

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state must partner with nonprofit community organizations to improve student achievements through proven literacy programs

### CHALLENGE | Most Oregon Children Miss Critical Literacy Milestone

The benefits of early literacy are well understood, yet two-thirds of all Oregon fourth-graders are not reading at a proficient level according to one of the most widely accepted benchmarks.<sup>1</sup> These numbers are even more alarming for historically underserved students.

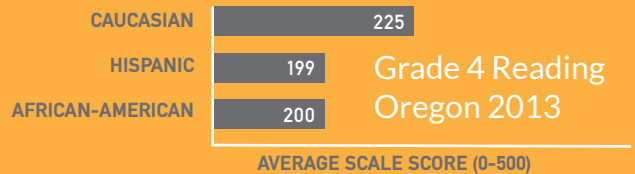
Early literacy programs are critical to improving third-grade reading outcomes, which correlate with improving Oregon's graduation rate.

### FINDINGS | The State Must Support Local Organizations

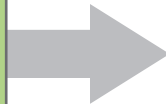
The Early Literacy Success Alliance's (ELSA) findings are simple: Schools can't go it alone — the state must also invest in and partner with evidence-based nonprofit community literacy organizations.

Oregon has a solution "hiding in plain sight." ELSA organizations — serving children in doctors' offices, schools, community centers and libraries — already have a presence in every county in the state, reaching over 1.2 million kids each year with effective and proven methods.

#### ACHIEVEMENT GAPS BETWEEN STUDENT RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS <sup>1</sup>



77% OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS  
90% OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES  
97% OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS



**DID NOT MEET 2015  
PROFICIENCY STANDARDS<sup>1</sup>**

## RECOMMENDATIONS | Invest in What's Working

In Oregon, effective early literacy programs exist and are ready to be scaled. By partnering with community programs, small investments can be significantly leveraged across the state. ELSA recommends:

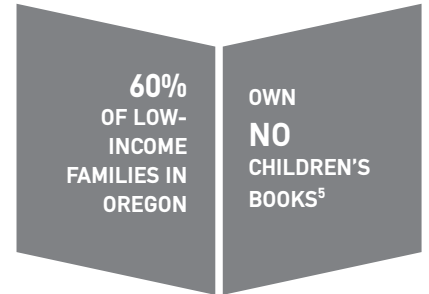
1. **Consulting with leaders of literacy-focused community programs** when making decisions affecting early literacy policy and practice.
2. **Investing in what's working.** Leverage investments in proven strategies that are ready to serve more children in need.
3. **Creating a pool of public and private funding** that allows for greater investment in effective and culturally specific literacy programs.
4. **Expanding eligibility to compete for public funding,** with particular attention to literacy programs focused on closing the education gap.

# PROVEN IMPACT

The nonprofit partners that comprise ELSA use evidence-based, culturally relevant methods to support schools and families in putting young children on a path to reading success.

## EXISTING PROGRAMS | ELSA Programs Throughout the State Currently:

- **Start early** through visits to prospective and new parents at home and delivery of literacy education at well-child visits to health providers. Lower-income children are likely to hear 30 million fewer words between birth and age four than their higher income peers, impacting later success at school.<sup>2</sup> ELSA partners help close this gap.
- **Engage families** with home visits, conversations at health care appointments, literacy events at schools and libraries and community-based workshops.
- **Partner for systemic change** by boosting kindergarten readiness through partnerships with Head Start teachers, child care professionals, school districts, and health care clinics.
- **Close the book ownership gap** and encourage reading before kindergarten and outside of school by providing access to reading materials tailored to diverse learning needs, including bilingual and culturally specific books. In 2015-16, more than 22% of students in Oregon schools were Hispanic/Latino.<sup>3</sup>
- **Leverage one-on-one support** to help students build specific literacy skills and catch up with their peers, closing gaps in progress or achievement.
- **Focus on equity** by developing culturally specific and culturally responsive interventions and creating partnerships that help close systemic gaps in resources for underserved communities. African-American and Hispanic students who do not reach reading proficiency by grade four are at even greater risk for not graduating on time.<sup>4</sup>



1. As defined by NAEP, a national assessment known as "The Nation's Report Card." <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>  
2. Thirty Million Words Initiative, <http://thirtymillionwords.org/tmw-initiative/>, citing Hart & Risley (1996)  
3. Based on ODE fall membership counts at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3225>  
4. Hernandez, Donald J. Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012  
5. Reach Out and Read Fact Sheet: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/media/46483/roronepagerfinal11.18.13.pdf>

