



18-SITE SCHOOL DISTRICT INCREASES PATRON SERVICES AND STAFF EFFICIENCY

MERCED CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
MERCED, CALIFORNIA

Administrators at Merced City School District (MCSD) had an ambitious goal: create an innovative, 21st-century library program that featured a STEAM innovation space at all 18 sites. Paula Heupel, MCSD's Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, recognized this as a tough challenge. However, after more than 28 years as a Follett customer, Heupel was confident that working with Follett would be a vital step in achieving the lofty goal.

Elaine Keeley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, agreed with Heupel. "Our Follett rep, Rob Walters, is an exceptional person who listens carefully to our needs and dreams," said Keeley. "We knew we had some hurdles ahead, and that our STEAM Center would be just one piece of an entire STEAM way of thinking. But we also knew that the journey we were about to undertake was one Rob would support and shepherd us through with enthusiasm."

At the start of their journey toward transforming their library, MCSD already had Follett Destiny Discover® and Collections by Destiny® in place. However, Destiny was not being used to its full potential. District librarians at the elementary and middle school levels were struggling with access issues, frustrated by a lack of control and had not been adequately trained in using the full range of the platform's functionalities.

Heupel, Keeley and others at MCSD set out to change that – and more.



“Destiny Discover and Collections by Destiny have had a positive impact on our goal of developing a professional culture of collaboration. Through these resources, our Teacher Librarian and our STEM Teachers on Special Assignment have developed collections to support the implementation of STEAM at their sites and across our district. This partnership has also influenced broader collaboration among the classroom teachers.”

PAULA HEUPEL

*Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services
Merced City School District (MCSD)*



THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A 21ST-CENTURY LIBRARY

Heupel and Keeley contacted Walters to explain their long-term goal of creating a 21st-century library and the challenges they faced. First, they identified a problem that had been a huge roadblock to using Destiny effectively – the fact that librarians did not have control of their own sites.

“Soon, Follett was able to open functionality and access so that all participants could customize Discover to meet each school’s needs,” said Heupel. “First obstacle solved!” With that done, Follett professional development was scheduled to train Teacher Librarians, STEAM Teachers on Special Assignment and Library Media Assistants.

The hands-on professional development was an immediate success. “Each participant gained new skills using the Destiny Discover system and explored topical issues of digital citizenship,” Keeley said.

“The training was a pivotal building block for our library media staff across the district,” Heupel added. “Our staff left with the skills they needed to help teachers and students access resources from our collection to meet the unique needs and diverse interests of their patrons. Most importantly, the professional development helped everyone increase their knowledge and awareness of the tools they could use immediately and in the future.”

Both Heupel and Keeley were thrilled with their new accessibility and efficiency now that the entire staff knew Destiny’s capabilities and how to best use them. “Learning how to use Destiny Discover and Collections was eye-opening,” said Keeley. “These amazing tools allow us to pull together resources easily, collaborate with teachers and give students a true 21st-century learning experience. Now we’re confident our kids are mastering the skills they need to succeed in this technology-driven world.”

“Follett resources are among the few that combine a robust balance of content and technology. With Follett, we don’t have to make a choice between rich content or well-designed technology – Follett resources have both! Our Follett rep has gone the extra mile in providing new updates, extensions and services and has helped us turn our vision into reality.”

PAULA HEUPEL

*Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Merced City School District*

“Follett’s customer service is a 10 on a scale of 1-10. This is in large part to our rep, Rob Walters, who has built a strong relationship with us based on our needs and direction. He brings ideas, training resources and even Follett upper-level management to meet with us.”

ELAINE KEELEY

*Director of Curriculum, Instruction,
and Professional Development
Merced City School District*



IMPROVING EFFICIENCY

The workshops helped deepen everyone's understanding about Destiny. "Destiny enabled participants to develop reading, research and writing activities using well-curated collections that provided a common foundation for students, ensuring equal access to all to hands-on, inquiry-based lessons and engineering experiences at the STEAM Center," Keeley reported.

MCSD's new STEAM Center powered by Destiny Discover and Collections has served over 11,000 students in Grades PreK-8 at 18 sites in the past year, providing benefits to librarians, teachers, students and the district as a whole. Heupel proudly shared that MCSD's students have shown improved achievement on local and state measures. They have also gained access to a resource that feeds their curiosity and encourages them to explore new topics for academic requirements and personal enjoyment.

At the librarian level, Destiny has increased staff efficiency. "Destiny's centralized MARC records not only allow us to ensure our records are accurate, the system has saved an incredible amount of staff time," Heupel explained. "With Destiny, we only need to create a record one time, instead of repeating the process 18 times at each of our sites. Our library staff can quickly process new materials, which gives them more time to meet the needs of their students."

In addition, Destiny ensures that each collection is consistent and easily shared within the district, increasing service to patrons and extending budget dollars. Equally important, Destiny Discover and Collections have greatly expanded staff's ability to curate resources aligned to instruction. "The single interface has changed the way our library staff works," Heupel said. "Rather than spending hours curating resources, library staff are now focused on ensuring students use the link or app and helping them select the resources that best meet their needs."

Administrators, librarians and teachers also appreciate the ability to provide a breadth of resources that are vetted and safe for student access. Heupel and Keeley are pleased with the transformation they've seen throughout the district due to the exceptional service, training and full implementation of Destiny. "I feel comfortable that MCSD is Future Ready and moving toward wise and deliberate decisions in technology use for students. Teachers now maximize the potential of these powerful, time-saving tools on an everyday basis with remarkable results," Keeley said.

As to the future? "Destiny Discover and Collections will continue to serve as our core platform for managing resources, curating content aligned to instruction and providing access to our students, staff and parents," Heupel said. "As Follett resources continue to develop in sophistication and integration, we envision continued expansion and upgrades to better use inventory of resources. We also anticipate possibly using the interface for a district-wide learning management system platform in the future."

