance and 62% of FNMI students had 90% or higher attendance in 2017–2018
 - The percentages of children with 90% or higher attendance in the City of Regina were 86.1% in Kindergarten; 75.5% in Grade 1; 76.6% in Grade 2; and 77.3% in Grade 3 in the 2017–2018 school year
- School readiness
 - In Regina the percentage of families scoring as “vulnerable” on the *In-Hospital Birth Questionnaire* was 25.7%, while the percentage of families scoring as “highly vulnerable” was 8.5% for the years 2011-2015
 - The *Early Years Evaluation (EYE)* results at Kindergarten entry for children in the City of Regina in the 2017–2018 school year reveal that 55.9% complete developmental tasks without difficulty; 27.5% experience some difficulty completing developmental tasks; and that 16.6% experience significant difficulty completing developmental tasks
- Summer learning
 - 91% of participants in the Summer Success Literacy Camp in 2018 maintained their reading levels from June, while 48% of participants improved on their reading levels from June
 - 90% of all participants in the Summer Success Literacy Camp in 2018 had 80% or better attendance, an 8% increase over the previous summer
 - 85% of families/caregivers were engaged in one or more camp activities in 2018

Includes other relevant data sets, including immunization rates and data screens and also a comprehensive list of community services and programs

Assurance #2 – Destination (Desired Outcomes and Impact)

Presents relevant provincial Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) outcomes, such as the following:

- By June 30, 2010, 80% of students will be at grade level or above in reading, writing and math
 - Saskatchewan will achieve an 85% three-year graduation rate and a 90% five-year graduation rate
-

- Ensure Saskatchewan leads the country in graduation rates and the graduation disparity between First Nations and Métis students and their non-Aboriginal peers has been reduced by 50%
- By June, 2020, children aged zero to six years will be supported in their development to ensure that 90% of students exiting Kindergarten are ready for learning in the primary grades
- Notes Regina Public Schools' *Strategic Plan* targets such as improving Indigenous student retention and achievement, increasing the number of Kindergarten students who enter Grade 1 ready to learn, and increasing number of students who achieve grade-level literacy and numeracy
- Notes Regina Catholic Schools' SMART goals' alignment to ESSP outcomes in reading, writing and math, and SMART goals' alignment of Pre-K and Kindergarten student outcomes with the Early Years outcomes
- Attendance monitored in Regina Catholic Schools and interventions with students occur at specific number of unexcused absences
- Attendance monitored in Regina Public Schools and targets reflected in traffic light colors green, yellow and red for number of days absent per year
- Summer Success Literacy Camps' goals to have 80% of campers maintain their grade-level reading, 80% of campers attend daily, and 80% family/caregiver engagement in one activity

Assurance #3 – Strategy (Integrated and Intertwined)

Presents the grade-level reading coalition's identification of core challenges and their development of strategies to strengthen existing programs, create new approaches, or adapt promising practices

- Need for targeted strategies for to focus on the area of school readiness
- Need to acknowledge in any strategies the devastating effects of poverty and corrosive factors such as racism upon families and children in the community
- Need for coordination of programs to address gap in services for children between zero to three years and three to six years of age
- Need for programs and initiatives to be culturally-responsive, grounded upon the Truth & Reconciliation's *Calls to Action*,² strength-based, and viewed through the lens of the impact of colonization
- The Language Nest as a model for a new program to teach expectant and young mothers how to sing, talk and read to their babies
- Incorporate health care components, such as vision screening or immunization, into summer literacy camps
- Enhance the current homework clubs for newcomer and refugee students by expanding to additional schools and inviting younger students to attend

Assurance #4 – Connecting for Synergy

Describes how the grade-level reading campaign in our city will benefit from and/or support other ongoing initiatives

- Incorporate fun literacy activities into after-school programs sponsored by the City of Regina
- Incorporate a literacy component, such as story-telling, into the summer lunch programs provided by REACH

² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

- Enrich after-school literacy clubs, based on the model of the Summer Success Camps, using action-based, fun activities and focusing on family engagement and relationship-building
- Imperative to “meet families where they are” and to develop relationships and build trust in order to respond to realities of poverty, food insecurity and homelessness, all obstacles to accessing services and programming

Assurance #5 - Data

Describes the availability of data sources to set baselines, track progress, and ensure accountability

- Grade 3 reading proficiency and attendance data, in addition to the *EYE* assessment results is publicly available in school division *Annual Reports*
- New platforms identified to harvest student data at the provincial level for all school divisions
- Identification of discrepancy in the data collection area for infants and toddlers and also gap in data collection for child development tracking in children three to five years of age
- Loss of key pieces of school readiness data, such as measurement of physical activity, and also the absence of key pieces of public health data such as vision and dental screenings
- Robust data sources for summer learning literacy camps identified, in addition to suggestions for additional progress measures beyond those of participation in city and library summer programs
- Focus on chronic absenteeism recommended, in addition to attendance tracking, and endorsement of proposed provincial attendance strategy

Assurance #6 – Success and Sustainability

Describes steps take to ensure broad-based support and resources to sustain the *Action Plan*

- United Way Regina committed to acquiring new and re-directed funding and staff resources
- Advisory and financial support of the Regina Human Service Partnership
- Collaboration and coordination for collective impact necessary to advance the *Action Plan* outlined in United Way Regina’s *Strategic Plan* for 2019–2020 and 2020–2021
- Inclusion of Elders and members of the Indigenous community as key stakeholders and leaders in Campaign is priority area moving forward
- Leaning upon established networks and organizations to work with newcomer and refugee families as a bridge to the community
- Mobilization of the business community to become engaged participants

Overview of the Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP) Development Process

Describes the development of the *Community Solutions Action Plan* during the time from July, 2018, to May, 2019, and outlines the input from stakeholders and coalition members

- Engagement sessions held over summer, 2018, to identify stakeholders and level of commitment
- Presentations on CGLR Week to provide information, background, and vision
- Strategy sessions held with coalition members from fall, 2018, to spring, 2019 including
 - Review of data sets to direct Assurance development
 - Group activities and discussion to respond to Assurance questions
 - Presentations by guest speakers on topics relevant to focus areas
 - Tele-conferencing with the Canadian CGLR site, Calgary Reads
 - Vetting of the *Action Plan* by stakeholders and coalition members

- Potential roadmap for *Action Plan* implementation including
 - Naming, branding, and marketing campaign
 - Roll-out to the community with a high-profile event launch
 - Authentic engagement with families/parents/caregivers to assess needs and identify priorities
 - Exploration of governance and working group structures
 - Guidance and support from the Smarter Learning Group in *Action Plan* implementation