



CASE STUDY

Carlton School District

Cultivating Resilience: A Blueprint for District-Wide Mental Wellness Programming

Bridging gaps and nurturing student resilience led to an entire school district making progress on building student resilience and engagement.

Situation

Like many districts post-COVID, Carlton School District was facing multiple and often competing challenges to re-engage struggling students and close the achievement gap. Rooted in the daily realities of an overloaded staff, school leaders set out to find a partner to deliver vital support, while also supporting their educators. At the elementary level, the district identified a need for greater consistency and a well-thought-out process for fostering resiliency and persistence. They sought a common language and curriculum that could be embraced schoolwide while teaching proactive strategies.

In the middle and high schools, the district reflected on feedback from the MN Student Survey and aimed to reach more students with proactive Tier 1 support, a component that had not been established previously. The goal was to enable the Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Advisor to serve more students effectively and ensure that students felt supported by someone at school. Additionally, the district aimed to expose teachers to mental health supports to better support their students.

Partnership

Through Carlton School District's partnership with Minnesota Rural Education Association, they found a vetted and trusted provider of student and educator support in EmpowerU. Carlton School District began its partnership with EmpowerU in 2022 with the primary objective to lay a strong foundation for Tier 1 support. The elementary level was well-prepared, having already allocated specific time and space for Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions. On the other hand, the middle and high schools, in collaboration with EmpowerU, took additional time to carefully refine their approach, with a specific focus on developing Tier 1 as part of their long-term strategy.

Fast forward to the 2023-24 school year, and Tier 1 programming remained unchanged. But the real buzz was around the expansion into Tier 2 support at the middle and high school levels. This strategic move leveraged the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to pinpoint students in need of additional mental health assistance, opening new avenues for reaching those who required it most.

Results & Outcomes

In the 2022-23 school year, the results of the partnership were exceptionally positive for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs.

Tier 1 Support: Elementary, Middle School and High School



100%
of participants found the EmpowerU course helpful



94%
expressed interest in continuing to teach EmpowerU



100%
would recommend EmpowerU to other students and classrooms

Tier 2 Support: Elementary School



94%
of participants found the EmpowerU course helpful



97%
rated the EmpowerU coach as crucial to their success



92%
would recommend EmpowerU to a friend



94%
made goal progress, further underlining the efficacy of the program

"Conversations between my students and I are wonderful, and the students are taking the time to talk about goals with each other. We've had some really interesting discussions that have been generated by EmpowerU. I am loving this."

- HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER -

"I am really happy with the amount of resources. There is a wonderful flow presented that when a topic is really hitting home with students, the class can spend more time on it. I really like the journal option."

- 4-5TH GRADE TEACHER -