



A Bold Venture
To Close The Opportunity Gap
So More Kids Succeed



The Challenge

San Mateo County is one of the most affluent counties in the nation, yet about half of our 3rd graders can't read proficiently. This statistic rises to a shocking three-fourths of low-income kids of color. Children who cannot read at grade level by 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school and be unemployed or incarcerated.

The Opportunity Gap

Many children in our county get quality preschool and other kinds of enrichment in their first five years, when 90% of brain development occurs. Children from low-income families often don't have access to the same opportunities. The achievement gap is actually an opportunity gap. These kids arrive at kindergarten already behind, and by 3rd grade, are not reading at grade level. Up to 3rd grade, kids learn to read. After, they must read to learn. If kids aren't reading proficiently by 3rd grade, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to be academically successful, thus closing off important career opportunities in the knowledge economy.

A Bold Social Venture

A collaborative of 300+ organizations, The Big Lift is a bold social venture that gives low-income kids the evidence-based boosts they need to read and succeed:

- 2 years of quality preschool
- 3 years of "inspiring summers" programs, designed to end summer learning loss and inspire kids to engage with STEM subjects
- Family engagement to support reading and regular school attendance

A Promising National Model with Best-in-Class Partners

Since our 2014 launch, we have worked with leading education experts to develop a high impact program and we're attracting national attention.

- **Program Partners:** Harvard Kennedy School, Stanford Graduate School of Education, RAND Corporation, San Mateo County Libraries, BELL, Raising A Reader, In Class Today, First 5
- **Funders (select):** San Mateo County Measure K, The White House Social Innovation Fund, The Packard Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, First 5, SV2, Google.org, Genentech

Leadership

This exciting public-private venture is being led by the County of San Mateo, San Mateo County Office of Education, and Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The Big Lift's leaders include:

- Carole Groom, Supervisor, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
- Anne Campbell, San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools
- Erica Wood, Chief Community Impact Officer, Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Outcomes and Impact of The Big Lift

Summary of Outcomes

Since 2014, we have inspired 5,000 low-income children, in 7 school districts, with exciting learning experiences. Results to date include:

**Kindergarten
Readiness***
+27 %

**Summer
Reading Progress****
+3.5 months

**Time reading
with family**
+50%

**Chronic
Absence**
-15%

Number of Children and Families Served

- 5,000 children have received one or more Big Lift interventions since 2014
- Each year, each evidence-based intervention serves:
 - High quality preschool: 2,000 3- and 4-year-olds in 99 classroom sessions
 - Inspiring Summers: 1,300 rising kindergarten through second graders
 - Family engagement: 2,000 families
 - Attendance: The families of 7,600 students receive targeted messaging

Profile of Big Lift Families

- Average family income is \$34 K per year
- 78% are Hispanic/Latino, 9% Asian, 6% White, 3% Pacific Islander, 4% other
- 74% have mothers with a high school education or less
- 74% are dual language learners

Communities Served

- Cabrillo Unified School District
- Jefferson Elementary School District
- La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District
- Ravenswood City School District
- Redwood City School District
- San Bruno Park School District
- South San Francisco Unified School District

How Our Systems Approach is Helping Kids Succeed

- Galvanized the county to address trajectory of low-income kids and invest when ROI is highest
- Challenged the K-12 system, preschools, nonprofits and government to work together for kids
- Implemented shared databases and assessments to track the progress of every child
- Required accountability and continuous improvement in every program facet
- Built the capacity of existing county organizations to do the work long-term

*RAND Study shows Big Lift kids scored higher (+ 27 percentage points) on kindergarten readiness than demographically similar children who did not attend preschool

**Our kids are gaining 1.5 months of reading progress each summer, instead of the usual two-month summer slide, for a net gain of 3.5 months each year.