CASE STUDY · WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

How One Superintendent Is Making Leadership More Personal

Superintendent Raymond González uses Lebra Lead to improve engagement, strengthen connections, and create a sense of belonging in the Westfield Public Schools

DISTRICT	LOCATION	PRODUCT	PUBLISHED
Westfield Public Schools	Union County, New Jersey	Lebra Lead	May 2026



Westfield Public Schools in Union County, New Jersey serves roughly 6,000 students across a PreK–12 system that includes an early learning center, six elementary schools, two intermediate schools, and one comprehensive high school.

Dr. Raymond González has been the superintendent of Westfield since 2021. He describes the school community as having high expectations for excellence from its schools, but also deeply supportive of its educators.

Prioritizing relationships and culture

González has spent nearly three decades in public education, beginning in 1998 as an elementary bilingual/ESL teacher in an urban district before progressing through roles including supervisor, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in several New Jersey communities. That breadth of experience shaped a leadership style grounded in visibility, relationships, and culture-building.

But even for a relationship-oriented leader, engaging with a large organization can be difficult. Westfield employs more than 800 staff members, making it difficult for González to ensure that all staff feel valued, connected, and seen.

“I would see individual staff members briefly during school visits, but usually in large groups,” he says. “I always aspired to be the type of leader who would send personalized messages to people, wishing them a happy birthday, discussing what’s happening, or sending a brief note of appreciation. But to do that manually would require a lot of time, energy, and resources that I don’t have.”

> *“We’re determined to develop a connected culture and a sense of belonging for all our employees. A tool like Lebra Lead is an important part of those efforts.”*

González started doing research about employee engagement platforms but found most of the technologies on the market were designed for the corporate world. “When I was introduced to Lebra Lead, it checked all the boxes for me. It was an engagement platform designed for K-12, and it met the needs that we had to engage with staff more consistently and personally.”

“The landscape of K-12 education has changed dramatically today. There is an increased level of competition, both for students, but also for teachers,” González says. “There is a shortage of teaching talent available, and so it is imperative that we create a positive work culture in our district, so that we retain our talented teachers. We’re determined to develop a connected culture and a sense of belonging for all our employees. A tool like Lebra Lead is an important part of those efforts.”

Personalized leadership at scale

Lebra Lead helps superintendents and school leaders build stronger relationships with employees by making it easier to lead in authentic, thoughtful, and consistent ways across organizations. The platform helps leaders identify important moments such as birthdays, work anniversaries, and

milestones, while making thoughtful outreach and recognition more manageable across an entire district.


Dr. Raymond González

Superintendents can use Lebra Lead to send personalized messages, recognize employees, schedule follow-ups, and strengthen connections in ways that help staff feel seen, valued, and inspired to grow. For González, the platform created a practical way to scale the type of thoughtful leadership he always believed was important, but difficult to sustain manually across his district.

A phased approach

González says his plan was to start using Lebra Lead himself so he can get to know the platform before encouraging the district's principals to start utilizing it in the next phase. "I wanted to see how it worked before we looked at deploying it more widely," he says. "The simplest way to get started was to send birthday messages."

Lebra helps González stay connected to important moments across the district and prepare thoughtful, personalized outreach in his own voice. González began by using the platform to recognize employee birthdays, reviewing and scheduling individualized emails—complete with his signature—to deploy that morning. "It's typically a simple message that wishes them a happy birthday, and says I appreciate them. That seemingly small gesture has had such an impact," he says. "People reply saying how much they appreciate it, and they'll volunteer information about themselves like what their plans are for the day, their family, or their interests, and I get to know them a little bit. They feel seen and recognized. That's so important."

While the initiative is still in its early stages, González says he has already seen an impact, particularly enhancing his in-person visits. "For example, before I went to surprise our Elementary Teacher of the Year in her classroom, I checked Lebra for background information and saw that her birthday was on Christmas Day," he says. "I made sure to mention that as I presented the award, saying she was a special person. It was a great moment. That ability to make a connection has empowered me to elevate the sense of community in our school system."

Over time, González says he plans to start recognizing work anniversaries in the same way, sending messages of congratulations to anyone celebrating a significant milestone.

The importance of partnership

Besides the features of the platform itself, González emphasizes the value of Lebra's responsiveness as a company. "I was an early adopter of the platform, so I regularly provided feedback and some ideas for features. They were very responsive, and I would soon see the updates I suggested made in the platform."

> ***"There is a big difference between a vendor and a true partner. Lebra definitely stands out as a partner, because they listen to our needs."***

"I have often said that one of the most important things as a district leader is to be able to recognize that there is a big difference between a vendor and a true partner, no matter which technologies you use. Lebra definitely stands out as a partner, because they listen to our needs. That has made all the difference in the world."

González is optimistic about expanding Lebra's use over time, planning to have principals and other leaders use it to improve staff engagement. But he says he is intentionally cautious and moving slowly in that direction. "I want to ensure that I know the best practices, and that the process is consistent and effective. To use this tool effectively, you need to be consistent," he says.

González says the engagement and connection experienced so far has been exactly what he hoped it would be. "Lebra has met or exceeded my expectations so far. There's no way I could do any of this manually. But I know I can do even more with it, so I'm looking forward to seeing how it evolves in the future as I get more familiar with it. I'm excited about it."

To learn more, go to www.lebrahq.com

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