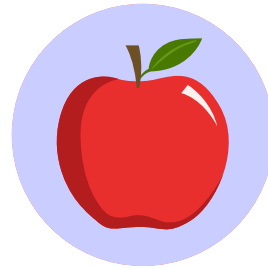


How Richland One Supports Literacy at All Levels

Richland One School District in South Carolina serves over 22,000 students across 52 schools, encompassing urban, suburban, and rural communities. The district has over 480 square miles and is home to diverse programs, including Montessori education, career development initiatives, language immersion, and the state's only Challenger Learning Center for Space Education. At the heart of these offerings is a robust commitment to literacy, recognizing its role in shaping students' academic and personal growth.

Dr. Kendra Lynn, the district's K-12 Literacy Coordinator, emphasizes, "Supporting readers means focusing on the whole child, treating each student as a unique reader with individual needs." This philosophy drives Richland One's innovative approach to building a vibrant reading culture that equips students with essential skills and fosters a lifelong love of reading.



Challenges

Richland One sought to:



Provide equitable access to reading resources across all schools.



Cultivate a district-wide culture of reading through programs that inspire engagement.



Enhance literacy support for diverse communities, including multilingual families.

Strategies

Richland One implemented a suite of literacy initiatives designed to address these challenges while fostering creativity, engagement, and inclusivity. Keep reading for a closer look at their key programs.

Build a Reading Culture Through Visibility and Role Models

Richland One introduced staff book posters showcasing principals, librarians, and coaches posing with their favorite books to make reading more visible and relatable. Prominently displayed in schools, these posters positioned trusted role models as passionate readers, inspiring students to follow suit.

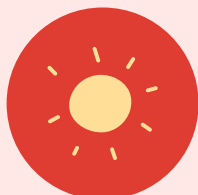


Promote Literacy at Home

Richland One extended reading beyond the classroom through two key initiatives:



Home Library Program: Students from pre-K3 to 9th grade selected books online, which were delivered before summer break. This program ensured students had engaging materials to combat the "summer slide."



Summer SOAR Program: Weekly book distributions kept summer reading alive, enabling students to build home libraries while maintaining momentum.

Empower Early Readers with Thrive Richland

Richland One's Thrive Richland program underscored the importance of early literacy by hosting bi-weekly playgroups for children under five. Each session included a book giveaway, ensuring families developed early reading habits. This initiative also provided books during pre-K screenings, planting the seeds for lifelong reading.





Encourage Creative Expression with Poetry Jam

The district's Poetry Jam encouraged students to explore spoken word and rap, fostering self-expression and creativity. This event showcased student talent and deepened connections to language and storytelling.

Expand Access Through Federal and State Support

Richland One utilized Title I and ESOL program funding to deliver over 110,000 books to families. Multilingual ESOL seed libraries in ten schools reflected the district's cultural diversity and ensured students could access books in their native languages.



Motivate Through Challenges: The Superintendent's Book Club

Richland One's annual reading challenge energized students, achieving remarkable milestones like 6 million minutes read in one year. To ensure inclusivity, the district emphasized reading minutes over books read, fostering equity for readers of all speeds.

Beanstack streamlined reading minute tracking and celebrated achievements with unique rewards. Memorable incentives like bounce houses and principal-led surprises (including one principal riding a camel) brought excitement to literacy efforts, making reading a celebrated activity district-wide.

Outcomes

Richland One's literacy initiatives have created a thriving culture of reading that touches every aspect of the district:

6M

Increased Engagement

Students logged over 6 million minutes during the Superintendent's Book Club challenge.



Cultural Inclusion

ESOL seed libraries provided multilingual families with tools to embrace literacy.

+110K

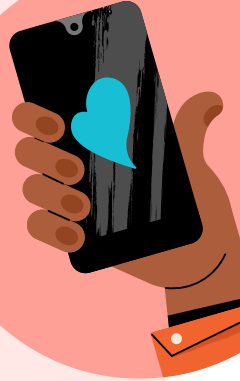
Equitable Access

Over 110,000 books distributed to families ensured resources reached all corners of the district.



Community Support

Programs like Thrive Richland and Summer SOAR nurtured reading habits from early childhood onward.



Lessons Learned

Travis Nelson, the district's Library Media Consultant, emphasizes that cultivating a reading culture requires daily efforts and district-wide programs. "It's not a one-step solution—it's about enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment at every level."

For districts aiming to replicate Richland One's success:

- Partner with libraries and literacy organizations for program development.
- Foster visibility and relatability by incorporating staff as reading role models.
- Leverage federal and state programs to enhance access to books and reading materials.

Conclusion

Richland One demonstrates how a comprehensive and inclusive approach to literacy can transform school communities. Their programs, tailored to diverse needs, reflect the district's deep commitment to reading skills and readers' identities.

