EAB

COVID-19 Employee Mental Health Support Audit and Resource Guide

Improve Your System of Mental Health Support for Teachers and Staff in Response to COVID-19

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Instructions

Use this audit to evaluate the resources in place at your institution to support the mental health of teachers and staff. Rate your current capabilities for each criterion with a simple "yes/no" answer and refer to the implementation resources for advice and sample practices. See EAB's COVID-19 resource center for additional implementation resources and sample practices. While this guide is built for public schools, it has been adapted from a higher education resource and still includes relevant higher education examples.

Audit Key

💡 *High impact practice* ▶

Look for the "high impact practice" designation for guidance on where to focus limited time and resources to improve employee mental health and wellness.

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Step 1: Alleviate Anxiety Through Honest, Ongoing, Multi-Channel Communication

Assess Your Institution's **Communication Strategy**	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	**N**	
Our institution has directly acknowledged the increased burden placed on teachers and staff as a result of COVID-19 and has proactively adjusted expectations of essential work responsibilities during this time. **High impact practice**			Reduce stress and enable employees to seek needed support by honestly acknowledging the personal and professional strain resulting from COVID-19 and proactively setting realistic work expectations. See sample letters from Michigan State University and Baylor University
Leadership has established a regular cadence of communication (i.e. daily, weekly) to update teachers and staff on the district's response to COVID-19. **High impact practice**			Do not wait for "breaking news"—send regular emails with updates about your district's response to COVID-19, even if some updates are short or simply offer messages of gratitude. See samples from Klein Independent School District and Montgomery County Public Schools
Our district has a process and multiple communication channels through which teachers and staff can ask pressing questions and provide feedback. **High impact practice**			Make this process clear on your website and use a combination of communication channels to enhance accessibility and encourage participation. Samples include: • A dedicated email address • An embedded webform • A coronavirus helpline • Virtual town hall meetings (see Atlanta Public Schools and Klein Independent School District) For virtual town hall meetings, consider allowing employees to submit questions in advance.
Our district has a dedicated COVID-19 webpage that archives all communication and supporting resources in a centralized location.			Archive COVID-19 related communications on a centralized webpage to increase transparency and ease for future reference. See samples from NOLA Public Schools and Jeffco Public Schools
Our COVID-19 webpage includes a comprehensive FAQ section with detailed answers for key stakeholders, including teachers and staff.			Keep FAQs organized by topic or relevant stakeholders as the list of questions and answers continues to grow. See samples from Fairfax County Public Schools and Denver Public Schools
Email communications are supplemented with regular social media blasts, blog posts, short videos, or podcasts to ensure messages are timely and accessible.			Translate existing information and emails into 1-3 posts per week to keep information digestible, accessible, and personal. Feel free to use posts to direct employees back to centralized repositories of information (e.g. your district website). Samples include Clark County Public Schools' Facebook Page and Princeton Public Schools' Facebook Page

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Step 2: Support the Mental Health and Well-being of Teachers and Staff

Assess Your District's **Mental Health Supports**	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	N	
Our district sends weekly wellness emails to teachers and staff with mental health support resources to encourage self-care and keep well-being top-of-mind. 💡 *High impact practice*			Focus weekly wellness emails on topics like self-compassion, stress reduction, and mindfulness. Be sure to also highlight available support resources and upcoming events. See samples from Simon Fraser University's 14 weekly email templates
Our district has organized virtual events or informational webinars focused on mental health and wellness (e.g. fitness classes, mindfulness breaks, webinar on coping strategies). 💡 *High impact practice*			Offer virtual events that build community, develop resiliency skills, and reinforce healthy coping strategies like exercise and meditation. Survey teachers and staff about the topics and frequency of events that they would find most supportive. See sample event from Montgomery County Public Schools
Our district offers virtual counseling services and support groups for teachers and staff who are struggling with mental health challenges such as anxiety, grief, and social isolation. 💡 *High impact practice*			See EAB's expert insight on technological solutions to improve access to mental health care during COVID-19. See a sample from Beverly Hills High School
Our district provides a comprehensive set of self-serve resources for teachers and staff to focus on mental wellness and self-care.			Provide teachers and staff with wellness and self-care tips, reputable support resources, and details on benefits available through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). See samples from EAB's expert insight, and Montgomery County Public Schools Also direct teachers and staff to free or low-cost mental health and wellness apps. If possible, cover subscription costs for paid apps. See samples from SUNY Geneseo and Smith College
Our district posts mental health resources and tips on social media to improve accessibility and visibility of resources, and to encourage dialogue about mental health and wellness.			Incorporate mental health support resources and topics into your regular flow of social media posts about COVID-19. See samples from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Fairfax County Public Schools

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Step 3: Adjust Administrative Policies to Ease the Impact of COVID-19

Assess Your District's **Performance Evaluation** Policies	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	N	
Teacher performance evaluations will not be punitively used against teachers but may be used to positively acknowledge work being done while in remote instruction.			Consider revising or suspending evaluations this term. Look to your state department of education for guidance on revised performance evaluation protocol.
			For example, see guidance from Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Assess Your District's **Flexible Schedule and Leave** Policies	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	N	
Our district has enabled employees to implement flexible work schedules to support work-life balance (where possible).			See sample guidance and resources from EAB's Conversation Guide for Managers and Yale University
Our district has granted additional paid administrative leave to accommodate extenuating circumstances relating to COVID-19.			See samples from Kansas City Kansas Public Schools and the University of California System

Assess Your District's **Response to Hiring Changes**	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	N	
Our district has communicated any needed hiring freezes, outlining affected roles, and clarifying any impact on the workload, job security, or advancement opportunities for current employees.			Be sure to highlight how a temporary hiring freeze will safeguard your ability to support current students, teachers, and staff.
			See sample statement from Albemarle County Public Schools

Assess Your District's **Health Care Benefits**	Rating		Implementation Resources
	Y	N	
Our district offers telehealth services to employees.			See sample policies from Tattnall County Schools and Fairfax County Public Schools
Employees without enough accrued sick time may use unearned sick days to take care of themselves or family affected by COVID-19.			Consult the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which includes direction on paid sick leave regarding COVID-19.
			See sample policies from Rockwood School District and Woodburn School District