Practice what you preach:
Developing interactive wellness policies and procedures for active education environments

Penelope Friday, MPH, CHES
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coordinator

Kelsey Barrick, MS
Wellness and Physical Activity Coordinator
What is Wellness?

- **EMOTIONAL**: Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL**: Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being.
- **INTELLECTUAL**: Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills.
- **PHYSICAL**: Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition.
- **FINANCIAL**: Satisfaction with current and future financial situations.
- **SOCIAL**: Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system.
- **SPIRITUAL**: Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life.
- **OCCUPATIONAL**: Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one’s work.
Why Teacher Wellness?

- You are always ‘ON’

- The promotion of teacher health and wellness is just as important as student health and wellness and may lead to a more positive and effective learning environment overall.

- Teacher burnout is REAL: Average is 5 years in profession

- Integrating educator wellness into schools means addressing policy and practices which will create a culture
Statistics on Teacher Stress

When describing stress in their own words, 61% of educators say that their work is always or often stressful and over 50% say that they don’t have the same enthusiasm as when they started teaching.

• A study that measured stress and coping levels found that educators with both low levels of stress and high coping abilities were extremely rare: 7% of all teachers.

• Another poll revealed that half of teachers agree with the following statement: “The stress and disappointments involved with teaching at this school aren’t really worth it.” Unfortunately, this trend is only increasing in both severity and frequency.

• A 2017 survey revealed that 58% of educators characterized their mental health as “not good” for at least a week out of the last month, which is up 24% from just 2015.
The State of our State

- Indiana is the 12th most obese state in the U.S.

- Over two thirds (68.0%) of Indiana adults are overweight or obese
  - 33.6% obese; 34.4% overweight
  - 3 million Hoosiers; enough to populate the entire state of Kentucky

- Adults who consume fruit less than one time per day; 40.7%

- Adults who consume veggies less than one time per day; 27.6%
**Student Achievement and Teacher Health**

- Research supports negative correlations between emotional exhaustion in teachers and average student grades, standardized test scores, and school satisfaction.

- It also shows that 75% of teachers have experienced “psychological, physical or behavioral symptoms because of work”
  - significantly higher portion than the overall population

- Better job satisfaction decreases physical symptoms in teachers
  - The less satisfied a teacher is, the more likely they are to experience significant physical health problems. Sick and apathetic teachers miss school most often, further affecting their engagement with their students and their students’ achievement levels.
Solutions to Teacher Stress

Structural changes

• Support programs
  – Set up relevant workshops and programs for teachers. You can include mentorship from teachers in the same subject, opportunities to communicate constructively with administrators, and workshops on time management and team building.

• Wellness programs
  – With improved health outcomes (BMI, BP, Cholesterol) employees had lower medical claims payments, leading to over three thousand dollars in savings for the district, which paid for the cost of the program three times over.

Individual changes

• Arrive at school early for productive quiet time before the chaos begins

• Leave school on Friday with the next week prepped so Sunday isn’t the most exhausting day of the week

• Close the door during prep periods so socializing doesn’t eat up work time

• Share the workload with other teachers by planning lessons together

• Give time-consuming (but simple) tasks like photocopying to parent volunteers

• Don’t overcommit with extracurriculars
Be Physically Active

- As school professionals, you have heard 60 minutes for students is best.
- What about YOU?
- New CDC Physical Activity Guidelines were released in 2018.
PA Guidelines

• **(Same)** Recommendations for adults are also the same at 150-300 minutes of mod/vig activity per week, including resistance activity.

• **(New)** They’ve changed the guideline that 10-minute bouts of PA add up to the required amount to ANY amount of PA done throughout the day is beneficial
  – Again, not just in 10 minute bouts.

• **(New)** New evidence shows that physical activity has immediate health benefits. For example, physical activity can reduce anxiety and blood pressure and improve quality of sleep and insulin sensitivity. This was assumed in the previous guidelines but never explicitly stated.
PA Guidelines

- **(New)** Again, previously known but is now explicitly stated, meeting the recommendations in the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans consistently over time can lead to even more long-term health benefits. (New benefits appear in bold with *.)

  - For youth, physical activity can help improve **cognition,** bone health, fitness, and heart health. It can also reduce the risk of depression.

  - For adults, physical activity helps prevent 8 types of cancer (bladder,* breast, colon, endometrium,* esophagus,* kidney,* stomach,* and lung*); reduces the risk of **dementia** (including Alzheimer’s disease*), all-cause mortality, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and depression; and improves bone health, physical function, and quality of life.
Movement vs. Exercise

- Intentional but functional
- Can be performed in a variety of spaces
- Complement to exercise
- Still just as valuable and more attainable for teachers
Health Benefits of PA

• For older adults, physical activity lowers the risk of falls and injuries from falls.

• For pregnant women, physical activity reduces the risk of postpartum depression.

• For all groups, physical activity reduces the risk of excessive weight gain and helps people maintain a healthy weight.
Let’s practice

• Leg circle (Ice skating)
• Sit to stand (Dryer move)
• Standing oblique crunch (Little Teapot)

All can easily be done at the desk and can be renamed to not feel like “exercise”
Be Mindful

- Mindfulness training and/or breathing exercises enhance emotional regulation and awareness, recognition, and understanding.

- Setting aside 5-10 minutes per day for mental health has been proven to be extremely beneficial. There are many resources that can be used to implement these practices in the classroom for increased mental wellness for teachers and students.

- WeAreTeachers.com also highlights mindfulness teaching techniques that are aimed for different student age levels.
Eat Well

• Eating healthy can be difficult when time is constantly a factor, but simple tips and tricks may ease the stress of implementing a healthier lifestyle.

• Making sure to have a nutritious breakfast is always encouraged for the students for improved brain power and focus and the same goes for teachers.
  – Prepping the night before can come in handy, for instance, soaking whole grain oats overnight in a low fat or plant-based milk with berries or other fresh fruit will provide a ready-to-go breakfast in the morning.

• Getting in the habit of bringing healthy snacks to class like sliced peppers, cucumbers, carrots, and fresh fruit.
  – If the students see the teacher eating healthy they may be more inclined to mimic the behavior as well.
Wellness Culture

• Only 4 in 10 people believe their leader truly cares about them. If that number 8 in 10, we’d see a 41% reduction in absenteeism.
  – Formulating a healthy workplace culture means focusing on the whole person
  – People show up when they know their leader cares

• 85% of our WORLD is disengaged at work-how do we fix that?
  • Create environments that empower people that their work is meaningful, and they have meaning besides their work

• 7% of employees are thriving in all five elements
  • Those without comprehensive workplace wellness program are 39% more likely to look for a job within a different organization
Fan Favorites

- Saladbration
- Walking meeting
- Healthy Meeting Policy
- Go! Challenges
- Active transportation
- Movement calendar
- Homegrown fruit and veggie exchange
- Call-A-Friend campaign for district collaboration
- Pass it forward
- Wellness newsletter
WELL Model
WELL

- **W** - Willing and able to start the conversation to address needs versus wants for teacher health

- **E** - Educate the importance of serving the whole person

- **L** - Listen to the past, think to the future

- **L** - Lead one effort using SMART Goals to increase overall wellness initiatives
Resources

- Healthy Schools Toolkit
- Low-Budget Guide
- CHOICES Childhood Obesity National Action Toolkit
- School-Based Health Alliance Webinars
School Highlights

• Wayne
  – Pedometer program

• Brownsburg
  – Free yoga and Pilates weekly, free mental health services, an annual Biggest Loser contest

• Pike
  – Around the World Challenge
Wellness Policy Evaluation

One way to get educators practicing wellness is to incorporate it into your existing wellness policy

- Offering a review of current practice
- Address three low-hanging fruit items
- Consultation session
- Provide supports, follow-up, and technical assistance
- Email pfriday@isdh.in.gov
Questions?

Thank you!