

# Supply Supplement

AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS SERVICES PUBLICATION

2018/19 Edition

## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM KEITH CINCOTTA

Director of School Services



About this time every year, schools start thinking about and planning for supply needs—which items need to be updated or replaced, the great ideas germinating for next school year, supplemental materials to help cope with an enrollment bulge and budgets, processes and timelines for teachers and administrators. That's why we publish the annual School Supply Supplement each year about this time. It gives our trusted vendors an opportunity to tell a little about themselves and showcase some of their new products. That way, faculty and staff can start thinking about their upcoming needs and preparing some of their wish lists before the actual ordering season commences.

Now is a great time to share some of the recent changes in the ISS School Supply Program. We've heard from schools over the years about interest in an online ordering system. I'm excited to tell you about a newly developed custom ISS School Supply portal for materials across nine different School Specialty vendors encompassing everything from general supplies to art supplies, PE equipment, furniture, science and more. My team has been working with School Specialty to develop a portal for their products to help streamline some of the coordination that typically happens within a school. Through the

portal, schools can create accounts for teachers and staff giving them the opportunity to create carts which can be approved by administrators and then automatically forwarded on to ISS. The portal has accurate pricing and inventory information which will cut down on time consuming back and forth with vendors. The portal also shows you the deep discounts ISS has negotiated on your behalf. Already, we've heard positive feedback from schools that this portal really helps make purchasing easier and more like the online shopping experience we're all familiar with. For more information contact your ISS Representative who can get you established and started with the ISS/School Specialty portal.

While the School Specialty portal is up and running and working well, we still have a tremendous number of orders that are being managed through our classic purchase order process. Our team is focused on giving you personalized support and helping you find just the right school supplies from the vendors you trust. We continue to aggressively negotiate discounts for you but increasingly spend time on logistics as well. Even as the distribution networks get more sophisticated throughout the world, we have been seeing a big shift in recent years related to managing country regulations and logistics. Vicki's reflective interview in this issue talks about what it used to be like. How times have changed! Now, there are increasing regulations

(continued on page 3)

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## Kick off the school year!



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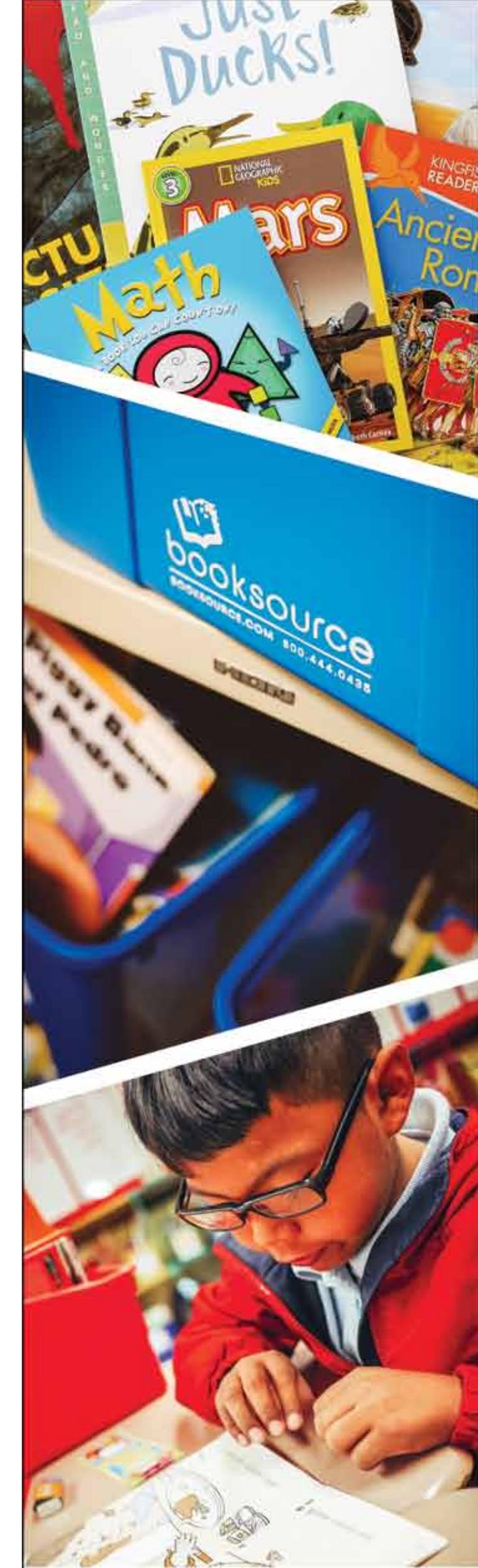
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A collage of educational materials. At the top, several children's books are displayed, including 'Just Ducks!', 'National Geographic Kids' magazine, 'Math', 'Ancient Rome', and 'King's Reader'. Below the books is a blue 'booksource' box with the company logo and website information. In the bottom left, a young boy with glasses is focused on drawing or writing at a desk.

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## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM KEITH CINCOTTA

(continued from page 1)

about which materials can be shipped where and what documentation is required. In addition, customs processing is becoming more and more complex. We are glad that ISS School Supply not only helps schools to get great school supply products at great prices, but provides deep expertise to ensure the necessary school supplies can be delivered on time with few customs headaches. Business managers, teachers and school staff have a lot of important work to do at their schools. Our knowledgeable team stays on top of all the changes in shipping regulations so you don't have to add that to your already long to-do list. We are glad to make ordering school supplies a worry-free, easy process.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH VICKI MERLO

*In July 2019, Vicki Merlo will celebrate her 35th Anniversary with ISS. Our Marketing and Communications team recently asked Vicki some questions about all of the changes she's seen.*

### How did you get started in this career?

I graduated college in December 1983 and was looking for a job. Two of my neighbors, Stella Taylor and Hilda Szmuto, worked for ISS at the time and needed help in the Purchasing department. I was initially hired as a temp and I quickly realized I loved working here. I got to know what ISS was all about and I believed in its mission. I stayed because I loved the work and feel I am doing something worthwhile to help overseas schools. Plus, it's such a great work environment and great people.

### How did you typically process an order back then compared to what you do today?

There were no computers when I started, so everything was done manually by hand or on a typewriter. For purchase orders, we would receive hard

copies sent from the schools by courier. We had a cover letter drafted for our suppliers and we would type information for each order, making copies using a mimeograph machine or carbon paper. We would

keep a copy of the cover letter and purchase order for our records, and mail the originals to the vendor. Eventually the copier became the norm for making copies. We would spend days preparing orders for mailing and creating folders for our files. When vendor invoices arrived, we had to make around eight copies, because

we needed copies for our files, for accounting, and four to five copies for shipping documents that were sent to the freight forwarder and the school. There were mounds of paper in our department.

Our operating systems have gone through several iterations since I started. When we finally became computerized, it was the AS/400 and we had one

(continued on page 4)



ISS Purchasing Department, Fall 1986

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH VICKI MERLO

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computer for the whole department at first. After the AS/400, we upgraded to an Oracle system, and finally, now, to NAV.

Today everything is electronic and we are completely paperless. Orders get emailed and are acknowledged almost immediately. Back when I started it took about two weeks for us to receive an acknowledgement card in the mail, which we attached to our orders and requested to have returned.

When I started we had just gotten a fax machine and were amazed that we could send a piece of paper through this machine and a copy would come out in another location. It was how we communicated with our warehouse.

In 1983 the warehouse would hand write on a sheet of paper all the receipts that they logged in that day. At the end of the day, or the next morning, they would fax that sheet to us. Part of my job was to manually write up every receipt as individual "warehouse tickets" (we had special pads made for this purpose) so that we could attach each warehouse ticket to the appropriate order. Special hand-written notes were made in the files to keep track of order status.

When it was time to ship, we would go through every folder for every

order and physically pull documents to add to our shipment. The warehouse tickets would all be in a pile and the pertinent receipt information from each warehouse ticket was typed on a shipment list. We would partner up and double-check that we typed the list correctly—one person would check the list while the other read the receipt information from the warehouse tickets. The totals from the vendor invoices would also have to be manually added using an adding machine (twice to verify accuracy). For a large shipment, this whole process could sometimes take up to a week.

Now the warehouse logs in freight directly into NAV and our account reps can see what's arrived in real time. With NAV, most of the work is already compiled in the computer ahead of shipping. Depending on the size of the shipment, preparation can take anywhere from a half hour up to a day, unless there are special paperwork requirements, which may take a little longer.

**How many different schools have you worked with through the years? Are there any standout stories?**

At one point, I know we were handling around 200 schools. I honestly can't say how many schools

we've handled since I started. Some have left our service and come back a few years later. Some schools have closed; many more have opened. There have been hundreds of schools that we've handled over the years.

We've ordered lots of items over the years, but the ones I remember are the ones with great stories behind them. One that always stands out for me is the time we had to order a school van for a school in Taipei. It had to be driven into the container and it was a close fit. The only person who was thin enough to be able to get out was Art Flowers (who later became our warehouse manager for several years). As thin as he was, the only way he could get out of the van was to crawl out the window, climb off the top of the van and slide himself out of the container.

There was another order I'll never forget. One of our schools had ordered frogs, but we thought they were preserved frogs for dissection. Instead we received LIVE frogs. Our warehouse manager (Don Kramer at the time) called the office in a panic, screaming that there were frogs jumping all over the warehouse! Our warehouse was in Windsor, NJ at the time, so one of our staff members drove over to the

warehouse, gathered up all the frogs, brought them back to our office and set them free in the creek next to our building. We saved some lives that day...



**What is the most enjoyable aspect of your job?**

I love the feeling when a shipment leaves; I always feel a sense of accomplishment when a school's orders are on their way to their destination. Also, I really enjoy when I have to dig into something to research it. Whether it's freight issues, a shipping process, or figuring out a procedure, I really enjoy doing the "detective" work and coming up with a solution.

**What advice would you give to someone who is ordering school supplies for the first time?**

International shipping has its challenges, so don't be afraid to ask questions; no question is a dumb question. Check on the receiving country's import requirements, because it's better to know up front if there are items that have restrictions

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH VICKI MERLO

(continued)

or license requirements for import so there are no surprises when it's time to ship. Also, plan ahead. A timeline for ordering needs to be established by working backwards. When do you need the goods on site? How long does customs clearance normally take? From there we can determine when the goods need to arrive at the port, transit time, time allowed for consolidation of goods at ISS from the vendors, and finally, when the orders are needed to be emailed to ISS to begin processing.

### Anything else you want to share?

One thing that has never changed in all the years I've been here is the dedication of the ISS staff. People here really do take pride in what they do and I think that's why so many people have worked here for many years.

## SCHOOL CORNER

*Emily Cave, Founding Director, NCIC-Immersion School in China, shared her thoughts on ordering supplies for her school.*

### What is it like at the school when the shipment of supplies arrives from ISS?

Our teachers can't wait each year to place their ISS orders, they love the wide range of suppliers they can order from, and that each year ISS puts

things into place to make it easier. Teachers get pretty excited when they get the discount list, and the new wishlist systems are also really appreciated.

### What is the most out of the ordinary item you ever ordered from ISS?

As far as something out of the ordinary, I don't think there is anything too weird we have ordered yet. Just more Elmer's school glue at one time than I have ever seen in my life

the year we opened the school. That said, I think the biggest thing to note is that we opened a school and the entirety of our needs for the first year were met ordering through ISS. All our founding faculty were impressed at how well resourced we were for a first year.



Photo of the many boxes from setting up their library.





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## A VISIT FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

ISS School Supply account representatives often develop strong relationships with their school contacts. Such is the case with ISS Senior Account Representative Sylvia Butler and her counterpart at the Jakarta Intercultural School (JIS) in Indonesia. Sylvia and JIS's procurement

manager Ebenezer Siahaan have worked together for fifteen years. When Ebenezer told Sylvia that he was planning a trip to the US, they arranged to meet in-person for the first time. In September, Ebenezer and his friend Wuri met Sylvia in Manhattan. Together they enjoyed a day touring some must-see sites

in the city, including the Empire State Building and St. Patrick's Cathedral. After several hours of walking and an American style steak dinner, their visit came to a close. It may be their only time together in person, but their friendship may very well continue for years.



Ebenezer, Wuri, Sylvia





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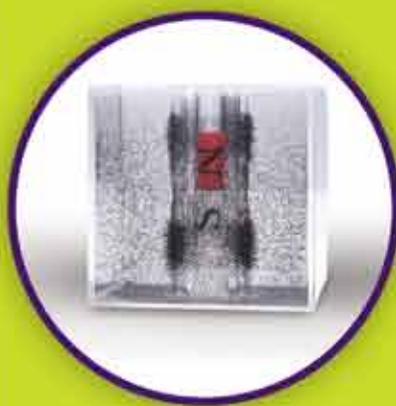
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ISS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS SERVICES

## SCHOOL SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Use this handy checklist to assess your school supply needs and get a jumpstart on your ordering.



### Overview and Planning for Change

If you're expecting some small or large strategic changes, now is a good time to add new items to your order or increase your quantities.

- Is enrollment expected to grow?
- Is your school focusing on curriculum review?
- What new technology initiatives are planned?



### Classroom

Take inventory of materials on hand and consider your update and replenishment plans.

- Have you planned classroom displays for next year?
- Do you have enough consumables?
- Maker space materials?
- Construction paper and arts & crafts supplies?
- Do you need replacement text books?



### Library

Review your current budget and next year's plan to find opportunity for expansion and growth.

- How can you build out your classroom libraries?



### Uniforms

Assess your stock and sizing needs for next year.

- School Uniforms
- PE Uniforms
- Sports Uniforms



### Music

Take inventory of your musical instruments.

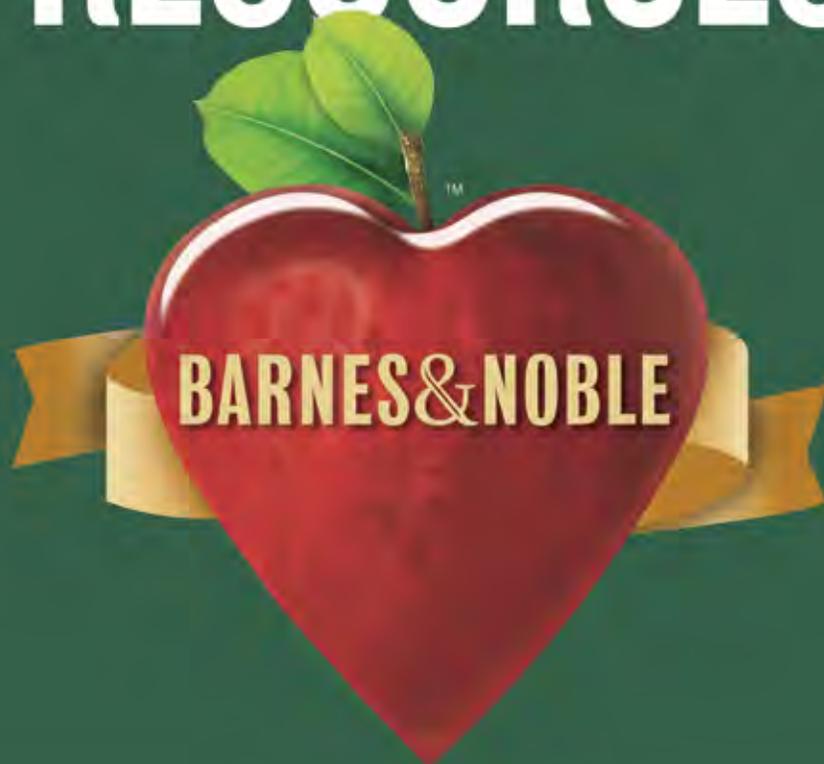
- Do you need to increase or replace any instruments?

### Here's what to do next

- Decide on a plan for storing and inventorying current supplies
- Make a list of needed items
- Place or increase your ISS School Supply Order by emailing [schoolsupply@iss.edu](mailto:schoolsupply@iss.edu)



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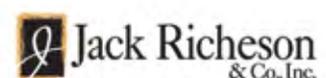
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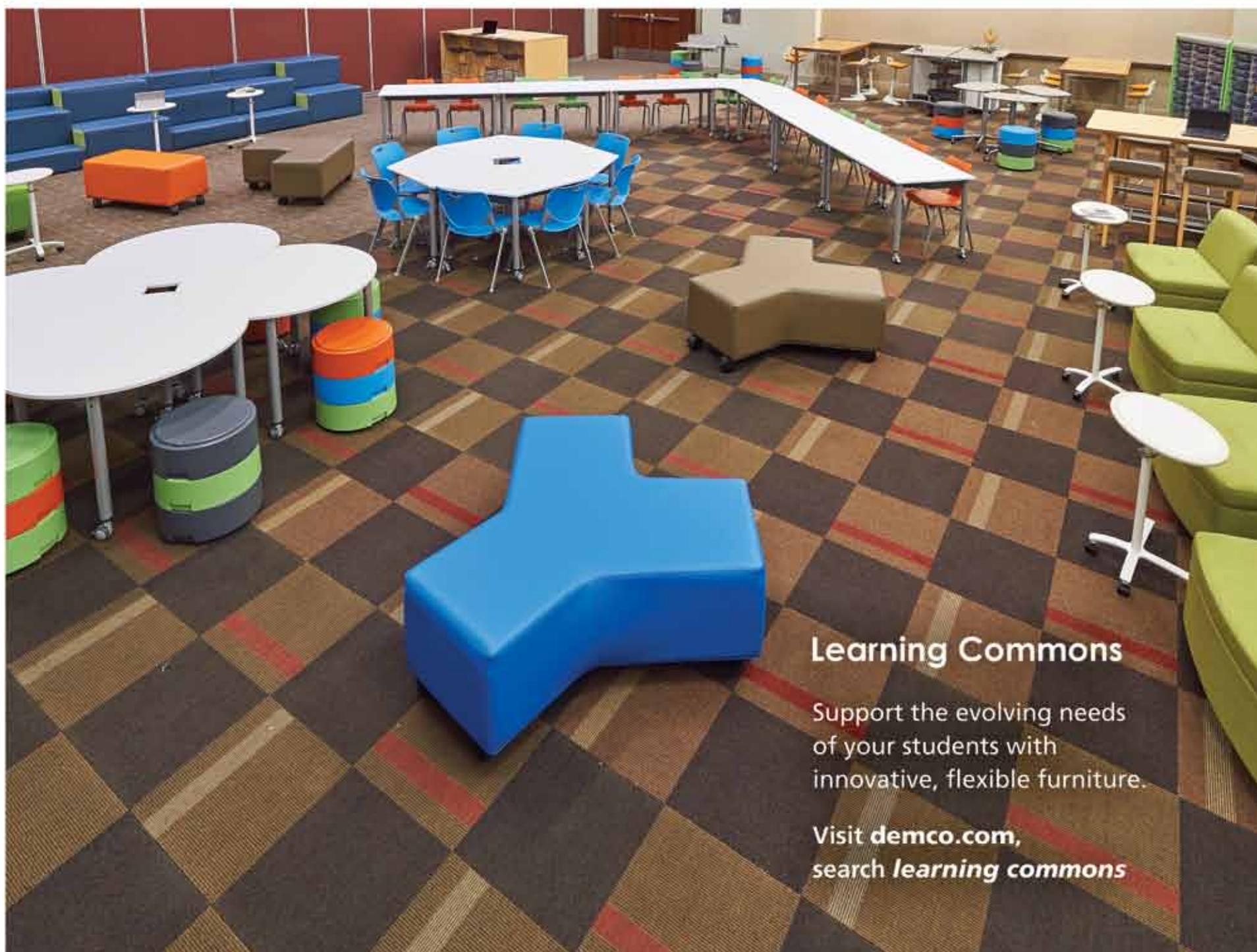
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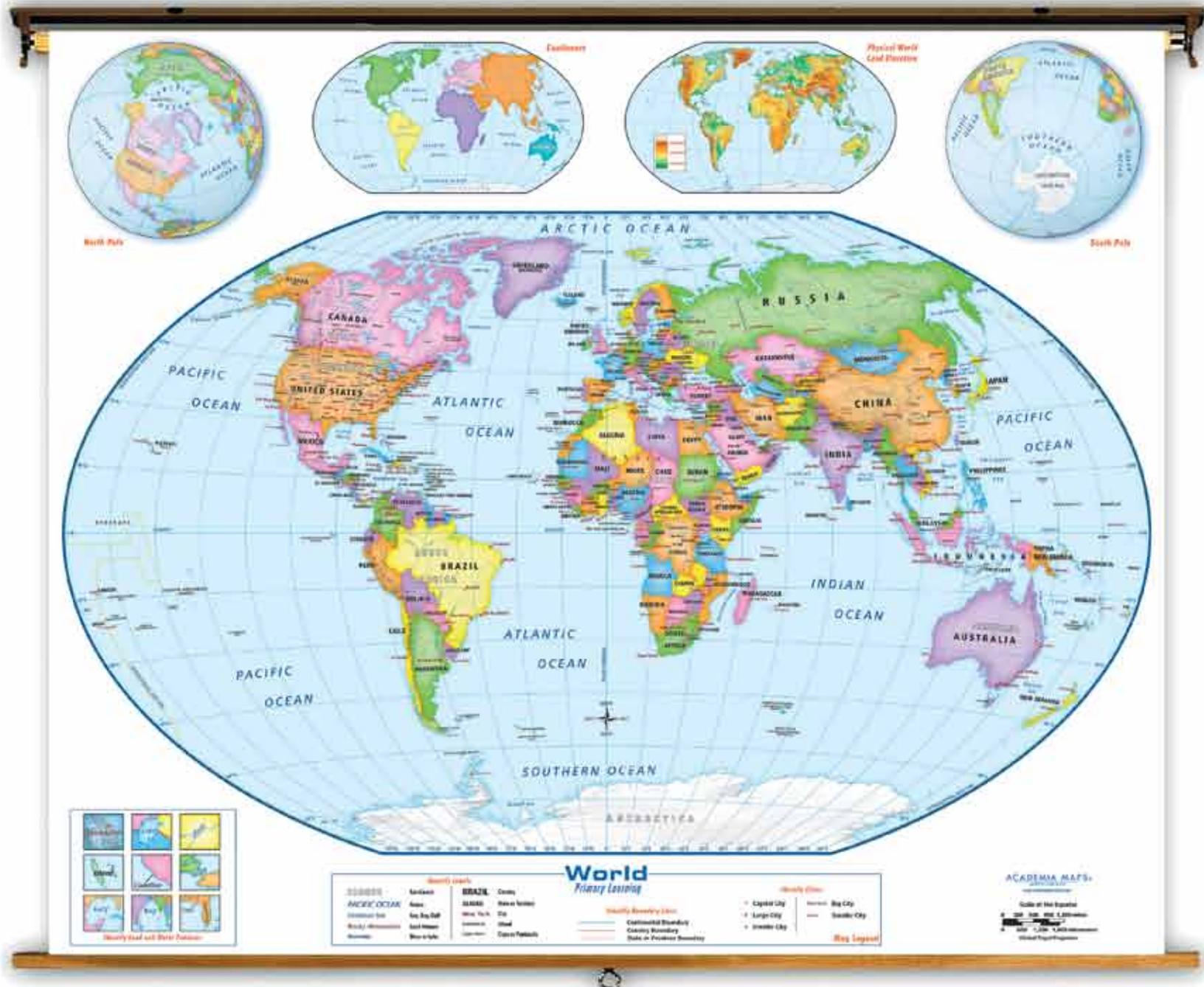


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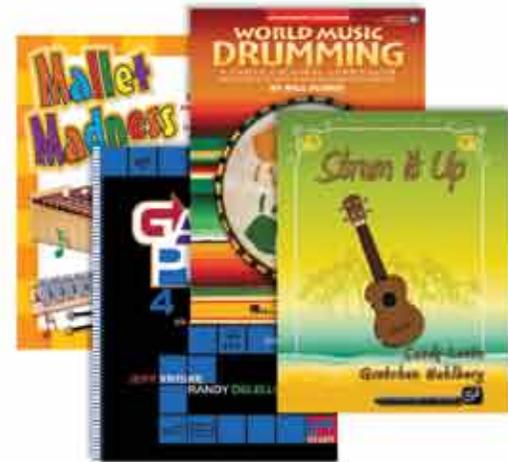
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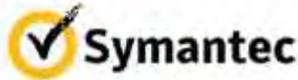


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