Literacy and a love of reading are at the heart of Springfield Ball Charter School’s approach to learning, so Principal Nicole Nash Gales planned a number of family literacy activities to make reading a priority at home and to engage parents more meaningfully in school.

Calling the initiative *Our Community R.E.A.D.S.: Realizing Excellence, Achieving Dreams in Springfield*, Gales and her staff made literacy a focus of the year, dedicating space in school newsletters to offer parents tips and ideas for how to read with their children -- such as asking questions about the storyline, and identifying beginnings, middles and endings. The school also hosted a series of book club meetings, during which parents and children read together. At a Literacy Night for All event, families received information and materials to support reading at home, and participated in a variety of activities, including a read-aloud. A *Dream* grant covered the cost of supplies, food and equipment to support the book clubs and Literacy Night.

Though book club attendance was lower than Gales expected, the response from parents and children was positive. “Providing structured time for families to read together is important and meaningful, whether there are 5–10 families or 50–100. Those who show up matter,” she said. Gales plans to repeat the book clubs next year and add a writing component.