



School Spotlight

Making Reading a Daily Routine at E.A. Gibson Elementary

At E.A. Gibson Elementary School in Virginia, reading isn't just encouraged—it's a natural part of everyday life. Thanks to the leadership of school librarian Jay Stephens, along with strong support from teachers and administrators, students are not only reading regularly, they're also taking ownership of their reading habits. One month into the school year, E.A. Gibson achieved Trailblazer status on Beanstack, with 80% student participation—and they've maintained that momentum all year long.

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

At E.A. Gibson, building a strong reading culture is a team effort. Collaboration between administrators, teachers, and the librarian keeps reading top of mind school-wide.

- **Leadership Support:** Jay notes, "Our principal has been very supportive and made it very clear that reading is an important part of what goes on here."
- **Teacher Buy-in:** Teachers play a vital role in communicating with parents and ensuring that independent reading is tracked in school and at home.
- **It's a Daily Routine:** Reading is a regular practice at the school and logging is "just part of the daily routine."



Student-Centered Approach

With an emphasis on free choice, E.A. Gibson has put each student's reading journey into their own hands. They follow simple, yet effective best practices:

- **Offer Choice:** "I just want you to read," says Jay. "I don't care if you're reading fiction, nonfiction, a graphic novel—you know, whatever it is. Reading is reading, and that's the good part."
- **Student Ownership:** Students take pride in tracking their own reading. "It gives them a little sense of responsibility ... that they are like, 'Hey, I'm logging my reading, and I'm taking care of this myself.'"
- **Flexible Tracking:** Students track reading in ways that work for them—some log independently on Beanstack, while others use paper logs that Jay later records.

Big Goals, Big Progress

E.A. Gibson Elementary set an ambitious goal of reading 14,000 books, a number based on average reading totals from the first two months of the school year. They're on track to meet the goal and plan to celebrate the success with end-of-year parties in the library!