



AN INNOVATIVE LIBRARIAN TRANSFORMS AN OUTDATED LIBRARY INTO A WORLD-CLASS LEARNING CENTER

JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL
AMERICAN SCHOOL AT QUERÉTARO, MEXICO

THIS PRIVATE, MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL NEEDED TO UPGRADE AND IMPROVE ITS LIBRARY TO SUPPORT ITS GLOBALIZED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Querétaro, the fastest-growing city in Mexico, is lively, dynamic and forward-thinking, with an economy that boasts IT and data centers, logistics services, aircraft manufacturing, automotive and machinery industries and wine and food production. Companies like Freixenet, Bombardier Aerospace, Kellogg's, Samsung and others have facilities in the area.

While Querétaro was advancing and growing, the library at the John F. Kennedy American School had not kept pace. Administrators at this private, Spanish/English school were aware that the school's library program needed to focus on becoming a central hub for inquiry-based learning. Improvements in cataloging and signage were essential to provide the world-class library needed to support its US, national Spanish and International Baccalaureate® curricula.



“To create a world-class library to support the world-class education JFK was committed to providing, I needed quality resources. I needed a cataloging map that made sense. I needed 24/7 ubiquitous access, and I needed my patrons to be able to find books. Follett came through with the support I needed.”

JAKE PETTIT
Library Director



TAKING INVENTORY OF WHAT WAS NEEDED...AND WHERE TO START

The administration's first step was to hire the school's first-ever certified librarian, Jake Pettit, an experienced professional with more than 20 years as an educator in schools around the world. As soon as Pettit came on board, she assessed the situation and found both bad and good news.

"The first thing I did was ask the staff to do a complete scan of all resources, so I could see where we stood," Pettit said.

The result of this analysis was that improvements to the cataloging were vital in order to have better precision regarding the collection.

There was some good news. She found the library already had a reliable library inventory system, Follett Destiny® Library Manager™. However, the system needed updating, as it was not fully exploited by using the advanced tools. It also was locally hosted.

As Pettit explained, JFK is an International Baccalaureate school, and full implementation of its newest element (*PYP: The IB Primary Years Program for children aged 3-12*) was scheduled for first-time implementation. "My first focus was to obtain print and digital sources to support PYP by placing a large order supporting the program's units of inquiry," Pettit said. "At the same time, I wanted to start a graphic novel collection for all ages, so students could see an exciting change was coming to the library."

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS FROM A SET PER-STUDENT INVESTMENT

Mindful of costs, Pettit did her homework and found that it was possible to revive the aging library for an affordable per-student investment. She dove into all that had to be accomplished and quickly earned support for her ideas. "My administration was behind me," she explained. "I am fortunate they trusted my ideas."

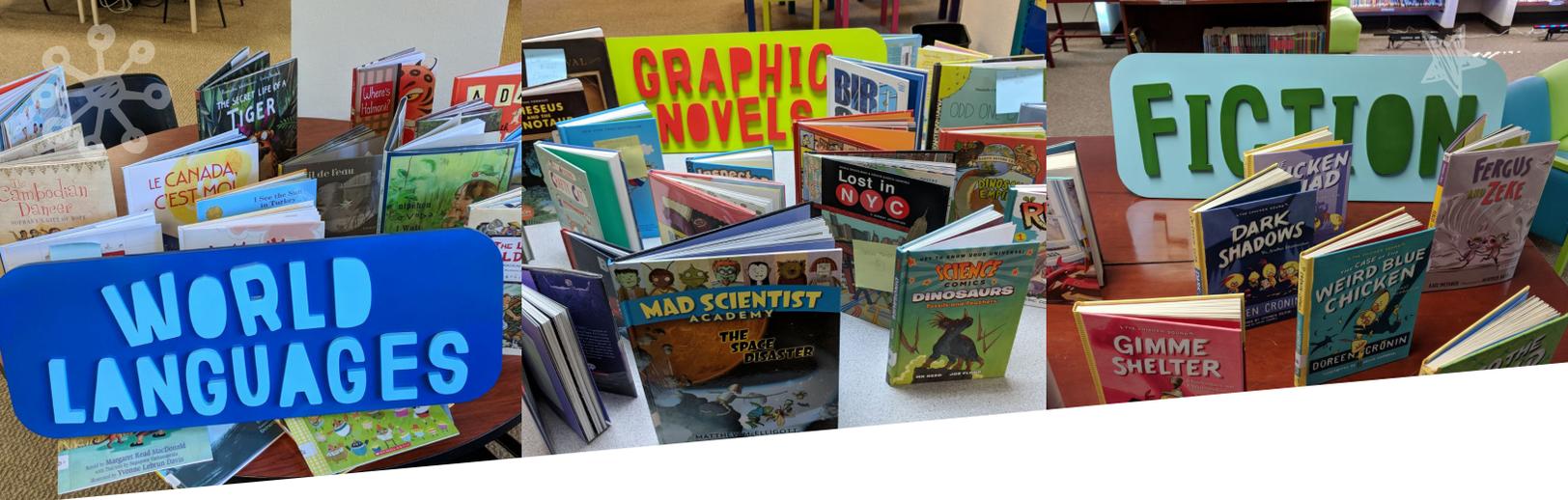
Pettit began by creating a presentation outlining the state of their collection and the costs involved in a transformation. She remained focused on the per-student cost of modernizing the library, and administrators agreed that \$25 per child annually was worth the investment. "I emphasized the idea that while support and movement needed to be ongoing, we needed immediate rebranding, and we could still accomplish that affordably."

"These students are the future," Pettit said. "For a small, yearly investment, we could revamp the library and media center and give them the tools they need to participate in this fast-paced, modern world."

Her administration listened and knew her ideas had merit. "After the presentation, I was given funding for books and to have Follett host Destiny Library Manager, which made it so much easier to accurately keep track of our inventory and media assets in real time."

"Making a large investment in our library was a big step. But when administrators saw that an update was possible by investing only \$25 per student, per year, and the enormous benefits the system would bring, they were sold."

JAKE PETTIT
Library Director



“I love the advanced search ability in Titlewave® that allows me to analyze the balance of fiction and nonfiction, age levels, etc. And now that I have Follett’s One Search™ and WebPath Express™ up and running, we can offer instructors even more tools.”

JAKE PETTIT
Library Director

Administrators empowered Pettit. She began to collaborate with the school’s service department to fix, paint, move and build bookshelves to create a more welcoming space for students to gather and work together. She also got to work with the communications department to create new signage that communicated the exciting changes to students, teachers and parents.

Pettit worked with Follett to get the transformation process under way. “I needed to know what I had,” she explained. “Follett was instrumental in all phases of the transformation. They had solutions for every aspect of our update, including collection analysis, software updates, migration to hosted service, Titlewave for list building and a lot of problem-solving related to data. Follett offered everything I needed, and I knew of their reputation for quality and top-notch customer service.”

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Pettit is delighted that feedback for the first round of changes has been positive. “Change is hard and scary, and I won’t say there hasn’t been any pushback or resistance, but some of the evidence of the power of the new system and our fantastic new library was immediately visible, and administration support has been fantastic.”

She admits that her first year as head librarian was challenging, but gratifying. “Having the upgraded Destiny Library Manager system, and the full support of Follett, has resulted in reduced stress and enormous time savings,” she shared. “I appreciated having Follett’s professional operation to run to for help when I needed to fix something immediately, which allowed me to implement a new initiative and keep the library moving toward 21st-century learning and goals.”

Today, Pettit is moving forward with the next set of initiatives, including establishing a collaborative planning/teaching model. She is also leading a team to create a research manual, so that all library users are working under the same standards and practices and using a common language.

“With the help of Follett, a supportive administration and enthusiastic teachers, my vision of creating a world-class learning center at John F. Kennedy is becoming a reality,” Pettit said. “We have a long way to go, but the transformation taking place in our school demonstrates that substantial change is possible with focused effort and a per-student budget. We’re living proof.”

