

2022 Winter Reading Report

 beanstack

Our First Winter Reading Report

Since January 2018, Beanstack's annual Winter Reading Challenge has inspired libraries and schools across the country to welcome the new year with reading. Communities rally around the monthlong contest to revitalize their daily reading habits and strengthen their culture of reading. Motivated by Beanstack's gamification tools and the chance to win big community prizes, readers of all ages log tens of millions of reading minutes.

Our company, products, and initiatives like Winter Reading are built around the mission to motivate communities to read more, together. And not only do we believe in the transformative power of reading—we've seen it play out. While average test scores [plunged](#) in the wake of the pandemic, our partners like [Castleberry Independent School District](#) in Texas and [Mitchell County School District](#) in Georgia are seeing big sustained gains—up to 60% increases in test scores—after putting reading with Beanstack at the center of their literacy initiatives.

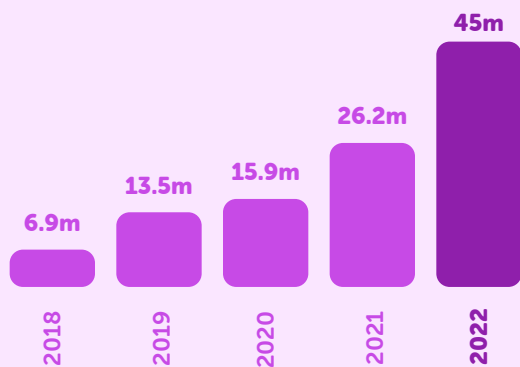
As you'll read in our inaugural Winter Reading Report, Beanstack's motivational tools combined with the creativity and dedication of our partners help thousands of communities create daily reading habits. To shed light on how our Winter Reading Challenge helps strengthen cultures of reading, we reviewed historic participation data and collected insights from past participants and winners. With data-driven tips and stories from past winners, you'll find helpful tools and ideas for harnessing the power of Winter Reading for your community in the pages that follow.

The Reach of Winter Reading

Our Winter Reading Challenge has expanded tenfold since we launched our first community reading contest back in 2018, when 93 libraries and schools read 6.9 million minutes. In our fifth Winter Reading Challenge in 2022, more than 2,500 libraries and schools participated from across the country, and 1.7 million readers collectively read more than 45 million minutes.

Five-Year Growth in Winter Reading Challenge Participation

Total minutes read, in millions



Beyond the big community numbers, Winter Reading helps grow healthy reading habits on the individual level. On average, 2022 Winter Reading Challenge participants read 25 minutes per school day—nearly 10 minutes higher than the [national average](#). Research shows that reading 20 minutes a day builds vocabulary, strengthens empathy, and lifts test scores.

Minutes Read Per Day

Average Winter Reading participant



National average



= 2 minutes

Impact

In Winter Reading Challenges from 2018 to 2022, 98 winning libraries and schools collectively received:

\$130,000 in prize money and donations

500 books

Dozens of author visits

Our Winter Reading winners hail from the beaches of Hawai'i, the mountains of California, the plains of Texas, and beyond. An impressive 24 of them were crowned winner or runner-up multiple times. The winningest school district is Pasadena Independent School District in Texas, where three elementary schools won twice and two schools won once, for a total of eight Winter Reading victories.

“The Winter Reading Challenge really helps motivate our students to get back on track with their reading after the winter break. It also encourages them to read over the break to get a jump start on their minutes that week before we return to school.”

Amanda Butcher

Librarian

Pearl Hall Elementary School in Pasadena
Independent School District in Texas, 2020 and 2021
Winter Reading Challenge winner

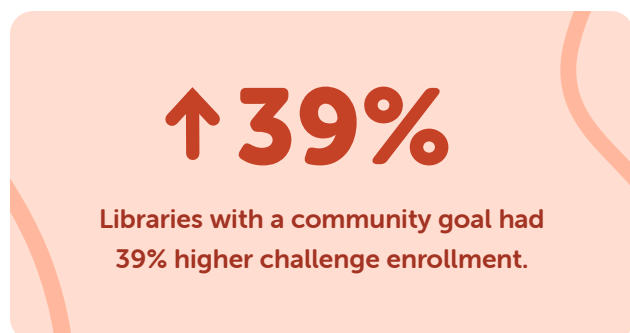
What are the keys to success in Pasadena and our other winners' communities? Read on for eight takeaways from their inspiring stories and the cold hard data.

1. Rally around a community goal.

Bringing readers together around a shared community reading goal motivates big reading returns.



Schools with a community goal had more than three times as much active participation and more than double the total minutes logged.



“The idea of the community competing, not against each other, but as an entire community against different library systems, has resonated in Suffolk.”

Sarah Townsend

Assistant Director of Libraries

Suffolk Public Library in Virginia, 2018–2021 Winter Reading Challenge winner

Suffolk Public Library’s use of a galvanizing community goal catapulted them to the Winter Reading Challenge podium an awe-inspiring four times, which ties them for the most wins of any library.

2. Use the Beanstack mobile app.

The Beanstack mobile app makes tracking reading an accessible, everyday habit and creates more sustained reading engagement.

Mobile Logging Far Outpaced Web-Only Participation in Winter Reading 2022

- On the web
- On the mobile app

Average minutes logged by readers

310 minutes

505 minutes

Percent of active readers logging 4+ days

35%

58%

Percent of active readers logging 8+ days

16%

34%

“Using the app is highly motivating for families. We have an active, on-the-go community. So having the convenience of logging in the app helps them stay involved in the contests and makes it easier for primary students to log their reading.”

Jennifer Siderius

Media Specialist

New Market Elementary School in Frederick County Public Schools in Maryland, 2021 Winter Reading Challenge winner

3. Encourage consistency with reading streaks.

In Beanstack, every day of logged reading adds to participants' reading streaks, creating an unbroken chain that recognizes reading consistency and urges users to read on days they may otherwise skip.

"The features of earning badges and streaks really appeal to my goal-oriented students."

Johanna Stieber

Library Media Specialist

Frederic School District in Wisconsin, 2022 Winter Reading Challenge participant.

"Many students love seeing their reading streaks."

Tonja Doering

Media Specialist

Arbor Ridge K-8 School in Orange County Public Schools in Florida, 2020 and 2022 Winter Reading Challenge winner

On average, students with at least a weeklong streak logged



37

minutes per day

AND

1,000+

minutes total during the 2022 Winter Reading Challenge.

4. Promote connection and competition with friends and leaderboards.

"I find friendly competitions are a great way to get students motivated."

Lisette de la Torre

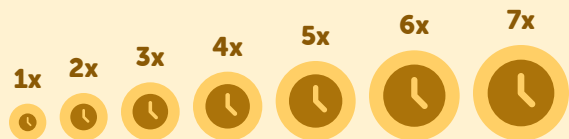
Media Specialist

Challenge Elementary in Broward County Public Schools in Florida, 2020 Winter Reading Challenge winner

One easy and impactful way to promote friendly competition and reading connections during Winter Reading is with Beanstack's friends and leaderboards feature. Showing readers all their friends' recent reading achievements and stats sparks more participation and engagement.

10%

Library sites with the friends feature enabled, which allows users to send email invitations to their wider community and spread the word about Winter Reading, saw a 10% increase in 2022 Winter Reading Challenge enrollment.



Students with friends in Beanstack logged nearly seven times as many minutes as those without any friends added.

5. Set up classroom or grade level competitions.

When polled, more than 60 percent of former Winter Reading school winners mentioned running reading competitions as a key element in their Winter Reading strategy. Our Insights Leaderboard simplifies and streamlines the process for schools with up-to-date dashboards of student, classroom, and grade rankings.

Thurmont Elementary School in Frederick County, Maryland, announced the school's leading student and classroom reading totals on their morning announcements. And one Texas elementary school used a classroom "scoreboard" to recognize when individuals, classrooms, and grades reached key reading milestones within the challenge.



>60%

of former Winter Reading school winners
ran reading competitions.

6. Activate a tandem connection for community collaboration.

Pairing up with your local library or school for Winter Reading amplifies your reach and generates excitement. With Beanstack's tandem connection, students can easily switch between library and school accounts, see challenges for both organizations, and count their reading toward both sites' Winter Reading Challenge totals.

Out of all the past Winter Reading school winners, 80% of winning schools currently have an active tandem connection with their local library. Especially with Winter Reading straddling winter break and the beginning of students' second semester, enacting tandems is a powerful way to connect your readers to resources and reading motivation both inside and outside of school.

"Beanstack is a great platform to encourage students to read. It allows teachers to monitor and students to focus on reading. I love the reading challenges, and it ties in with our local county libraries, who also use Beanstack."

Amanda Garza

Teacher Librarian

Bakersfield High School in Kern High School District in California, 2022 Winter Reading Challenge participant

7. Give away Badge Books.

Libraries that use Badge Books, our physical reading logs and sticker books, had 54% higher 2022 Winter Reading Challenge enrollment. While Badge Books don't directly pair with Winter Reading, they do sync up with summer reading, 1,000 Books, and evergreen reading challenges, leading readers to be more engaged with library challenges and services year-round.

Summer 2022 was the first year that schools debuted Badge Books to their communities. The early response from families in Cobb County School District in Georgia, one of our pilot districts, was astounding. We can't wait to see how strengthening year-round reading habits with Badge Books impacts results in our 2023 Winter Reading Challenge!



"It was amazing!"
Second grader



"Please do it again next year!"
Parent of a third grader

"It was fun to compete against my mom!"
Fourth grader



"We got to use all the stickers and it connected with the Beanstack app that I loved!"
Fifth grader



"We used it every single day."
Parent of a second grader



"It helped me out a lot."
Parent of a fourth grader

8. "Promote, promote, promote whenever you can!"

After launching competitions, using creative promotional tactics was the most common tip shared by previous Winter Reading winners. "Promote, promote, promote whenever you can!" a former winner from Orange County Public Schools counseled. From putting "Log your minutes in Beanstack" signs in the car pick-up line and banners in the library to recreating viral dance videos, many past winners combined physical and social media marketing for maximum effect.

"Marketing is key to build the fun factor."

Sarah Townsend

Assistant Director of Libraries

Suffolk Public Library in Virginia, 2018–2021 Winter Reading Challenge winner

"I sent notices through teachers, added to the school newsletter, posted on the school website, AND made a robocall to our school families. I had a good response with all my reminders."

Caryn Cuadra

Media Specialist

Country Hills Elementary in Broward County Public Schools in Florida, 2020 Winter Reading Challenge winner

Closing Thoughts

These eight tips aim to strengthen our shared mission: motivating all people and communities to read more. We're proud of the growth and impact of Winter Reading, and excited for the next five years, and then the next. Through it all, we'll continue to seek out open feedback, suggestions, and insights from you, our partners—with love, inclusion, and awesomeness always at the heart.





 **beanstack**

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