

## Wellness Benefits Tip Sheet

*Wellness: The state of being in good physical and mental health.*

Wellness involves...

- Disease prevention
- A focus on fitness and nutrition
- Becoming aware of and making choices towards a healthy lifestyle

Today's educators take on an endless task to create and maintain a school culture that is physically, mentally, and emotionally safe for staff, students, and families. And they often work directly—over extended periods of time—with students and families who are under duress. Ohio has created [resources](#) and [funding opportunities](#) for student wellness programs and has integrated wellness into the state strategic plan for education.

According to the [National Association of State Boards of Education](#) (NASBE), nearly half of all U.S. teachers report experiencing high levels of stress daily during the school year. Unless school systems support employee wellness, it will be difficult for them to address student wellness needs.

Wellness programs are offered by more than half (58%) of US employers. Source: 2019 Employee Benefits, SHRM

### Wellness Benefits Matter!

The research is clear, healthy educators are better equipped to support student development when they themselves are mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally well. They are also more productive and less likely to be absent.

- The return on investment for disease management is \$3.80 for every dollar spent. (Source: [Rand Corporation](#), 2014)
- Organizations with highly effective wellness programs report significantly lower voluntary attrition than do those whose programs have low effectiveness (9% vs. 15%) (Source: Study by Towers Watson and the National Business Group on Health).
- Mental health is among the most limiting health conditions in terms of performing major daily activities. Approximately 6-7% of full-time U.S. workers experienced major depression (MDD) within the past year. The total economic burden of MDD is now estimated to be \$210.5 billion per year. (Source: [Center for Workplace Mental Health](#))

## Wellness Benefits: What are education organizations offering?

Wellness offerings range from system-wide efforts to participatory programs.

### System-wide Wellness Programs

Wellness programs can reinforce system-wide efforts to create an overall positive, safe, and healthy culture. The following examples are provided to help you learn more about system-wide wellness programs.

- [North Allegheny School District](#) (3-min video)
- [Metro Nashville Public Schools](#) (3-min video)

### On-site Health Clinics

On-site clinics can provide employees, students, and their families convenient access to preventative care and other healthcare services. The following examples are provided to help you learn more about on-site health clinics.

- [Wolves Wellness Center at West Clermont](#) (West Clermont Schools, Ohio)
- [The Bridge Health Center](#) (City of St Charles Schools, Missouri)

### Mental Health

The [Center for Workplace Mental Health](#) provides tips for advancing mental health of employees and their families.

### Other Examples of Wellness Benefits

While not an exhaustive list, the following examples illustrate the variety of wellness offerings that can be incorporated into school-based wellness programs.

- Participatory wellness programs
- On-site seasonal flu vaccinations
- Annual health risk assessment
- Stress management
- Healthy food at work
- CPR/First-aid training
- On-site blood pressure machine
- Nutrition counseling
- Standing desk stations
- Stretch at your desk
- Quiet room (meditation, nap, etc.)
- Off-site and/or on-site fitness classes
- Speaker series available to staff, students, and families
- Walk and talk meetings

- Smoking surcharges to healthcare plans
- Healthcare discount for participating in annual health risk assessments, wellness programs, etc.

## Starting the Conversation on Wellness Benefits

To be fully present and professionally effective, employees must first care for themselves. If your system is planning to offer or increase wellness benefits, gather input from your employees on their wants and needs at work to support the physical, mental, and/or the emotional health of employees.