

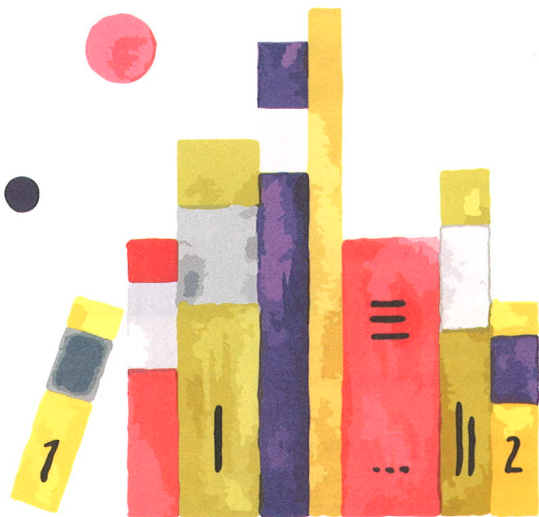
Faculty Voices

INTERVIEW BY MEGAN TADY

Katie Archambault

A Futuristic Library—Right Now

Katie Archambault and her team want to catapult Dietel Library into the 21st century. As she looks across the room, she's excited about the possibilities—high-tech teaching rooms, writable surfaces, flexible furniture, and students and teachers taking learning to the next level.



Since arriving at Emma in 2013 with six years under her belt working in independent school libraries, Katie has made it her mission to transform the school's library, preserving the old (archived collections) and ushering in the new (3D printers). She's also the president-elect for the Association of Independent School Librarians. She describes herself as a librarian with "a sense of whimsy."

How do you want students to feel in the library? I want the library to be warm and welcoming and buzzing with life—the academic hub and heart of the school. This should be a place where people come to collaborate, to curl up with a good book, and to come for help with research and academic support. I'm thrilled to have Maureen Harrison, our cognitive support specialist, working in the library, too.

What is your vision for a 21st-century library? A 21st-century library is no longer a shushed, dusty warehouse of information. It offers a balanced collection, the best print and digital resources to support the school's curriculum, and encourages pleasure reading. It is a flexible space with movable furniture and writeable surfaces that can be easily configured to fit the needs of the community. It has loud and sometimes messy areas, learning spaces where users question, collaborate, create, and engage with new material. It also has quiet spaces, protected for those

who prefer it. Librarians collaborate with teachers, work with students, and teach everything from honing a research question to evaluating web sources, to refining a database search, to prototyping new ideas utilizing a 3D printer. Ours is on its way to becoming the ideal: housing not only the librarians, but also the History and English departments, tech support and tech integrationist, tutors, and cognitive support specialists.

What have you already done to improve the library? We needed more places to display student work, so we took out some magazine walls, added a countertop and a 55-inch monitor to give us a teaching space. We put in device charging stations at workspace tables and in the fireplace pit. We have rolling whiteboards, and we weeded the physical collection, making good materials easier to find. We added several new databases, purchased thousands of eBooks, provided three high-speed Macs loaded with software programs that some students

Katie Archambault (middle) and fellow librarians and archivists, Nancy Iannucci (left) and Caroline Buinicky (right), have a clear vision for the future of Dietel Library.



might not be able to afford, and we are currently building a Maker Space in our basement complete with 3D printers and a CNC mill, in addition to low-tech prototyping materials like duct tape, pipe cleaners, and popsicle sticks.

How does technology enhance the library of the future? Why do you want a technology-enhanced classroom inside the library? We have a space on the third floor of the library where we can teach among the books and have the digital world at our fingertips. The library of the future invites the world in. It offers a classroom to all disciplines and to students doing group work. It is a cutting-edge environment that reflects the level of work that is

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taking place in every other academic space on campus.

Why preserve Emma Willard’s archived collection? We have researchers who call on us from all over the world because our archives are so rich in women’s history and the history of women’s education. Right now our collection is a hidden gem in the basement of the library. Archives of this caliber

deserve to be brought to the surface. In my ideal world, the archives would be presented as a state-of-the-art museum on campus.

Why continue to improve Emma’s library? Emma is known worldwide for our rigorous academic environment, and our unique care for and attention to our girls. The library is the crown jewel of the academic program. We have a great space, and I believe we can make it better by continuing to modernize and adding technology to connect classroom learning to the world. Our future library reflects the amazing academic offerings, innovative Signature program and incredible faculty of Emma Willard. ☑