



Using a behavior improvement system that includes progress monitoring, a district meets the needs of students in special education

Garland Independent School District

The Challenge

The Garland Independent School District (GISD) is a large, ethnically diverse, urban district in Texas. Approximately 8 percent of the student population is enrolled in special education programs. “A lot of our efforts are focused upon making sure that there is consistency in data collection,” remarked Michele Burford, special education coordinator, as she explained the district’s focus on developing effective interventions to address students’ needs.

To track the behavior of students in special education, teachers kept manual logs, which created the potential for inconsistency and did not provide an effective method for administrators and staff to analyze school and district trends. In order to better meet students’ needs, GISD sought a user-friendly, uniform system to document behavior for progress monitoring and evaluations.



Pearson

A Behavior Improvement Solution

GISD decided to implement Pearson’s Review360®, a behavior improvement system that includes progress monitoring, in grades 1–12. Initially, the district used the system only in its Behavior Adjustment Program, which serves students whose behavior consistently interferes with their educational performance. The goal of the program is to enable students to return to the general classroom. GISD soon expanded its use of the system to its Applied Learning Environment (ALE) classes. These self-contained special education classes focus on the practical application of academic skills and provide individualized learning appropriate to students’ developmental and functional level.

In the 2015–2016 school year, GISD began using Review360 to track the academic progress of all students in special education as well. Teachers can now document how students are progressing in meeting standards-based goals and objectives.

Bentley Parker, special education coordinator, explained that he uses the reports generated by the behavior improvement system to monitor student progress on goals and objectives on a regular basis:

“Every month, I get an automatic report in my inbox. It gives me a quick reference about how my teachers are doing in inputting data on goals and objectives, the count of kids to make sure that it matches my class count, if students are making progress toward the goal or objective that’s being tracked, and how many students are not making progress.” Parker then discusses this information with teachers and principals.

The system “gives you a comprehensive record,” he added, “because you can look at it per grading period, per year, or over multiple years.”

According to Burford, the reports have not only helped facilitate communication between teachers and administrators, but also between teachers and parents, especially about behavior. “Our teachers can communicate with parents by emailing them the reports. And that builds better relationships with parents,” she said.

PROFILE

State

Texas

District Enrollment

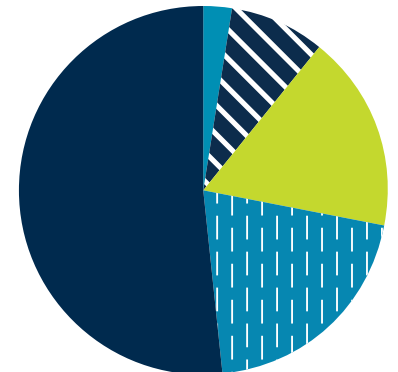
57,436 students

Grades

PreK–12

Ethnicity

- 51.7% Hispanic/Latino
- 20.4% White
- 17.1% Black/African American
- 8.3% Asian
- 2.5% Other



Jennifer Millet, an ALE teacher at Rowlett High School, GISD, and a parent of three children with special needs who attend the school, appreciates the information the behavior improvement system gives parents. “The report cards are basically ‘What grade did students get in English? What grade did they get in math?’ They don’t tell you that much,” she commented. “But when you look at the Review360 data, you can see exactly all of your children’s goals and objectives and how well they are doing on them. And to me, that’s way more important than the grade.”

“To see the data every six weeks and know that the teachers are really working on what you want them to work on is very reassuring,” she added. “It’s good to see when your child is making progress.”

GISD has come to rely on the Review360 data in Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings in which a committee determines the special education supports and services a student should receive. “Teachers need to have good data to take with them to those meetings so that they can really paint a picture for parents of how their child is progressing and also to justify different placements and services,” explained Burford.

The Results

By providing precise progress monitoring data, the behavior improvement system is helping GISD help students. “If there wasn’t a benefit for the kids, then we probably wouldn’t use it,” remarked Parker.

According to Parker, the system provides clear evidence of whether students are progressing in meeting their goals and objectives. “It’s taking all of the data that you’re putting in and making it meaningful and measurable,” he said. Teachers can then act on the data and modify or change their teaching strategies and interventions or any area of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to support students more effectively.

“From a behavioral standpoint,” Burford noted, “Review360 has been very useful for us.” The district moved from self-contained behavior classes to an inclusion model for middle and high school students who have been identified as having an emotional disturbance or autism. “We need to make sure that this program is really working. And it’s been very successful. But we know that by looking at the data.”

“To a parent with a special needs child, the Review360 data is way more important than the report card.”

— Jennifer Millet, ALE Teacher, Rowlett High School, GISD, and Parent of Three Children with Special Needs

“Data for progress monitoring needs to be systematic and legally defensible. We’re confident that Review360 provides us with that.”

— Michele Burford, Special Education Coordinator, GISD

The data has also played a crucial role in GISD's evaluation of students in the Pathfinder Achievement Center, the district's most restrictive setting. "It's extremely important that we're able to look very closely at our students' behaviors," Burford said. "Sometimes the behaviors are so extreme that you don't see the progress. But then, when you take the data and look at it from year to year, you're able to really see the progress that students have made."

Burford explained how she uses the system to help reduce the number of suspensions, citing one high school as an example. "I had all of the Review360 data. We had the list of all of the kids. We had the reasons why they were suspended. Then we were able to really hone in on that margin of kids that needed extra support."

As both a teacher and a parent, Millet has seen firsthand how the behavior improvement system benefits individual learners by providing actionable progress monitoring data.

A few years ago, there was a boy in an ALE class who had always been "super calm," according to Millet. But he began yelling out a lot in his upper high school years.

"His mother had no idea that this was happening in school until we started documenting and reporting it," Millet recounted. "They ended up having to change his medications."

For one of Millet's sons, who does not speak, Review360 helped his teachers and parents assess his ability to use a speech app on his iPad®. One of his goals in school was to become more familiar with the app, and his teacher worked with him on using it to communicate, recording how many times he found the correct button to push.

"The data helped us to look at the app's system and ask, 'What's making it hard for him to navigate through it?' We made it a little more user-friendly for him and made the menus less difficult," Millet said. As a result, she and her husband were able to make it easier for their son to communicate with others.

“Review360 is a dynamic system that all of our kids benefit from because it gives us continuous, ongoing information.”

— Bentley Parker, Special Education Coordinator, GISD

To learn how a behavior improvement system can help you monitor progress, visit pearsonclinical.com/review360

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