

Success Story

Gasconade County R-1...Preparing Lifelong Learners

Hermann, Missouri, home of Gasconade County R-1 School District, is tucked away in the Missouri River Valley. Located about an hour west of St. Louis, tourists are often drawn to this rural wine country. The district has over 860 students in grades K-12, above average state test scores, and the staff is dedicated to making the students lifelong learners by having a solid curriculum in place.

A New Solution

When administrators at Gasconade County R-1 found out their current curriculum tool was no longer going to be supported, there wasn't much of a complaint. The tool was not user-friendly and there were no reporting options that would give satisfactory data as to how standards were covered in a course.

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— Maranda Anderson,
Director of Curriculum and Assessments, Gasconade County R-1

Teachers and administrators worked together as a team that researched new curriculum tools for the district. The team found the answer in BuildYourOwnCurriculum (BYOC). Shortly after the selection process, Maranda Anderson, Director of Curriculum, Assessments and Federal programming for Gasconade County R-1, was hired and she began guiding the curriculum writing process.

Reporting and Analysis

“The greatest value of BYOC is it's reporting transparency,” said Anderson. “We can run a report that shows our building principals exactly what a teacher is covering in their classroom that week, including standards. When a principal enters a classroom for observation and is confidently armed with the knowledge on what is being taught, teachers then see that administration is invested in the curriculum tool they are using.”

When a course is created in BYOC, state and national standards are aligned to the course to show where in the curriculum specific grade-level standards are being taught. This has become an important part of the curriculum writing process for teachers, because, according to Anderson, being able to run a report in BYOC to see where there are gaps in standards coverage helps with maintaining Gasconade County R-1's above state average test scores.

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build your own
curriculum
The Framework for K-12 Success

Gasconade County R-1 School District

Hermann, Missouri

• Enrollment - 860 Students, Three Buildings

Staff Buy-in

“Not all teachers are tech-savvy and working on curriculum can fall low on their list of priorities,” said Anderson. “In BYOC we are getting teacher buy-in because they are seeing how simple it is to choose from the bank of standards to tie into their coursework. This helps answer the question ‘why are we struggling in this area on a state test?’ The answer can be found by looking at coursework that has been entered in BYOC.”

Curricular Transparency

Teaching staff at Gasconade County R-1 isn’t alone in seeing the benefits of using BYOC for their curriculum platform. The school community is also enjoying the new transparency in curriculum by accessing Gasconade County R-1’s public BYOC website, which is available to all districts that use BYOC. When a course is marked as “published” in BYOC, meaning it has been through a revision process and is ready for the community to view, it is shown on the district’s public BYOC website. Although the coursework is on the public website, Anderson explains that they consider all curriculum a living document and that it is ever evolving throughout the school year. That way teachers don’t feel like they should walk away and let their curriculum gather dust. It can be revisited, edited, improved, and fine-tuned as the school year progresses and they see the struggles and successes their students are having with the way their coursework and activities are presented.

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Focused and Responsive

Gasconade County R-1’s success in using BYOC is not rare. Other districts have discovered that managing their curriculum using word processing documents and spreadsheets has limitations. Those tools are designed to meet the needs of the masses and try to impress by having overwhelming capabilities, versus being focused specifically on curriculum. What Gasconade County R-1 has found is that BYOC is curriculum-focused and customer driven, allowing them to be successful.

This focus on curriculum and listening to customers is what differentiates BuildYourOwnCurriculum and continually drives the team forward.

“Your (BYOC’s) responsiveness to customer feedback is very impressive,” Anderson recalls. “You truly listen and implement partner suggestions whether it’s from comments at a user meeting or an email sent to customer support.”

School Software Group

School Software Group (SSG) is an online solution provider of district curriculum and assessment management systems. SSG’s core offering BuildYourOwnCurriculum offers districts a framework to create and utilize truly effective curriculum. The expanded version of BuildYourOwnCurriculum, BuildYourOwnCurriculum+ further leverages the curriculum to drive a learning management and assessment system aligned to the district defined curriculum.

At School Software Group, we believe that a well-articulated and viable curriculum ensures standards-aligned, rigorous, and effective classroom instruction. We create the tools to systematically document and utilize a district’s curriculum—turning it into a viable, living document that can be easily improved.