



School Spotlight

Middletown High School: Celebrating Reading with Benny the Bean

Middletown High School in Middletown, New York, is a large Title I high school serving roughly 2,700 students. Through the district's Middies Love to Read initiative, the school was already committed to making reading visible and celebrated across campus — but they needed a way to track reading and distribute incentives at scale.

In their first year using Beanstack, librarian Emily Londrigan and instructional leader Rachel Koontz streamlined their reading program while bringing new energy to reading across the school. With friendly competition, a book vending machine, and Benny the Bean, they make reading feel social and fun, proving that reading celebrations can feel engaging and meaningful at the high school level.

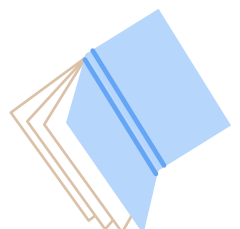


“

We had all these ideas of challenges, but it was, like, how do we implement it in such a large scale? And Beanstack covered that need perfectly.

Emily Londrigan

Librarian, Middletown High School



Growing Engagement Through Middies Love to Read

Beanstack strengthens Middletown's existing program by organizing challenges, tracking reading, and celebrating progress across a large student body.

- **Schoolwide challenges:** Emily and Rachel promote reading challenges through morning announcements, challenge reminders, and regular top-reader shoutouts.
- **Book vending machine incentives:** Students earn tokens by completing Beanstack challenges, participating in reading activities, or showing enthusiasm for books and reading.
- **Celebrating with Spirit Week:** Benny is the new star of the school's annual Spirit Week! Students celebrate with Benny swag, hidden Bennys around the school, and other activities that make reading visible and fun.

Fueling the Progress with Competition

Middletown's team leans into friendly competition to keep students and staff motivated throughout the year.

- **Classroom competition:** Top-reading classes earn a traveling Benny trophy, certificates, handwritten notes from Benny, and public recognition.
- **Schoolwide milestones:** The school celebrates reading progress with memorable incentives, including a livestreamed pie-in-the-face event with administrators, teachers, and top readers.
- **Benny everywhere:** Benny is now a school mascot, going on literary "adventures," moving from classroom to classroom, and sparking excitement around logging minutes.

Encouraging Teacher Buy-In

Teacher participation helps make Beanstack part of the school culture, not just a library initiative.

- **Intentional onboarding:** English teachers are introduced to Beanstack at department meetings. The school tech team works closely with the Beanstack team to ensure that everyone is on the same page.
- **Staff recognition:** Top teacher readers are celebrated at faculty meetings and receive Kindles as prizes or book vending machine tokens to share with students.
- **Classroom flexibility:** Teachers choose their own classroom challenges, making it easier to tailor Beanstack to student goals and interests.



Culture Shift

More students are reading, talking about books, and participating in reading-related activities.



Circulation Increase

In the first eight months of adopting Beanstack, library circulation surpassed the previous full year by 28%.



350k minutes

Middletown hit and went past its initial reading goal in months, and they continue to set the bar higher.

Looking Ahead

After a successful first year with Beanstack at the secondary level, Middletown hopes to expand the program district-wide to elementary schools. At the high school, Emily and Rachel plan to increase teacher involvement beyond the English department. Next year, the team will build on the momentum gained with a new goal: Middies Read One Million Minutes.