

FROM INITIATIVE TO IMPACT:

EMBEDDING STAFF WELLNESS INTO SCHOOL SYSTEMS



PRESENTED BY:
SUE ANN BLACH, LMFT, ATR-BC
SUSAN KADEL, BSN, RN



RC SELPA MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM
RIVERSIDE CONVENTION CENTER
MAY 20, 2026

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- FRAMING THE NEED
- RESEARCH & NATIONAL CONTEXT
- STAFF WELLNESS AS A SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITY
- DSUSD ORIGIN STORY
- DESIGNING THE PROGRAM
- THE WELLNESS MODEL
- IMPLEMENTATION & BARRIERS
- IMPACT OUTCOMES
- REPLICATION FRAMEWORK



WHY THIS MATTERS!

“HOW DO I KEEP GOING?”

- IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON EDUCATORS
 - BURNOUT, COMPASSION FATIGUE, STAFF SHORTAGES
 - INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH DEMANDS FROM STUDENTS
- NATIONAL TRENDS:
 - INCREASED TEACHER ATTRITION
 - DECLINES IN MORALE AND SENSE OF BELONGING



A SYSTEMS PROBLEM



NOT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL
RESILIENCE ALONE



IT'S ABOUT SYSTEM
DESIGN



WELLNESS MUST BE
EMBEDDED

REFRAMING WELLNESS



PUT ON YOUR OWN MASK FIRST



FROM OPTIONAL TO ESSENTIAL



FROM INITIATIVE TO EXPECTATION

WHY IT MATTERS FOR DISTRICTS



**IMPACTS
INSTRUCTION**



**SHAPES SCHOOL
CLIMATE**



**DRIVES STUDENT
SUCCESS**



**“IF WE EXPECT
STAFF TO MEET
INCREASING STUDENT
NEEDS, WHAT ARE
WE DOING TO
STRUCTURALLY
SUPPORT THEM?”**

DSUSD ORIGIN STORY



PANDEMIC AS A CATALYST



GRASSROOTS BEGINNINGS



LEADERSHIP SUPPORTED
GROWTH



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION



STAFF WELLNESS
COMMITTEE



DIVERSE REPRESENTATION



SHARED MISSION

DESIGNING WITH INTENTION



PARTICIPATION
DATA



LISTENING TO
STAFF VOICE

STAFF
SURVEYS

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS



LIMITED TIME



ACCESSIBILITY



ENERGY
& BURNOUT

DESIGN RESPONSE



EMBEDDED SUPPORTS

ACCESSIBILITY OPTIONS

INTEREST DRIVEN ACTIVITIES

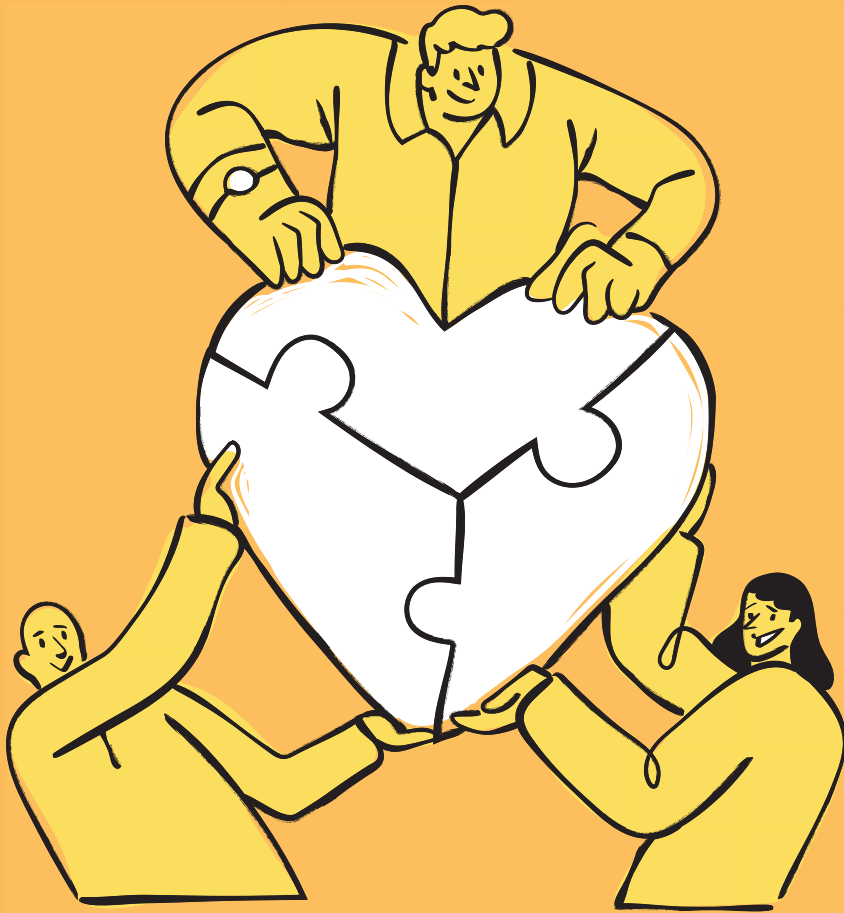
THE WELLNESS MODEL

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT



TIER I-UNIVERSAL

- WELLNESS CALENDAR
- WEEKLY MESSAGING
- STAFF VIDEOS



TIER II-ENGAGEMENT



- PAINT NIGHTS
- BOWLING EVENTS
- YOGA SESSIONS
- COMMUNITY BUILDING



TIER III-BELONGING



- STAFF LED ACTIVITIES
- CROSS SITE COLLABORATION
- RECOGNITION SYSTEMS

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES



- CONSISTENCY BUILDS CULTURE
- STAFF VOICE BUILDS BUY IN



IMPACT

STAFF



- Increased morale
- Greater sense of belonging

ORGANIZATION



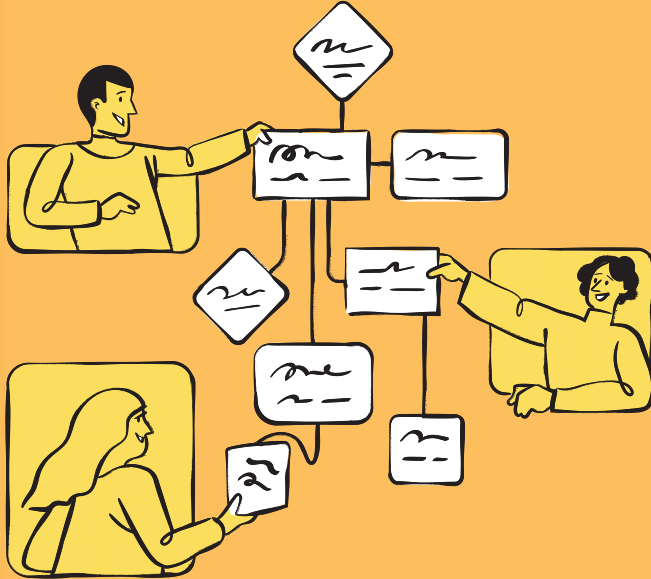
- Improved collaboration
- Positive school climate

STUDENTS



- Stronger relationships
- Healthier school communities

REPLICATION FRAMEWORK



1. FORM A REPRESENTATIVE WELLNESS COMMITTEE
2. DEFINE A CLEAR MISSION TIED TO DISTRICT GOALS
3. START WITH UNIVERSAL SUPPORTS (CALENDAR MESSAGING)
4. BUILD ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EVENTS
5. HIGHLIGHT STAFF VOICE AND LEADERSHIP
6. COMMUNICATE CONSISTENTLY
7. MEASURE CLIMATE AND REFINE

KEY MESSAGE



YOU CANNOT SEPARATE
ADULT WELLNESS FROM
STUDENT OUTCOMES

START SMALL, BUILD MOMENTUM



PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION!



SMALL WINS MATTER!

WHAT ARE STEPS YOUR DISTRICT CAN TAKE?



STAFF WELLNESS PROGRAM ROADMAP

A Simple Questionnaire to Guide Our Journey

Healthy staff. Strong schools. Bright futures.

Your Name: _____ Your Role/Department: _____

Use this roadmap to help shape a wellness program that supports, energizes, and empowers our staff.

- 1. UNDERSTAND OUR COMMUNITY**
What are the strengths and needs of our staff when it comes to wellness?
- 2. DEFINE OUR WHY**
Why is a staff wellness program important for our district?
- 3. VISION & GOALS**
What do we want our wellness program to achieve? (Think big, start smart.)
- 4. PROGRAM IDEAS**
What activities, resources, or supports would make the biggest impact?
- 5. PARTNERS & SUPPORT**
Who can help us bring this vision to life?
- 6. PLAN & MEASURE**
How will we start, sustain, and know our program is making a difference?

YOUR COMMITMENT
One action I will take to support our staff wellness journey is: _____

When we care for our staff, we care for our students and our community.
TOGETHER, WE THRIVE.

Small steps today. Lasting impact tomorrow.

**WELLNESS IS NOT A PROGRAM,
IT IS A CULTURE SHIFT**



**IF WE WANT RESILIENT STUDENTS,
WE MUST BUILD RESILIENT SYSTEMS**



**"UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU
CARES A WHOLE AWFUL LOT,
NOTHING IS GOING TO GET
BETTER. IT'S NOT."
-THE LORAX**

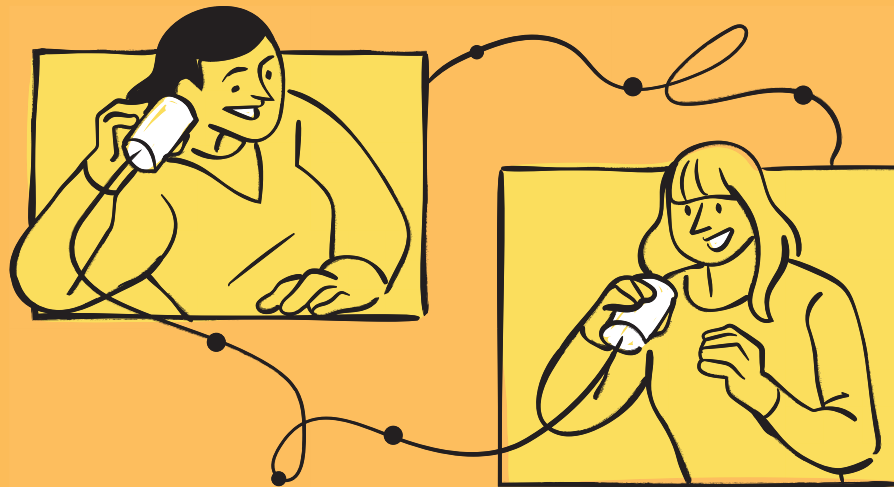


THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS



**DESERT
SANDS
UNIFIED
SCHOOL
DISTRICT**



**SUE ANN BLACH
SUEANN.BLACH@DESERTSANDS.US**

**SUSAN KADEL
SUSAN.KADEL@DESERTSANDS.US**