

Springfield District

Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders in STEM



Dr. Allison Pilley

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Allison Pilley is the curriculum director for Springfield Public Schools, the largest accredited school district in Missouri. **Their mission is to make learning engaging, relevant and personal for all students - every learner, every day.** That is what they keep at the forefront when planning and implementing from their curriculum department.

With over 35 elementary buildings, 10 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 2 alternative centers, updating their curriculum is not an easy task. Yet that is exactly what they have done. As their state changed standards, they worked diligently to overhaul their classes, integrating content areas into single units and writing **project-based learning** units around new standards.

LEGO® Education WeDo 2.0 and LEGO® MINDSTORMS® Education EV3 are helping to fill those curriculum needs, especially in STEM and coding. Developing their units required a layered approach. First, Allison and her team took their standards apart, planned culminating projects and mapped the learning needed to achieve those goals.

STEM is a big focus for Springfield Public School system. "We have used the LEGO® Education WeDo 2.0 robots. We have a class called Bot Builder for incoming 4th and 5th grade students. It is two weeks of their curriculum in a four week class," Allison said as she talked about expanding WeDo 2.0 across their classes.

What excites her most is seeing kids get excited about science

and coding through WeDo 2.0. "What LEGO® has done is created a nice guided practice in the WeDo curriculum that will lead teachers and kids through the program to learn some of those concepts and ask those questions." She continued, "I'm excited it is bringing coding into the classroom."

"What I'm most looking forward to is seeing kids get excited about the scientific concepts that they are exploring through using WeDo 2.0."

In their middle school classrooms, Springfield Public Schools integrates coding using MINDSTORMS for their summer Robot Revolution class. Because of the success of this class, they piloted a spring program with a project-based learning unit for math and science. What they found was the students never knew they could program a robot and that **coding could lead to a career.** They are looking to implement more units like that.

Allison said, "At the middle school and elementary levels we really want to expose our kids to STEM fields. We want them to know what their opportunities are."

She continued, "I think a lot of it is making sure they are exposed to lots of different things so **they can find their passion and find what they really love to learn about.**"

For the Springfield Public Schools, providing playful learning experiences that give a base to **make learning engaging, relevant and personal** is most important to the teachers and staff. "I feel like before they watched a video on an earthquake, but now they're getting to simulate an earthquake. It's just fun. And that's what we're looking for."

