



**6,000 + Students**  
Grades ranging from PK-12



**900+ Employees**



**15 Schools**

## About Longview Public Schools

Located in Southwest Washington - about an hour north of Portland, Oregon - Longview Public Schools provides public education to over 6,000 students for grades ranging from PK-12. Longview offers a safe and supportive learning and working environment for students, families, staff members, and their community.



Ukeru has been a tremendous support in our district. We are grateful to have a restraint-free, trauma-informed alternative for responding to students with unsafe behaviors. We feel all schools could benefit from Ukeru!

**Dr. Elizabeth West**  
Executive Director of  
Special Education



## Looking for Solutions

Longview Public Schools reached out to Ukeru in 2019 seeking a trauma-informed approach to support their staff when managing challenging behavior. At the time, they were seeing an increase in physically aggressive behaviors. They were searching for an alternative to restraint and wanted a tool to keep their staff and students safe. Ukeru was appealing to them as a partner due to its trauma-informed approach to managing challenging behavior and focus on being proactive vs. reactive. Additionally, Ukeru's philosophy was in alignment with the district's principles and initiatives.

# Working with Ukeru

Longview Public Schools began working with Ukeru in December of 2019. They began by having three staff members trained as trainers. From there, they systematically implemented Ukeru throughout their district. Longview started small by training their specialized programs first, consisting of about 40-50 staff, where they were seeing the highest volume of aggression. They then expanded the training throughout their district to further support staff who may work with individuals that exhibit challenging behavior. As of August 2024, they have trained upwards of 250 staff members.

To generate buy-in, they communicated with staff about their goal of reducing their number of restraints, without compromising staff safety. They showed staff their restraint data to help them better understand why they were going in this direction and to encourage them to try something new. Additionally, their trainers were instrumental during the rollout offering their own testimonials of the program, providing extra training opportunities for staff, and being available to model correct usage and answer any questions.

To ensure the change would be sustainable, their trainers, who also make up their Behavior Support Team, implemented ongoing coaching sessions throughout the district. In addition, they provided refresher trainings to teams in need.



**Ukeru has been a helpful tool for my classroom because it doesn't diminish student relationships with teachers or other staff members. We have Ukeru pads readily available to use when students have high emotions and/or become unsafe towards themselves or others. This empowers staff to de-escalate students and not let them harm other students or teachers. Ukeru pads are also used before a student can get to a point where they fully need it, 'You seem mad, you want to use the pad?' I can also tell you that we have used Ukeru pads around the whole building. They are often borrowed and used in all areas. This tells me that they are working and are an asset to my school building and classroom. I would recommend that all teachers and districts use Ukeru pads to bring down the percentage of having to go hands-on with students or restrain them.**

***Shelby, Special Education Teacher***

# Results

The overall result has been incredible. Ukeru has made a profound impact on their district. **“We have seen a dramatic reduction in restraint throughout the district. We have seen a reduction in challenging behavior and staff have been empowered to implement effective interventions,”** Dr. Elizabeth West, the Executive Director of Special Education, proudly shared. As of August of 2024, they have reduced their use of restraint by an impressive 75% and seclusion by a groundbreaking 95%. They continue to collect ongoing data and are motivated to decrease their use of restrictive practices even further.

**“We continue to hear positive feedback and comments from staff. A testimony is that staff continue to reach out to want ongoing training and refreshers, as they see the impact. Additionally, our elementary administrators have asked to be trained,”** West revealed.

75%

Restraint  
reduction

95%

Seclusion  
reduction

250+

Staff  
trained



Positive feedback  
from staff

# Next Steps

As far as next steps, Longview Public Schools is determined to become a restraint and seclusion-free district. They also want to continue to provide the best trauma-informed approaches to their students.

To those who think minimizing restrictive practices is unsafe, West would say, “There is a way forward that is humanizing, where staff are provided preventative practices that reduce escalations. We have witnessed dramatic reductions in restraint and also improved behavior where students are being taught through a trauma-informed lens.”



Ukeru has helped our team to confidently respond to emergency calls. We are able to de-escalate our students, while protecting our bodies with the pads. We have had less injuries since we switched to this model. We explain to our students that the pads are simply to keep our bodies safe and will not be used on the student. This type of intervention helps to maintain good relationships with our students, without breaking their trust or further traumatizing them. Since switching to this model, students trust us when we respond to an emergency and de-escalate much faster than in previous years.

*Angy, Special Education Teacher*

