

CASE STUDY



Dana DeAndrea
Library Director
Fairhill School, Dallas, TX

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DESIGNING A LIBRARY THAT WORKS FOR EVERY LEARNER

FAIRHILL SCHOOL
DALLAS, TX

OVERVIEW

At a private school serving students with diverse learning needs, the library plays a critical role in supporting student confidence, engagement, and academic growth.

For Dana DeAndrea, Library Director at Fairhill School in Dallas, Texas, creating a space where every student can successfully navigate and connect with books required more than just building a collection, it required rethinking how the library functions for her unique student population.

By leveraging resources from Follett Content, alongside her own innovative approach, DeAndrea transformed her library into a highly engaging, accessible, and student-centered environment.

THE CHALLENGE

DeAndrea supports a wide range of students, ranging from second grade through twelfth grade, many of whom face challenges with reading and traditional learning structures.

This yielded several key considerations:

- Traditional library systems were cumbersome for her students to navigate.
- Standard classification (e.g., Dewey Decimal) felt overwhelming and complex.
- Students struggled to independently find books aligned to their interests and reading levels.
- The library needed to serve a wide range of ages and abilities within a single space.

“When you have students who struggle, traditional systems are challenging,” DeAndrea said.

She needed a solution that would simplify navigation, increase accessibility, and support independent exploration. And students needed to confidently select their own materials without feeling overwhelmed.

THE SOLUTION

DeAndrea redesigned her library experience by combining Genrefication Solutions from Follett Content with her own highly creative, student-first approach.

Visual Organization That Supports All Learners

Using Follett Content genrefication signage, spine labels, and nonfiction organization tools, DeAndrea created a visually intuitive system that helps students easily navigate the library.

“Having the Follett Content signage and organization was magical for our students,” she said.

DeAndrea further enhanced the system by:

- Creating her own dyslexia-friendly fonts and spacing
- Adding custom signage tailored to her students' needs
- Integrating visual elements (e.g., 3D-printed icons tied to subject areas)

This approach allows students to rely on visual cues rather than complex classification systems.

Library Genre Solutions

To further simplify access, DeAndrea reorganized her collection by genre, enabling students to:

- Quickly find books aligned to their interests
- Explore new genres more easily
- Build confidence in selecting books independently

“This initiative has really impacted our students,” she said.

One-Stop Content Sourcing with Follett Content

Follett Content serves as a centralized resource for building DeAndrea's programming and collections. She uses Follett Content to source:

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Biographies
- Graphic novels
- Thematic materials (e.g., cookbooks tied to events and units)

“It’s really a one-stop shop and I can build an entire initiative through Follett Content,” said DeAndrea.

This streamlined approach enables her to efficiently plan and execute library initiatives.

Responsive Support and Partnership

In addition to products, DeAndrea benefits from responsive, ongoing support from Follett Content.

“When something comes up such as damaged books or order issues, there’s always support to fix it quickly,” she said.

This reliability allows her to focus on students rather than on operational challenges.



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THE IMPACT

DeAndrea's approach has transformed the library into a space where students feel confident, engaged, and excited to explore reading.

By combining intuitive organization, strong visual cues, and a student-centered approach, she has created an environment where students can independently navigate the library, discover new interests, and build confidence in their reading choices.

"It helps our students actually find books instead of feeling overwhelmed," said DeAndrea.

Students are now more:

- Confident selecting books on their own
- Willing to explore new genres
- Engaged in reading overall

Beyond day-to-day interactions, DeAndrea has elevated the library into a central hub of the school experience. Through immersive, book-connected initiatives, such as themed events, interactive displays, and cross-genre learning experiences, she brings content to life in ways that resonate with students.

This approach not only increases engagement, but also reinforces a culture where reading is active, relevant, and enjoyable. The library serves as a model for inclusive design, showcasing that when an environment adapts to the student, reading engagement thrives.

As a result, the library has become:

- A highly utilized and student-centered space
- A key feature highlighted during school tours
- A meaningful contributor to the overall school culture

CONCLUSION

DeAndrea's work demonstrates what's possible when libraries are designed around student needs. She has created a modern space that's accessible, engaging, and deeply impactful while helping students build confidence, discover new interests, and connect with reading in meaningful ways.

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Library Director



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