

Inspiration
SOFTWARE, INC.

The Leader in
Visual Thinking and Learning™

Denver Public Schools

Denver teachers inspired to use visual learning in all grades, across the curriculum

When teachers from Denver Public Schools put Inspiration® and Kidspiration® on the top of their technology wish list, district administrators discovered that the Inspiration Software® Comprehensive License Program was an easy, cost-effective and legally licensed way to put the visual learning software products at their fingertips. Now with the graphic organizers loaded on all instructional computers, teachers in grades K-12 are using visual learning across the curriculum to help students develop strong thinking and organizational skills and improve their academic performance.

Inspiration and Kidspiration Top Teachers' "Wish" List

More than 250 teachers from Denver Public Schools went to the Colorado Technology in Education Conference looking for new ways to use technology to improve teaching and learning for the city's 73,000 students. In follow-up workshops with many of these teachers, they expressed a strong interest in using Inspiration and Kidspiration in their classrooms and schools.

Educational Technology Specialist Lee Hayward says it is rare to find teachers agreeing on the same new instructional tool, but when his district's teachers talk about using Inspiration and Kidspiration, their enthusiasm is apparent.

"I love Kidspiration for grades K to 5 because it is so incredibly versatile," says Erin Daly, a technology teacher at Schenck Elementary School. "I adapt any curricular lesson to use Kidspiration. Visual organizers are available for math, science, language arts or social studies. It is an essential tool in my tech lab."

Many Denver teachers were already using Inspiration and Kidspiration before the movement for districtwide adoption grew out of the education technology conference. In the past, individual schools bought single copies of Inspiration and Kidspiration for classrooms and computer labs and the district purchased a copy for each elementary school. However, Hayward says, "We really wanted students using the software at all grade levels and across the curriculum."

Offering visual learning software across the district

Denver Public Schools was looking for an easy, cost-effective and legally licensed way to make the visual learning software products available to all teachers and students. When Hayward learned about the Inspiration Software Comprehensive License Program, he decided that it would meet the district's needs, offering an easy way to purchase Inspiration and Kidspiration with the confidence that all copies are properly licensed.

When the Educational Technology Department had a discussion about how to spend some Title IID money, it decided to pursue purchase of the comprehensive license from Inspiration Software. This was an exception for Denver schools, says Hayward. As a district that is managed at the building-level, decisions about purchasing instructional materials are normally made by each school. In fact, Inspiration Software is Denver Public Schools' only comprehensive instructional software license. "This is not normally something we do," he adds.



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Hayward worked with Inspiration Software to come up with a “Good Faith Estimate” of the number of instructional computers in the district—the comprehensive volume licensing program doesn’t require an exact count of computers. He was pleased to learn that the district’s current licenses for Inspiration and Kidspiration were considered when the pricing for the license was determined. Also because the comprehensive licensing program is reviewed and adjusted for new computers just once annually, Hayward only needs to place one order per year with Inspiration Software. He now saves valuable time that in the past might have been spent getting approval for and processing multiple orders throughout the school year. The district will also get special pricing on future upgrades.

“Inspiration Software worked closely with us and so it was easy to offer our teachers and students access to these valuable learning tools,” Hayward says. “We anticipate that it will be easy to manage the licenses.”

Developing customized professional development for Inspiration and Kidspiration

Hayward and his colleagues knew that purchasing the comprehensive license was only the first step in encouraging the use of visual learning throughout the district. The software was installed on computers throughout Denver’s 148 schools over a two-month period. With the software, teachers received a two-page “Quickie” tip sheet to help them quickly learn to use Inspiration and Kidspiration.

Hayward and his team then used Inspiration Software’s professional development scripts to develop in-service training on visual learning teaching strategies. These workshops are being conducted throughout the district as requested by principals and teachers.

“With the ease of managing the Inspiration Software comprehensive license, we were able to put our time and energy into ensuring that our teachers have adequate professional development on using Inspiration and Kidspiration to support instruction,” adds Hayward.

“Great things” to come with Inspiration and Kidspiration

Hayward says that because Inspiration and Kidspiration were number one on the Denver teachers’ wish list, enthusiasm for using the software in the classroom is the highest he has ever seen for a technology learning tool. Teachers in grades K-12 are using the software to support teaching and learning, and visual learning is becoming an important part of the district’s instructional program at all levels. For example, Elma Ruiz, a member of the district’s central literacy team and coordinator of the Reading First grant, says they have added Inspiration and Kidspiration to the district’s list of approved literacy software.

“We have only just begun to see the benefits. We anticipate great things as the school year progresses,” concludes Hayward.



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