



# City of Tualatin

## Briefing

Sharon Benson, Senior Development Officer

Becky Bard, Volunteer Site Coordinator

May 2026





# Thanks for your vote of confidence!





# About SMART Reading

- Oregon's largest volunteer children's literacy nonprofit
- Vision: An Oregon where all kids can realize their full potential through reading
- Underserved kids; kids living in poverty
- 95% funded with donations; volunteer-driven



Founded in 1991





# Why SMART Reading?

39% of Oregon third graders aren't meeting 3rd grade reading benchmark

Building a strong foundation of literacy can change a child's life trajectory. **Research shows** 2 things are strong predictors of early literacy skills:

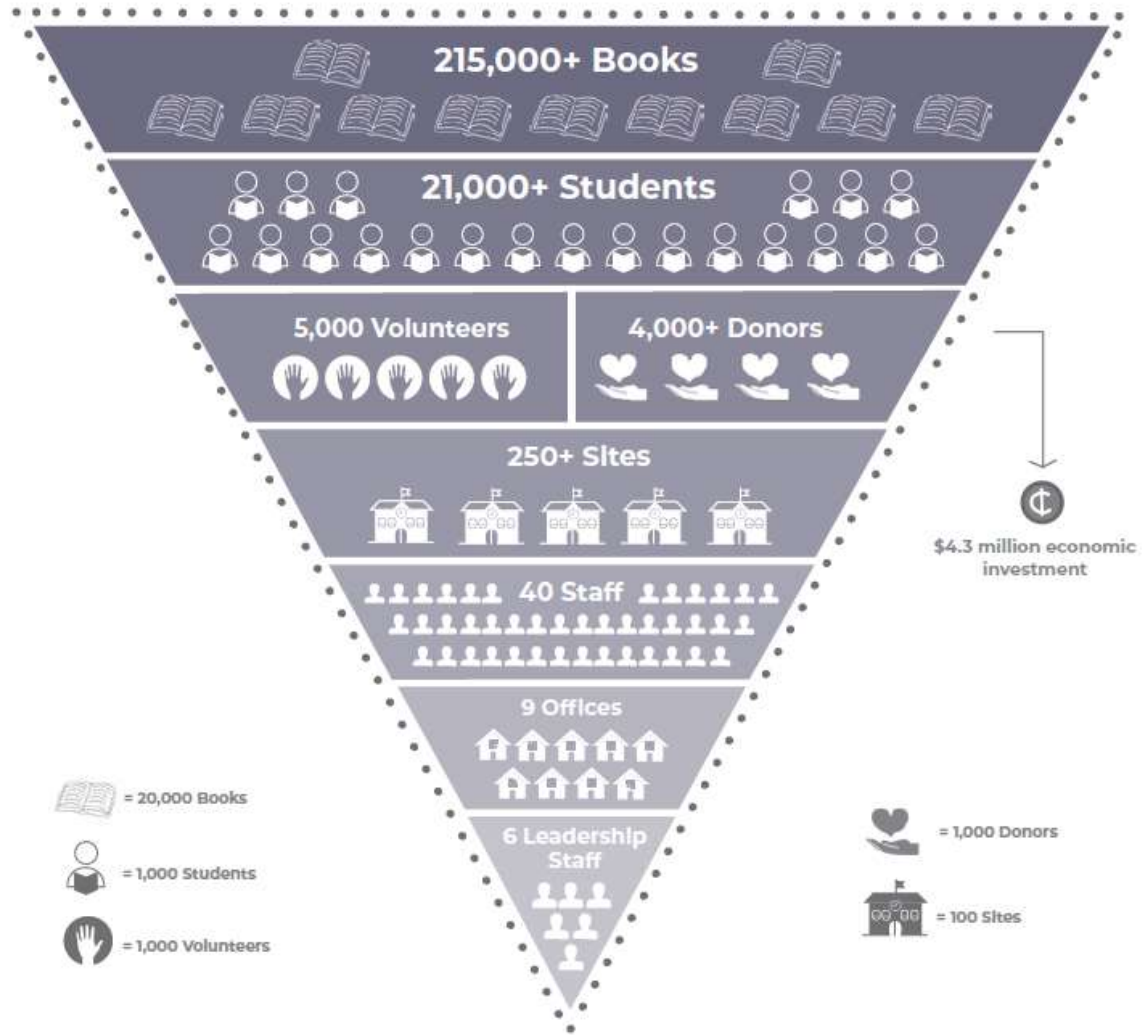
- 1) **shared book reading**
- 2) **access to books in the home**



64% of SMART kids are on track to meet 3rd grade reading benchmark, compared to 39% of all OR kids

Teachers say attendance is better on SMART Reading days

SMART only costs about \$320 per student





# SMART Reading's Impact

**84%**  
of students improved confidence in reading skills.\*

**85%**  
of students improved in reading comprehension.\*

**89%**  
of students increased their enjoyment of reading.\*

**84%**  
of students improved in vocabulary development.\*

**85%**  
of parents and caregivers feel their child benefited from participating in SMART.

**96%**  
of teachers feel SMART benefits their students and school community.

# Tualatin Elementary's SMART Program 2025-26

*"Tualatin Elementary School is such a warm and welcoming place, and our SMART readers feel that warmth every day they are there. From the students seeing us in the hallway and cheering their readers' names to teachers gratefully acknowledging the difference SMART has made for their kids to classes applauding after hearing the books being read, it's a special place with special people."* - Becky Bard, SMART volunteer site coordinator



# Tualatin Elementary's SMART Program 2025-26



- As of March 30:
  - 63 kindergarteners participating in weekly reading with adult volunteer; all three kinder classes participating
  - Students have taken home 653 new books; students choose the books they keep

By June, each student will have assembled a personal library of up to 14 books (last year, 73 kids got 780 books)



# Joy





# Inclusivity





# Positive Childhood Experiences

Laugh

Smile

Affirmation

Conversation

Engagement

Opportunity

Relationship





# Stay Engaged with SMART Reading

- Spread the word
- Volunteer as a Reader or restore books at the Children's Book Bank
- Make annual donations
- Hire us to provide literacy trainings: trauma-informed care, science-based reading, representation in books

*For more info: [sbenenson@smartreading.org](mailto:sbenenson@smartreading.org)*

