

Districts Nationwide Transitioning Class Sets From Print To Digital

LONGMONT, CO – The St. Vrain Valley School District has become one of the latest school systems from across the country to transition its class set programs from traditional print to digital.

Districts like St. Vrain have reported significant benefits from this growing trend toward digital class sets, ranging from boosting long-term cost effectiveness and fully leveraging devices to maximizing classroom time and more deeply engaging students in reading. Helping to guide schools through this critical shift has been OverDrive Education, the supplier of digital content solutions from thousands of publishers to more than 18,000 districts and schools worldwide.

Located north of Denver, St. Vrain is Colorado's eighth-largest school district, serving 30,000 PreK-12 students in 53 schools. Concurrent with implementation of an extensive 1:1 device initiative, the district adopted a new secondary English language arts curriculum. **A comprehensive review by a team of St. Vrain curriculum, technology and library leaders identified OverDrive as the premier partner to deliver digital novels to the district-provided iPads and students and educators' personal devices.**

MEETING CURRICULUM NEEDS

"I actually sent (OverDrive) an outline of the themes and topics in our unit plans at the different grade levels, and they pulled together for us a huge list of (novels) that we could then go through and vet," St. Vrain English Language Arts Coordinator Kerin McClure said.

St. Vrain would eventually purchase 350 copies of 12 titles for each grade 6-12, including *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *Wonder*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, *Animal Farm* and *Into Thin Air*. These novels, along with professional development titles, supplemented the district's digital library of 24,000 eBooks and audiobooks to support students' elective and recreational reading.

"In terms of topic of content, we've not yet run up against something that we've wanted but couldn't find," McClure said of OverDrive's catalog of millions of titles.



24/7 ACCESS ON ANY DEVICE

Because their digital novels can be **accessed by students and educators 24/7** from a customized district-wide website, St. Vrain only needed to purchase the exact number of copies that would be needed at any given time. These titles will remain available through the length of the adoption cycle and beyond, and since eBooks can never be lost or stolen, money will be saved by avoiding replacements costs.

Although St. Vrain's 1:1 device initiative focuses on iPads, the district realized the importance of a device-agnostic digital content solution. OverDrive was able to offer unmatched compatibility with all major devices, including iPad, iPhone, NOOK, Android, Kindle, Chromebook and Kobo.

"Students are accessing OverDrive content on all the devices they can get to, which is great," district Instructional Technologist Bud Hunt said. "We've got students accessing OverDrive content on Chromebooks in classrooms, on their iPads, via smartphones and the computer at home. They're getting to OverDrive content in a lot of different ways."

"...IT'S BEEN QUITE LIFE CHANGING"

Digital novel study has received rave reviews from students and educators since its introduction at St. Vrain. Teachers have begun integrating the "flipped classroom" model in which reading is assigned outside the classroom so group discussions and other engaging activities can be conducted during class time. **This previously wasn't possible when limited copies of print texts had to be confined to the classroom.**

"This year, we were introduced to OverDrive, and it's been quite life changing," eighth grade teacher Kristine Hagemeyer said. "Students have a lot more control (over their reading), the technology's accessible and they can take it anywhere. That's pretty powerful stuff."

JT, a sixth grader in the district, likes the interactive features of OverDrive titles, such as highlighting, notetaking, bookmarking and the built-in dictionary. He summed up perfectly the excitement that can be felt from students across St. Vrain around the shift toward digital content.

"It's a whole new way to read," he said.

