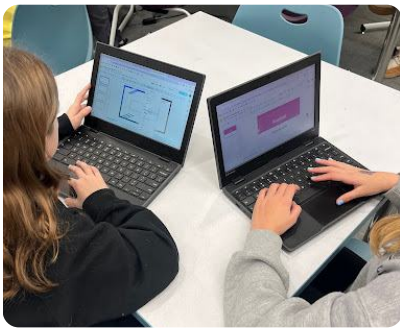


School Spotlight

Student-Designed Challenges at Salisbury Central School

At Salisbury Central School in Connecticut, fifth graders aren't just participating in reading challenges—they're creating them. Under the guidance of media specialist Jen Segalla, students took the lead in designing their own Beanstack challenges, complete with unique badges and incentives. By combining creativity, technology, and peer-driven motivation, this initiative turned reading into an exciting, personalized adventure.



“ The Beanstack challenge design activity bridges creativity and motivation, giving students a voice in shaping their own reading journey. Our students are overwhelmingly motivated and inspired by Beanstack, and this activity empowers them to take ownership of their reading goals—transforming the platform into something that feels truly theirs.

Jen Segalla

Library Media Specialist
Salisbury Central School

Goals

The major goal: empower students to take ownership of their reading journey! Jen drew on the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards, and aimed to encourage students to read widely, create with purpose, and develop problem-solving skills through design and reflection.

Strategy

To facilitate this student-driven approach, Jen used a simple yet effective strategy:

- **Plan:** Fifth graders brainstormed challenge themes such as "Fire Up Your Reading," "Cook Up Your Reading," and "Reading is a Treat." This encouraged creativity and allowed students to shape reading goals that resonated with their interests.
- **Design:** Students used Canva to design digital badges for their challenges. They selected templates, incorporated relevant imagery and text, and customized colors to make their badges engaging and meaningful.
- **Challenge creation:** With a little help from Jen, student-designed challenges came to life in Beanstack!
- **Ready, set, read:** To provide an extra layer of motivation, readers who completed challenges received brag tags to celebrate their achievements.

Outcomes

This unique project proved to be a resounding success. Salisbury Central School saw:

- **Excitement for reading:** students were excited to participate in challenges created by their peers, and the integration of digital badges and brag tags added a layer of gamification that kept them engaged.
- **Strong participation:** 38 students have completed the first two student-designed challenges, "Literary Trailblazer" and "Paw-some Pages." Together, they have logged 73,297 minutes (a number that grows daily!) and earned 902 badges.

CONCLUSION

Jen's innovative approach to reading engagement at Salisbury Central School highlights the power of student-led initiatives. By giving students the freedom to design their own challenges, she created a dynamic reading environment where students were not only participants but also creators.