

# Palisades Park Saves 66% Through Innovative Course Expansion

## The Opportunity: Superintendent Identifies Need for World Language Course Expansion

Palisades Park School District came to the realization that there was a need to increase their world language course offerings.

"About three years ago, a student came to me and said, 'I would like to learn American Sign Language because it will assist me in communicating with my family member who has a disability,'" Superintendent Dr. Cirillo remembers. Excited that a child came to him and wanted help, he was motivated to add ASL courses and began looking into ways that he could make this happen.

Following this conversation, Dr. Cirillo implemented teacher recruitment strategies to attract a certified ASL educator. Due to the teacher shortage in New Jersey, his search for a local ASL teacher proved to be challenging.

On a mission, Dr. Cirillo shared, "I started calling the local junior colleges to figure out who we could partner with. We needed to identify a certified teacher in ASL who was affordable. He quickly realized that unless he made this a full-time position, offered five sections at a high school, and paid upwards of \$80,000 plus benefits, he wasn't going to be able to offer this course.

In January 2022, Dr. Cirillo attended an industry event where he learned that Proximity Learning (PLI) provides live virtual teaching solutions which could enable him to offer this course on a small scale, without the need for it to involve multiple sections.

### About Palisades Park

Palisades Park School District is a small, diverse district located in Bergen County, New Jersey. The district serves about 2,000 students in 3 schools.

"To be able to offer 4 world languages in a school district of our size is unheard of – this really lends itself to the cost-effective solution that Proximity Learning provides."

Dr. Cirillo, Superintendent,  
Palisades Park School District

An affordable solution -  
Palisades Park **saved 66%** by  
using a live virtual teacher.\*

\*Costs may vary.

## The Solution: ASL Live Virtual Teaching Solution Provides Qualified Educator

After discussions with Proximity Learning, Palisades Park realized that they could get creative and combat the teacher shortage by filling the ASL vacancy with a live virtual teacher. In business for over 14 years, Proximity Learning was the perfect fit, as they extended beyond geographic bounds to provide certified teachers that meet state requirements and produce a fully interactive learning environment via livestream. Excited for this innovative approach, Palisades Park decided to expand their world language course offerings by leveraging technology and partnering with Proximity.

As they began the rollout of this course expansion, the district anticipated issues with scheduling, but Proximity Learning adapted to their 180-day A-D rotation. Principal Garcia says, "We shared our school schedule with Proximity Learning, told them when the kids needed to meet, and they took care of the rest. They made it work, which was awesome. I have very limited time and there are always so many things going on, so it was very nice to be able to trust Proximity's team to make it happen."

## The Results: Students Ask to Grow Program During First Year of Implementation

Now part of their regular course offerings, three days a week, the teacher and students meet synchronously over livestream. They have live instruction, ask questions, and complete activities together in real-time. One day per week, the teacher provides assignments and the students have independent study. The work is submitted back to that certified teacher for grading.

After seeing the success of the added courses, Palisades Park School District plans to expand its partnership with Proximity Learning over the next school year to provide ASL 2, so students can continue excelling in the language.

"Proximity Learning has also provided a solution to solve our staffing concern," Dr. Cirillo says. "We are providing a certified teacher and expanding our course offerings."

### A time-saving solution

The Palisades Park live virtual ASL course had the ability to be **implemented in the classroom in just 2 weeks**, 1/3 of the time it takes to recruit, interview, hire, and onboard new faculty.



"The individualized service we've received shows that PLI cares about you as an individual and that is important," he continues. "PLI has exceeded expectations. Clearly, Proximity has gone above and beyond – I do not put my name on something unless I believe in it."

"I like that the online course is very interactive which gives a realistic approach when actually talking with one another. I also love how the materials we learned were things we can use in our everyday lives."

Palisades Park Student

## Live Virtual ASL Teacher

- 🌐 Gives students access to ASL instruction regardless of location
- 🌐 Integrates with school district policies and existing bell schedule
- 🌐 Provides high-quality curriculum
- 🌐 Improves the social and emotional well-being of students



### Take Action, Now!

Follow Us on Social Media

@ProximityLearning

🌐 proxlearn.com

📍 1800 E 4th St, Suite 131  
Austin, TX 78702



### About Proximity Learning

Proximity Learning provides live and highly interactive K-12 virtual teaching services from certified teachers that helps schools easily expand courses or fill hard-to-fill positions, ensuring quality education and academic success for all.