

ENHANCING TEACHER WELL-BEING THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT: WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS CAN DO



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Suggested Audience: K-12 School Leaders

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This brief applies educational psychology, policy, and leadership research to indicate how school leaders can promote teacher well-being through administrative support.

KEY DEFINITION AND FINDINGS

- Teacher well-being can be defined as “individuals’ positive perceptions of their job, and their effective, healthy functioning within the workplace.”¹
- When teachers experience greater well-being, they are more engaged and motivated, leading to effective instruction and a positive classroom climate. By prioritizing teacher well-being, schools can improve retention, reduce turnover, and preserve valuable institutional knowledge.^{2,3}
- According to the Pew Research Center’s 2024 report, 77% of public K-12 teachers said their job was frequently stressful, and 68% said it was overwhelming.⁴



SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

 <p>1. Seek and Incorporate Teachers’ Feedback⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with teachers to create shared goals by co-designing school improvement plans during summer retreats or staff development days.⁶• Establish open communication channels by implementing open-door policies, administering surveys, and conducting feedback sessions.⁷• Include teachers on year-long instructional leadership teams that meet regularly to review student data, plan professional development, and inform schoolwide decisions.⁸
 <p>2. Provide Professional Learning Opportunities^{9,10}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate opportunities for peer collaboration and mentoring by creating structured peer-observation cycles with reflective activities.^{11,12}• Assist teachers in identifying and attending conferences of interest by offering small stipends and highlighting relevant opportunities.¹³• Frame professional development as a meaningful, communal learning experience where school members collectively enhance their competence by creating time to work on shared instructional challenges.¹⁴
 <p>3. Support Teachers’ Mental Health¹⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge teacher challenges and conduct brief monthly one-on-one or small group check-ins to ensure workloads are manageable.¹⁶• Cultivate mindfulness practices for stress management and improved instruction by offering optional mindfulness workshops.¹⁷• Intervene and mediate behavioral issues and parental complaints that go beyond teachers’ capacity by developing a clear escalation protocol that empowers teachers and facilitates school leaders’ timely intervention.¹⁸

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FOR EACH SUGGESTION

1. Actively seek teachers' feedback and insights and incorporate them into decision-making processes.

- At a summer retreat, the principal invites grade-level teams to review student performance data and set three measurable schoolwide goals (e.g., improving reading fluency, increasing parent engagement).
- An instructional leadership team made up of teachers, special education specialists, and counselors meets monthly to review assessment data and recommends tailored professional development.
- The principal institutes "Feedback Friday," where teachers can anonymously submit suggestions or concerns through a digital form. The principal then reviews the themes with staff and shares how the feedback will shape decisions (e.g., adjusting meeting schedules, addressing workload concerns).



2. Provide meaningful and active professional learning opportunities that enhance teachers' perceived competence.

- During monthly staff meetings, the assistant principal highlights upcoming conferences aligned with school priorities. The school sets aside funds to provide \$200 stipends for teachers who attend, with the expectation that they share key takeaways with other school members.
- Instead of hiring outside consultants for every professional development day, the principal invites teacher-leaders to co-facilitate workshops on practices they have successfully implemented.
- The school supports teacher learning communities (TLCs) organized by interest areas. Each TLC meets monthly during a common planning period; teachers share student work samples, reflect on successes and challenges, and set instructional goals for the next month.



3. Support teachers' mental health by advocating for them and providing necessary resources.

- School leaders schedule 15-minute informal check-ins each month—either one-on-one or with small teams—to ask, "How's your workload? Where could you use help?" This open acknowledgment helps normalize challenges and enables support for real-time needs.
- The leaders provide professional development sessions on mental health and emotion regulation. For example, they invite a certified mindfulness practitioner to lead a six-week optional lunchtime series, where interested teachers can learn simple techniques for stress reduction and reflection (see Reschke & Gill's 2026 practice brief⁹ for the impact of mindfulness intervention).
- The school has a system in which any recurring or serious behavioral issue is flagged by the teacher through a quick referral form. Within 24 hours, the assistant principal or behavior specialist follows up by offering classroom support, meeting with the student and family, or guiding the teacher.



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