



# Four Keys to Elevating the School Library Experience for Everyone

Innovative technology can enhance operations, benefiting students and staff alike.

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# School libraries play a crucial role in driving student literacy and achievement.

[As a new report from the nonprofit Center for American Progress observes, more than 50 years of research demonstrates that students with access to well-resourced school libraries consistently perform better academically and score higher on standardized assessments.](#)

Technology can be a powerful tool in supporting this work and elevating the school library experience for everyone.

The right library management platform empowers educators and librarians to maximize their impact on student success by providing unified and connected experiences across schools and districts. By leveraging fully integrated software solutions, educators can access actionable insights, automate key tasks, and optimize resources to enhance learning. With seamless data integration, librarians can make informed decisions about their collections and contribute to a dynamic, student-centered learning environment. It also creates a connection between the library, the classroom, and the home, enabling educators to collaborate effortlessly, and ensures that students have continuous access to engaging, relevant materials that support their academic journey. From real-time reporting to robust data security, asset management integration provides the tools to drive meaningful outcomes and foster a culture of learning that spans schools, districts, and communities.

There are four key features to look for in a school library management platform that helps create a rich, engaging, and high-quality school library experience for all stakeholders.

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## Powerful Insight

When librarians can easily see how resources are being used, they can make more informed purchasing decisions and shape their collections in a way that meets the needs and interests of users. This helps school libraries better engage their stakeholders, while also delivering more value to the community.

Shannon McClintock Miller, a teacher librarian at Van Meter School in Iowa, says she uses the Follett Destiny® Library Manager dashboard to see at a glance which types of resources are being used most often. The system's built-in intelligence also recommends specific resources based on what kinds of items are most popular among users.

"It helps me be the best librarian I can be," she says, "because I'm working on our collection constantly every time I'm in Destiny."

The enriched reporting capabilities of Destiny Library Manager help librarians analyze their collections to see which titles, genres, and other types of content are most popular among users – and how often these items are circulating.

"It gives me hard numbers to show our families and administrators just what impact our library is having on students," says Carrie Friday, the media specialist for Melbourne High School in Florida.

Laura Christner, district library coordinator for North Adams Community Schools in Indiana, uses the platform to keep track of not only books and media resources but also laptops, projectors, and other technology throughout the district.

Christner and her colleagues use the platform's Follett Destiny® Resource Manager module to track and manage a wide range of assets, including

textbooks and instructional technologies – thereby benefiting the entire district. Having a single platform with a unified experience for managing assets both within and outside the library saves staff time, because they only have to master one system. Staff have seamless access and actionable insights using the same shared data and information.

The readily available insight that Christner and other administrators have into the status of the district’s resources helps them ensure that materials are available to students and teachers as needed. For instance, the district recently had a projector bulb burn out. With one simple click, Christner could see how many bulbs they had in stock, so she knew when to order more.

“It might seem like such a little thing, but it was a huge time-saver for us,” she notes.

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## Easy Discoverability of Resources

If students and teachers can’t easily find resources that are personally appealing and/or relevant to instruction, then they aren’t likely to take advantage of a library’s collections. Making engaging and relevant materials easy to find for all stakeholders is fundamental to elevating school library programs.

North Adams Community Schools uses Follett Destiny Discover®, a library interface that allows students and educators to search for and access all of the district’s print and digital resources in one place – including eBooks, audiobooks, and interactive books, as well as free and paid subscription databases.

“We have even put links to our teachers’ class pages in Canvas, our learning management system, within Destiny Discover,” Christner says. “It’s a one-stop platform for all of our learning resources.”

Having a single, comprehensive online catalog that’s easy to use empowers students to find their own resources to aid in their learning, she says, adding: “That’s really powerful.” Besides encouraging independent reading and study, it also strengthens the home/school connection and extends students’ learning into the home.

Miller calls Destiny a central “hub” for finding and accessing all of her school’s learning materials. “I can easily showcase specific items or collections on our library’s home page by making carousels displaying the new books we have, or books on certain themes,” she notes.

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## Flexible Organization

A few years ago, Ralph M. Captain Elementary School in Clayton, Missouri, adopted a new way of classifying its nonfiction titles that involves “a fundamental shift in thinking,” says Tom Bober, district library coordinator for the School District of Clayton – and having a flexible library management system like Destiny has helped the school make this transition seamlessly within its library.

Captain Elementary has embraced the nonfiction classification system proposed by Melissa Stewart, author of more than 200 science-related children’s books, and Marlene Correia, an assistant professor of Literacy Education at Bridgewater State University, in their book *5 Kinds of Nonfiction*. Instead of classifying books by the topics they cover, the system categorizes nonfiction books by their structure, their intent, and the type of experience a reader has when engaging with the text:

- **Active books** teach the reader how to do something, like a cookbook, craft book, or how-to guide.

- **Browsable books** have short blocks of straightforward text, lots of graphics, and are best used for engaging readers quickly with interesting or unusual facts.
- **Traditional books** present a general overview of a topic, and they're often part of a larger series.
- **Narrative books** tell a story or convey an experience, with characters, dialog, and a narrative arc.
- **Expository literature** uses a strong voice and rich language, and it's best used for providing more depth of knowledge about specialized ideas.

This classification system helps librarians (and teachers) balance their nonfiction collections to provide a wide range of titles that appeal to different kinds of readers. It also helps students choose the types of books they like to read the most.

Captain Elementary has color coded its books according to this system and has entered this information within Destiny Discover as well. The platform's flexibility in categorizing various materials allowed the school to use the Sublocation tag to indicate the type of nonfiction work a particular book is.

"Students can use Destiny to look for books topically and also by nonfiction category," Bober says. "That's been a game changer for us – and we wouldn't have been able to do that without a flexible system like Destiny."

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## Connection and Collaboration

The most successful school library programs facilitate collaboration between librarians and teachers, helping them to be partners in their students' education. A high-quality school library management platform provides opportunities for teachers and librarians to work together in support of student learning.

Miller uses Collections by Destiny® to create curriculum-aligned collections of resources and share them with grade-level teachers. Collections can include all types of materials, including web links, images, documents, eBooks, and more, and they can be shared publicly or kept private. Teachers can also create their own collections, and they can share and build these collaboratively with colleagues.

"Teachers can go back and use these collections year after year," she says. "It becomes a real time-saver for them."

An effective school library program should also provide opportunities for students to connect with each other about what they're reading, either for school or outside of class. Van Meter School is using the book club feature within Destiny Discover Engage to support student reading and discussion, leading to deeper engagement.

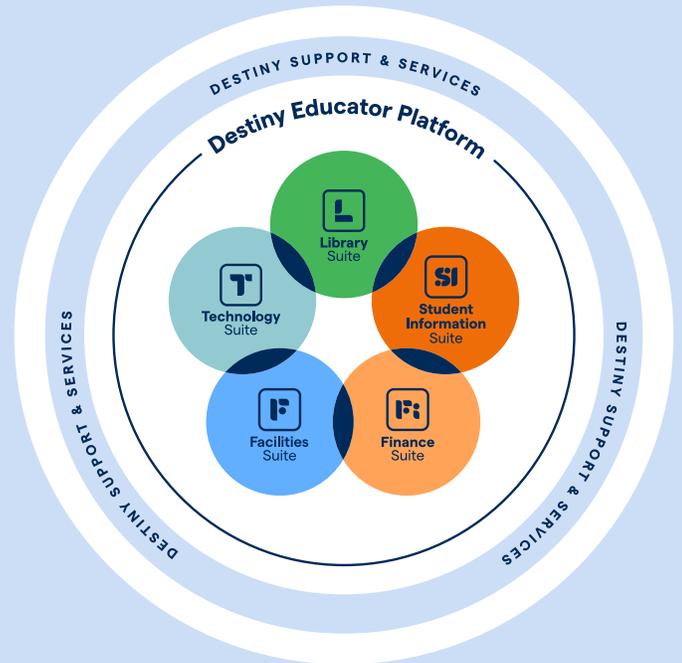
Another feature within the platform allows staff to create reading challenges to encourage students to read. "Kids can set up their own challenges by challenging their friends as well," Miller says. "I think that's a really cool feature. We want them to feel not like they're tasked to read, but excited to read."

## An Interconnected Community

The right technology can bring together librarians, teachers, and students, creating an interconnected community that fosters student literacy and improves teaching and learning.

A library management platform that includes powerful insights on the use of library resources, helps users easily discover relevant materials, is flexible enough to accommodate different needs and circumstances, and facilitates engagement and collaboration among staff and students can elevate school library programs in support of student achievement.

“When everyone is working together in support of education – including librarians, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students themselves – then powerful learning outcomes are possible,” says Van Meter Community School District Superintendent Deron Durlinger. “The Destiny platform enables that for our schools. It makes staff more efficient and connects students with valuable learning resources.”



Ready to enhance your library's impact on student success? Discover how Destiny Library Manager can streamline your library's operations, improve resource accessibility, and create a seamless connection between the classroom and home. Take the next step in transforming your library into a hub of learning.

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