I had dinner with an acquaintance last week and she is on the important work of the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) in our region.

First, I discussed a few of our challenges. In the Suncoast region, 45% of our children are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Forty percent repeat grade three, and 6% are on grade level.

Next, I shared some of our successes. In the Suncoast region, 45% of our children are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Forty percent repeat grade three, and 6% are on grade level.

My acquaintance replied, "It’s so easy to believe there is anything you can do about a problem like this!"

I wasn’t discouraged by her questions. I understood her thoughts. The size of this crisis and the many different factors that must be done in order to ensure that no other children see the same outcomes. If you look at the whole picture at once it can feel like we have to try to fill an ocean with a teaspoon. Let’s face it, it’s too late to take the first step in a journey that seems a million miles long. It’s easier to break the trip down into manageable chunks.

By concentrating our efforts on key areas, we can make a difference.

Each program we implement will get us closer to the goal. Every one of our children deserves the very best chance we can give them.

Our goal has to include all of our children because each one of them matters.

By making them stronger, we make our community stronger.

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First, I laid out the goal: The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is an initiative to ensure that every child in our region has the opportunity to begin our journey of a million miles, knowing that step by step, week by week, month by month we will make a difference.

Summer Learning Loss

By concentrating our efforts in five key areas -- attendance, Parental Engagement, Reading at Home, School Readiness, and Social Emotional Learning -- SCGLR is working to close the gaps for students at every point in their learning journey.

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