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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

The Opportunity Trust and Emerson Launch Second Cohort of Emerson Early Literacy Challenge

\$1 million initiative aims to accelerate reading gains for St. Louis students by third grade

ST. LOUIS, MO – [August 7, 2025] – [The Opportunity Trust](#), in partnership with St. Louis-headquartered [Emerson](#), the global automation technology and software company, has launched the second cohort of the [Emerson Early Literacy Challenge](#), a multi-year initiative to improve third-grade reading outcomes across public schools in St. Louis City and County.

Building on the momentum of last year's launch, this year's challenge is made possible by a renewed \$1 million investment from Emerson. The program continues to respond to the St. Louis NAACP's urgent call to action to close racial literacy gaps and address the systemic reading crisis impacting Missouri students.

"At Emerson, we believe strong early childhood literacy lays the foundation for a thriving workforce and community," said Akberet Boykin Farr, Vice President of HR, Corporate Functions at Emerson. "We're proud to continue our investment of \$1 million this year to deepen our impact and help more students unlock the power of reading."

The Emerson Early Literacy Challenge will again support four public schools with immersive professional learning and funding to implement the Science of Reading. Selected literacy teams will include educators, school leaders, district leaders, parents, and community partners, and will collaborate with leading literacy experts to develop and refine literacy action plans for K–3 classrooms.

Each participating team is eligible for a \$5,000 planning grant and, upon completing the program, a \$200,000 implementation grant. Schools will also benefit from

year-round learning sessions, implementation support, and shared best practices across the cohort.

“We’ve seen what’s possible when schools are equipped with high-quality training and support rooted in evidence-based literacy instruction,” said Eric Scroggins, CEO of The Opportunity Trust. “This next cohort of the Emerson Early Literacy Challenge continues our commitment to accelerating literacy gains and proving what’s possible for all students in St. Louis.”

Applications for the second cohort are now open and will close on **September 5, 2025**. School and district leaders in St. Louis City and County can learn more and apply at emersonliteracychallenge.org.

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About The Opportunity Trust:

The Opportunity Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing educational equity and excellence. Through strategic investments, policy advocacy, and innovative programs, The Opportunity Trust works to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in life. To learn more, visit theopportunitytrust.org.

About Emerson:

Emerson (NYSE: EMR) is a global technology and software company providing innovative solutions for the world’s essential industries. Through its leading automation portfolio, including its majority stake in AspenTech, Emerson helps hybrid, process and discrete manufacturers optimize operations, protect personnel, reduce emissions and achieve their sustainability goals. For more information, visit Emerson.com.