

# SCHOOL EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

A Guide for Protecting the Assets of Our Nation's Schools



# A Valuable Asset

*School districts put a valuable asset of the nation's schools at risk when they ignore the health of their employees.*

## WHY?

### BECAUSE...

- Actions and conditions that affect employee health also influence students' health and learning.
- Protecting the physical and mental health of school employees is integral to protecting the health of students and ensuring their academic success.



# Why Implement Employee Wellness Programs?

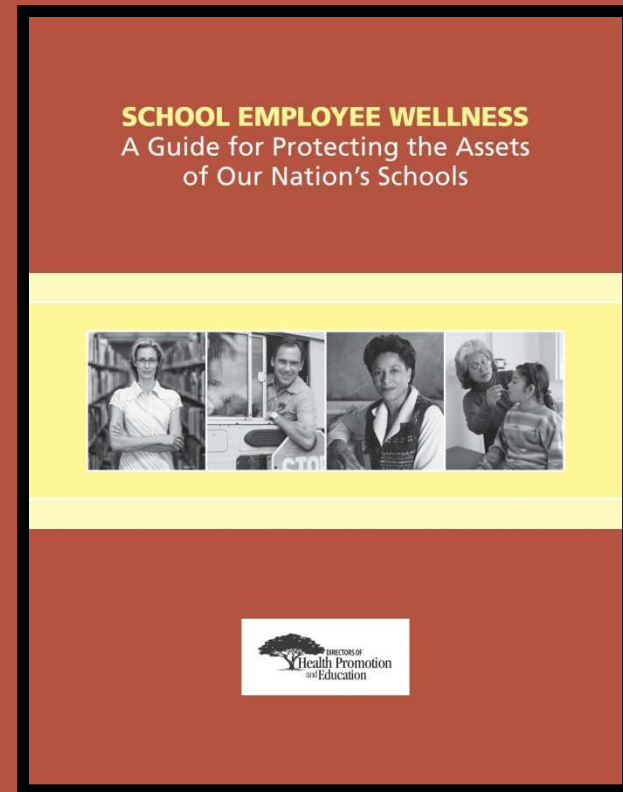
## Employee Wellness Programs:

- Promote the health and reduce health risk behaviors of employees.
- Identify and correct conditions in the workplace that:
  - compromise the health of school employees,
  - reduce school employees' levels of productivity,
  - impede student success, and
  - contribute to escalating health care costs.



# Introducing the Guide

- Provides information about School Employee Wellness Programs
- Supplies practical tools and resources to support their implementation
- Developed by the Directors of Health Promotion and Education with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



# ***Why Wellness Programs for School Employees?***

## **INCLUDES:**

- Information about wellness programs in the business sector
  - Costs of mental illnesses, occupational illnesses, and health care
  - Financial impact of employee wellness programs
- Information about wellness programs for employees of schools
  - The beginning of school employee wellness programs
  - The benefits of school employee wellness programs



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# ***Establishing a School Employee Wellness Program***

## **INCLUDES:**

- Key Principles for School Employee Wellness Programs
  - Integrate into the CSHP
  - Tailor to the health needs of participants
  - Start small and build a foundation
  - Gather support from a cross section of the school community
- Nine Steps for Establishing an Employee Wellness Program



# School Employee Wellness

## The Nine Steps

Step 1: *Obtain Administrative Support.*

Step 2: *Identify Resources.*

Step 3: *Identify a Leader.*

Step 4: *Organize a Committee.*

Step 5: *Gather and Analyze Data.*

Step 6: *Develop a Plan.*

Step 7: *Implement the Plan.*

Step 8: *Evaluate and Adapt the Plan.*

Step 9: *Sustain the Program.*



# Step 1: Obtain Administrative Support

- The support of the superintendent, school board, principal and vice principal(s)
- Be prepared to address this question: ***“How will a School Employee Wellness Program help our school (or district) achieve its primary mission?”***
- Gather data to make your case, such as:
  - Employee absenteeism,
  - Cost of substitutes,
  - Injury incidence and worker’s compensation claims,
  - Health care cost, and
  - Results of a survey on employee interests.



# Benefits of Employee Wellness Programs

- Lower health care and insurance costs
- Decreased absenteeism
- Increased productivity
- Increased employee retention and morale
- Fewer work-related injuries
- Fewer worker compensation and disability claims
- Prospective employees more easily attracted
- Image in the community more positive
- Increased motivation to practice healthy behaviors
- Employees become healthy role models for students



# Step 2: Identify Resources

- Resources required include:
  - *Qualified personnel*
  - *Space*
  - *Equipment and supplies*
- Resources may already be available:
  - In your school or district, or
  - Through partnerships with agencies and organizations in the community.



# Step 3: Identify a Leader

*“Coordinators are the soul of the program.”*

*– Robin Atwood, University of Texas, Austin*

- Essential skills for a leader include writing, organizational management, marketing, and budgeting.
- Leaders should be pro-active, visibly involved at all times, and promote the program at every possible opportunity.



# Step 4: Organize a Committee

*“One person can do only so much. A team of people who are good motivators champion the program and get people involved.”*

*– Michelle Burke, School Health Coordinator, Hudson Falls Central School District, NY*

## Possible Committee Members Include:

- Representatives of employees the program will affect
- Representatives of the other components of the CSHP
- Administrator who has access to the superintendent
- Managers of human resources, EAPs, workers' compensation, legal, risk management and facilities
- Representatives of community resources



# Step 5: Gather and Analyze Data

- A needs assessment provides key data to develop support for and plan a program
  - Current health-related costs
  - Status of School Employee Wellness Program
  - Interests of school employees
- This data will provide a baseline for monitoring, evaluating and adapting the program over time.
- Data should be collected periodically to inform program changes.



# Step 6: Develop a Plan

- A well-written plan spells out why, how, when and by whom activities will be accomplished.
- A plan should include:
  - A mission statement
  - Goals
  - Measurable objectives
  - Activities
  - Timelines
  - Designated responsibilities
  - Identified resources
  - Budget
  - Evaluation plan



# Step 7: Implement the Plan

*“Baby steps are what you have to take. You’d like to see 100 people but only 10 show up. Be patient and unafraid to try new things.”*

*– Sherrie Yarbro, School Health Coordinator, Tipton County Schools, TN*

## Initial Activities to Consider:

- Offering health screenings
- Taking a team to a wellness conference
- Introducing one or two activities only
- Offering health-related sessions as part of staff development
- Offering activities based on monthly themes
- Organizing a health fair



# Step 8: Evaluate and Adapt the Program

- Evaluations help identify how well objectives are being met, determine the effects of the program and identify ways to improve the program.
  - **Formative (BEFORE):** Need assessments and surveys
  - **Process (DURING):** Data on program implementation strategies and participant response
  - **Outcome (AFTER):** Measurement of program impact



# Step 9: Sustain the Program

- Continuing support of the school board and administration is crucial to program's success.
- Ideas that may help sustain support include:
  - Inviting administrators to attend wellness team meetings,
  - Presenting to the school board at least once a year, and
  - Developing a visual record of the program.

*Although implementing a school employee wellness program can be complex and demanding, those who have pursued its development found that the rewards far outweighed the challenges.*



# ***Useful Tools Included in the Guide***

- Sample letter of invitation to join the wellness team
- Employee wellness survey
- Employee health promotion interest survey
- School Employee Wellness Program checklist
- Sample mission statement
- Examples of national health observances



# ***Resources Included in the Guide***

- Funding Sources
- Publications



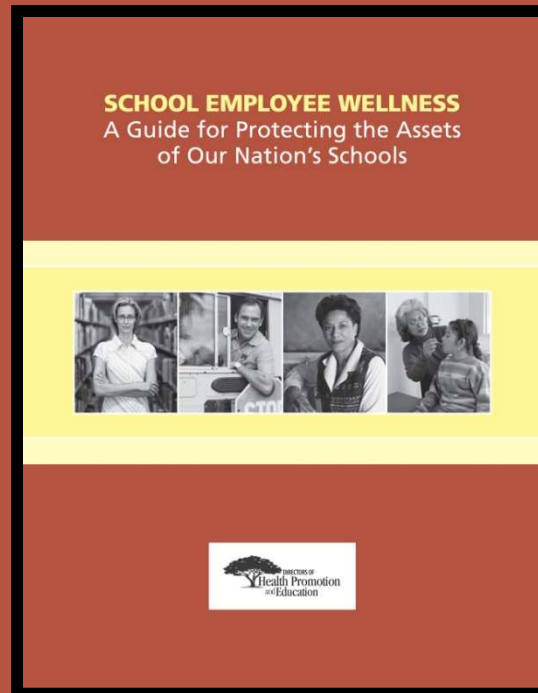
# Staff Wellness Resources at your Fingertips!

- [School Employee Wellness](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services School Health Program](#)
- [Prevention Institute](#)
- [Wellness Proposals](#)
- [Texas Coalition for Worksite Wellness](#)
- [National Institutes of Health “Wealth of Health Information”](#)
- [Health Finder](#)
- [Medline Plus](#)
- [Move! Weight Management Program](#)
- [Walk Across Texas](#)
- [Texas Round-Up](#)
- [Get Fit](#)
- [America on the Move](#)
- [TEXERCISE](#)
- [Health Central Newsletter](#)



# How to Get the Guide

Go to [www.schoolempwell.org](http://www.schoolempwell.org) to download your  
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