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How Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16 has unleashed the power of data to proactively support students

17

school districts receiving highly specialized special ed services

70+

students with diverse abilities and challenges having their needs met

1

user-friendly tool to collect and analyze student data, and make it actionable



Challenge

A structured way to collect student self-assessment data and make it actionable

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16 (CSIU) is a regional education service agency serving five counties in central Pennsylvania. In the state of Pennsylvania, an intermediate unit operates under the Department of Education to cost effectively and efficiently provide specialized services such as special education and technical education to the state's public and non-public schools.

One of 29 intermediate units in the state of Pennsylvania, CSIU operates highly specialized special education classrooms for students from 17 school districts. Serving students from 1st through 12th grade with a range of disabilities, CSIU's curriculum includes providing specialized learning, as well as social and emotional support.

To proactively meet their students' social and emotional needs, CSIU needed to collect self-reported student assessment data. However, they lacked a structured way to do this. Beyond data collection, they also wanted help making the data actionable.



Solution

Customizable data collection, analysis, and suggested interventions help teachers support student needs

Jessica Harry, Special Education and Off-Site Facilities Support Program Supervisor, led the search for a solution to meet CSIU's needs. To evaluate the options, she defined five must-have criteria in a solution.

It had to:

- ✓ **Be safe and secure**
- ✓ **Be available to teachers at any time during the school day**
- ✓ **Be accessible to all students, regardless of ability or disability**
- ✓ **Provide analysis tools to spot trends and patterns**
- ✓ **Make easy for CSIU to make the data actionable**

There were several programs and resources CSIU looked at that could collect the data. Some could check one or two other boxes, too, but only one ticked all five: Securly Rhithm.

In particular, Jessica liked how accessible Rhithm is to all students. "Rhithm is just cool. The colors, the way it's structured, what shows up on the screen. We can use it across our student body and feel confident that the content's meeting their needs. We're not watering it down or going over someone's ability level. It keeps the younger students' attention, but it's also not offensive to the older kids," she shares.

Jessica also loved that Rhithm is so user friendly. She can customize Rhithm settings on her own and "really make the system ours." For example, if she wants to set up Rhithm to flag student responses that indicate self harm, she can specify simpler terms for younger students and more sophisticated ones for older students.

A self-proclaimed "data dork," Jessica says Rhithm also makes it easy to identify trends across their student population, as well as pinpoint individual student needs. She explains, "When we're looking into a behavior or concern, we know we can set up the threshold correctly so the system catches it. Rhithm guides us through that, and it makes us feel more confident."

Perhaps her favorite part of Rhithm, though, is that it doesn't just gather data, it provides guidance for how to use it. "It's really rare in education to find a resource that not only collects your data, but also gives you the scope of options for intervention," she shares. "That's what we were really looking for and what I had struggled with as an administrator. Rhithm provides that."



Outcomes

"We have conversations with students and normalize that it's okay to feel the way they're feeling."

Using Rhithm's simple emoji-based questionnaire, CSIU students now complete a Rhithm check-in every morning as part of their "what I need to win" period, which is a remediation touch base between teachers and students. Teachers also have the authority to do ad hoc Rhithm check-ins if "there's something going on with a group of students during class or if students seem off somehow."

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Teachers are able to easily check student responses to see if there are any flags or concerns. If they find anything, the rule is that they address it before the next class. Jessica explains, "It's been really great for students to have this safe outlet. They're able to report how they're feeling without judgment and without fear. And they know that we're not just gonna have them tell us how they feel; we're going to provide support according to how they feel."

Each week, Jessica also reviews the Rhithm data globally to get insights into what's happening system wide and on an individual student level. For example, Rhithm data once revealed that some high school students were having relationship challenges so CSIU brought the students together to talk about relationships and how to navigate them.

Jessica also uses the data to identify students who are struggling with similar issues so she can deliver Tier 2 interventions in small groups and, in doing so, provide them in an efficient and resourceful way.

By partnering with Securly, CSIU is:

- ✔ **Collecting self-reported student data daily**
- ✔ **Using data to identify trends and patterns**
- ✔ **Providing interventions effectively and efficiently**
- ✔ **Proactively supporting students' social and emotional needs**

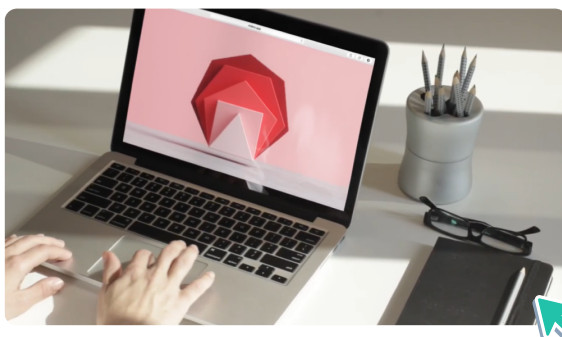
Using Rhithm has also shifted and molded the culture of CSIU's student wellness program. In regularly analyzing student data, CSIU is able to identify and proactively support students' emotional needs before they mushroom into behavioral issues. Students and staff alike are also cultivating greater self-awareness and learning self-acceptance of their whole range of feelings and emotions.

Jessica says, "When students bottle their feelings in, those feelings come out as poor behaviors or negatively impact their academics. The Rhithm check-ins give students an emotional outlet. We follow up with students to normalize that it's okay to feel the way they're feeling. We're able to deal with their feelings rather than the behavioral issues that result when students try to keep them in."



Equitably capture student voice and gain invaluable wellness insights.

By providing a simple and equitable way to capture student voice, Rhithm gives you actionable insight into current safety and wellness concerns at the individual student and schoolwide level, while helping your students develop self-regulation skills and get ready to learn



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