

## Spotlight on Success Kelso School District (Washington, USA)

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### Turning Data Into Action for Student and Staff Well-Being

By embedding data into everyday decision-making, Kelso School District is building a more connected and responsive support system for students and staff. Kelso has strengthened their infrastructure for continuous improvement by intentionally using data to identify needs, set goals, and measure progress at both student and staff levels.

Kelso's first step was to implement a district-wide culture and climate survey focused on student belonging. In response to School Board interest and to align with school improvement goals, the district chose the Panorama Student Survey and customized it to include general climate questions and specific items about belonging. This allowed Kelso to:

- Collect building-level data from elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Disaggregate results to surface trends and gaps.
- Involve students directly by having student panels review data and suggest school-based actions.

This data has already led to changes in how time is used in meetings, incorporating intentional time for relationship building and connection, as well as how staff look at attendance data in relation to student sense of belonging. This is helping the district align academic and behavioral interventions with a deeper understanding of student experience.

At the same time, Kelso launched a Panorama staff well-being survey focused on belonging, work climate, and emotional wellness. After a low response rate, the district adjusted its communication strategy and survey delivery, and then saw a big increase in staff participation.



With data in hand, the Kelso Wellness Committee identified one high-leverage area to address at each school site in the short term. Selecting one focus area not only helped with goal setting, but also staff buy-in, especially among wellness champions at each school (who are charged with carrying the work forward). As part of their strategic plan, Kelso is developing resources and leadership structures to support educator well-being, recognizing the connection between adult support and student success.

The district also developed and implemented a new survey process to gather feedback from students and families about the services they are receiving. This includes:

- Modifying intake forms to collect contact information.
- Creating a Google Form to keep it anonymous.
- Three data collection points per year to track progress over time.

This feedback loop allows Kelso to see if supports are working for students and how community partners are performing within the broader mental health system.

The district has now strengthened systems and structures in place to keep this work going: coordinated leadership teams, time for data review, and student involvement in progress monitoring. Kelso's example shows how data, when collected intentionally and reviewed with purpose, can drive real change for student well-being and staff support.

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