



EDUCATION FIRST
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

2024

ANNUAL REPORT





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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MR. CHRIS W. BUSCH, *Chairman*

DR. LULA HENRY, *Vice Chairman*

MR. SCOTT CAMPBELL, *Treasurer*

MRS. SHIRLENE S. COOK, *Secretary*

DR. STEVE HYDEN

MS. MARIAN G. PEKAR

DR. STEVE JENKINS

MRS. DEBORAH A. SCROGGINS

MS. LISA H. LAFOSSE

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

MR. MATT E. STRAWSER, *Chairman*

DR. LULA HENRY

MR. ANTHONY PAPA

MR. NICHOLAS BRAKE

MR. JEFF DAVIS



Welcome to the 73rd Annual Meeting of Education First FCU! We are delighted to have you here today and commend you for your active interest in our credit union's one-member, one-vote structure and philosophy. Your engagement is what makes our cooperative strong.

In 2024, credit unions faced significant economic pressures, including rising interest rates, inflation, and increased operating costs—challenges that also impacted EFFCU. Like many of our members, we navigated these financial stressors, which affected our bottom line and resulted in a negative net income for the year. However, despite these challenges, EFFCU remains well-capitalized, maintaining a strong net worth ratio of 8.43%.

Despite economic hardships, our credit union remained a trusted financial partner for our members. In 2024, members took out more than \$59 million in loans for autos, personal loans, credit cards, and mortgages—demonstrating confidence in our institution. We sincerely thank you for that trust.

Additionally, our member-owners opened more than 6,000 new savings and checking accounts, contributing to a 2.54% growth in deposits. This growth is not only a testament to your trust in us but also a positive indicator of our financial stability and the direction of the economy.

As your hometown credit union, we are dedicated to community involvement. Here are key highlights of our support in 2024:

- **Financial Education Initiatives** – We hosted multiple in-person seminars at our Lumberton Community Room and launched our first virtual event. Additionally, we attended several external financial education seminars, which centered around the youth, to further engage with the community.
- **Financial Literacy Partnership** – Our partnership with Zogo, a digital financial literacy app, continues to grow, with over 700 active users who have collectively spent more than 600 hours enhancing their financial knowledge.
- **Community Engagement** – Our employees participated in countless community events, school outreach programs, and sponsored events, contributing over 1,100 volunteer hours. Their dedication underscores our deep commitment to serving the community.

I want to recognize my fellow board members for their dedication to this credit union. Together, we ensure Education First FCU has a capable, qualified, and transparent management team—and I can say without hesitation that we do. Their commitment to strong governance and leadership is vital to our credit union's well-being, sustainability, and success.

I have deep confidence in our President and CEO, Urjit Patel, the wisdom of our board, the dedication of our staff, and the loyalty of our member-owners. We are well-positioned to overcome challenges and embrace opportunities in 2025. Our future is bright.

You already know that credit unions are different from other financial institutions—and that difference is you. As a member, you are also an owner, and we are accountable to you. Staying informed about Education First FCU empowers you to make smart financial choices, benefiting us all. Thank you for taking an active role in your local credit union!

2024 was a challenging year—not just for the nation's economy but also for Southeast Texas. Many of our members felt financial stress, and we recognize these unique challenges. At Education First, we remain committed to listening to your concerns, acting on your feedback, and finding the best ways to support you as we navigate these challenges together.

Despite the economic difficulties of 2024, we achieved several significant milestones:

- **Expanded our presence:** In February, we proudly opened our eighth branch in Lumberton, featuring a state-of-the-art Community Room—a free resource for local nonprofits and small businesses that lack access to meeting spaces.
- **Technology Enhancements:** We expanded our banking services by introducing Interactive Teller Machines (ITMs), which provide a wide range of self-service options for 24/7 banking convenience. Currently, 18 ITMs are available across various EFFCU locations throughout Southeast Texas.
- **Launched new service offerings:** We expanded our programs to better serve you, including Belong, our referral program, and Boost!, our round-up savings program. In 2024, members earned \$4,400 in referral bonuses through Belong, simply by inviting friends and family to join EFFCU and saved over \$46,000 using Boost!
- **Member Surveys:** Listening to our members is the key to improving and enhancing the value of your membership. Last year, we introduced a new member survey tool, gathering feedback from more than 2,400 members. As a result, we achieved an impressive member satisfaction score, placing us in the "excellent" range compared to our peers. This score reflects the high level of satisfaction among our members and their strong willingness to recommend EFFCU.

Looking ahead to 2025, we recognize that challenges will persist; however, EFFCU remains committed to embracing innovation and delivering an exceptional member experience, ensuring faster, more convenient service—whether you bank with us in-branch, over the phone, or through our digital platforms.

Education First FCU is your credit union. We are here to serve you, and your continued input and involvement are essential to shaping a stronger future.

Independent of the Board, the Supervisory Committee provides a comprehensive audit each year to determine compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and to evaluate internal controls. Our 2024 audit was conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, and their findings indicate that Education First's financial statements are properly prepared and accurately reflect the financial position of the credit union. Your credit union continues to be a very sound financial institution, and your best place to borrow and save.

CURRENT EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

URJIT PATEL | *President and CEO*

JONATHAN HASKETT JR. | *Executive Vice President*

BOYD LARSEN | *VP Accounting*

CHRISTY COOLEY | *VP Branch Operations*

ERIN TURK | *VP Human Resources*

SCOTT SIMS | *VP Information Technology*

CATHLEEN CANTER | *VP Lending*

CAROLYN RIDOUT | *VP Marketing*

SHANNON GUILLORY | *VP Mortgage Lending*

RACHEL GILMORE | *VP Risk and Compliance*

SAL GUERRERO | *VP Wealth Management*

2024 COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF CONDITION

ASSETS	2023	2024
Total Loans	394,203,132	378,826,740
Less: Allowance For Loan Losses	(3,644,996)	(6,923,233)
Cash On Hand & In Bank	14,627,858	18,500,903
Total Investments	164,747,882	152,254,729
Land & Building	19,010,624	26,496,958
Other Fixed Assets	12,339,991	9,578,670
Other Assets	27,408,536	26,999,273
Total Assets	628,693,027	605,734,041
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Notes Payable	62,518,800	30,750,000
Dividends & Interest Payable	0	0
Accounts Payable & Other Liabilities	4,657,012	3,422,023
Total Shares & Deposits	529,362,039	538,843,861
Regular Reserves	-	-
Accum Gains/Losses on Pension Plan/AFS Securities	(17,868,104)	(17,319,352)
Undivided Earnings	50,023,280	50,037,509
Total Liabilities & Equity	628,693,027	605,734,041
INCOME		
Interest On Loans	19,975,655	23,635,259
Income From Investments	6,491,657	6,615,560
Other Operating Income	8,754,339	10,336,952
Total Income	35,221,651	40,587,772
EXPENSES		
Compensation & Benefits	12,211,095	12,312,770
Travel & Conference	251,336	191,026
Office Occupancy	1,861,176	2,463,077
Office Operations	6,009,339	6,792,158
Education & Promotion	678,169	595,184
Loan Servicing	1,438,254	1,516,794
Professional & Outside	851,689	777,734
Provision For Loan Losses	1,907,512	7,219,692
Member Insurance	12,516	3,423
Operating Fees	90,061	109,385
Miscellaneous Expenses	243,631	524,420
Total Operating Expenses	25,554,778	32,505,695
Dividend & Interest Expense	9,428,508	12,133,350
Net Income	238,365	(4,051,274)

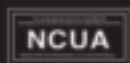


Education First

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