

MEMORANDUM

To: All School-Level Administrators and Teachers
From: Dr. Marcia Oglesby, Director of Grants and Partnerships
Through: Mrs. Jennifer Caracciolo, Interim Chief of CEIP
Date: September 19, 2025
Subject: *Funding Focus Friday: Ben Carson Reading Projects THINK BIG*

The [Ben Carson Reading Project](#) helps schools create inviting Reading Rooms with engaging books and student-friendly furniture strategically designed to promote independent reading and reflect Dr. Carson's THINK BIG philosophy. So far, the project has established over 300 *Reading Rooms* in 24 states- including Georgia- and D.C., expanding access to enjoyable, everyday reading for students who need more practice with engaging books.

What you will receive:

- A curated starter library containing over 500 titles across various authors, genres, and topics, along with an inviting, student-centered design. ([Typical room cost: \\$20,000](#))
- An optional *Reading Room Incentive Package* to reward stamina, genre exploration, and peer recommendations.

Project ideas that close gaps and spark engagement:

- **Bilingual & Family Read-Together Kits:** Multilingual titles and take-home prompts; host monthly family story times.
- **Sensory-Friendly Nooks:** Flexible seating, soft lighting, and quiet zones to help neurodiverse and reluctant readers focus.
- **STEM & Career Spotlight Shelf:** High-interest nonfiction (coding, aviation, health careers) and magazines for background knowledge.
- **"THINK BIG" Passport:** Track pages/genres, celebrate milestones, and feature student book talks.
- **Summer-Slide Bundles:** Short, high-appeal titles prepped for breaks & intersessions.

Who should apply? Schools with:

- A suitable space
- A committed team (administrator + teacher/media lead)
- A sustainability plan that aligns with literacy goals (i.e., attendance, Lexile growth)

Learn more about Dr. Carson's Reading Rooms [HERE](#). To apply, see [HERE](#).

Don't forget to review and follow the [DCSD Grant Guidelines](#) and work with [Grants & Partnerships](#) to coordinate the next steps. We are here to support you in shaping your ideas and strengthening your submissions. To begin your application, have questions answered, or get experienced advice, email us at grantsandpartnerships@dekalbschoolsga.org.

Thank you from the DCSD Grants and Partnerships Team:

Dr. Marcia Oglesby, *Director*
Mrs. Libritta Anderson Griffin, *Coordinator II* Dr. Donald Porter, *Lead Grant Strategist*
Ms. Demetric Crittle, *Coordinator* Ms. Tanya Arrington, *Strategic Partners Manager*