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## **Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Advisory Council Names Interim Director**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (March 5, 2021) — The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) is pleased to name Dr. Amy Emerson as its interim director. Dr. Emerson currently works as a senior advisor to Early Learning Works by Tulsa Educare as well as in the private sector as a physician and small business owner.

“Dr. Emerson is someone I have come to know both professionally and personally over the last 15 years. OPSR could not ask for a more tireless advocate or more creative thought leader — her commitment to the power of early learning knows no bounds. I’m thrilled to work alongside Amy as we chart OPSR’s path forward.” said Annie Van Hanken, president, OPSR Foundation, and senior program officer, Parent Education & Early Childhood, George Kaiser Family Foundation.

In addition to her work as a physician, Dr. Emerson has served as a Reach Out and Read Medical Champion since 2003 and a leader in the local implementation of the Talking is Teaching campaign as well as a national consultant to other cities.

As executive director to our state’s only early childhood advisory council, Dr. Emerson will be responsible for supporting OPSR’s mission to improve the lives of children by building public-private partnerships and fostering cross-sector collaborations and policies that reduce trauma, improve equity and ensure the health and safety of our state’s youngest learners.

“I’m honored to join the board and staff of OPSR as we continue our partnerships with private and public organizations to carry out the vision that all Oklahoma children are safe, healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school. This mandate has never been more relevant, and we will continue to look for innovative ways to make this vision a reality for the over 300,000 children birth to five in our great state,” Dr. Emerson said.

To learn more about the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, visit [www.okschooldreadiness.org](http://www.okschooldreadiness.org).

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### **About Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR)**

In 2003, House Bill 1094 created the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness and added Oklahoma to a growing list of states that recognized more action is required to successfully support families and children from birth to preschool — thus improving school readiness. Together, through both public and private partnerships, this group works to help children arrive at school with the knowledge, skills and physical and emotional health to achieve their dreams. Today, their mission is to lead Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system that strengthens families and ensures all children are ready for school. For more information, visit <https://www.okschoolreadiness.org>.

### **About OPSR Board**

The OPSR Board serves as Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Advisory Council and reports directly to the Governor of Oklahoma. This group is comprised of diverse members, including early childhood experts and state leaders with representation from the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and Oklahoma Department of Commerce, to name a few. The OPSR Board is responsible for carrying out state and federal [legislatively-defined mandates](#), and some areas of focus include: engaging policymakers and the community with the intent to gain support for school readiness; convening and supporting partnerships within the board, throughout communities and statewide; incubating innovative, research-based solutions to encourage early language, interaction and brain development; and ensuring continuous improvement and accountability of Oklahoma’s programs that touch families with young children. To learn more about the OPSR Board, [click here](#).

### **About OPSR Foundation**

In conjunction with the establishment of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, the OPSR Foundation was created to solicit and receive public and philanthropic funds. The foundation supports OPSR’s vision and mission by expanding the breadth in which our organization can financially support early childhood research, programs and initiatives. In this capacity, the OPSR Foundation operates as a 501(c)3 organization. Currently, the foundation is made up of passionate, dedicated early childhood advocates, some of who worked to improve school readiness even before the formation of OPSR. Our foundation is proud of OPSR’s hard work over the past 15 years but knows there is much more to be gained if we continue to invest

in our children from birth to the time they enter school. Learn more about our foundation directors, [here](#).