



*“BYOC was robust enough to fit our needs, yet simple enough for our teachers to understand – the program’s approach to designing curriculum just made sense.”*

**Allyson Olson, Director of Secondary Education**  
South Sioux City Community Schools, South Sioux City, Nebraska

## NEBRASKA DISTRICT PURCHASES BYOC

Two years ago, Allyson Olson, Director of Secondary Education at South Sioux City Community Schools watched as a group of math teachers sat on the floor, attempting to map out the Nebraska state standards. “They had physically cut apart the state standards and were sequencing them on the floor. Their objective was to find the best way to teach these standards in the classroom. As I watched, I just thought to myself, ‘there has got to be a better way,’” Olson said.

This event prompted Olson to seek out a technology-based solution for South Sioux City. Her main objective was to find an easily accessible program that could enhance the district’s curriculum development process. After considering several solutions, the district purchased BuildYourOwnCurriculum (BYOC). “BYOC was robust enough to fit our needs, yet simple enough for our teachers to understand – the program’s approach to designing curriculum just made sense,” Olson said.

### Finding the Right Technology

Before she began working with BYOC, Olson had two goals for South Sioux City’s curriculum. Her first goal was to improve the district’s curriculum development process. “We needed a tool that would eliminate the task of having to physically manipulate standards in order to align them with our instruction. As educators, we’re devoting a lot of instructional time unpacking and prioritizing standards. We needed to improve this process – we needed to involve technology.”

Olson’s second goal was to make the district’s curriculum accessible to all teachers. “When the district published curriculum, those documents were placed in a binder and handed out to every teacher. However, I remember the classroom well enough to know teachers weren’t sitting down to plan their lessons by opening up that curriculum binder. So, I wanted to make sure our curriculum was user-friendly ... something our teachers would utilize on a daily basis.”

Compared to other software programs on the market, Olson felt BYOC was the only one that was entirely user-friendly. “When I first demoed BYOC, I immediately noticed how intuitive it is. It’s obvious that BYOC has been developed based on teacher input. There is no need to have extensive knowledge of software to use BYOC – I think any teacher can use it.”

BYOC provides educators with a simple web-based design to make learning resources easily accessible. Teachers can search, plan, build, align and publish learning content from any location within an organized structure. “We had spent a significant amount of time in our

**SOUTH SIOUX CITY  
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**  
South Sioux City, Nebraska

**DISTRICT ENROLLMENT**  
3,850

build your own  
**curriculum**

district just focusing on learning targets. The fact that BYOC builds upon learning targets was very useful to us. I have yet to encounter one teacher that has found this program difficult. The drop-down menus and all-around approach to designing curriculum is logical.”

### Paving a Pathway for Achievement

“We use BYOC to ensure that we provide a rigorous education that will prepare students for their future,” Olson said. “A year ago, we developed all of our elementary language arts and math courses and many courses at the secondary level. Since then, assessment results indicate we had some gaps in our curriculum. We’ve been focused on unpacking standards, prioritizing standards and developing proficiency scales. BYOC has helped us to ensure that we are providing a guaranteed curriculum for all students.”

According to Olson, South Sioux City is still in the beginning stages of their BYOC implementation. However, it has already provided valuable assistance for two district programs. “One of our At-Risk programs is known as School Within a School. The program was designed for students who were having trouble in our general education setting.”

School Within a School uses a self-contained approach within the district’s middle school. “Sometimes, because of academics and behaviors, students are unable to be successful in relation to other children in the middle school. We’ve created a leveled program for these students. Students come into the program at level one and advance through the levels depending on their ability to exhibit appropriate behaviors. Some of these behaviors include completion of homework and classroom activities,” Olson said.

“We have two teachers delivering instruction for multiple grade levels and multiple subjects which makes the planning for the School Within a School program very intense. Our teachers really appreciated the fact that BYOC gives them access to the curriculum of other teachers who specialize in subjects like language arts and math. With BYOC, these teachers can remain confident that the instruction they are delivering is consistent

with what our other middle school students are being taught,” Olson said.

The second program BYOC has provided assistance for is South Sioux City’s Newcomers program. The Newcomers program was created for students who are new to America, completing their first year in an English speaking school. “When students come into this program, they are coming from a variety of educational backgrounds. The challenge is to provide grade level, rich instruction to students who may be missing important foundational pieces. With BYOC, our Newcomer teachers are able to pull units from various language arts or math classrooms in order to help build on those foundational gaps.”

“BYOC gives our teachers the confidence to know that the instruction they’re providing is high quality and aligned to Nebraska standards. The program also takes the individual planning burden off those teachers who are providing instruction on multiple subjects,” Olson said.

### Continuing Success

As South Sioux City continues to work in BYOC, Olson said the support from Education Technology Partners and School Software Group has provided the extra assurance needed for a success implementation. “The team at Education Technology Partners and School Software Group are great to work with. Their support guides and customer service team make it very easy to find answers to any question right away.”

When asked how she would describe BYOC to other Nebraska districts, Olson replied, “BYOC is a great tool. The program allows your district’s curriculum to be readily available to teachers. Therefore, increasing the likelihood that curriculum drives instruction, rather than textbooks. Any teacher will love it.”

“Our teachers continue to gain clarity on the knowledge and skills that are essential for students to master in each course and at each grade level. As we continue to refine our curriculum, BYOC will ensure that instruction for each course is aligned to our priority standards. With BYOC we can feel confident that expectations for student performance are met,” Olson said.

#### ABOUT EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

*Founded by a former educator in 2003, Education Technology Partners was started with one goal in mind – to research, identify and bring to schools the very best, and most effective, education technology solutions available. Additionally, we support these “Best of Breed” technologies with the highest caliber of professional development and training services.*