

District Success Story

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

About Federal Way

Federal Way Public Schools (FWPS) is the most diverse district in Washington State with over 100 languages spoken and about 25% of students officially in an ELL program. Designing instruction that leverages that diversity is of high priority. FWPS is currently made up of 37 schools, 1325 teachers, and 21,405 students.

! CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

Prior to this adoption, FWPS hadn't gone through a formal science adoption in over ten years, largely developing their own materials.

- Needed materials that worked well for both teachers with significant NGSS training and those without. Developing that internally was not a realistic option.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were less effective when teachers used different curriculum.
- No system in place to restock kit materials. How do we sustain a hands-on program over time?
- Lacking the technology in place to implement a digital curriculum.

💡 SOLUTIONS & SERVICES

It became clear that FWPS needed externally developed curriculum that could be taught consistently across the district. After extensive piloting, *Issues and Science* best met district needs and priorities.

- Instructional materials are very user friendly and designed in a way that led to high quality teaching practices for a broad range of teachers, not just those with comprehensive NGSS training.
- Having a common curriculum not only helped PLCs – the consistency with which it is taught also helped students who move from school to school within the district.
- *Issues and Science* had the highest adoption evaluation score of the programs that didn't have to be implemented digitally.

“The organization of the material drawers has made the hands-on really manageable – both in the classroom and at the district level.”

Programs & Services

- Issues and Science, Designed for the NGSS
- Hardbound Student Books
- Online Teacher Portal
- Online Student Portal & Hands-on@Home for the FWPS digital school
- PL Hours: 30 per teacher, over 2 years



PROGRAM IMPACT

Now finishing their fourth year with *Issues and Science*, Federal Way Public Schools (FWPS) is happy with their middle school science program. Moving to a nationally published program, as opposed to developing curriculum internally, has led to instructional consistency across the district and has increased efficacy within their Professional Learning Communities. Using *Issues and Science* specifically has led to high quality teaching practices across the district, allowing core teachers with NGSS training to leverage that work, but teacher resources are also designed well enough that even teachers without that intensive coaching can teach it with fidelity.

From a logistics stand-point, partnering with Lab-Aids has allowed FWPS to make a hands-on program sustainable. Program materials and equipment are highly organized in labeled drawers with specific compartments for each set, making it easy to identify what needs to be replaced or refilled. Refurbishment of the few consumable materials is done systematically and easily at the district level.

Using *Issues and Science* also allowed FWPS to adopt a high-quality NGSS program that didn't require 1:1 technology, but *could* move online in the future if the district desired. While printed Student Books and classroom activity materials are used in most of the schools, the online Portal and Hands-on@Home materials are used within the all digital/remote school.

“Since the progression of learning is so solid, we've found that we can choose to make some of the phenomena more localized, but the activities and curriculum still applies well.

Lab-Aids offers a really nice balance between structure and flexibility.”

Megan Walker
District Science Facilitator
Federal Way Public Schools



At Lab-Aids we are committed to innovation, equity, and leadership within the field of science education. We consider it our mission to reform science education through quality, hands-on science instruction.