5.1 PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF LAB-AIDS MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE RESOURCES (GRADES 6-8) ADOPTION

A. SUBJECT

This item is included on the agenda so that the Board of Education can give preliminary approval of the new middle school science resources.

B. INFORMATION

The current middle school science resources were purchased in 2007. Since that time, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have been adopted, introducing more rigorous expectations for science instruction and updated instructional practices that reflect the needs of today's world and future workforce.

Since the adoption of the NGSS, middle school science teachers have supplemented the 2007 resources with a variety of instructional materials to support student learning and engagement. These efforts have allowed classrooms to incorporate more hands-on and inquiry-based learning aligned with current standards. Moving forward, the adoption of updated, research-based, and systematically designed resources will ensure greater consistency across classrooms, programming, and provide students and teachers with tools that more fully support the expectations of NGSS and 21st-century science instruction.

Resource Review Process

In the winter of 2023-2024, a Middle School Science Resource Review Committee was formed. The committee included:

- Middle school science teachers
- Building principals
- District administrators

The team established a list of key criteria to guide the review process. These included:

- Alignment with NGSS
- Hands-on, inquiry-based learning
- Instructional coherence and usability
- Accessibility in both English and Spanish

Seven science programs were reviewed in total, including five in-person vendor presentations. These vendors included Twig Science by Imagine Learning, Into Science by HMH, Science Techbook by Discovery Education, OpenSciEd by

Activate Learning, and Lab Aids. After careful consideration and evaluation, the committee unanimously recommended Lab-Aids as the best science resource to meet the needs of our students and educators.

As the committee reviewed multiple science resources, Lab-Aids consistently stood out as a strong match for our district's instructional goals and the needs of our students. One of the most compelling reasons for its selection was its alignment to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)—an area where Lab-Aids earned a top "green" rating from EdReports, an independent curriculum review organization. This rating reflects the program's strength in coherence, usability, and standards alignment.

What made Lab-Aids especially appealing was its commitment to hands-on, issue-based learning. Each unit is designed to help students investigate real-world problems through scientific inquiry, allowing them to think and work like scientists. The content spans across Earth and Space, Physical, and Life Sciences, with engaging units such as *Geological Processes*, *Chemical Reactions*, and *Biomedical Engineering*.

Another key advantage of Lab-Aids is that it provides materials in both English and Spanish, supporting both our monolingual and dual language programs. This dual-language access promotes consistency across classrooms and ensures that all students have equitable access to high-quality science instruction.

Additionally, Lab-Aids is built around the three-dimensional learning model of NGSS, integrating Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas into every unit. This comprehensive approach helps students make deeper connections and develop the critical thinking skills necessary for future success.

Overall, Lab-Aids offers a balanced blend of rigor, accessibility, and student-centered learning—making it the right choice to support our middle school science instruction moving forward.

Implementation Plan

The Lab-Aids science resources are recommended for adoption beginning in the 2025–2026 school year for grades 6–8. The program will follow a discipline-specific model, with each grade level focusing on Earth and Space, Life, or Physical Science. This structure is intentionally designed to avoid redundancy and ensure students experience a well-sequenced, comprehensive science education throughout middle school.

To support a successful rollout, teachers will participate in four professional development sessions over the course of the school year. Each session will be strategically scheduled to align with the instructional timeline, ensuring teachers

are well-prepared and confident in delivering each unit prior to implementation. This ongoing professional learning will provide teachers with the tools, strategies, and support needed to bring the Lab-Aids resources to life in the classroom.

Program Cost:

Lab Aids 6th - 8th Grade Science Resources	
6th Grade, 7th Grade, and 8th Grade Resources (Includes textbooks in English/Spanish, online portal, teacher resources, lab kits for each grade level)	$289,384.81
Professional Development	$ 25,000.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COST	**$314,384.81**

C. RECOMMENDATION

The Superintendent recommends that the Board give preliminary approval of the Lab-Aids Science resources for use in grades 6-8.

D. SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to approve the administration's recommendation for preliminary approval of the adoption of the Lab-Aids Science resources for use in grades 6-8. Final adoption approval will be recommended by the administration at the June 17, 2025 Board of Education meeting.