CASE STUDY · GRANDVIEW C-4 SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Sense of Belonging

How a Consolidated School District in Missouri Built a Unified Internal Culture

DISTRICT	LOCATION	PRODUCT	PUBLISHED	UPDATED
Grandview C-4 School District	Grandview, Missouri	Lebra Lead	February 2026	April 2026



Grandview C-4 School District is located in Missouri just outside the urban core of the Kansas City metro area. The consolidated district straddles several municipalities with a range of racial, ethnic, and economic demographics, resulting in diversity among students and families as well as staff. Although the community is united around the district, coordinating engagement activities poses day-to-day challenges for staff when communicating with two police departments, two fire departments, three Chambers of Commerce, and many other organizations and official entities.

Superintendent Dr. Kenny Rodrequez recognized that this rich diversity of people and places across the district had given rise to information silos and subcultures. In 2021, the district embarked on an intentional process to change that. They generated benchmark engagement data and reimagined what could be done to build a sense of belonging.

Rodrequez and his fellow school leaders were determined to establish authentic relationships and ensure every educator and employee felt seen, valued, and inspired to grow so they would want to stay in the district. “Over the course of the last three or four years, we have made a conscious effort to ensure that we are improving recruitment and retention,” he said. “We were willing to go about this a little bit differently by using new tools and leveraging artificial intelligence.”

The Challenge

Lackluster Engagement Among District Employees

“Unity of purpose” means all members of an organization are focused on a common goal. Hoping to achieve this, Grandview added climate and culture as an area of focus under the district’s comprehensive school improvement plan, along with workforce excellence and operational readiness.

However, in 2021, only 56% of staff strongly agreed with the statement, “I would recommend working in the Grandview C-4 School District.” In addition, survey data from staff, students, and families showed a high level of confusion over even simple elements such as Grandview’s brand, colors, and the style of the bulldog on its school logos.

Building principals were willing to be the frontline representatives for district administrators’ initiative to improve employees’ sense of belonging. But they were also under intense time pressure.

Although Rodrequez encouraged a deliberate focus on improvements to climate and culture, he also emphasized to school leaders that celebrating the district’s accomplishments coming out of the pandemic continued to be important for overall morale.

“The first questions I always ask my staff members are, ‘What is going well? What do you love about our school district?’ Because they always smile when they talk about it, and I want them to have that feeling.”

- **Unclear district identity and shared direction**
- **Low staff advocacy and belonging**
- **Limited time for meaningful connection**

The Solution

Changing the Dynamics Through New Processes and Leadership Tools

The Lebra platform was created to strengthen the leader-employee connections that give organizations a competitive advantage. The district integrated Lebra within its existing HRIS system, creating a secure, intuitive communications environment for building genuine relationships. To measure staff engagement, the district incorporated additional tools, including listening tours by administrators and surveys.

As a former teacher and principal, Rodrequez is familiar with the time constraints inherent in balancing classroom responsibilities and overarching organizational goals.

“You don’t have enough time to really build the relationships that you want to create,” he said. “The day-to-day operations can take you out of all of that.”

Lebra helps address this challenge by saving administrators valuable time on administrative tasks and helping them stay on top of potential areas of dissatisfaction that might lead to staff members leaving the district if not resolved.

Administrators can also track a variety of metrics–from big-picture trends to the number of contacts they have had with individual personnel within their organization–and set reminders to follow up on important professional goals or personal milestones.

“I love birthdays, so I use Lebra to send teachers a personalized message,” Rodrequez said. “I make sure that they know it’s not just a bot. And I got a response last week that said, ‘I didn’t have getting an email from the superintendent on my bingo card this year. That is amazing. Thank you.’ They knew that was an intentional interaction. It was not just an automated message.”

Reactions like this reinforce administrators’ commitment to using Lebra on a daily basis.

The Results

Changing the Dynamics Through New Processes and Leadership Tools

By the 2024–2025 school year, the percentage of staff who strongly agreed that they would recommend working in Grandview had risen from 56% to 77%. Staff climate and culture surveys also indicated increases in employees who found their work meaningful, felt recognized, felt informed about what was happening in the district, and had opportunities to receive feedback promoting professional growth from their building leader.

One of the largest gains was among those who strongly agreed with the statement, “My school’s culture fosters a comfortable, supportive work environment,” which jumped from 50% in 2021 to 74% in 2024.

In early 2025, Rodrequez reported to the school board that for three consecutive years, Grandview met or exceeded its overall staff engagement goal of 72%.

The district’s success with current employees has allowed it to focus more energy on onboarding new staff members and first-year teachers. The district instituted quarterly check-ins and end-of-year one-on-one meetings with each employee. School leaders and HR staff use that feedback to improve their processes and identify opportunities to deepen relationships using Lebra in the coming year.

“Lebra has given us a tangible tool to truly focus on climate and culture in a way that we didn’t even know existed prior to this,” Rodrequez said. “It is an integral part of the approach that has helped us meet and exceed our goals.”

STAFF SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

56% → 77%

Staff recommending Grandview rose from 56% → 77%

CULTURE & CLIMATE IMPROVEMENTS

50% → 74%

My school’s culture fosters a supportive environment” rose from 50% → 74%

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