

2023 SELECT REPORT



Working together to break down silos,
build connections, and increase visibility
of early literacy efforts across Tennessee



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GOVERNOR'S
EARLY LITERACY
FOUNDATION

The first statewide collaborative for early literacy





James Pond, President, GELF

Letter from James & Katie

In 2020, the Statewide Early Literacy Education Collaborative of Tennessee (SELECT) started as a meeting of 14 leaders representing five regional literacy efforts. In 2023, SELECT brought together over 100 individuals from 80+ organizations across the state. Countless connections were made and partnerships formed as we spent the day learning together.

From these connections, Tennessee's Early Literacy Landscape (TELL) is being formed as a community of early literacy leaders in Tennessee. TELL will serve as a resource-sharing channel and an online directory for partners, caregivers, funders, and legislators to connect with the people and organizations making a difference in literacy. Caregivers will be able to find support. Partners will be able to find opportunities to connect and collaborate statewide. Funders and legislators will be able to find ways to invest.

There is remarkable power in people coming together to solve our most urgent challenges. 2023 witnessed impactful collaboration within SELECT. This report encapsulates our discussions and initiatives.

As we advance our efforts, we aim to broaden SELECT's membership across every corner of our great state, seeking out individuals with optimism, dedication, and innovation as they contribute to the betterment of Tennessee's youngest citizens. It's more than books. It's the future of Tennessee.

James Pond, President, GELF



"As a former educator, I have seen firsthand the support families need, and SELECT brings together the people who provide that support to make a huge difference in the lives of kids."

Katie Elam, SELECT, Program Manager

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"Teamwork is what makes common people capable of uncommon results."

—Pat Summitt



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Our Why

The path to becoming a proficient reader starts long before 3rd grade. It is paved by the learning opportunities and experiences that a child has from birth. Across the state, hundreds of organizations are working tirelessly to support our youngest learners in early childhood centers, home based care, out of school settings, and communities indirectly serving families to increase access to books and high-quality resources, support caregiver engagement, and help meet basic needs.

“The lack of a comprehensive view of community interactions prevents the strategic leveraging of these relationships, often leading to missed opportunities for impactful involvement.”

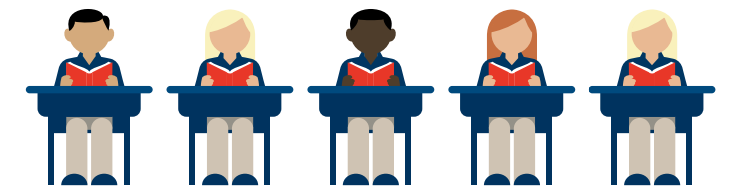
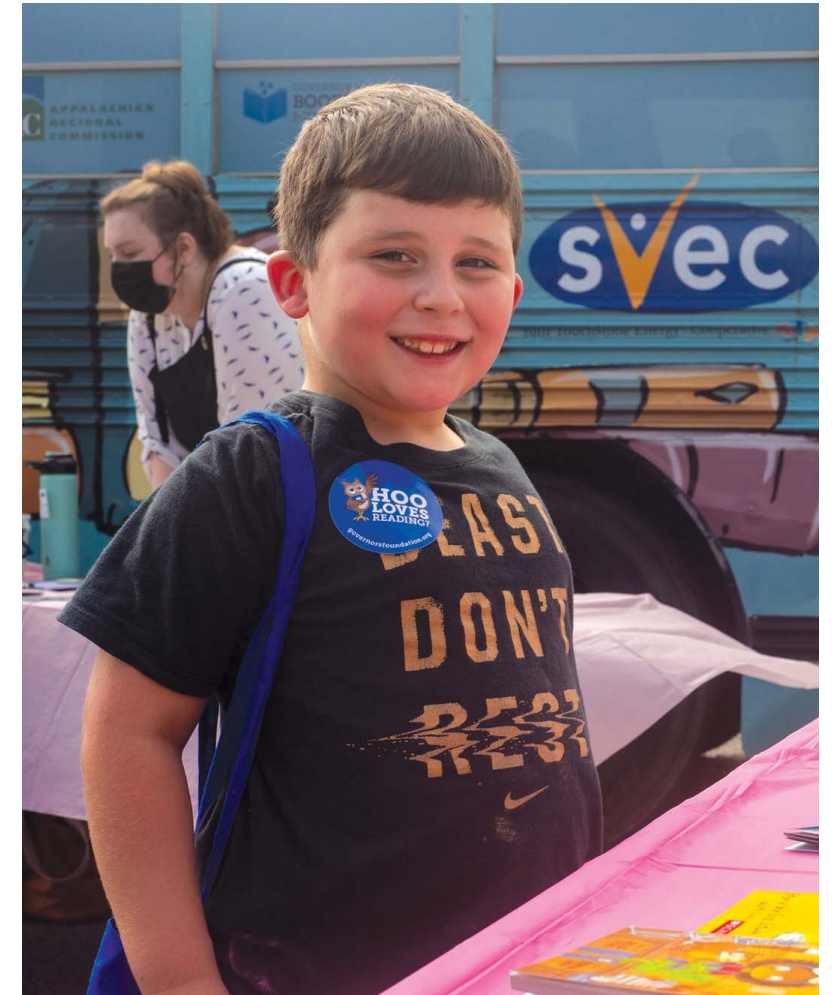
– Visible Network Labs

“These silos contribute to confusion among community partners, who may receive mixed messages or redundant communication.”

The partners are there. The work is happening. But, it’s often being done in silos with limited resources and operational isolation from partner organizations and schools.

- *Organizations are unsure where to collaborate and learn from others’ experiences.*
- *Funders are unaware of opportunities for investment. The legislature is missing information to make key decisions related to early childhood.*
- *Despite outreach efforts, families often don’t know where to go to get the literacy support and resources their children need.*

That is why Governor’s Early Literacy Foundation created SELECT as the open channel through which the early literacy work already flowing, can flow together.



One study found that academic achievement had less to do with the quality of a student’s school and much more to do with the social composition of the school and surrounding neighborhood—together with the student’s family background.

– Gamoran & Long, 2006

What is SELECT?

SELECT is a collective of organizations across Tennessee coming together to increase the impact of early literacy efforts through community and collaboration. SELECT connects early literacy organizations, providing networking and professional development opportunities, and increasing visibility of early literacy efforts in Tennessee.



Confident
readers



Critical
thinkers



Lifelong
learners

Our Mission:

Breakdown silos, build connections, and increase visibility to strengthen the early literacy landscape in Tennessee.

Our Vision:

A Tennessee where all children have equitable access to the resources and opportunities to become confident readers, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

Our Pillars:

1

Visibility

Tennessee's Early Literacy Landscape

Found on pg. 8

2

Connection

Convening & Collaboration

Found on pg. 10

3

Learning

TELL Talks

Found on pg. 14

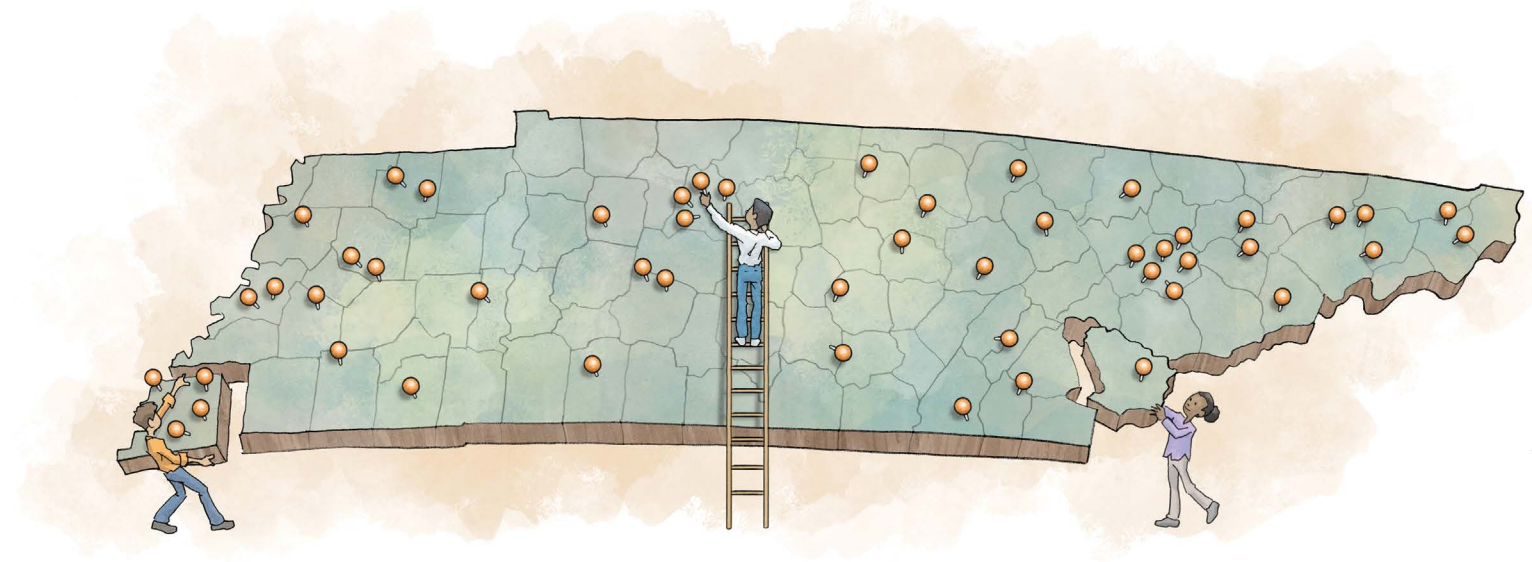
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Future Forecast

Goal – 100% of counties represented

Found on pg. 16

SELECT partnerships build momentum for change through collaboration and connection.



Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can advance the practice of family involvement and strengthen the linkages among early childhood programs, schools, community-based organizations, and families.

– (Weiss et al., 2006)

Visibility *Tennessee's Early Literacy Landscape (TELL)*

Shining a light on literacy efforts in communities across the state to build awareness of Tennessee's Early Literacy Landscape.

TELL is a public resource map and directory of the organizations within the SELECT community to:

- Identify strengths, promising practices, challenges, gaps, and opportunities for growth across the state.
- Create a snapshot of the work happening to support connections across organizations as well as inform legislators and funders of the impact being made within the state.
- Ensure families know where to go for support and services.



What's next? TELL Website

Overview/Goals - New survey rolling out in January of 2024 to drive mapping project. Launch public resource map and directory of SELECT partner organizations in spring of 2024. Based on information gathered through surveys and interviews, we are compiling the data to launch the TELL website as a public resource map and directory of SELECT partner organizations.

Timeline: Launching Summer 2024

In 2023, GELF launched TELL by collecting data from early literacy partners through an online survey and follow-up interviews.



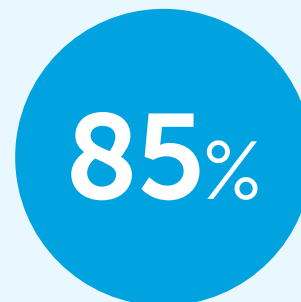
Number of Surveys Collected



Number of Interviews Conducted

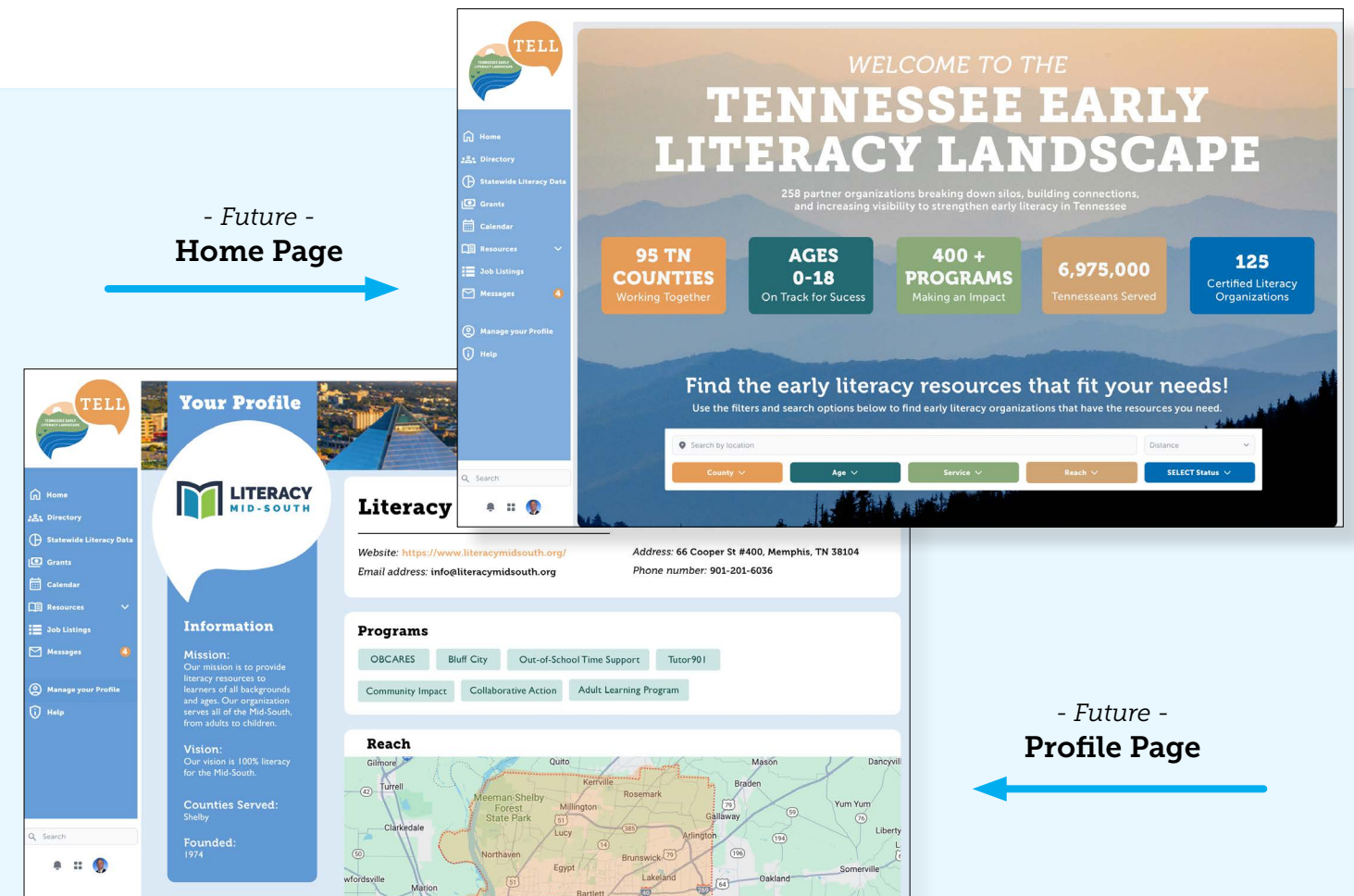


Organizations represented



Currently connected to 81/95 counties

- Future -
Home Page



- Future -
Profile Page

Connection

Linking partners and programs to increase impact and collaboration across the state.

Convenings

In July 2023, GELF brought together early literacy leaders from across the state for the annual SELECT Statewide Convening in Franklin, Tenn. The day was filled with inspiring work, engaging conversations, and connections made. The 2023 SELECT Statewide Convening marked the largest one to date. The day kicked off with a lively “speed dating” session to build connections between partners. Breakout sessions focused on highlighting the amazing work being done by our partners across the state. We enjoyed a “Literacy Lunch and Learn” with Dr. Deborah Reed to learn more about the science of reading. And we closed the day hearing powerful stories from world renowned storyteller and author, Carmen Agra Deedy.



Carmen Agra Deedy,
Author & Storyteller

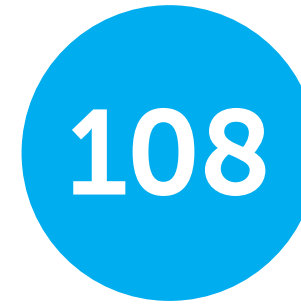


Dr. Deborah Reed,
Director of Tennessee
Reading Research Center

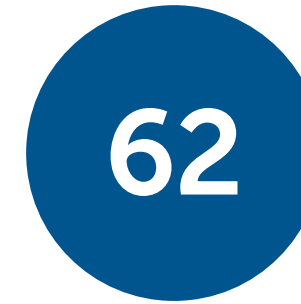
Key Presentations:

- **Building Community Through Collaboration**
- Dr. Nancy Dishner & Mark Cruise
- **Foundation Conversation: Process & Outcomes in Early Literacy Funding**
- Abigail Sanderson, Denine Torr, Ellie Kittrell, & Katy Spurlock
- **Literacy Across the Lifespan: A Systems Approach**
- Sam O'Bryant
- **Supporting Literacy Development in Northeast Tennessee**
- Dr. Karen Schetzina
- **Bold Leadership Panel** -
James Pond, Dr. Nancy Dishner, Corey Strong, Megan Godbey & Mark Cruise
- **Keynote: That One Child**
- Carmen Agra Deedy
- **Literacy Lunch and Learn: Understanding the Language of Reading**
- Dr. Deborah Reed
- **Innovations in Early Education**
- Dean Hoskins, Gwen Laaser & Heather Hicks
- **Bright Start Panel**
- Jonathan Scoonover, Megan Godbey, Corey Strong, Ellie Kittrell, Heather Logan, Olivia Abernathy
- **Collaboration: Connecting the Dots**
- Wynett Jones & Alicia Norman
- **Project On-Track's High-Dosage/ Low-Ratio Tutoring Program**
- Dr. Debra Bentley

Scan the QR Code to access any of these key presentations



Number of Attendees



Number of Organizations Represented



Number of Presenters



What's next? Literacy Links Regional Convenings

In 2024, SELECT is hosting six Regional Convenings in communities across the state. These are collaborative conversations that will link literacy leaders in Tennessee. The goals for regional convenings will be to increase awareness of our programs, share best practices, and provide networking opportunities within and across our programs.

I learned so much and came away feeling inspired by the panels, presentations, and the work of colleagues. Everything was so well run and the content of the day was thorough - I don't think I've ever gotten so much from a one day convening.

- SELECT 2023 attendee



Collaboration

Partners working together as a result of connections made.

Through SELECT, organizations connected with one another to further literacy across the state. This included cross-promotion of messaging, speaking engagements, and bringing new ideas to communities. From Memphis to Mountain City, SELECT is linking literacy across the state.

OWL Fest: At GELF's OWL Fest in September, SELECT partners volunteered at school visits across the state to help children "shop" for free books.

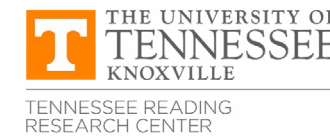
- Tennessee Reading Research Center
- Knox Education Foundation
- Porter-Leath, NEXT Memphis
- Arise2Read
- Knoxville Dream Center
- My Brother's Keeper Nashville
- MNPS Library Services
- United Way of West Tennessee
- Sisters Book Corner
- United Way of Greater Chattanooga
- Urban Child Institute

ParentPowered/MNPS: SELECT helped to connect ParentPowered and Metro Nashville Public Schools to bring their text based program to families. This collaboration has the potential to benefit caregivers of 10,000 children prior to entering kindergarten in Davidson County.



Deborah Reed at the Tennessee Reading Research Center and Corey Strong (F8M)

Dr. Deborah Reed, Director of Tennessee Reading Research Center, and Corey Strong, Director of Strategic Partnerships at First 8 Memphis, connected via SELECT and have traveled the state together to cross-promote their organization's work. For example, Dr. Deborah Reed, Sonja Randall, LENA Coordinator at the University of Memphis, and Read-n-Ready Advocate Grandma Joyce joined First 8 Memphis for their Parent Speaker Series Workshop: How to Teach Your Child To Read to discuss early literacy skills and give real-time presentations on methods of teaching children phonics.



What's next? Amplify partner voices

Email katie.elam@tn.gov your efforts/events.

In an environment focused on the ways Tennessee & Tennesseans are failing, it was refreshing to see & feel all the work that is good & right happening across the state.

– SELECT 2023 attendee



Learning

Sharing information and resources between partners to amplify impact.

TELL Talks E-Newsletter

In 2023, GELF launched TELL Talks, a monthly e-newsletter sharing resources, data, and insights collected from organizations. It's a group conversation for the SELECT community to exchange opportunities and ideas.



TELL Talks
A group conversation for the SELECT community to exchange ideas and opportunities in Tennessee's Early Literacy Landscape.

REFER AN ORGANIZATION TO JOIN | SUBMIT A RESOURCE FOR THE NEXT EDITION | COMPLETE THE TELL SURVEY FOR THE MAP



Doubled readership in 1 year!

9
Number of Editions

345
Number of Subscribers

708
Number of Opens

100+
Number of Resources Provided





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What's next?

Expand SELECT community. Together, we can help our state's youngest learners achieve important literacy goals that will ensure future success in school, work, and life. Join us in our efforts and be a part of our early literacy collaborative.

If you are a like-minded organization and have not had an opportunity to connect with us, please contact Katie Elam, SELECT Manager at katie.elam@tn.gov.



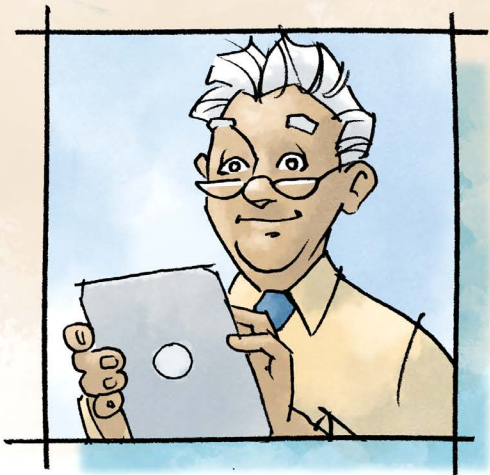
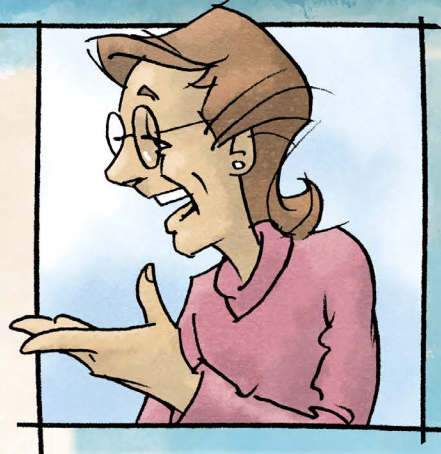
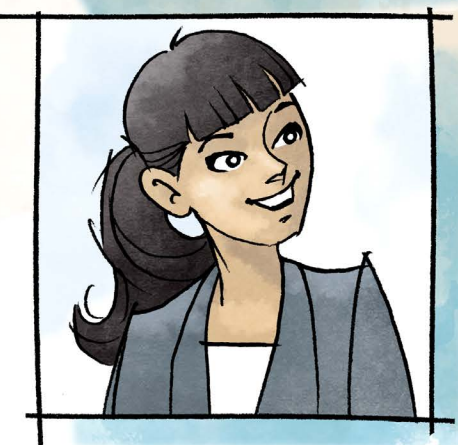
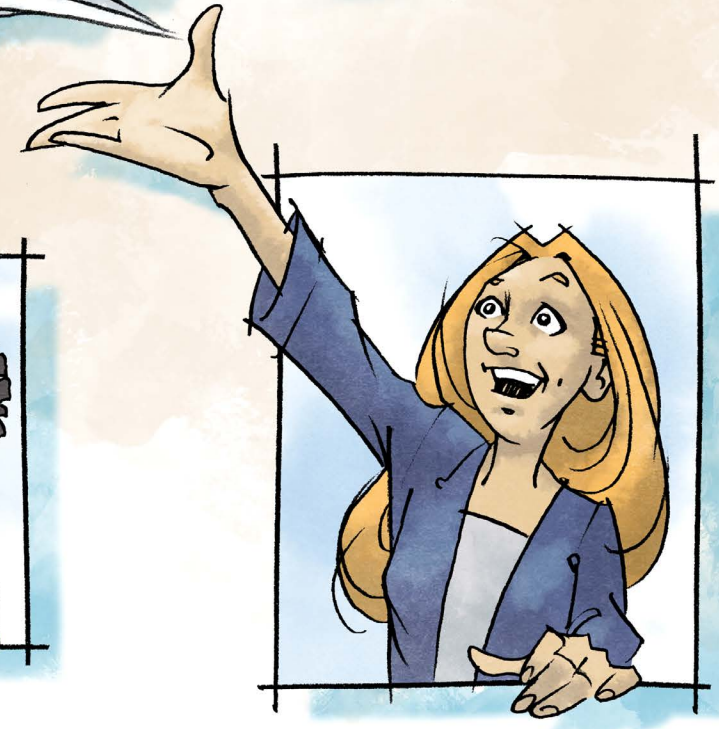
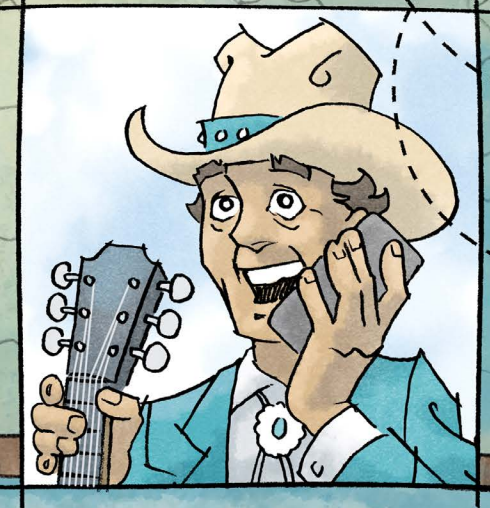
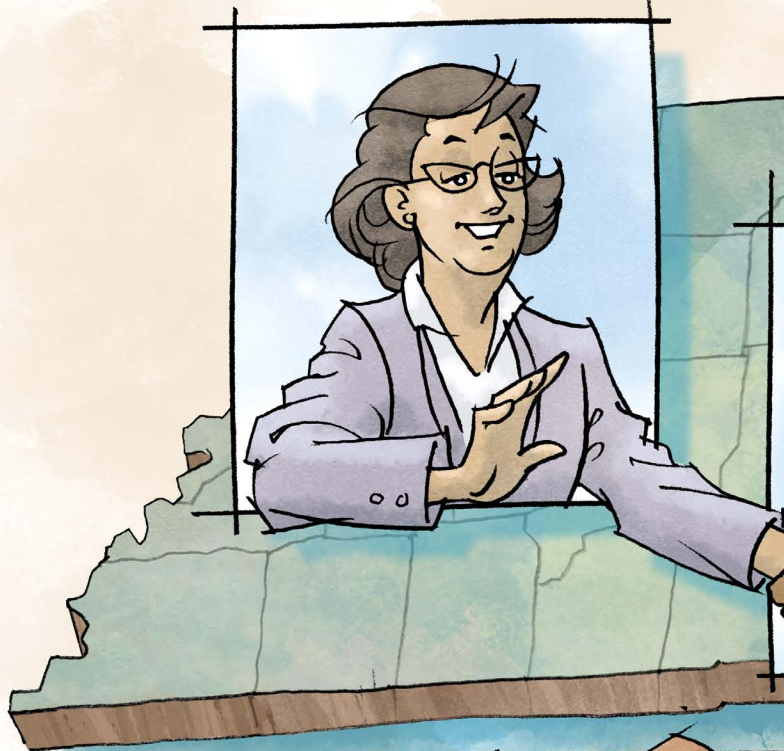
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Interested in supporting SELECT? Email Abigail Sanderson, GELF Development Director, at Abigail.sanderson@tn.gov.





For more information, visit governorsfoundation.org or email select@governorsfoundation.org