



Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools

The Prichard Committee

Family Engagement Strategy 1: Teacher Wellness Check-Ins

Beginning of the School Year and Ongoing

Goal: You can't pour from an empty cup! Kicking off the school year with staff check-ins help staff feel leadership supports, appreciates and hears them. This is a relationship and trust building experience and an opportunity for leadership staff to hear how they can be more effective in managing and supporting the school team. Ongoing wellness promotion during the school year is critical to keep this support strong.

Top Tips:

Survey Says Here's What Teacher Want More of:

- Choice in professional development and in duty stations and schedules
- Encouraged to take "mental health days"
- A full planning period without having to cover classes for other teachers on a regular basis
- Able to go to the restroom, eat lunch, and leave in a timely fashion after school
- Trusted and treated as a professional
- Principals ask about their day & not looking at their phone during the conversation
- Supported and provided information about students who have been sent to office
- Supported when seeking help for a student's home life

Welcoming Phone Calls:

- Ask 2 or 3 teachers and parents to help co-design the process. Who should make the calls? What would staff want to hear and talk about?
- Create a list of [open ended questions](#) that foster relationship building and give teachers an opportunity to share challenges and strengths. Have teachers help you develop this list of questions.

Tips for a Healthy Environment

- Break Room Makeover-With suggestions from teachers create a break room that promotes health and well-being.



- Promote relaxation—consider lighting changes, designate spaces inside and out that promote rest

Back to School Breakfast for School or District Staff

Work with community organizations and businesses to sponsor tables filled with fun decor, giveaways, and encouraging sentiments to kick off the school year. Make this optional as a positive opportunity rather than a required obligation.

Ongoing wellness promotion during the school year (this is KEY!)

- Move away from one-off or one-time engagements: School and district leaders should encourage frequent/routine opportunities to engage in non-hierarchical dialogue/discourse around teacher and administrator mental health promising practices, as well as barriers in order to create reciprocal problem solving opportunities
- Build check-in calls throughout the year: [Teacher Check-In Toolkit](#)
- Teacher [Check In · A podcast on Anchor](#)
- Connect to Brave Teacher Kentucky Brave Teacher KY
- Leverage health insurance Employee Assistance programs for added support.

Doing WITH teachers, not TO teachers:

- Ensure administration knows the needs and desires of staff. Could be a survey, a “temperature” check or any getting-to-know-you measure. Purposeful and staff-informed approaches are key.
- Always bring teachers to the planning table from the beginning.
- When starting a new idea be sure to tell staff why you are doing it and the intention is to ensure they feel supported and appreciated.
- Create wellness teams among staff with a designated lead
- Ask 2 or 3 teachers and parents to help co-design any teacher wellness process.

Equity and Inclusion:

- Include cultural, race and ethnic celebrations and/or ask staff if there are ones they want included or celebrated
- Ask teachers what, if any, barriers prevent them from participating in certain team building activities such as child care, transportation, etc. work with district staff and community partners to remove these barriers.
- The goal is for 100% of staff to feel included and supported. Be ready to change the approach for staff that would rather connect in different ways. Ask staff who are not engaged how they like to be communicated with and work to meet



those needs. This includes accommodations for teachers with special needs and learning differences.

Measure Success

- When asking teachers for feedback, be honest and open about how responses will be analyzed. Many teachers are reluctant to share because they don't know how the results will be used.
- Host surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews around:
 - Educators mental health, well-being, safety, and trust
 - Connection and sense of belonging within school building
 - Impact on specific events and strategies and suggestions for future activities
- [Impact Kentucky](#) Survey for Teachers

This strategy sheet is part of a series called “KY’s 11 Goal Post Strategies for Family Engagement” these resources and more will be available online after Sept. 1st 2021.

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