



**For Immediate Release:**  
9/16/2022

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Dr. Lauren Effler from Union County Schools Named to Governor's Early Literacy Foundation 2022-2023 Executive Council**

*Local educator selected to statewide consulting body to help determine the best resources to combat learning loss in students*

**Maynardville, Tenn.** — Dr. Lauren Effler from Union County Schools, Maynardville has been named to Governor's Early Literacy Foundation's (GELF) 2022-2023 Executive Council, a group of 28 educators from rural, urban, and suburban communities across Tennessee who will help GELF determine the resources to best meet the needs of students statewide. With only 35% of Tennessee third graders able to read proficiently, GELF's Educator Advisory Council serves as a consulting body for the Foundation's early literacy initiatives, including its statewide K-3 Home Library program that mailed books to more than 160,000 students and teachers in Summer 2022.

Twenty-eight Tennessee educators were selected from 60+ applicants to serve on the 2022-2023 Educator Advisory Council, representing 19 school districts in all three regions of the state and three charter schools in Memphis and Nashville. GELF launched the Educator Advisory Council (EAC) in 2021 to strengthen its early literacy initiatives by gaining the insight and perspectives of educators statewide.

"Educators are crucial to a child's journey, inspiring our children's dreams and shaping their futures," said James Pond, GELF President. "Governor's Early Literacy Foundation is honored to work with them, listen to them, and learn from them to best meet students and families where they are with the resources they need to build lifelong learners. Together, we will work to strengthen early literacy in Tennessee, one program, one family, one child at a time."

Led by an Executive Team, the primary responsibility of the EAC is to select the books and curate the literacy resources that students and teachers statewide will be mailed through GELF's K-3 Home Library program in Summer 2023. Through its K-3 Home Library program, GELF collaborates with Scholastic to mail high-quality, age-appropriate books to kindergarten through third grade students and teachers over the summer to combat learning loss and support student learning in the home.

Third grade reading proficiency is the benchmark where children transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" and is a key indicator for a child's future educational success and workforce readiness.

Research shows that two to three months of reading proficiency is lost for students who do not read over the summer. However, reading 4-6 books over the summer can stop or even reverse summer



slide. Placing books directly into children's homes combats learning loss, and the presence of a home library increases children's academic success, vocabulary development, attention span, and job attainment.

In Summer 2022, GELF's K-3 Home Library program mailed 970,000 books to the homes of 162,000 rising 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students and teachers across Tennessee, marking the expansion of the first statewide roll-out of an at-home book delivery program for K-3 students across the U.S. In Summer 2023, GELF plans to expand this program to serve rising 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students statewide and rising kindergarten students in pilot areas of the state, bridging the gap between its Birth-5 Book Delivery program in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. This expansion will give Tennessee children the opportunity to receive free books from birth to third grade.

The EAC helps direct GELF's K-3 programming decisions aimed at meeting students and families where they are with the resources they need to strengthen early literacy and combat learning loss statewide.

Dr. Lauren Effler is a product of Union County Schools. She has worked in the Union County School system for 16 years, first as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher. She is currently the K-12 Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor and Pre-K Director. This is her second year serving as a member of the executive council.

The 2022-2023 Educator Advisory Council represents 17 K-3 teachers, a Director of Schools, two library media specialists, three literacy specialists, and six additional school district leaders.

See below for a full list of the selected 2022-2023 GELF Educator Advisory Council members.

### **Executive Council**

Alexis Wade, Chair, K-3 Reading Interventionist, Memphis Business Academy Elementary Charter, Shelby County Schools

Chris Dickerson, Kindergarten Teacher, Norman Binkley Elementary, Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Lauren Effler, Pre K-12 Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor, Union County Schools**

Christie Wimberley, Second Grade Teacher, Lakewood Elementary, Henry County Schools

### **EAC Members**

Natalie Alexander, K-4 Resource Specialist, Milan Elementary, Milan Special School District

Angela Brown, Second Grade Teacher, City Park School, Athens City Schools

Lee Ann Butts, District Instructional Coach, Bedford County Schools

De'Shadrian Campbell, Kindergarten Teacher, Middleton Elementary, Hardeman County Schools

Tara Comerford, Third Grade Teacher, Westside Elementary, Athens City Schools

Jessica Drinnon, Kindergarten Teacher, Mooresburg Elementary, Hawkins County Schools

Rebekah "Bekah" Gibson, Kindergarten Teacher, Joppa Elementary, Grainger County Schools

Catina Jennings, First Grade Teacher, Coleman School, Journey Community Schools

Angie Manor, Literacy Coordinator, Hickman County Schools

Jenni Mason, Kindergarten Teacher, Sam Houston Elementary, Lebanon Special School District

Tracy McAbee, Director of Schools, Lewis County Schools





Meredith McMackins, Second Grade Teacher, Finley Elementary, Dyer County Schools  
Misty Mercer, Literacy Specialist, Greene County Schools  
Leah Murray, K-4 Reading Interventionist, Surgoinsville Elementary, Hawkins County Schools  
Shanna Pierpoint, Second Grade Teacher, Lakewood Elementary, Henry County Schools  
Regina Radencic, K-2 Special Education Teacher, A.H. Roberts Elementary, Overton County Schools  
Mary Raines, Librarian/Media Specialist, Trousdale County Elementary, Trousdale County Schools  
Michael Ramsey, Instructional Coach, Joppa Elementary, Grainger County Schools  
Melisha Simmons, First Grade Teacher, Eastside Elementary, Warren County Schools  
Katie Spears, PK-8 Librarian, Irving College Elementary, Warren County Schools  
Angie Sybert, Second Grade Teacher, Ketron Elementary, Sullivan County Schools  
Lily Watson, First Grade Teacher, Emmett Elementary, Sullivan County Schools  
Lindsay Webster, Kindergarten Teacher, Compass Binghamton, Compass Community Schools  
Megan Wing, K-2 Dean of Academics, East End Prep, Metro Nashville School District

The EAC application will next open in Spring 2023 with announcements made in mid summer. Members are asked to serve for a one-year term.

For more information on GELF and the Educator Advisory Council, visit [governorsfoundation.org](http://governorsfoundation.org).

#### **About GELF**

Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) equips Tennessee's children with books and innovative literacy tools that encourage lifelong learning for a brighter future. GELF is a nonpartisan 501c3 driven by a mission to strengthen early literacy in Tennessee by acting as a thought leader, advisor, and catalyst for programs across the state. These programs include Birth-5 Book Delivery through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, K-3 Book Delivery, Caregiver Engagement, Book Buses, and Storybook Trails. GELF was founded in 2004 by former Gov. Phil Bredesen as a public-private partnership to sustain Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Tennessee. GELF has grown from solely a book-gifting program to an early literacy organization driven by a vision where all Tennessee children have access to the resources, guidance, and support they need to become lifelong learners. For more information, visit [www.GovernorsFoundation.org](http://www.GovernorsFoundation.org) or [www.facebook.com/GovEarlyLiteracyTN](https://www.facebook.com/GovEarlyLiteracyTN), or call toll-free at (877) 99-BOOKS.

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