



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WAKE UP AND READ HONORED AS A NATIONAL PACESETTER
FOR EARLY LITERACY WORK**

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Recognizes Wake County as Exemplary

RALEIGH, NC (April 3, 2017) – WAKE Up and Read has been honored as a Pacesetter by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading for exemplary work in eliminating barriers faced by children from low-income families on the path to becoming proficient readers.

“We are proud of WAKE Up and Read and the numerous organizations and individuals involved in the collaborative for joining forces and working tirelessly to help children and families,” said Wake County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. James Merrill. “The Pacesetter award is a wonderful acknowledgement of WAKE Up and Read’s work and progress to help all Wake County children develop the skills needed to excel in school.”

The WAKE Up and Read campaign was launched in 2012 to address two of the most critical junctures to lifelong success, reading on grade-level by third grade and summer learning loss. This unique community collaboration includes education, civic, philanthropic, and business leaders from across Wake County, all working together to help every child develop the necessary skills for success in school and beyond. WAKE Up and Read’s goal is to ensure that all children in our community have the tools and resources they need to become lifelong readers and learners.

“Reading proficiency is key to our children’s futures and the economic vitality of our state through an educated workforce. Ensuring that our children are equipped to succeed in school by supporting good oral and overall health and development is the responsibility of the whole community. Delta Dental is a committed partner in the WAKE Up and Read collaboration,” said Delta Dental of North Carolina President and Chief Executive Officer, Curt Ladig.

The GLR Campaign recognizes Wake County, North Carolina, as a 2016 Pacesetter, one of the highest awards presented by the Campaign, for reporting population-level, measurable progress in school readiness for children from low-income families. Successes include an increase in school readiness for entering Wake kindergarteners in Title I schools; in 2014-2015, just 22% of Wake County incoming kindergarten students in Title I schools were at or above proficiency in reading, and by 2016-2017, that percentage increased to 34%. WAKE Up and Read, along with other numerous agencies and

organizations in Wake County who support young children and families, affected this change by offer learning opportunities for families through targeted messaging and helping them build home libraries.

In addition to school readiness, WAKE Up and Read also addresses other key factors in achieving grade-level reading: school attendance and summer learning loss. Through a multi-faceted awareness campaign and annual book drive that benefits elementary schools, child care facilities, and community centers, WAKE Up and Read helps put books into the homes of children across Wake County and encourages families to read, talk, and play with their children and understand the importance of attending school every day.

Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone toward high school graduation and career success because it marks the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” National tests show that two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders (four-fifths of whom are from low-income families) are not reading proficiently. Students who have not mastered reading by that time are more likely to drop out of high school and struggle throughout their lives.

WAKE Up and Read is part of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and supported by the state lead organization, the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation. The Campaign is a collaborative effort to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. More than 300 communities across the country are partners in the campaign; WAKE Up and Read is one of six in North Carolina.

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ABOUT WAKE UP AND READ

WAKE Up and Read is a collaborative effort to engage and educate Wake County about the importance of childhood literacy and to increase access to literacy resources and opportunities for all children. This unique community partnership includes education, civic, philanthropic, and business leaders from across Wake County, all working together to help every child develop the necessary skills for success in school and beyond. Our shared vision is for every child in Wake County inspired, equipped, and empowered to read. To learn more, visit www.wakeupandread.org.

ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION

NCECF has a bold vision that each North Carolina child has a strong foundation for lifelong health, education and well-being supported by a premiere birth-to-eight system. NCECF promotes public understanding of and support for policies that promote children’s birth-to-age-eight years for academic and lifelong success, convenes and spearheads collaboration to bridge North Carolina’s birth-to-five and kindergarten-to-third grade systems, and advances policies that create a stronger NC today and tomorrow by supporting each child’s birth-to-eight development. Learn more at <http://www.buildthefoundation.org/>.