



## Overview

When the Colorado legislature passed SB 10-191, the Douglas County School District (DCSD) responded by creating a robust tool to support teacher evaluation, professional development and more. The development of InspirED Innovation began in 2013 at the direction of the DCSD Board of Education and district leadership. At that time, a program that would fully meet the needs of DCSD teachers and staff did not exist. InspirED Innovation was created to support the excellence found only in DCSD.

InspirED Innovation is a custom-built tool that enhances the work of teachers and leaders. The software deepens instructional planning, evaluation, professional development and student learning:

- Learning Outcomes – allows the creation and management of what is identified as student success by educators in unit planning
- Unit Builder – supports teachers in the selection of rigorous skills and assessment to measure student mastery, and authentic activities that connect student learning to life
- Teacher Evaluation – facilitates meaningful dialogue between teachers and leaders with the goal of continuous improvement
- Leader Evaluation – facilitates meaningful dialogue between leaders and district administrators with the goal of continuous improvement
- Teacher and Leader Dashboards – provides a central hub for all InspirED Innovation tools and other district systems
- Professional Development System – allows creation and management of a course catalogue and streamlines the process of course creation, course delivery, accountability and transcriptions
- Assessment Library – allows for the creation and sharing of high-quality assessments, leading to increased student growth and achievement
- Elementary Progress Report (EPR) – provides parents/guardians with information about the progress of their child in reading, writing and math skills, as well as other valued learning outcomes

As of the last project reconciliation in January 2016, the system had an estimated cost of \$5.6 million over the life of the project (3+ years in development and use).

For more information about InspirED Innovation, go to [www.dcsdk12.org/information-technology/inspired](http://www.dcsdk12.org/information-technology/inspired).

To see InspirED Innovation in action, go to [bit.ly/2b69Xe9](http://bit.ly/2b69Xe9).

## What to Know

“Software development is both an art and a science which is constantly evolving. InspirED Innovation was built to meet the requirements of SB 10-191, with the intent of creating the most efficient and low-cost system.

All of the tools used underneath the covers are open source technologies, which means that we don't have to pay a Microsoft or Oracle license fee to develop on their platform. The software was also built in a modular fashion using Agile software development methodology which allows for incrementally building functionality, without having large cycles of rework.

The packaging allows us to deliver new functionality or fix issues as reported by our teachers every two weeks. This is no small feat - but in my professional opinion, done very well by the InspirED software development team.”

- *Gautam Sethi*  
*DCSD Chief Technology Officer*

## The Latest

Over the past year, other school districts have expressed interest in learning more about InspirED Innovation software and how the tools could be used meet the system needs of their districts. A pilot licensing program was undertaken with Mile High Academy to determine if it is a viable endeavor for DCSD to allow other schools/districts to use InspirED Innovation in their own restricted environment to meet their system needs, while generating additional revenue for DCSD.

Any costs associated with training, operating and supporting the system were billed back to the other school as part of their contract to ensure no additional DCSD resources were expended in supporting this pilot.

CASTLE ROCK- In 2013, Douglas County School District self-developed and launched the InspirED Innovation system, a web-based tool to support the District's strategic priorities and to comply with state law, including Senate Bill 10-191. It provides teachers and staff the ability to build units, create learning outcomes, manage assessments and access professional development and evaluation tools all in a single place.

Over the past year, other schools and districts have expressed interest in utilizing a version of DCSD's platform to meet their own needs. A pilot licensing program was undertaken with Mile High Academy (MHA) to determine if it is a viable endeavor for DCSD to allow other schools/districts to use InspirED Innovation in their own restricted environment to meet their system needs.

If the pilot is deemed successful by DCSD Board and leadership, a software licensing program could potentially serve as a new stream of revenue for the district.

This type of revenue generation isn't new. The District has a long standing practice of leasing school facilities (gyms, sports fields, etc.) to other organizations. As you know, schools, like InspirED Innovation, are built and maintained using taxpayer resources, but may be used by other entities. Yearly, facility rentals resulting in the generation of more than 1 million dollars in revenue, which benefits the students of Douglas County.

Below are some details we would like to share with you regarding this pilot program.

**Q: Why did a school district create its own software program?**

A: When the Colorado legislature passed SB 10-191, the Douglas County School District (DCSD) responded by creating a robust tool to support teacher and leader evaluation, professional development and more. The development of InspirED Innovation began in 2013 at the direction of the DCSD Board of Education and district leadership. At that time, a program that would fully meet the needs of DCSD teachers and staff did not exist. Third-party vendors were unable to fulfill DCSD's needs for the program. InspirED Innovation was created to fulfill the vision put forth by district leadership and the DCSD Board of Education.

**Q: So what does InspirED Innovation do for teachers and staff?**

A: InspirED Innovation is a custom-built tool that enhances the work of teachers and leaders. The software deepens instructional planning, licensed evaluation, professional development and student learning.

**Q: Can you give me some examples?**

A: Here is a breakdown of what InspirED Innovation brings to teachers and staff:

- Learning Outcomes – allows the creation and management of what is identified as student success by educators in unit planning
- Unit Builder – supports teachers in the selection of rigorous skills and assessment to measure student mastery, and authentic activities that connect student learning to life
- Teacher Evaluation – facilitates meaningful dialogue between teachers and leaders with the goal of continuous improvement
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- Teacher and Leader Dashboards – provides a central hub for all InspirED Innovation tools and other district systems
- Professional Development System – allows creation and management of a course catalogue and streamlines the process of course creation, course delivery, accountability and transcriptions
- Assessment Library – allows for the creation and sharing of high-quality assessments, leading to increased student growth and achievement

**Q: Besides the benefits tied to students and their achievement mentioned above, what else does InspirED do for students and parents?**

A: InspirED Innovation houses the template creation (by school) view, teacher view, and registrar view for the Elementary Progress Report. Also known as the EPR, this report allows elementary educators to provide parents/guardians with information about the progress of their child in reading, writing and math skills, as well as other valued learning outcomes.

**Q: How much has this cost?**

A: As of the last project reconciliation in January 2016, the system had an estimated cost of \$5.6 million over the life of the project (3+ years in development and use). The figure accounts for shared infrastructure costs for the InspirED tool and its elements (servers, storage, etc.) and the cost to write the software code (consulting fees paid to the Radix team). It does not account for DCSD employee time used in support of this project as we do not account for staff time by projects. It is also important to note that Radix, on occasion, is contracted by DCSD for work separate from the InspirED Innovation project.

**Q: Has any other school or district outside of DCSD used InspirED Innovation?**

A: Over the past year, other school districts have expressed interest in learning more about InspirED Innovation software and how the tools could be used meet the system needs of their districts. A pilot licensing program was undertaken with Mile High Academy (MHA) to determine if it is a viable endeavor for DCSD to allow other schools/districts to use InspirED Innovation in their own restricted environment to meet their system needs, while generating additional revenue for DCSD.

**Q: Is Mile High Academy paying for this?**

A: MHA paid an initial licensing fee which covers hosting, support and training on the software, to ensure DCSD resources were not expended in supporting this pilot.

**Q: Is DCSD paying for the storage and maintenance of MHA's system? Where is the money coming from to fund this?**

A: As per the previous answer DCSD is paying for the storage and operations of MHA's environment from the licensing fee.

**Q: Why did DCSD choose to share InspirED with another school?**

A: The tool was developed to support DCSD students and staff. The goal of the partnership with MHA is to pilot the option of operating the software, understand costs and time, and present information to Board and district leadership to see if it is a viable endeavor for DCSD to generate revenue by allowing other schools/districts to use InspirED for meeting their critical needs.

**Q: So DCSD is actively marketing the tool?**

A: No. This has been organic and demand based - we have had opportunities to talk about the product naturally during educational conferences/events or otherwise with other school districts. If they showed interest in using the software, we pursued the opportunity by presenting them with the costs. What we have been able to validate with the pilot is that we can potentially generate additional revenue to meet district budget needs, if pursued with energy. The future of this endeavor is dependent on the interest or desire of the Board of Education and district leadership to pursue this further. We will, as always, execute to the district's strategic plan.

**Q: Was any teacher, staff, or student data given to Mile High Academy, or used for training purposes?**

A: No. While the platform is being licensed, it is configured to run in a standalone environment. The platform did not include any private information or data from DCSD teacher unit plans, assessments, etc. Furthermore, no evaluation evidence (which may include such things as unit plans, assessments, or other teacher work products) submitted by DCSD teachers was ever made available or licensed as part of the agreement with MHA.

**Q: Does MHA have access to DCSD data? Is MHA's data stored in the same place as DCSD data?**

A: No. MHA's system was built and is stored separately from DCSD's system. MHA's system and data is stored in a cloud-based environment, while DCSD's system and data is stored on a mix of physical and virtualized servers in a DCSD managed environment. The two systems do not intermingle.

**Q: Does the licensing include intellectual property produced by DCSD teachers, such as backwards plans or assessments, that were developed for use in their classes with DCSD students?**

A: No. The intellectual property licensed to MHA includes the software platform only. Do note that MHA has no rights to ownership, only rights to use our software as licensed. Like other schools and districts, has its own educational priorities. Instructional plans and/or assessments developed by DCSD teachers are not being licensed, nor is there any intention for them to be licensed.