

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

School districts across the United States use employee wellness program to increase the health of their staff members; however, many districts face challenges encouraging employees to take advantage of wellness programs. Hanover Research has prepared the following presentation to support districts in:



 ✓ Understanding best practices for offering employee health and wellness programs



 ✓ Reviewing strategies that encourage employees to participate in employer-offered wellness programs



 Examining how leading districts offer and encourage participation in wellness programs



RECOMMENDATIONS



Develop a strategic communication plan to communicate the benefits of participating in wellness programs to teachers and other employees.



Recruit site-based wellness champions to promote wellness programs among their colleagues.



Implement methods for managing data to evaluate wellness programs, including participation, satisfaction, and health outcomes.



KEY FINDING: SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLNESS



Successful employee wellness programs take a holistic approach to create a culture of positive health. Districts can successfully implement a program to support employee wellness through the following six-step process:

- 1. Gain leadership and board support;
- 2. Select a wellness coordinator and team;
- 3. Gather wellness data;
- 4. Put priorities into action;
- 5. Create a supportive and healthy environment; and
- 6. Evaluate and celebrate success.



KEY FINDING: INCREASING WELLNESS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION



Districts can strategically increase employee participation in wellness program by:

- Engaging employees in designing and promoting the wellness program;
- Providing wellness topics and options that appeal to teachers, and align with their motivations;
- Promoting the wellness program to employees, including details on what the program is, how it works, what it offers, how they can use it, and how they can sign up;
- ✓ Offering incentives that encourage participation and rewards for when staff reach wellness goals; and
- Making participation easy, convenient, and fun for teachers.



KEY FINDING: SUCCESS PROFILES



Profiled school districts offer comprehensive employee wellness programs that typically address multiple facets of wellness, such as physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellness. Most profiled districts offer a wide variety of wellness options, such as fitness classes or gym memberships, employee assistance programs (e.g., counseling), wellness campaigns, incentives, and mindfulness resources.

Poudre School District also offers a walk-in clinic free to employees on the district's health insurance. This creates convenience for employees and cost savings for the district and employees.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

BEST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Supporting employee wellness throughout a school district follows a six-step planning, implementation, and evaluation process.¹

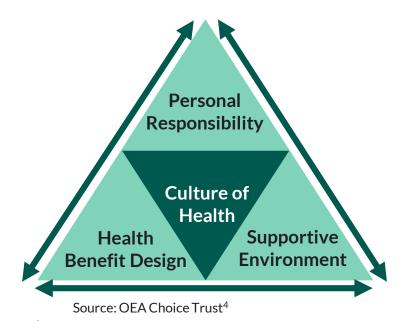




KEY STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Supporting employee wellness strategies involve a holistic approach to create a culture of positive health. This better incorporates wellness programs into an established culture of health.³

The necessary supports to achieve a successful employee wellness program include:



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Building a culture of health throughout the workplace requires districts to implement policies and engage in practices that support positive health changes among employees. This lays a supportive foundation for employees to be successful in health-focused initiatives.⁵



CREATE A DISTRICT CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS WELLNESS

A culture that prioritizes health and wellness among employees ensures that three changes in the culture operate in tandem to support each individual employee: environmental changes, external changes, and internal changes.⁶



ENVIRONMENTAL

The workplace adapts the environment to be conducive to employee health and wellness. This includes effective wellnessrelated communication and ongoing support that positively impacts the space where employees work.⁷



Wellness programs and the work environment incentivize employees to pursue and maintain wellness health-related changes.⁸



INTERNAL

Individuals make appropriate changes to embody health and wellness because the person deems them as important.⁹



SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Strategic approaches to common employee wellness hurdles include:

	INSTEAD TRY:
"Administering health risk assessments only."	Equipping employees with tools and resources to make the right changes with ongoing support and commitment from leadership.
"Paying people to change their habits."	Introducing internal incentives to employees to support their "self-determined health goals."
"Sending people to your health plan's website."	Strategically communicating about wellness program or initiative details, benefits, functions, and opportunities for involvement.
"Introducing short-term campaigns."	Building a culture that encourages health and wellness naturally among employees and measuring success along the way.
"Hiring a vendor to 'fix' unhealthy employees."	Understanding the health interests and needs of employees and supporting them with internally established wellness committees.

Source: Harvard Business Review¹⁰



STRATEGIES TO INCREASE TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Districts can use the following strategies to encourage teachers to participate in employee health and wellness programs:

Engage employees in designing and promoting the wellness program



Provide wellness topics that interest teachers



Communicate and promote the wellness program to employees Offer incentives to encourage participation

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Make participation easy for teachers



ENGAGE EMPLOYEES IN DESIGNING AND PROMOTING THE WELLNESS PROGRAM



Involving teachers in the process of designing and promoting the wellness initiative helps to increase buy-in and increased participation for the program.¹

Employees can engage in the development and promotion of the wellness initiative by:²

- Planning the initiative or monthly campaigns,
- Completing surveys,
- Providing feedback on the initiative,
- Participating in the initiative, and
- Serving as wellness champions.

Wellness champions are employees who help to promote wellness and build buy-in for the program among their peers. Wellness champions can:

- Educate others about the importance of wellness,
- Promote activities and offerings,
- Assist with organizing activities and events,
- Maintain program visibility and generate enthusiasm,
- Provide feedback on the needs and interests of their peers, and
- Share ideas and insights on areas for improvement.



PROVIDE WELLNESS TOPICS THAT INTEREST TEACHERS



Districts can increase participation in wellness initiatives by offering wellness options that appeal to and excite teachers, are relevant to teachers' fitness levels and needs, and align with their motivations.⁴



Districts can use surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather data on the types of programs that interest teachers, as well as what resources employees already have access to.⁵

Topics to ask about include:⁶

- Level of interest in various wellness topics;
- Knowledge and health behaviors (e.g., current exercise habits) related to wellness topics;
- Preferred times, locations, and formats (e.g., live class, team activity, individual challenge, etc.) for programs;
- Motivators and barriers (e.g., time and scheduling, physical limitations, affordability) for participating; and
- Preferred rewards/incentives.

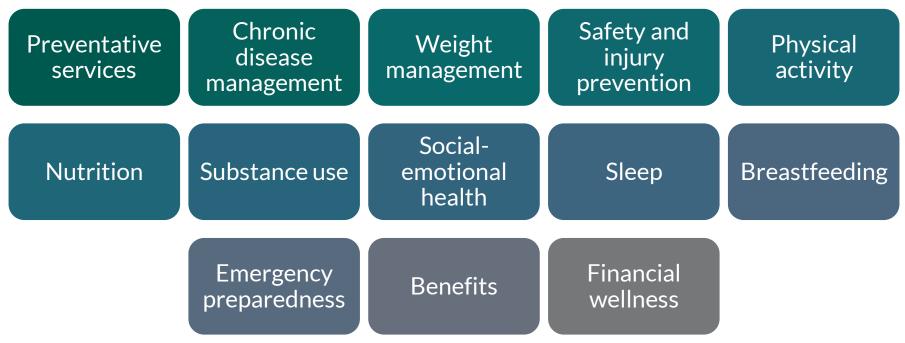
Source: CIGNA



SAMPLE WELLNESS TOPICS



When determining what types of health and wellness services and programming to offer and what might appeal most to staff, districts can consider the following sample wellness topics:



Source: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors⁷



COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE THE WELLNESS PROGRAM TO EMPLOYEES

Communicating the wellness program to employees is critical to increasing participation.⁸

Specifically, teachers should understand:⁹

- > What the program is,
- ➢ How it works,
- What it offers,
- How they can use it, and
- How they can sign up.

In addition to initial communications, districts should engage employees in ongoing communication about the wellness program to keep them updated and motivate their continued involvement.¹⁰

Effective communications that encourage employees to sign up:

Offer to help solve a problem (e.g., improving health, losing weight)

Offer something of value (e.g., incentives, better quality of life)

Include a call to action and make it easy to participate (e.g., "Sign up here," "Join now")

Source: WellSteps¹¹



CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Districts should include the following in wellness communications :

Source: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors¹²

PROMOTE WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES

- What programs, campaigns, classes, or benefits are available, and what policy, practice, or infrastructure changes are taking place.
- Who should participate.
- Why the issue or topic should matter to employees and the benefits of participating.
- How to get involved (e.g., time, location, simple signup instructions).

SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT IMPROVING WELLNESS

- Why the topic is important and what employees can gain by taking action.
- What steps employees can take to act on the information (e.g., if sharing information about heart health, provide specific actions that employees can take to improve their heart health).
- References or links to highquality, evidence-based sources to provide credibility.

BUILD AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEE WELLNESS INITIATIVE

- Information that educates staff about the purpose and scope of the initiative.
- Highlights and successes, including employee testimonials or evaluation results that demonstrate the benefits of participating in the initiative.
- Quotes from district or school leaders to help elevate the profile of the initiative.



OFFER INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION



Districts can increase engagement in wellness programs by offering incentives for participation and for reaching reach new wellness goals.¹³ Across industries, offering positive incentives is a common method for increasing participation.¹⁴

To encourage long-term participation, districts should consider a variety of incentives (both financial and not) and choose incentives to offer based on what motivates teachers to participate.¹⁵ "To be successful, the incentive must target the primary behaviors that influence wellness."¹⁶ Districts should monitor the incentive program and adjust incentives as necessary and when participation begins to decline.¹⁷

- Discounts or gift cards
- Improved benefits
- Cash

Sample incentives:18

- Novelty items (e.g., free fitness products)
- Gym membership

- "Casual Fridays"
- Social events



MAKE PARTICIPATION EASY FOR TEACHERS



Districts can also encourage teacher participation by making the program easy, convenient, and fun for teachers. Such strategies include:

Provide time for participating health and wellness activities Hold activities during times and at locations that teachers can easily attend Provide wellness opportunities that do not require teachers' personal time

Bring wellness activities to teachers (e.g., a half hour of yoga onsite once per week) Offer fun health and wellness opportunities, such as cooking classes or local team sports

Source: Multiple¹⁹



ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Districts can use the following additional strategies to help increase participation in employee wellness programs:



Recognize success

Provide recognition for staff that participate in the program or reach their goals (e.g., Bulletin board displays, certificates of completion, or newsletter blurbs) to encourage others to participate and sustain participation.²⁰



Show leadership support and lead by example

Encourage district and school leaders to participate and model wellness program participation.²¹



Offer wearable fitness trackers

Wearable trackers can make tracking activity easier for employees by automatically syncing fitness data and can create excitement for the program.²²



Encourage competition

Examples include walking/step challenges, competitions between teams or department, and community-wide challenges.²³

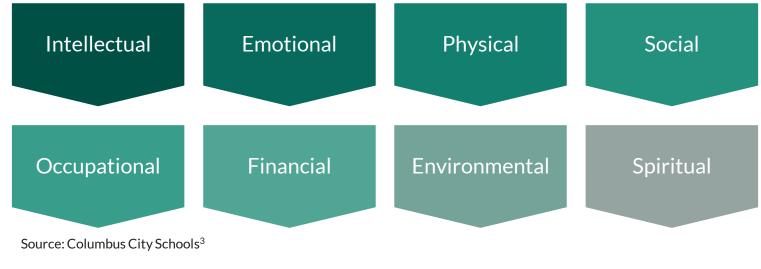


SUCCESS PROFILES

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS (OH)

Columbus City Schools (CCS) developed their wellness program, "<u>Heathy</u> <u>Bodies, Active Minds</u>," in 2005 "to support the District mission of improving student success by creating and fostering a culture of wellness that results in healthy behaviors among students, staff, and the CCS community."¹ The CCS Staff Wellness Initiative strives to reduce health care costs, attract and retain employees, reduce absenteeism, improve school climate, and support employee health.²

The CCS Staff Wellness Initiative aligns with Eight Dimensions of Wellness:



COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS (OH)

Program Features

"Healthy Minds, Active Body" offers:

- Programming including onsite biometric screenings, fitness classes, and Urban Zen integrative therapy;
- Staff wellness newsletter four times per schoolyear;
- Wellness benefits from UnitedHealthcare;
- An employee assistance program;
- Monthly wellness campaigns;
- > A district employee wellness portal; and
- > Perks such as fitness discounts, Weightwatcher's in the workplace, and recipes.

Source: Columbus City Schools⁴

Recognition

CCS's wellness program received the Healthy Worksite Gold Level Award from the Healthy Business Council of Ohio in 2019 and 2018.

Source: Columbus City Schools 5

Evaluation

CCS evaluates their wellness program by collecting participation, demographic, and satisfaction data through a online wellness portal and satisfaction surveys. The district also collects data on employee health through claims and benefits usage data from providers, which they use to develop programming and increase participation.

Source: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors⁶



MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT (WI)

Madison Metropolitan School District (MMUSD) offers a comprehensive <u>employee wellness program</u>.

Vision Statement: All employees are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and balanced

Mission Statement:

Providing education, support, and resources to assist employees on their journey to create a work-life balance and improve quality of life

Source: Madison Metropolitan School District⁷

MMUSD's Wellness Program features are listed on the next page.



MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT (WI)

Wellness Newsletter	MMSD supports staff wellness by distributing a monthly electronic newsletter to employees that provides information of wellness programming, offers resources and support, and spotlights positive wellness initiatives.	Insurance Incentives	Staff can access wellness incentives through their insurer
Wellness Campaign	The Site-Based Wellness Liaisons and Employee Wellness Committee establish wellness campaigns throughout the year, such as mindfulness, physical activity, and sleep challenges	Community Supported Agriculture	MMSD offers CSA partnerships to bring fresh, healthy produce into schools for employees
Mindfulness	MMSD offers mindfulness professional development, training, presentations, and resources to all staff through a partnership with UW Health Mindfulness Program	Employee Assistance Program	24-hour counseling help line
District Wellness Committee	"The committee guides the development and implementation of various wellness programming including monthly employee wellness newsletters, district-wide wellness challenges, annual Wellness Fair, and continuous support to the Site-Based Wellness Liaisons."	Site Based Wellness Liaisons	"A Site-Based Wellness Liaison is an active member of a school or building community that is committed to creating healthier environments for staff and students."



BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MD)

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) offers a <u>staff wellness program</u> to "create a healthy climate for our employees."⁹

The district's staff wellness program offers numerous programs and services that address the following aspects of wellness:¹⁰



BCPS offers free wellness coaching and health assessments, and provides staff access to an internal staff wellness website with additional resources and programming.¹¹ Additionally, the district wellness staff serve the following functions:

- Collaborate with others to cultivate a healthy, safe, and supportive environment
- Assist individuals and sites in meeting their diverse wellness needs
- Assist in the implementation of federal, state, and local health-related guidelines, objectives, and regulations



POUDRE SCHOOL DISTRICT (CO)

Poudre School District's (PSD) <u>employee wellness program</u> supports employee's physical and emotional well-being and healthy work/life balance.¹³ The district coordinates with the University of Colorado and a local health provider to support employee wellness.¹⁴

The district offers the following health and wellness services for staff:

Biometric screenings	Educational wellness classes	Cooking classes	Free fitness classes	Free open gym hours
Flu shots	Interactive employee wellness portal	Free walk-in health clinic	District wide wellness challenges	Online health assessment
Mindfulness classes	Health and Wellness e- learning series	Professional fitness assessments	Employee Assistance Program	PSD corporate discount rates at local fitness centers

Source: Poudre School District¹⁵

In 2019, PSD received the Governor's Award for Worksite Wellness and was recognized as a Health Links Certified Healthy Business Leader.¹⁶



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCES ON EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPATION

Resource	Organization	Overview	QR Code
<u>"Healthy School,</u> <u>Healthy Staff, Healthy</u> <u>Students: A Guide to</u> <u>Improving School</u> <u>Employee Wellness"</u>	National Association of Chronic Disease Directors	Offers appendices with actionable resources for developing a school employee wellness program, increasing participation, and evaluating the program.	
<u>"Blueprint for School Employee Wellness"</u>	OEA Choice Trust	Discusses steps for developing an effective employee wellness program.	
<u>"Engaging Employees</u> in Their Health and <u>Wellness"</u>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Offers strategies for increasing employee engagement in wellness programs	
<u>"How to Maximize</u> <u>Employee Wellness</u> <u>Participation"</u>	WellSteps	Infographic on increasing employee engagement in wellness programs	



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Thank you.

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