

School Employee Wellness Guide

Protecting a School's Most Valuable Resource

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OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
— CHAMPION EXCELLENCE —



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20.3%

of Oklahomans reported having
1-13 mentally unhealthy days
in the last month.¹

¹ [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey Data](http://www.health.state.ok.us/stats/Health_Surveys/BRFSS/Statistics11.shtml) - http://www.health.state.ok.us/stats/Health_Surveys/BRFSS/Statistics11.shtml



INTRODUCTION

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has developed this School Employee Wellness Guide to provide information about wellness programs and practical tools that schools can use in implementing these programs.

To continue to improve the quality of achievement of our students, we must also improve the quality of health of our school employees.

School programs of the 21st century should include the ten components of the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model, which includes a focus on employee wellness. School employee wellness programs are designed to increase recruitment, retention and productivity of staff by focusing on improving the health and quality of life of employees and create an environment where every individual is:

- **HEALTHY**
- **SAFE**
- **ENGAGED**
- **SUPPORTED**
- **CHALLENGED**

With employee wellness programs, schools can:

- Promote the health and reduce health-risk behaviors of employees
- Identify and correct conditions that can compromise the health of school employees
- Reduce levels of stress in adults
- Increase productivity
- Reduce escalating health care costs

Teachers and staff are a school's most valuable resource, and school policies should include programs that focus on the health of employees. In too many cases, adults in Oklahoma schools are not offered wellness opportunities.

14.3%

of Oklahomans reported having
14-30 mentally unhealthy days
in the last month.²

² [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey Data](http://www.health.state.ok.us/stats/Health_Surveys/BRFSS/Statistics11.shtml) - http://www.health.state.ok.us/stats/Health_Surveys/BRFSS/Statistics11.shtml



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Effective wellness initiatives are to be inclusive of all employees and customized to their needs, interests and culture. The components of a successful and comprehensive employee wellness program should include:

1. Health-promoting activities that focus on **healthy** lifestyle behaviors that are subject to change along with the distribution of information, building of awareness and access to facilities that are tailored to employees' needs and interests.
2. **Safe**, supportive environments, including expectations about healthy behaviors and implementation of policies that promote health and safety and focus on the reduction of chronic diseases.
3. Programs that increase **engagement**, such as employee assistance, emergency care, mental health support and programs that help employees balance family and work life.
4. Education and resources to **support** employees on their decisions about health care.
5. Screening programs, which are linked to medical care to ensure follow up and appropriate treatment as necessary.
6. Individual follow-up interventions to support **challenges** that may arise with behavior change.
7. An improvement process to help **enhance** the wellness program's effectiveness and efficiency.

Potential Benefits of a School Employee Wellness Programs

1. Decreased employee absenteeism
2. Lower health care and insurance costs
3. Increased employee retention
4. Improved morale
5. Recruitment tool for prospective employees
6. Increased productivity
7. Increased participation in practicing healthy behaviors
8. Healthy role models for students
9. Stress reduction and support for overall mental health

3RD

Oklahoma has the third-highest adult obesity rate in the nation and currently ranks 8th among states in diabetes diagnosis.³

³[The State of Obesity](https://stateofobesity.org/states/ok) - <https://stateofobesity.org/states/ok>

ESTABLISHING YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM



Build Support

Network with individuals ranging from district and school leadership, employees and community stakeholders.



Assemble a Team

Identify those who can be champions for this vision and build a committee that focuses on the goals of the program, implementation and revision.



Gather Information

Survey potential participants and work to identify needs and targets for your wellness program.



Plan for Success

Develop a timeline with goals and a written plan to guide the program initiatives.



Maximize the Impact

Use communication and strategies to boost participation.



Collect Results

Record data to show the impact of the program and share it with stakeholders.



Maintain Program Growth

Use evaluation strategies to continue the success of the program.

239,669

Heart disease cases in Oklahoma in 2010.



HOW TO BUILD SUPPORT

The following groups are essential when establishing, implementing and sustaining successful school employee wellness programs:

- **School District Personnel** who may currently implement wellness programs
- **Administrative Leaders** who make decisions, approve policies and provide administrative support
- **School Employees** who will benefit from the wellness programs
- **Community Stakeholders**

School District Personnel

Those who design and implement school wellness programs are the intended audience for this wellness guide. These may be individuals who implement health programs for students and could include school health coordinators, school nurses, psychologists, health educators, nutrition professionals, physical educators and counselors. School sites interested in implementing a school employee wellness program will also find this information useful and relevant.

Administrative Leaders

It's important to have administrators who have the authority to approve policies and provide support that is essential for an employee wellness program. These can include school board members, superintendents, district leadership and school site principals.

School Employees

School Employees include the instructional staff, administrators, support staff, child nutrition staff and school counselors.

Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders who share the same vision and mission of improving the health of employees within the school are vital to the program's success. The community is a great support system and can help integrate new program offerings and services to employee wellness programs.

752,463

Arthritis cases in Oklahoma in 2010.



ACTION PLAN

A well-developed action plan acts as a blueprint for program activities, develops investment of stakeholders, demonstrates desired outcomes to administrative leaders and should be used to justify the use of resources.

Implementing the school employee wellness plan into the overall improvement of a district can help institutionalize the program. The action plan should demonstrate cultural awareness and include the following:

Mission Statement

This statement establishes goals and objectives. The development will clarify what an employee wellness program should hope to accomplish and will provide a forum for discussion of committee members' expectations.

Consider these questions:

- What is our vision for a school employee wellness program?
- How does this vision relate to the district's mission?

Goals

When setting goals, wellness committees should be realistic about what can be accomplished. Start with making a list of short-term and long-term intentions with the understanding that it isn't necessary to address all goals simultaneously. What's important is what the program intends to achieve over time.

Consider these questions:

- Offer or implement health education
- Develop a supportive environment
- Integrate school employee wellness into district culture
- Implement an employee assistance program
- Offer screening programs
- Offer interventions to support behavior change
- Help employees become better informed about when and how to use health care services
- Evaluate and improve school employee wellness programs

Measurable Outcomes

Measurable outcomes are statements of what a district or school will do to achieve each goal. These statements should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

Consider these questions:

- What is expected to change or occur?
- What/how much change is expected?
- Where and when will the change occur?

Activities that Demonstrate Cultural Awareness

After the goals and measurable outcomes have been developed, committee members should decide what activities to implement in order to achieve them. Multiple activities may be planned for each goal or outcome. Cultural factors should be considered in this planning phase and should address health concerns and the needs of diverse populations.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines cultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. It means to be respectful and responsive to the health beliefs and practices of diverse population groups.”³

Consider these questions:

- Do policies reflect the interests of the diverse populations served?
- What do I need to know about the cultures being served?
- What beliefs do I have that could negatively influence perceptions or interactions with individuals who are different from me?
- Are my assessment tools and programs culturally appropriate?
- How can we use professional learning opportunities to educate other school staff about respecting cultural differences?

Plan Implementation

The first steps of implementing a school employee wellness program should be to bring awareness and promotion of the program. Engagement with employees is key, and districts should consider starting with simple initiatives that are easy to implement and cost little or nothing. This helps provide visibility and can promise immediate success.

Initial programming ideas:

- Walking program
- Presentation on nutrition or stress management
- Health-related speakers during professional learning days

³ [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention/cultural-competence) - <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention/cultural-competence>

Other potential offerings

- Promotional campaigns for attending health screenings
- On-site flu shots and immunizations
- First Aid and CPR Certification opportunities
- Nutrition recipe clubs
- On-site cancer screenings
- Full health insurance
- Support groups
- Chronic disease resources
- Ergonomic workstations
- Exercise equipment for employee use
- On-site exercise facilities
- On-site fitness classes
- Financial literacy workshops
- Professional development opportunities
- Exercise challenges
- Intramural sports teams
- On-site fitness assessments
- Subsidized fitness memberships
- Nutritious foods campaign
- Discounts on healthier food choices
- School garden
- Cooking classes
- Employee benefits fair
- Subsidies for weight loss programs
- Substance-free campus policy
- Tobacco cessation program
- Mental health counseling
- Health literacy classes
- Space for relaxation or meditation breaks
- Lactation rooms with policies to support breastfeeding
- Recognition of staff achievement

Evaluation Plan

A plan to evaluate the program recognizes potential changes needed, determines how well objectives are being met and identifies the effects of the program. Needs assessments and surveys should be used at the start of the program and continue throughout the process. Data from these surveys can help evaluate program goals. Sample surveys can be found in the resources section of this document.

59,906

Obesity-related cancer cases in
Oklahoma in 2010.



RESOURCES

Did you know?

Employees that are a part of the state insurance coverage plans are eligible for benefits through the Oklahoma Employee Well-Being Program, **Thrive**. Benefits include classes and trainings, support groups, financial well-being education, fitness membership discounts, recreation leagues and more at no cost to employees or employers!

- [Thrive: Oklahoma Employee Well-Being](http://thrive.ok.gov) – thrive.ok.gov
- [Education Week: The Impact of Employee Wellness on School Staff](https://youtube.com/watch?v=ArkQknLu4IE) – youtube.com/watch?v=ArkQknLu4IE
- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation: Staff Wellness Ideas to Make Your Whole School Healthier](https://youtube.com/watch?v=opmm0EluA6A) – youtube.com/watch?v=opmm0EluA6A
- [OEA Choice Trust: Success Stories](http://oechoice.com/success-stories) – oechoice.com/success-stories
- [The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model: A guide to Implementation](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/chronicdisease.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/school_health/NACDD_TheWholeSchool_FINAL.pdf) – c.ymcdn.com/sites/chronicdisease.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/school_health/NACDD_TheWholeSchool_FINAL.pdf
- [Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools: School Employee Wellness Webinar Series](http://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/school-employees/webinars) – thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/school-employees/webinars
- [OEA Choice Trust: School Employee Health and Well-Being Needs Surveys](http://oechoice.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Staff-Needs-and-Interest-Survey-PDF.pdf) – oechoice.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Staff-Needs-and-Interest-Survey-PDF.pdf
- [Kaiser Permanente: Monthly Health Topics](http://business.kaiserpermanente.org/thrive/monthly-health-topics) – business.kaiserpermanente.org/thrive/monthly-health-topics
- [Region of Waterloo Public Health: Evaluation Tools](http://projecthealth.ca/sites/default/files/files/Evaluation%20Tools%20for%20Workplace%20Wellness%20Activities.pdf) – projecthealth.ca/sites/default/files/files/Evaluation%20Tools%20for%20Workplace%20Wellness%20Activities.pdf
- [Kauffman Foundation: Evaluation Reporting Guide](http://kauffman.org/evaluation/evaluation-reporting-guide) – kauffman.org/evaluation/evaluation-reporting-guide
- [Community Tool Box: Sustaining the Work or Initiative](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/sustaining-work-or-initiative) – ctb.ku.edu/en/sustaining-work-or-initiative



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