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Denver Public Schools  
Denver, CO

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*Lesson Planning and Addressing  
Behavioral Challenges*



**Case Study**

## Denver Public Schools

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#### About Denver

Denver Public Schools is the largest school district in Colorado and is one of the fastest growing districts in the nation with 11,932 employees including 4,329 teachers. With 199 schools, their mission is “to provide all students the opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our diverse society.”

#### Denver Enrollment

Denver Public Schools serves 92,331 students with 0.6% American Indian, 3.2% Asian, 13.4% Black, 55.5% Hispanic, and 23.2% White. 67.3% of students participate in the free/reduced lunch program. 11% of students are in special education in Denver.

## About Implementation

In 2016-2017, Denver Public Schools' fourth year of Rethink Ed implementation, leadership identified the continued need to systematically grow and build internal capacity within center-based programs and district personnel serving students in these areas; particularly students with autism and multi-intensive support needs. Specific goals were focused on four different areas: center-based classrooms, center-based teachers, center-based paraprofessionals, and the district-level special education support team.

Teachers focused their work on developing systems, supports, and structures in their classrooms to foster best practices and student learning. Additionally, they directed efforts to aligning IEP and behavior goals in Rethink Ed for systematic and consistent practices, districtwide. The paraprofessionals in these programs further developed their functional skill sets by completing Rethink Ed's training center modules as part of their year-long onboarding process as center-program staff. Overseeing this work and building internal capacity, is Denver Public Schools' district level coaches, known as Associate Support and Support Partners. This group of high-level and skilled professionals developed personal instructional coaching skills, modeled best practices, assisted in classroom environment set-up, and overall learning of the Rethink Ed program.

## Rethink Ed Helps Teachers Easily Create Effective Lesson Plans For Students

In education, preparing for effective instruction through lesson planning and curriculum organization is pivotal in ensuring student success. There is rarely adequate time in the school day for this necessary prep and teachers often work in the evenings and weekends to engage in this necessary preparation. In special education, where each student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), this preparation may require additional time. Denver Public Schools works closely with Rethink Ed to ease the time and work constraints of lesson planning for special education teachers

Janet Ott, a Support Specialist at the Autism Center at one of the district's high schools, "loves going into the lesson plans" and got very excited when she began digging into this component of Rethink Ed to support classroom educators. When she first started, she "ended

up completing up about 6-7 lesson plans within 1 hour" and she could print them out and immediately apply these instructional supports with her students. She was "very excited." The high school special education teacher that she supports, Ashley Gelb, likes that she and her staff can go into the Resource area of Rethink Ed and "look at exemplar lesson plans" and "adapt them specifically to (their) students."

Amanda Sullivan, a Special Education Technician and Rethink Ed Coach and Trainer, also sees the value in the Rethink Ed lesson plans across the district. "When I'm initially training teachers using the Rethink Ed platform, they really enjoy the learning tab with all the different lessons and lesson plans provided with materials," she explains. She believes that the lesson plans are comprehensive and detailed enough to use every day and likes how "each lesson plan provides goals and objectives" that can be used in IEPs.

One of Denver's special education teachers, Tracy Shellooe, finds Rethink Ed to be valuable in that the wording of the goals and objectives in the platform make it simple for her to transfer goals to IEPs and it "makes it more cohesive when working on goals." Having a comprehensive library of lesson plans with materials readily available saves time and helps streamline educator workflow.

Another aspect of planning is determining what data are to be collected to promote formative and summative assessment of student learning to guide instructional practices. Collecting that data, and putting together progress reports of each child's instructional program is easily accomplished in Rethink Ed. Michelle Sandoval, the Associate Director for Special Education for Denver Public Schools, feels that the data collection and analysis components of Rethink Ed are really important not only for the teachers, but also for parents. The ability to "report how the interventions are going" and to "be able to pull out reports" is extremely useful to keep

parents connected, she explains. Janet Ott likes how she now has the ability to easily "see the data and being able to track it" - this really makes lesson planning simple and efficient. Other paraprofessionals in the district "use Rethink Ed to help teachers monitor progress and collect data", explains Amanda Sullivan. Teachers, like Ashley Gelb, also value the data system in Rethink Ed and use it to capture data "on a daily basis." Being a "really big data nerd," Ashley is impressed with the "data express where (she) can see the charts" that helps guide decisions for behavior management and instruction. The ability to look at data and use it for daily decision making is essential and as stated by Ashley, nobody want to "be taking data just to take data." The data are very helpful for guiding decisions for each child on a daily basis

Tracy Shellooe is particularly impressed with the ABC (Antecedent-Behavior- Consequence) graphs because she thinks they "are so clear when you look at it." Ashley Gelb not only uses the data in her classroom, she also uses it to

guide parents through their child's progress. Every single day, she provides parents with a behavior update via e-mail because unlike other students, her "students aren't capable of going home and having that conversation with their family" and this "has been really beneficial in opening up lines of communication" with families and with her staff. Amanda Sullivan also sees this with other teachers and thinks the straight forward graphs are "a big selling point... to show parents progress or lack of progress." For her, she also values the data system because the digital management of the data in Rethink Ed allows her to have "access at all times" and monitor progress in "one system."

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### **Rethink Ed Provides On-Demand, Efficient, And Effective Training For Staff**

Learning to effectively implement lesson plans requires training. Denver uses the Rethink Ed Training Center to save time and promote paraprofessionals and teachers delivery of

evidencebased instruction. Amanda Sullivan explains that "they enjoy watching the videos" to help them in teaching students and thinks this is a valuable tool to show staff how to implement specific learning strategies. She points out that the ability to learn "step by step" and to "fast forward and rewind" "makes the process a lot easier" for teachers and paraprofessionals to learn the skills to implement the lesson plans and behavior plans. These modules are instrumental in training paraprofessionals across the district. Tracy Shellooe uses the modules and states that "one of her paraprofessionals has used them a lot" and the results have been demonstrated in better instruction. She thinks that the Training Center "definitely helps with showing how to interact with students and how to teach them" and she has used them with substitutes as well as with paraprofessionals.

Ashley Gelb uses the training modules as a foundation for staff development and implements it like a "professional learning community." Staff review the modules together

and discuss different techniques in the video and how they apply to specific students. Some of her staff “took the initiative to complete all of the trainings in Rethink Ed to get the RBT (Registered Behavior Technician) certification.” She feels the training videos give her and her staff a “common language” and that it improves the quality of instruction in her classroom.

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## **Rethink Ed Provides A User-Friendly Tool For Addressing Behavioral Challenges**

Addressing behavioral challenges is necessary to promote a positive learning environment, it’s imperative for teachers to effectively manage behavior problems for the benefit of every child in the class. Designing an effective behavior plan requires a systematic approach. Rethink Ed provides a systematic process to teachers to develop, implement and monitor an effective behavior intervention plan.

The straight forward sequence for creating and implementing a behavior plan is something that has been of real value to Denver. Michelle Sandoval shares that teachers use the process to effectively analyze “root causes regarding behavioral challenges they are facing in the classroom.” She also states that unlike other behavior management software, Rethink Ed helps teachers to “implement some replacement behaviors” for “students who have some significant challenging behaviors.” Replacement behaviors are essential to successfully remediate behavioral issues. As noted by Ashley Gelb, it’s a noticeable change when “reinforcements (of replacement skills) are way up” and problem “behaviors are way down” and you can begin to “close that gap” and “build the relationship that you would like with that student.” Like the rest of the Rethink Ed platform, the behavior plans also make it convenient and user-friendly to monitor the progress of not just the challenging behaviors, but also the replacement skills the student is developing through effective instruction.



## Conclusion

Denver Public Schools have experienced true value in implementing Rethink Ed across their district. The platform saves staff time and improves consistency and “the system is easy to navigate” and “that’s very helpful,” explains Tracy Shellooe. Janet Ott thinks that Rethink Ed is “self-explanatory” and has not had much trouble diving into it and using it as a paraprofessional.

Teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators have seen student success and improved instructional practices through the application of lesson plans, data collection, and behavior management protocols. They value the ability to involve parents by providing graphs and student progress to parents and careproviders on a regular basis. The comprehensive tools and resources in Rethink Ed make it easier on everyone states Amanda Sullivan, and the fact that “Rethink Ed is a one-stop shop” is essential for such a large district.





## Case Study



**RethinkEd**  
Together We Power Potential

Rethink First | 49 W. 27th Street, 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10001

# About Us

Rethink Ed was founded on a simple, yet powerful idea: To re-think education. To make it better and easier. To unburden school districts and empower educators. To improve outcomes and elevate accountability. To promote collaboration and inspire learning. And most importantly, to make a difference in the school day for everyone – administrators, educators, and students.

The Rethink Ed solution is part of Rethink First, a global company that is transforming behavioral healthcare. Similar to Rethink First's other solutions that are innovating and improving outcomes for clinicians and employers globally, Rethink Ed is pioneering EdTech with our relentless pursuit of innovative methods that put evidenced-based, data-informed, digitally delivered instruction and assessments into the hands of educators, clinicians, and parents who share our singularly minded focus: To power the potential of all children and to work together to help them succeed.

## Get in touch

info@rethinked.com  
(877) 988 - 8871  
49 W 27th Street, 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10001



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