

ABC-CLIO's Online Solutions Help Wayne Public Schools in NJ Take a Leadership Position in 21st Century Teaching and Learning

CHALLENGE

Wayne Public School District's mission is to implement policies that make it possible for their nearly 9,000 students to flourish in a well-rounded educational program that recognizes the individual needs of each student.

To help accomplish its mission, four years ago Wayne Public Schools moved to a thematic curriculum for teaching U.S. and World History. Part of their instructional methodology is for students to best understand the world they live in; they need to develop a deep understanding of the world that came before. They decided to implement this with online digital resources rather than textbooks as their primary instructional tool. The challenge was to find the right tool for all of their students that was rich with content, cost-effective, and updated on a regular basis.

SOLUTION

ABC-CLIO databases get high marks when it comes to usage. Every classroom in Wayne Public Schools is wired to the Internet.

Each teacher uses the database for instruction... "the databases are not just used for research. They are used as an instructional tool. Teachers are proficient at bookmarking database articles and posting links for their students on their webpages," says Carmine Picardo, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, Social Studies.

No More Textbooks

Fully embracing digital technologies, Wayne Public Schools made the decision to abandon textbooks in favor of digital resources to support the move to a thematic curriculum for teaching U.S. and World History. Favoring a broad-based source of information that couldn't be provided by standard textbooks, ABC-CLIO was among the first sources of content selected by Wayne Public Schools. Picardo explains

"I would recommend ABC-CLIO to any school district looking to move their curriculum into the 21st century."

the instructional methodologies. "When teaching a subject such as, say, migration, we ask students the questions 'where are we today? How did we get here?' That leads to 'where

are we going in the future?'" Picardo says that the broad-based information requirements simply weren't satisfied by textbooks.

Like the rest of the country, NJ is facing significant budget pressures. The move from textbooks to digital solutions has allowed for sizable savings. Carmine Picardo estimates it to be substantial. "ABC-CLIO is one of the most used of our digital and database resources. Together with the others I would say we have saved over \$275,000 in the last few years. Going forward we probably save about \$25,000-30,000 per year."

Enhancing Critical Thinking and Analysis

Built into every ABC-CLIO database is an ever-growing collection of critical articles from scholars that provides insight into how thinkers use analysis and critical thinking to form and support arguments. For example, in examining how the western expansion defines American culture, critical articles on this important question mine both the upside and downside of this migration. This aligns tightly with Wayne Public Schools' mission. "The curriculum here is issues based. Every issue is approached with a model of debate and resolution. Critical thinking is embedded into the curriculum," says Picardo.

EVALUATING SUCCESS

According to the *New Jersey Magazine*, Wayne Public School District is consistently ranked among the top 75 in the state of NJ.

With high performance comes high expectations. For Wayne Public Schools, it's important to understand the metrics that gauge success. "For us, it's usage," says Carmine Picardo. "ABC-CLIO has a lot of use. We're tracking thousands of hits per month."

"... there are many wonderful digital resources that students and teachers can utilize to enrich the learning experience. One of the best is ABC-CLIO. We find their databases of information to be rich in primary source materials; their readings to be clear and concise; and their videos, graphs, and charts very engaging. Furthermore, the ABC-CLIO databases are easy to navigate for students and teachers. Searches are easily obtained including advance searches. ABC-CLIO even provides stimulating lessons and discussion points to further enhance the classroom experience. We are very happy with their product including their support services."

— *Carmine Picardo, Supervisor, Curriculum & Instruction, Social Studies, Wayne Public School District*



QUICK FACTS

Wayne Public School District

- K–12 district located in Passaic County, NJ
- 9,000 total students
- Wayne Public School District is a consistently top ranked K–12 district located in Northern New Jersey
- 2 High Schools, Grades 9–12, over 3,000 secondary students
 - Wayne Hills High School
 - Wayne Valley High School
- 4 Middle Schools, Grades 6–8
- Thematic curriculum with focus on:
 - U.S. History
 - World History
- ABC-CLIO's Online Databases used:
 - American History
 - World History: The Modern Era
 - World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras
 - World at War: Understanding Conflict and Society
 - Issues: Understanding Controversy and Society
 - Daily Life Through History
 - Pop Culture Universe: Icons, Idols, Ideas

DISTRICT LEADER

Carmine Picardo
Supervisor, Curriculum & Instruction, Social Studies
Wayne Public School District