Little Chute Area School District Implements BuildYourOwnCurriculum™

A Pressing Need

Several years ago, the Little Chute Area School District in Little Chute, Wisconsin realized they needed a curriculum collection tool that would house and map preK-12 curriculum. There was already a secondary school collection tool in place, as well as an in-house solution for mid-level primary grades. However, neither program back-mapped or forward-mapped. So, Little Chute sought out a solution that would be able to house and map their curriculum across all grades.

Finding a Solution

Little Chute created a curriculum sub-committee, under the leadership of Curriculum Director, Jennifer McDermot. They investigated three different products, and chose the BuildYourOwnCurriculum (BYOC) solution from School Software Group (SSG).

According to Jennifer McDermot: "BYOC was the best fit for our school district, and philosophically aligned with the way we've developed curriculum here in Little Chute. The other products approached curriculum development from only the teacher's point of view. BYOC makes curriculum development open and collaborative. It looks at what's best for the district and it's mapped so that we see how everyone in the education process is connected — all components of a larger entity."

Continues McDermot: "…it was like, they took what was in my head conceptually, and it was there, created. I was personally very excited about it. It made sense to me as the curriculum person. Even though I was convinced immediately, it was decided, by the committee, that BYOC was the best choice for the district."

Implementation & Training

After selecting BYOC, Little Chute in partnership with School Software Group trained a small core group from each building — elementary, middle school, and high school. After BYOC was successfully implemented with the smaller groups, it was introduced to the entire staff. McDermot states: "The training from School Software Group was very easy to follow, very non-threatening, very appropriate, and they (SSG) were very receptive to our needs. And then we kicked it off at the beginning of the year with staff, and we've been going at it ever since!"

Faculty was divided into teams based on grade-level. Team leaders were trained first, and then they helped train the others in their group. Trainers received a half day of training, followed by time to practice for themselves with their own curriculum. A full day of curriculum writing time was included in the process. Additional days — not exclusively professional development days — were provided to write curriculum, during which time trainers were available. The District

build your own curriculum
The Framework for K-12 Success

Little Chute Area School District
Little Chute, Wisconsin
- Enrollment (1,512 Students)

Curriculum Director and building principals were also available to help staff members navigate BYOC, manipulate various functions, and define certain components.

On the Path to Improved Student Performance

Although BYOC is still relatively new to Little Chute, Jennifer McDermot states: "A positive outcome was that we created a review process that I have been able to share with other BYOC users. It was a component that was important and necessary, if we were going to publish curriculum and be accountable to our colleagues, to our parents, to the community, and to the school board. In that review, and through this whole process, there's been a tremendous amount of very positive dialogue about the level of expectation. What do I want my kids to be able to do? How does that match with the district focus? Are all of our preK-12 initiatives, such as literacy and technology, intertwined? Is that being documented? Are my concepts measurable? All of that dialogue has happened through this process, which has not happened in this organization for a while."

> "*The biggest benefits of BYOC are support, ease of use, and School Software Group's willingness to participate in user group meetings — listen to the people who are using the product — and make modifications based on needs, without destroying the integrity of the original intent*"
>
> — Jennifer McDermot
> Curriculum Director, Little Chute Area School District

McDermot adds: "The more we publish, the more we review, the more teachers are in line with what they want their kids to know and do, the better and more accurate the assessments they're developing. Teachers are developing better focus for their classroom, which theoretically, should create improvement in student performance."

The Right Choice for Little Chute

The selection of BuildYourOwnCurriculum for Little Chute has proven to be both cost effective and time saving. As Jennifer McDermot describes it: "At the click of a button, a user can find a report, look for holes, look for interdisciplinary connections, match the standards, and reword local standards." The implementation and training went quickly and efficiently, and the level of service and support has exceeded expectations.

As Jennifer McDermot emphatically states: "On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say SSG is a 12. Anything that I have asked, I've gotten an immediate response to. For example, this morning I went in to work and there was an issue. I emailed SSG and received an email back within a half an hour, saying 'the issue's on our end, we'll let you know when we'll have it up and running' and very shortly after that, they let me know. That's the way they have always operated, which is another reason we chose to go with SSG."

School Software Group

School Software Group (SSG) is an online solution provider of district curriculum and assessment management systems. At SSG, we believe that a well-articulated and viable curriculum ensures standards-aligned, rigorous, and effective classroom instruction. We create the tools to systematically document a district's curriculum—turning it into a viable, living document that can be easily improved.