



One For the Books

A 21st century makeover of Providence Day School's library ushers students into a new era of learning.

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When the Thompson-Jones Library at Providence Day School opened in 2001, streaming media and mobile devices were merely points of light on the horizon. As the student body grew to 1,600 and the curricular offerings expanded, school leaders recognized that change was coming...and coming fast. They wanted to honor a culture of avid readers and cultivate a love for books, yet create new collaborative spaces that incorporate and embrace digital media and mobile devices.

"Just as the way we do business has changed, so has the way we teach and learn," said Head of School Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw. "All around the new space are signs of global technology and culture," he said. "There is a group of students visiting from China in one room, and a theater class is meeting in another." Dr. Cowlshaw enthusiastically praises the work of the

staff members who researched, planned and executed the remarkable transformation.

Derrick Willard, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, spearheaded this state-of-the-art renovation. He, along with Head Librarian Nicole Collins, and Director of Technology Matt Scully, went to work to see how they could make this vision a reality.

Along the way, Collins visited N.C. State University in Raleigh to tour the James B. Hunt Library. N.C. State had recently built this prototypical 21st Century Library from scratch. They, like all schools, had wrestled with the task of being a modern library in the digital age.

Collins and Scully also met with Middle and Upper School student groups to see what their expectations might be. "From that feedback, we found the students wanted areas to collaborate with their classmates, spaces to hide away and study, comfortable spots to chill out and more," said Collins.

Students even helped choose seating and design elements to create ideal spaces for



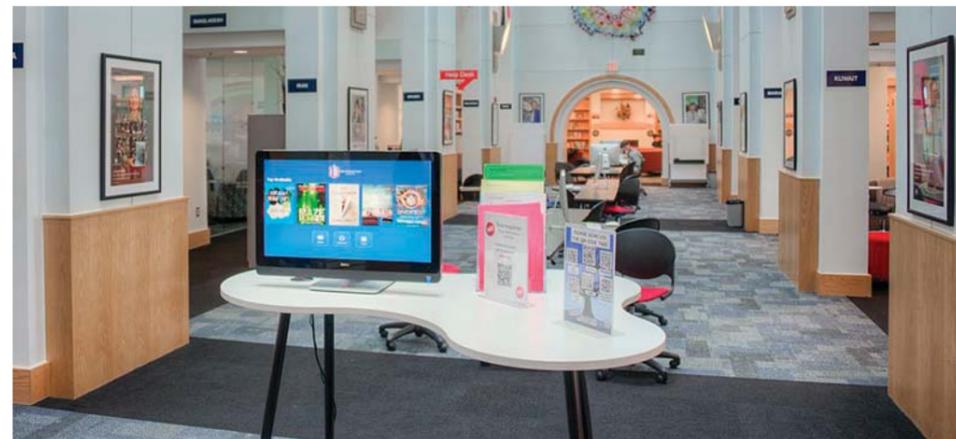
learning and collaboration, ones that can be reconfigured as necessary. That revised classroom "enabled new instructional practices, like being able to transition from large group to individual to small group and then back to large group in a single class period," said Matt Scully, Technology director.

On Thompson-Jones' second floor, two collaborative rooms named "Think Tank" and "The Hive" were added where students and classes can work together. Students can write on both white board walls and glass walls, and use the Apple TV to project their work



and study with their peers. Another room, "The Source," is for students to work with librarians, teachers or peers on assignments. And a separate quiet room, appropriately named "The Quiet," allows for silent study all day long.

"Everything is more open now and accessible, and I'm finding that I work with more students on a daily basis than in the past," said Collins. "The library is used throughout the day now, and gets more traffic before and after school and during lunch. It's now a place that the students really enjoy being in."



"What I love most about the spaces is that, without training or sharing with the students how the spaces should be used, they used them as we had designed them," said Scully. "To me this means we not only designed the entire space well but more importantly that we anticipated the needs of the students."

It's an amazing library. And what's more amazing is the entire renovation project was planned and completed within one year.

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Nicole Collins, Derrick Willard and Matt Scully



Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw