

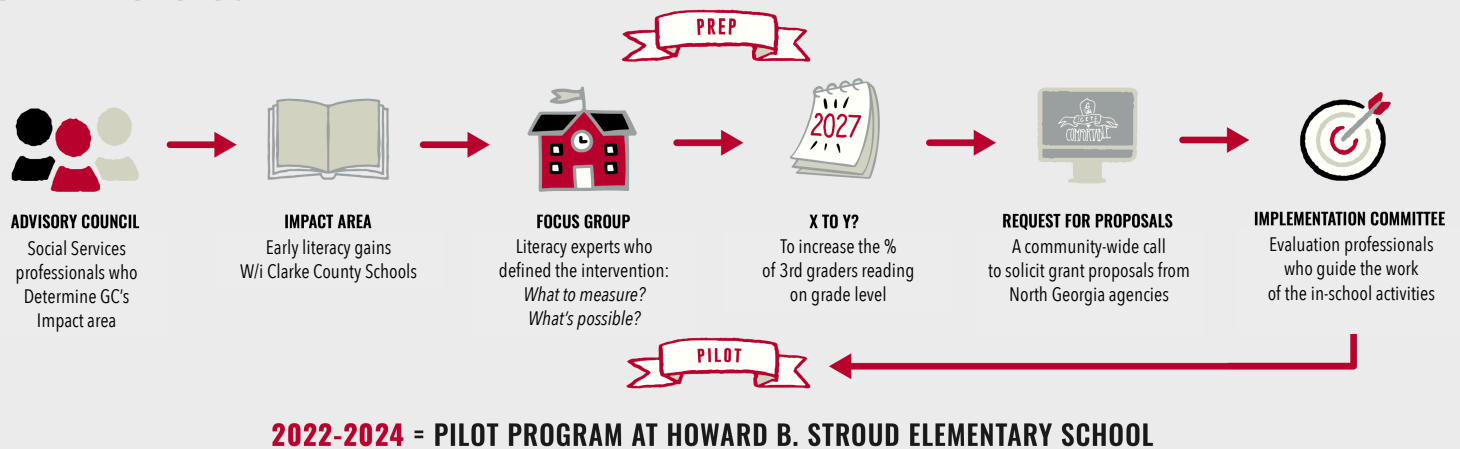
ABOUT GET COMFORTABLE: STORYTELLERS

Get Comfortable is a cross-sector consortium with a mission to **channel the generosity of many toward the greatest local needs**. Working alongside 34 local representatives in 2021—from the **ACC Government**, **Envision Athens**, **United Way of Northeast Georgia**, the **Athens Wellbeing Project**, and the **Clarke County School District (CCSD)**—early literacy was identified as a consensus community priority that required more focused energy over time.

To increase the number of CCSD 3rd graders reading on level from **20% to 60%**, *Get Comfortable* has partnered with **CCSD** and **Books For Keeps** to roll out an in-school, high-dosage, 1-on-1 literacy mentorship program that pairs mentors with county-identified 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders.

The **Get Comfortable Fund**, where all funds are donated and distributed, is housed at the **Athens Area Community Foundation**. As such, donors enjoy the benefits of contributing to a 501(c)(3), and receive a tax letter upon every donation.

OUR METHODOLOGY



THE IMPORTANCE OF 3RD GRADE LITERACY



3rd grade is when a student goes from 'learning to read' to now 'reading to learn'

4X

A non-proficient reader in 3rd grade is 4 times less likely to graduate from high school



The average high school dropout has a negative net fiscal contribution to society



In 2021, 20% of Clarke County 3rd grade students were reading on grade level

WHAT IS LITERACY MENTORING?

- The pairing of a **trained community member** with a CCSD-identified 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade student for the duration of the academic year.
- 1 hour each week** is spent between a student and their literacy mentor completing activities that reinforce the fundamentals of language arts: phonics, syntax, sight words, reading comprehension, etc.
- By the end of the academic term, each participating student receives a minimum of **15 additional hours** of literacy enhancement.
- The activities being employed are based upon the principles of **effective mentorship**, which are endorsed by UGA's Fanning Institute and MENTOR Georgia.

PROGRAM EFFICACY

We are working with a 3rd-party research team—a partnership between CCSD’s Director of Data and the UGA College of Public Health—to analyze program efficacy.

Two comparable CCSD elementary schools serve as the **Control Group**, whose reading proficiency gains are measured against the **Stroud Cohort**, our experimental group. At right, you can see the start-of-term (August) versus end-of-term (May) data comps for both pilot years.

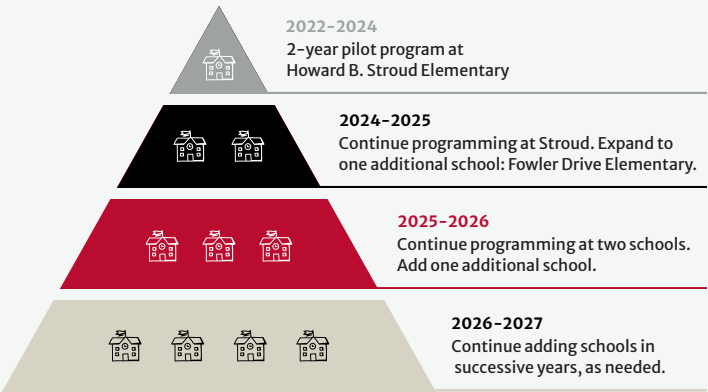
ACADEMIC YEAR	PERFORMANCE CATEGORY	CONTROL GROUP	GC COHORT
2022-2023 Δ	On Grade Level	[+] 136%	[+] 629%
	1 Grade Level Behind	[-] 48%	[+] 45%
	2+ Grade Levels Behind	[-] 52%	[-] 84%
2023-2024 Δ	On Grade Level	[+] 119%	[+] 300%
	1 Grade Level Behind	[-] 24%	[-] 4%
	2+ Grade Levels Behind	[-] 42%	[-] 52%
2024-2025 Δ	On Grade Level	[+] 125%	[+] 337%
	1 Grade Level Behind	[-] 12%	[-] 50%
	2+ Grade Levels Behind	[-] 38%	[-] 72%

The chart above compares the literacy gains between the Clarke County School District’s **Control Group** and our experimental **Get Comfortable Cohort**. Highlighted cells show the most pronounced treatment effects.

EXPANSION PLANNING

Given such a pronounced treatment effect, the program expanded into **one additional school** during the 2024–2025 term. Expansion will continue in each successive year until a critical mass is being served county-wide.

Once the program achieves its goal—cresting 60% of CCSD 3rd graders reading on level—**sustainability planning** will commence. For now, the program is committed to produce an intervention that could in time be replicated across the state and region.



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY SAYING?

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Get Comfortable has identified a crucial linchpin that has the potential to impact our community for decades to come: 3rd grade reading proficiency. They have rallied organizations and have committed time and fiscal resources to launch a very successful pilot program to address this crucial challenge. Research findings from the pilot year demonstrate the effectiveness of their approach and give us confidence that its expansion will be successful.

Denise Spangler, PhD
Dean
UGA College of Education

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Studies show that if a student has learned to read by 3rd grade, they will begin reading to learn thereafter. As such, 3rd grade reading proficiency is the single most important predictor of the earning future of each student, not to mention the economic vitality of Athens as a whole over the next 10 years. The Get Comfortable campaign is changing the lives of students today. And in fact, it has become the cornerstone of the Athens-Clarke County workforce development plan moving forward.

David Bradley
President & CEO,
Athens Area Chamber of Commerce

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION

- **2023 Community Impact Program of the Year**
Sandra Deal Center for Early Language & Literacy
*Recognized at the Annual Governor’s Summit
- **2023 Community Impact Business of the Year**
Georgia Municipal Association
*Presented at Georgia City Solutions
- **2024 Best Community Improvement Program**
United States Chamber of Commerce
*Only 8 Corporate Citizens Awards presented annually