



**EAST AURORA**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

Administrative Center  
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Date: March 16, 2026  
To: Dr. Robert Halverson, Superintendent of Schools  
East Aurora School District 131 Board of Education  
From: Dr. Laura Erlenbaugh, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Differentiation  
Subject: Ukeru Systems

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**Issue:**

The district currently utilizes both Handle With Care Behavior Management System and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) across various grade levels to support staff in managing behavioral escalation. Both programs provide de-escalation strategies and guidance for safely responding to student physical aggression when necessary. While these models continue to meet compliance and safety requirements, they are designed primarily around physical crisis response, including safe physical intervention techniques. The district is not proposing to eliminate these programs. Rather, the recommendation is to add a prevention-focused model for younger learners while maintaining existing crisis response systems for upper-grade levels.

**Justification:**

Ukeru Systems offers a model grounded in trauma-informed practices that prioritizes prevention and is designed to minimize the need for physical contact whenever possible. Implementing Ukeru in Pre-K through elementary settings would provide structured, proactive strategies to support students experiencing dysregulation during their foundational developmental years. The approach emphasizes teaching coping skills, emotional regulation, and social-emotional competencies, with the goal of reducing reliance on physical management interventions while maintaining student and staff safety.

Handle With Care and CPI would remain in place for middle and high school settings, where crisis response systems continue to be appropriate to student developmental levels and behavioral needs. Adding Ukeru strengthens the district's continuum of support rather than replacing existing systems.

**Board Policy and Past Practice:**

East Aurora School District 131 Board of Education (BOE) Policy 7:190 outlines the district's use of physical restraint and behavioral interventions.

**Strategic Plan:**

This proposal supports Strategic Goal #1, Educational Equity: East Aurora School District 131 will meet the diverse needs of all students by ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment.

**Cost:**

The cost to move forward with Ukeru would be \$38,060 and would be grant-funded through IDEA.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the addition of Ukeru, with implementation to begin during Extended School Year 2026.

**Timeline for Decision:**

March 16, 2026

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