



Providence Reads

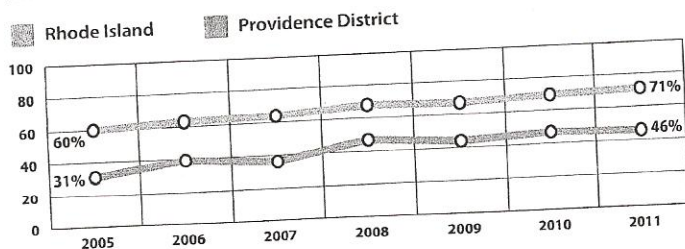
A Campaign to Improve Reading Proficiency in Providence

Why Third Grade Reading?

- The most important predictor of school success and high school graduation is grade-level reading by the end of third grade.
- There is a critical transition from learning to read to reading to learn that, for most students, happens by the end of third grade.
- Research shows that children not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.
- Children who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are less likely to find and maintain employment and acquire the job skills they need to be successful in the 21st century workforce.

Too Many Providence Children Not Reading Proficiently by the End of Third Grade

Fourth-Grade NECAP Reading Proficiency Rates, Providence and Rhode Island, 2005-2011



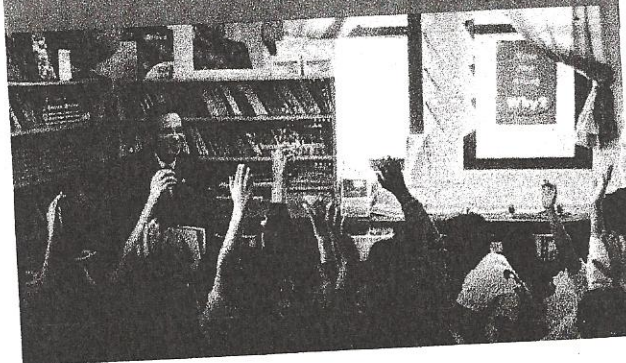
Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, October 2005-October 2011.

- In 2011, almost three-quarters (71%) of Rhode Island fourth graders scored at or above proficiency in reading on the *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, the state's standardized reading assessment test.
- In 2011, less than half (46%) of Providence fourth graders scored at or above proficiency in reading on the *NECAP*.
- A smaller percentage of fourth graders scored proficient in reading in Providence than in any other school district in the state.



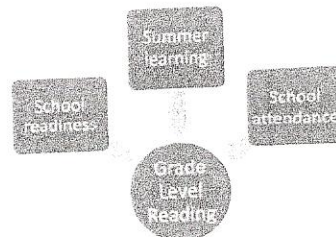
CITY OF PROVIDENCE
 ANGEL TAVERAS, MAYOR

A Providence native who went from Head Start to Harvard through Providence Public Schools, Providence Mayor Angel Taveras has made reading proficiency by the end of third grade the cornerstone of his educational action plan for the City.



Providence has been named a 2012 All-America City in recognition of its ambitious plan to ensure that more children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

- The national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading focuses on improving the reading proficiency of low-income children. The national campaign includes three core components – improving school readiness, reducing chronic early absence, and increasing access to high-quality summer learning programs.



- 124 communities all across the United States are participating in this campaign.

School Readiness

- Many children from low-income families start school already far behind their higher-income peers.
- Children from low-income families have less access to high-quality early learning and Pre-Kindergarten programs than higher-income families.
- In September 2010, only 35% of Providence kindergarteners tested at or above benchmark on the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*, an assessment of early literacy.
- In 2011, due to funding shortages, only about 5% of the more than 3,200 income-eligible children in Providence were enrolled in Early Head Start.
- In 2011, less than 40% of the income-eligible 3 to 4 year-olds in the city were enrolled in Head Start, again due to funding shortages.
- As of January 2012, 26% of Providence's child care centers and preschools and 14% of the city's family childcare homes were participating in Bright Stars, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early care and education programs.
- Providence currently has three State Pre-K Program classrooms, which are funded by a combination of state funds and federal Title I funds. The number of Pre-K classrooms will be expanding in the coming years as the state education funding formula includes expanded funding for Pre-K, starting with communities with high percentages of low-income children.
- In addition to increasing access to early learning opportunities, more early literacy strategies are needed to reach children in other settings, including health centers and libraries.

Chronic Early Absence

- Too many children from low-income families miss too many days of school.
- One in 10 kindergarten and first grade students in the U.S. misses nearly a month of school each year through a combination of excused and unexcused absences.
- During the 2010-2011 school year, 22% of Providence children between kindergarten and third grade were chronically absent from school, meaning that they missed at least 10% of the school year. Providence's chronic early absence rate was the second highest in the state.
- Chronic early absence is a particular problem in kindergarten where one-third (33%) of Providence students were chronically absent during the 2010-2011 school year.
- Parent engagement is a key part of a successful strategy to reduce chronic absence in the early school years.
- Chronic early absence can be reduced through school-family-community partnerships and by monitoring attendance and contacting parents as soon as troubling patterns of attendance appear.

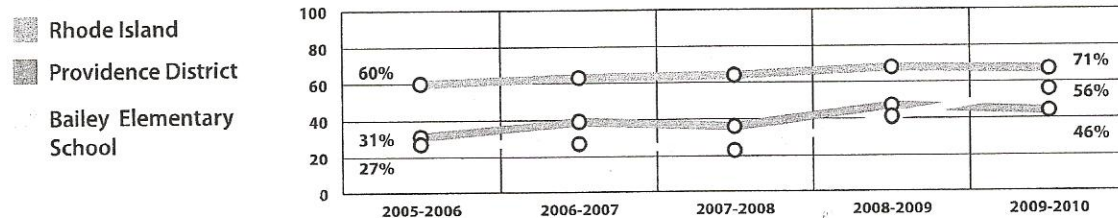
Access to High-Quality Summer Learning Programs

- Many children lose ground over the summer months, a phenomenon called "summer learning loss."
- Without access to the kinds of enriching activities available to many higher-income students, children from low-income families lose as much as three months of reading comprehension over the summer.
- A recent study by Johns Hopkins University found that differences in summer learning opportunities account for much of the achievement gap between lower-income and higher-income students by the time students reach high school.
- According to an *America After 3PM* study, just over one-third (36%) of Rhode Island school children participate in summer learning programs

It's Doable!

Since 2008, grade-level reading has been a central objective for Providence's Full Service Community Schools. At schools like the Robert Bailey Elementary Schools, community partners, including Dorcas Place Adult and Family Literacy Center, the YMCA of Greater Providence and others have worked together with school faculty to improve chronic absenteeism and grade-level reading. Key strategies have included small-group literacy interventions, before and after-school enrichment programs, summer learning programs, family programs, adult ESOL classes and case managers providing the support needed to help children be successful. And the results speak for themselves. In just four years, the percentage of third-graders scoring proficient in reading at Bailey Elementary School has more than doubled.

Third-Grade *NECAP* Reading Proficiency Rates, 2005-2006 Through 2009-2010



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, October 2005-October 2011.

Now, the Providence Public Schools have adopted the Full Service Community Schools model as a school improvement strategy and hope to translate the success of Bailey Elementary School to the rest of the city.

Providence has 85 third-grade classrooms. We can focus on what children need from prenatal to third grade to move the needle on reading proficiency by the end of third grade. Providence has what it takes to be a model for the country.

Providence Reads Goals:

- The percentage of students entering fourth grade demonstrating reading proficiency on the *NECAP* will rise from 44% in 2009 to 70% in 2015.
- By 2013, all early learning programs in Providence will be Bright Stars rated.
- By 2013, 50% or more of K-3 students will be reading on grade level.
- By 2015, 25% of K-3 students will be participating in high-quality summer learning experiences.
- By 2017, the chronic early absence rate or rate of kindergarten through third graders who miss 18 or more days of school, which represents 10% of the school year, will be reduced by 5%.

Providence Reads Key Strategies:

- Expand on the success of full-service community schools.
- Improve parents' understanding of the importance of early literacy and how to foster.
- Increase participation in BrightStars, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child care and early learning programs and increase the percentage of Providence children participating in high-quality early learning programs.
- Focus on reducing chronic early absence rates.
- Increase awareness about the importance of summer learning and increase access to high-quality summer learning programs for students in the early grades.
- Partner with Harvard's Making Learning Visible initiative at Project Zero to improve early literacy.

How You Can Help the Campaign

Providence Residents

- Volunteer in Providence classrooms, libraries, health centers and other locations.
- Donate money and books.
- Help spread the word about the campaign.
- Sponsor summer learning programs.

Educators

- Communicate the importance of all grade-level reading campaign components to children and parents.
- Coordinate reading week activities with the grade-level reading campaign.
- Serve as spokesperson or advocates for the campaign.
- Provide ideas and resources for summer learning.
- Create a culture of attendance in every classroom in every school.
- Embrace and advocate for an early warning system and evidence-based interventions to close gaps in achievement.

Business Leaders

- Display literacy messages and tips around the city.
- Host a speaker to speak on the benefits of grade-level reading.
- Volunteer in Providence classrooms, libraries, health centers and other locations.
- Organize a corporate volunteer corps to support regular volunteering in Providence classrooms.

- Donate books, supplies and technology to classes, schools and families.
- Donate money to support the campaign.
- Give parents paid time off to attend parent-teacher conferences and other key school events.
- Provide incentives for grade-level reading challenges to encourage adults to volunteer in classrooms, children to achieve improvement or schools to achieve certain benchmarks.
- Sponsor scholarships for children attending summer learning programs.
- Adopt a school or class to provide resources.
- Visit classrooms or invite children to take a child to work events to expose children to a variety of careers.

Parents

- Attend meetings at children's school every semester.
- Allow teachers to do home visits.
- Get recommended reading lists from teachers.
- Get children library cards and encourage them to use the libraries' resources.
- Attend literacy nights.
- Read to children every day.
- Make sure children do not miss school unless absolutely necessary (e.g., due to an illness).
- Keep children engaged in learning over the summer.
- Engage in family literacy activities, if needed.



Resources

For more information on *Providence Reads*, please contact Angela Romans, Senior Advisor on Education for Mayor Taveras, at aromans@providenceri.com or visit www.providenceri.com/educate-providence.

For more information on the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, please contact Ralph Smith at rsmith@gradelevelreading.net or visit www.gradelevelreading.net.