



## About Sharpsville Area School District

Sharpsville Area School District, located in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, provides K-12 public education. Their mission is to deliver comprehensive education that meets academic, social and emotional needs of all students to prepare them for future challenges.

The school district is a one-campus setting with a K-5 Elementary School, a 6-8 Middle School and a 9-12 High School. Current enrollment is just under 1,200 students. Sharpsville Area School District is a central part of the community, offering various resources and community partnership opportunities.



*The last thing anyone wants to do is hurt a child. Ukeru has made me feel more comfortable with what I do because I know that I am safe and the students are safe too. That's what everyone should want for their school.*

### Tim Findley

*Autism Support Teacher  
Sharpsville Area School District*



## Challenges

Prior to Ukeru, Sharpsville Area School District was looking to minimize the use of restraint and reduce staff injuries, in hopes of creating a safer environment for all involved. Ukeru was appealing to them as a partner due to the hands-off approach and additional resources and support provided. They liked the idea of utilizing the blocking techniques to minimize the use of restraint, while still providing staff with a tool to keep themselves safe.

## Working with Ukeru

Sharpshville Area School District began implementing Ukeru in early 2018. To ensure implementation was successful, they had internal champions that modeled proper usage of Ukeru. Pretty quickly, other staff members followed suit and accepted the direction the district was going in. In addition, they gained buy-in from parents through communication and modeling.

“Seeing the growth that happened with our most severe behaviors was proof that Ukeru worked. Once staff realized that students and staff were safer and better off, it stuck”, explained Tim Findley, Autism Support Teacher.



*It makes a big difference when parents see our results. Then, they see it work for them at home too. It makes parents lives easier and students lives better.*

**Tim Findley**

Autism Support Teacher  
Sharpshville Area School District

**100%**

Restraint  
reduction

**90%**

Staff injury  
reduction

**80%**

Challenging  
behavior reduction

## Results

Their results have been incredible. Within their first year of using Ukeru, they only recorded one restraint. Since then, they have been restraint-free the last 5 years and no longer teach a restraint program. Along with that, they saw a drastic decrease in challenging behaviors, largely due to Ukeru strengthening the relationships between staff and students. With eliminating the use of restraint, staff injuries have been reduced by an impressive 90%.

“Staff have said they like the hands-off approach better and feel safer”, Findley proudly shared. Findley also shared that they have received positive feedback from families. The approach not only benefits students while they are in school, but parents have expressed that it has helped them at home as well. Sharpshville Area School District’s success is proof that minimizing, and in their case eliminating, restraint is possible. **“It’s possible and creates a more stable environment for learning”** concluded Findley.