

## Staff Wellness Best Practices

### Why does Staff Wellness Matter?

Teachers and other school employees are charged with educating and caring for some of our most precious assets – our students. Therefore, it is imperative that school employees are supported in their efforts to stay healthy and active so that they can do their job most effectively.

Wellness opportunities such as health assessments, health education, and physical fitness activities can be provided to school administrators, teachers, and support personnel to improve their health status.

These opportunities encourage staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle and contribute to improved health status, improved morale, and greater personal commitment to the overall coordinated school health program. When school staff are more personally committed to their school health program, they serve as positive role models to their students.

Health promotion activities conducted on-site improve productivity, decrease absenteeism, and reduce health insurance costs. Qualified professionals such as principals, supervisors, health educators, school health nurses, and school personnel/human resources directors provide leadership in this area.

### Evidence to Support Staff Wellness<sup>1 2</sup>

A healthy workplace leads to employees who are more satisfied with their jobs, get better results, and model healthy behaviors.

Healthy school employees are absent fewer days and are more likely to stay in their positions.

Savings, from lower substitute teacher costs and onboarding new teachers, can be reinvested into the school to promote health, well-being, and education.

An evidence-based employee wellness initiative can improve employee health, increase productivity and performance, reduce absences, lower healthcare costs, and benefit students.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Permanente . (2021, July 29). *School employee well-being collaboration guide*. Thriving Schools | A partnership for healthy students, staff & teachers. Retrieved November 2021, from <https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/resources/school-employee-well-being-collaboration-guide/>.

<sup>2</sup> National Association of Chronic Disease Directors . (2018). *Healthy school, healthy staff healthy students*. Retrieved November 2021, from [https://www.chronicdisease.org/resource/resmgr/school\\_health/school\\_employee\\_wellness/nacdd\\_schoolemployeewellness.pdf](https://www.chronicdisease.org/resource/resmgr/school_health/school_employee_wellness/nacdd_schoolemployeewellness.pdf)

## Best Practice Resources

 The apple icon indicates a project has been implemented by identified coordinators. The coordinator's email address is linked in the icon.

Engagement	
<i>Engagement encompasses each staff member and the commitment to engaging each employee in the wellness offerings available at the district and school level. This category offers ways to engage school staff to improve their overall wellness.</i>	
Project	Description
Short-term Challenges	Challenges for staff up to 30 days.
Any Fitness Level Can Participate	Ensuring any fitness level can participate in the event will allow more staff the opportunity to participate. i.e. Partnering with a Yoga Instructor that has extensive training to adjust instruction for all ability level (beginner-experienced).
Offering Choices	Offer an array of choices throughout the year for participation that vary in type, time, date, and location.
Tap into Rivals: Battle of The Bridge	The football rivalry between Loudon High School and Lenoir City High School is the second longest running sports rivalry in the state. Coordinators used the annual game to raise awareness of staff wellness practices.   <i>Kate Galyon, Loudon County Schools</i>
Health, Wellness, Safety, And Family Engagement Seminars	Offering seminar classes for staff to participate in various topic areas.
Change Wording from Exercise or Physical Activity to Movement	By changing language from exercise to movement, promotes a positive association with being physically active.
Partnering with Local Businesses	Build relationships and partner with local businesses to collaborate on projects, provide incentives, increase opportunity for in-kind, sponsorships, etc.
Partnering with Local Gyms, Fitness	Offer classes, obtain discounts, fitness/gym challenges, etc.
Prizes	Coordinators can provide prizes such as water refill stations, a collected pot of money, stipends, percentage off electric bill (sponsored), portable picnic table for outdoor meetings/lunch, Fitbit, donations from local businesses, coolers, or other items to incentivize a healthy lifestyle.
District Pays ½ Gym Membership	Some districts provide ½ price gym membership if employees go twice per week.

	 <i>Coordinators across the state</i>
Adult Field Day	Offer an in-service day centered around movement. A field day type event can be held with various activities to participate in with a designated team.   <i>Misty Bailey, Crockett County Schools</i>

<b>Appreciation</b>	
<i>Appreciation is the act of recognizing and rewarding employees through formal and informal channels. This category includes ideas and projects to acknowledge the hard work of our school staff.</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Tokens of Appreciation	Stress ball, handwritten thank you note, post it notes with an inspirational quote, mini kind bars, water bottles, etc.
Provide Staff Lunch/ Snack	Have a lunch catered for staff. Provide a pop-up popcorn bar with healthy toppings. Partner with the local restaurant/business, PTO, etc. for cost.
Stand Up Desks	Standing desks adjust to rise your computer, allowing you to stand up comfortably while working.
Yard Signs	Coordinators might provide yard signs that read, "A superhero lives here."   <i>Tracy Simmons, Trenton Special Schools</i>

<b>Advertisement</b>	
<i>Advertisement is a way to promote and market your program, project, and event through print and media.</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Healthy School Team Communication	The Healthy School Team leader can send communications about events to their designated school.
Posters	Posters can be placed in the school regarding the 8 components of CSH. i.e., School Health Wall with monthly posters for the respective monthly awareness.
Newsletter	A newsletter can be created to disseminate important information, partnerships, discounts, health related tips, community events, etc. district wide.   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Flyers	Flyers for events, promotion, or partnerships can be placed in teacher/staff mailboxes.

<b>Physical Health</b>	
<i>Physical Health involves pursuing a healthy lifestyle to decrease the risk of disease and maintain physical fitness. This category provides ideas and examples to encourage positive movement for staff.</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Personal Safety	Taught by Local Karate Instructors   <i>Laura Roberts, Clinton City Schools</i>
Walk Across TN	Partnership with UT Extension   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Weight Loss Challenges	Various weight loss challenges can be created to best fit staff needs. i.e., Biggest Loser Challenge  <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Fitness Class	Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, HITT, Goat Yoga   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Teacher Fitness Break Cards	Employees who move together are happier together, so take 5 to stretch and move! To get started, print this <a href="#">document</a> . i.e., Halfway through your next hour-long staff meeting, ask five people to select one card each. Everyone can do an activity together for one minute each.
Nature Walks	Promotion of nature walks in the community, provide opportunities for staff to get out and walk at their school, host sign up times for groups to get together to walk.   <i>Ginger Teague &amp; Jessica Hollingsworth, Decatur County Schools</i>
Gym Memberships	Partnering with local businesses to reduce the cost of gym memberships.
5K Event	Host, plan, and partner with local businesses to hold a 5K event for the community, teachers, and students.   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Fitness in the Park	Weekly multi-day HIIT, Yoga, Zumba offerings   <i>Sudie Cushman, Shelby County Schools</i>
Exercise Room	Build out a room at the school that has fitness equipment. i.e.

	treadmill, stationary bike, weight rack, medicine balls, yoga mats, bands, etc.   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Walking/Biking Challenge	5-7 days for 6 weeks 1 mile, 5-7 days a week walking 3 miles, 5-7 days a week biking   <i>Heather Ledbetter, Maryville City Schools</i>
Marathon in a Month	Mapped out ½ mile in hallways Completed outside   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Staff Breaks	Central Office Staff get 20 minutes at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to walk outside. Not considered lunch time, and allowable for 1-mile daily.   <i>Dawn Callas, Robertson County Schools</i>
"Caught Ya" Picture Board	Nurse catches staff doing healthy things in the building, such as participating in GoNoodle or eating a healthy snack and posts their picture on the board for students to see.   <i>Bethany Allen, Weakley County Schools</i>

<b>Mental Health</b>	
<i>Mental Health for staff in regard to their psychological and emotional wellbeing. This category provides ideas and projects to increase awareness and self-care among all staff.</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Staff Wellness Rooms/Calming Rooms/Zen Dens	<p>Convert the teacher lounge into a calm space for teachers. This room can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Massage Chairs</li> <li>— Adult coloring books</li> <li>— Essential Oils</li> <li>— Healthy Snacks</li> <li>— Resiliency Journals</li> <li>— Mini punching bag</li> <li>— Small water fountain</li> <li>— Dim lighting</li> <li>— Fidgets</li> <li>— Encouraging words/quotes on the wall</li> </ul> <p> <i>Coordinators Across the State</i></p>

Videos Promoting Quick Self Care Activities	Short 2–3-minute videos  <i>Patricia Pace, Morgan County Schools</i>
Random Acts of Kindness Challenge	Provide challenge materials and instructions to promote the random acts of kindness challenge.  <i>Patricia Pace, Morgan County Schools</i>
Counseling Available During the Day for Staff	Offer counseling services available during the day for staff.  <i>Trey Upchurch, Putnam County Schools</i>
Staff Goodie Bag	Assemble a staff goodie bag with various items to promote physical health, mental health, nutrition, or appreciation.
Stress Meter Mood Card	Card gauges stress.  <i>Stephanie Winders, Henry County Schools</i>
Therapy Dogs	 <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Mindfulness Training	Training to increase knowledge on mindfulness practices.
Laughter Yoga	Incorporate laughter yoga into your next staff meeting or allow staff to practice on their own.
Virtual Calming Rooms	Create a website landing page with virtual calming resources. i.e., calming music, guided breathing, stretching videos
Coffee & Conversation Break	Virtual coffee and conversation break for staff to connect and communicate about non-work topics.
Notes of Gratitude	Write a handwritten note with gratitude.

<b>Nutrition</b>	
<i>Nutrition is the process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth for proper nourishment. This category provides ideas and projects to increase knowledge of healthy eating, proper water consumption, and food preparation.</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Water Challenge	Staff can participate in a water drinking challenge.  <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Cooking Workshop	Recipes, Pack Freezer Meals, Meal Prep, etc.  <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>

Food Truck Partnership	Partner with local food trucks to set up for staff during their lunch periods.   <i>Mischelle Black, Newport City Schools</i>
School Garden for Staff	Space for a school garden where staff can plant and pick produce.   <i>Keri Prigmore, Alcoa City Schools</i>
No Junk November	Challenge to eat healthier over the holiday months.   <i>Kim Travis, Dayton City Schools</i>
Lunch and Learn	Provide an array of topics for a lunch and learn opportunity for staff to engage with the 8 components of CSH and provide a healthy lunch option.   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Fruit Infused Water & Healthy Snacks in Teacher Lounge	Provide fruit infused water and various healthy snacks for teachers throughout the day.   <i>Tonya Garner, Coffee County Schools</i>
Newsletter Blurbs with Healthy Meals for Staff	Promote healthy meal options that are healthy and easy to prepare for staff and their families.
Weight Watchers	Participate in a weight watchers challenge to encourage healthy eating.   <i>Lisa Cummings, Pickett County Schools</i>

**ALL (Physical, Mental, & Nutrition)**

*This category includes projects that touch multiple categories in staff wellness and include challenges for staff to participate in.*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
12 Days of Wellness	December wellness challenge with various activities to complete.   <i>Laura Roberts, Clinton City Schools</i>
Wellness Bingo	Bingo card with various activities to complete.   <i>Coordinators Across the State</i>
Theme Boxes	Mental Health, Nutrition, Fitness themed boxes for staff with an array of items.

Mental Health Break	Principal releases front office staff for 30-minute break every day.  <i>Anna Hurt, Anderson County Schools</i>
Lactation Room	Separate room dedicated for mothers needing a private space.
Wellness Cup for Schools	Staff participate in specified wellness activities.  <i>Marcia Wade, Oak Ridge City Schools</i>
School Wide Event for Staff and their Families	A school or district wide wellness event to promote staff wellness, movement, nutrition, and mental health.
CPR/AED Classes	Adult and Child CPR classes to provide lifesaving training that will provide staff with the confidence and skills to act when the moment matters.