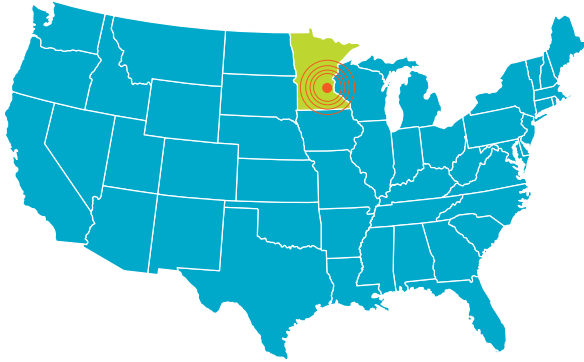


## St. Paul Public Schools Choose BuildYourOwnCurriculum to Support Major Curriculum Development Initiatives



### ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- 38,000 students
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> largest school district in Minnesota
- 3,329 K-12 teachers
- 69.5% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch

"I think of BuildYourOwnCurriculum as having your cake *and* eating it too..." says Micheal Thompson, Director of Curriculum for St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota. The district undertook an extensive initiative to research and then implement a new technology-based curriculum development and management program to support its secondary school programs.

Thompson noted, "We conducted in-depth research on several different curriculum management programs. Some delivered great looking documents but did not provide the in-depth curriculum development tools we really needed to support our required standards alignment and curriculum mapping processes. Others provided some of the tools we needed but were quite complicated for teachers and administrators to learn and use. With BuildYourOwnCurriculum we have simple curriculum authoring tools, all the flexibility and embedded data we need to identify critical gaps between curriculum and instruction, and we have accessible, understandable curriculum documents that support teachers, students, parents, and administrators alike."

Thompson also noted that BuildYourOwnCurriculum (BYOC) will give the district the necessary tools to achieve curriculum commonality across its secondary school buildings, classrooms, and subject areas. Saint Paul Public Schools have also initiated a professional learning community model and Thompson stated that (BYOC) will provide shared curriculum resources, communications, and documents to support this program as well.

In discussing the district's choice of BuildYourOwnCurriculum, Thompson stated that the solution was the right choice because it allowed the district to evolve and transform the curriculum development work already in process, rather than "...starting from scratch."

Thompson explained, "We invest a great deal of educator time and funding in our curriculum development initiatives. It's critical that we have the ability to make this information available consistently to our faculty, students, and their families. Print-based binders with curriculum documents that sit on the shelf simply do not answer our 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs for making curriculum open, interactive, accessible, and available to focus the work of teachers, students, and administrators alike."

### A Comprehensive Review Process

In selecting BYOC, St. Paul Public Schools' Curriculum and Instruction teams, comprised of both district and site-level educators, reviewed the solution's tools, access, output, and ease-of-use. The district's technology teams evaluated the program's Application Service Provider (ASP) model and found that it integrated well with their current systems and did not impose additional requirements for server capacity, additional tech support, or complex technical training for users.

### The Process Has Begun...

St. Paul Public Schools began to author curriculum for secondary grades beginning with its Health and Physical Education courses in the fall of 2008. Micheal Thompson stated, "We can already see how beneficial BYOC will be. Loading our curriculum data has been a streamlined process and we have received excellent support from the team at School Software Group. We will begin to use the program to support our core curriculum areas beginning in 2008 and we envision that BYOC will truly become the information hub for all of our curriculum information going forward."



## Making Curriculum Open, Accessible and Effective

Education Technology Partners assisted Saint Paul Public Schools in their selection of BuildYourOwnCurriculum. The district stated that barrier-free access to curriculum information was essential for teacher induction, teacher retention, and central to their drive to improve student achievement. They chose BuildYourOwnCurriculum because the system was able to deliver value from the very first day teachers had online access to the information and tools.

## About BuildYourOwnCurriculum from School Software Group

BuildYourOwnCurriculum was developed to provide every member of a district's learning community with on-demand curriculum information at affordable prices. A Web-based solution, BuildYourOwnCurriculum works wherever schools have Internet-connected computers. There is no need for schools to change or expand current network infrastructure. The solution enables districts to provide a curriculum portal that can be customized to align with and support the district's existing web site and can include links to and from individual buildings' and the district's Web site. Fully customizable, BuildYourOwnCurriculum can be configured to follow the philosophy of Understanding by Design or other district specific curriculum development, alignment and implementation approaches.

BuildYourOwnCurriculum was specifically designed by educators to meet the needs of students, parents, administrators and teachers. Students can look at the standards they're expected to learn and master, see class activities, and retrieve the resources they'll need to complete their work. Parents have the opportunity to view curriculum, assignments, and standards from home, work or library. Teachers can locate current curriculum requirements and resources, to easily update and customize their lesson plans in alignment with district standards and expectations. Administrators can gain instant access to the learning paths in each building, grade, and classroom—and view this information by standards, by teaching objective, and by key concept. In addition to simply managing district curriculum and streamlining that process, BYOC also offers an integrated lesson planner, classroom assignment publisher, and the ability for districts to view and share each others' curriculum, providing access to best practices and fostering collaborative curriculum development.

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—Micheal Thompson, Director of Curriculum  
for St. Paul Public Schools

