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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Four St. Louis Area Schools Selected for Second Cohort of Emerson Early Literacy Challenge**

Emerson's \$1 Million Investment Continues Effort to Close Reading Gaps

**ST. LOUIS, MO** – [September 25, 2025] – The Opportunity Trust, with a donation from St. Louis-headquartered Emerson, the global automation technology and software company, is thrilled to announce the selection of four school teams from across the St. Louis region to participate in the second cohort of the [Emerson Early Literacy Challenge](#). These four schools, including charter and traditional public schools, were selected through a competitive application process, marking the next phase of this transformative initiative designed to help address literacy disparities and improve student outcomes in the region.

The schools selected for participation in the Emerson Early Literacy Challenge are:

1. Friendly Academy
2. Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis, South Elementary
3. Maplewood Richmond Heights Early Childhood Center – Maplewood Richmond Heights School District
4. Moline Elementary – Riverview Gardens School District

The Emerson Early Literacy Challenge, continued with a renewed \$1 million investment from Emerson, is dedicated to accelerating literacy proficiency in St. Louis City and County by supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices rooted in the Science of Reading. The initiative responds directly to the NAACP's urgent call to action and aligns with Senate Bill 681 enacted into law in 2022, which requires Missouri schools to adopt proven literacy strategies.

"We've already seen the power of giving schools the right tools and support through our first cohort," said Eric Scroggins, CEO of The Opportunity Trust. "With this second cohort, we're expanding that momentum, bringing more schools into the fold and

proving that real change for students is possible when we anchor our work in evidence-based practices.”

The selected school teams will embark on an immersive two-year journey that includes professional learning, strategic planning, a site visit to a school that accelerated literary outcomes, and direct support from nationally recognized literacy experts. Each team will develop and implement a tailored literacy plan aimed at accelerating K–3 reading proficiency.

Each of the four teams will receive a \$5,000 planning grant for the 2025–2026 school year, with the opportunity to receive up to \$200,000 in implementation funding for the 2026–2027 school year.

“At Emerson, we believe literacy is the foundation for both academic and life success,” said Akberet Boykin Farr, vice president of human resources at Emerson. “We are proud to continue this investment and support schools in their mission to ensure every child has the tools they need to thrive.”

This announcement marks a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts to close the literacy gap in St. Louis, with the newly selected schools building on the progress of the first cohort and joining a growing effort to ensure that all children in St. Louis can read proficiently by third grade.

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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](https://theopportunitytrust.org).

#### **About Emerson:**

Emerson (NYSE: EMR) is a global industrial technology leader that provides advanced automation. With an unmatched portfolio of intelligent devices, controls systems, and industrial software, Emerson delivers solutions that automate and optimize business

performance. Headquartered in Saint Louis, Missouri, Emerson combines innovative technology with proven operational excellence to power the future of automation. For more information, visit [Emerson.com](https://www.emerson.com).