

Read On Arizona

Leading for greater impact in a state



The Inspiration

Like hundreds of other campaigns, Read On Arizona launched with the goal of moving the needle on 3rd grade reading.

What's not so common is the result; during the initiative's first 6 years, there were clear, sustained increases in state 3rd grade reading scores. Led by director Terri Clark and fueled by many strong partnerships, Read On Arizona continues to grow and to accelerate its impact.



- ★ **Statewide collective impact initiative focused on early literacy**
- ★ **Collaboration, data, effective practices, policy, communications**
- ★ **Key state agencies and philanthropic partners**
- ★ **25 regional collaboratives**
- ★ **500+ local partners**

Avoiding Intention-Impact Gaps

So, what makes Read On Arizona distinct? Ultimately, Clark and her partners avoided the intention-impact gap that's widespread among (today's) campaigns—setting goals that demand what we call “systems-building” work and functions but mounting a campaign that's actually characterized by “awareness-raising” work and functions.

Getting to measurable, sustained change in the social impact space is nothing short of complex and challenging. Over the last decade, we've heard from hundreds of amazing partners about their unfulfilled expectations; all too often, there are goals, there is tremendously hard work, there are strategic plans, there are advisories and cabinets, and new approaches—but the energy and efforts aren't converting to impact.

Charting a Path Forward

How did Read On Arizona take a systems-building approach? What has this looked like since the 2013 launch? It's obviously been a comprehensive approach, but here are a few elements that stand out:

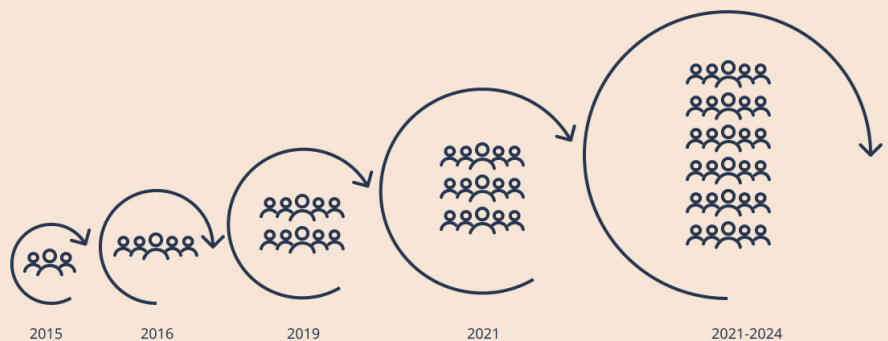
Read On recognized over time, state literacy initiatives funded by public dollars and the campaign's goals would have to be tightly connected; strong partnerships with state educational agencies has been core to the campaign work.

In recruiting communities to join the campaign, Clark knew it wasn't enough to rally them around goals; through a multi-year partnership with Lectio, local community teams receive technical assistance and support to analyze their own approaches against their goals and population's evolving needs (see graphic).

To inform data-driven goals and initiatives, the campaign launched MapLit, an interactive mapping tool as a "one stop" resource to identify key data sets (census, school, health, family engagement) that impact early literacy outcomes in communities.

Beyond a push for community-based collective action and capacity-building, Read On led partners to develop and support a shared policy and action agenda to inform statewide funding and legislative change.

Cross-Sector AZ Institutes + Strategic Consulting: State Teams, Community + School Teams, Funders



A Snapshot of the Results

13% point increase in all students passing the AzMERIT 3rd grade reading assessment since 2015.

Early literacy legislation (SB1572) resulting in over \$100 million in new investments for early literacy in Arizona.

5-year, \$20 million, federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant, to support high-need populations through wide-scale professional development. Arizona's design spans caregivers and educators serving children and families from birth to 12th grade.

440,000+ shared literacy resources distributed through partners.

Inclusion of the Lectio framework in RFPs at state agency and community organizations.