

**Overview**

The Jefferson County Public School District manages 154 schools spread across nearly 800 square miles. The district includes heavily developed areas just a couple of miles from downtown Denver, and stretches to remote rural townships in the mountains.

In 2015 Jeffco Public Schools replaced some 15,000 pieces of furniture at sixteen elementary schools across the county. 90% were student desks and chairs; the balance were mostly classroom tables, and there were hundreds of miscellaneous pieces as well. Projects ranged from as few as 160 to as many as 1,600 pieces per school. Replacements were scheduled from late May through mid-August.

The old furniture was nearly 100% in usable condition. Jeffco Public Schools asked IRN's assistance to help find a better option than throwing the old furniture away, with the proviso that the solution must cost no more than landfill disposal.

**Implementation**

On this project, making the right match with the right recipients on a rigid schedule was the most serious challenge.

School furnishings are in high demand among IRN's international charitable partners. But Denver is 1,000 miles from the nearest port, and the cost of overland shipping was prohibitive. As much as possible, the furniture needed to be placed nearby.

IRN tapped regional charter schools as potential recipients. Charter schools are public schools but operate with independent budgets and funding. As such, they search for the least-cost solutions to secure furnishings and other supplies. There was a logical match with the used furnishings coming from Jeffco Public Schools.



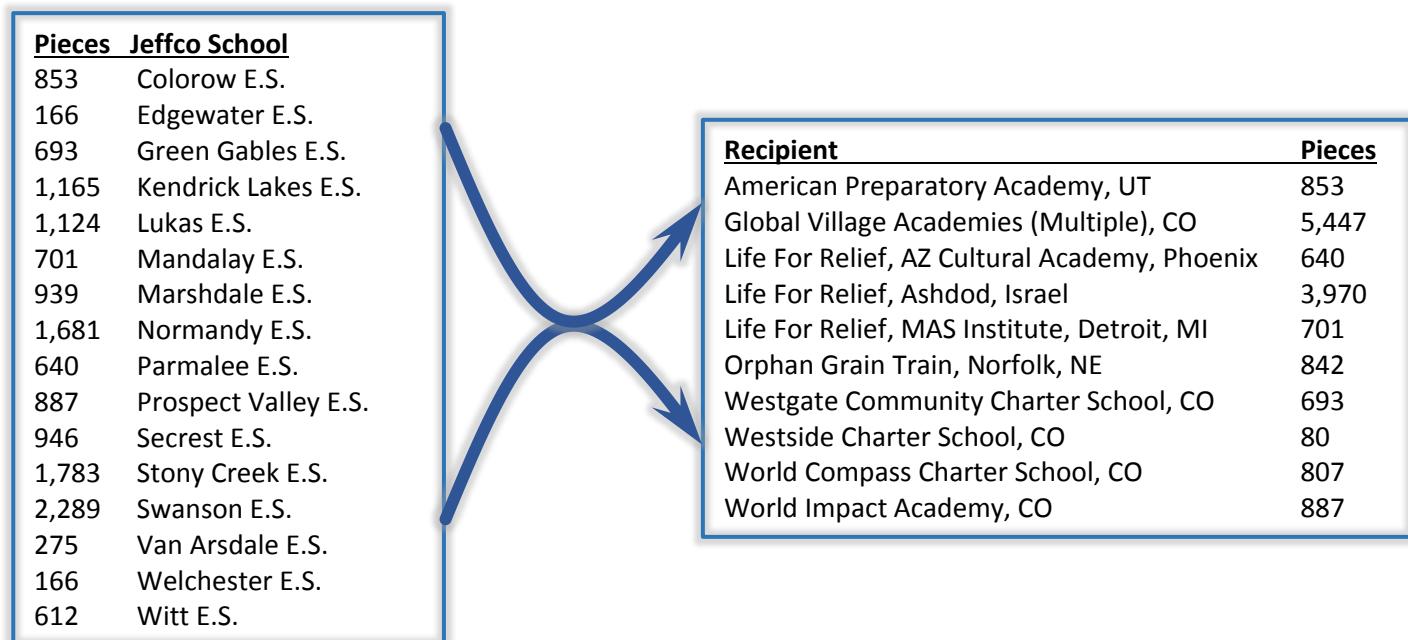
*A truckload of more than 600 student desks and chairs from Witt Elementary School, packed for shipment to the World Compass Charter School*

In fact, Jeffco Public Schools had offered furniture to Colorado charter schools, but with no success. The district did not have the experience or resources to reach out to engage and assist the charters. And the charters did not have the experience or resources to manage the evaluation, selection, scheduling, handling, and transportation of truckloads of furniture. IRN bridged the gap.

IRN assembled a schedule and inventory for each school. We identified a local trucker who could supply trailers and transportation. We prepared an offering package explaining the project in detail, with photographs of the furnishings. We reached out to the Colorado League of Charter Schools, and through them to the charter community. As schools responded, we helped them identify the Jeffco school(s) with the inventory best suited to their needs, then set up a loading and transportation schedule to get the furnishings to them. If a charter could not receive an inventory on the date it became available, we arranged short-term storage. We tracked each trailer of furniture from the time it was loaded to its final destination.

In addition to Colorado charters, we also placed Jeffco furnishings with schools and nonprofits in Arizona, Utah, Nebraska, and Michigan, and with IRN's long-time partner Life for Relief for shipment to Israel.

### **Jefferson County Schools – Where From, Where To**



#### **Impact**

Jefferson County kept more than 250,000 pounds from the landfill, and achieved the District's goal of costing no more than disposal. IRN's best estimate is that reuse saved 8-12% compared to throwing Jeffco's furniture into dumpsters. But most important, more than 5,000 students at public and private schools have been furnished with chairs, desks and other furnishings at practically no cost to their schools, while the schools themselves have conserved resources for other pressing priorities.