

MySci: Changing The Face Of Science Education

Washington University in St. Louis



Educators have long been challenged with providing hands-on and engaging learning experiences in science curriculum with limited materials and equipment, training, and time.



Recognizing these challenges, Victoria May, executive director of the Institute for School Partnership (ISP) at Washington University in St. Louis, helped to launch mySci, a program aimed at enhancing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Initial development of mySci began almost 20 years ago through a collaboration between the

ISP, local educators, and community partners focused on addressing the need for high-quality, engaging science education in elementary and middle schools. The program was designed to improve science literacy, stimulate student interest in STEM fields, and support teachers with effective resources and professional development.

Initial support for mySci was provided with grants from The Monsanto Fund (now Bayer Fund) in 2005 (\$3.7 million) and 2015 (\$1.9 million). The program grew from a pilot phase in several local schools, where the curriculum was tested and feedback gathered from teachers and students, to being the go-to curricular resource for nearly every school district in the St. Louis region, as well as many private and charter schools.

mySci's comprehensive curriculum and hands-on kits for elementary and middle schools are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the Missouri Learning Standards, and Common Core math and literacy standards. Since 2019, mySci units have been awarded four NGSS Design Badges for excellence.

In 2024, with assistance from the Office of Technology Management (OTM), mySci has launched as a Washington University startup company to market the instructional units and kits beyond the St. Louis region to school districts nationwide. The OTM Business Development and Licensing team worked closely with the mySci team to refine the new startup's business plan, parcel various intellectual property assets (including copyright and trademark issues), coordinate with internal University offices to streamline and support the company, and align the licensing strategy with the commercialization goal.

"We are all proud of the mySci team and what we have been able to accomplish in the St. Louis area," says May. "We are looking forward to sharing it more broadly to engage even more young learners with hands-on science. Working with Washington University's OTM team has been instrumental to moving this effort forward. They have been there every step of the way to provide insights and guidance to make this a reality."

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