



**Strategic Plan  
2019 – 2021**

## **Introduction**

The strategic plan for Lehigh Valley Reads defines the next three years of grade level reading collective impact work in our region. It provides a foundation for the campaign's future as an instrumental community resource to affect change. In addition to this plan is a vision that will ensure our youngest community members reach their highest potential. This vision is directly related to the current and future quality of life in the Lehigh Valley.

Community challenges like 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading proficiency are too large for any one organization to solve alone. By mobilizing and leading a collective impact initiative, Lehigh Valley Reads will ensure structured collaboration that maintains a common agenda, shared measurement, and open communication.

This strategic plan is intended to be a dynamic document that will continue to evolve as members of the Lehigh Valley Reads Steering Committee, coalitions, and relevant subcommittees review, revise, and sign on to become implementers of the plan.

## **Vision**

A community of opportunity for all.

## **Mission**

To ensure every student in the Lehigh Valley is reading on grade level by the end of third grade, by 2025.

## **Action Plan Strategies**

- Inform, engage, and mobilize community members, businesses, and institutions to advance grade level reading growth
- Create dynamic, multi-platform messages that equip families to take specific actions that support grade level reading growth
- Become the prime resource for Lehigh Valley school districts to support grade level reading growth

## **Pillars**

- Early Childhood Education
- Summer Learning
- Attendance
- Community Schools
- Trauma Informed Classrooms
- Infrastructure & Systems

# Lehigh Valley Reads 2019 - 2021

<b>The mission of Lehigh Valley Reads is that by 2021, at least 75% of Lehigh Valley students will read proficiently by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.</b>										
Early Childhood Education		Summer Learning		Attendance		Community Schools		Trauma Informed Classrooms		Infrastructure & Systems
<b>Community Mobilization</b> We mobilize the community to raise awareness, connect families and schools with available resources, and measure success to inform strategies and ensure accountability and achieve success.										

### **Pillar 1: Early Childhood Education**

The Early Childhood Coalition is comprised of educators, community members, parents, and others who work collaboratively to impact the language and literacy development of children, birth to 5 years-old, in the Lehigh Valley. The Coalition strives to increase awareness for the importance of early learning and the capacity of the community and caregivers to help children develop the language, literacy and emotional skillsets needed to be school ready.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) support parent/caregiver success and (2) coordinate school districts to develop a standardized Kindergarten readiness assessment. By 2021, a community-wide awareness campaign will be established, reaching at least 5,000 families per year. To measure our success, we will track the number of families touched over time and have a standardized assessment with at least three school districts participating.

### **Pillar 2: Summer Learning**

The Summer Learning Coalition was created to ensure all Lehigh Valley children continue to thrive, even when school's out. The Coalition strives to increase both access to and the quality of summer programming for low income youth across the Lehigh Valley to prevent the summer slide.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) build capacity with providers of summer learning opportunities for youth (2) increase awareness with families about the importance of continued learning over the summer and (3) evaluate change in number and quality of summer learning opportunities for Lehigh Valley youth.

### **Pillar 3: Attendance**

Challenge 5 Attendance Awareness coalition focuses on both community-based and school-based strategies to encourage all kids to strive for less than five absences – excused or unexcused – all year. Research shows that when children miss 10% or more of the school year in for any reason, they fall behind in learning. Missing 10% or more of school days is referred to as chronic absenteeism. Students who are chronically absent in kindergarten, first and second grade are less likely to read on grade level by the end of third grade than peers who were not chronically absent.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) identify the chronic absenteeism baseline for the Lehigh Valley and (2) reduce the number of students who are chronically absent each year.

### **Pillar 4: Community Schools**

Community Schools support and expand the operating systems of high need schools across the Lehigh Valley. They develop partnerships with community resources to meet student/family/staff need, build relationships with and between students, families, staff and partners, coordinate programs and services from the community inside of the school, use data to inform decisions and evaluate the effectiveness of the efforts. Community schools build relationships between students, staff, families and partners all working towards common goals of increased successful outcomes. The Lehigh Valley Community School Network currently consists of 28 high need schools across four districts; urban, suburban and rural. Twenty-one schools in the network are supported by full time Community School Coordinators. Five additional schools are supported by AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers. 8,300 kids are supported by the LV

Community School Network across Allentown School District, Bangor Area School District, Bethlehem Area School District and Easton Area School District.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) expand the number of schools effectively implementing Community Schools and (2) increase measureable outcomes across the CS Network.

#### **Pillar 5: Trauma Informed Classrooms**

The Lehigh Valley Trauma Awareness Collaborative is a regional effort raising awareness about what trauma is and how it impacts learning in people of all ages, especially our youth. It aims to build capacity with all youth serving providers to meet kids where they are, prevent re-injury or re-traumatization and avoid stigmatizing and punishing students so that quality learning opportunities increase. A large focus of this collaborative to date is on preparing schools to be “trauma informed” wherein teachers have been trained to understand trauma and classrooms and schools modified to be the most stable, safe and supportive environments for students exposed to trauma.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) increase trauma informed professional development for educators.

#### **Pillar 6: Infrastructure & Systems**

Lehigh Valley Reads staff and Steering Committee is committed to building a solid infrastructure and more effectively integrated systems to drive the work needed to reach the goal of Lehigh Valley Reads.

Over the next three years, Lehigh Valley Reads will (1) establish and implement effective strategies for internal and external communications (2) create and implement a micro credential system to support enhanced training in quality explicit instruction for Lehigh Valley educators (3) build a data warehouse and the systems to implement it and (4) work with Franklin Covey to leverage the Leader in Me model to increase grade level reading.