

# Supporting Organizational Wellness in Schools

Resources for School Staff & Communities



## Facts & Data

A [2022 NEA \(National Education Association\) survey](#) showed fifty-nine percent of teachers experienced burnout, compared to 48% of other working adults, and 90% of members say feeling burned out is a serious problem.

In the same [NEA survey](#), when asked about addressing burnout, a top surveyed item reported from education staff was providing additional mental health support for students (94% support).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reported](#) that the number of educators working in public education fell from 10.6 million to 10 million—a loss of 600,000 teachers—in the period between 2020 and 2022.

School staff stress and burnout affects not only the adult professionals but also the students with whom these professionals interact. For example, teacher burnout is predictive of student academic outcomes, including being correlated with lower levels of student effective learning and lower motivation ([Zhang & Sapp, 2008](#)).

Teacher burnout appears to affect the stress levels of the students they teach; a recent study found that teacher burnout level explained more than half of the variability in students' levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) when evaluated in the morning (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016).

Reducing school staff workload consistently has a positive impact on student performance. ([Churches, 2020](#))

## Take Action- Individuals Can Support and Prioritize Their Wellness By:

- Incorporating rest practices into daily life.  
Ask yourself: When was the last time you let yourself rest? How can you make, prioritize and advocate for this human necessity?
- Listen to your body. Your body is always communicating to you.  
Ask yourself: How is it communicating recently? What do you really need? How will you honor that need?
- Give yourself space. Prioritize being honest with your limits, setting boundaries and fostering a life balance that aligns with your wellness needs.  
Ask yourself: How do you make space for yourself including your needs, feelings and hopes?
- Some quick wins include shutting off the computer as you end your workday, making intentional time to spend with those you love most, and laying down for physical rest. Even if you do not nap or fall asleep data shows immense positives even from 15-20 minutes of laying down or mindfulness practices that allow your body to recharge.

# Conversation Starters and What Leaders Can Do to Support Staff Well-being:

- Asking staff how school practices and policies could be improved to reduce their stress.
- Asking what makes you proud about your work and what is one thing that might support your work?
- Building opportunities to practice mindfulness skills into existing routines.
- Talking to school staff about how to access mental health supports.
- Engaging with the community and with parent-teacher organizations to decide on ways groups can work together to support teachers and school staff.
- Educate staff and provide resources and regular opportunities for staff to address potential issues around burnout and secondary traumatic stress.
- Encourage and develop formal strategies for peer support and mentorship.
- Create a culture that fosters staff resilience that includes fair leave policies, a physically safe and secure working environment, sufficient supervision, professional development opportunities, and processes for shared decision making.
- Be mindful and intentional on staff workload. Reducing workload consistently has a positive impact on student performance.

Learn more about a [Tiered approach](#) to staff well-being and how to grow [fully inclusive wellness in the workplace](#).

## Additional Resources: School Communities Can Support Staff Well-being by:

- [Building a School Wellness Committee](#) - The Alliance for Healthier Generation School Wellness Committee Toolkit was created as a resource for school wellness committees to convene, plan and implement their action plans.
- [Learn implementation tips](#) – The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) action guide describes six in-school strategies that are proven to promote and support mental health and well-being.
- [Invest in and build a framework of support](#) - Child Trends has developed a comprehensive approach that centers employee voice and leverages school systems' role in setting and enforcing policies and distributing resources. This has a greater potential to achieve systemwide reductions in job stressors and increases in access to wellness resources for all employees.
- [Learn more](#) - Check out the OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) Gate Equity Webinar on Organizational Wellness for Equity, along with a variety of resources, articles, videos, toolkits and more.

