

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS



Employee Wellness is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model. Fostering employees' physical and mental health protects school staff, and therefore, helps to support students' health and academic success. Healthy school employees serve as powerful role models for students. Research overwhelmingly shows employee wellness programs and healthy work environments can 1) decrease employee absenteeism and the cost of substitutes, 2) reduce employee turnover, 3) lower health care and insurance premiums, 4) improve employee morale, and 5) increase productivity. Students, in turn, have positive role models, learn better and are healthier.



Schools are not only places of learning, but they are also worksites.

Schools can create work environments that support healthy eating, adopt active lifestyles, be tobacco free, manage stress, and avoid injury and exposure to hazards (e.g., mold, asbestos). A comprehensive school employee wellness approach is a coordinated set of programs, policies, benefits, and environmental supports designed to address multiple risk factors (e.g., lack of physical activity, tobacco use) and health conditions (e.g., diabetes, depression) to meet the health and safety needs of all employees. Partnerships between school districts and their health insurance providers can help offer resources, including personalized health assessments and flu vaccinations.

~ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Provide educational opportunities for staff on healthy eating, physical activity, injury prevention, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Provide linkages to established employee assistance programs.

Encourage staff to keep medical appointments and participate in health screenings.

Allow time for staff to participate in health-promoting activities.

Adapted from the Education Development Center and the National Association of State Boards of Education.

A whole child approach, which ensures each student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, sets the standard for comprehensive, sustainable school improvement and provides for long-term student success.

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Ways the **WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD** components can support employee wellness in your school

1

HEALTH EDUCATION

- Share information with staff about the link between learning and health
- Present “lunch and learn” sessions on wellness topics
- Offer health education and health-promoting activities tailored to needs and interests of staff

2

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Provide ideas for being physically active throughout the school day
- Schedule physical activity breaks during staff meetings
- Encourage use of non-motorized transportation to and from school

3

NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

- Offer healthy food and beverage choices at staff meetings and in vending machines
- Conduct taste tests, nutrition presentations, cooking demonstrations, and classes

4

HEALTH SERVICES

- Conduct free or low-cost on-site health risk assessments and health screenings (e.g., BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol) for staff
- Coordinate First Aid/CPR/AED training, annual flu shots, and/or tobacco cessation efforts
- Offer asthma management programs that are accessible and free or low-cost

5

COUNSELING, PSYCHOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Offer accessible and free or low-cost stress management programs
- Offer programs or services to help staff balance work and family life
- Provide opportunities for mental health support of employees, and crisis intervention for personal difficulties

6

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

- Educate staff about modeling healthy social and emotional behaviors
- Offer conflict resolution trainings

7

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Create and promote a healthy classroom environment by advocating for healthy snacks, physical activity breaks, and health education
- Implement policies that support healthy eating and active living
- Develop a map with safe indoor and outdoor walking routes for staff and students

8

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- Offer programs on physical activity, healthy eating and/or weight management
- Model healthy eating and active living behaviors

9

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Assist with employee health and wellness events at schools
- Invite school staff to PTA/PTO meetings to share information about employee wellness programs and encourage parents to model healthy behaviors at home

10

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Partner with school staff to host fitness-related community events
- Provide community resources to schools to support employee health and wellness



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Maintaining Administrator Support for Employee Wellness in the School



Promote staff member participation in wellness programs by implementing a communication plan (e.g., announce in staff newsletters and post flyers in staff lounges and mailboxes)

Allow time for participation in health-promoting activities (e.g., schedule time during the day for staff to participate in an on-site health risk assessment and health screenings)



Support programs, practices, and policies to enhance staff health (e.g., provide an employee assistance program)

Ways to Engage Students

- Create physical activity and nutrition challenges with dual participation of staff and students (e.g., plan a walking challenge between classrooms)
- Ask students to brainstorm ideas for, and lead, active brain boosts



- ✓ Don't try to take on everything at once!
- ✓ The focus of the School Health Improvement Plan should be on the health needs/highest priorities identified through the assessment (School Health Index or Smart Source).
- ✓ Get input from other individuals in your school on how to best address your school's health needs (e.g., an employee wellness interest survey).

- ✓ Meet regularly with your school health team and monitor School Health Improvement Plan implementation progress.
- ✓ A final consideration: If you shared the School Health Improvement Plan with someone unfamiliar with it, would they understand the purpose, SMART objective, and action steps necessary to achieve the objective? Would they understand what the school health team is trying to accomplish? If not, add more details!



SMARTness

To ensure your SHIP is SMART, be sure it includes:

- A SMART objective based on the priority identified from a school health assessment tool
- Action steps that are clear, complete, and in chronological order
- Action steps on data collection, team and grant responsibilities, and sustainability efforts
- A realistic budget aligned with the SMART objective
- Shared responsibility among all team members

Writing a SMART School Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

Sample SMART Objective

By May 15, 20XX, at least 75% of school staff will participate in a six-month walking challenge to increase physical activity and movement.

By May 15, 20XX, Healthy High School will implement a policy for healthy food choices as a standard at staff meetings and other staff-related events where food is available.

For more information on School Health Improvement Plans, refer to the Destination <http://tinyurl.com/orq4pyu>

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Physical Activity: Provide programs for staff members to increase physical activity

Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Encourage all staff to complete an employee wellness interest survey (consider Survey Monkey or a paper questionnaire)
- Include questions to get input on different types of physical activity/fitness programs and classes (e.g., yoga, strength training, Zumba, Pilates, or walking club) for staff to do individually or in groups
- Discuss survey results at a School Health Team meeting
- Kick off the employee wellness program by offering the physical activity option with the most interest
- Coordinate logistics for the physical activity option
- Consider instructor qualifications, location, cost, and liability

- Announce the physical activity selection to all staff (e.g., staff meetings, post fliers and distribute in mailboxes)
- Ask all School Health Team members to encourage staff participation
- Track appropriate program data (e.g., # of participants that completed program, # of participants that dropped out of program, frequency and # of total minutes of activity)
- Get feedback from participants on program (e.g., what they liked, challenges)
- Discuss feedback at a School Health Team meeting and identify next steps
- Share successes, progress, and outcomes of program (e.g., newsletter, success stories, video)



Nutrition: Ensure all foods and beverages served and sold to staff meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards

Suggested action steps for your School Health Improvement Plan:

- Complete a baseline assessment of current practices and policies
- Review Local School Wellness Policy and/or other policies that may address the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards for staff
- Consider adding language that address these nutrition standards for staff when updating the Local School Wellness Policy and/or other related policies
- Communicate updated policy changes to all staff and advocate for policy implementation
- Compile lists of foods and beverages served and sold to staff that do and do not meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Develop the best approach to ensure all foods and beverages served and sold to staff meet the nutrition standards. Start small and pick one or two areas to

initially improve on before trying to meet the standards in areas all at once

- Market healthy and nutritious foods to staff using different communication methods
- Work with administration, Food Services Department, and vendors on purchasing healthy options that meet and exceed the nutrition standards while discontinuing purchasing the foods and beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards
- Provide guidelines on healthy celebrations and other work-related events that support the nutrition standards
- Assess policy implementation and discuss successes and challenges for this objective at a School Health Team meeting(s)
- Fully implement and ensure all foods and beverages served and sold to staff meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards

Resources



- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Employee Wellness](http://www.tinyurl.com/n9s5mjv)
- [ASCD Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Approach](http://tinyurl.com/pz32vfj)
- [Colorado Education Initiative:](http://tinyurl.com/p799ebu)
- [Directors of Health Promotion and Education, School Employee Wellness Guide](http://www.tinyurl.com/juheenw)
- [Kaiser Permanente](http://tinyurl.com/qbh9ccz)