

# Fostering a Sense of Belonging and Innovation: Embracing AI in Education to Increase Stakeholder Engagement

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Grandview C-4 School District

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# Grandview C-4 School District

- Serves more than 3800 diverse students across nine schools in Grandview and parts of South Kansas City, Missouri
- More than 90% of our graduates enroll in college or are employed in vocational careers.
- District boundaries encompass the majority of Grandview, Missouri, as well as portions of south Kansas City on the west of the district and Lee's Summit on the east, with a total population of 32,000+.
- GC-4 has an early childhood center (High Grove), four elementary schools (Belvidere, Butcher-Greene, Conn-West, and Meadowmere), one K-8 school (Martin City), one 6-8 grade middle school (Grandview Middle School/GMS), one 9-12 grade high school (Grandview High School/GHS) and the Center for Alternative Instructional Resources (CAIR).

Presently the student demographics are 52% African-American, 20% Caucasian, 20% Hispanic, and 8% Asian, Indian, or other minority backgrounds.

- [www.grandviewc4.net](http://www.grandviewc4.net)



# Vision and Mission

## *Future Strong*

***Vision:*** Preparing all students to be future-ready

***Mission:*** Grandview C-4 is a community preparing students for life after high school with the skills needed to live a life through passion and purpose for the greater good of the communities they impact.



**GRANDVIEW**  
C-4 SCHOOL DISTRICT

### **Our Vision**

Preparing all students to be future-ready.

### **Our Mission**

Grandview C-4 is a community, preparing students for life after high school with the skills needed to live a life through passion and purpose for the greater good of the communities they impact.

### **Collective Commitments**

We Commit to:

- Challenging all learners to think critically and creatively.
- Making learning more engaging, relevant, and meaningful in a technology-rich environment.
- Developing collaborative leadership.
- Promoting continuous improvement through data-driven decision-making.
- Creating an educational environment where there are high expectations for learning and collaboration to develop high-quality skills.
- Providing safe, clean, and healthy environments, with appropriate resources to enrich the learning experience for all.
- Sustaining positive relationships and involvement among students, staff, families, and community members.

**FUTURE STRONG**



GRANDVIEW C-4



# Unity of Purpose

All members of an organization focused on a common goal can be referred to as unity of purpose.

Unity of purpose is instilled through **positive leadership** supported by effective communication and it manifests in **positive accomplishments through coordinated efforts.**



FOCUS AREA:

**WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE**

- ★ Implement a system that recruits quality staff
- ★ Instill a system to retain quality workforce members

FOCUS AREA:

**SUCCESS READY STUDENTS**

- ★ Ensure a guaranteed & viable curriculum
- ★ Ensure high-quality tier I instruction
- ★ Enhance kindergarten readiness throughout the district
- ★ Provide real world learning experiences for all students

VISION  
PREPARING ALL STUDENTS TO BE

# FUTURE READY

FOCUS AREA:

**OPERATIONAL READINESS**

- ★ The district will maintain an operating fund balance of 35%
- ★ Enhance safety, security, & overall functionality of all facilities
- ★ Improve efficiency & safety of school district's transportation services
- ★ Provide nutritious, regulation-compliant meals for all students, promoting health & academic success
- ★ Ensure universal access to technology resources & repair services district-wide

FOCUS AREA:

**CLIMATE & CULTURE**

- ★ Ensure a sense of belonging amongst all stakeholders
- ★ Integrate social & emotional learning (SEL) throughout the Grandview C-4 school district
- ★ Integrate wellness program with quality essentials (financial, physical, social, community & career wellbeing)



**GRANDVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN**  
C-4 SCHOOL DISTRICT



GRANDVIEW C-4



# Grandview C-4 – CSIP Areas of Focus

## ACADEMICS: STUDENT READY SUCCESS

- Literacy & Mathematics Focus
- Social and Emotional Learning

## CLIMATE AND CULTURE: SEEK PURPOSE

- Sense of Belonging (Adults & Students)
- Wellness Programming (Adults & Students)



# Grandview C-4 – Sense of Belonging

## Focus Area: Climate & Culture

**Seek Purpose:** The top priorities in the area of climate and culture are focused on ensuring a sense of belonging for all district and community stakeholders.

**(MSIP 6 Domain: Collaborative Culture and Climate)**

**GOAL CHAMPION:**

Dr. Kenny Rodriquez - Superintendent

Dr. Stephanie Amaya - Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Mrs. Janet Melton - Wellness Coordinator

Mrs. Karla Harris - Mental Health Coordinator

**Goal #1: Ensure a sense of belonging amongst all stakeholders**

**Objective A:** All stakeholder groups in Grandview C-4 will have a perceived sense of belonging and feel they are valued members within the school district community. The District will prioritize creating an environment that fosters intentional connections between internal and external stakeholders, enhancing staff involvement in initiatives and decision-making, and actively engaging parents, guardians, and community members. Strive to improve the sense of belonging for marginalized students and families by addressing potential barriers, formalizing student participation in decision-making, and promoting collaboration among staff, students, parents, and community members for a collective sense of ownership and belonging in the school community.





# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections





# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections



*"Leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge—building genuine connections that inspire trust, collaboration, and shared success."*

— Simon Sinek (inspired)

# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections

- ◆ **What is a sense of belonging?**

*A feeling of being accepted, valued, and included as an important member of a group, community, or environment.*

- ◆ **Key Elements:**

- Feeling welcomed and respected
- Experiencing acceptance and support
- Developing a sense of connection and purpose
- Knowing you matter and belong

- ◆ **Why It Matters:**

- Fosters well-being and confidence
- Encourages engagement and participation
- Builds stronger relationships and inclusive communities





# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections

## How a Sense of Belonging Encourages Engagement

- ◆ **Feeling Connected = Greater Participation**

When people feel they belong, they're more likely to contribute ideas and take part in activities.

- ◆ **Increased Motivation**

A sense of belonging boosts motivation to stay involved, learn, and collaborate with others.

- ◆ **Stronger Commitment**

People who feel valued are more committed to the group's goals and success.

- ◆ **Positive Environment**

Belonging fosters a safe, supportive space where individuals feel comfortable speaking up and sharing perspectives.



# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections

## How a Sense of Belonging Helps Foster Connection in the Workplace

- ◆ **Builds Trust Among Team Members**

When employees feel they belong, they are more likely to trust their colleagues and leaders, creating a strong foundation for meaningful connections.

- ◆ **Encourages Open Communication**

A sense of belonging empowers individuals to express their ideas, concerns, and feedback openly, fostering transparent and honest conversations.

- ◆ **Strengthens Team Collaboration**

Belonging nurtures a spirit of teamwork, where employees feel comfortable working together, sharing responsibilities, and supporting one another toward common goals.

- ◆ **Creates an Inclusive Work Culture**

When everyone feels valued and included, it promotes a culture of mutual respect and acceptance, where connections grow naturally.

- ◆ **Boosts Employee Engagement and Retention**

Employees who feel connected are more engaged in their work and invested in the success of their teams and organization.



# Grandview C-4: Sense of Belonging, Engagement & Connections

## Why Leaders Need to Connect with Employees to Improve Retention

- ◆ **Builds Trust and Loyalty**

When leaders form authentic connections, employees feel valued and trusted—leading to greater loyalty and long-term commitment.

- ◆ **Increases Job Satisfaction**

Strong leader-employee connections foster open communication, making employees feel heard, respected, and satisfied in their roles.

- ◆ **Boosts Engagement and Motivation**

Connected leaders inspire employees to stay engaged, motivated, and invested in both their work and the organization's success.

- ◆ **Reduces Turnover**

Employees who feel connected to their leaders are less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere, improving retention rates.

- ◆ **Creates a Positive Work Culture**

Connection promotes an inclusive and supportive environment, which enhances overall morale and makes employees want to stay.





# Grandview C-4: Avenues for Engaging & Connecting with Stakeholders

## Phase I

### Listening Tours

Leaders engage in open conversations with employees to hear their experiences, concerns, and ideas directly.

- ◆ **Engagement Surveys**

Regular surveys help assess employee engagement levels and identify areas for improvement.

- ◆ **Climate and Culture Surveys**

Gain insights into the overall work environment and organizational culture to ensure alignment with employee needs.

- ◆ **CSIP and SIP Goals**

Align Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals with staff input to foster collaboration and shared vision.

- ◆ **Senior Leadership Feedback Loops**

Establish consistent, two-way communication channels between senior leaders and staff to ensure continuous feedback and responsive action.



# Grandview C-4: Hard Wiring Connections & Measurement

**How do we organize and remember connections and key moments with our employees?**

**How do we measure leadership connections with our workforce?**

**How do we organize our connections so that we can authentically recognize and celebrate our workforce?**

## Lebra Leadership: The only AI-powered leadership platform

**A new way to develop leaders and engage, recognize and retain staff**

Lebra Leadership enables organizational leaders to build and manage genuine relationships with more employees, board members and community members.

[Schedule a Demo](#)



# Grandview C-4: Why Lebra?



## ☀️ Qualities of My Best Boss ☀️

### ● Mentoring

*Guided me with wisdom and shared their experience.*

### ● Investment

*Took time to invest in my growth and success.*

### ● Compassion

*Showed empathy and understanding, especially in tough times.*

### ● Caring (Knowing Me Personally)

*Took genuine interest in who I am beyond the job.*

### ● Follow Through

*Kept promises and followed up on commitments.*



# Grandview C-4: Why Lebra?

## How Do We Manage Our Time to Keep Focus on What's Important?

### The Challenge:

- We often go from *fire to fire*, and things *fall through the cracks*.

### Why Do We Use AI?

- To *save time*.
- But... have we considered using it to *build and strengthen relationships*?

### Leadership with Purpose:

- As leaders, we strive for a high degree of care, while maintaining the values Grandview C-4 School District possesses.



# Grandview C-4: How Lebra Increases Connections

- ◆ **Recognition:** Allows for recognition early, often, and specific.
- ◆ **Ask Great Questions:** Generates positivity.
- ◆ **Develop Outstanding Listening Skills:** Focus can be on being present and authentic.
- ◆ **Be Accessible:** Shows interest in members.
- ◆ **Express Gratitude:** Creates realtime ways to show appreciation.
- ◆ **Interact Through “Rounding” (Walkthroughs):** Focus on being present and visible.
- ◆ **Engage with Intent:** Creates realtime personal and purposeful connections.
- ◆ **Find a Rhythm of Regular Communication:** Allows consistent connections with key constituents.





# Grandview C-4: Avenues for Engaging & Connecting with Stakeholders

## Phase II - Building a system to implement rounding in GVC4

### Continuous Improvement Feedback Loops

Leaders engage in open conversations with employees to hear their experiences, concerns, and ideas directly.

- ◆ **2025-2026 - District Level Leaders Rounding for Impact**
  - Demonstrating intentional and meaningful relationships
  - Demonstrating approachability
  - Demonstrating the willingness to glean feedback in real time
  - Creates real time opportunities to maintain efficient systems
  - Acts as recruitment and retention strategy



# Example: New Teacher and Student Teacher Rounding Questions

## **30 Day Meeting with New Hires & Student Teachers**

Rounding questions:

How do we compare with what we said?

What's working well?

Have there been any individuals who have been helpful to you?

Based on your prior work, what ideas for improvement do you have? (Just because they tell you something doesn't mean you have to do it)

Is there any reason that you feel this is not the right place for you?

## **90 Day Meeting with New Hires and two more questions**

Is there anyone you know at your previous work that might be a good fit here? (This builds the bench, ask if they would help you if needed to reach out)

As your supervisor, how can I be helpful to you? (This is feedback for you)



# Rounding Logistics To Think About

- Start small
- Organize a place (spreadsheet) for responses from stakeholders
- Log personal items for connection in Lebra (real time use of mobile app)
- Use the same questions for qualitative data collection
- Theme responses every week (use AI for help)
  - Who, What When scheduled for data collection and utilization
- Schedule time for senior leadership to go over data and make action plans for improvements
- Schedule time for senior leadership to share with district leadership the themes
- Provide scheduled time for district leaders to process their feedback loops with senior leadership



# Grandview C-4: Lebra in Action



**Lebra**  
Grandview School District

- Today
- Assistant
- Connect
- Recognition
- Organization
- Groups

Search Lebra...

## Welcome back, Kenny!

Wed, Mar 12 < > All People v

You have 2 birthdays on your team today

### NEW EMPLOYEES [MAIL ALL](#)

No new employees today

### WORK ANNIVERSARIES [MAIL ALL](#)

No work anniversaries today

### BIRTHDAYS [EMAIL ALL](#)

**Lane Green** Teacher

**Gabrielle Biondo** Teacher

### FOLLOW UPS [SEE ALL](#)

Make sure to follow up on PD

Overdue - Apr 04

Follow up on progress to baseball/softball field; will it be ready for the season?

Mar 18

Discuss final evaluation cycle for all staff

Apr 01

### IMPORTANT NOTES IN LAST WEEK

No important notes in the last week

### MEETINGS TODAY

MASA Presentation due tomorrow All day

Morning Connections: GAP Mar 12, 8:00 AM - Mar 12, 9:00 AM

Meet with Steph Mar 12, 9:00 AM - Mar 12, 9:30 AM

GKCSAA Meeting Mar 12, 10:00 AM - Mar 12, 12:00 PM

Rotary Mar 12, 12:00 PM - Mar 12, 1:00 PM



# Grandview C-4: What Our Employees Are Saying



Amplify Humanity

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones stacked on top of each other in a circle, symbolizing teamwork and support. The hands are wearing various accessories like bracelets and rings.

“

- “I have never had a superintendent wish me a happy birthday before. I am both impressed and intimidated!”
- “Thank you so much. I appreciate you!”
- “I appreciate you, Dr. Rod. Very thankful for being a part of this team.”
- “Thank you so much. It means a lot when your administration cares about you on a personal level.”
- “Wow. Thanks for the encouragement. Have a good day!”
- “I'm going to be honest, I wasn't expecting an email from you on my birthday, but a sweet, unexpected surprise. I'll take it. Little things like this make a difference.”

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- ◆ Small gestures create meaningful connections
- ◆ Acknowledging employees fosters engagement and loyalty
- ◆ A culture of appreciation strengthens workplace morale





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