



## MISSION STATEMENT

Right to Read Sumner is a group of parents, community members and educators who believe that knowledge is powerful and fosters a better understanding of the lives, cultures, and experiences of all people.

We advocate for literacy. We are committed to the idea that every person is represented and has access to historically accurate resources that teach them about the events that have shaped our world.

We actively support our school personnel and public library staff in navigating this challenging political and cultural environment.

## VISION STATEMENT

Right to Read Sumner believes in supporting diversity, including both a robust public school system and public library system, that meet the needs of the entire community.

## HISTORY OF RIGHT TO READ SUMNER

In October of 2022, the Caldecott award-winning children's book, "A Place Inside Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart ", by Zetta Elliott was challenged by a parent in Sumner County Schools as "inappropriate" for children. The poem tells the story of a young Black child and his feelings as he processes his community's reaction to a police killing.

A group of concerned parents across the political spectrum came together in support of the librarian who selected the book and the school where the book was part of the library collection. They spoke out publicly in social media and in comments in multiple school board meetings.

After weeks of debate, the school board voted to keep the book in the collection.

Recognizing that book challenges were now a part of a nation-wide attack on the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution, this growing group recognizes the need to elevate the diverse stories of its community through literature and to ensure that all children in the county have access to library and classroom materials that are representative of themselves.

Further, while exact literacy rates among the county are hard to gauge, by organizing into an official non-profit organization, Right to Read Sumner believes we can make a positive impact by conducting community events to encourage reading, by supporting public school teachers and librarians with advocacy and literacy resources, and by partnering with community organizations to promote equity and inclusion across the county.

## A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

***We read to know we are not alone.*** — C.S. Lewis

In 2022, when I ran for a school board seat in Sumner County, TN, I recognized that the surging national debate around literature and libraries, a clash of ideologies and ideals, had suddenly become a central focus for my community. After a book was challenged at my son's public school, I started a Facebook group in support of the librarian, the school, and the book and 200+ members joined in a matter of days. While defending literature is central to the mission of this group, we hope that our primary focus is to make a positive impact on our community by promoting literacy across Sumner County.

We cannot do this without you!

We believe that through thoughtful dialogue and advocacy for librarians, libraries and literature, we can change this course of conflict. We believe that every member of our community deserves representation in literature.

We believe that everyone has the ***Right to Read***

Thank you and welcome,

***Hilary Louder, Founder, Right to Read Sumner***