

FAST FACTS

Interviewee:

Liz Wolf, Cincinnati Public Schools' K–12 Curriculum Manager for Science, Physical Education and Health

Challenge: Developing an advanced, hands-on, high-quality laboratory program that parallels the newly adopted high-quality science curriculum, and finding a way to fund the program across the entire district.

Solution: Partner with Carolina Biological Supply Company to design curriculum-aligned lab equipment and supplies for middle and high school science classes to ensure engaging experiences.

Results: Teachers have a state-of-the-science, custom-designed laboratory program that provides them with the lab equipment, supplies, and support they need to implement labs in their courses. Students are learning cutting-edge science and hands-on skills that prepare them for college and careers in the sciences.

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Cincinnati Public Schools Kicks Off Advanced Hands-On Science Learning with Federal ESSER Funds



[Cincinnati Public Schools](#) (CPS) serves 36,000 students, making it the largest school district in the Greater Cincinnati area, and Ohio's second-largest school district. It is also Ohio's fastest-growing large-city district, with enrollment up more than 20 percent since 2012.

CPS offers preschool through 12th grade education at 65 schools, including:

- 42 preschool locations
- 49 elementary/middle schools (K–6 or K–8)
- 18 elementary/middle/high schools (K–12, 7–12, or 9–12)

They also educate students at three off-campus satellite locations and a virtual high school.

CPS strives to continuously provide a state-of-the-art education to their students, and it shows in their national recognitions. Their dedication is demonstrated by

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their ongoing efforts to provide cutting-edge teaching, content and resources. One district strategy to do so was to update their curriculum adoption cycles, which recently included the adoption of a new curriculum for K–12 science. [Liz Wolf](#) is CPS' Curriculum Manager for Science, Physical Education and Health. She, along with a team of teachers, researched numerous K–12 curricula available for the sciences, piloted their top choices, and recommended the Amplify curriculum for grades K–8 and McGraw Hill for grades 9–12. These curricula were selected based on their quality, alignment to standards, and positive feedback from teachers, students, parents and the community. The new science programs also received the needed approval, support, and investment from the district administration and the Board of Education.

Once the curriculum was selected, Ms. Wolf and the high school team wasted no time starting to plan for hands-on laboratory lessons that paralleled the new curriculum. They wanted to upgrade their laboratory equipment and supplies and provide high-quality advanced materials and investigations for students. They knew that cost would be their biggest hurdle. In the sciences, in addition to purchasing a classroom curriculum, a complete science program includes hands-on laboratory learning using modern equipment and methods. That's another investment that must be funded; however, Wolf knew there was an opportunity to use pandemic-era Federal [ESSER Funds](#) to make a modern, district-wide, high-quality science laboratory program a reality.



Ready . . .

Wolf prepared a communiqué describing their proposed solution. She and the team used the communiqué to start conversations and gain support within the district. Wolf held meetings with district administrators and the Board of Education to discuss the proposal and address the potential use of ESSER funds to make it happen. As part of the adoption process, she also engaged with teacher leaders and the local teachers union to get their feedback and support.

Ms. Wolf's efforts did indeed bear fruit! To the delight of Ms. Wolf and the team, the district-wide science laboratory program was given the go-ahead with a preliminary budget of \$3 million, including [ESSER I](#) funds for middle school labs and [ESSER II](#) funds for high school labs.

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“Never in my teaching career have I been able to do labs that paralleled the curriculum so well.”

—Rachna Gajjar, High School Science Teacher at Spencer Center

Set . . .

Wolf and the team began by inventorying the equipment and supplies already on hand, their condition, and any upgrades or replacements needed for routinely-used items. Carolina Biological Supply helped Ms. Wolf design aligned equipment and supply lists for each grade level from 9 to 12. The resources were designed to parallel the new curriculum in order to reinforce the students' classroom learning.

The grades 9 to 12 curriculum doesn't include any lab equipment or supplies. Carolina helped Wolf design a lab program and individual labs for every high school science course taught at CPS:

- Biology
- Chemistry

- Physics
- Physical Science
- Human Anatomy & Physiology
- Environmental Science
- Astronomy
- AP Biology
- AP Chemistry

Once the final budget and procurement process were approved, Carolina began building the labs and gathering resources. Ms. Rachna Gajjar, a high school teacher in CPS, happily reports, “Never in my teaching career have I been able to do labs that paralleled the curriculum so well.”



Go!

CPS piloted the new labs during the 2022–2023 academic year. When shipping time came, Carolina prepared a package for each course at each school and shipped them directly to each teacher at their building. There were no delays due to general delivery for CPS. As Wolf describes it, “We have an entire Carolina team supporting us!”

And the winners are . . .

Everyone!

The results have been nothing less than

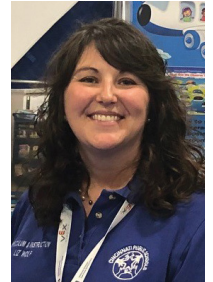
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remarkable for students, teachers and administrators. The teachers are thrilled to have all the resources they need to offer students advanced science learning and hands-on experience.

Students started “falling in love” with science thanks to the engaging labs. Their enthusiasm is clearly seen in their high lab attendance rates, especially on dissection days. Before the first implementation year was completed, Ms. Wolf said she witnessed “more hands-on science in six months than in six years previously.”

“They [Carolina] supported us each step of the way—during planning, configurations, clarifications, service, assistance and beyond.”

—Liz Wolf, K–12 Curriculum Manager for Science, Physical Education, and Health at Cincinnati Public Schools



When CPS principals report student success, high attendance rates on lab days, and soaring student enthusiasm, it’s no wonder they receive

standing ovations from families, staff, and the Cincinnati community in support of the science program investment!

Ms. Wolf is still riding that wave of satisfaction as she sees students thriving and embracing science. “We received remarkable service from Carolina throughout this process,” she says. “They supported us each step of the way—during planning, configurations, clarifications, service, assistance and beyond.”

Carolina is proud to be part of this success story. We can’t wait to see what CPS students go on to accomplish in the sciences.

