

Emerson Early Literacy Challenge

Cohort 2 Information Session

August 2025

Welcome! In the chat, please share:

- Name
- Title
- School / District
- Favorite part of your summer



Agenda

Introduction to The Opportunity Trust Team

Origins of The Challenge

Program Overview

Look Back on Year 1 of The Challenge

Introduction to Attuned Education Partners

Program Timeline

Application Process

Questions

**Emerson Early Literacy
Challenge**



Meet The Opportunity Trust Team here today



Brandi Chin

Partner



Jesse Dixon

Partner



Jonathan Caldera

Associate Partner

**Emerson Early Literacy
Challenge**

Building off the momentum of Right to Read, we aim to inspire accelerated progress through shared learning and proof points

- Right to Read is pursuing equity through literacy across the nation
- In 2022, Missouri passed Senate Bill 681, mandating evidence-based reading instruction
- In 2023, the Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed initiative allocated \$60 million in funding to support student literacy
- In 2024, the St. Louis NAACP made an urgent call to action for the community to help address the local literacy crisis
- In response, St. Louis-headquartered Emerson, the global automation technology and software company, donated \$1 million, paving the way for the Emerson Early Literacy Challenge



POLITICS

Missouri education bill with water lead testing, literacy programs and more set to pass



Galen Bacharier
Springfield News-Leader

Published 12:23 p.m. CT May 11, 2022 | Updated 12:28 p.m. CT May 11, 2022



Missouri DESE-Approved Solutions to Launch Successful Readers

Written by
Voyager Sopris Learning

Updated on June 11, 2024
Reading

The Missouri Read, Lead, Exceed initiative is the state's comprehensive plan from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to dedicate \$25 million in state funding and \$35 million in federal relief funding to invest in student literacy through educator training and materials that support the science of reading.

**Emerson Early Literacy
Challenge**

The Challenge connects participants with expert guidance, peer and community support, and grant funding

Participants have access to...

Guidance from Nationally Recognized Literacy Experts

- School visit at the start of the program to conduct an instructional diagnostic sharing strengths and opportunities in instructional trends, teacher trends, and personalized recommendations
- Five 1:1 coaching sessions
- Four full-day cohort learning sessions sharing research-backed best practices and resources

Peer and Community Support

- Access to a cohort of like-minded LEAs
- Exposure to local literacy experts and education leaders representing parent groups, higher education, the Missouri Department of Education, community-based organizations, and philanthropy
- Support from The Opportunity Trust

Proof Points

- Learning site visit to a school that significantly improved student literacy outcomes

Grant Funding

- \$5,000 planning grant in Fall 2025
- Up to \$200,000 implementation grant in Spring 2026



The Challenge is guided by four principles

1

Literacy is a human & civil right

All children are capable of reading proficiently by 3rd grade and doing so is foundational to success in school and in life.

2

Proficiency is possible with the right conditions and approaches

Schools and school systems applying the science of reading and learning science consistently are creating classrooms where the majority of students irrespective of background attain grade level proficiency.

3

Collaboration is essential to accelerate improvement

The best solutions for St. Louis schools will be developed by education leaders who collectively share their expertise, learn from promising practices locally and nationally, and engage parents and community as partners.

4

Proof points will catalyze a greater collective sense of possibility

Having local examples of what is possible are essential to sustaining the changes required at the school, system, and state level to ensure all children in our public schools can read proficiently by 3rd grade.

In its inaugural year, four St. LEAs participated in an immersive learning journey culminating in plans and funding designed to accelerate literacy outcomes

A look back on year 1 of The Challenge...



Selected 4 LEAs through a rigorous application process: Atlas, Premier, Ferguson-Florissant, and University City



Partnered with literacy experts to facilitate three full-day cohort learning sessions to build capacity for change



Traveled to Washington DC to learn from a district that successfully accelerated literacy outcomes



LEAs developed early literacy visions, set goals, formulated comprehensive literacy plans, and received grant funding

Cohort one participants rated the program highly



% of attendees reporting the learning experience was a valuable use of their time

100%
of DC Site
Visit
participants

92%
of cohort
learning
session #1
respondents

95%
of cohort
learning
session #2
respondents

94%
of cohort
learning
session #3
respondents



This partnership has pushed my thinking and forced me to think outside the box. It's been especially helpful to see data and to learn what other districts are doing.

– Head of School



The partnership has given me guidance and structure around the work we are trying to do. The outside help has been wonderful!

– Principal



The D.C trip was transformative... this was my first taste of being a part of something "beyond the classroom", if you will. I'm not usually a part of budget convos or vision/planning outside of curriculum.

– Educator

Founded in 2016, Attuned is a team of nationally-respected practitioners with a proven record of guiding school systems to excellence

Our vision

All students have access to educational excellence.

Our mission

Attuned builds the capacity of PK-12 organizations to drive educational equity and excellence for underserved students. Our team of practitioners partners with school systems to prioritize, tailor, and implement a diverse set of proven practices. We blend rigor and empathy, planning and implementation, district and charter expertise, and aspirations of quality and scale.



Lindsey Smith
Chief Academic Officer



Walter Chen
Deputy Chief of Special Projects

**Emerson Early Literacy
Challenge**

What We Deliver

We help our partners become well aligned and well equipped in these areas

Clear, Coherent Plans

- **Actionable diagnostics** to inform continuous improvement
- Multi-year **strategic plans**
- Effective **school design**



Instructional Excellence

- **Implementation of high-quality instructional materials**, with a focus on ELA, science of reading (SoR) and math
- **Implementation of high-impact instructional practices** (“difference makers”)
- Enduring systems that enable **supports for multilingual learners**

Strong Leaders & Teams

- Actionable insights from **custom team health surveys**
- Impactful **professional learning systems**
- **Coaching and development** for individuals and teams

Our Literacy Partnerships

Attuned has supported over 200+ systems across the country with literacy-related planning and implementation



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life



**BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



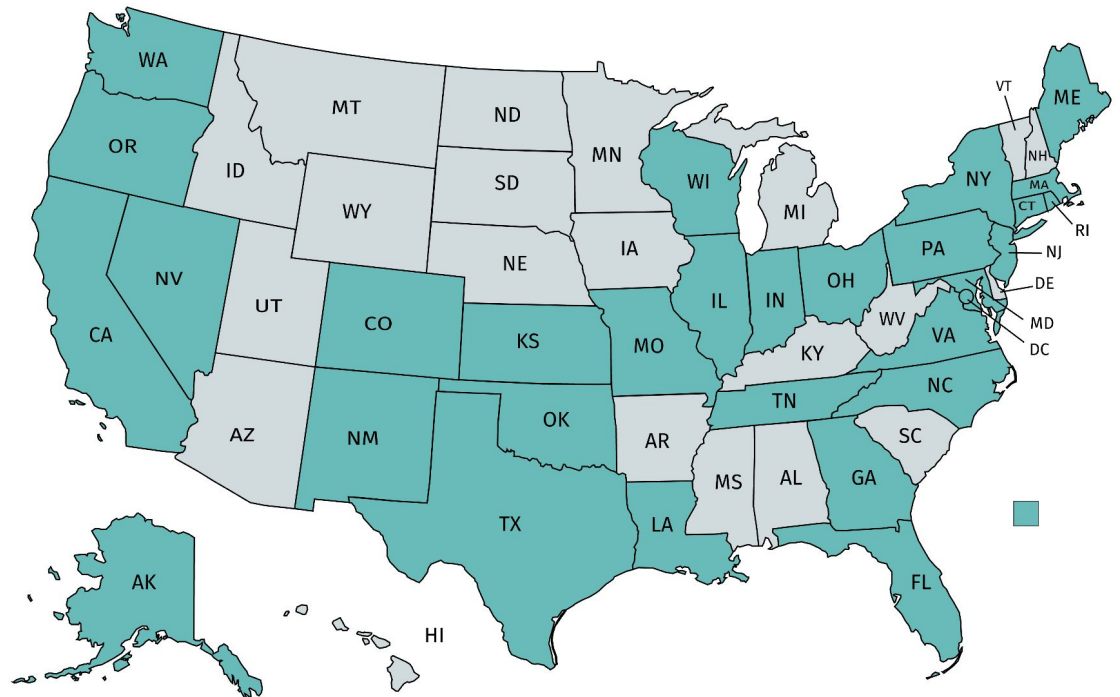
**ROCKETSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Mastery Charter Schools
Excellence. No Excuses.



**UNCOMMON
SCHOOLS**



**Emerson Early Literacy
Challenge**

Our Experience in Missouri and St. Louis

Attuned has deep familiarity with the Missouri context having supported 14+ schools and systems in both St. Louis and Kansas City



Crossroads Charter Schools



EWING MARION

KAUFFMAN SCHOOL



KIPP:KC



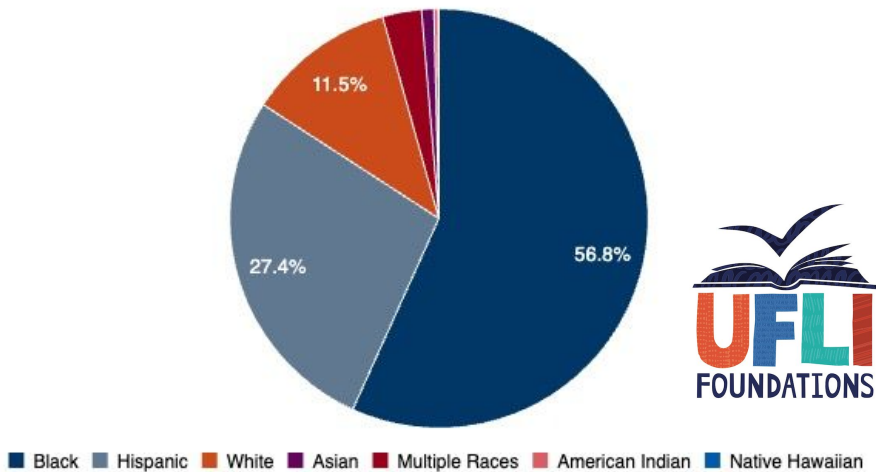
Emerson Early Literacy Challenge



We've seen breakthrough results in an urban school system with which we've deeply partnered in early literacy

Attuned has partnered deeply in early literacy in an urban school system with 25 elementary schools for the last two years. After piloting UFLI with Attuned support and seeing strong results in 2023-24, the school system scaled implementation in 2024-25. The school system doubled the rate of early literacy BOY to EOY growth from any previous year on record, as well as the state's rate of growth from BOY to EOY, with outsized growth for historically disadvantaged students.

2024 Fall Membership By Subgroup: Racial and Ethnic Groups

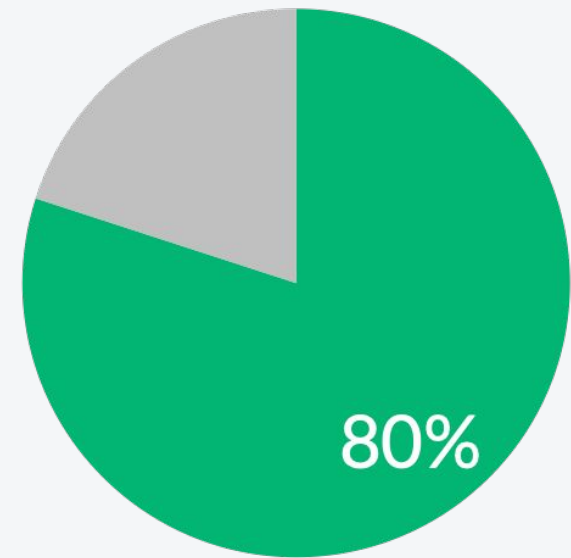


Grade/subgroup	Change from BOY to EOY
Kindergarten	+13
1st	+16, all time high
2nd	+14
ML	+33, all time high
SwD	+10, all time high
ED	+18
Black	+12
Latino/a	+23
White	+8

We're proud of our impact with school system partners that receive our language and literacy support

Student Outcomes

80% of school systems that received our language and literacy support narrowed proficiency gaps between Black/Latinx students and statewide peers



Reach and Scale

We've served over 1.6 million students across 30+ states.

90+

Net Promoter Score

300+

PK-12 Organizations

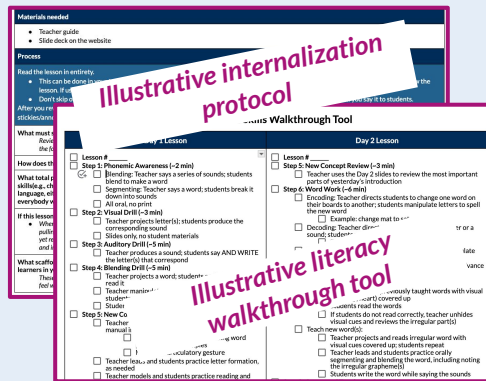
Our Triple Bottom Line

Our literacy partnerships are designed to leave systems with breakthrough results across a triple bottom line



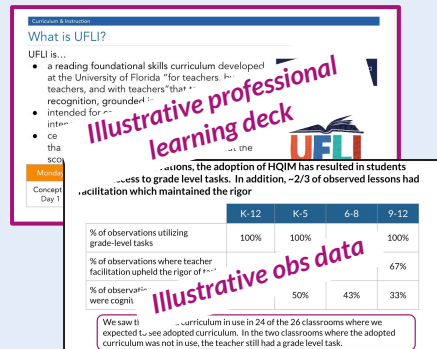
Literacy Instructional Leadership Capacity

Supported by enduring tools and resources



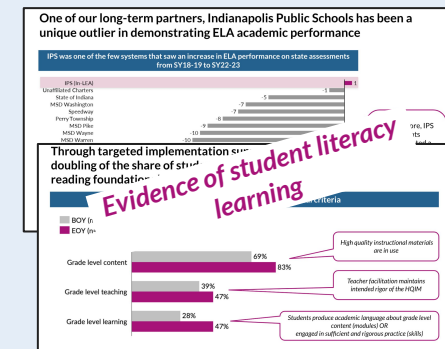
Literacy Curriculum & Instruction

Grounded in high-quality content brought to life by knowledgeable and skilled educators



Student Learning

Including experiences in the classroom and outcomes on measures of reading success

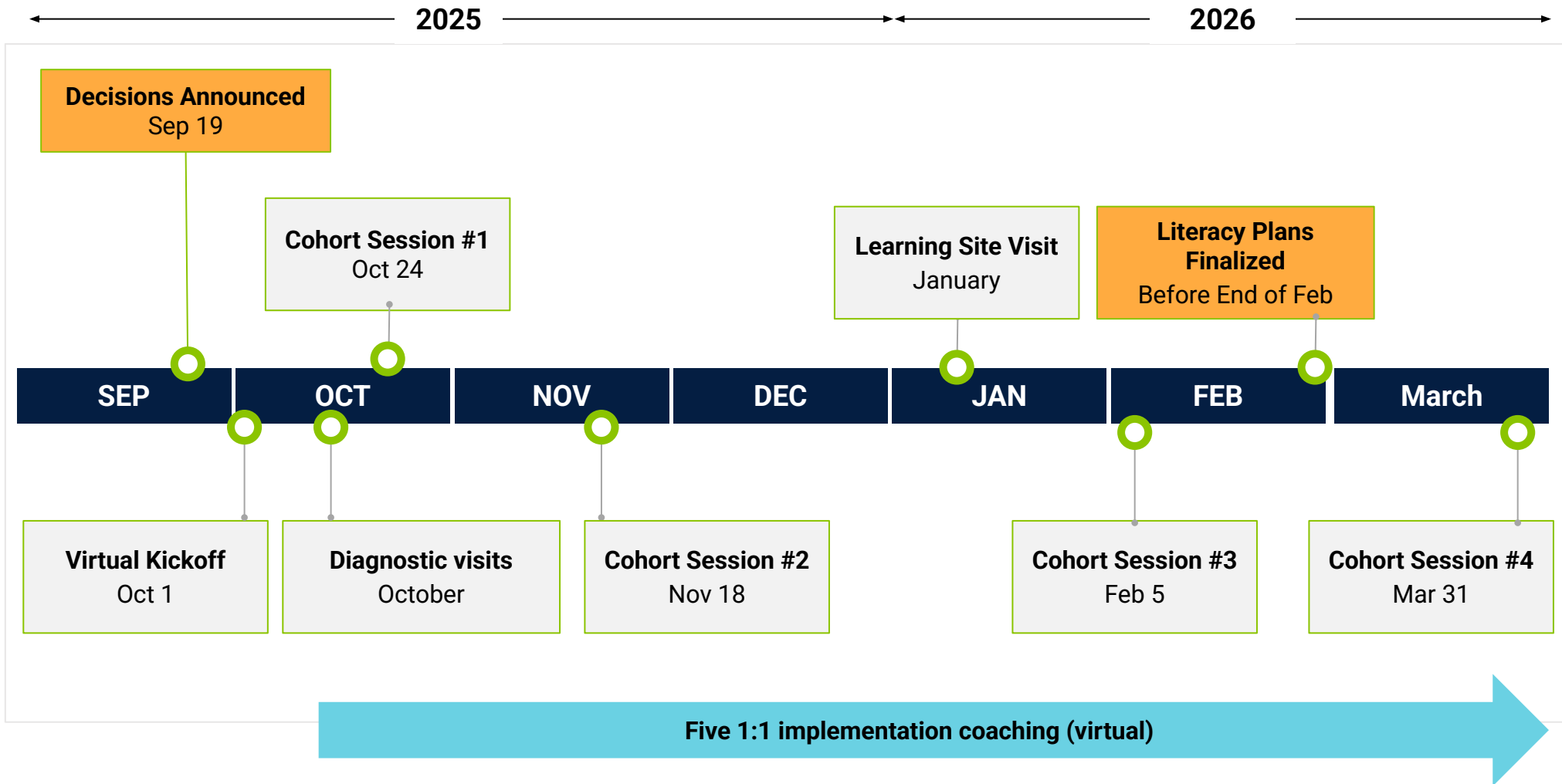


We can achieve transformational literacy outcomes for students furthest from opportunity, at scale



“To learn to read is to be forever free.”
—Frederick Douglass

2025-2026 Program Timeline



Expectations for Grant Award

Requirements for the \$200k implementation grant in Spring 2026:

1. Core Team members **attend all scheduled programming**
 - a. 1 90-minute virtual kickoff
 - b. 4 full-day cohort learning sessions
 - c. 1 overnight site visit to Richmond
1. **Willing to host the ~25 person cohort** at your school for a cohort learning session and site visit between October and March
1. **Develop a comprehensive literacy plan** reflective of the program learnings, that is approved by your School Board, Attuned, and The Opportunity Trust by the end of February



Applications will be assessed on four dimensions

Representative LEA Team:

- A 5-member Core Team with a participating principal, head of literacy, and at least two educators
- Change-agents who demonstrate the ability to execute and deliver impact
- Able commit to participating in all programming

Readiness for Change:

- Prepared to embrace change and make significant shifts
- Display a growth mindset, including a willingness to innovate, openness to feedback, and willingness to make mid-course corrections

Knowledge & Implementation of Best Practices:

- Literacy journey underway; already utilizing green-rated curriculum, phonics, etc.
- Baseline knowledge and understanding of the Science of Reading
- Motivation to take literacy journey to the next level
- Evidence of successfully implementing innovative practices
- Culture of continuous learning

Data Driven Culture:

- Track record of monitoring results to track student achievement
- History of practicing data-driven decision-making
- Able to provide clear examples of using data to drive continuous improvement

Key Application Dates

Applications Close	September 5, 11:59pm CT
Invitations to Interview	By September 10 EOD
Capacity Interviews	September 11-16
Final Decisions Announced	September 19
90-min Virtual Program Kickoff	October 1



Questions?