



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MINI-GRANT

*A synopsis of all schools
receiving the mini-grant
in 2022-2023*



*Prepared by Metro RESA
Wraparound & Whole Child Division*

THE ATLANTA METRO MHAT MINI-GRANT RECIPIENTS

The recipients of the Metro RESA MHAT Mini-Grant spanned across 4 counties and in a total of 7 schools. Each school took on the task of increasing the Mental Wellness of the faculty and staff through services, resources and trainings.

03**CLAYTON COUNTY**

- Forest Park Middle

10**DEKALB COUNTY**

- Cedar Grove Middle
- Kelley Lake Elementary
- Peachcrest Elementary

06**COBB COUNTY**

- HAVEN Academy

18**FULTON COUNTY**

- North Springs HS
- Tri-Cities HS

OBJECTIVES AND PLANS

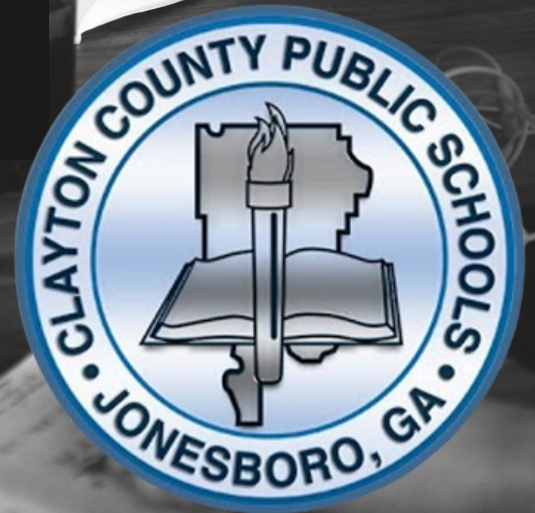
Metro RESA is committed to supporting mental health awareness training for school staff and announced the mini-grant opportunity for the 22/23 school year. We invited applications from schools in Metro RESA's service delivery region seeking to enhance staff awareness and their understanding of mental health and behavioral health needs in order to more effectively address those needs and improve educational outcomes.



CLAYTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mission

to empower scholars to achieve academic, professional, and personal goals by providing equitable access and experiences that build skills in literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.



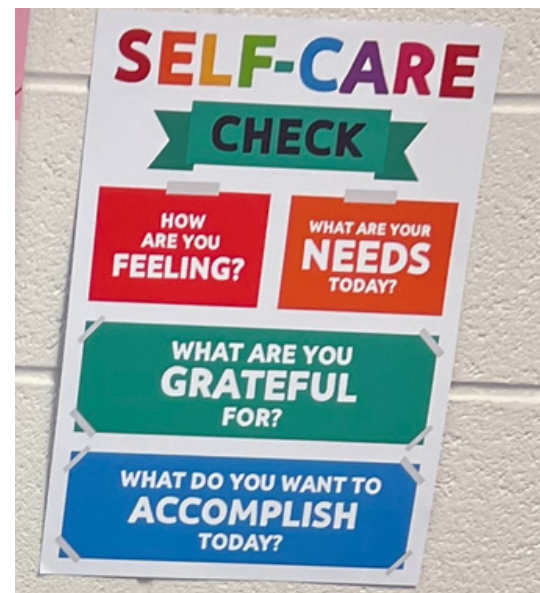
THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY FOREST PARK MIDDLE

At Forest Park Middle School, the team successfully established a teacher wellness space, which featured a donated massage chair. Sensory cushions were made available on a check-out basis, allowing teachers to bring them back to their classrooms for additional benefits.

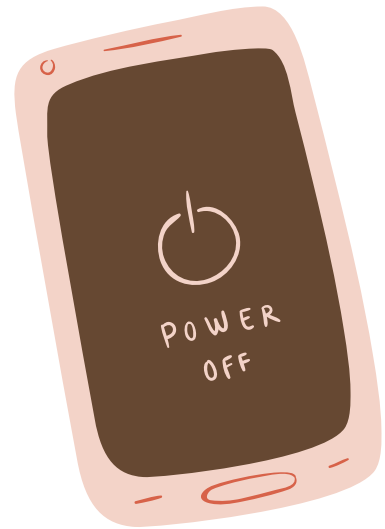
Classroom sets of wellness cards were distributed, ensuring that wellness efforts extended beyond the designated space and into the classroom environment. The initiative also focused on fostering peer connections to provide support, which proved to be successful.

The creation of an environment that promoted care, compassion, and accessible resources was identified as a key factor that contributed to the program's effectiveness. As a result, the administration team observed a decrease in attendance concerns among teachers who had previously exhibited a pattern of repeated absences.

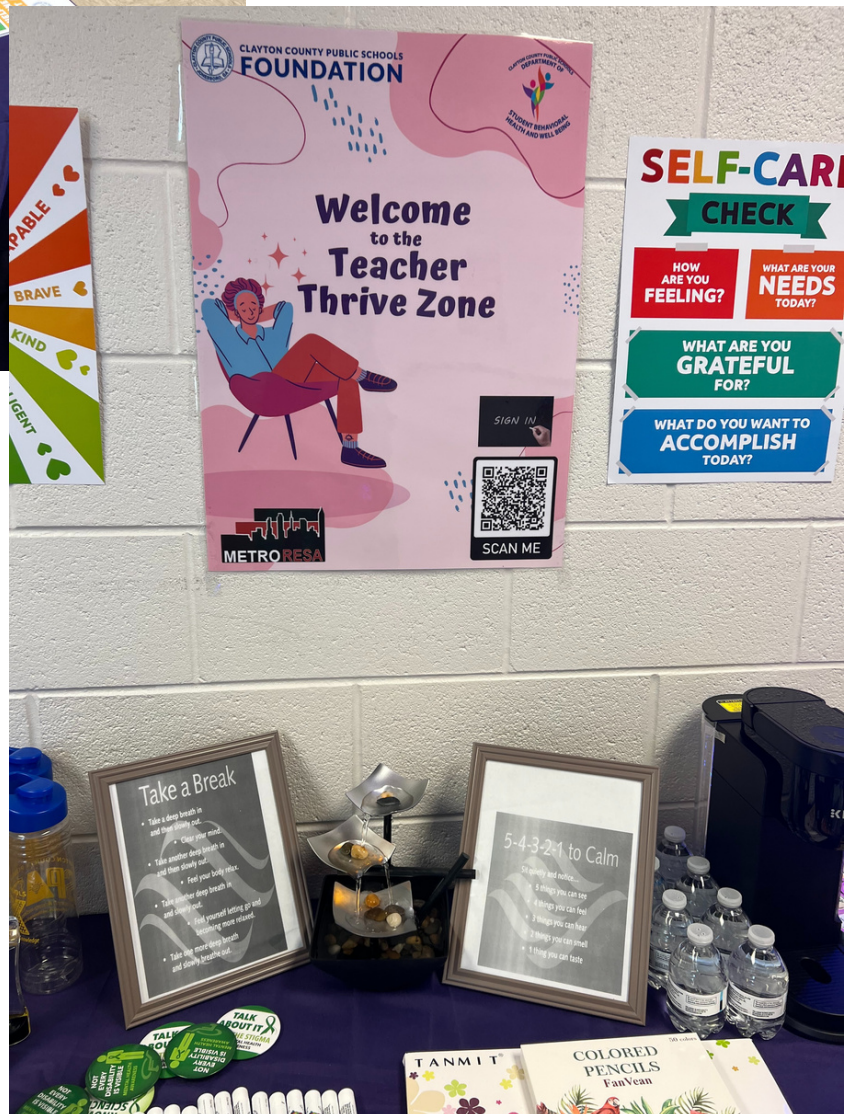
However, the limited size of the wellness space posed a challenge as it could only accommodate one person at a time, restricting those seeking physical quiet time. Nonetheless, the teacher wellness cards were well-received, and the team addressed specific concerns by tailoring the cards to meet the identified needs rather than relying on pre-made orders.



"...administration team observed a decrease in attendance concerns among teachers who had previously exhibited a pattern of repeated absences."



**SELF CARE
IS A
PRIORITY
AND
NECESSITY
NOT A
LUXURY**



COBB COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mission

"...is One Team, One Goal: Student Success"



THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY HAVEN ACADEMY

The HAVEN Wellness program aimed to implement a sustainable and goal-oriented wellness program, focusing on physical, emotional, social, and financial health. Two significant projects were made possible through the grant: the CALM app and the Take-a-Paws calm room.

The CALM app proved to be beneficial, with 75% of staff actively engaged and utilizing its self-regulation features. Many staff members shared the app with their families, reaching a 42% participation rate among children and family members. The Take-a-Paws calm room, although lacking grant-covered furniture, received generous donations from the community, including paint and carpets. The room was designed with readily available stations and activities that introduced staff to stress-relieving strategies they may not have considered before. The room was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by the entire staff and district office members. Staff expressed appreciation for the safe and soothing space, with positive feedback on the activities.

Wellness Wednesdays were implemented, consisting of various team-building activities such as music bingo, staff game days, and presentations on self-care and tapping techniques. These activities occurred at 8 AM when staff first arrived, providing an optional opportunity for engagement before the day's work. Panther

Paws, an initiative to write accolades and messages of appreciation to each other, boosted camaraderie and morale among staff. Newsletters were sent to staff, featuring links to wellness sites, mindful minutes, and calming activities. Clinical staff received training in EFT/Tapping and Compassion Fatigue, which they subsequently presented to the rest of the staff.

To support wellness at an individual level, each staff member was able to choose a wellness item for personal use.

The HAVEN Wellness program achieved success, providing staff with valuable resources and spaces for self-care, promoting a supportive and non-judgmental environment. The program's impact on staff morale and well-being was notable, emphasizing the importance of centering oneself to better serve the students and their needs.

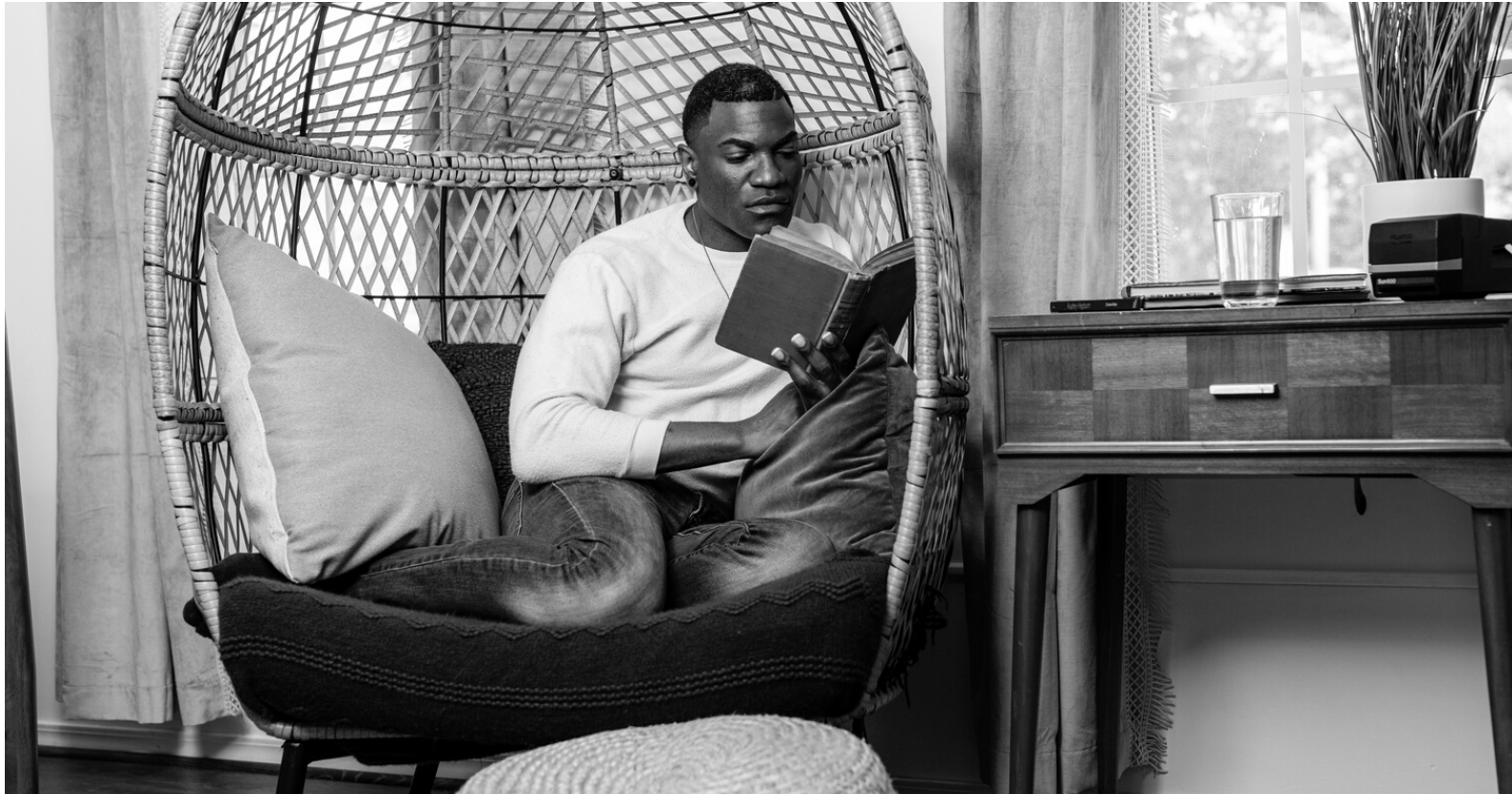
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN
THE CALM APP

75%

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN
THE CALM APP

42%

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT YEAR

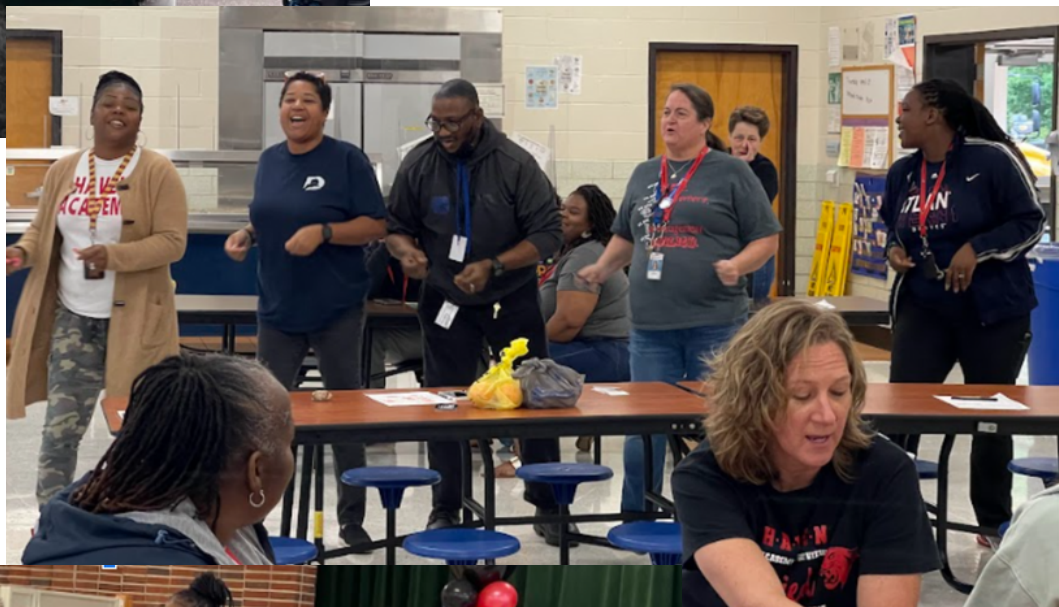


LOOKING AHEAD

We have a wellness committee that will continue surveying staff to see what their needs and wants are and will create the 2023-2024 Wellness Program to address those needs.

We will continue:

- Wellness Wednesdays •
- Panther Paws and have purchased a “survey box” so that staff can complete a Panther Paws anytime, not just at staff meetings. •
- Wellness Newsletters •
- Yoga and other physical activities. We are planning a staff basketball contest in March next year. •
- Re-Present the Tapping training and Compassion Fatigue work •
- The calm room, Take-a-Paws, will continue to be used for staff C.A.R moments and staff decompression •



DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mission

"to ensure student success, leading to higher education, work, and lifelong learning."



THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY KELLEY LAKE ELEMENTARY

We utilized a district staff development day to launch our mental health awareness initiative. During this day, we emphasized the importance of mental health awareness and provided each staff member with a mindfulness journal containing daily prompts. Lunch was provided, and we concluded the day with a staff-wide chair yoga session in the media center.

To kick off Teacher Appreciation Week, we organized an event titled "Self Care" featuring Dr. Hornsby-Griffin. Staff members had small group sessions with Dr. Hornsby-Griffin during their planning periods. The discussions revolved around the impact of negative stress and strategies to address it. The benefits of self-care were also highlighted.

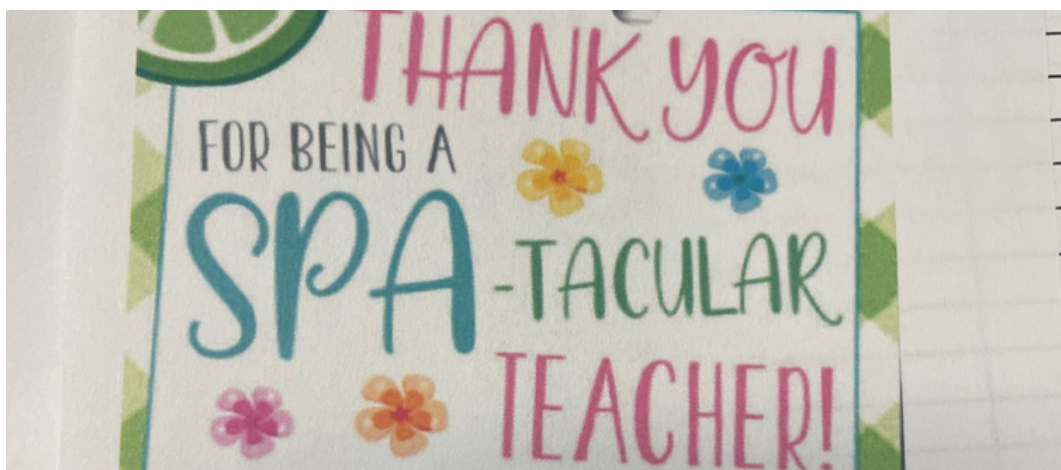
Staff members engaged with Dr. Hornsby-Griffin while enjoying snacks and refreshments, and they left the sessions equipped with self-care strategies and ways to prevent the build-up of negative stress. The feedback from surveys indicated that the event was highly beneficial and appreciated.

To follow up on the self-care discussions, we arranged for Calming Space Mobile Massage to

visit our school and provide staff members with 10-minute chair massages. During the massages, meditation cards were placed strategically on the floor, posing questions related to mental health, allowing staff members to reflect on their current mental well-being. Additionally, we purchased Tiny Guides licenses for 50 people.

Each staff member received a card during lunch, introducing the Tiny Guides and providing access to the guide on "Anxiety," along with an accompanying assignment.

Overall, the events we organized were well-received, and the feedback we received will inform our plans for the upcoming school year. The creation of a Mindful Moments room and the mental health events were particularly successful, as indicated by the survey responses. The most rewarding aspect of our mini-grant project was witnessing the appreciation and gratitude expressed by staff members as they engaged in the various events.



KELLEY LAKE HIGHLIGHTS



3. The exercise with my colleagues today was (0 point)

Helpful in improving my health	13
Relaxing	13
Too strenuous	0
Other	1



4. The 20-minute chair yoga activity was the right amount of time for me to focus on myself health care

Yes	25
No	0



I am encouraged by the mindfulness activities that the Mindfulness Committee have presented, or The Mindfulness Committee is making a conscience effort to promote ways to stay healthy by providing

A Healthy meal	14
Exercise activity	13
Resources that are intentional t...	19



THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY CEDAR GROVE MIDDLE

The "CGMS Intentional Wellness and Mindfulness Program" focused on the significance of incorporating mindful moments into teachers' routines throughout the year to enhance their overall well-being. By creating a wellness plan tailored to the school's work environment, teachers and staff members were provided with an outlet for self-care.

Educating teachers and staff on wellness techniques and establishing a designated space for relaxation, particularly during challenging workdays filled with teaching, behavior management, testing, and data analysis, served as a reminder that it is acceptable to take a moment for themselves in order to maintain balance and groundedness while performing their educational duties.

A key success of the program was the opportunity to engage with staff members and equip them with tools to support a healthy mindset and prioritize their mental health.

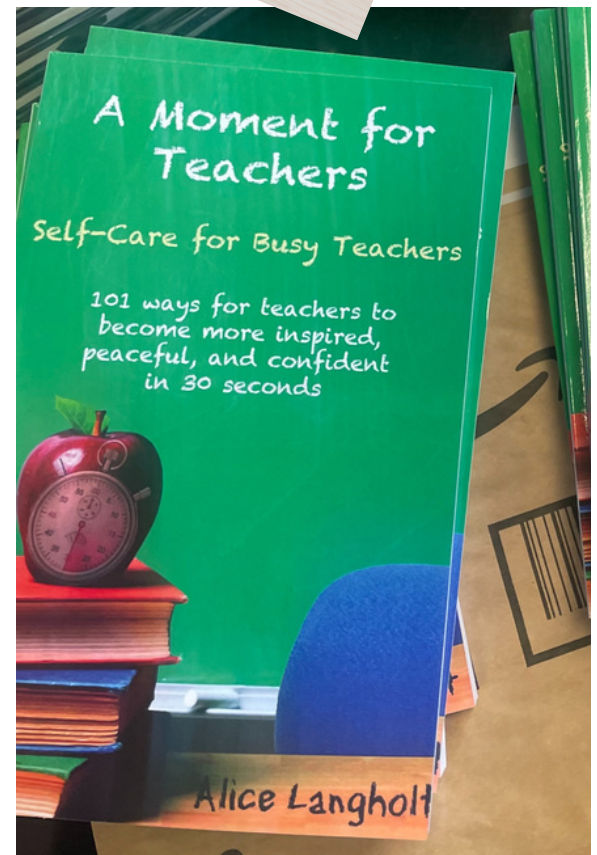
Presentations on mind-body medicine alignment and healthy eating provided staff members with readily available references for optimal wellness practices. Testimonies from staff members highlighted how the wellness items they received, such as journals, stress balls, self-care books, inspirational quote pens, and self-massaging tools, aided them in practicing the discussed mindfulness techniques.

As the school year concludes, the wellness team encouraged staff members to continue engaging in intentional mindfulness moments, suggesting activities like deep breathing while seated on a yoga mat or bean bag, both at school and at home, to foster ongoing progress towards optimal well-being.

The most rewarding aspect of the program was witnessing the staff's joy upon receiving the wellness items and the words of encouragement to prioritize self-care. The creation of this wellness program not only inspired the wellness team but also garnered strong support from the administrators.

The team now feels motivated to extend their knowledge on overall mental health and wellness practices to include students and parents in the upcoming semesters.

This mini-grant project motivated our school to practice more mindfulness to maintain balance to guide the students under our care. The aspect of the program that proved most beneficial to our staff was the introduction of new-age methods for practicing mental well-being and providing tools for stress management.



THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY PEACH CREST ELEMENTARY

The outcomes of the **"Joy on Joy Lane"** school SEL program at Peachcrest ES proved to be highly beneficial for the staff. All members of the school staff had the opportunity to participate in Chris180 Teacher Burnout sessions, which focused on addressing burnout in the workplace. These sessions provided a safe space for staff to reflect on and express their stressors, while also fostering a sense of community among colleagues. Additionally, the "Tiny Guides" workshops helped staff members identify and implement self-care strategies both at work and in their personal lives.

Implementing the program at Peachcrest revealed several successful aspects, such as the CHRIS180 teacher burnout sessions and the "Tiny Guides" self-care workshops. Scheduling the sessions during teacher planning times allowed every teacher to participate without disrupting their personal lives. It also seamlessly integrated into the daily operations of the school, allowing teachers to regroup and fulfill their daily responsibilities. The "Tiny Guides" workshop provided practical strategies that could be implemented in real-time, whether inside the classroom or in personal life.

Overall, the faculty and staff at Peachcrest considered the "Joy on Joy Lane" project successful in its pilot year. Reflecting on the experience, they identified additional components to enhance and implement in the future. For example, they aim to provide more readily accessible resources at the school, such

as videos and audio materials in the wellness room to promote meditation and exercise for relaxation moments. They also plan to provide staff members with self-care checklists as a strategy learned from sessions with Dr. Hornsby-Griffin, promoting self-accountability. Monthly teacher burnout sessions with the CHRIS180 representative will be offered to facilitate open communication among teachers, allowing them to express concerns, share stressors, and provide suggestions to their coworkers.

The professional developments and workshops resulted in a more cohesive staff, with evidence of staff members utilizing learned strategies, such as participating in "Movement Monday" where teachers gathered during planning times for walks inside or outside the building. The designated "A Moment for Me" room provided teachers with a space for quick breaks outside of the classroom. Staff members expressed gratitude for these opportunities, feeling heard and recognized in their emotions and gaining a broader perspective of their colleagues' roles within the school. The project fostered bonding and relationship-building among staff, which was one of its most valuable outcomes.



PEACH CREST HIGHLIGHTS

SAMPLE DAILY SELF-CARE REMINDERS

- 8:00am: **Gratitude.** Think of something you're grateful for that actually makes you smile.
- 10:15am: **Breathe.** Take sixty seconds to take three deep breaths.
- 12:30pm: **Move.** Take three minutes to stand, stretch, walk around the room or walk outside.
- 3:00 pm: **Music.** Take four and a half minutes to listen to or sing one of your favorite songs.
- 8:00pm: **Contact.** Reach out to someone for a live, person-to-person, non-electronic-typing, caring conversation.



Dr. Hornsby-Griffin, promoting self-accountability

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to the upcoming school year, plans include housing Tiny Guides links and pamphlets in the staff wellness room, making stress-relieving resources available, such as reflection journals and affirmation coloring books. Meditation resources, including yoga mats and zen/buddha boards, will also be integrated. More professional developments and workshops will be implemented, providing staff with a safe place to express themselves, offer suggestions, and share resources and strategies.







SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Good sleep 
- ☐ Meditate 
- ☐ Exercise 
- ☐ Read book 
- ☐ Eat healthy 
- ☐ Drink more water 



FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mission

"To educate every student to be a responsible, productive citizen."

Fulton
County Schools
Where Students Come First

THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY NORTH SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL



Our staff wellness project focused on exposing staff to various wellness activities to model self-care. We conducted a survey to understand their preferences and successfully implemented fitness classes like Qigong, dance, and yoga. Regular wellness stations and 5-minute chair massages were made available throughout the year, thanks to a partnership. Engaging staff involved leveraging internal talent and collaborating with community members.

Staff playtime was a hit, encouraging interaction among colleagues. However, attendance for fitness classes could have been better due to the packed workdays, with limited availability outside of district-required trainings. Activities offered on teacher workdays saw the highest participation.

Staff appreciated the dedicated retreat/lounge space, time off, and the provision of coffee, tea, and treats. The Wellness Teams Channel facilitated sharing of healthy recipes, city activities, and wellness offerings. The most rewarding aspect was the positive impact on teachers' well-being and their expressions of gratitude. The principal's support and witnessing teachers engage in play were particularly encouraging.

The gift of time off allowed participants to connect with family, and yoga classes addressed physical limitations. Time and building connections were identified as the most valuable aspects based on feedback. Future plans include implementing self-care days more frequently, leveraging staff talents, and continuing the Wellness Committee.

Scheduling staff wellness activities within the workday calendar is crucial to maximize participation due to competing commitments. In summary, our staff wellness project successfully introduced a range of activities to promote self-care. Although challenges with attendance were observed, the initiative received positive feedback. The commitment to staff well-being will continue through refined initiatives and a focus on integrating wellness into our organization's culture.



OUTCOME

Continuing with the Wellness Committee is something we will definitely continue, as I was able to hear directly from teachers what they felt would work and not work for wellness initiatives. A key lesson was that making time for staff wellness activities must be built into the workday calendar to maximize participation. Not many people will stay after work due to competing interests (childcare, continuing education, travel challenges, etc.).





THE USAGE OF THE MINI-GRANT BY TRI- CITIES HIGH SCHOOL



Our wellness initiative, supported by a mini-grant, has been incredibly successful in boosting staff engagement and fostering a healthier workplace environment. One of the most popular aspects of the series has been the Wellness Wednesday "pop-ups." These events, made possible by generous donations, offer a range of healthy items including fresh vegetables, coffee, smoothies, tea, snacks, and hygiene products. Organizing these events has been relatively easy, and we consistently attract a turnout of 75-100 staff members each week.

In addition to the pop-ups, we also offered yoga and dance classes as part of the initiative. While these classes were well-liked by participants, we would have liked to see a higher regular attendance. On

average, about 8-10 staff members attended the classes regularly. However, we are proud to acknowledge the exceptional skills of our three instructors who have been instrumental in creating a positive experience for participants.

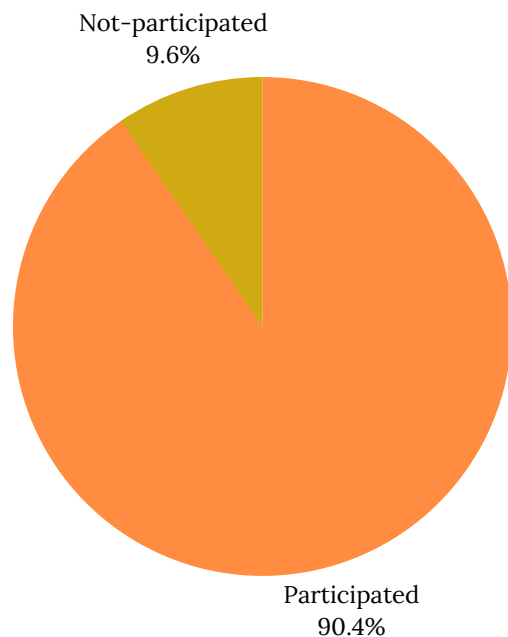
To further enhance participation, we have planned to make some changes for the next year. We will kickstart Wellness Wednesday at the beginning of the school year and aim to have afterschool classes running by September. This adjustment will help us avoid scheduling conflicts that typically arise in the spring, and we expect stronger participation by running the classes from September to March.

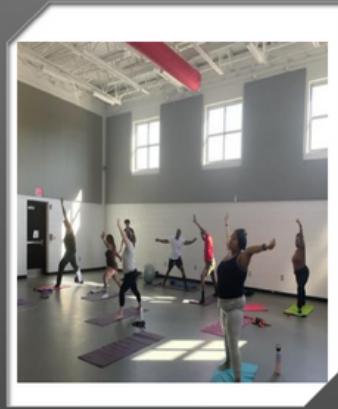
Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of our initiative has been the increased staff participation and enthusiasm it has generated month after month. The mini-grant served as a catalyst for us to initiate this program, and it has inspired us to think creatively and find new ways to enhance the well-being of our staff both physically and mentally. This positive momentum has prompted us to commit to continuing the initiative in the following year.



OUTCOME

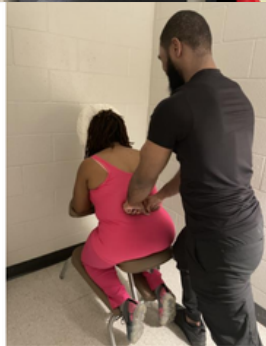
Overall, our wellness initiative, powered by the mini-grant, has been instrumental in creating a more engaged and resilient staff community. We are excited about the future and the innovative ideas we have in store, all made possible by the transformative impact of this mini-grant. Together, we are building a workplace environment that prioritizes the well-being and empowerment of every staff member.





YOGA & MINDFULNESS

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY: POP-UPS



WELLNESS INCENTIVE: THE WELLNESS SPOT

MASSAGE DAY

METRO RESA

"Building Leaders of Teaching and Learning"



METRO RESA CONTRIBUTION



TEACHER WELLNESS KITS

Metro RESA took a bold step to extend its impact beyond the grantees by going the extra mile. In addition to offering a diverse range of Mental Health and Wellness trainings, we went ahead and procured Teacher Wellness Kits. These carefully curated kits were designed to complement participants' engagement in our trainings, ensuring a comprehensive and immersive experience. Packed within each kit were not only essential items but also a personalized letter and a comprehensive guide, empowering individuals with practical strategies on how to maximize the potential of the kit's contents. With these Educator Wellness Kits, Metro RESA left no stone unturned in its commitment to supporting mental health and wellness in our service area.



- Restorative Practice
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma Informed and Resilient Schools
- Educator Self-care and Wellness
- and more!

TEACHER WELLNESS KIT

A MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING (MHAT) RESOURCE

WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR KIT

★ 180 ★

DAYS OF SELF-CARE

Be intentional about your use of the self-care journal. Discuss some things you like/agree with and those you don't. Maybe discuss a different alternative for you.

Discuss the **Wellness Cards/Prompts** with colleagues/friends to encourage a culture of wellness and support.

FIDGET ITEMS

Using a fidget item is a harmless way of displacing a little bit of extra energy so your brain can attend to the main task at hand. They can also help with anxiety to help you feel better in stressful situations.

COLORING BOOK BENEFITS

- Relaxes Brain and improves Brain Function
- Induces Meditative State
- Improves Motor Skills
- Improves Sleep
- Improves Focus
- Reduces Stress
- Relieves Stress

TOP 3 WAYS TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS

1. Diffusers
2. Topically
3. Inhale Directly

Essential Oils

Natural Healing for Body and Soul

- Eucalyptus Oil:** Clear Sinuses
- Lavender Oil:** Better Sleep
- Lemon Oil:** Clear Increase happiness, improve concentration
- Peppermint Oil:** Boost alertness, reduce headaches
- Tangerine (Sweet Orange):** Reduce Anxiety

Headache Blend

3 drops Peppermint, 2 drops Eucalyptus

Focus Blend

2 drops Peppermint, 2 drops Tangerine

Seasonal Support Blend

2 drops Peppermint, 2 drops Lavender, 2 drops Lemon

@MRESA_SCS

