

## “Meeting Families Where They Are: Unique Strategies for Accessible Resources”

A Crucible of Practice Salon  
April 9, 2024 / 12:30 – 2 pm EST

### CONVERSATION LEADS



Alyce Hartman  
Founder and Executive Director  
Birdie's Bookmobile  
Detroit, Michigan

Alyce Hartman has more than a decade of teaching and non-profit experience. She is a passionate urban educator and curriculum developer with a background in creative writing and literacy. She has served as

the Director of Education at MACC Development and the Director of Collective Learning with 313Reads. She currently teaches K-4<sup>th</sup> grade STEM at Detroit Prep and is the Founder and Executive Director of Birdie's Bookmobile.



Leah van Belle, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
313Reads: Detroit's Literacy Coalition  
Detroit, Michigan

Dr. Leah van Belle serves as the Executive Director of 313Reads, a collective impact coalition of more than 90 diverse partner organizations working together toward

literacy equity and grade-level reading. A proud Detroiter and first-generation high school and college graduate, she earned her Ph.D. in literacy, language, and culture at The University of Michigan. Her professional and community work has focused on literacy access and equity as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, university faculty in urban teacher education, university clinical practice director, and consultant to the Michigan Department of Education. Leah serves on the Executive Board of the Michigan Reading Association as its Immediate Past President, on the state's Early Literacy Task Force, and on Detroit's adult literacy task force. She is editor of *The Michigan Reading Journal* and part-time faculty at Eastern Michigan University. Most importantly, she is the mama of a neurodiverse little human who is a student in a Detroit public school and is teaching her how to build with LEGO. Reading together at bedtime is one of their favorite parts of every day. You can reach her at [leah@313reads.org](mailto:leah@313reads.org).



Dea Wright  
Director,  
Office of Early Childhood Initiatives  
City of Milwaukee, WI

Dea Wright serves as the Office of Early Childhood Education Initiatives (OECE) Director. Under her leadership, OECE has secured national partnerships with organizations working on

behalf of young children and families and created innovative, award-winning initiatives to advance early childhood education in Milwaukee. Wright spearheaded Wisconsin's first-ever Family, Read, Play, and Learn space inside a Milwaukee laundromat. Her work with Too Small To Fail expanded literacy-rich areas to children's court waiting rooms. The accomplishments earned Milwaukee the Laundry Literacy Coalition 2020 Summit Award for Outstanding Partnership. She is the proud mother of six children with her husband of twenty-three years and a lifelong advocate for children's right to thrive. With an extensive background in early childhood development and a stellar history of moving the needle on access to quality programs for children and families, Dea is uniting Milwaukee around early childhood learning.