

beanstack
CASE STUDY

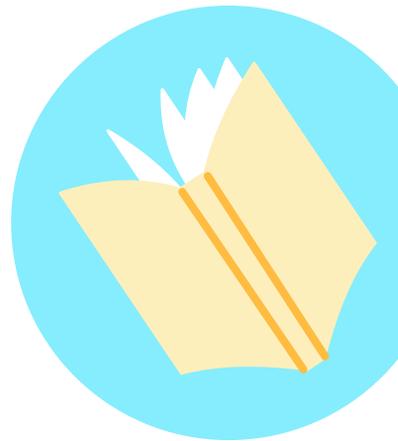


Turning Pages and Showing Up: Clearfield Elementary's Reading Culture Revival

At Clearfield Elementary, increasing reading engagement was more than just a goal—it was a challenge. As a Title I school in Rowan County, Kentucky, many students faced economic hardships and inconsistent attendance, making it difficult to foster a strong reading culture. Administrators and educators knew they needed an innovative approach to spark a love for reading, strengthen family involvement, and create meaningful incentives for student success.

“Beanstack has sparked a new level of excitement for reading in our school. Students are not only motivated to read more, but they’re also proud to track their progress and celebrate their accomplishments. It’s been incredible to watch our readers grow and cheer each other on—reading has truly become a joyful part of our school culture.”

Enter Beanstack. Under the leadership of library media specialist Jessica Stepp and student technology leadership program coach and Title I teacher Maria White, Clearfield launched a new reading initiative that transformed how students, families, and staff connected with books. Clearfield Elementary built a thriving reading culture beyond the classroom through creative challenges, community partnerships, and a school-wide commitment to making reading fun.



Goals



Increase Student Engagement with Reading

Clearfield aimed to boost student enthusiasm for independent reading by making reading more interactive and rewarding.



Strengthen Family Involvement in Literacy

Provide families with tools and resources to support their children's reading journeys and extend a love of reading beyond the classroom.



Use Incentives to Improve Attendance

Connect reading challenges and rewards—like book vending machine tokens—to positive attendance behaviors and school engagement to motivate consistent student attendance.

Strategies

Clearfield Elementary embraced a multifaceted approach to sparking student enthusiasm, engaging families, and integrating reading into daily school life.

Staff Launch

Before introducing Beanstack to students, Stepp ensured the staff was comfortable with the platform. The school started with a staff-only reading challenge, “In My Reading Era,” inspired by Taylor Swift. Teachers were encouraged to log their reading, and those who met the goal by fall break were entered into a Starbucks gift card raffle. This fun, low-pressure challenge gave teachers firsthand experience with Beanstack and helped build excitement ahead of the student launch.

Student Launch

Stepp kept the introduction to Beanstack simple for kindergarten and first-grade students. These younger students learned how the library would use the program without overwhelming them with details. Meanwhile, second through fifth-grade students brought their Chromebooks to the library for a step-by-step tutorial. They learned to log reading minutes, add friends, and scan book barcodes. The ability to track their friends' reading activity sparked friendly competition, increasing student engagement.



Family Engagement

To help families support reading at home, Stepp sent home a quick-start guide and a welcome letter from Beanstack. They also shared an explainer video on Facebook, which received great feedback from parents. The library newsletter spotlights the current reading challenge, leaderboard updates, and special recognitions—like the Beanstack Trailblazer badge each month. Students also earned exclusive badges for participating in Family Literacy Night and the book fair.

Engaging Students & Building Excitement

Clearfield made Beanstack a vibrant and visible part of everyday school life. Posters promoting reading challenges lined high-traffic areas, and a leaderboard outside the library drew daily attention—students even rushed in after snow days to check if their names were on top. The excitement from the staff challenge spilled over to students, boosting participation across the board. The school consistently ran a 300-minute reading challenge alongside themed monthly challenges using Beanstack's ready-made templates to keep the momentum going.



Let Recognition Be an Incentive

To bring meaningful reading incentives to life, Clearfield Elementary partnered with local organizations to secure a book vending machine. While the school initially planned to cover half the cost, a generous community sponsor fully funded the project. They celebrated the launch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by elected officials. Students earn tokens to use at the vending machine as rewards for reading milestones, positive behavior, and strong attendance. Clearfield also teamed up with the public library for joint literacy events, open house tables, and even a bookmobile tour to further support reading engagement.

Tracking Progress & Data Insights

Clearfield set clear, school-wide reading goals and actively monitored progress through Beanstack. By celebrating milestones, adjusting goals based on participation, and using data insights to spotlight student reading habits, the school kept the momentum high and encouraged deeper engagement.



Outcomes

The impact of Beanstack at Clearfield Elementary was immediate and profound.



Within one week, Clearfield reached 75% student participation and earned Beanstack's Reading Culture Trailblazer status. By week two, students had logged more than 100,000 minutes of reading.



Chronic absenteeism fell from 33.7% in 2023–2024 to 25.1% in 2024–2025—an 8.6 percent decrease. Clearfield staff credit part of this improvement to Beanstack challenges, which gave students more motivation to attend school and participate in daily activities.



Library visits surged as students became more invested in selecting books aligned with their interests, leading to increased circulation and student requests for specific titles.



Students not only read more but also expressed a newfound enthusiasm for reading. Many who had previously struggled to engage with books found motivation through the competitive and rewarding aspects of Beanstack.

Lessons Learned

Teacher buy-in is crucial.

Staff engagement played a key role in student adoption. Teachers integrated Beanstack into independent reading rotations, making it a seamless part of their routine.

Consistency is key.

Discussing Beanstack regularly in the library and classrooms helped embed it into the school's reading culture.

Different students are motivated by different incentives.

While personal reading goals and badges drove some students, others were more motivated by prizes like book vending machine tokens and certificates. A mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was essential.

Conclusion

Clearfield Elementary transformed reading engagement by weaving Beanstack into daily school life. With dedicated staff, family support, and fun incentives, they built a thriving reading culture. As one student shared, "In 3rd grade, I didn't like reading, but I do now that we have Beanstack." The school's efforts sparked a love of reading and helped boost attendance by giving students more reasons to attend.