

CASE STUDY



MORRIS-UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION

Using **AI-powered roleplays** to train fearless leaders for the hardest conversations

From avoiding difficult talks to practicing them on demand – MUJC prepares administrators to handle high-stakes decisions in hiring, firing, and retention



“Creatium gives leaders a safe place to practice the conversations they’ve never been trained to have.”

–Evan Abramson, Director at MUJC

At a glance

The Morris–Union Jointure Commission (MUJC)—a regional public school collaborative in New Jersey—serves students with some of the most significant cognitive and behavioral needs in the state. In that environment, one wrong hire or one unaddressed toxic employee doesn't just hurt culture; it directly affects vulnerable students and already-stretched staff.

Like most systems in education, MUJC's leaders came up through the classroom with almost no formal preparation for the hardest parts of their jobs: high-stakes human conversations about hiring, firing, and performance. As a result, districts across the state routinely default to “safe” but average candidates, avoid tough evaluations, and watch their best teachers walk out the door.

Evan Abramson, MUJC's Director of Technology and Innovation and a 2025 EdWeek “Leader to Learn From,” has built a career on using technology to make complex human work more humane—from designing a first-of-its-kind esports arena for students with autism to leading AI trainings for dozens of districts. At MUJC, he turned to Creatium's AI-powered roleplay platform to give superintendents, principals, and future leaders a realistic, low-risk way to practice those difficult conversations on demand—long before they sit down with a real person.

Challenge

When Evan Abramson became Director of Technology and Innovation at the Morris–Union Jointure Commission (MUJC), he kept running into the same problem: the people making the most consequential staffing decisions had never really been taught how to talk about them. Most superintendents and principals “don't know how to have difficult conversations,” he explains, yet they're suddenly responsible for hiring, firing, and confronting performance issues.

Across nine regional committees he leads (including tech directors, instructional coaches, network administrators, STEAM leads, and more) and in his statewide leadership trainings, Abramson sees the same pattern: leaders under pressure to make the right people decisions, with no safe, structured way to practice the hardest conversations. Unsurprisingly, fear and discomfort drive avoidance — administrators skip tough observations, delay documentation, or soften critical feedback because they “don't want to deal with it.”

“Mediocre and toxic staff are allowed to stay while high performers leave. Education completely underestimates the damage that does.”

The ripple effects are serious.

Mediocre and toxic staff are allowed to stay while high performers leave; Abramson often cites the Chipotle CEO's estimate that one toxic employee can cost a company a million dollars, arguing that education similarly underestimates the damage.

Hiring practices compound the problem, as districts default to “safe,” predictable candidates and rigid interview scripts instead of real conversations about fit, culture, and values. Traditional PD and in-person roleplays are expensive, hard to sustain, and often led by superintendents who were never trained for these conversations themselves.

In a context where MUJC's work is physically and emotionally demanding, and where student safety and stability depend on having the right people in the right roles, these gaps aren't abstract.

Hiring and keeping strong staff—and addressing poor fits quickly and fairly—are the mission-critical challenges Abramson set out to solve with Creatium.



The Solution

Abramson adopted Creatium's AI roleplay platform to give MUJC leaders a safe, realistic way to rehearse the hardest conversations they face — as often as they need, without scheduling constraints or fear of “messing up.”

Abramson believes any implementation must start this way: “The superintendent has to be completely on board and has to be able to push through this and say, ‘We’re not grading you... however, we need you to be better.’”

And it's working. Recently, Abramson had to let an underperforming employee go. Afterward, his colleagues pulled him aside and said, “Wow, how did you get so good at this?” His answer was simple: he'd practiced the conversation eight times beforehand with an AI roleplay in Creatium.

“...my leadership team asked, ‘How did you get so good at this?’ I told them, ‘I practiced the conversation eight times with an AI roleplay.’”

Creatium is currently working with Abramson to design unique personas and scenarios rooted in MUJC's reality:

- Difficult firing conversations
- Hiring interviews where you're hiring “safe” over potentially amazing candidates
- Addressing performance and conduct that harm students and staff
- Maintaining consistency of message with parents, staff, and new hires



Each leadership team member is assigned specific administrators to mentor, using roleplays as the core practice tool. Even principals with 20 years of experience are asked to run scenarios — because, as Abramson notes, “these conversations are changing, they're difficult,” and tenure in the role doesn't equal preparation.

What's next

Although it's early and formal metrics are still being collected, MUJC is already seeing several qualitative shifts in leadership behavior and culture.

1. Leaders are finally practicing the conversations that matter most

Administrators now rehearse high-stakes hiring, firing, and performance talks with AI before they happen in real life.

2. A shared standard for leadership conversations

Superintendent, central office, and principals are aligning on what “good” looks like and using the same language and expectations.

3. A mindset shift: from filling seats to hiring all-stars

Hiring discussions are moving away from “safe” candidates toward people who will elevate culture and student outcomes.

4. Laying the groundwork for improved retention and reduced turnover

By hiring better fits and addressing poor performance sooner, MUJC is positioning itself to keep strong staff longer.

5. Reframing AI as an enhancer, not a threat

Leaders are experiencing AI as a judgment-free practice partner that builds their skills instead of replacing them

MUJC's work with Creatium is still in its early stages, but the direction is clear: finish building habits with its first cohort of administrators, extend scenarios to teachers and future leaders, and make proven conversations reusable across districts. For Abramson, the goal is simple—superintendents and principals who are truly prepared for the hardest moments of their jobs, and hiring decisions that prioritize fit and student impact over “easy” choices—using AI not to replace human judgment, but to strengthen it. ■



Creatium helps organizations train for the human skills that matter most in the age of AI—skills like leadership, coaching, sales, and teaching that can't be automated. Our platform uses lifelike AI coaches, roleplays, and simulations to replace passive learning with interactive practice, building capability 5–8x faster and boosting learning outcomes by up to 28%.