# 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.

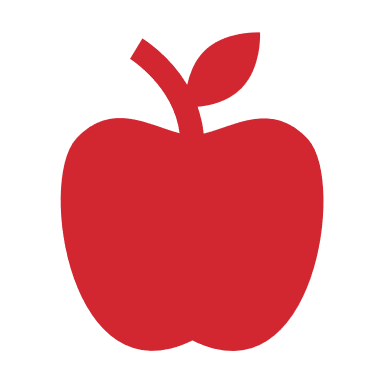
Wellness opportunities such as health assessments, health education, and physical fitness activities can be provided to school administrators, teachers, and support personnel to improve their health status.

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[[1]](#footnote-2) [[2]](#footnote-3)**

**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.

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| **Engagement** | |
| *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.* | |
| **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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:galyonk@loudoncounty.org) *Kate Galyon, Loudon County Schools* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:dgarner@bradfordspecial.com;tsmith@lcdoe.org;elisedriver@dekalbschools.net;Klewis1@vanburenschools.org) *Coordinators across the state* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:misty.bailey@crockettcavs.net) *Misty Bailey, Crockett County Schools* |

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| **Appreciation** | |
| *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.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| 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.”  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:tracy.simmons@trentonssd.org) *Tracy Simmons, Trenton Special Schools* |

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| **Advertisement** | |
| *Advertisement is a way to promote and market your program, project, and event through print and media.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| 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.  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Flyers | [Apple with solid fill](mailto:lhudson@clevelandschools.org;galyonk@loudoncounty.org;cushmanss@scsk12.org;lstanton@mauryk12.org;jennifer.golden@lcss.us;winderss@henryk12.net)Flyers for events, promotion, or partnerships can be placed in teacher/staff mailboxes. |

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| **Physical Health** | |
| *Physical Health involves pursing 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.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| Personal Safety | Taught by Local Karate Instructors  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:robertsl@clintonschools.org)  *Laura Roberts, Clinton City Schools* |
| Walk Across TN | Partnership with UT Extension  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:VALERIE.WALTERS@gcstn.org;mjbarber@roaneschools.com;kmaynard@smithcoedu.net;debbie.howard@fentressboe.com;csmith@lcdoe.org;dawn.skelton@waynetn.net;lstanton@mauryk12.org;mdrewry@carrollschools.com;ginger.teague@decaturschools.org)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Weight Loss Challenges | Various weight loss challenges can be created to best fit staff needs.  i.e., Biggest Loser Challenge  *Coordinators Across the State* [Apple with solid fill](mailto:jennifer.davis@scstn.net;brent.shoemaker@scottcounty.net;kferrell@richardhardy.org;cbrawner@maconcountyschools.org;marcie.kinnard@whitecoschools.net;jgoodmiller@dcstn.org;lbrasfield@k12mcs.net;mlambert@gcboe.us;wardenc@fcsboe.org;dawn.skelton@waynetn.net;spowers@lewisk12.org) |
| Fitness Class | Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, HITT, Goat Yoga  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:elisedriver@dekalbschools.net;pacep@mcsed.net;janie.dalton@hcsk12.com;mischelle.black@newportgrammar.org;eidsons@rcschool.net;amcglamery@jocoed.net;brent.shoemaker@scottcounty.net;jsmith@oc-sd.com)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Teacher Fitness Break Cards | Employees who move together are happier together, so take 5 to stretch and move! To get started, print this [document](mailto:https://static1.squarespace.com/static/589ba1f09de4bb2d44262cc8/t/5db8834efdcb9618d1fb8087/1572373331645/Staff+Fitness+Break+Cards.pdf).  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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:ginger.teague@decaturschools.org;Jessica.hollingsworth@decaturschools.org)  *Ginger Teague & Jessica Hollingsworth, Decatur County Schools* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:SmithK@hcboe.net;wbstooksbury@lenoircityschools.net;galyonk@loudoncounty.org;andrew.martin@gmsdk12.org;kayla.tipton@cmcss.net;jgoodmiller@dcstn.org)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Fitness in the Park | Weekly multi-day HIIT, Yoga, Zumba offerings  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:cushmanss@scsk12.org)  *Sudie Cushman, Shelby County Schools* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:mmccartt@oneidaschools.org;mgallagher@grundyk12.com;kprigmore@alcoaschools.net;coffmana@mcnairy.org;syarbro@tipton-county.com;grayc7@hcsedu.org)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| 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  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:heather.ledbetter@maryville-schools.org)  *Heather Ledbetter, Maryville City Schools* |
| Marathon in a Month | Mapped out ½ mile in hallways  Completed outside  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:hennesseec@rheacounty.org;mpolson@ccschools.k12tn.net;brownk@hcss.org)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:dawn.callas@rcstn.net)  *Dawn Callas, Robertson County Schools* |
| “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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:bethany.allen@wcsk12tn.net)  *Bethany Allen, Weakley County Schools* |

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| **Mental Health** | |
| *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.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| Staff Wellness Rooms/Calming Rooms/Zen Dens | Convert the teacher lounge into a calm space for teachers. This room can include the following:   * Massage Chairs * Adult coloring books * Essential Oils * Healthy Snacks * Resiliency Journals * Mini punching bag * Small water fountain * Dem lighting * Fidgets * Encouraging words/quotes on the wall   [Apple with solid fill](mailto:nortonj@jcschools.org;%20eidsons@rcschool.net;%20shanan.smith@sullivank12.net;wbstooksbury@lenoircityschools.net;galyonk@loudoncounty.org;tara.farley@blountk12.org;shelley.duke@ccstn.org;bonita.nolan@fcstn.net;perrym@alamoschool.org;kmiles@ucboe.net;kristy.barlow@hctnschools.com;aewilson@jmcss.org) *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Videos Promoting Quick Self Care Activities | Short 2–3-minute videos  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:pacep@mcsed.net)  *Patricia Pace, Morgan County Schools* |
| Random Acts of Kindness Challenge | Provide challenge materials and instructions to promote the random acts of kindness challenge.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:pacep@mcsed.net)  *Patricia Pace, Morgan County Schools* |
| Counseling Available During the Day for Staff | Offer counseling services available during the day for staff.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:oupchurch@pcsstn.com)  *Trey Upchurch, Putnam County Schools* |
| 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.  *Stephanie Winders, Henry County Schools* |
| Therapy Dogs | [Apple with solid fill](mailto:winderss@henryk12.net) *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Mindfulness Training | Training to increase knowledge on mindfulness practices. |
| Laughter Yoga | [Apple with solid fill](mailto:douglasm@caywood.org;bethbare@carterk12.net;tracy.simmons@trentonssd.org)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. |

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| **Nutrition** | |
| *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.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| Water Challenge | Staff can participate in a water drinking challenge.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:erika.phillips@hck12.net;%20pacep@mcsed.net:jennings_c@hcde.org;edwardsr@clayedu.com;wardenc@fcsboe.org;shanan.smith@sullivank12.net) *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Cooking Workshop | Recipes, Pack Freezer Meals, Meal Prep, etc.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:csh@wcde.org;wallerk@gcs123.net;traviski@daytoncity.net;mrains@bledsoecountyschools.org;gbolden@bartlettschools.org;heather.griffin@chestercountyschools.org) *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Food Truck Partnership | Partner with local food trucks to set up for staff during their lunch periods.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:mischelle.black@newportgrammar.org)  *Mischelle Black, Newport City Schools* |
| School Garden for Staff | Space for a school garden where staff can plant and pick produce.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:kprigmore@alcoaschools.net)  *Keri Prigmore, Alcoa City Schools* |
| No Junk November | Challenge to eat healthier over the holiday months.  *Kim Travis, Dayton City Schools* [Apple with solid fill](mailto:traviski@daytoncity.net) |
| 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.  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| Fruit Infused Water & Healthy Snacks in Teacher Lounge | [Apple with solid fill](mailto:rgreen@sequatchie.k12.tn.us;Susan.Lavender@mnps.org)Provide fruit infused water and various healthy snacks for teachers throughout the day.  *Tonya Garner, Coffee County Schools* |
| Newsletter Blurbs with Healthy Meals for Staff | [Apple with solid fill](mailto:garnert@k12coffee.net)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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:lisa.cummings@pickettk12.net) *Lisa Cummings, Pickett County Schools* |

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| **ALL (Physical, Mental, & Nutrition)** | |
| *This category includes projects that touch multiple categories in staff wellness and include challenges for staff to participate in.* | |
| **Project** | **Description** |
| 12 Days of Wellness | December wellness challenge with various activities to complete.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:robertsl@clintonschools.org)  *Laura Roberts, Clinton City Schools* |
| Wellness Bingo | Bingo card with various activities to complete.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:robertsl@clintonschools.org;mkwade@ortn.edu;jlofland@athensk8.net;hennesseec@rheacounty.org;kslater@bradleyschools.org;regina.symonette@lssd.org;lbrasfield@k12mcs.net;jennifer.golden@lcss.us;jordan.fondren@hcsvikings.org;jmontgomery@k12k.com)  *Coordinators Across the State* |
| 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.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:ahurt@acs.ac)  *Anna Hurt, Anderson County Schools* |
| Lactation Room | Separate room dedicated for mothers needing a private space. |
| Wellness Cup for Schools | Staff participate in specified wellness activities.  [Apple with solid fill](mailto:marcia.wade@ortn.edu)  *Marcia Wade, Oak Ridge City Schools* |
| 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. |

1. 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/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. 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> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)