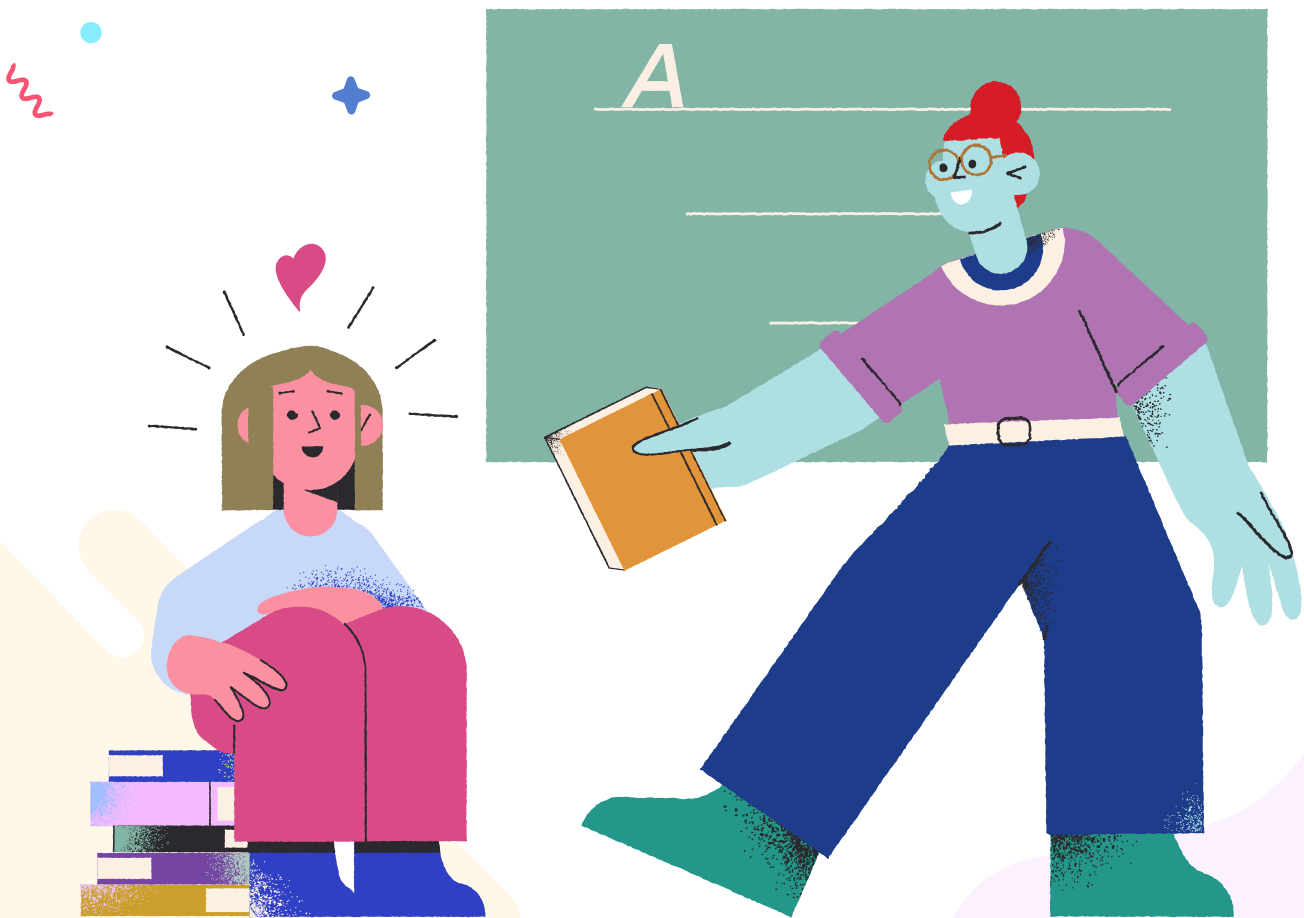


**SUCCESS STORY**

# Pasco County Schools Reignite a Love for Reading With Beanstack

In the spring of 2023, Pasco County Public Schools embarked on a mission to reignite students' love for reading. With no library media specialists in school buildings and a state mandate requiring that classroom libraries be cataloged and shared digitally, the district had to quickly find a way to work within these constraints. Facing the challenge head-on, Pasco County leveraged Beanstack's Classroom Library Connector and the best practice of initiating a district-wide reading challenge in the fall of 2023. Aptly named R.A.C.E. to Read Pasco! (Read Across the County Everyday), they set an ambitious goal to read 15 million minutes by the end of the school year in 2024.

Since reaching the six-month mark of the challenge, Pasco County readers are well on their way to surpassing their initial goal by 133%! The key components of their success? Engaging staff and teachers and inspiring students with enticing and imaginative incentives (think: a latte cart!). In one school year, Pasco County has effectively sparked a sense of excitement and passion for reading.



## Striving for Positive Reading Outcomes



Pasco County's secondary library media specialist, Donna Dorilio, and elementary library media specialist, Melissa Miller, along with key stakeholders across the district, aimed to meet the needs of their diverse learners while creating a reading culture that would lead to positive reading outcomes. With that goal in mind, the pair knew they would need help. When they discovered Beanstack during a meeting with other librarians from the state, Donna recalls being very excited about the opportunity to partner with Beanstack.

Since then, educators in Pasco County have realized just how quick and easy it is to integrate Beanstack into their daily routines. Many have used reading challenges to support Florida-mandated monthly topics, including Black History Month, Native American Heritage, and Financial Literacy. Even without building media specialists, there has been little lift for teachers, administration, and support staff. Not only does Beanstack increase students' motivation to read and offer a way to log the time they spend reading, but it also provides teachers with an accountability solution to track students' independent reading habits.



## Motivating Students With Rewards, Goals, and Competition



With the year-long challenge in full swing, keeping students motivated was essential. To help with this, Pasco County educators developed a few creative ideas. While Beanstack plays an essential role in gamifying the reading experience and providing digital rewards, physical rewards, and recognition are also used. Their most effective motivators? Food and activities.

One of the most popular rewards has been the “Read a Latte” cart started by a high school reading coach. The coach uses snacks and beverages to recognize students’ reading achievements, pulling them out of class to enjoy a treat from the cart. The excitement spreads once the student returns to class, and peers immediately want to know how to earn a treat. Other successful incentives have been wearing pajamas to school, reading with another grade level, cookies and cocoa, gift cards, and new books.

To wrap up the school year, Pasco County plans to award gold, silver, and bronze trophies to the top three schools based on student participation. Winners will also earn a digital “trophy badge” designed by Beanstack to add to their email signature, further celebrating their success.



## Maintaining Momentum Throughout the Year



To help schools more easily implement Beanstack, Donna and Melissa use smaller, themed reading challenges readily available through Beanstack to incentivize students and to keep the momentum going. “The excitement has been increasing. We added a Celebrate Literacy Week reading challenge and saw lots of engagement from students and staff,” says Melissa. “One of our reading coaches even posted a photo to social media of their participation in one of our activities—reading to a stuffed animal!”

Designing a bookmark has been the most popular activity so far. Students could earn an achievement badge for creating a reading-themed bookmark during their Celebrate Literacy Week challenge. Students entered their designs, and the winners’ schools received 500 printed bookmarks to be distributed in their library media center. Five winning designs were selected at each elementary, middle, and high school level. By the close of the Celebrate Literacy Week challenge, Pasco County had received thousands of submissions. The activity was so well received that the district is already planning to implement the challenge again next year.



# Spreading the Word



Creating a strong reading culture takes an entire community. For Pasco County, it's no different. As part of their ongoing collaboration with leaders throughout the district, Donna and Melissa have determined the following communications plan as the most effective:

1. Send weekly updates to school administrators with challenge leader information, adjusting metrics to ensure all schools can feel included—schools with the most minutes read, new schools joining the challenge, schools with the highest percentage of readers, etc.
2. Provide information to instructional coaches, teachers, and staff in person at departmental meetings and through written communication.
3. Share what strategies are successful in coaching forums and recognize individuals going above and beyond.
4. Include information in the district's monthly parent newsletter.
5. Distribute posters to schools and place them around district offices.
6. Engage the public relations department to help promote the district challenge.
7. Provide the school board with updates at every meeting.



## Achieving Positive Reading Results



Pasco County has experienced significant growth in reading engagement. While Donna and Melissa initially anticipated Beanstack to be a success in their elementary schools, there has been a notable surge in momentum within secondary schools as well—middle and high schools consistently rank in the top 20 of the R.A.C.E. to Read leaderboard. Students of all ages are discovering their passion for reading, fueled by the thrill of competition and the opportunity to receive public recognition.

Donna notes, “Beanstack is a great way to start or continue emphasizing literacy and reading for pleasure. It allows districts and individual schools to promote reading in a way that represents their overall community, whether it’s through minutes, specific books, activities, or bingo boards.” She says, “The bottom line is to make reading an intrinsic, enjoyable experience”—and we couldn’t agree more.





# About Beanstack

Beanstack helps public and school libraries effortlessly facilitate reading challenges and reading fundraisers. The flagship product of Zoobean Inc., Beanstack is licensed by over 10,000 public libraries, school districts, and corporations around the world. Its investors include Mark Cuban from ABC's Shark Tank and its founding members were previously Washington, D.C.'s teacher of the year and Google's first head of K-12 education outreach. To learn more, visit [beanstack.com](https://beanstack.com).