



BRIGHT SPOTS

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

When Oakland, California, joined the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, school readiness was clearly an issue. But it took a deep dive into the data to reveal to the campaign how big an issue: only 54 percent of children enter Oakland's public schools with early literacy skills.

"That was one of the starkest findings for us," says Sanam Jorjani, program manager for Oakland Reads 2020, the community's GLR coalition, launched in 2012. "We knew kids were coming in behind. But for the first time, we had really clear data and it became a rallying point."

Disaggregated data from the Oakland Unified School District covering three school years, up to 2012-2013, also revealed that African-American third graders are three times more likely to be chronically absent from school — missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason. "We knew it was higher but three times is pretty drastic," says Jorjani.

The data were used to construct the Oakland Reads Baseline Report, an extensive analysis of third-grade reading proficiency in Oakland. Released in spring 2014, the report provides more information to better define Oakland's challenges and better develop strategies to increase the percentage of children reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

"A lot of the report affirmed what we thought was true but we needed to disaggregate the data and lay the foundation to create appropriately targeted and data-driven strategies," says Jorjani. "The report also highlights what is in place to build off of. We hope it prompts others to ask 'Why does the data look like this? What needs to happen? How can we get there?'"

The data effort was prompted by Oakland's work to update its GLR Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP), which was based on "some general information," says Jorjani. "We decided that we needed to focus on 'What is the data?' and have baselines. That helps provide a compass."

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Bright Spots showcase the work that Grade-Level Reading communities are doing to make progress on school readiness, school attendance and summer learning by 2016. They are written and produced by the Campaign. You can nominate a Bright Spot in your community by emailing Betsy Rubiner at brubiner@gradelevelreading.net.

And by pinpointing the children most affected by an issue, the data revealed the need to develop interventions “more targeted” to specific populations, notes Jorjani.

Two workgroups are using the challenges identified in the 84-page report — which looks at school readiness, attendance, summer learning and parent engagement — to create a “theory of action” and a road map with strategies. They will get input from the Oakland Reads steering committee and a broader network of community partners, including literacy services providers, foundations, businesses, public agencies and school districts.

Not only an internal planning tool, the report is being used for external messaging and capacity-building to engage the public, including funders. “Seeing all the data together and getting it to tell a story is powerful,” says Jorjani. “We used this as an organizing tool, presenting the information in a new way. To make it more engaging, we highlight challenges and assets.”

Particularly engaging is a one-page summary infographic (see next page) that visually represents challenges (*only 38 percent of third graders are reading at grade level*); progress (*70 percent of fluent bilingual third graders are reading at grade level*); and linkages (*chronically absent third graders are three times less likely to read at grade level*).

Unlike the original CSAP, the next will be designed more by key community players doing the work. “We’re building a collective impact model to pursue strategies,” says Jorjani.

Written by Urban Strategies Council, an Oakland nonprofit, and commissioned by Rogers Family Foundation, the report also confirms how difficult it can be to find “quality reliable data,” especially for a full-bodied look at school readiness and summer learning, says Jorjani.

But the report contains some new details including that in kindergarten, Latina girls have the highest rate of “at risk” attendance, missing 5 to 9 percent of school days. And it adds heft to some basic assumptions. “We all have hunches about which kids are performing lower than other kids,” says Jorjani. “The report helps highlight exactly how stark the disparities are.”

Oakland Reads 2020: Aiming for 85% of Students Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade



READING SUCCESS SUPPORTED BY SCHOOL READINESS, ATTENDANCE, SUMMER LEARNING, & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Reading Success

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

Only **38%** of 3rd graders

are reading at grade level



32% of 3rd graders are English learners: this is almost 1,000 students that need to be brought to proficiency.

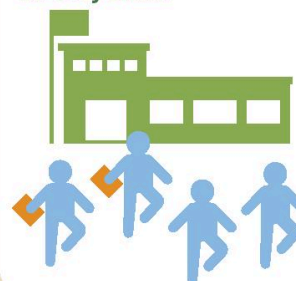


70% of fluent bilingual 3rd graders are reading at grade level



School Readiness

Only 54% of children enter OUSD with early literacy skills.



Attendance

Chronically absent 3rd graders are

3x

less likely to read at grade level.



3rd graders with ONE OR MORE SUSPENSIONS are

50%

less likely



to READ AT GRADE LEVEL than students with no suspensions

AFRICAN AMERICAN 3rd graders are **3x** more likely to be CHRONICALLY ABSENT AND SUSPENDED once or more.

Summer Learning

Students served:



Family Engagement

A School Quality Review process rated 20 elementary schools on FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:



Source of data for all except Summer Learning: Oakland Unified School District 2012-13

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