



## **Vision**

A city where diverse, ethnic, and immigrant communities become dynamic participants in education, the marketplace, and civics and become contributors to its well being.

## **Mission**

To invest in students to excel in literacy, engage parents to be the first teachers, and support the family and its school with community partners.

## **How**

- Connect children reading below grade level with personal reading relationships, parents first.
- Provide parents with adult education opportunities to empower them to teach their children and get jobs that allow more family time.
- Surround the family with a support structure:
  - Parents who befriend the parents and engage in educational activities together
  - Pupils who excel in school helping children read
  - Professionals who come to read with children before work
  - Parishes that further invest in children, parents, and schools
  - Points of community: businesses, libraries, non-profits who partner

## **Values**

Interpersonal: children require one-on-one attention

Family-based: the most enduring relationship

Reaching underserved: providing equal opportunities

Aligned with schools: success in schools is the ultimate benchmark

Local engagement: volunteer and community resources

Scaling through partnerships: outreach must be broad but targeted

Leadership-driven: systemic and behavioral change through the influence of leaders

## **Literacy Across Atlanta Together**

Catalyst Coalition is a non-profit organization that brings the resources of diversity together with existing efforts to take on significant challenges. Our current focus is on third-grade literacy rates, which are below 50% in Gwinnett. At a time when learning to read must give way to reading to learn, the majority of our children are struggling to make the transition. The consequences for the rest of the child's schooling and future are monumental. Research and data, especially of early childhood, indicates a child's future course in education and life may be decided by factors well before third grade. This is before a child has a chance to make their own choices.

"Reading and Relationship" is our plan to start a ripple effect to reverse the tide. We want to see every child that is reading below grade level connected to personal reading relationships. The very first and enduring relationship must be the child's parents. Child literacy must be about family literacy. And family literacy must be about community literacy as we coordinate community stakeholders to come alongside and support the family. Our strategy is to operate successfully across the diverse and ethnic communities and in working with existing relational structures in a simple, sustainable, and scalable manner. We get children reading more by engaging community relationships and empowering families to read together with the child.

Parents, teachers, neighbors, volunteers, professionals before work, high school students after school, churches, businesses, and libraries — all must come together to read with the child. From cafeteria tables in the morning, school desks during the day, library desks in the afternoon, to the dinner table in the evening, the child will be surrounded by opportunities to read and learn. Through a series of supportive relationships, the child reads daily, on weekends and during vacation, and a love of reading can flourish. We want to see every elementary school appropriately identified, adopted by the community-based coalition. The starting point is the simple act of reading in a personal relationship. The coalition will consist of other literacy, child, and family non-profits that provide specialized, wrap-around services.

By engaging the family and community, we can address the root causes and help break the generational cycles. By forming diverse partnerships that take ownership of this challenge and opportunity, the mission can be accelerated and amplified across the multi-cultural landscape. Catalyst Coalition will help play a convening and coordinating role to mobilize those diverse relationships and strategically direct them beginning with Gwinnett County.