



Dear SMART Reading and The Children's Book Bank Community,

Over the past two years, we've witnessed some truly heroic efforts and amazingly creative pivots to adapt our programs — all so that we could continue to deliver on our two organizations' passions and our promises to Oregon's children.

We've adapted to the pandemic, to disruptions of in-person school and work, to the community devastation of forest fires and economic hardship, and to new calls for equity and justice; just to name a few.

As the respective board chairs of two incredible nonprofits, we're inspired every day by the ingenuity and dedication of our teams; and also by your unflagging community spirit, support, and resilience, as well as the constancy of your commitment to literacy, education, and the future of Oregon. You are an exceptional community of educators, professionals, philanthropists, and volunteers. And now that community is growing.

We're writing today, with much excitement, to share the news that SMART Reading and The Children's Book Bank have entered into an agreement to merge. This is a remarkable opportunity to extend the individual reach of both organizations, with great potential to expand our collective impact for kids across Oregon.

For SMART Reading, our merger extends the organization's mission by getting more books into children's hands and supporting literacy development for students, as well as expanding and diversifying volunteer opportunities. For The Children's Book Bank, our merger is an opportunity to expand scope and scale outside of Portland by utilizing SMART Reading's established statewide infrastructure. For Oregon, this represents the opportunity to put more children on the path to literacy and learning success.

While this is fresh news to our joint community, it's actually an idea that our boards and staffs have been discussing over the past year. We want to reassure you that this merger is not happening because of the coronavirus pandemic, or financial or leadership crisis. This is an unmatched opportunity for two strong and fiscally healthy nonprofits — which have very aligned missions and visions, and who already have worked collaboratively for years—to be stronger, together.

We understand this news may prompt some questions, and we encourage you to reach out to the senior leadership and staff of both our organizations to learn more about the exciting shared work we have in store.

We each want to express our gratitude to the members of our two organizations' boards and staff for their dedication and diligence in bringing us to this landmark announcement. This has been no small undertaking to carefully consider a future together, and there is still much work to do to make a merger a reality.

The opportunity is great. We appreciate your continued support and advocacy as we work to make two great grassroots nonprofits into one powerhouse to support children's literacy in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Anna Madill
Chair, SMART Reading Statewide Board of Directors

Beth Daniels
Co-chair, The Children's Book Bank Board of Directors

Allyson Yoshiwara
Co-chair, The Children's Book Bank Board of Directors