



# COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

*Patrick S. Blacklock*  
County Administrator

Beth Gabor  
Manager of Operations & Strategy

625 Court Street, Room 202 ▪ Woodland, CA 95695  
(530) 666-8042 ▪ FAX (530) 668-4029  
www.yolocounty.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 30, 2015

Contact: Beth Gabor, Public Information Officer  
(530) 666-8042 [w] ▪ (530) 219-8464 [c]

## **April 29 Literacy Symposium to Address Achievement Gap**

**(Woodland, CA)** – According to a 2013 Annie E. Casey Foundation report on why reading by the end of third grade matters, “children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers.” How does this affect us in Yolo County? This question will be addressed in a community “Call to Action” on April 29, 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the Yolo County Office of Education Conference Center, located at 1280 Anita Court, Suite 120 in Woodland.

Yolo County Superintendent of Schools Jesse Ortiz and Yolo County Librarian Patty Wong are working together to bring attention to the issue of low literacy. This symposium will be the first step in creating a county wide action plan. Community and civic leaders from all backgrounds are invited to attend the symposium and learn what we can do in Yolo County to give our children the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.

“When children reach the 3rd grade with low literacy skills they face almost insurmountable challenges in learning, and they account for 63% of youth who do not graduate from high school,” said Yolo County Librarian Patty Wong. “Reading is an important life skill that gives children the ability to understand the world around them, and we believe that working with schools, pre-schools and parents is key in helping all children succeed in reading and in life.”

In Yolo County (accordingly to 2013 STAR Test Results):

- 69% of economically disadvantaged youth are not reading at grade level in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 54% of African American youth are not reading at grade level in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 43% of Hispanic youth are not reading at grade level in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

“Investing in our children now is an investment in the future,” said Yolo County Superintendent of Schools Jesse Ortiz. “The quality of life for generations to come will be influenced by the resources and priorities we provide our children now to become successful throughout their lives.”

The April 29 literacy symposium will focus on:

- early intervention and targeted approaches to student improvement;
- food security and nutrition access to stimulate learning readiness;
- community engagement including enhanced parent participation; and
- summer learning sustainability.

To register for the literacy symposium, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/k2suahb> or call (530) 668-6700 for more information.

###