



Seth Parsons, President

**Inside this issue:**

<i>President's Message</i>	1
<i>2020 ALER Virtual Conference</i>	2
<i>Get Ready for ALER 2021 Conference</i>	2
<i>Division Information</i>	3
<i>2020 Award Winners</i>	4
<i>Social Media and ALER</i>	4
<i>Call for Editors of Literacy News</i>	4

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## President's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues,  
It's almost cliché now to say that we are living in unprecedented times, but the truth of it cannot be overstated. We are in the midst of a pandemic, which at the time of this writing is escalating as we head into the new year. The coronavirus has led to different ways of teaching children, preparing teachers, working with schools, conducting research, collaborating with colleagues, and nearly every aspect of work and life. At the same time, our country faces unrest due to ongoing racism, inequality, and oppression. We experienced a presidential election unlike any other in our lifetimes, where misinformation is rampant and political division is wider than ever.

The entirety of this unpredictable and tumultuous context can be disheartening and scary—indeed, it is. However, I also view it as a clarion call for educators and researchers. Educators and researchers have forged new ways to “do” school from preschool to graduate school, and we continue to get smarter about teaching and learning in virtual and hybrid environments.

Similarly, teachers and researchers have the opportunity to continue to contribute to the effort to address and overcome injustices and to promote an education system and

a society that actively combats racism and oppression.

Finally, a functioning democracy relies upon an educated citizenry, one that thinks critically; one that reads critically; one that understands the multi-generational damage of systemic racism; one that has a breadth of knowledge about history, math, science, literature, art, and health; one that values empathy and altruism; and more.

Teachers and researchers are on the frontlines addressing social ills and building an educated citizenry. We have been doing this work for so long, yet there is so much work left to do. My hope is that the current turbulent times serve to rejuvenate our efforts as we double down to do what is best for the students, colleagues, and communities we serve. It is hard work, but among some of the most important work in today's society.

I know that the current state of affairs has invigorated ALER. The Board of Directors recently had its fall meeting, and I left it in awe of the hard work being completed by so many individuals to keep ALER moving forward, even in “unprecedented times.” Not only have the traditional activities continued—the journal published cutting-edge research and ideas, the research

committee considered numerous worthy submissions for the grant and master's award, the awards committee reviewed nominations of many worthy ALER members, etc.—but also new ideas and activities have emerged. The Executive Committee created a social media calendar to increase access and connectivity among ALER members. A subgroup of Board members met to discuss how to best support teachers in teaching literacy in virtual settings. And more.

ALER has adapted to meet the new and persistent problems literacy teachers and learners face. We urge you to (a) check your membership and renew if your membership has lapsed; (b) connect with ALER on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; and (c) join us in the effort to answer the clarion call inherent in the current context.

**Executive Committee Statement:**

[https://  
www.aleronline.org/  
general/custom.asp?  
page=Commitment](https://www.aleronline.org/general/custom.asp?page=Commitment)

# 2020 ALER Virtual Summit

<https://www.aleronline.org/page/ALER2020VirtualSummit>

As shared by Tammy Francis and Ashlee Horton in the Summer 2020 edition of *Literacy News*, the ALER Board of Directors decided to cancel the 2020 Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico. ALER Leadership planned the ALER Virtual Summit to give colleagues an opportunity to present their work since the conference was cancelled. These presentations are available on the ALER website at <https://www.aleronline.org/page/ALER2020VirtualSummit>

At this link, you will find presentations by the following literacy experts:

- ◆ Jodi Pilgrim, Sheri Vasinda, and Peggy Lisenbee
- ◆ Vicki Collet
- ◆ Jill Tussey and Leslie Haas
- ◆ Catherine Gibbons
- ◆ Alexandra (Ale) Babino and Mary Amanda (Mandy) Stewart
- ◆ Catherine McGeehan
- ◆ Dana Evans
- ◆ Maribeth Nottingham and Barbara J. McClanahan

If you haven't had a chance to watch these presentations, take some time to learn what your colleagues have been working on!

**"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom."**

*— George Washington Carver*



Hilton Head, SC - Nov. 4-7, 2021

# Get Ready for ALER 2021 Conference in Hilton Head, SC!

ALER proposals submitted to the cancelled 2020 conference **will need to be resubmitted in the submission portal**. You can also submit a new proposal. The portal has reopened at this link: <https://www.cvent.com/c/abstracts/b79d8d7e-a863-4c7b-a499-1db3b9d95f40>.

The portal will close again on **February 15, 2021** and all submissions in the portal will undergo peer review

for ALER 2021.

In addition, Dr. Tammy Francis will remain Conference Program Chair, Dr. Robin Johnson will be the Conference Co-Chair, and the theme will remain the same for 2021. The scheduled keynote speakers will be Dawn Quigley, Shaun Woodly, and Patrick Camangian. Let's hope that we will be able to travel to and be together in Hilton Head, SC for ALER 2021!



Conference Theme:  
Educate to Liberate

Conference Chair:  
Tammy C. Francis

Conference Co-Chair:  
Robin M. Johnson

## Teacher Education and Professional Learning Division



Jackie Ingram, Chair



Aimee Morewood,  
Chair-Elect

The Teacher Education and Professional Learning division has created a new email address to better communicate with TEPL members: [TEPL@TeacherEdProfLearn.org](mailto:TEPL@TeacherEdProfLearn.org). The division emailed members in December with an updated link for the division's Citation Repository. The repository is intended as a place where the members of TEPL can post and share their literacy research related to teacher education and/or professional learning in order to strengthen research connections among our membership. If you have questions about the TEPL Division, please contact Jacqueline Ingram (Chair) at [TEPL@TeacherEdProfLearn.org](mailto:TEPL@TeacherEdProfLearn.org) or Aimee Morewood (Chair-elect) at [aimee.morewood@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:aimee.morewood@mail.wvu.edu).

## Clinical Research and Practice Division



Cindy Jones, Chair

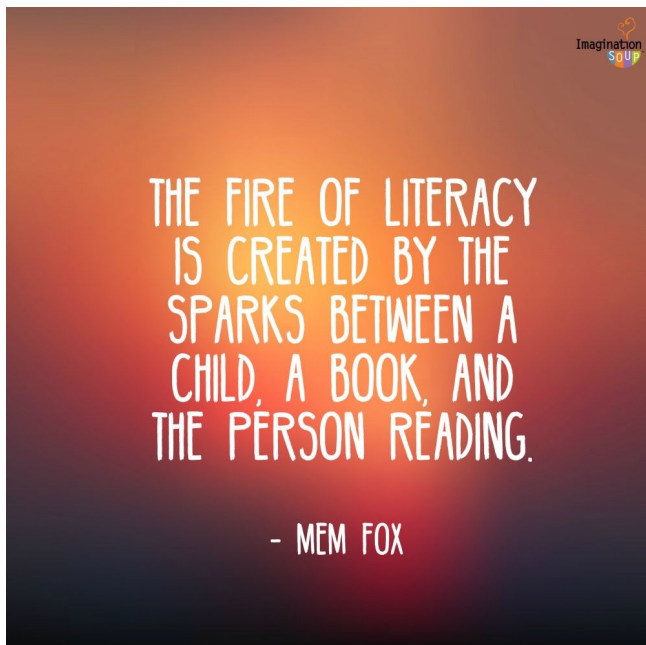
For more information about the Clinical Research and Practice Division, please contact Cindy Jones at [cindy.jones@usu.edu](mailto:cindy.jones@usu.edu).

## Adult Learning Division



Dianna Sand, Chair

If you have any questions about the Adult Learning Division, contact Dianna Sand, Chair, at [dsand@holyfamily.edu](mailto:dsand@holyfamily.edu).



## College Literacy Division

If you have any questions about the College Literacy Division, please contact Debra Coffey, Chair, at [dcoffey1@kennesaw.edu](mailto:dcoffey1@kennesaw.edu).



Debra Coffey,  
Chair

# Congratulations to the ALER 2020 Award Winners!



Dr. J. Helen Perkins,  
University of Memphis,  
winner of the ALER  
Laureate Award

Although we did not have the ALER annual conference in 2020, several people were recognized for their work and received ALER awards. Dr. Helen J. Perkins received the ALER Laureate Award that recognizes a long-term ALER member who influences other reading professionals and has research, publications, and presentations that involve collaboration.

Dr. Tori Flint was the recipient of the Jerry Johns Promising Researcher Award that honors

and supports research by a junior ALER member whose work is beyond the dissertation phase. Dr. Jill Tussey received the Judy Richardson Literacy as a Living Legacy Award. This award supports a literacy-related project related to an existing need in a community or school that typically is not supported by other public or private funds.

Dr. Leslie Roberts was the winner of the 2020 J. Estill Alexander Future Leaders in Literacy Award for Outstanding Dissertation. Dr. Roberts is from Clemson University and won for the paper, *Motivation to Read in the Middle Grades*, sponsored by Dr. Jaqueline Malloy. The J. Estill Alexander Future Leaders in Literacy Award for Outstanding Master's Research Paper was

Awarded to Kacie Neamtu from the University of Lethbridge for the paper, *Pedagogy in Practice: An Exploration of Writing Instruction in a High School English Language Arts Classroom*, sponsored by Dr. David Slomp.

Drs. Elizabeth M Bemiss, University of West Florida and Melanie Keel, Wingate University were awarded the ALER Teacher Education Research Grant for their research proposal *Innovations in Education: Using Simulation to Teach Foundational Literacy Strategies in Pre-Service Preparation*.

The award winners will be recognized at the 2021 ALER conference in Hilton Head, SC.

## Social Media and ALER

Did you know that ALER has a Facebook page and a Twitter handle? Social media is a great medium to share important research and advocacy, develop connections among literacy educators, researchers, and advocates, and promote our organization. As an organization we are committed to stimulate the self-development and professional growth of professors, teachers, reading specialists and students at all educational levels. Social media is a great way to meet this aspect of our mission.

We are increasing our presence on social media and we need your help. Here are four things you can do to improve our presence and share the wonderful work that comes from our mem-

bership:

\*Follow us on Facebook at the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers and on Twitter at @aleronline.

\*Invite your colleagues to follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Try to get 5 colleagues to follow us.

\*Help us curate wonderful content to share. Submit a request to share news or content to our social media channels via this [submission form \(https://forms.gle/9JraoyUVCMTG5xV29\)](https://forms.gle/9JraoyUVCMTG5xV29).

\*Share our posts on Facebook and retweeting on Twitter to let your followers know the great work we are doing to improve people's literate lives.

**If you have questions about accessing our social media channels or how to submit content for ALER to share through our channels, please email Michael Manderino, ALER Social Media**

## Call for Editors of Literacy News

Applications are being accepted from teams of committed and enthusiastic literacy professionals for the position of editors of the ALER newsletter, *Literacy News*. This publication publishes articles on aspects of literacy especially related to the four divisions of the organization: teacher education and professional learning, college reading, clinical research and practice, and adult learning. The editors manage the review and publication process to ensure a quality publication that reflects the ALER membership. As a valuable and unique service to ALER and to the literacy profession in general, this editorship opportunity comes only once every three years. Please seriously consider working with a team of colleagues to submit an application. Applicants must be current ALER members. See the Call for Editors on the ALER website for the application requirements.

**Send all application materials electronically on or before March 15, 2021 to:**

Leslie Haas, Chair, ALER Publications Committee  
[HaasL@bv.edu](mailto:HaasL@bv.edu)