

# IOWA'S CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

## NETWORK MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



### DUBUQUE'S 3RD GRADE READING COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS ACTION PLAN

In July 2012, Dubuque's Grade Level Reading Campaign, made up of dozens of community partners including schools, nonprofits, higher-ed, business, government and philanthropy was recognized by the Nation Civic League with the All-America City Award, for our 3rd Grade Reading Community Solutions Action Plan.

In September 2012, the plan was also selected as a Together for Tomorrow Challenge winner for the 2012-13 school year by the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Since then, the team in Dubuque has shifted to implementing the plan. Our partnerships continue to grow and progress in each of the Focus Areas, and while it is early in our work, our progress is exciting.

#### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dubuque's Vision: Because attendance is a community priority of parents, students, nonprofits, business partner and schools, no students miss more than 10% of school each year.

##### Progress update - Year 1

A School Attendance Committee has identified multiple best practices to test in one of our most at-risk elementary schools. Working with School Administrators, and the building Principal, the committee has taken the following actions;

- » Implementation of an intervention process that catches attendance issues early
- » Received a grant from the Community Foundation to implement an attendance pilot program.
- » Testing of best practice policies and programs that have proven successful in other schools and districts.

##### What's next?

The Attendance Committee will evaluate the various test policies and programs to determine which could be brought to scale in the district. In addition, evaluation of attendance policies is also planned for year 1. Results of the pilot program and policy evaluations will be shared with schools and community partners to build buy-in and scale.



## SUMMER LEARNING

Dubuque's Vision: Change summertime focus from "keeping kids busy" to purposeful activities that foster skills, including reading, math, and science growth, and instill a love for life-long learning, healthy living, and connection to school.

### Progress update - Year 1

A Summer Learning Committee is currently developing plans for a pilot summer learning program that will happen this summer (2013), with support from a planning grant from the Community Foundation. The summer pilot will offer a limited number of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students an 8-week, research based, summer learning program. The program will;

- » offer activity based learning with a focus on reading
- » fun enriched activities from community-based organizations
- » best-practice and research-based instruction by certified teachers
- » use a community-supported collaborative approach between schools and nonprofits

### What's next?

Data from the summer pilot will be used to identify what works and what doesn't. The year 1 pilot will also inform a plan for scaling the summer learning program in future years.

## SCHOOL READINESS

Dubuque's Vision: All young people in Dubuque are school ready through high quality early education in combination with additional supports to compensate for and overcome early disadvantages for higher achievement levels.

### Progress update - Year 1

The Carnegie Stout Library launched the Dubuque Picture Book Award which is connecting pre-schoolers to reading at an early age. Funding support from McGraw-Hill made the new program possible. Meanwhile, leaders from North East Iowa Community College and the Dubuque Community Schools are working on improved training opportunities for early-childhood professionals that provide high-quality, cost effective certificate programs. On the challenging side, policy changes at the state level are putting Dubuque's model for 4-year preschool at risk. The policy changes limit our community approach that engages private-sector providers along side school based programs, that has resulted in 90 percent participation in Dubuque, a result that far exceeds other communities.

### What's next?

We are advocating for policies that support a public/private approach like Dubuque's model, to expand access and build capacity in communities to provide 4-year preschool for every child. We will implement the plans being made to increase the number of students taking part in quality, early-childhood training programs.

## **THANK YOU**

On behalf of the Dubuque Campaign for Grade Level Reading we thank the Annie E Casey Foundation and the Campaign for Grade Level Reading for recognizing Dubuque's efforts.

We also thank the members of the Dubuque Campaign for their passion, openness to innovation and willingness to partner. An exciting example is collaboration between the City of Dubuque and the Dubuque Community Schools, who partnered on an application for four (4) AmeriCorps VISTAs. We recently received news that our application was accepted. The Schools and City will split the cost of the VISTAs who will serve to support each of the three focus areas – School Attendance, Summer Learning, and School Readiness. The fourth VISTA will support the three areas with a special focus on implementing strategies to collect and manage data for the Campaign.

We're proud of our progress but recognize there is still much to do before we achieve Dubuque's Vision; At least 90% of our students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be proficient in reading.

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