



FOLLETT DESTINY RESOURCE MANAGER ADDRESSES DISTRICT'S NEEDS DURING PANDEMIC

Mass Distribution, Tracking, Monitoring of Chromebooks Made Easier with Follett Solution and Support

STOCKTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
STOCKTON | CALIFORNIA

"We went on Spring Break and never came back," recalled MaryAnn K. Pafford, District Librarian for Stockton Unified School District (SUSD), California's fifteenth largest K-12 district, which serves more than 40,000 students in 54 schools.

It was a familiar refrain in March 2020 for school districts across the country as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. Believing at the time they would be returning in a week or two, SUSD students left their instruments and other personal belongings in classrooms.



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MARYANN K. PAFFORD
District Librarian
Stockton Unified School District
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THE PROBLEM

The SUSD curriculum department and administrators launched into action as they began to plan for distance learning for their teachers and students, unaware how long that would last. For the first two weeks, during which teachers were being trained and students were provided homework, the district focused on a Chromebook distribution plan. Students in Stockton, located 60 miles east of San Francisco, long had access to the laptops in the classroom, but the district had never before sent the devices home.

Getting the Chromebooks ready for distribution for so many students proved to be no small task.

“While we were fortunate to have enough Chromebooks for all students, they were intricately buried in classroom carts, along with their power cords,” Pafford said. “These had to be torn apart in a mad rush. It was all hands on deck as cafeteria workers, teachers, security guards, counselors, administrators, library assistants, and custodians all jumped in to make this happen.”

Beyond the monumental job of getting Chromebooks out to the students, the district also recognized it needed a smooth plan to find and retrieve the laptops once home-learning restrictions eased.

THE SOLUTION

Since the district has been a Follett customer for 15 years – first with Follett Destiny® Library Manager and later Follett Destiny® Resource Manager – Pafford knew the much-needed solution fortunately was already in-house.

“Destiny Resource Manager was the obvious solution in my mind, as it is what we already use,” she said.

Time was of the essence, however, and since the Chromebooks had never before left school property, they were understandably not cataloged into the Follett solution.

“When the leadership team at SUSD began to understand what Destiny Resource Manager was capable of, we decided to add all of our Chromebooks,” Pafford said.

“Follett moved quickly for us. Several amazing employees worked long and hard hours to help us.

“Some district employees stayed up half the night getting our Chromebooks uploaded. Other Follett employees flexed their schedules to accommodate ours, in order to train all our team members with Destiny Resource Manager nearly instantaneously. We are a Google district, and Follett spoke our language. Within a week, we had more than 40,000 Chromebooks uploaded and enough training in place.”

The same district team that originally gathered up the laptops now donned masks and positioned themselves in front of district schools, while logging into Destiny Resource Manager (many for the first time) and wielding Follett scanners.



“The police came out to support us, and we had some parents waiting in line for as long as two hours to get devices for their students,” said Pafford, who added that the district checked out most of its inventory of laptops in the first 10 distribution days to students at 50 different sites.

In addition, at the height of the pandemic, the district didn’t want its families to be put in unsafe situations or inconvenienced.

“Follett helped us create access levels so that any staff member in the district could log in to Destiny and simply check in and out devices at any site anywhere,” she said. “They helped us create reports we needed quickly to share out with all sites. Follett also helped think of solutions that prevented our families with multiple students from having to drive all over town to grab a Chromebook from several sites. They saved time for our team and our families as well.”

Once distribution was complete, next came securing 40,000 hot spots for the students, and even webcams and amplifying systems for the teachers.

“Having a bird’s eye view of the entire district’s assets was a powerful tool for our leadership team as we were also learning how to work remotely,” Pafford related. “Without even having to go to visit a site, we could easily share reports digitally to see what had been distributed at each school each day. With the push of a button, a shared report showed our site administrators which students in which classes had a device and which ones were still in need.

“When we opted to purchase hot spots for each child, the same tools in Destiny Resource Manager proved beneficial again, as we didn’t want to waste a day of a child’s learning without equitable access. Hot spots were in homes nearly immediately.”

Since SUSD students already knew that Destiny held them accountable for the library books and textbooks they checked out, it was a small shift to explain that they were borrowing their Chromebooks as well.

“Our first challenge was time,” Pafford said. “We wanted our students to have the tools they needed for digital learning immediately. Follett took on that challenge and partnered us with team members who were just as dedicated to the cause as our students.”

THE RESULTS

Destiny Resource Manager is helping SUSD navigate the unexpected. Not surprisingly, the district found that placing Chromebooks in students’ homes was much different than its previous practice of Chromebook carts.

“It was, of course, going to cause unexpected issues. Destiny Resource Manager is helping us monitor lost and broken devices. In the past, we guesstimated how many more Chromebooks we needed for the upcoming year,” Pafford noted. “In the future, we will have real data telling us what is usable, repairable, obsolete, or lost. This will change our purchasing habits for the better. It also is helping us monitor what textbooks have been lost due to COVID. When school ended in 2020, we did not get to recover our textbooks in a normal manner.”

Further, Pafford explained that the Follett solution enables the district to email parents and students to remind them of what might still be laying under a bed or tucked away in a closet. “We can see what has not been returned, we know where it is, and we have a better chance of recovering it instead of just buying more.”

An unexpected benefit the district hadn’t considered was saving costs from hot spot service plans. Destiny Resource Manager can cross-reference which hot spots are actually checked out and in use, providing IEMI and data information to its service providers so the district is not overcharged for what is currently in use.

“Without even having to go to visit a site, we can easily share reports digitally to see what inventory sits on sites and in homes,” Pafford said. “This holds not only the patron accountable, but sites as well.”

Yet another value Destiny Resource Manager brings to districts such as Stockton’s is administrative accountability with the solution’s efficient system of the management

and collection of fines – just one more inevitability with so many assets moving from classrooms to homes.

“This was an unprecedented situation for all of us, and fortunately the Follett team we worked with was empathetic to what we were going through,” Pafford explained. “We all were working 12-hour days and had 40,000 students who needed access to their education. Follett provided additional team members to upload things for us when we didn’t have enough time to do it. They helped us create solutions to what we needed to happen quickly and easily for our sites and patrons.”

In short, she said the support from Follett never wavered as the district navigated its way through previously uncharted waters. “Through all of this, Follett has proven to be dependable, innovative, and dedicated. Plus, the company backs up its products. They are always asking for feedback and want to make improvements.”

Despite the challenges Stockton Unified School District faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pafford said people rose to the occasion.

“So many good things have come out of this tough situation.”

