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readingpartners

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To the Reading Partners community,

At our core, Reading Partners believes in the awesome potential of all students. We also recognize that many students, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, often face daunting obstacles and we view it as our mission to empower communities to provide support to help ensure all children have the opportunity to become lifelong readers with bright futures. Renowned author and scholar, Dr. Alfred W. Tatum, has observed that establishing meaningful connections to reading can be especially important for vulnerable students, often students of color.

**“Because it’s not just about literacy — it’s about their lives.” - Dr. Alfred W. Tatum**

We recently learned that Taylor Hayes, a 7-year-old Reading Partners Baltimore student, was faced with extreme adversity that no child should ever confront when, on July 5, under unclear circumstances, she was struck in the back by a bullet that entered the car she was riding in. For the past two weeks, Taylor has remained in critical condition, valiantly fighting for her life, but I am absolutely heartbroken to share the [devastating news](#) that this precious young girl has passed away. Upon learning about the tragic shooting and Taylor’s precarious condition, the Baltimore community in general, and many people associated with Reading Partners in Baltimore and across the country, have offered financial support and words of encouragement to Taylor and her family as they shouldered the inconceivable burden of the dire threat to the life of this promising young child. Now, in the wake of Taylor’s passing, I would ask you to please hold this special student and her family close in your thoughts. For all those who would like to help support Taylor’s family during this trying time, you can make a contribution on the [GoFundMe page](#) Taylor’s mother established in honor of her daughter.

A bright light has been lost in Baltimore.

## Student success in the 2017-18 school year



Our year-end impact reports are still being finalized and will be posted on our website later this month, but I am so pleased to share preliminary results with you that showcase both the impact we are having in the communities we serve and the incredible achievements of our students across the country.

### Program results

- **Nearly 11,000** students served
- **Over 373,000** total tutoring sessions
- **34** sessions per student served (on average)
- **85%** of all students are meeting their primary literacy growth goal
- **90%** of K-2 students are developing mastery of key foundational reading skills needed to read at grade level
- **94%** of principals at Reading Partners schools report school-wide reading progress
- **100%** of teachers report that Reading Partners is valuable to their school
- **95%** of Reading Partners volunteers are satisfied with their experience

## Setting priorities for the year ahead

### Increase impact

**Increase impact** by enhancing Reading Partners' individualized tutoring program while expanding our presence in existing geographies.

### Deepen focus on equity

**Deepen focus on equity** by developing a team, program, and culture that better reflect the diversity of the communities Reading Partners serves and building partnerships to support a broader national movement for educational equity.

### Achieve greater financial sustainability

**Achieve greater financial sustainability** by increasing nationally driven resource development and pursuing a greater proportion of multi-year, multi-region investments from a broader set of sources.

### Ensure organizational success

**Ensure organizational success** by building the systems, staffing, and infrastructure required to more efficiently and consistently deliver our program.

Reading Partners national board members met in mid-June to discuss program performance and to review and approve our FY19 budget proposal. As I shared with you in my last quarterly update, we have developed a new strategic plan for the organization, and we are using that longer-range plan to help guide our priorities for the year ahead. Key focus areas include strengthening our tutoring model, growing as a champion for educational equity, bolstering our financial sustainability, and strengthening our organizational efficiency and effectiveness. All of our priorities are designed to deepen the already substantial impact Reading Partners is achieving in communities in the 14 regions we support across the country.

### STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

## Celebrating 20 years of Reading Partners



*Pictured left to right: Molly McCrory, Mary Wright Shaw, and Jean Bacigalupi - three of Reading Partners original founders*

It has been 20 years since Reading Partners was launched by three community leaders supporting a handful of students in Menlo Park, California. In the intervening years, fueled by constant innovation, improvement, and collaboration with engaged community members, Reading Partners has grown tremendously in both scale and impact. What began as a simple concept to help students acquire essential reading skills through one-on-one tutoring has evolved into a proven program helping tens of thousands of students use literacy as a launch pad for the rest of their lives.

In the 2018-19 school year, we will launch an exciting 20th anniversary campaign to celebrate, build awareness, and engage current and past partners and members of the Reading Partners community. We will celebrate the successes of the past 20 years and look forward to supporting even more progress and student impact in the 20 years to come.

## Talented new additions to the national board



I want to extend a warm welcome to Kate Jerome and Devin Fletcher, both recent additions to our national Reading Partners board!

After a successful career in education and education publishing, **Kate Jerome** became a prolific author of more than 200 children's books, including books written in collaboration with leading educational and trade publishers like National Geographic, Penguin Random House, and Arcadia Publishing Company. Kate also brings highly valuable expertise in the study of intergenerational connections, an area that is so relevant to one-on-one tutoring. She delivered a compelling [TEDx talk](#) on the subject in 2016 and she has written extensively on the topic as well, including as the creator and program developer for two Read Together/Do Together children's book series

that promote literacy while encouraging meaningful conversations between kids and adults.

**Devin Fletcher** joined Tulsa Public Schools in 2016 where he currently serves as the chief learning officer (CLO) and chief talent officer (CTO). As the CLO, Devin is responsible for establishing a vision of learning for students and adults in the district and he leads curriculum and instruction, assessment, adult learning, exceptional student support services, language and cultural services, teacher and leader effectiveness, and early childhood education. As the CTO, Devin helped launch Tulsa Teacher Corps, a district-run teacher preparation, and certification program. Previously, Devin served as executive director of teaching and learning at Denver Public Schools from 2013-16 where he was the district lead on academic strategic planning, school-based autonomy, and the implementation of standards-aligned resources and instructional best practices. In his role he spearheaded the design and development of the district's Literacy Plan 2020. Devin has been a true champion for Reading Partners during his time in Denver and now in Tulsa and we are grateful for his ongoing and increasing commitment to our work.

We're humbled to be able to add both Kate and Devin to the Reading Partners national board. To learn more about their backgrounds, please read their full bios [on our website](#).

### LEARN MORE

## Twenty years and counting

With our dedicated/committed board members, a highly talented staff and AmeriCorps workforce and an ever-growing community of volunteers, I am excited to both celebrate the last 20 years of Reading Partners and to dive into the school year ahead! We've all been attracted to this movement by a shared belief that educational equity and opportunity should be the birthright of all students across this country regardless of where they come from.

Holding Taylor Hayes very much in my thoughts and prayers in her passing. I thank you for your ongoing compassion for all of the students Reading Partners serves and for so many more that we hope to one day reach.

In partnership,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karine Apollon".

Karine Apollon  
CEO, Reading Partners

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