



American  
Heart  
Association.

# TEACHERS TALK. LET'S LISTEN.

SCIENCE-BASED TIPS FOR TEACHER WELL-BEING.



ADMINISTRATOR TOOLKIT

## TEACHERS SPEAK WITH THEIR ACTIONS.

### IT'S NO SECRET: TEACHERS FACE MORE CHALLENGES THAN EVER.

The pandemic hampered many students' development, and teachers feel pressured from all sides. Concerns about compensation, increasing workload and even safety issues all contribute to burnout.

Many teachers are leaving the field. This has led to a crisis in teacher retention and recruitment.

### TEACHERS TALK. LET'S LISTEN.

At the American Heart Association, we want to help. This toolkit includes science-backed best practices to improve teacher well-being. Taking care of our teachers can only help to attract and retain good educators.

Teachers talk. To each other. To administrators. And to social scientists doing research about the state of education today.

Let's listen to what they have to say — and act on it. Supporting teachers' well-being will benefit not just them, but students too.

### IN THIS TOOLKIT — AND BEYOND.

Read on to discover helpful resources for fostering teacher well-being.

This toolkit focuses on the vital role that administrators can play. Meanwhile, we have created a companion toolkit just for teachers. You can find that here.

The suggestions in both toolkits are science-based and widely applicable. Still, it's worth observing that every teacher, administrator, school and community is different. Evaluate these best practices in light of your school system's current practices, as well as your culture and community.

Many school systems also face budgetary pressures. While some best practices to promote well-being come with a price tag, many other ideas are low cost or no cost.



### BEYOND TEACHERS Well-being matters for all.

Everyone's well-being is a priority. While this toolkit is focused on teachers, many of the same suggestions (and resources) apply equally to your entire team:

- Administrators & staff
- Counselors
- Teachers' aides
- Nurses
- Paraprofessionals
- Lunchroom staff
- Bus drivers
- And others

Putting well-being first can benefit anyone who helps to shape the student experience at your school.

## THE WHY BEHIND WELL-BEING

Why should you focus on teacher well-being?  
Why is the American Heart Association weighing in on this subject?

### WELL-BEING MATTERS.

At its heart, well-being is about quality of life – how happy and healthy (both physically and mentally) your teachers are. Not only is encouraging teacher well-being the right thing to do, *well-being among teachers is also associated with higher rates of teacher commitment which reduces burnout and attrition.*

Well-being is not a head-in-the-clouds abstraction. Instead, well-being has real-world consequences, and teacher well-being carries important implications for education today.

### WE'RE DEVOTED TO HEALTH.

At the American Heart Association, we foster good health by leveraging science-based observations. Well-being has been shown to correlate with lower risk of disease and increased longevity.

When it comes to well-being and physical health, eating right and being active top our to-do list. We know that true health also includes getting good sleep, managing stress, connecting socially as well as keeping mind and body fit.



### ABOUT THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

For nearly 100 years, the **American Heart Association** has been fighting heart disease and stroke. We continue to promote healthy hearts and minds, based on the latest science.

This research-backed toolkit to address teacher well-being is just one of many American Heart Association resources that encourage health in the workplace and beyond. Visit [heart.org/workforce](https://heart.org/workforce) to learn more.



## TEACHERS' AID

### HELPFUL IDEAS FOR TEACHER WELL-BEING

This is just one of two toolkits focused on teacher well-being. The other one is written for your teachers. It includes many self-help and peer-care strategies for well-being.

But the suggestions don't stop there. Listed below you'll find several practical ideas that you can implement as an administrator.

- **Canvass teachers — and act on their feedback.** Transparency about the process and your goals will build trust.
  - **Interview teachers one on one, or in focus groups.** Include open-ended questions to solicit input on workload, stress and work relationships.
  - **Conduct a survey.** Use free or low-cost online survey resources to gain insights. Allow anonymous responses to gain more candor.
  - **Circle back about results and next steps.** Give your teachers a sense for what you learned, and what you're planning to do in response. Promote programs that help. Follow in the footsteps of schools that have created a "helpline" for teachers to call for a short therapy session. Or consider this video detailing a school's "tap-in, tap-out" mutual support network.
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- **Make well-being a priority.** Bring in a guest speaker to teach helpful deep-breathing exercises. Survey your teachers or administration staff – you never know when someone will have a talent to share, such as leading the group in relaxation techniques. Or host a "teacher well-being week" where you focus on mind, body and spirit.
- **Do what you can as an administrator.** Frequent, informal check-ins with your teachers can boost morale. Administrators and school leaders can also cover classes for teachers, giving those educators much-needed time for planning, grading, or self-care. One other idea? If you can avoid it, don't send emails to your teachers and staff after school hours or on weekends. (You can schedule most emails to deliver during school hours.)
- **Forms of recognition.** You may not be able to offer your teachers greater compensation, but you can opt for non-monetary recognition. Being recognized and feeling appreciated can go a long way toward inspiring teachers who are facing stress and burnout.