



beanstack
CASE STUDY

Lubbock-Cooper Liberty High School: Turning Grant Funding Into Reading Traditions



When Lubbock-Cooper Liberty opened in 2023, it was the first new high school in Lubbock, Texas, in over 50 years. Positioned in a rapidly developing suburban area with new homes and businesses, their district is known for active parents, a supportive school board, and strong community engagement. Liberty's inaugural media specialist, Sarah Henderson, saw an exciting opportunity to establish a school culture with strong traditions centered on reading.

As a brand-new school, however, there was no budget earmarked for a reading platform like Beanstack. Rather than letting that stand in the way, Sarah's principal, Phillip Saffel, suggested piloting Beanstack for a semester. This would help build excitement around independent reading and gather the data needed to make a compelling case for grant funding to sustain the program.



"I just think you gotta shoot for the moon. It's really easy to get into the mindset of, 'I don't have the funds for this.' We just have to be creative, we have to be hopeful, we have to be positive in our approach... Just because you don't have the money in your budget doesn't mean that you can't get the money."

With that mindset, Sarah collected meaningful data, secured nearly \$10,000 in grant funding, and set the stage for long-term success by embedding reading into Liberty's culture from day one.

Goals

Sarah set out to inspire Liberty students to find joy in reading while creating a sustainable path to fund Beanstack beyond the pilot semester. She hoped to:



Create Motivating Reading Traditions

Launch a school-wide independent reading program with meaningful incentives to help students—many of whom hadn't read for pleasure in years—reconnect with reading.



Align with State Standards Without Extra Testing

Support required self-selected independent reading in English classes with a tool that simplified logging and kept the focus on building reading habits, not assessments.



Build a Data-driven Case for Grant Funding

Use participation and reading data from the pilot to demonstrate Beanstack's impact and secure multi-year funding from the local education foundation.



Strategies

From pilot launch to securing full funding, Sarah balanced academic goals with high-impact rewards that resonated with high school students and sustained their engagement.



Pilot with a Clear Vision

Sarah launched a semester-long pilot to introduce Beanstack and gather meaningful data to guide next steps.



Partner with Teachers Early

She met with department chairs to determine realistic reading goals, ensure alignment with classroom expectations, and build early staff buy-in.



Create Short-, Mid-, and Long-Term Incentive

By rewarding progress with monthly gift card drawings, semester reading milestones, and a long-term graduation honor cord tied to consistent goal completion.



Choose Incentives That Resonate with Teens

Sarah offered high-value rewards, such as gift cards to local coffee and soda shops, as well as popular brands like Lululemon.



Use Pilot Data to Strengthen the Grant Proposal

Sarah highlighted participation rates, total minutes logged, and the program's overall structure to support continued funding.

Outcomes

Beanstack helped Liberty High School establish a strong foundation for independent reading and community engagement in its first years.



Increased Student Engagement

Beanstack data shows student participation rose 18% from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 and continues to grow.



A School-Wide Reading Culture

Teachers, the principal, morning announcements, and community partners all reinforced the program, making reading a shared priority across the campus.



Fully Funded, Sustainable Program Support

Pilot data and a well-structured plan enabled Sarah to fully fund two years of Beanstack licensing and high-value program incentives.

Lessons Learned

Sarah plans to pursue several grants to continue Beanstack funding for Liberty's reading programs in the years ahead. In addition to reapplying to the local education foundation, she's exploring state and regional funding options to build a more sustainable model. With budget deficits affecting schools nationwide, Sarah knows diversification is key, and, she's committed to using creative grant strategies to support both Beanstack licensing and incentives that keep her readers engaged.

Conclusion

With thoughtful program design, meaningful prizes, and strong staff support, Sarah built a reading initiative that truly motivates students and celebrates their growth as readers. Her experience shows that even without a dedicated budget, schools can create real momentum by piloting first, gathering actionable data, and leveraging community-backed grants. As Sarah explains, "We had principal buy-in, teacher buy-in, student buy-in, and now we have community buy-in." Liberty's program success proves that when schools think big and stay resourceful, they can build lasting reading traditions that empower every student.

