

An Assessment of School System Readiness to Advance Comprehensive School Employee Wellness

Efforts to implement organizational change are often unsuccessful when planning teams do not assess the level of readiness for change within their organization. Readiness assessment efforts should engage individuals who reflect school system employees with respect to positions, tenure, and sociodemographic characteristics (including individuals who are not on the formal planning team) to most effectively identify potential challenges and creative solutions. See the Centering Equity in

This readiness assessment can guide an examination of a school system's current readiness to advance equitable school employee wellness. It allows for reflection on readiness in three areas that will shape actions carried out at the school and school system levels: (1) school district context, (2) senior leader support for employee wellness, and (3) capacity to advance employee wellness. The assessment also includes worksheets to facilitate discussion and help teams prioritize growth areas to focus on in order to position themselves for success.

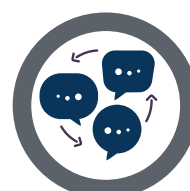


Reflect

School district context
School district context refers to general conditions within a school system that could influence implementation of new initiatives. This section includes several items related to how the school system has engaged in creating and sustaining change in the past. Weaknesses in this area have the potential to negatively influence efforts to advance school employee wellness.

For each item, mark the column that best describes your assessment of your school system in relation to that item.	Strength	Growth Area
1. In our district, there is minimal turnover in senior leadership positions.		
2. In our district, there is minimal turnover in school leadership positions.		
3. District-level staff routinely collaborate to achieve shared goals, including shared ownership of initiatives.		
4. In our district, we collect and use data to set priorities and monitor progress.		
5. In our district, data are rarely used in a positive way.		
6. Our district has a track record of discontinuing or modifying ineffective policies, processes, and/or programs.		
7. When our district tries something new, school staff, families, students, and community partners are involved in the decision-making process.		
8. When our district tries something new, a diverse group of school staff (e.g., role, tenure, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) are involved in the decision-making process.		
9. When our district tries something new, senior leaders generally stick with it long enough to determine whether it works (i.e., there is not a revolving door of new initiatives).		
10. When our district tries something new, senior leaders generally allocate the resources necessary to do it, including providing school staff with the time necessary to implement the new initiative.		
11. When our district tries something new, senior leaders take a learning-oriented approach rather than a competence-oriented approach to monitoring progress.		
12. Our district generally limits the number of new initiatives to avoid "initiative fatigue."		
13. Our district does not currently have high-profile or resource-intensive initiatives that may compete with or otherwise negatively impact implementation of a new employee wellness initiative.		

Advancing Comprehensive School Employee Wellness: A Toolkit for School Systems



Discuss

School District Context Priority Setting

Did **any** members of your team mark **one or more** items in the Senior Leader Support section as "does not describe us"?

YES → Skip to "School District Context Priority Setting"
NO → Skip to "Senior Leader Support for Employee Wellness Priority Setting"

Step 1: Review
In the box below, list up to three items that your team unanimously agrees are growth areas.

In the box below, list up to three items that some, but not all, team members think are growth areas.

If there are more than three items in either category, list those that seem most feasible to address.

Step 2: Discuss

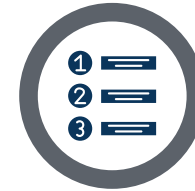
- If you listed items in the left-hand box, discuss these first. What led everyone to agree that these items do not describe your school system?
- If you listed items in the right-hand box, discuss these next. Why do you think there is disagreement on these? For example, do team members have different opinions about what these items mean? Have different team members had different experiences based on their role, tenure, or other characteristics?

Tally the results to identify your team's top priorities (no more than three) based on which items received the most votes. List these in the box below.

Copy these priorities into the **Top priorities** box on page 58.

Next, complete "Senior Leader Support for Employee Wellness Priority Setting" on the following page.

Advancing Comprehensive School Employee Wellness: A Toolkit for School Systems



Prioritize

Our Readiness Priorities

The tables below and on the next page reflect the readiness growth areas that your team prioritized on the preceding pages. Continue using a discussion-based approach to help your team work through next steps for how to address each one.

Senior Leader Support for Employee Wellness
For each prioritized growth area in this section, determine your team's first step toward building support. Examples include: sharing information from the toolkit with senior leaders to help build understanding; using available employee data to demonstrate need; and highlighting the connection between employee wellness and existing organizational goals, mission, and/or values.

Top priorities (from page 55)	First steps toward building support
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

School District Context
Consider how each prioritized growth area has impacted prior district initiatives (wellness-related or other) and what could have helped to mitigate its impact. Use those ideas to build mitigation strategies for employee wellness efforts going forward. For example, if turnover in school leadership has disrupted or slowed prior initiatives, consider how to: 1) build shared leadership at the school level so employee wellness efforts do not start and end with school leaders, and 2) efficiently onboard new school leaders to ongoing employee wellness efforts to minimize burden on other staff during leadership transitions.

Top priorities (from page 56)	Mitigation strategies
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

School district context

School district context refers to general conditions within a school system that could influence implementation of new initiatives. This section includes several items related to how the school system has engaged in creating and sustaining change in the past. Weaknesses in this area have the potential to negatively influence efforts to advance school employee wellness.

For each item, mark the column that best describes your assessment of your school system in relation to that item.	Strength	Growth Area
1. In our district, there is minimal turnover in senior leadership positions.		
2. In our district, there is minimal turnover in school leadership positions.		
3. District-level staff routinely collaborate to achieve shared goals, including shared ownership of initiatives.		
4. In our district, we collect and use data to set priorities and monitor progress.		
5. In our district, data are rarely used in a punitive way.		
6. Our district has a track record of discontinuing or modifying ineffective policies, processes, and/or programs.		
7. When our district tries something new, school staff, families, students, and community partners are involved in the decision-making process.		
8. When our district tries something new, a diverse group of school staff (e.g., role, tenure, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) are involved in the decision-making process.		
9. When our district tries something new, senior leaders generally stick with it long enough to determine whether it works (i.e., there is not a revolving door of new initiatives).		
10. When our district tries something new, senior leaders generally allocate the resources necessary to do it, including providing school staff with the time necessary to implement the new initiative.		
11. When our district tries something new, senior leaders take a learning-oriented approach rather than a compliance-oriented approach to monitoring progress.		
12. Our district generally limits the number of new initiatives to avoid "initiative fatigue."		
13. Our district does not currently have high-profile or resource-intensive initiatives that may compete with or otherwise negatively impact implementation of a new employee wellness initiative.		

Senior leader support for employee wellness

Leadership support is critical for achieving large-scale, sustainable improvements in an organization or system. Senior leader support for employee wellness refers to senior leaders' buy-in and motivation to support comprehensive and equity-focused efforts to advance employee wellness.

For each item, mark the column that best describes your assessment of your school system in relation to that item.	Describes us well	Describes us somewhat	Does <u>not</u> describe us	What is your evidence? Provide examples that support your choice.
1. In our district, senior leaders are committed to advancing employee wellness, generally.				
2. In our district, senior leaders are committed to making long-term investments in employee wellness and understand that there is no "quick fix."				
3. In our district, senior leaders are committed to reducing wellness disparities experienced by school employees based on characteristics like role, tenure, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.				
4. In our district, senior leaders are committed to taking a comprehensive approach to advancing employee wellness (e.g., going beyond physical and/or mental wellness to include things like economic stability, agency, and work that feels meaningful).				
5. In our district, senior leaders are committed to increasing resources and supports , as needed, to advance employee wellness.				
6. In our district, senior leaders are committed to reducing job stressors (i.e., job-related challenges such as insufficient resources, unrealistic expectations, etc.), as needed, to advance employee wellness.				

Capacity to advance employee wellness

Capacity to advance employee wellness refers to financial and human capital, as well as data and other infrastructure, that can be leveraged for comprehensive and equity-focused efforts to advance employee wellness. Resources may come from the school system or the broader community. Understanding the currently available resources can help to inform planning and implementation efforts.

For each item, mark the column that best describes your assessment of your school system in relation to that item.	Strength	Growth Area
1. Our district has <u>senior</u> leaders who are seen as wellness champions.		
2. Our district has <u>school</u> leaders who are seen as wellness champions.		
3. Our district has adequate financial resources to invest in employee wellness.		
4. In our district, staff in a variety of district- and school-level roles have time to play a decision-making role in advancing wellness for all school employees (e.g., help establish our district's vision for employee wellness, identify goals that align with our vision, and develop a plan for how to achieve our goals).		
5. Our district collects data that can be used to identify wellness needs and monitor progress.		
6. Our district collects data that can be used to identify differences in employee wellness needs across different groups of employees (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, job title, etc.).		
7. Our district has staff with the skills needed to effectively use data, including identifying relevant data sources, understanding the limitations of available data (i.e., what it can/cannot tell us), and being able to transform raw data into meaningful information and insights (i.e., cleaning, analyzing, interpreting, and explaining data to others).		
8. Our district has staff with the skills needed to coordinate new data collection, if needed.		
9. Our district has effective communication systems in place for sharing information with the school community (including staff, families, and community partners) about new initiatives.		
10. Our district has effective systems in place to support training and professional development that may be needed for the implementation of new initiatives.		
11. In our district, there are parent organizations with capacity to support employee wellness.		
12. In our district, there are collective bargaining organizations (i.e., unions) with capacity to support employee wellness.		
13. Our district has existing partnerships with community organizations that can support efforts to promote employee wellness.		
14. In our district, there are community organizations that schools can potentially partner with to promote employee wellness.		

School District Context Priority Setting

Did **any** members of your team mark **one or more items** in the Senior Leader Support section as "does not describe us"?

YES

NO



Skip to "School District Context Priority Setting"



Step 1: Review

In the box below, list *up to three* items that your team unanimously agrees are growth areas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the box below, list *up to three* items that some, but not all, team members think are growth areas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If there are more than three items in either category, list those that seem most feasible to address.

Step 2: Discuss

- If you listed items in the left-hand box, discuss these first. What led everyone to agree that these items do not describe your school system?
- If you listed items in the right-hand box, discuss these next. Why do you think there is disagreement on these? For example, do team members have different opinions about what these items mean? Have different team members had different experiences based on their role, tenure, or other characteristics?

Step 3: Prioritize

Transfer all items from both boxes in Step 1 to sticky notes and post them to a wall or whiteboard (physical or virtual, such as [Jamboard](#)). [In a pinch, you could simply list them on a large, easel-sized pad of paper.]

Have each team member cast their vote for the item(s) they think are most pressing to address by placing a dot (using a sticker, marker, or pen) on those sticky note(s). Depending on how many items you have in total, you could allow everyone to vote for their top 1-3 choices.

Tally the results to identify your team's top priorities (no more than three) based on which items received the most votes. List these in the box below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Copy these priorities into the first box on page 58.

Next, complete "Senior Leader Support for Employee Wellness Priority Setting" on the following page.

Senior Leader Support for Employee Wellness Priority Setting

Did **any** members of your team mark **one or more items** in the Senior Leader Support section as "does not describe us"?

YES

NO

→ Skip to "Capacity to Advance Employee Wellness Capacity Setting"

Step 1: Review

In the box below, list *up to three* items that your team unanimously agrees are growth areas.

1.
2.
3.

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1.
2.
3.

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1.
2.
3.

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Capacity to Advance Employee Wellness Priority Setting

Did **any** members of your team mark **one or more items** in the Senior Leader Support section as "does not describe us"?

YES

NO



Skip to "Our Readiness Priorities"

Step 1: Review

In the box below, list *up to three* items that your team unanimously agrees are growth areas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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1.

2.

3.

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Our Readiness Priorities

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Top priorities (from page 55)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

First steps toward building support

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

School District Context

Consider how each prioritized growth area has impacted prior district initiatives (wellness-related or other) and what could have helped to mitigate its impact. Use these ideas to build mitigation strategies for employee wellness efforts going forward. For example, if turnover in school leadership has derailed or slowed prior initiatives, consider how to: 1) build shared leadership at the school level so employee wellness efforts do not start and end with school leaders, and 2) efficiently onboard new school leaders to ongoing employee wellness efforts to minimize burden on other staff during leadership transitions.

Top priorities (from page 56)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Mitigation strategies

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

Our Readiness Priorities (continued)

Capacity to Advance Employee Wellness

For each prioritized growth area in this section, consider strategies for building the needed capacity. There are a wide range of possible strategies that could be used, depending on the resource needed. Some examples include fundraising or applying for grants, providing professional development to build staff skills, engaging stakeholder groups to secure their support, partnering with community organizations to leverage existing resources, or hiring additional staff.

Top priorities (from previous page)	Capacity-building strategies
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Work Smarter, Not Harder

Just as the six wellness domains are interrelated, so are the three domains included in the readiness assessment. We encourage your team to discuss the ways in which your identified readiness priorities and/or strategies may be interrelated, as this can highlight places where efforts may contribute to progress across multiple areas (i.e., you may be able to address more than one priority with a single strategy). For example, efforts to build senior leader support can also help address gaps in capacity, given the unique role senior leaders play in securing and allocating resources. By identifying these interconnections now, you may be able to streamline your efforts, thereby saving time and resources. This thought activity can also help you map out a tentative timeline for your next steps. Use the space below to note potential synergies, timing of next steps, or anything else that you find helpful for planning.

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