

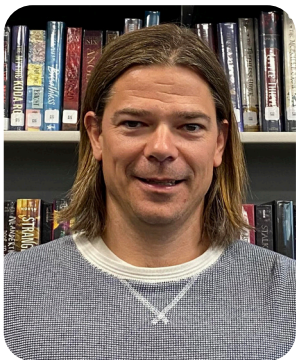


Restoring a School Library After a Watery Christmas Eve Disaster

SECKMAN HIGH SCHOOL
IMPERIAL, MISSOURI

It should have been a celebratory evening that Christmas Eve, free from worry with only joyous thoughts of the holiday break and a fantastic year ahead. At least that's what Matt Davis, Library Media Specialist at Seckman High School in Imperial, Missouri, had planned. However, things took a different turn when a water line burst in the school library he had managed for the past three years. The phone call Davis received that night made his heart sink.

"It was hard to hear what was happening," Davis shared. "I'm extremely proud of our library and the program we offer. The library is the largest classroom at Seckman High School (SHS), and I am lucky to have the privilege of running it." As he listened to details of the disaster – a broken pipe and an ensuing flood, the loss of thousands of books, soggy shelves and carpets – his first thought was getting his library classroom back into shape so students would continue to have access to the learning materials they need.



"This entire process with Follett was fantastic. There is no way I could have gotten our library back together without their help."

MATT DAVIS

*Library Media Specialist
Seckman High School
Imperial, MO*

Matthew Davis has taught high school language arts for about 15 years, and he's been a librarian since 2018. He lives in Jefferson County, Missouri, with his wife and daughters.

TRUE TEAM EFFORT

Davis quickly began strategizing in order to determine what was lost, salvage what he could, and find a temporary space for the library. Since insurance would not classify all books as a loss, he and his team had to assess each book to identify what could stay and what must go. Then, new books needed to be ordered, barcoded, organized, and shelved. This made for a lot of hands-on work, and Davis knew that he needed expert help.

“The thought of what was ahead of us was a bit overwhelming,” Davis said. “There was roughly \$500,000 worth of damage, necessitating drywall removal as well as new flooring, shelving, books, and furniture.” Recognizing the gravity of the situation and the urgent needs of his students, he quickly mobilized and made a plan.

ADVOCATES AND PARTNERS

The first few days were filled with the chaos of contractors, air-quality tests, and conversations with the insurance company. But one of Davis’ first calls that week was to his Follett Sales Consultant, Gina Donato.

“Gina did a great job of letting me know that Follett would be able to assist. She dove right in,” Davis said. “Even before the flood, Gina met with us periodically to share new resources and introduce us to wonderful tools. I knew she would be helpful in this situation, and I am extremely grateful that she was here to support us during this tumultuous process.”

While Davis set up a temporary library space, he relied upon the Follett Curation Team to help him navigate the process of making informed decisions about rebuilding his collection. “First, I met with them online to answer questions about the collection. They understood what we had been through and did a good job of listening to SHS’s need, taking great care to listen specifically to the needs of our students,” he said. “They were helpful with suggesting titles to consider. They gave me many more options than I needed, which allowed me to find titles that work for us and align with what we lost in the flood.”

“Follett’s content expertise was good! We were able to get modern titles along with older ones that we know kids read.”

MATT DAVIS

*Library Media Specialist, Seckman High School
Imperial, MO*

SHELF-READY BOOKS SAVE “TWO YEARS’ TIME”

Once new furniture, carpeting, shelves, and books were ordered, the daunting task of getting everything unpacked, barcoded, and shelved loomed before Matt and his team. Fortunately, the Follett New School Library Service was able to streamline the process. “The fact that Follett sent all books to us in True Dewey order, ready to be shelved, was incredibly beneficial,” Davis said. “It would have taken probably two school years if that many books didn’t come shelf ready. It was 277 boxes of books! In two days’ time, we were able to get almost all of the books onto shelves, barcoded, and in order.”

With his library back up and running, Davis believes the program and collection are better than ever. “The students have what they need because we were able to pull together as a team. This entire process with Follett was fantastic. There is no way I could have gotten our library back together without their help,” he said.



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