



Office of the State  
Superintendent of Education



# BLUEPRINT

## FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EDUCATOR WELLNESS

Supporting the whole educator through policies, processes and practices that address the whole school and the whole system.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) would like to thank its Educator Wellness Technical Assistance grantees and partner schools who made this publication possible. The grantees and their partner schools applied the whole school approach to educator wellness so that, together, we could learn what worked and what needed improvement to support District of Columbia (DC) public and public charter schools in the implementation of a whole school approach to educator wellness.



Readers will find this DC map throughout the document. This identifies best practices and lessons learned from DC schools.

OSSE looks forward to continuing our partnerships with schools, local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement and make updates to the Blueprint and support educators as they cultivate the learning, growth and development of students.

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# INTRODUCTION

## How do we care for our educators so they can do the important work of supporting and educating students?

The Blueprint for a Whole School Approach to Educator Wellness (Blueprint) is a quick reference guide that provides local education agencies (LEAs), school leaders, educators<sup>1</sup> and community-based organizations (CBOs) a roadmap for integrating educator wellness policies, practices and processes into their school system. The Blueprint uses a whole school approach, centered on educator voice and equity, to implement approaches at the individual, interpersonal and organizational levels.

This resource is built from growing research and evidence-based practice in educator wellness and the use of a whole school approach to educator wellness in DC public and public charter schools. The Blueprint sections are:

### *What is Being Built – A Whole School Approach to Educator Wellness (Approach)*

A whole school approach to educator wellness requires understanding the importance of centering educator voice and equity to create school environments that support the whole educator.

### *Lay Your Foundation – Triad for Effective Implementation*

School leaders and educators will reflect on three considerations when beginning or enhancing educator wellness work: 1) readiness; 2) capacity; and 3) accountability. These factors help a school define their starting point.

### *Create Your Scaffolding – Determine the Supports Needed*

The needs of each school are different. Use data collection and feedback processes designed for trust and transparency to identify the root causes of educator stress.

### *Build Your Walls – Identify Your Goals and Objectives*

Educator wellness is a journey that begins with small steps. Create educator wellness goals and objectives that balance lofty aims with quick wins.

### *Check That It's Structurally Sound – Use a Continuous Quality Improvement Process*

To determine if an objective achieves the school's educator wellness goals, start small. A Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process and the use of feedback loops allow a school to scale or modify its educator wellness plan.

**The Blueprint is a guide. Make the steps and processes work for the school community and implement strategies that are responsive to the school's needs.**

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<sup>1</sup> Educator refers to all staff who work in a school building or child development facility.

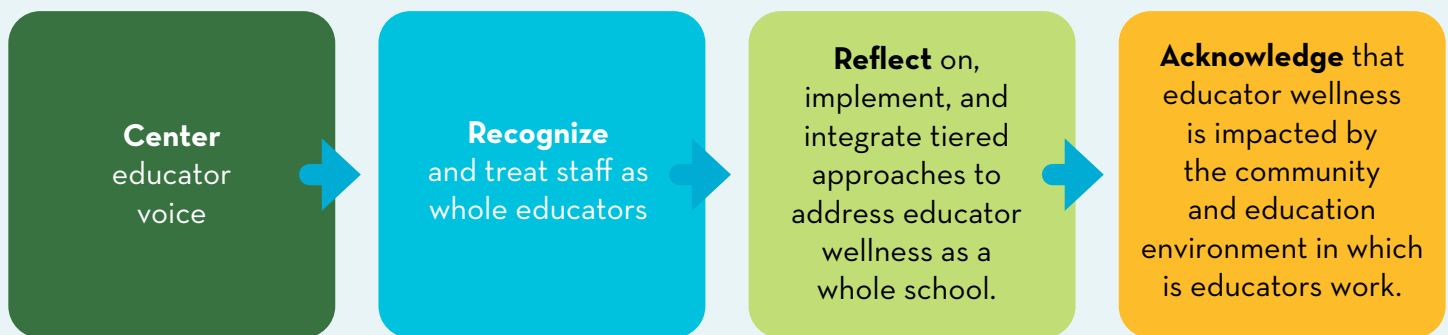
## WHAT IS BEING BUILT | A Whole School Approach to Educator Wellness

Educator wellness honors educators as whole people whose state of social, emotional, physical, mental and professional well-being is impacted by the school's organizational and individual systems. These systems create positive or negative working conditions that impact the teaching and learning environment for students and educators.

A Whole School Approach to Educator Wellness (Approach) names the intersecting systems factors that impact educator well-being. Grounded in existing research, wellness models and the experience of DC public and public charter schools, this Approach shifts educator well-being from the sole responsibility of the individual to include the influence of interpersonal, organizational and community impacts.<sup>2</sup>



### A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EDUCATOR WELLNESS



The Approach supports OSSE, LEAs, schools, child development facilities and education partners to:

#### Center educator voice.

To address educator wellness, educators must be able to authentically voice their thoughts and opinions. Build processes and environments that value [psychological safety](#) and allow staff to feel safe, trust that their voice matters and that they are equitably heard.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Approach incorporates existing research and wellness models from [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [U.S. Surgeon General](#), [Pennsylvania State University](#) and the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) and the [Mayo Clinic](#).

<sup>3</sup> [The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

## Recognize and treat staff as whole educators.

Educators bring their whole selves to work. Their mental health and well-being cannot be detached from their job duties – this is a symbiotic relationship. To create work environments that value the whole educator, much as we do the whole child, the **five components** below define the essential needs of educators.<sup>4,5,6</sup> The terms and definitions are modeled after the [Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being](#).

## AN EDUCATOR IS WHOLE WHEN THEY FEEL:

### SAFE

Educators work in an environment that is physically and psychologically safe. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is embraced to center mutual respect and trust for individuals and in all relationships. A school's policies and practices ensure a secure building, structures and premises that meet safety and environmental standards.<sup>7</sup>

### SEEN

Educator voice is valued and they feel meaningfully engaged in workplace decisions that encourage shared leadership, ownership and provide clear connections to organizational goals.<sup>8</sup>

### BALANCED

Educators are seen as whole people and boundaries are in place to support a work-life balance. The necessary resources, benefits and supports are available to ensure the health and well-being of staff and, as appropriate, offer autonomy and flexibility.<sup>9</sup>

### SUPPORTED

Educators work in a culture that cultivates trusting relationships and fosters collaboration and teamwork. Staff work in an environment with clear and consistent communication from leaders that is respectful and fosters trust.<sup>10</sup>

### CHALLENGED

Educators have access to quality training, education and mentoring that fosters clear and equitable paths for career advancement. Staff are provided professional development and coaching that builds and expands their skills.<sup>11</sup>

4 [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\): A Collaborative Approach to Learning](#)

5 [WSCC Fact Sheet](#)

6 [The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

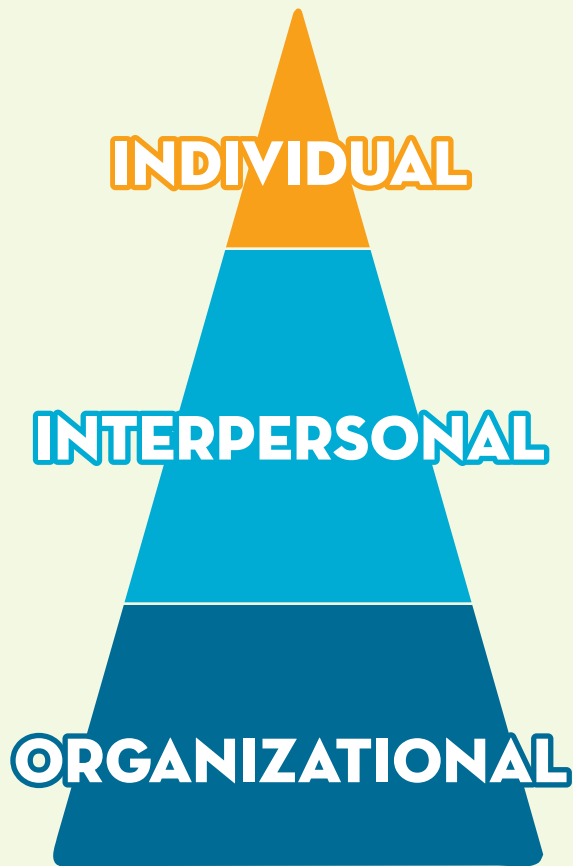
7 [Correlates to Protection from Harm in the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

8 [Correlate to Matter at Work in the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

9 [Correlates to Work-Life Harmony in the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

10 [Correlates to Connection & Community in the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health & Well-Being](#)

11 [Correlates to Opportunity for Growth in the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being](#)



**Individual** approaches teach educators self-care, wellness strategies and stress management techniques.

**Guiding Questions:** What health and wellness supports and employee benefits are available? Is self-care part of daily practices? Do staff feel they can access needed supports?

**Interpersonal** approaches build respectful and trusting workplace relationships and supports.

**Guiding Questions:** What is the quality of relationships among staff? Is there professional development or coaching that would provide support? What type of workplace relationships and actions are modeled for staff and does it build or erode trust?

**Organizational** approaches change the organization's culture to mitigate stress.

**Guiding Questions:** Are there systems-level policies or practices that are stressors? Is there an absence of structures (e.g., policies, mechanisms for staff feedback) that has led to stressors? What changes could be made to mitigate these stressors?

*Acknowledge that educator wellness is impacted by the community and education environment in which educators work.<sup>13</sup>*

Educators, school and child development facility leaders, LEAs and OSSE exist within the DC education environment and community. Each of these individuals or entities has a role to play in supporting and advocating for educator wellness.

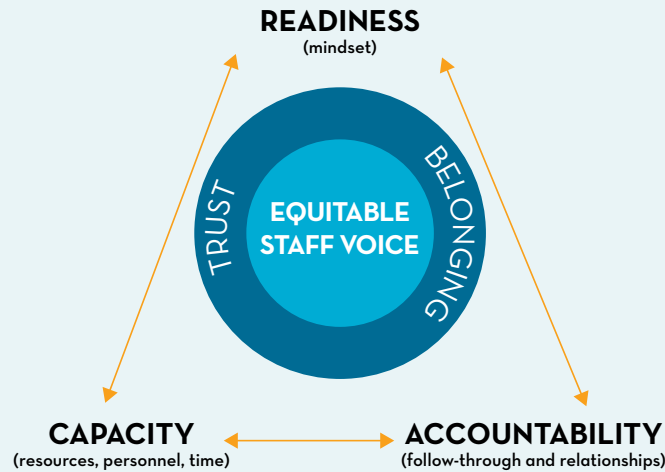
- As an **educator**, share sources of stress, contribute to conversations around finding solutions, build trusting and respectful workplace relationships and advocate for solutions.
- As a **school or child development facility leader**, reflect on your leadership style and that of the leadership team. Think about how your leadership supports the whole educator and builds environments of trust and belonging. Determine ways to advocate for your staff. Reflect on how you balance your own mental health and well-being and model this for your staff.
- As an **LEA leader**, reflect on the Approach in the climate and culture of school(s). Elevate school leader and staff voice to learn the impact of LEA policies, processes and practices. Advocate for change that would mitigate educator stress. Be mindful of the unique strengths and challenges of each school and the community in which they serve.
- As **OSSE**, we support the capacity-building of LEAs, schools and child development facilities to implement whole school approaches to educator wellness while also reflecting on the agency's role to mitigate educator stress and support educator mental health and well-being.

**By focusing on the whole educator, schools and child development facilities can improve the teaching and learning environment for the whole child that is reflective of the community and responsive to its specific needs.**

<sup>12</sup> [Teacher Stress and Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Pennsylvania State University](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Figure 3. Drivers of burnout and engagement with examples of individual, work unit, organization, and national factors, p. 4. Executive Leadership and Physician Well-being: Nine Organizational Strategies to Promote Engagement and Reduce Burnout. Mayo Clinic.](#)

# STEP ONE: LAY YOUR FOUNDATION | The Triad for Effective Implementation



Building or enhancing educator wellness policies, practices and processes is an individual journey for each school and its success depends on school leader and staff **readiness, capacity, school processes for accountability and use of authentic staff voice to inform and make decisions**. The *Triad for Effective Implementation* prepares schools for this journey through reflection on three key considerations, centered on educator voice.

## Equitable Educator Voice to Build Trust and Belonging

*What is this?*

A school environment acknowledges educator voice and allows staff to share their opinions freely and safely. This builds a school culture of trust and belonging.

*How to get started?*

Begin by creating a work environment that is psychologically safe. Psychological safety is “a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.”<sup>14</sup> A critical component of a psychologically safe work environment is DEIB. By operationalizing DEIB norms, policies and practices, educators feel safe to be their authentic self, express their feelings and ideas and feel value for their perspective.<sup>15</sup> To learn more:

- Watch “[Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace](#),” by Amy Edmondson.
- Read [Toward a Respectful Workplace, Psychological Safety and DEI](#), Michigan State University
- Consider these tools to assess psychological safety in the workplace: [Building Psychological Safety](#), by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation<sup>16</sup> and Kaiser Permanente; [Toward a Respectful Workplace, Organization’s Guide](#), by the University of Michigan; and [Tool: Foster Psychological Safety](#) and [a guide for how managers can foster psychological safety](#), by re:Work.

<sup>14</sup> Amy C. Edmondson, Psychological Safety, [www.amycedmondson.com/psychological-safety/#resources](http://www.amycedmondson.com/psychological-safety/#resources)

<sup>15</sup> Protection from Harm, Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being

<sup>16</sup> Alliance for a Healthier Generation, [register for an account](#) to access more tools and guidance



## 1. Readiness

### *What is this?*

Readiness is about reflecting on the beliefs and mindsets regarding this Approach and how those beliefs and mindsets resonate with the Approach.

### *How to get started?*

For school administrators, buy-in is crucial to the success of the work and to build trust with educators. They need to see, hear and feel leadership support and commitment for this work to be effective. For educators, it is critically important to share perspective on this approach and be willing to participate in defining what educator wellness looks like in the school. For all members of the school community, initial hesitancy is a normal part of the process. Recognize that, voice concerns or questions and share ideas for forward movement to identify the best and most effective, starting point for the school.

School administrators and educator wellness leads, consider the below activity to reflect on readiness and engage the staff in conversation.<sup>17</sup> As a leadership team, (e.g., school administrators, staff who lead educator wellness initiatives) use the below prompts to identify your readiness.

- What's your initial response to this educator wellness approach? What do you like? What are you wondering about? What makes you hesitant? What was the nature of your response? Was it positive, neutral, negative or some combination? What might be at the root of those responses?
- What factors will help or hinder your buy-in and support for a whole school approach to educator wellness?
- What is your role in a whole school approach to educator wellness? For the work to move forward, what actions will you take? If you're hesitant, what do you need to engage in this work?

Discuss your reflections as a team. Note the current beliefs and mindsets regarding the Approach. Are there initial ideas for a vision? Are there challenges or barriers to work through? Decide how to introduce the Approach to staff and how the work will proceed. When deciding, consider:

- Using an already scheduled meeting or professional development to introduce and discuss the Approach.
- Engaging staff in the same reflection activity used above by leadership. This is an opportunity for school administrators and educator wellness leads to share their own resonance and hesitancy.
- Using the discussion to norm around what educator wellness will mean at the school. Revisit this throughout the work to expand and update the school's values and beliefs on the Approach.

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<sup>17</sup> Adapted from [Flashpoint Flowchart](#) from Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice

## 2. Capacity

*What is this?*

School leaders and educators are often asked to do more with time that is already limited. Capacity is identifying the staff and leaders who want to lead this work and are supported to find balance between their current workload and taking on a new initiative.

*How to get started?*

- Select an educator wellness champion who will lead the work. This is someone interested in a leadership role, passionate about educator wellness and who has the time and bandwidth to dedicate to the work. The employee and their manager should discuss the employee's current workload, how to rebalance workload to avoid burnout and to set expectations. The lead should regularly meet with a school leader who can review, discuss and approve plans.
- Select or form a team who can help implement the plan. The team should reflect the school staff and be of a size that allows for representation, but not so large that it makes equitable discussion and decision making difficult. Norms and expectations should be set about time commitment and responsibilities.
- Staff voice and participation is critical to this process. This is best received if woven into part of an existing meeting or professional development.

## 3. Accountability

*What is this?*

As this work begins, determine where it fits into existing workstreams, teams and planning processes. Accountability is integrating this work into the work of the school so identified goals and objectives become a regular point of discussion and are tracked for progress. Instead of being siloed, educator wellness work is then an important component of the school's overall work and success.

*How to get started?*

Transparent and authentic communication and feedback loops facilitate a successful accountability process. School leaders should decide how this work will be communicated to the whole school. Consider how you will:

- Share the team's process for reflecting and deciding to pursue a whole school approach to educator wellness. Show vulnerability and authenticity.
- Discuss the plan to authentically hear from staff. If psychological safety is of concern, name that, discuss ways that safe environments will be created and provide opportunities for staff feedback.
- Update staff regarding the process and how leadership and the team will remain transparent in the work.

## STEP TWO: CREATE YOUR SCAFFOLDING | What supports are needed?

A key part of addressing educator wellness is identifying the school's strengths and areas of improvement, arriving at the problem and determining the responses to put in place. Selected activities should: 1) Be specific to the school community; 2) address the root cause of an issue and not a symptom; and 3) build on the unique structure and strengths of the school. Data are critical in this process. The [Digital Promise](#) provides guidance on how to apply an [equity lens](#) and mindset using a five-part cycle.<sup>18</sup>

### Part One: Data Collection – What data already exists?

#### What To Do

Ground data collection in staff voice and the whole educator component of the Approach to:


1. Brainstorm and gather data that the school already collects related to educator wellness (see the below table for ideas);
2. Use [Appendix A: Data Collection Worksheet](#) to review and organize data using the five components of a whole educator; and
3. Identify gaps and determine if additional data collection might be needed.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DATA	TOOLS FOR ADDITIONAL DATA COLLECTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School climate and culture surveys</li><li>• Staff exit surveys</li><li>• Staff retention and absenteeism data</li><li>• Staff satisfaction surveys</li><li>• Professional development evaluations or other surveys from staff engagement opportunities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Organizational Well-Being Inventory for Schools (OWBI-S)</a>, National Center for School Mental Health<sup>19</sup></li><li>• Panorama Education, <a href="#">Teacher Well-Being Survey</a></li></ul>



If a staff survey is needed, provide educators with time during their workday to complete the survey (e.g., at the beginning or end of an existing meeting) and clear communication as to why the data are being collected, what it will be used for, whether responses are anonymous and how the results will be shared back with staff for further input and discussion. Respecting staff time and transparent communication builds trust.

Consider these questions to guide data collection:


1. What existing data does the school already have? Is there qualitative data, quantitative data or both?
2. Are there data for each of the five components of a whole educator? Are there gaps?
3.  How are the data collected? Are there school staff who are not represented? Does the data allow for voices to be heard and collected in different ways?
4. How recently were the data collected? Are the data still relevant?

<sup>18</sup> Part five of the cycle, Data-Based Decision-Making, will be included in Step 3: Build Your Walls – What is the plan?

<sup>19</sup> The online tool is accessible by creating a free account at [www.theshapesystem.com/](http://www.theshapesystem.com/)

## Part Two: Data Analysis – What are the problems? What are the strengths?

### What To Do

Map the findings across the five components of a whole educator to summarize areas of strengths and areas for growth. Be careful not to apply conclusions or recommendations at this stage. As the data are reviewed, be aware of biases or feelings that may emerge, especially if the information is unexpected or unfavorable . Consider using [Appendix B: Data Summary Worksheet](#) to organize the data across the five components.

Consider these questions to guide your data analysis:

1. What are the strengths and areas of growth for the five whole educator components?
2. Are the data representative of all staff with respect to roles, tenure, race/ethnicity, etc.? Does it allow for an understanding in difference between subsets of the school staff?
3. Is there any context that should be considered when looking at the data?

## Part Three: Data Interpretation – What is causing the problem? What is leading to the strengths?

### What To Do



Identify an existing meeting or professional development session to present educator wellness data and engage educators in making meaning of this information. This process allows for a variety of perspectives in the interpretation of the data and helps educators to tell their own story and add the ‘why’ behind the data.

There are several ways to facilitate a data interpretation activity. Provided below are two examples.

1. Conduct a Data Equity Walk. This is a 45- to 90-minute activity that engages participants in the exploration of data individually and through group conversations. A full toolkit can be found on The Education Trust-West [website](#) and its [facilitation guide](#) provides instructions on how to structure the activity.
2. Use the [5 Whys Exercise](#) to conduct a root cause analysis. This exercise allows teams to go deeper into understanding the root cause of a problem and identify solutions that are more likely to be successful.



Consider these questions to guide the data interpretation activity:

- Should school leaders be in the room? If they are present, will it impact educators’ ability to have honest conversations?
- Who should facilitate the conversation? Is there an educator that is trusted among staff? Or, is there an external party that would be best to facilitate the meeting?
- Does the process provide a variety of ways (e.g., verbal, written) for educators to give feedback?
- What is the best format? As one large group or in smaller groups?
- Depending on the time selected, which educators will be able to attend? Are there any educators that would be excluded? If so, how can they be included?

## Part Four: Data Sharing

### What To Do

Summarize the data and identify themes. Again, be mindful of individual and team perspectives and present the data as is. Update the [data summary worksheet](#) based on new information and develop a plan to communicate the results

Consider these questions to guide the data sharing process:

1. What methods will be used to communicate and share the data?
2. Who is best positioned to share the data? What is the impact of a school leader sharing the data?
3. What are the action steps the team and school leadership will take in response to the data analysis?

## STEP THREE: BUILD YOUR WALLS | What is the plan?

Use the results of the data analysis for data-based decision-making and create an educator wellness plan. Look to the individual, interpersonal and organizational tiers of the Approach. The tiers will support plan development that is responsive to the root cause of your school's educator wellness concerns.

To create a plan, draft goals that reflect the change educators want to see in their workplace wellness and are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive and equitable ([SMARTIE](#)). For each goal, use the [educator wellness plan template in Appendix C](#) to:

### 1. Engage staff to identify strategies and build consensus, using the three tiers of the Approach - individual, interpersonal and organizational.

Strategies are the policies, programs or practices the school will implement or change to reach a stated goal. Key themes and examples of policies, programs or practices used at DC public and public charter schools can be found in [Appendix D: Key Themes and Index of Strategies Used at DC Public and Public Charter Schools](#).

To engage staff and build consensus around strategies, host an in-person meeting or professional development session. Gather feedback on the draft goals by:


- Reviewing how data and staff feedback were used to draft the goals.
- Providing an opportunity for reflection, discussion and feedback.

Next, brainstorm strategies that would help the school accomplish its goals.<sup>20</sup> To do this:

- For each goal, post a piece of chart paper around the room that is modeled after section one of the Three-Tiered Reflection and Brainstorm Tool found in Appendix C.
- Provide each person sticky notes and a pen or marker.
- Instruct participants to walk around the room and silently provide their ideas for how to reach each goal. Reserve 10 to 15 minutes for this step. Adjust as needed based on the number of goals and size of the group.
- Ask participants to walk around and read the ideas. They can add to an idea, draw a star to like it, pose a question, etc. Give another 10 to 15 minutes for this step, adjusting as needed.
- Ask participants to report out their own ideas, what resonated with them and what questions they have.

To conclude, share how: 1) this information will be used to edit goals and draft an educator wellness plan and 2) the plan will be shared with staff.

### 2. Assess the suggested strategies for capacity, readiness and accountability.

As a team, review the ideas staff suggested and make edits to the goals. Revisit the Triad for Effective Implementation and use [section two of the educator wellness plan template](#) to review and discuss the strategies .

- **Which strategies are quick wins or could be written as short-term objectives?** These are strategies that require minimal effort but have a large impact as they: are responsive to staff; show tangible progress in the work; and build buy-in from staff and school leaders.
- **Which strategies were popular, but would take time to implement?** These strategies may require more planning and possibly advocacy efforts, to shift a policy, process or practice. Discuss school capacity, school readiness and the steps that it would take to implement these long-term solutions.
- **Which strategies resonated with staff, but seemed too lofty to implement?** Consider if these can be streamlined, simplified or broken down into smaller steps. Starting small allows the school to build momentum, demonstrate progress toward a strategy and build capacity and buy-in, if needed.
- **Which strategies are beyond the control of the school?** Some strategies may be outside the school's locus control. For example, a strategy may require support and approval from LEA leaders. Provide compelling and data-driven reasons for how a strategy would improve staff morale, mental health and well-being.

<sup>20</sup> This activity could also be done digitally using the free online tool [Tricider](#).

### 3. Identify objectives and measures for success.

Identify which strategies should be written into objectives (i.e., measurable milestones by which the team expects to achieve to reach the stated goal). These should be written as SMARTIE objectives. Use [section three of the educator wellness plan template](#) to determine:

- What activities will meet the objective? Identify the resources needed.
- How will the objective and activities be communicated to staff?
- How will school leaders actively promote and support this objective and activities?
- How will the objective and activities be measured? Include process measures that will define the quality and reach of the work (e.g., number of staff reached by a program; training satisfaction) and outcome measures to identify a change in staff wellness knowledge, attitudes or behaviors).

Goals and objectives should connect to existing school priorities and plans. Find alignment between improvements in educator wellness and positive learning environments.



### 4. Establish a consistent and transparent way to communicate with the staff.

Determine how the final plan will be shared with staff. Communication throughout this process builds staff buy-in and trust. Identify which communication strategies were most successful and unsuccessful and determine necessary changes in the communications approach. To develop a communication plan, consider:

- How will the plan be presented to staff? Discuss how the team arrived at decisions. If a popular idea was not included, be transparent about why.
- How will the team ensure transparency? If challenges or barriers arise, how will those be communicated?
- What is the role that staff will play? Think about how the plan can be framed as an opportunity for educators and school leaders to participate and take responsibility for the wellness of the organization. This includes how they handle their stress, how they interact with their peers and how they advocate for their needs with leadership.
- How will staff have opportunities to offer feedback and have a role in decision making? The plan needs to be a flexible, living document that can shift as new needs arise. Ensuring that staff voice is incorporated throughout the process will help the team determine what works well and when course corrections may be needed.

## STEP FOUR: CHECK FOR STURDINESS | Implementation and Quality Improvement

An educator wellness strategy requires both big goals and quick wins. A continuous quality improvement (CQI) process can help the team identify the strategies that have worked, that should be sustained and/or scaled or that require changes to increase their effectiveness.

A common CQI framework is the [Plan-Do-Study-Act \(PDSA\) cycle](#), which moves a goal toward sustainable improvements. The use of this cycle can provide the team with real-time information and help the team ensure the educator wellness plan is updated in response to the success or challenges identified.

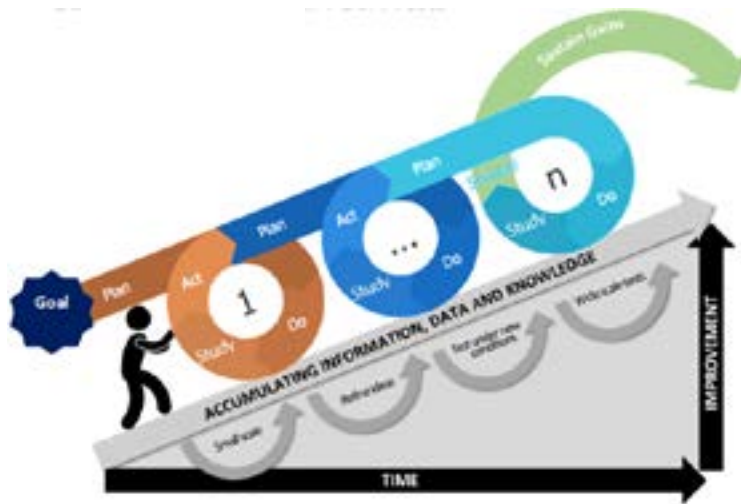


Image sourced from the University of Wisconsin, [Plan-Do-Study-Act Collaborative](#)

A benefit of using this framework is that the previous steps align with the first two steps in the cycle:

- 1. Plan.** The team already has an educator wellness plan that identifies goals, objectives and progress and outcome measures.
- 2. Do.** The educator wellness plan is implemented and stated process and outcome measures are collected. This will flag any implementation challenges.
- 3. Study.** Review the information gathered. Was the activity implemented as planned? What were the successes and challenges? Did the activity result in the desired outcome?
- 4. Act.** Use what was learned to decide on a path forward. *Adopt* strategies that resulted in the desired change. *Adapt* promising strategies that can be improved upon and tested again. Identify the changes to be made prior to trying again. *Abandon* strategies that are not working as expected. Identify what other strategies could be tried to reach the desired change.

The Study and Act points in the cycle are opportunities to communicate about implementation and gather feedback from staff. Celebrate what is working, be transparent about what is not and continue to center staff voice when making decisions about the strategies used in the educator wellness plan.



Document decisions that are made about policy, practice and process change. Codify or operationalize these changes to endure wellness team and leadership transitions and to ensure sustainability.

## APPENDIX A: Data Collection Worksheet

Use this worksheet to organize educator wellness data. Complete the following fields:

- **Data Source:** List the name of the data source.
- **Type of Data:** Identify the type of data. These could be school climate and culture surveys, staff exit surveys, staff retention and absenteeism data, staff satisfaction surveys, or professional development evaluations.
- **Data Description:** Briefly describe the data in the report that will be useful to the educator wellness work.
- **Applicable Areas:** Place an “x” in the category that the data applies to: growth, balanced, seen, safe and/or supported.

DATA SOURCE	TYPE OF DATA	DATA DESCRIPTION	APPLICABLE AREAS				
			GROWTH	BALANCED	SEEN	SAFE	SUPPORTED



## APPENDIX B: Data Collection Summary Sheet

Use this worksheet to map data across the five components of a whole educator and determine the school's strengths and areas for growth.

FIVE COMPONENTS OF THE WHOLE EDUCATOR	AREAS OF STRENGTH	AREAS FOR GROWTH
<p><b>GROWTH:</b> Educators have access to quality training, education and mentoring that fosters clear and equitable paths for career advancement. Staff are provided professional development and coaching that builds and expands their skills.</p>		
<p><b>BALANCED:</b> Educators are seen as whole people and boundaries are in place to support a work-life balance. The necessary resources, benefits and supports are available to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and, to the degree appropriate, offer autonomy and flexibility.</p>		
<p><b>SEEN:</b> Educator voice is valued and they feel authentically engaged in workplace decisions that encourage shared leadership, ownership and provide clear connections to organizational goals. There are processes in place to support and center educator voice in decision making that gives dignity and provides meaning to their work.</p>		
<p><b>SAFE:</b> Educators work in an environment that is physically and psychologically safe. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is embraced to center mutual respect and trust for individuals. A school's policies and practices ensure a secure building, structures and premises that meet safety and environmental standards.</p>		
<p><b>SUPPORTED:</b> Educators work in a culture that cultivates trusting relationships and fosters collaboration and teamwork. Staff work in an environment with clear and consistent communication from leaders that is respectful and fosters trust.</p>		

## APPENDIX C: Educator Wellness Plan Template

### SECTION ONE: THREE-TIERED REFLECTION AND BRAINSTORM TOOL

SMARTIE GOAL:

TIER	GUIDING QUESTIONS	BRAINSTORM
<p><b>Individual</b> approaches that teach educators self-care, wellness and stress techniques.</p>	<p>What health and wellness supports and employee benefits are in place?</p> <p>Are self-care practices part of the daily practices?</p> <p>Do staff feel they can access needed supports?</p>	
<p><b>Interpersonal</b> approaches build workplace relationships and supports.</p>	<p>What is the quality of relationships among staff?</p> <p>Is there a professional development or coaching that would provide support?</p> <p>What type of workplace relationships and actions are modeled for staff, and does it build or erode trust?</p>	
<p><b>Organizational</b> approaches change the organization's culture to mitigate stress.</p>	<p>Are there systems-level policies or practices that are stressors?</p> <p>Is there an absence of structures (e.g., policies, mechanisms for staff feedback) that has led to the stressors?</p> <p>What changes could be made to mitigate these stressors?</p>	

For each goal, review the strategies and organize them using these discussion points to help determine which should be included as objectives in the educator wellness plan.

**SECTION TWO: ASSESS FOR CAPACITY, READINESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**SMARITE GOAL:**

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION	SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
Which are quick wins or could be written as short-term objectives?	
Which were popular among staff but would take time to implement?	
If a strategy resonated with staff but seems difficult or too large to implement, discuss if it can be simplified or broken down into smaller, simpler steps.	
What is the locus of control?	

Based on the data, staff feedback and team discussions, for each goal develop the objectives and the associated activities that will be implemented.

**SECTION THREE: EDUCATOR WELLNESS PLAN**

**SMARITE GOAL:**

**OBJECTIVE:**

What activities are needed to meet the objective? Identify any resources needed.	How will the objective and activities be communicated and promoted to staff?	How will school leadership actively promote and support this objective and activities?	How will the objective and activities be measured?

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**HOW DOES THIS GOAL AND ITS ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVES CONNECT TO THE OVERALL WORK OF THE SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS?**

## APPENDIX D: Key Themes and Index of Strategies Used at DC Public and Public Charter Schools

The themes listed below are representative of educator wellness work and strategies that resonated across multiple DC schools.

### Key Themes Across the Strategies:

- **Transparent and Regular Communication.** This is a theme elevated throughout the Blueprint and has been key in many educator wellness plans. It is often central to a need to build trust, provide opportunities to center staff voice and to increase dialogue between staff and leadership regarding why and how decisions are made.
- **Connection and Building Relationships.** Trusting, respectful and authentic peer-to-peer and employee to supervisor relationships are important to decrease and mitigate workplace stress. Creating a school culture where there is no fear of retribution or judgement for sharing honest opinions and there are opportunities for staff to connect as people, appreciate one another and have fun.
- **Acknowledgement of the Importance of Mental Health.** Naming and promoting the importance of mental health, its connection to staff stress and their ability to show up as their best self in the workplace and the influence of the work environment and surrounding community.
- **Professional Development that Supports the Unique Needs of Staff.** Opportunities for staff to engage in forms of professional development that are responsive and unique to the needs of their school community, to their professional growth and provide feedback on in their field of study while not being evaluative in nature, e.g., coaching, mentorship, peer-to-peer observations.
- **Work/Life Balance.** Honoring staff as whole people who have commitments outside of work and evaluating policies, procedures or practices that might cause additional stress and burden.
- **Leadership Capacity Building.** An opportunity within leadership teams to reflect on the needs shared by staff as compared to their styles of management and for leadership to determine: 1) what a leader may be doing that helps to build trust, create authentic and respectful relationships and mitigate staff stress; and 2) what a leader may be doing that inhibits trust building, causes negative relationships and contributes to stress in the work environment.

### Index of Strategies

The strategies below are organized by the three tiers of the Approach, individual, interpersonal and organizational. These are example of strategies and activities used in DC schools. Each school community is different, and these may or may not work for every school however, they are provided for inspiration and guidance when developing your own unique school plan. In addition, this education brief, [Structural Support to Promote Teacher Well-Being](#), provides strategies to consider and to avoid when creating your plans.

**Individual:** Approaches that teach staff self-care, wellness and stress techniques.

**Think About:** What health and wellness benefits are in place? Are self-care practices part of the daily work environment? Do staff feel they can access these supports?

#### This could look like:

- Book clubs on topics related to trauma-informed practices and DEIB to help navigate difficult conversations and provide professional learning.
- Training and coaching around adult social-emotional skills to better understand and reflect on one's own stress triggers and how to manage them.
- Wellness challenges that support individual goals and build community.
- On-site movement and wellness classes, e.g., Zumba, yoga, nutrition, meditation.
- Mindfulness and stress management techniques are encouraged to build muscle and knowledge of tools, especially in moments of crisis.
- Sharing and promotion of financial wellness resources, especially those offered through workplace benefits packages.
- Capacity building for leadership to reflect on their leadership practices and how those contribute to or help to mitigate staff stress.

**Interpersonal:** Approaches that focus on building workplace relationships and supports.

**Think About:** What is the relationship between staff and managers or staff and teams? Is there professional development or coaching that would provide support? What type of workplace relationships and actions are modeled for staff – does it bolster a positive environment and build trust or add to stress and uneasiness? Is there [relational trust](#)?

**This could look like:**

- Open, continuous, action-oriented and non-punitive conversations on staff wellness.
- Restorative practices to build and strengthen relationships and navigate difficult conversations.
- Conversations to integrate DEIB as a way to build work place relationships.
- Focus on co-teacher relationships to create roommate agreements and schedule time to plan together.
- Training and professional development around adult social-emotional skills to better respond to and interact with colleagues to foster trusting and respectful relationships.
- Incorporating intentional ways to build community into the work week and during meetings, e.g., time to recognize and celebrate staff, walking meetings and check-ins, etc.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring by partnering junior and senior staff.

**Organizational:** Approaches that focus on changing the organization’s culture to mitigate stress from occurring.

**Think About:** Is there any system policy or practice that contributes to the stressor? Is there an absence of structure, guidance or staff feedback that has led to the stressor? What changes could be made to alleviate the stress? For leadership, how might your actions contribute to the stress?

**This could look like:**

- Reviewing and updating wellness-related policies and practices, such as offering staff mental health days. Non-evaluative feedback for staff through coaching, mentorship, peer-to-peer opportunities, etc.
- Asset mapping to identify opportunities for staff-led professional development based on an educator’s skills and strengths.
- Flexible scheduling.
- Intentional conversations and reflection on DEIB in the workplace and how some school policies, practices or processes may not be equitable.
- Intentional acknowledgement of work/life boundaries. For example, being aware of emails and other communication after work hours.
- Mindfulness and stress management techniques incorporated into daily work environment to build muscle and knowledge of tools, especially in moments of crisis.
- Discussion about workload, frequency of meetings and planning time.
- Leadership implements processes to build awareness of school decisions and include staff in decision making. This could look like: 1) communicating with staff regarding professional development, school goals, initiatives or programs; 2) providing opportunities for staff discussion and feedback; and 3) looping back with staff on the rationale for decisions that have been made. The latter can include transparency on how their feedback was considered, why certain feedback was taken and why other feedback was not.
- Opportunities for [distributive leadership](#).
- Reflection about and updates to how the school manages student behavior to ensure consistency to the process and opportunities for staff feedback.

*Note: Depending on the facilitation experience of your school staff and current status of work place relationships, a trained facilitator may be required. If so, look to partnerships your school currently has who may have the skillset required.*



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