



Reading Universe: Scaling Teacher PD for Student Success

A CGLR Funder-to-Funder Conversation

February 20, 2024 | 12:30–2 pm ET/9:30–11 am PT

Panelist Bios

MODERATOR



Jane Park

Senior Content Strategist

Google Kids & Families

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Jane Park is a Senior Content Strategist at Google where she is leading efforts to create high-quality online experiences for children and families around the world. In her role, she drives content partnerships with product teams across Google, as well as with external partners to light up fun, engaging, and enriching experiences that meet the core developmental needs of children—while supporting parents and educators with tools to help kids navigate the online world safely and confidently. She previously served as the Director of *Too Small to Fail*, the early childhood initiative of the Clinton Foundation, where she led partnerships with corporations, nonprofits, and associations to scale a national public awareness and action campaign designed to promote children’s early brain and language development. Through this role, Jane was passionate about forging innovative, cross-sector collaborations to create more equitable access to playful, inclusive, literacy-rich environments in the everyday spaces families visit. Prior to this role, Jane was the Associate Director of Content in the Education, Research, and Outreach department at Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*. She worked with a team to develop the whole child curriculum on which the television series is based and collaborated across the organization to integrate *Sesame Street*’s educational content through various platforms—including print, video, and web. Jane also wrote numerous publications to support parents/caregivers through challenging situations, including military deployment, natural disasters, and economic and food insecurity. Jane holds an M.A. in developmental psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University and a B.A. in communications from the University of California at San Diego. She is a child of first generation immigrants from Korea (who learned English watching *Sesame Street*), and a mom of two children and their sweet Poodle, Lucy.

PRESENTERS



Erika Bryant

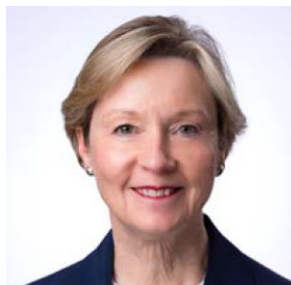
First Grade Teacher

Pecan Park Elementary School

Jackson Public Schools, Mississippi

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A 26-year veteran teacher, Erika Bryant is presently a First Grade Teacher and Team Leader at Pecan Park Elementary School in the Jackson Public School District. As a proud alum of JPSP's Provine High School, she finds it a great honor and opportunity to teach in the very elementary school she, herself attended (formally known as Whitfield Elementary). She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Communitive Disorders, and a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Jackson State University. It has always been a great joy being an educator, impacting and inspiring each and every student she's awarded the opportunity to teach. Language Arts and Writing are the areas Ms. Bryant enjoys teaching the most, as well as laying a strong foundation of reading in her students. She also serves as a Mentor, Girl Scout Leader, and Professional Development Facilitator through the Jackson Federation of Teachers and American Federation of Teachers of Mississippi. She was a cohort in the charter group for AFT/ JFT Teacher Leadership Program 2019-2020. In 2020, Ms. Bryant was recognized as one of the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership Metro Teacher of the Year. Ms. Bryant hopes to continue make a difference in all the lives she's blessed to touch. She looks forward to consistently being a mentor to new and future educators, remaining involved in advocacy for fellow educators, paraprofessionals and the students and families she serves, as well as to provide opportunities to make connections between our public schools and the communities they serve.



Kelly Butler

Senior Advisor

Reading Universe

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Kelly Butler is Senior Advisor to ReadingUniverse.org, a large-scale legacy project of the Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI), where she served as Chief Executive Officer. The Institute concluded operations in June of 2023 having contributed significantly to Mississippi's rise in reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP 2019, NAEP 2022). Reading Universe is housed at WETA, PBS's flagship station in Washington, D.C. amidst a suite of award-winning literacy websites supporting evidence-based practices for teachers of reading and writing.

During her tenure at BRI, Kelly initiated the original Reading Universe concept to provide high quality professional development to educators in Barksdale schools and educator preparation programs. Butler authored three statewide studies on Teacher Preparation for Early Literacy Instruction which propelled The Path Forward, a multi-state initiative focused on preparation and licensure. Kelly is an advisor to the Mississippi Reading Panel, the Mississippi Reading Clinic, The Path Forward, the Southeast Region's

Education Laboratory, and the Education Advocacy Center; and is a board member for Springboard to Opportunities and Deans for Impact. She holds a master's degree in administration, planning and social policy from Harvard University. She lives in Jackson, Mississippi.



Michelle Knapik

President

Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation

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Michelle Knapik is the president of the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation (EHTF). EHTF funds innovative projects that advance solutions to basic and enduring problems in the fields of arts, environment, and learning differences. Key initiatives include Artists Thr!ve, Sustainable CT, and EHTF's Early Learning Ecosystem.

In the education space, EHTF has been supporting place-based, systems changing literacy champions in Indian River County, FL (via The Learning Alliance), and in Philadelphia, PA (via Read by 4th, AIM Institute for Learning & Research, and the Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association). EHTF also focuses on early identification of reading challenges, plus teacher professional development and teacher preparation related to structured literacy.

Michelle has 19 years of leadership in the philanthropic sector. Prior to EHTF, Michelle served as the Director of the Sustainable Environments Program at the Surdna Foundation where she developed grant making and program related investment strategies to advance Next Generation Infrastructure. She was also Program Director at the Geraldine R Dodge Foundation. A lawyer by training, Michelle draws on a wide range of program, policy, and organizational development experience. From the activism of Greenpeace to the US Navy to local government to philanthropy, service to the greater good is a through-line in Michelle's professional journey. Michelle also has deep contemplative practices that help her center empathy and support consciousness and healing from individual through systems level change.



Tami Mount, M.Ed.

Senior Director

Reading Universe

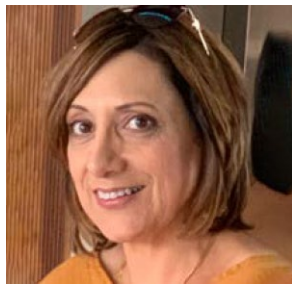
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Tami Mount was an early pioneer in online learning and professional growth opportunities for PreK-12 teachers. Over the last three decades, she has created and launched award-winning teacher sites including DiscoverySchool.com, Scholastic.com for Teachers, and PBS LearningMedia.org. She has unique expertise in conceiving, designing, and developing content-based services and digital media products geared toward educators.

She began her career as an online research associate for the Educational Resource Information Center on Assessment and Evaluation and an elementary school teacher. Drawing on her experience as a classroom teacher who was not taught how to teach children to read, she's become keenly focused on the national conversations around translating literacy research, bringing evidence to the forefront of reading instruction, and implementing effective professional development for reading teachers.

Tami's passion for evidence-based reading instruction is also informed by her experience raising a child with dyslexia. The challenge of finding teachers with the training to teach her daughter to read wholeheartedly changed the way Tami approached her work as a teacher, parent, and producer. Once she uncovered the breadth of reading research and found a community of like-minded educators, she committed to using her strategic and production skills to broadcast to every teacher and parent the most effective methods for teaching reading.



Marla Ucelli-Kashyap

Senior Director, Educational Issues

American Federation of Teachers

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Marla Ucelli-Kashyap is Senior Director for Educational Issues at the 1.7 million-member American Federation of Teachers, where she serves as strategic advisor to AFT President Randi Weingarten and leads a team working on key areas of policy, practice, technical assistance, and professional development aimed at helping teachers and their unions improve education quality and their profession. The Educational Issues portfolio includes the teacher career continuum and workforce shortages, community schools expansion, the AFT's signature professional conferences and training programs, and its Share My Lesson resource sharing website with more than 2 million registered users. She also led the AFT's response to and supports for K-12 educator members in dealing with the teaching and learning challenges stemming from COVID-19, overseeing affiliate support, policy guidance, professional learning, and on-line resources.

Prior to AFT, Marla was Director of District Redesign and Leadership at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Before that, she was a senior program officer at the Rockefeller Foundation. Early in her career, Marla served as senior education aide to New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean and as special assistant to then President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Ernest L. Boyer.

Marla has also been an education policy consultant, a press secretary, and a reporter. She holds degrees from New York University and Rutgers. Marla recently completed two terms as chair of the Learning First Alliance Board of Directors. She serves on numerous boards and advisory groups and was a member of the Education Agency Review Team for the Biden Administration transition.