

Using Pulse to elevate staff voice on culture and climate

Satchel Pulse is designed specifically for school districts. Pulse provides school and district leaders with powerful insights regarding the culture and climate of their schools. Real-time feedback is gathered and reported in a user-friendly manner. Pulse solutions and services are designed to give leaders the information, tools, and resources to make meaningful improvements to their culture and climate.

Background

Limestone County School District is a school district in Limestone County, Alabama, with 15 schools serving 8,900 students and 660 staff. The district has been using Pulse for 4 months, since September 2020, and found that Pulse has given their staff a voice and their feedback is utilized to improve the district. We spoke with Superintendent, Dr Randy Shearouse.



Dr Randy Shearouse
Superintendent
Limestone County School District

What was the main challenge that led you to speak to Pulse?

I had just been appointed as a new Superintendent so I really wanted to get the teachers' opinions and understand what they liked and disliked about the district. I wanted to make sure through the Pulse surveys I could see how they felt. The teachers really appreciate having a chance to give feedback.

When looking for providers, what was an important factor for you?

Ease of use is very important. I wanted teachers to be able to use this through multiple devices, no one likes to complete a paper survey. Using technology, Pulse provides easy, quick snapshot surveys.

Why did you choose Pulse?

Pulse is more personalized for us, you have the chance to get the thoughts of the district on either a monthly basis or whenever you want to collect feedback, rather than just that one time survey that you can get. Having multiple surveys throughout the year is more beneficial for us.

“The tool is great for school improvement and building trust.”

From your perspective how are we different from our competitors?

The ease of use with the surveys, the support was really good, you helped us make sure we had all our contacts set up and we were ready to go.

What did you want to achieve using Pulse?

I wanted to make sure that we had an understanding of how the teachers felt about each school. The Pulse surveys are one of the goals for every Principal, this is to make sure they review their results so they can make school-wide improvements. That's our main purpose for using Pulse, we are making sure Principals are paying attention because it is a part of their evaluation.

How was the onboarding process?

Really simple, we just had to make sure we provided email addresses for all the teachers. If we did have any minor difficulties we were able to work that out easily. I heard no concerns from anyone at all. I would like 100% of our teachers to take the surveys, but we have had an uptake so far and this has kept increasing over time. When staff take the surveys and indicate their issues, when we do address these they know that their feedback really does make a difference, that's why I wanted to use Pulse and so far it has been working out great for us. I have found that when staff are concerned with something the participation rates really shot up, they are taking this seriously because they know that someone is looking at the results.

It's great you can see the district as a whole, and then drill down into each individual school to see how they are doing and if they need support you can direct your efforts into that school. Pulse helps simplify leadership decisions because you can really target the areas you need to and not use a shotgun approach where you make changes everywhere.

“Pulse helps simplify leadership decisions.”

What have been your highlights so far with Pulse?

I haven't needed to contact support but I feel like I could at any time. I know I have the support and can set up a zoom conference at any time which I am really appreciative of. Even if I did have a problem tomorrow I can contact you and you will get it fixed straight away.

What results have you seen so far with Pulse?

The participation rates are increasing each month. When I met with Principals for the first evaluation meeting and then the second we looked at several months of the Pulse data to see how the schools were performing. It's important to have that information at my fingertips, it helps start that conversation with the Principal.

With 15 schools, you're not going to know what is going on in each school but now with these survey results, you can easily see how they are and really talk with the Principals about it. We now when our teachers have concerns or when things are going great and when we need to celebrate. The tool is great for school improvement and building trust, the Pulse surveys really do help build that trust and help teachers feel like they can give feedback that will actually be utilized in the district.

Having this feedback is more important than ever. This has been such a tough year with COVID-19, virtual school, teachers being under so much stress. We want to make sure that we can take care of them and understand what they are going through.

Has Pulse helped with your initial goal?

My initial goal was getting feedback, as I am new to the district it is important for me to build trust with the staff and make sure teachers know they can communicate their issues, and to also build trust with all of the Principals too.

Pulse has helped me to do that and as it continues this year we will continue getting useful feedback and building trust between all of the schools and the central office.