

How One PreK-12 District Conquered Its Textbook Management Quandary

As this fast-growing Illinois PreK-12 district's enrollment numbers continued to climb, its textbook needs increased exponentially. By seeking an innovative and creative solution to centralize and streamline its textbook management process, the Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 reasoned it could control and spend its textbook dollars more efficiently, especially significant in a fiscal environment with tightened budgets.

"It was getting extremely difficult and time consuming gathering information every year from each campus asking how many particular textbooks did they have, how many were they planning on ordering, and so forth," said Linda Casey, the district's Director of Instructional Technology. Casey has watched District 202 increase from a five-school, 3,500-student district to one with 30 schools and 29,300 students. "Some buildings kept track using barcodes and spreadsheets, while others used a manual approach, such as handwriting numbers on books and keeping paper and pencil logs."

Moreover, in the process of aligning its pre-kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum, the district had invested heavily in new mathematics materials and determined it was the ideal time to start creating centralized textbook management processes.

"A team comprising a number of different people in various positions investigated a variety of solutions," Casey recalled. "After gathering the information the team sat down and discussed the pros and cons of each—for example cost, ease of use, training, support and implementation."

Encouraged by its successful adoption of Follett Software Company's Destiny® Library Manager™ two years earlier, Casey said "it made sense" for her district to use Follett's Destiny Textbook Manager™ product to manage its textbooks across the district.

"We just felt this would allow us to ensure that students will have access to the textbooks they need, when they need them, while at the same time saving our taxpayers a tremendous amount of money," she said.

In the first year alone after adopting Destiny Textbook Manager, the Plainfield district saved approximately \$500,000, in large part due to the fact the product helped the district find surplus textbooks they didn't even realize they had. These books were used to meet needs at Plainfield's new schools.

Beyond the noteworthy cost savings, the entire district has successfully embraced a new textbook philosophy. "The mindset had been that the buildings owned the textbooks,"

Casey observed. "Now, the mindset is that the district owns the textbooks."

Before a textbook order is placed and approved, Casey explained, the district analyzes how many textbooks of a particular title are available at various campuses. If a campus or campuses have a surplus, they transfer the surplus to the building in need.

"Because it was a manual system that we had in the past there wasn't an efficient way to track the amount of loss," Casey observed. "The only way we could track

was by how much money was spent reordering textbooks. Now we can pinpoint what we have and where, and better utilize surplus, track losses and increase accountability."

Casey encourages other districts encountering textbook management issues to take action. She recommends they gather a team of building administrators, secretaries, classroom teachers, curriculum and instruction directors, finance directors and anyone else involved with textbooks.

"The next step is to draft a common district textbook management process," she said. "Bring it back to the stakeholders for their input. Present the plan and rationalization to building administrators, teachers and parents."

"If someone had told me a year ago that our district would save this much time and money in this short period," Casey continued, "I would not have believed it."

With today's uncertain economic climate, more districts are looking for ways to dramatically reduce textbook costs and redirect those funds to save vital programs in their district. Plainfield Community Consolidated School

District is among the growing ranks of customers—whose count has more than doubled in the past 2 years—who have discovered significant savings through Destiny Textbook Manager.

Find out how much your district could save with smart textbook management at www.FollettSoftware.com/TextbookSavings or by calling 800.323.3397.

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— Linda Casey,

Director of Instructional Technology,
Plainfield School District 202

— DISTRICT AT A GLANCE —

Plainfield (Ill.) Community Consolidated School District 202

- Schools: 30
- Grade Levels: PreK-12
- Students: 29,300



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