

School Spotlight

A First-Year Media Specialist's Recipe for Success at Rolling Hills Elementary

When media specialist Meghan Murphy joined Rolling Hills Elementary at the beginning of the year, she saw an opportunity to build a thriving reading culture. Students were interested in reading, but they needed a way to truly connect with it. "We're an extra hours school, we're a Title I school, and we are trying to climb these kids to the top testing-wise, and I just want reading to be fun for them, or it's never going to be a built-in part of their lives." With this goal in mind, Meghan set out to create an environment where reading is a fun and essential part of everyday life.



“The library should be the heart of the school, a place where every student feels welcome.”

Meghan Murphy

Media Specialist

Rolling Hills Elementary School, FL

Building a Schoolwide Reading Culture

From the start, the goal was to make reading accessible to all students. Rolling Hills had primarily used Accelerated Reader, but Meghan noticed that only a handful of teachers were actively using it, and the same group of students were participating. By introducing Beanstack, she created a fun and inclusive way for students and teachers to track their reading and build excitement around books.

Inspiring Students to Read—and Love It!

From celebrating top readers to simply keeping the library doors open, Meghan found that a combination of in-person and online strategies worked best.

- **Get Social:** The “friends” setting in Beanstack was a hit, “When kids see their friends reading and getting excited about books, it creates this incredible ripple effect,” Meghan shared.
- **A Little Recognition Goes a Long Way:** Posters celebrating top readers helped build excitement and motivation.
- **Make it Personal:** “Seeing students’ faces light up when they find a book that truly resonates with them is the best part of my job,” Meghan said.
- **Create an Inviting Space:** Meghan kept the library doors open throughout the day, giving students a welcoming place to explore. “Once you give the space, everyone will come.”

Teacher Engagement for Greater Impact

Teacher involvement played a crucial role in increasing student participation. Meghan notes, “It wasn’t about adding more to their plate, it was about showing them how Beanstack could support what they were already doing.”

- **Communication Matters:** Meghan emailed teachers three times a week with Beanstack stats and infographics, showcasing grade-level reading minutes and top-performing teachers.
- **Highlight Teacher Achievement:** Beanstack updates were included in the weekly school news, highlighting teachers who encouraged student participation. “When other teachers saw their colleagues getting recognized, they wanted to be part of it too.”
- **Incentives That Spark Excitement:** Scholastic book fair funds were used to offer book pack prizes, encouraging friendly competition among teachers.

Outcomes & Impact

These efforts have led to a remarkable boost in student engagement—and a culture shift throughout the school.

- Halfway through the year, Rolling Hills reached 50% Beanstack participation, with over 260 students actively logging their reading.
- Meghan initially set a community reading goal of 50,000 minutes, but students quickly surpassed it—so they raised it to 255,500 minutes.
- The library has become a hub of excitement, with 40–50 students visiting each morning to check out books.

CONCLUSION

Thanks to Meghan’s enthusiasm and persistence, Rolling Hills Elementary students are reading more—and loving it. As Meghan put it, “Beanstack helped us celebrate all kinds of readers, and that’s what made the biggest difference in engagement.” By making reading fun, visible, and accessible, the school has created a lasting impact that will continue to grow.