



## About Alexandria Public Schools

Alexandria Public Schools is made up of 9 schools, with grades ranging from preschool to grade 12, serving over 4,000 students. Located in rural Alexandria, MN, their district is committed to providing comprehensive academic programs that foster personal growth in all students.



## Looking For Solutions

Prior to Ukeru, Alexandria Public Schools was looking to improve staff and student safety. They specifically wanted to decrease the number of staff injuries related to restraints and aggressive behavior.

Ukeru was appealing as a partner because of its curriculum being heavy on trauma-informed care and verbal de-escalation. In addition, they were attracted to Ukeru's hands-off approach and the idea of equipping staff with specialized tools to keep both themselves and the students safe.



*This is a tool that is not only beneficial to the students we serve but also the staff. Many staff have commented on feeling safer when dealing with challenging behavior and it shows with the data on injuries and the time it takes to de-escalate our students.*

**Alexis Backhaus**  
Special Education Teacher



# Working with Ukeru

Alexandria Public Schools began utilizing Ukeru in August of 2021. Right away, they were excited to add another tool to their staff's toolbox and have another way to manage challenging behavior and keep everyone safe. In their first year, they started small, training only center-based staff and then expanded Ukeru the following year to include all behavior special education staff at the elementary level. Additionally, in their second year of using Ukeru, they trained all middle and high school staff in the philosophy portion of the training.

Fairly quickly, staff started to see the benefits of Ukeru. Because they now didn't have to fear for their own safety, they were able to be proactive and become behavior detectives. "We started looking more at the 'why' behind the behavior, as well as how we could support the staff and students, while respecting their boundaries and keeping others safe", shared Alexis Backhaus, Ukeru Trainer and Special Education Teacher.



*Staff feel more comfortable working with challenging behaviors because they have a tool to keep them safe. They also have more proactive strategies.*

**Alexis Backhaus**

*Special Education Teacher*

35%

**Restraint  
reduction**



**Positive feedback  
from staff,  
students and  
families**

100%

**Staff injury  
reduction**

## Results

In just two years, they have made great strides in minimizing the use of restraint by 35% and have reduced staff injuries by a remarkable 100%. "Staff injuries are down, as well as the amount of students being suspended or sent home, due to aggressive behavior", Backhaus proudly shared.

Their staff culture has transformed since implementing Ukeru in their district. **"Staff feel more comfortable working with challenging behaviors because they have a tool to keep them safe. They also have more proactive strategies"**, said Backhaus. Additionally, they have received positive feedback from students and their families. "Students are able to identify why we use the pads and families feel like Ukeru is safer than restraints," Backhaus concluded.