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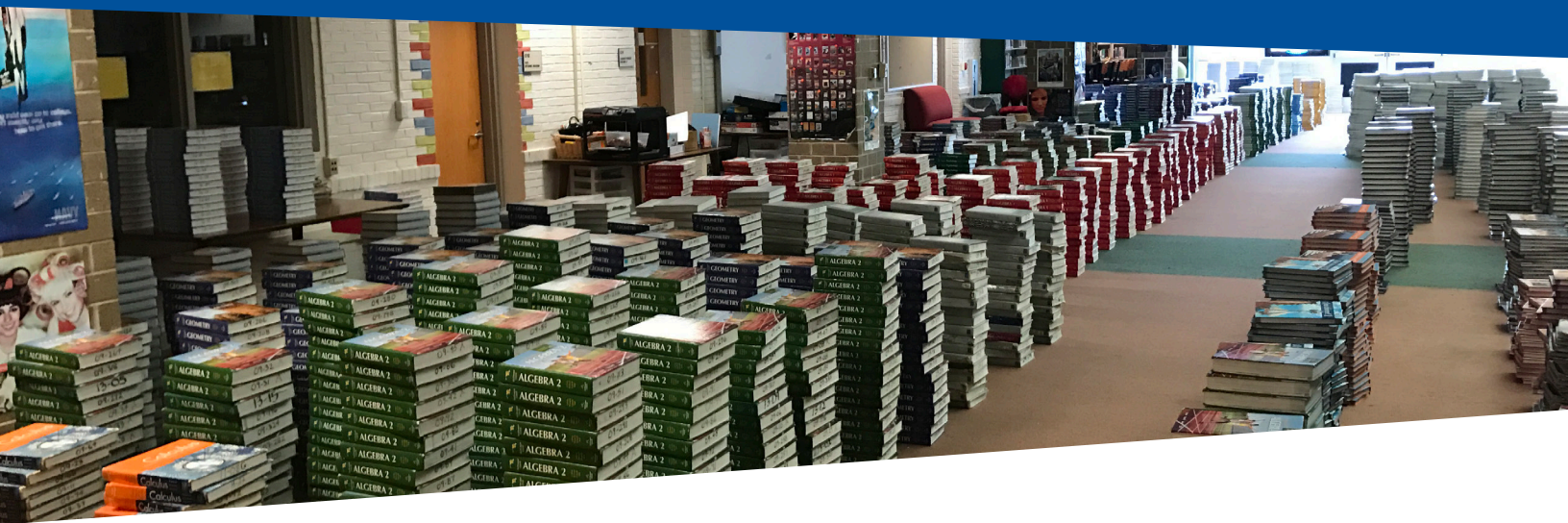St. Mary's County, MD

18,000-Student District Finds Success Tracking Inventory

St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS), which serves over 18,000 PreK-12 students, had long been trying to maintain its inventory of textbooks and instructional teaching materials through tedious manual counts and spreadsheets. Since none of the textbooks or teaching materials were barcoded, keeping an accurate accounting was extremely difficult. It created inefficiency in moving inventory between the 18 elementary schools, four middle schools, and six high schools.

Tasked in 2017 with implementing a formalized inventory system for the district, SMCPS sought a solution that would not only provide accountability and accuracy, but also help the district save critical dollars.

SMCPS interviewed several companies but turned to a trusted partner as the district had been using the market-leading Follett Destiny® Library Manager™ for more than 20 years.

"Follett Destiny Resource Manager™ was not only a natural addition but made for an easy transition," said Samantha Nelson, Administrative Secretary in the Assessment and Accountability department of St. Mary's County Public Schools. "Destiny Resource Manager included all the features our staff was already accustomed to using with Destiny Library Manager. Plus, very important to us was the option of being able to cross-dock incoming purchases and schedule discards all through the same company during the implementation process."

Nelson explained how St. Mary's County set up Destiny Resource Manager to be centrally managed by just two employees, which allows "less room for error when transferring and adding inventory and maintaining records."

"The biggest advantage for us has been that the textbooks and instructional-resources circulation is managed at each individual school building, but the financial aspect of damaged and lost-materials fines is handled quarterly through our Central Office," said Dr. Alex Jaffurs, Assessment and Accountability Officer at St. Mary's. By having all these materials now barcoded through Destiny Resource Manager, he said the district can track student debts "more efficiently and issue debt-status letters directly to parents, which has greatly improved the accountability of these materials."

The shift to Destiny Resource Manager has not only made for a far more accurate inventory, but it also has greatly simplified the moving of inventory between buildings. "We are now able to see in real time an accurate inventory and move materials as needed," Nelson said. "Also, being able to know where the surplus of materials is within our district has saved us money on unnecessary purchases when additional copies are needed."

Contributing to the smooth transition was Follett's implementation team, which helped the district barcode its inventory and participated throughout the process for SMCPS. Between Follett and the district, it was initially determined the barcoding project would start with 100,000 textbooks, based on St. Mary's current inventory.

"At the end of the implementation project," Nelson said, "we had barcoded and inventoried 250,000 textbooks and instructional resources!" Both Jaffurs and Nelson agreed that having Follett spearhead the barcoding made the transition as painless as possible. "The Follett team assigned to our project was amazing and supportive through every hiccup and question we had. They worked with us through every stage of the planning, and, even after the barcode implementation ended, they maintained regular contact to ensure things were still going smoothly."

Nelson "highly recommends" Follett Destiny Resource Manager to any school district seeking greatly enhanced accountability for its textbooks, instructional materials, and more. "The system also offers users the ability to expand their inventory to include other items, such as musical instruments, computer equipment, and sports equipment."

Nelson said, "As we have found since its implementation, Destiny Resource Manager offers a great peace of mind for us to maintain accountability for all these materials since they are now directly checked out to students and staff."

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