



EAB

How School Districts Can Improve Teacher Morale

The Overlooked Barrier to Pandemic Recovery

Day One: April 6th, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

District Leadership Forum

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Many Thanks to the Advisors of this Work

Teacher Morale Advisory Council

Session #1 Participants

Districts Profiled in Research



Crete Public Schools, Nebraska

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Curtis Hicks, *Superintendent*



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Harvard CUSD, Illinois

Corey Tafoya, *Superintendent*



Norton Public Schools, Massachusetts

- Joseph Baeta, *Superintendent*
- Jen O'Neill, *ASI Teaching & Learning*



Parkway Public Schools, Missouri

- Keith Marty, *Superintendent*
- Chelsea Watson, *Deputy Superintendent*



Prosper ISD, Texas

Bernadette Gerace, *ED Human Resources*



Republic School District, Missouri

Matt Pearce, *Superintendent*

Objectives for This Session



Discuss the presence and impact of low morale among teachers in schools today



Deconstruct the process successful organizations leverage to raise and sustain employee morale



Provide concrete steps that you and your team can take to launch the adoption of this proven process in your district today

Working in Schools Just Keeps Getting Harder



5

Not Only Are District Leaders' Jobs Harder Than Ever...

Evergreen Challenges Worsen

- Expanding academic gaps and needs
- State accountability and mandates
- Decreasing funds

New Challenges Always Emerging

- COVID closures
- Mask and vaccine conflicts
- Mental health crisis
- CRT and other polarization

But the Teaching Profession **Keeps Getting Harder**, Too.



Ever-Increasing Challenges Make Progress an Uphill Battle

“We’ve had to pause our strategic plan this year because of teachers...and learning acceleration is a pipe dream at this point. Teachers are barely holding on let alone innovating in how they are pacing and accelerating learning. And it isn’t that they can’t do it—they have the skills...They are just too spent to do anything new.”

Superintendent
Large School District, Alabama



Tackling Teacher Morale Is Best Bet for Progress



Limits on What District Leaders Can Do to Improve Situation



Hire More Teachers?



Nearly 30% of teacher education programs saw **a decline in enrollment** this year.



Increase Salaries?



Public school dollars are tight, finances are highly regulated, and **competitive pay is a long way off**.



Reinvent Public Perception?



"What we need is a public figure to be to teachers **what Ronald Reagan was for the American soldier**."

Improving Morale Only Remaining Lever



What we can do is make sure [teachers] have as much of a positive experience at school as possible. That is what we are trying to do-- show teachers they are valued and appreciated since they are doing so much."

Why Are We Talking About “Morale?”



Morale Synonyms are Close, But Not Quite Right



“Stress” can help accomplish goals

Definition: Pressure or tension resulting from demanding circumstances



“Dissatisfaction” too low a bar

Definition: Contentedness, comfort with a job



“Burnout” often too narrow in scope

Definition: Feeling unable to do the job because of unmanageable stress



“Demotivated” implies lack of care

Definition: Less eager to work



Whereas burnout happens when teachers are entirely depleted, demoralization happens when teachers are consistently thwarted in their ability to enact the values that brought them to the profession.”

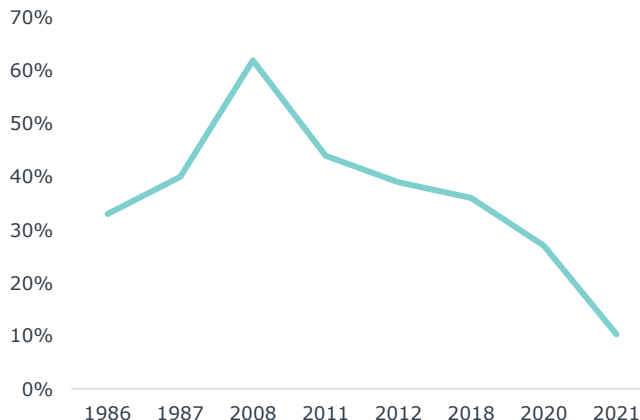
Doris A. Santoro

Author, *Demoralized: Why Teachers Leave the Profession and How They Can Stay*

Morale Will Not Improve Without Action

The Decline of Teacher Morale Overtime

Data from from NCES, MetLife and EAB¹



88%

Of district leaders agree teacher morale is **worse today** than five years ago²

75%

Of teachers report **morale is lower** than pre-pandemic³

70%

Of teachers agreed they are **not able to be the best teacher** they can be for students²

And the Future of Morale, As It Is, Discouraging

- Teacher responsibilities keep increasing
- Data trends on morale over past 20 years unpromising
- Crises (e.g., COVID) that exacerbate low morale will likely evolve into new crises

Sources: Educators for Excellence, "[Voices from the Classroom](#)," 2020; Gallup, State of America's Schools, 2014; Kurtz & Herold, "[Opinion of DeVos Plunging, Truancy Rising: 10 Key Findings From Latest EdWeek Survey](#)," Education Week, April 28, 2020; MetLife, "[The Survey of the American Teacher](#)," 2013; NCES, "[U.S. Highlighted Results From the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey \(TALIS\)](#)," 2018; EAB interviews, surveys, and analysis.

1) N = 4,000; n = 1,000; n = 2400

2) Data from EAB's Teacher Morale Survey, 2021

3) Data from EdWeek

Low Morale Is Bad for Students, Bad for Districts



Negative Impacts on Districts

~80%

Of partners agree that initiative fatigue has led them to postpone their learning acceleration plans until next year.

~50%

Of partners report an increase in mid-year resignations this year.

Negative Impacts on Students

70%

Of relevant studies concluded that teachers with the lowest morale also had the lowest academic student outcomes across core subjects.

78%

Of middle and high school students report feeling less interested in class when their teachers appear “unenergized” or “disengaged.”

At A Time When...



Students Academic and SEL Needs at All-Time High



Growing Substitute and Teacher Shortages



Public Perception of Public K12 Is Strained

Sources: Buttner, Annie, Frontline Education, [The Teacher Shortage, 2021 Edition](#), 4.19.21; Gallup, [The Powerful Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Team Performance](#), 2020; Madigan, Daniel, Kim, Lisa, International Journal of Educational Research, [Does teacher burnout affect students...](#), November 2020. Will, Madeline, Education Week, [As Teacher Morale Hits a New Low, Schools Look for Ways to Give Breaks](#), Restoration, 1.6.21; EAB interviews and analysis.

An Ethical Imperative to Protect Health and Well-being ¹¹

Mental and Physical Health in Jeopardy

Increased Physical Health Risks

23%

Increase in chances of a heart attack



Tied to higher likelihood of Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, headaches, respiratory and gastrointestinal issues.¹

Increased Mental Health Risks

10%

Increase in chances of a major depressive episode

WHO Acknowledges Threat to Health

In 2019, WHO categorized the extreme form of low morale, burnout (defined as chronic, unmanaged workplace stress) as “**an occupational health hazard**” for the first time because of its known negative impact on individual health and wellbeing.

1) Additionally tied to a higher likelihood of cardiovascular disorder, prolonged fatigue gastrointestinal issues, respiratory problems, severe injuries, and mortality below the age of 45 years.

Sources: Patel, Chandani, M.D., ABC News, [Job Stress Linked to Increased Heart-Attack Risk](#), September 2012; Salvagioni, Denise Albiéri Jodas et al. “[Physical, psychological and occupational consequences of job burnout: A systematic review of prospective studies.](#)” *PLoS one* vol. 12,10 e0185781. 4 Oct. 2017, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0185781; Turner, Ashley, CNBC, [The World Health Organization recognizes...](#), May 2019; Wang, Jianli, National Library of Medicine, [Work stress as a risk factor for major depressive episode\(s\)](#), June 2005; EAB interviews and analysis.

Common Myths Have Prevented Progress in the Past

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A Strategic Investment in Morale Is...



Too Corporate

Teachers do not work for a careless corporation. They work in schools because they care and are passionate about their students. Our district's mission inherently takes care of morale.



Too Costly

School districts can't create working environments with swimming pools and full restaurants like the tech giants or even offer flexible remote arrangements for most staff.



Too Complex

Too much of what negatively impacts teacher morale is outside of the school districts' control like pay, public perception, parents, pandemics, politics, etc.

Districts' Current Efforts to Improve Morale Fall Flat

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Wellness And Teacher Appreciation Most Common Strategies To Improve Morale



80%

Of partner districts offer **wellness supports** to employees as their #1 strategy for improving morale



95%

Of partners share that **increasing teacher appreciation efforts** is the #2 most important part of their strategy

But Despite Good Intentions, Morale Has Stayed Low

“Despite our efforts, this is probably the worst years we have seen for teacher morale. We are doing what we can, but **we are kind of at a loss.**”

*Superintendent
Midwestern School District*



Some Efforts Doing More Harm Than Good

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Some efforts causing backlash from teachers



"One day soon we're going to have a conversation about how the term 'self care' is being weaponized against teachers. No amount of yoga or massages will fix this. Educators are operating in full crisis mode and need structural changes from the top."

Dr. Tracy Edwards
[@tracyrenee70](https://twitter.com/tracyrenee70)



EAB's Four-Part Research Methodology



Exploring Beyond K-12 to Uncover the Secret to Success



● **Review Existing Research**

50+ years of research on psychology of motivation, morale, and engagement studied

● **Conduct Nationwide Survey**

2600+ teachers and district/school leaders surveyed by EAB to capture current state of morale and engagement

● **Analyze Critical Factors**

130+ key factors analyzed for impact on teacher morale

● **Search for Aligned Best Practices**

100+ organizations examined for best practices to raise employee morale and engagement

K-12 Behind on Investment in Morale



Two Decades of Morale Investment Across Other Industries



But School Districts Lagging Behind

- 
- ✖ Morale metrics uncommon in district success assessment
 - ✖ Annual climate surveys still the industry's standard
 - ✖ Piecemeal strategy to improve teacher morale the norm
 - ✖ Narrow focus on retention and recruitment
 - ✖ No dedicated owner
 - ✖ Leaders cannot articulate an overarching strategy

'Doctor' Archetype Most Likely to Improve Morale

...But Also, Least Common in Public Education

80% of Districts

CAREGIVER



Heavily invests in employee wellness and ramps up one-off appreciation efforts

17% of Districts

GENERALIST



Attempts to operationalize every morale factor they can find

3% of Districts

DOCTOR



Slows down to diagnose the root problem of morale and partners with employee to solve it

Diagnosis & Partnership Key to Doctor's Success



Specific Morale Strategies Not as Important...

...As Choosing a Morale Strategy Like a Doctor



The Morale Doctor

- Diagnoses organizations' unique **root causes** of low employee morale
- Designs approach and solutions in **partnership with employees**

Three Steps to Become a Morale ‘Doctor’

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EAB’s Teacher Morale Momentum Loop



Diagnose Causes of Low Morale Using a Quarterly Diagnostic System

Prioritize 1-2 Threats to Morale at a Time Based on Impact & Feasibility

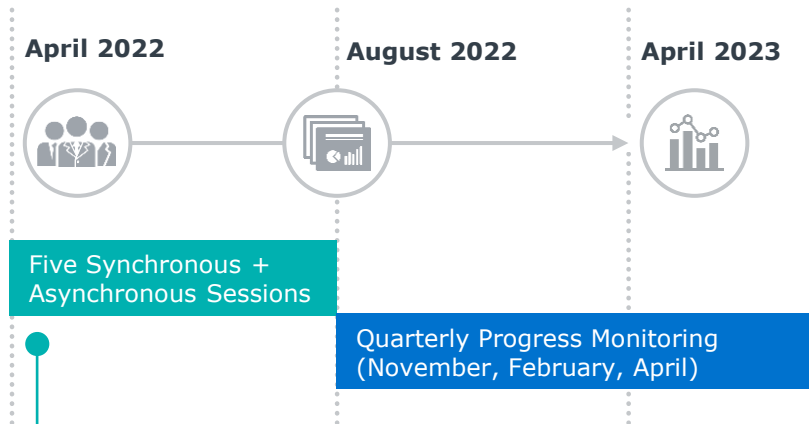
Involve Teachers in Co-Designing Solutions by Lowering Input Barriers

Collective Implementation to Accelerate Success



EAB's Nationwide Collaborative to Raise Teacher Morale

Schedule Overview



REGISTER NOW!

Limited spots remain for April 2022 start date.

During this guided program, EAB experts will provide the insights and tools you need to successfully establish today's practices in your schools, while a nationwide cohort of peers will create the community and shared accountability needed to see it through.



Step-by-Step
Guided Implementation



Peer Collaboration and
Shared Accountability



Quarterly progress
monitoring and long-
term support

An Updated System Requires Updated Mindsets

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Five Commitments Underpin Continuous Morale Improvement



Believes that **organizations can improve morale** and takes ownership



Recognizes that **sources of low morale will vary** between districts



Commits to **understanding problem before acting**



Tests **1-2 ideas at a time**



Revises solutions each year using teacher feedback

Shifting Mindsets

Self Reflection

Which of the new mindsets will be hardest for you and your leadership team to adopt?

Spend 1 minute reflecting or writing down your thoughts to the above question.

New Mindsets

- Believes that organizations can improve morale and takes ownership
- Recognizes that sources of low morale will vary between districts
- Commits to understanding problem before acting
- Tests 1-2 ideas at a time
- Revises solutions each year using teacher feedback

Morale is Everyone's Problem

Collective Ownership Paramount for Sustained Improvement

Assigning Morale as One Individual's Side Job Common, But Insufficient

78% Of organizations think people strategy is **only HR's** responsibility



But one person doesn't have the knowledge, power, or resources needed

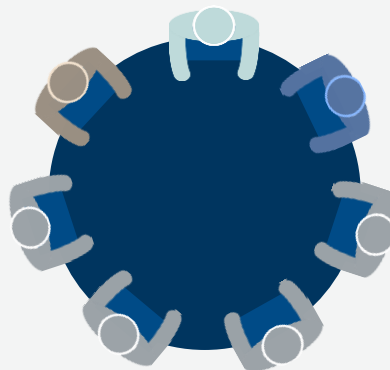
...And Districts Can't Just Hire an FTE



Hiring a full-time 'Chief Experience Officer' is not feasible for districts

Instead, Districts Must Embrace **Shared Responsibility**

- Superintendent
- Other District Leadership
- Teacher Leaders and Union Reps
- Principals



Integrate Morale into Leaders' Daily Activities

DISTRICT LEVEL



Add Teacher Morale to Official District Priorities

Harvard CUSD's includes happiness among their BHAGS (big hairy, audacious goals) for the year to ensure it is a formal priority for district leadership.

Goal: "All work will be done by **deliriously happy people.**"

Corey Tafoya
Superintendent, Harvard CUSD

BUILDING LEVEL



Embed Morale Questions Into All 1:1 Check ins

- Incorporate morale questions into all teacher check-ins
- Add 1-2 questions to faculty meetings, grade-level PLCs, etc.



Include Morale in Principal Evaluations

Arkport Central School District uses 360 evaluations for their building leaders to keep principals accountable to support teachers' growth and overall morale.

Cracking the Code on Teacher Morale



1 **Diagnose Causes** of Low Morale Using a Quarterly Diagnostic System

1. Quarterly Morale Diagnostic Questions
2. Teacher Productive Conversation Guide
3. Proactive Stay Interviews

2 **Prioritize 1-2 Threats** to Morale at a Time Based on Impact & Feasibility

4. Threat Prioritization Playbook
 - Solvable Threats Register
 - Threat Decision Matrix
 - 60-Minute Decision Agenda

3 **Involve Teachers in Co-Designing Solutions** by Lowering Input Barriers

6. Morale Booster Compendium
7. Time Bank Incentives
8. Scaled Input Social Media Posts

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Step #1: Diagnose Causes

Self Reflection

How does your district currently collect input from teachers on engagement and morale?

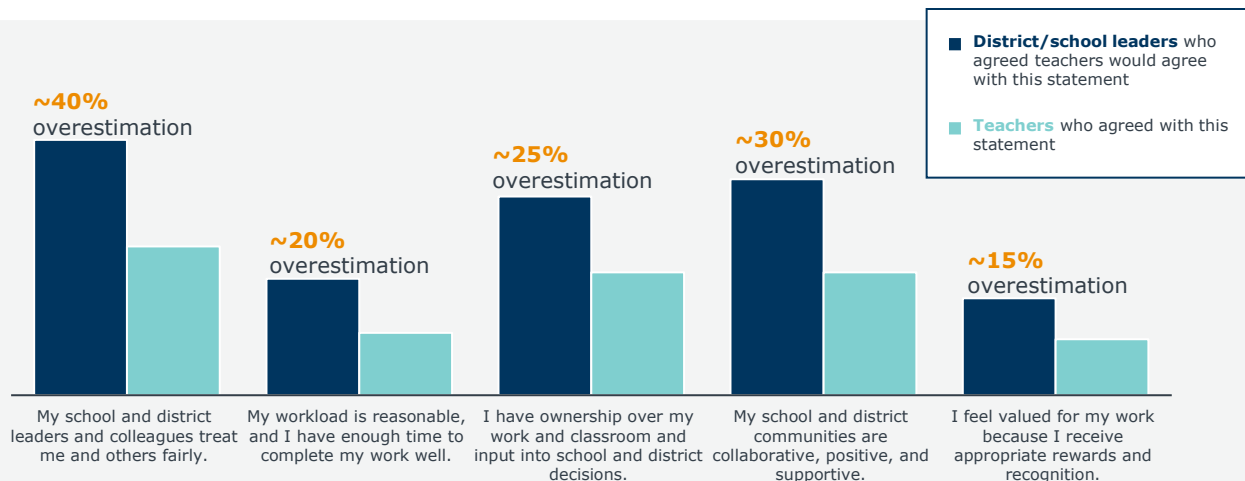
- *What types of input do you gather?*
- *How frequently do you gather input?*

Spend 1 minute reflecting or writing down your thoughts to the above question. You will use this reflection in a breakout later in this session.

Leaders Often Misunderstand Threats to Morale

Leadership Versus Teacher Perspectives on Morale Threats

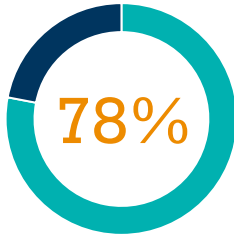
EAB Teacher Morale Survey, October 2021¹



1) Based on data from 2600 surveyed school and district leaders and teachers

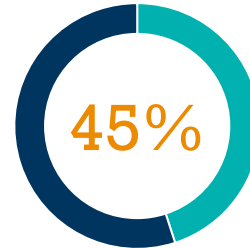
For Better Results, Leaders Must Ask Better Questions

Few leaders are clear on causes of low morale



Of organizations¹ do not know what drives their employees' disengagement

Less than half attempt to move from measurement to diagnosis



Of organizations¹ claim to regularly diagnose employee engagement

1) Based on data from 600 surveyed executives across 20 industries



Current Approaches to Diagnosis Miss the Mark

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Annual Climate Surveys Flawed

- ✘ Conducted too infrequently (once annually or less)
- ✘ Focus more on measurement than diagnosing threats
- ✘ Fail to communicate results and action in a timely fashion (causes survey fatigue)

Teacher Conversations Often Unproductive

- ✘ Ask questions that leaders cannot respond to, undermining teacher trust
- ✘ Often only hear from the 'loudest voices in the room'
- ✘ Focus on sourcing solutions too early in the process rather than diagnosing problems

Current Approaches to Diagnosis Miss the Mark

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DIY Diagnosis Causes a Cascade of Issues



Few plug and play options available



Internal survey expertise limited



Cognitive biases promote assumptions



Defining Categories for Threat Diagnosis

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Rigorous Analysis to Identify Diagnostic Questions

- ✓ Synthesized 130+ morale and engagement theories
- ✓ Adapted preeminent research in this field (Maslach, Gallup) for K12
- ✓ Analyzed 250+ engagement survey questions
- ✓ Applied findings and feedback from EAB's fall teacher morale survey

Six Threat Categories to Assess

1. Personal safety and belonging
2. Time and resources
3. Leadership trust & values alignment
4. Ownership and input
5. Recognition and value
6. Professional growth



A Research-Based Recipe for Success

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Components of an Effective Morale Diagnostic

Aligns With Research



Includes proven morale and engagement questions, customized for the K12 environment



Requires minimal effort and time



Distinguishes relevant questions by school and district level

Aligns With Reality



Supplements or replaces existing annual climate & engagement surveys



Compatible with existing survey tools (e.g., Qualtrics)

Frequency is Key for Impact and Analysis

Benefits of Quarterly Morale Surveys

Improve Engagement

19%

Increase in employee engagement scores when surveyed 4+ times per year

Identify Flight Risks

2.6x

Employees who do not respond to 2+ surveys are 2.6x more likely to leave



EAB's Diagnostic Questions Available This April

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To Make Quantitative Diagnosis Easier for School Districts

Sample EAB Diagnostic Questions

1. *I have the materials and resources needed to teach well.**

Strongly disagree ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly agree

2. *I have a manageable workload.**

Strongly disagree ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly agree

3. *The actions of district leadership reflect my school district's mission and values.**

Strongly disagree ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly agree

4. *The actions of school leadership reflect my school district's mission and values.**

Strongly disagree ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly agree



Assesses **6 Research-Backed Threat** Areas



Designed for Up To **Quarterly Use**



Fewer Than **20 Questions**



Customized for **K-12**

*Specifics of questions subject to change

Sources: [Advisory Board](#), 2022; Gallup, ["Gallup's Employee Engagement Survey: Ask the Right Questions With the Q12 Survey"](#), Accessed December 2021; Mashlach, Christina, ["Six areas of workplace..."](#), Journal of Health and Human Services Administration, February 1999; Qualtrics, ["The ultimate guide to employee pulse surveys"](#), Accessed December 2021; Weiss, Laure, ["Burnout from an Organizational Perspective"](#), October 20, 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

'Survey Fatigue' Stems from Inaction Not Quantity

What Causes Survey Fatigue:

- ☒ Length of survey
- ☒ Ask unsolvable questions

☐ Insufficient communication about survey results, next steps

Communication Traps That Contribute to Survey Fatigue



Untimely (or no) communication



Share survey data without clear next steps for action



Fail to share why behind decisions

“

“The common reason people don’t want to fill out your survey is that you haven’t done anything since the last one. **They don’t have survey fatigue; they have lack of action fatigue**”

Didier Elzinga
Culture Amp CEO



Avoid Survey Fatigue, Develop A Communication Plan

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Four Musts of Morale Communication

- 1 Communicate within 4-6 weeks of survey's close
- 2 Provide summary of survey and qualitative results
- 3 Describe next steps district intends to take
- 4 Explain consistent prioritization process that guides next steps

Norton Public Schools & Arkport Central School District Use Multiple, Existing Channels

- Monthly newsletters
- Faculty meetings
- School board meetings
- Districtwide faculty & staff meetings
- Emails from the SI

Better Communication Increases Survey Participation

60%

Average engagement survey response at Norton School District, who surveys more often than average

38%

Increase in employee engagement when organizations use similar communication strategies

Making the Shift From Strategies to a System

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Five Reasons Why the Momentum Loop Improves Morale



Diagnoses the root of morale issues rather than treating symptoms



Addresses 1-2 root issues at a time



Partners with teachers to design solutions



Provides agility to respond to any new or unforeseen disruptions to morale



Shifts focus from low morale to sustained investment in improved working conditions

To Prepare for Tomorrow Self Reflection

- 1. How are you making decisions around what threats to morale to address and do teachers understand those decisions?**
- 2. How are you partnering with teachers to ensure solutions meet their needs without unintended barriers or consequences?**

Please Share Your Feedback

Please take a moment to answer this final poll question to provide your overall experience on today's session.

We have also shared a link to a short online evaluation in the **Chat** and we would appreciate if you could take 2-3 minutes to give us additional feedback on your experience today.





How School Districts Can Improve Teacher Morale

The Overlooked Barrier to Pandemic Recovery

Day Two: April 7th, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

District Leadership Forum

Objectives for This Session



Challenge conventional beliefs about how schools and districts can best improve teacher morale



Deconstruct the process successful organizations leverage to raise and sustain employee morale



Provide concrete steps that you and your team can take to launch the adoption of this proven process in your district today

Making the Shift From Strategies to a System

42



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Cracking the Code on Teacher Morale

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1. Quarterly Morale Diagnostic Questions
2. **Teacher Productive Conversation Guide**
3. **Proactive Stay Interviews**

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Involve Teachers in Co-Designing Solutions by Lowering Input Barriers

6. Morale Booster Compendium
7. Time Bank Incentives
8. Scaled Input Social Media Posts

Current Approaches to Qualitative Input Ineffective

Districts' Typical Approach to Collecting Qualitative Input

Host town hall or faculty meetings



Include open-ended question(s) on survey and during discussions with teachers



Use exit and/or entrance interviews for teachers



Why It Doesn't Work



Only the loudest voices are heard



Results in laundry lists of grievances and ideas that are ineffective or impractical to address



Impact is limited in scope and reactive, often too little, too late

This Leaves Teachers Feeling...



Undervalued



Ignored



Disengaged with Process



Improve Discussions to Better Diagnose Causes

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EAB's Conversation Guide Makes Productivity Easy

Make Teacher Conversations More Productive

- ▶ EAB's agenda should take no more than **30 minutes**
- ▶ Base questions on established HR best practice
- ▶ Clear questions and explicit goals of agenda make the time well spent for all

Sample EAB Agenda

Intro/Opening (5 mins.)

- Today we'll be focused on leadership trust and workload.
- What was your initial reaction to learning that we'd be talking about workload today?

Questions for Discussion (20 mins.)

- What has made you feel supported by building leaders in the past?
- What has worked to address workload in the past? What hasn't worked?

Closing (5 mins.)

- Is there anything you thought we'd talk about today that we didn't touch on?
- Timeline for updates and next steps.

Two Ways to Use Conversation Guide



Formal Focus Groups

Parkway Schools, Missouri

Holds formal focus groups during first semester specifically on morale concerns

- ✓ Provides in-depth information
- ✓ Participating teachers feel really heard



Faculty Meeting Post-Its

Republic School District, Missouri

Uses post-its to gather answers from teachers to targeted question during faculty meetings

- ✓ More teachers heard
- ✓ Efficient way to get input



Stay Interviews Offer Details, Elevate Teacher Voice

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Prosper ISD's Take on Stay Interviews



Prosper ISD conducts 30-minute conversations with dozens of district teachers annually to **better understand teachers' experience** in the district and **make them feel heard**

A Recipe for Success

- Stay interviewer must build trust with teachers so they feel comfortable sharing
- Conduct stay interviews on the teachers' 'turf,' in their classrooms
- Interviewers follow up with teachers on next steps, even when they cannot deliver

Stay Interviews Can Improve Morale, Retention

<8% Dissatisfaction at one company (BWSC) after implementing stay interviews

78% Of the reasons employees leave are preventable by the employer; stay interviews can surface these issues before employees leave

“

I know that it's working because these teachers stay in touch with me—they continue to share their thoughts, requests, and feedback with me after the interview has ended. And teachers I haven't interviewed before continue to be enthusiastic to speak with me.”

Bernie Gerace

Director HR, Prosper Independent School District



Guiding Questions for Teacher-Directed Conversations

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Sample Stay Interview Questions:

Positive Stay Factors

- What causes you to enjoy the teaching role?
- What reasons do you give others for liking your job?
- Do you feel like you are doing the best work of your life?

- What brought you to this district and keeps you here?

Negative Experiences, Feedback

- Is there an experience you can describe that you've had in school that has negatively impacted you?

- When was the last time you thought about leaving this school and what prompted you to think about leaving?

Most important question to indicate attrition risk¹

Spends more time on different sections depending on whether the teacher seems to be having a more positive or negative experience

1) According to Prosper ISD

Invest in Diagnosing Causes of Low Morale

Next Steps



Use **EAB's morale diagnostic questions** to collect quantitative data from teachers quarterly, available in April.



Develop a plan to communicate survey results within 4-6 weeks and share next steps with teachers.



Get beyond the quantitative data with targeted focus groups and proactive "stay interviews." Be sure to equip facilitators with EAB's conversation guide.

Cracking the Code on Teacher Morale

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Step #2: Prioritize Threats

Self Reflection

How are you making decisions around what threats to morale to address and do teachers understand those decisions?

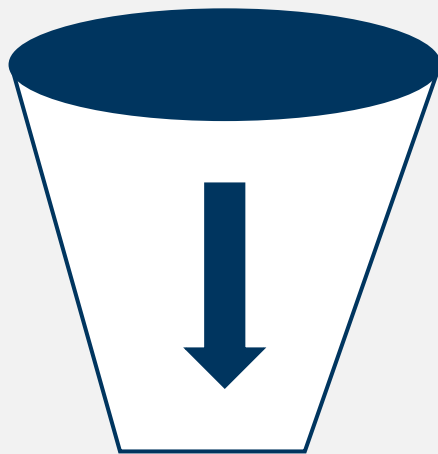
Spend 1 minute reflecting or writing down your thoughts to the above question. You will use this reflection in a breakout later in this session.



Efforts to Diagnose Lead to Information Overload

51

Request for Teacher Input



100s of survey responses, quantitative data

100s of comments, qualitative responses

10s of threats to morale from teachers

Common Mistakes in Responding

- ✗ Try to solve too many problems
- ✗ Prioritize projects that are “possible” rather than critical
- ✗ Select projects based on popularity
- ✗ Determine next steps without clear rationale to teachers



Addressing All or Wrong Threats Can Cost Districts

52

Lack of Informed Prioritization Results in Ineffective Strategies



All
Threats

or



Wrong
Threats

Resource intensive and often **poorly executed**
morale-boosting strategies.



Four Elements of Effective Threat Prioritization

53

Threats Must Be...

Achievable

Commit to 1-2 prioritized threats at a time so districts can robustly and effectively address threats



Impactful

Select threats with the greatest likelihood to improve morale



Prioritization Process Must Be...

Efficient

Make decisions quickly for timely teacher communication



Consistent

Establish a repeatable decision-making process so teachers can understand decision rationale

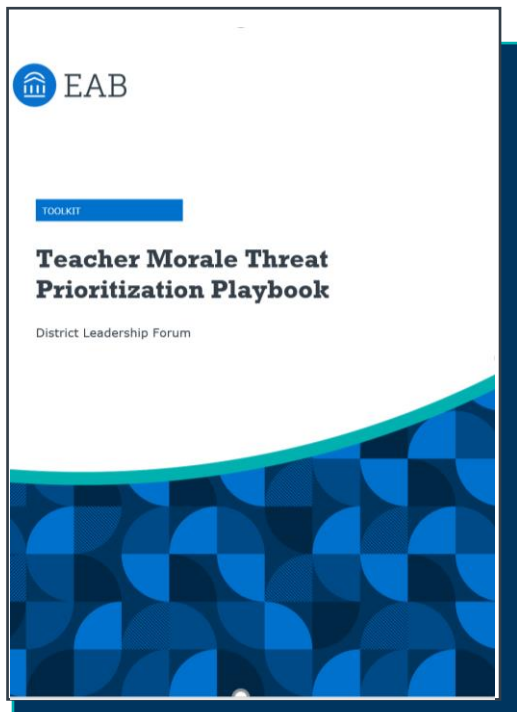




Consistently & Efficiently Select 1-2 Morale Threats

54

EAB's Prioritization Playbook Makes Effective Threat Prioritization Possible



The Playbook Includes...



60-minute Decision Meeting Agenda



Solvable Threats Register



Threat Decision Matrix



First, Translate Teacher Input into Solvable Threats

55

Morale Threat Register Offers 30+ Problem Statements to Get You Started

75%

Of teachers disagree that the actions of district leadership reflect the district's mission and values

Broad, general threat to morale identified by diagnostic

Example Solvable Problems for 'Leadership & Values' Threat

Teachers are uncertain of the district's mission and values

District leadership's actions don't clearly reflect mission and values

Teachers unaware of district leadership's actions and decisions

The link between district leadership's actions & district's mission is unclear to teachers

Ideal Problem Statements Are:

- ✓ Limited to problems within your locus of control
- ✓ Comprised of branches that are mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive (M.E.C.E)
- ✓ Based on teacher input, not assumptions



Next, Prioritize Threats Based on Impact, Feasibility

56

Decision Matrix Helps Narrow Down Which Problems to Tackle

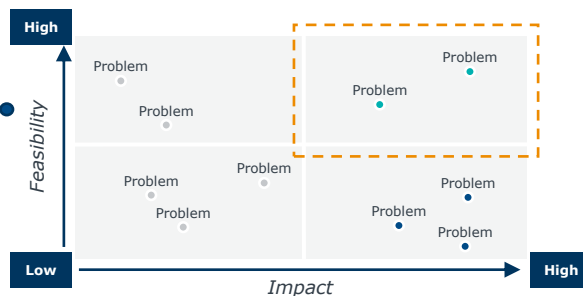


5 standardized questions to plot problems on the impact and feasibility chart



Prioritization playbook also includes threat hierarchy cheat sheet to aid in assessing impact

Chart Impact, Feasibility of Threats





A Consistent and Efficient Process Improves Morale

57

EAB's Prioritization Playbook Helps to:

Decrease Time, Improve Efficiency



1 Hour

Average time spent to arrive at prioritized list of threats to focus on when using the playbook, allowing leaders to **inform their teachers of next steps quickly**

Increase Consistency, Improve Trust



17%

Increase in employees' **trust of leaders** when leaders rated high in 'consistency'¹ and the playbook provides leaders with a repeatable, consistent process to explain decisions to teachers

1) Consistency is one of the three most important elements of trust according



Prioritize 1-2 Morale Threats to Address at a Time

58

Next Steps



Analyze teacher input based not only on popularity and feasibility but **also impact**



Prioritize 1-2 solvable threats to address that target underlying teacher morale problems



Communicate **your consistent decision-making process** and the rationale behind your set priorities to teachers

Cracking the Code on Teacher Morale



1 Diagnose Causes of Low Morale Using a Quarterly Diagnostic System

1. Quarterly Morale Diagnostic Questions
2. Teacher Productive Conversation Guide
3. Proactive Stay Interviews

2 Prioritize 1-2 Threats to Morale at a Time Based on Impact & Feasibility

4. Threat Prioritization Playbook
 - Solvable Threats Register
 - Threat Decision Matrix
 - 60-Minute Decision Agenda

3 Involve Teachers in Co-Designing Solutions by Lowering Input Barriers

6. Morale Booster Compendium
7. Time Bank Incentives
8. Scaled Input Social Media Posts

Step #3: Co-Design Solutions

Self Reflection

How are you partnering with teachers to ensure solutions meet their needs without unintended barriers or consequences?

Spend 1 minute reflecting or writing down your thoughts to the above question. You will use this reflection in a breakout later in this session.

Solution Conversations Lead to Either Silence or Noise

61

...Making Co-Designing Morale Strategies A Challenge



Silence

Leaders and teachers alike **struggle to think of potential solutions** to improve on the prioritized threats to morale



Noise

Leaders struggle to sort through **ineffective and/or impossible potential solutions** suggested by teachers

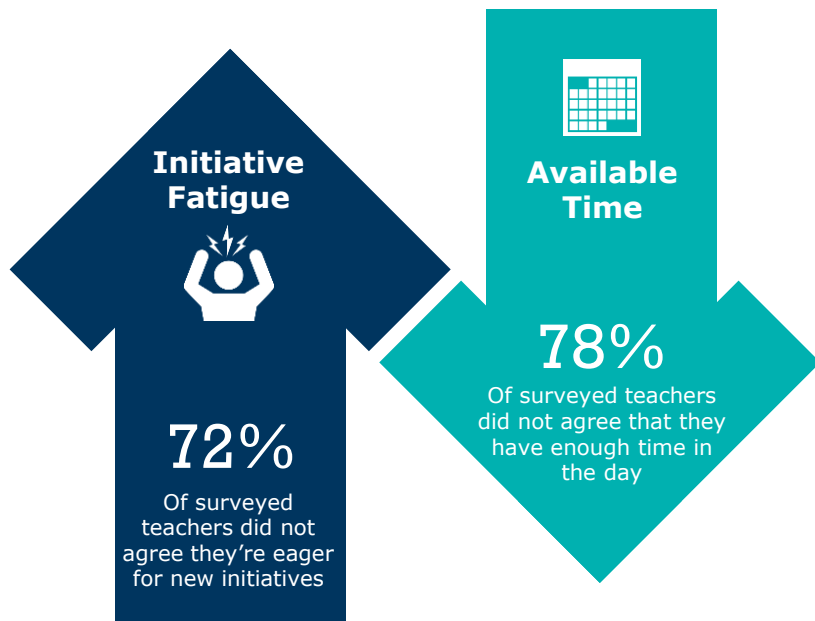


50+

Superintendents shared with EAB during focus groups and research interviews that leaders' and teachers' inability to identify solutions that effectively solve morale threats is a **main barrier to co-designing solutions**

Teachers Have Limited Time, Energy to Participate

62



Morale Compendium Offers a Starting Point

30+ Morale-Boosting Strategies to Jumpstart Co-Design Conversations

THREAT: TIME AND RESOURCES			
Strategy	Capsule Description	Level	Resources
School Day Schedule Audits	Teachers often find that when new tasks and responsibilities are added to their plates, it is unclear which activities are no longer useful to continue. District or building leaders should work with teachers to audit their time to determine how days are spent and where time could be saved. Teachers should keep a journal throughout a single day of their tasks or ask teachers to build a very detailed schedule during a faculty meeting. Building leaders review these daily logs with their teachers at least once a year. Teachers at one district were able to identify content that took 30 minutes that students were not benefiting from and omit that from their curriculum moving forward.	School	\$
District-Wide Time Audits	District leaders spend time annually analyzing the district calendar to determine areas where they can remove time requirements of teachers. One district identified that four instructional walk-throughs for teachers annually took up more time in preparation than they realized. They reduced the walk-throughs from four to two per teacher, saving each teacher up to 8 hours in prep.	District	\$
"Office Hours" for Parent-Teacher Conferences	Parent-Teacher Conferences take up teachers' afternoons and evenings throughout the school year. Furthermore, traditional conference time is inconvenient for many families and caregivers. Instead, one school district has moved from traditional parent-teacher conferences to "office hours" in which teachers schedule 8 hours per semester to drop in for consultation. They give teachers the autonomy to set their own hours to better save time and teach their students better.	District	\$
Alternative Schedules (late starts, early releases)	School districts rethink the typical eight-hour, five-day-a-week school day to offer teachers more preparation and planning time without students. This typically comes in the form of a later start or early release once weekly for school schedules.	District	\$\$\$
Classroom Supplies Marketplace	Teachers in some districts tend to not have the classroom supplies necessary for their students and often resort to using their own money to purchase materials such as books, pens, paper, etc. or acknowledgement and appreciation for students (e.g., candy, cards, gifts). One school district decided to collect input from teachers on what materials they needed most, purchase those materials, and build up a marketplace for where teachers could buy materials using currency the district allows.	District	\$\$\$

Includes **30+ Solutions** with Descriptions

Solutions Organized By **Six Threats**

Feasibility and Effort Guidance Included



A Sneak Peak into the Compendium

64

\$

Time & Resources

Teacher-Led Time Audits

- School leaders dedicate time at least once a year for teachers to create a detailed schedule of a typical day
- Building leaders review these logs with teachers to find areas to decrease time spent

1 hour

Saved in instruction weekly for teachers in one grade level

\$\$

Leadership Trust & Values Alignment

Reverse Mentoring

- Involves a teacher who serves as a mentor to a school/district leader, reversing the typical power dynamics of mentorships
- Increasingly common outside of the education industry, with companies seeing increased trust and respect of participants

87%

Mentors/mentees feel empowered by the experience and have developed greater confidence

\$\$\$

Professional Growth

Teacher Career Ladder

- Teachers apply for a special designation that offers financial and professional benefits at one Texas district
- As teachers advance, they are compensated financially and given more professional opportunities and responsibilities

95%

Annual retention rate of teacher participants

Use Compendium To Avoid Silence & Noise

1 Use Strategies for Inspiration

Share 2-4 leader-selected strategies to workshop with teachers to avoid silence during solution brainstorming

2 Vote on Promising Strategies

Ask teachers to vote on top strategies for prioritized threat areas to avoid too much noise or unproductive ideas

Benefits of Using EAB's Compendium to Codesign Solutions



Maintains focus on possible solutions



Provides starting point, helps with initial brainstorming



Ensures strategies are grounded in proven strategies and research



Show Appreciation for and Incentivize Participation

66



Key Features of Time Bank Incentives



Prove to teachers that leaders value participation in morale efforts by offering time incentives for joining committees, focus groups



Ensure time rewards are reflective of actual needs or wants of the district's teachers



Scale up (or down) offered incentives based on district resources at any given time

Potential Time Rewards

- Central office staff take lunch and/or recess duty
- Central office staff member does all printing, etc.
- Additional preparation time coverage
- An additional ½ personal day for 3+ focus group participations

Streamline Teacher Input with Social Media

67

Terrell ISD Quickly Gathers Teacher Input Via Well-Crafted Questions



Example Question

If a classroom
fairy could bring
you something,
what would you
want?



1

STEP

Write a clear, concise, and
direct question related to
a prioritized threat

2

STEP

Collect all replies in
one easy to sort place
(e.g., excel)

3

STEP

Look at all replies
and identify trends
across replies

4

STEP

Identify opportunities
for the district to act
on the results

200+

Actionable
responses from
teachers¹



Used responses to stock a
classroom 'market' where teachers
could 'buy' supplies with district-
provided currency

1) Of an approximately 300 teacher district
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Make It Easy for Teachers to Co-Design Solutions

Next Steps



Use **EAB's morale-booster compendium** to ground conversations with teachers in proven strategies



Develop a plan to **establish opportunities for teachers to provide input on solutions**



Write **targeted questions** based on prioritized threats to make it fast and easy for teachers to co-design solutions

Your Loop Should Be on Repeat



Keep in Mind When Using EAB's Morale Momentum Loop



Continue to check in on success of solutions



Deploy at district-level but empower school leaders to use too



Permanent process, the loop is never complete

Encourage Leaders to Register for April Webinar



**April 6th and April 7th
at 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET**

All school and district leaders welcome to learn the information you learned this week about teacher morale to get them informed and onboard with this important work

Why Teacher Morale Became the Overlooked Barrier to Pandemic Recovery and How School Districts Can Improve It

Apr 06 - 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM — ET - Virtual - Morale

Why Teacher Morale Became the Overlooked Barrier to Pandemic Recovery and How School Districts Can Improve It, ET - Virtual - Morale

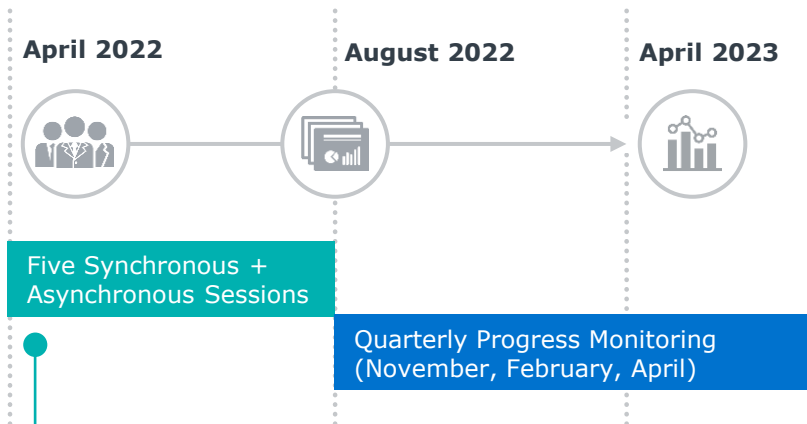
If you are a partner, please log in to register and view event information. If you have additional questions, please contact your Dedicated Advisor.



Nationwide Collaborative to Raise Teacher Morale

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EAB'S Collaborative Schedule



REGISTER NOW!

Limited spots remain for April 2022 start date.

During this guided program, EAB experts will provide the insights and tools you need to successfully establish today's practices in your schools, while a nationwide cohort of peers will create the community and shared accountability needed to see it through.



Step-by-Step Guided Implementation

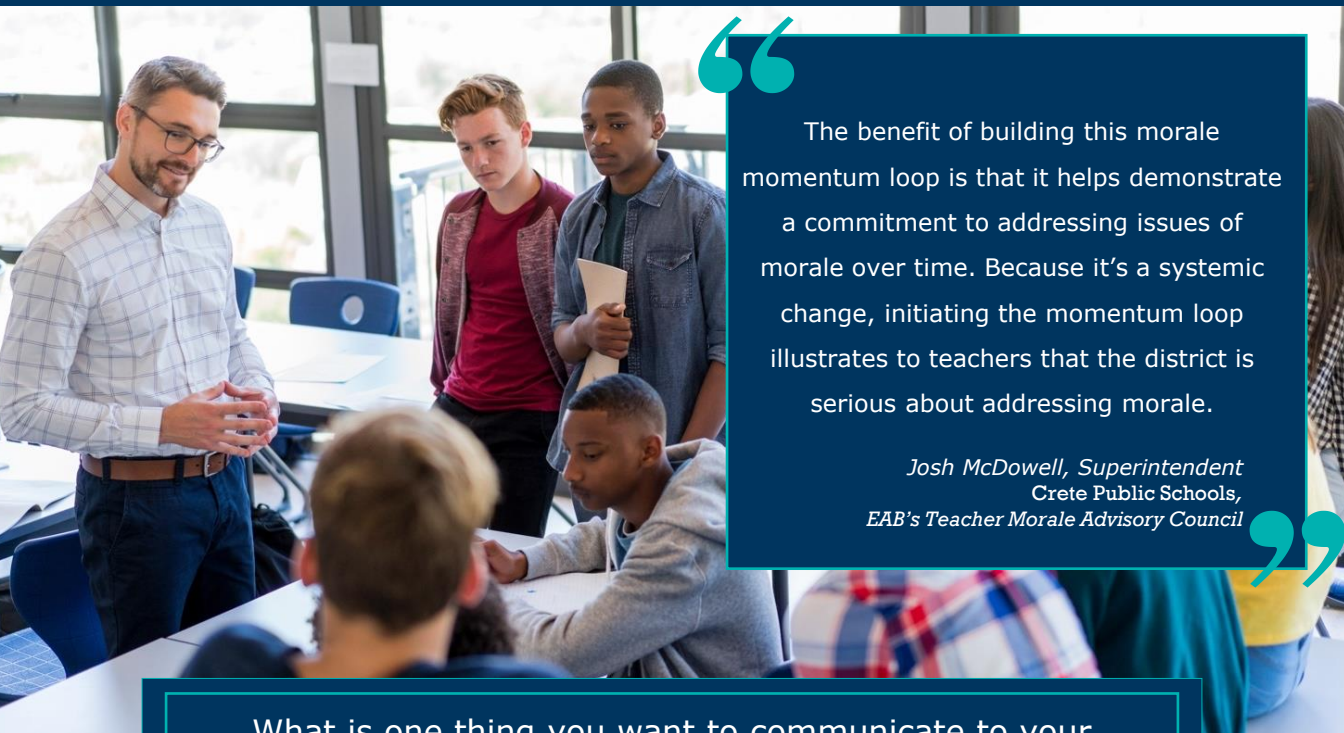


Peer Collaboration and Shared Accountability



Quarterly progress monitoring and long-term support

Sharing the Morale Momentum with Teachers



“

The benefit of building this morale momentum loop is that it helps demonstrate a commitment to addressing issues of morale over time. Because it's a systemic change, initiating the momentum loop illustrates to teachers that the district is serious about addressing morale.

*Josh McDowell, Superintendent
Crete Public Schools,
EAB's Teacher Morale Advisory Council*

”

What is one thing you want to communicate to your teachers about the morale momentum loop?

Final Thoughts

We have shared a link to a short online evaluation in the **Chat** and we would appreciate if you could take 2-3 minutes to give us additional feedback on your experience today.





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