



With Destiny, this middle school impacts engagement, student outcomes, and more – by empowering student voice and choice.



Kristen Ziller is in her 21st year of being a librarian. She is excited about the evolution she's seeing in school libraries and how students are embracing the library as the heart of the school more now than ever before.

"I love it when students visit the library with no other purpose than just to be in this space," said Kristen Ziller, Library Media Specialist at Pine Hollow Middle School in Raleigh, North Carolina. "I've had multiple students say they need to be in here for at least some part of each school day. It's important, as librarians, that we cultivate these nourishing spaces and make them the best they can be to provide free access to reading and informational services."

Ziller admits that school librarians like herself also need powerful tools to keep their libraries humming. At Pine Hollow – part of the Wake County Public School System – the go-to system is Follett Destiny® Library Manager. Everything Ziller does in her library is student-centered, and Destiny is “at the heart of everything we do and empowers our students,” she said. “We use Destiny to ensure student voices are heard and that they are able to accomplish what they need to.” Ziller described this student-centered approach as one that fully utilizes Collections by Destiny® and makes it easy for librarians, teachers, and students to collaborate and share free or purchased resources. She also credits Follett Destiny Discover®, the user-friendly interface, with making her job easier and more efficient.

“I am focused on empowering students by giving them a voice,” she said. “I’m also dedicated to sharing what I discover and learn on Destiny with our other librarians.”



Ziller shared how she uses the Destiny Discover homepage as a one-stop landing page for students, where they find links to the school website, public library catalog, research resources, and a library book purchase request form. According to Ziller, her students love the “Topics and Collections” feature, which allows them to browse titles if they’re unsure as they search for books. The students’ response has been overwhelmingly positive.

“I love using Destiny Discover for finding books, even though I know the library well,” said Natalie, one of Ziller’s students. “Sometimes I want to know exactly where to find it. I get to see if the book is already checked out, so I do not just go looking for this book that is not there. Being able to check out books is so easy that it makes it easy to get your hands on the book and fast. It is so much easier than just showing up and hoping that it is in today.”

Another student shared that Destiny Discover helped open her eyes to new genres, while another said it was a huge time-saver when searching for books.

“When I find the book I like, then I look for the author and the genre it is in, and it shows me exactly where to go for the book,” said Nathan, another student. “I also look for the reviews on Destiny to pick the book that is right for me and my preferences.”

Ziller said the “My Stuff” section in Destiny makes it easy for students to check their own library account, place books on hold, and add books to their “Favorites” list.

“I get so much joy from spending my days with the kids, helping to provide a place where they feel welcome, and fostering their love of books. When a child can see themselves in a book, it is transformational.”



Ziller is not the only educator in her district in praise of Destiny.

“Destiny Discover helps me provide a dynamic library experience for students,” said Pete Caggia, Library Media Coordinator at Salem Middle School in Apex, North Carolina. “Its seamless display is visually appealing, and I can easily rotate fresh content. Students are empowered to manage their library accounts independently when logging in from their school devices, extending access beyond our physical space.”

For Ziller and her colleagues, one of the most important benefits of using Destiny is improved student outcomes.

“Destiny Discover’s collections have been essential to my students’ academic success. I have created collections to curate specific topics for research,” said Carmen Brennan, Library Media Coordinator for Alston Ridge Middle School in Cary, North Carolina. “A quick

lesson on collections and providing reviews at the beginning of the year allows my students to navigate the plethora of lists I have curated for them to assist with projects and leisure reading the rest of the year.”

With the backing of a supportive and committed administration and a student population who consistently use the library during their time in middle school, Ziller knows she is helping to make a difference in her role as a middle school library media specialist, and Destiny is key to making that difference.

“I particularly enjoy it when students share with me what they’re reading or ask me for reading recommendations,” she said. “At the end of the day, it’s vital that libraries are safe spaces that offer resources on a variety of perspectives, where all individuals see themselves represented in the materials there and gain empathy and understanding by learning about others. Destiny helps our library at Pine Hollow be the heart of the school and a safe space.”