

Taking Stock of Textbooks Helps District Manage Key Investment

Using Destiny® Textbook Manager™, a fast-growing Arizona district redeploys resources and recognizes big savings

As enrollment in Arizona's Higley Unified School District grew from 200 students to 10,000 over the last 10 years, administrators focused their attention on building schools and stocking them with furniture, textbooks and other necessities fast enough to accommodate the growth.

Anticipating the August 2009 opening of Centennial Elementary School, Superintendent Denise Birdwell decided it was time the district stepped back and took stock of its assets, including textbooks and other curricular materials—which represent the district's third-largest expenditure.

"We were about to open our 10th school, so we were trying to determine how many textbooks we needed to buy," Birdwell says. "It's a simple question, but not in a district that doesn't have a textbook management system."

Destiny® Textbook Manager™, a centralized browser-based system from Follett Software Company, enabled administrators to inventory every textbook, teacher edition and CD in the district using textbook management best practices.

The effort had an immediate impact on the district's bottom line.

"It saved us a half million dollars because it turned out we didn't have to buy books for Centennial," Birdwell says.

While tracking every book in every school was a challenge, Destiny Textbook Manager made the process easy—especially since the district already uses Follett's Destiny Library Manager™ to manage inventory and circulation in its school libraries.

"It was a natural extension, so it did not involve an extensive implementation plan or learning a new system," says Joyce Lewis, supervisor of instructional technology and project lead for Higley's textbook initiative. "Destiny Textbook Manager is very logical and user friendly, and the documentation and support are superb."

Before the district embarked on this initiative, keeping track of textbooks was happenstance. Some schools logged new textbooks, while others did not. When textbooks were moved from one school to another, they might be added to one school's inventory without being deleted from the first.

Using Destiny Textbook Manager, the district inventoried 75,000 books and CDs in the K-8 schools, 37,000 in the two high schools, and 40,000 in a warehouse—assets valued at \$7.5 million.

Now that they know what the district owns, administrators expect the software to continue to deliver valuable benefits. "The program helps us with textbook adoptions because we can see the financial impact of what we have in place and what

we need to replace," Lewis says. "It also allows us to recognize excess curricular inventory and find ways to disposition the unused materials."

The software will help the district manage its resources wisely and plan for the future. This is especially critical today, as Arizona school districts tighten their budgets in response to severe reductions in state aid.

As the Higley Unified School District continues to grow, Destiny Textbook Manager will help administrators track the movement of books from one site to another. "If you are able to easily access your inventory and to know how you are using materials and where they are used," Birdwell says, "you can redeploy these

assets based on increases and decreases in enrollment."

By keeping track of every book, Follett's Destiny Textbook Manager will also make it possible for the district to identify lost books and recoup the cost. It is estimated that 5 percent to 10 percent of textbooks are lost each year in a typical district.

"When we look at fiscal accountability, especially in these economic times, we want to make sure we are using taxpayer dollars to the absolute best benefit of learning," says Birdwell. "If I can save \$50 or \$50,000, or in our case, \$500,000, that's a critical savings for a school district."

Districts can calculate their savings potential at www.FollettSoftware.com/DollarsandSense or by calling 800.323.3397.



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