The Purchasing Department of Harford County (MD) Public Schools had an exciting – albeit daunting challenge. The district was building a new school – Patterson Mill Middle/High School – and Jeff LaPorta, Supervisor of Purchasing, and his team were responsible for the purchase of all the new supplies. Materials were not being brought in from other schools.

That extensive supply list included a $50,000 order of science supplies.

Harford County turned to Fisher Science Education – a supplier with the U.S. Communities cooperative purchasing program. Fisher Science Education is a global services company that provides a complete portfolio of laboratory equipment, chemicals, supplies and services.

Fisher Science took a very hands-on approach to helping the school fully equip all of their labs. Going beyond just filling orders, Fisher Science helped Harford County address many of the challenges with equipping a new school.

“A representative of theirs met with me, the school principal and the science content supervisor to determine all of their needs,” explained Jeff. The representative asked many questions and provided knowledgeable recommendations, and the science supervisor was there to provide answers and feedback.

“That saved time, eliminated funneling questions through purchasing, and streamlined communications,” said Jeff.

“We assembled a list of everything we needed by grade and sent it to our Fisher Science representative. He, in turn, created the price list – also by grade – based on Fisher’s pricing with U.S. Communities,” Jeff noted. When the products were ready before the school was completed, Fisher helped by holding the order until the school was ready for delivery.

“The savings we realized through Fisher Science were deep – far more than we could have gotten on our own. When using the cooperative purchasing contracts available through U.S. Communities we reap the benefits in both pricing and staff time.”

Jeff LaPorta

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Fisher Went Above and Beyond

“School openings are usually very hectic! Not only are final details being wrapped up just days before the opening, but all new supplies need to be delivered during this time. During this crunch time, our Fisher representative was a tremendous help. He arranged for the delivery, showed up himself, helped unload the boxes, personally checked everything in, and made sure the equipment was delivered to the proper classrooms. He was there all day!”

The support from the Fisher representative didn’t stop there. He met with the purchasing department to provide an update on the delivery and any missing or broken items, and took care of reordering them. Having Fisher onsite to oversee this order was a big help and time-saver for the Harford County staff.

Not only did Fisher Science help manage a challenging timeline and process, their extensive product offering meant Harford County could get all of their science supplies from one company. “There is nothing you could need in your science room that they don’t have and most items can be delivered the next day at no charge.”

The service approach provided by Fisher Science was so helpful that when Harford County built another new school, they went through the same process and relied on Fisher.

“Using U.S. Communities is a huge time-saver because we don’t have to do the bid. We love the lead agency model since they do the bid for us. The savings we realized through Fisher Science were deep – far more than we could have gotten on our own. When using the cooperative purchasing contracts available through U.S. Communities we reap the benefits in both pricing and staff time,” added Jeff.