

Cincinnati Public Schools Makes Clear Impact in Reaching Language Goals with Instructional Software

New program is designed to bridge linguistic differences among district students, parents and staff

English-language learners now comprise more than five percent of Cincinnati's school population—which has grown more than 500 percent in the past five years.

The third largest district in Ohio, Cincinnati Public Schools features a diverse population that includes speakers of 83 different languages. Addressing this specific challenge was part of the district's objective when applying for Ohio's Straight A Fund grant in 2013.

"This grant was flexible and required us to design a program that would be sustainable over five years, result in cost savings and address an essential district need," says Mireika "Marie" Kobayashi, ESL/foreign language manager for CPS.

The proposed program was named Future CLASS (Culturally Linguistically Appropriate Systems of Support) for Diverse Learners. Part of the goal of the program was to help both ELL and native English-speaking students and staff learn an additional language.

A homeschool component was built into the program, providing ELL students and the local community access to resources that help in developing cross-cultural competencies. Additionally, the grant would fund the cost of the translation of large amounts of documents into non-English languages.

"We wanted ELLs to learn English, and also to help English speakers to learn another language in order to break down barriers between families," says Kobayashi.

Rosetta Stone® was selected as the partner to fulfill both of these needs. With Rosetta Stone's *Foundations* program for K-12, beginner and intermediate students can learn social communications in up to 24 languages. Students build their fundamental skills through the program's context-based, immersion methodology. Building upon the *Foundations* program, Rosetta Stone® *Advantage* is available for intermediate to advanced levels in nine languages. The program is rigorous, with an initial placement test and assessments at each level to assess understanding. More than 40 activity types keep students constantly engaged.

"Rosetta Stone *Advantage* teaches academic and vocational



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vocabulary and grammar," says Kobayashi. "There is a module for communicating about healthcare, for example. Students and parents need to know how to talk about such matters to be successful."

CPS was awarded the Straight A Fund grant in December 2013, and Rosetta Stone's programs were implemented at the district's targeted schools in January 2014. Now 33,000 students and their parents and more than 4,200 employees have access to Rosetta Stone's ELL and World Language Learning programs.

So far, 445 ELL parents and 800 CPS employees have used the program. When ELL parents arrive at school now, they are welcomed

and can feel safe communicating in their own language. "It is so powerful to see the smile on a parent's face when a secretary greets them in their native language," says Kobayashi. "Staff are so proud to serve our families this way."

The attendance rate for ELL students has improved since Rosetta Stone was introduced. In the past, parents did not feel empowered enough to do errands alone in the community without pulling their child out of school to serve as an interpreter, says Kobayashi. Now, they can use the skills they have gained through working on Rosetta Stone to communicate in English.

Enthusiasm for the program is growing across the district. "We have more schools that want to have Rosetta Stone sessions schoolwide," says Kobayashi. "We want to make sure they can get the training, attention and support that our in-residence technologists and the Rosetta Stone team provide."

The cost savings with Rosetta Stone have been substantial. "As parents learn English, it reduces the need to continue to translate documents and provide interpretive support," says Kobayashi.



Education

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