





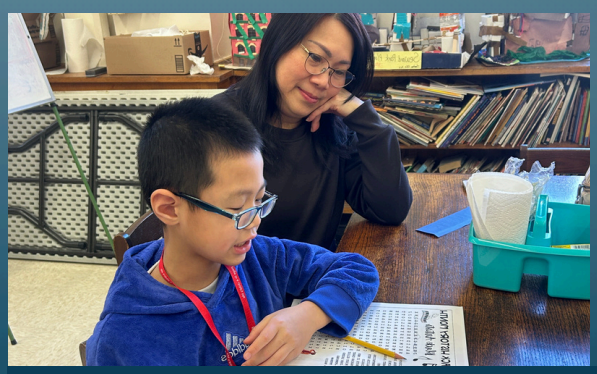
read ahead

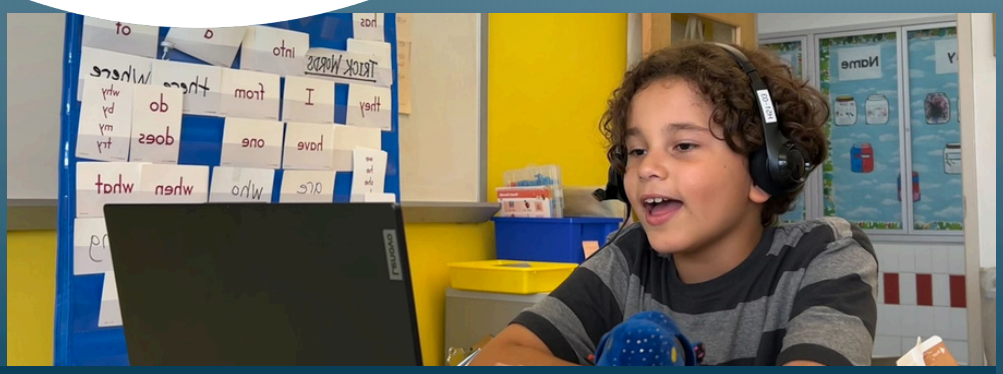
share a page in a child's life

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031







Building a stronger future for
Read Ahead—and the students we serve.

A New Chapter for Read Ahead



A Letter from Our Board Chair & Vice Chair

SEAN FITZGERALD & ROBERT RYAN









Dear Friends and Supporters,

On behalf of the full Board of Directors, especially the Strategic Planning Committee, we are excited to share with you our **five year Strategic Plan for Read Ahead.**

We launched this process in tandem with our search for a new Executive Director, aligned to ensure a pointed focus for this next chapter of Read Ahead. We were mindful of ensuring that the creation of this strategic document included analysis of our past combined with the vision of new leadership. We began with a question: what does success for our students and communities look like within the everchanging world we are experiencing today?

Like all new plans, our goal with this one includes expanding on our previous successes and creating new opportunities where we can invest our resources to solidify our future. Having a strong and sustainable financial foundation is key to the success of our Strategic Plan, and allows us to implement the other pillars over the next five years.

As always, our goals are ambitious, and while we may face challenges along the way, our team is ready to tackle those to achieve our mission, and to realize our vision. Thanks to the unwavering support of our partners, staff, volunteers and broader community, Read Ahead is poised to answer the call of New Yorkers, and ensure that our students have the tools and resources to strengthen their confidence and prepare them for future success.

Thank you for joining us,

A Letter from Our Executive Director

ZOE HENRIQUEZ



To Our Wonderful Community,

Thank you for welcoming me into this incredible organization, and thank you for your support of our mission. With your partnership, Read Ahead has been enacting our work for more than 35 years. With the launch of this new Strategic Plan, Read Ahead has laid the groundwork for more students to receive greater exposure to the tools they need to succeed, helping them increase their curiosity and gain self-efficacy in literacy development.

But we can't do it alone. We hope you'll join us for the next phase of our growth; one where we envision a world where **all students have the support they need to become confident readers, helping them unlock their full potential.**

Thanks to the leadership of our Read Ahead Board of Directors and you, the futures of our students have the beginnings of a great story.

Thank you,

Reading Opens Doors, Relationships Build Confidence.

OUR MISSION

Read Ahead provides elementary school students with reading-based mentoring programs and the resources that strengthen their confidence and prepare them for future success.

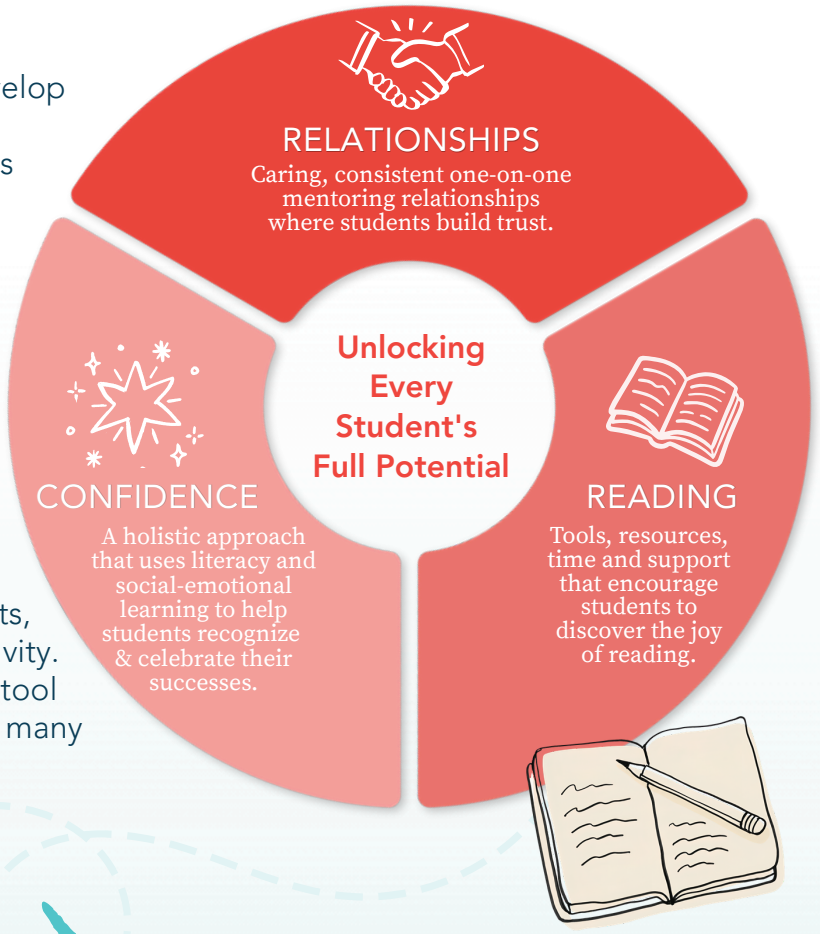
OUR VISION

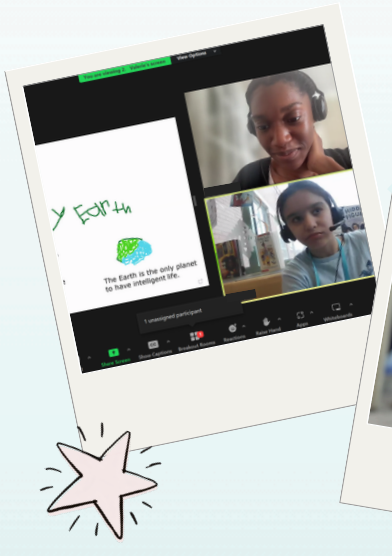
We envision a world where all students have the support they need to become confident readers, helping them unlock their full potential.

OUR APPROACH

By reading together, students and mentors develop trust and connection while making reading fun, engaging, and driven by students' own interests and curiosity. Our **reading-based mentoring program** supplements other aspects of students' lives—regardless of where they start academically—so that all students have more opportunities to experience and celebrate their successes, and boost their confidence and self-esteem over time.

Read Ahead also provides additional programming and tools for caregivers to support their children at home and **become more confident young readers.** For our students, reading becomes a fun, exciting, enjoyable activity. Most importantly, reading becomes a valuable tool that students know how to apply and deploy in many other aspects of their lives.







"The impact Read Ahead has cannot be measured … **I'd put my entire class in this program.** Every child needs a mentor and many of ours struggle to find one."

- 4TH GRADE TEACHER, P.S. 92

The Future We're Building



As we celebrate more than 35 years of impact, we look ahead to the next five years with a clear vision for Read Ahead's future and an unwavering commitment to the students we serve.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1

Grow Our Reach

Serve 1,000 NYC students.

We will thoughtfully expand Read Ahead's reach—serving more students within current partner schools, building new school partnerships, growing our mentor community, and strengthening the resources and support available to students, mentors and caregivers.

This plan specifically prioritizes expanding within current schools, adding schools, growing the mentor pool, improving mentor training, expanding caregiver resources and documenting curriculum.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2

Demonstrate Our Impact

Better understand—and share—the difference Read Ahead makes.

We will strengthen how we collect, evaluate and communicate data so that we can better understand student outcomes, continuously improve our programs and demonstrate Read Ahead's impact to our community.

Importantly, our data and impact strategy will incorporate perspectives from students, mentors, caregivers and educators, rather than relying on a single measure of success.

"The virtual program helps my son improve his skills with reading and the relationship between himself and reading books. **He began to love books more after this program!**"

- PARENT OF A READ AHEAD MENTEE, P.S. 33





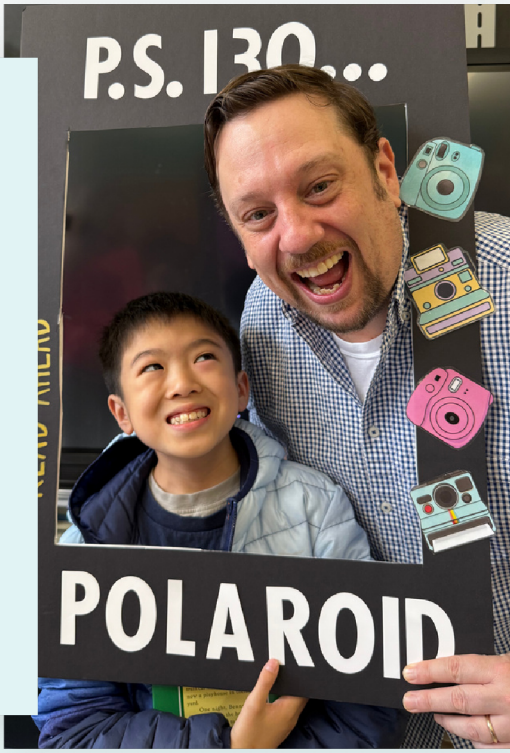
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3

Build a Stronger Foundation

Grow annual revenue to $5 million by 2031.

Sustainable growth requires sustainable resources. We will diversify Read Ahead's funding, deepen corporate partnerships, expand foundation support and grow individual giving so we can invest responsibly in our programs, people and future.

We believe that revenue growth should enable essential staffing, financial reserves and sustainable, strategic expansion without jeopardizing existing organizational and programmatic operations.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #4

Expand Our Community

Bring Read Ahead beyond our current sphere of influence.

We will strengthen Read Ahead's communications and storytelling so more people understand who we are, the impact of our work and the many ways they can become part of our community.

This work is key, as we know that stronger communications and branding are deeply connected with with revenue growth, impact and program expansion.

The Next Chapter Starts With All of Us.



Our five-year vision is ambitious because the opportunity in front of us is significant.

Reaching 1,000 students will require more mentors. Stronger programs will require continued investment. Understanding our impact will require new tools and resources. And accomplishing all of this by 2031 will require a growing community that believes in what Read Ahead makes possible.

There are many ways to be part of what comes next.



MENTOR

Share your time and build a meaningful relationship with a student.



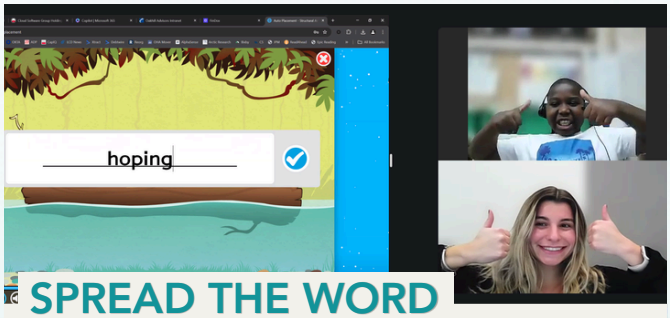
PARTNER

Engage your company or organization in supporting NYC students.



GIVE

Invest in Read Ahead's growth and the future of our students.



SPREAD THE WORD

Help introduce Read Ahead to new people and communities.

Together, we can share a page in the next chapter of Read Ahead.

Reach out to development@readahead.org to learn more.