The Mindful Educators Initiative:

Strategic Plan for Mental Health PTO Pilot Program in the School District of Philadelphia

Cover image: © WavebreakMediaMicro/Adobe Stock Images, 2023

By Donovan W. Forrest

EMPA Candidate (Class of 2024)

Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania

This project is dedicated to the unsung education heroes: the playground duty doers. Beyond the structured debates and formal discussions, you—the teachers on the front lines of our urban playgrounds and classrooms—embody the spirit and soul of transformative education. Your daily commitment, often unnoticed, truly shapes the future, one student at a time.

I sincerely thank Dr. Janet Rosenzweig, Professor Robertson-Kraft, and my dedicated Fels classmates. Your support, constructive feedback, and the joy you infused into the intense tasks of research, writing, outlining, and presenting have been invaluable. Your collective wisdom and camaraderie have enriched this work and made the process a truly memorable and rewarding experience.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....4

BLUF.....7

Background and Rationale.....9

Pilot Program Proposal.....14

Program Implementation Strategy.....21

Stakeholder Engagement and Support.....27

Budget Overview and Resource Allocation.....32

Limitations.....36

Future Work 38

Conclusion.....40

Bibliography 42

Executive Summary

Executive Summary:

This pilot initiative actively addresses the pressing issue of teacher retention to strengthen the support system for teachers and boost morale, especially for those serving the most vulnerable students in ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Urban catchment areas where early exposure to stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect lead to more drastic health issues, criminal behaviors, and higher potential for substance use.[1] The significance of this endeavor cannot be overstated, as teacher attrition not only imposes a substantial financial toll on the education system but also profoundly affects student achievement, particularly during their formative years.

The initiative encourages the just distribution of Mental Health PTO by emphasizing a rigorously structured selection process. This process includes creating a diverse committee and employing a confidential, equitable application process. It reinforces the program's dedication to privacy and trust, which are vital for fostering teacher participation and engagement. By incorporating best practices and feedback mechanisms, the program evolves in response to shifting needs and insights and showcases its adaptability and potential for broader application and enduring sustainability.

High teacher turnover inflicts detrimental effects on schools across the United States. Philadelphia provides a poignant example: nearly 400 teachers resigned after the 2022-2023 school year, contributing significantly to an estimated loss exceeding 8 million dollars.[2] These losses extend beyond financial implications, permeating the educational landscape and directly impacting student success.

Teacher attrition significantly affects low-performing, high-poverty schools, especially those within ACE Urban catchment areas where many Philadelphia students enroll. Nearly 60% of Philadelphia students attend low-achieving schools, with Black and Brown children overrepresented.[3] The urgent need to support educators in these settings is evident, as factors such as prolonged work hours, oversized classrooms, and inadequate salaries contribute to teachers' challenges.[4]

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has further strained teachers' mental well-being.

---

[1] Christopher Freeze, "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Crime," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, April 9, 2019, https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/adverse-childhood-experiences-and-crime.

[2] Axios, "Public Schools See Surge in Teacher Resignations, Retirements," Axios Philadelphia, September 11, 2023, accessed September 11, 2023, https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2023/09/11/public-schools-teacher-resignations-retirements-dat a.

[3] Chalkbeat Philadelphia, "Racial, Economic Inequities Persist in Philadelphia Schools, New Report Says," Chalkbeat, January 13, 2021, accessed January 13, 2021, https://www.chalkbeat.org/philadelphia/2021/1/13/22230116/racial-economic-inequities-persist-in-philadelphia-sch ools-new-report-says/#:~:text=Overall%2C%2060%25%20of%20Philadelphia%20kids,ranking %20schools%20than%20wealthier%20neighborhoods.

[4] Economic Policy Institute, "A Policy Agenda to Address the Teacher Shortage in U.S. Public Schools," Economic Policy Institute, accessed March 22, 2024, https://www.epi.org/publication/a-policy-agenda-to-address-the-teacher-shortage-in-u-s-public-schools/.

The abrupt transition to remote instruction left many educators feeling isolated and overwhelmed, exacerbating symptoms of depression and anxiety. These challenges compounded with the dual crises of the pandemic and racial unrest in 2020, which disproportionately impacted Black and Brown children and their teachers, leading to increased burnout rates, particularly in urban centers like Philadelphia.[5]

The racial unrest during 2020, particularly following the murder of George Floyd and others, significantly impacted various sectors of society, including education.[6] Widespread protests marked the period of civil unrest triggered by these events and, in some instances, riots against systemic racism and police violence in the United States, and this period of unrest led to a national and international cultural reckoning on topics of racial injustice. Such a climate undoubtedly affected communities deeply, potentially impacting children's mental health, community cohesion, and the overall learning environment.

This project proposes a pilot plan for Mental Health Paid Time Off (PTO) in the School District of Philadelphia to support teachers. Alongside the ten personal leave days already provided at the beginning of the school year, this initiative aims to provide teachers with the necessary support to navigate their challenges, ultimately fostering a more conducive learning environment for all students. Grounded in evidence from the district regarding teacher retention rates and annual disability requests and guided by a cost-effectiveness analysis, this proposal outlines a small-scale, two-year-long experiment to prioritize teacher well-being, enhance morale, and drive student achievement.

---

[5] Loretta I. Eboigbe et al., "The compounded effect of the dual pandemic on ethnic-racial minority adolescents' mental health and psychosocial well-being," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 52 (2023): 101626, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101626.

[6] Matt Barnum and Kalyn Belsha, "Protests, donations, lesson plans: How the education world is responding to George Floyd's killing," *Chalkbeat*, June 2, 2020, https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/6/2/21278591/education-schools-george-floyd-racism/

Bottom Line Up Front

Bottom Line Up Front:

Enhancing elementary school educators' mental and emotional well-being is essential for their health and the academic success of their economically disadvantaged students, particularly in literacy development. The proposed pilot initiative for mental health Paid Time Off (PTO) in Philadelphia seeks to mitigate stressors, improve teacher retention, and ultimately elevate student achievement. This strategic investment in teacher well-being aligns with research demonstrating its profound impact on educational outcomes and societal equity. It advocates a paradigm shift towards a more resilient and effective education system. Studies such as The Research on Mindfulness by Mindful Schools and an article written by Benjamin Dreer in the Frontiers for Psychology journal indicates that focusing on teacher well-being can significantly enhance educational and social outcomes for students.[7][8]

[7] Research on Mindfulness," Mindful Schools, accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research-on-mindfulness/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw17qvBhBrEiwA1rU9w_0UQfE4NkQtDPtBOSIs6G_yCYeYZuvajt7HXd454_hcx4HwG2KUgBo CAeQQAvD_BwE.

[8] Dreer B., "On the Outcomes of Teacher Wellbeing: A Systematic Review of Research," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023): 1205179, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1205179.

Background and Rationale

Supporting Educator Well-Being for Student Success

Supporting elementary school educators' mental and emotional well-being should be prioritized, not merely for their health but for the academic achievement of their students, particularly within economically disadvantaged areas. This emphasis is of utmost importance due to these educators' critical role in the initial stages of literacy development. The proficiency in reading by the conclusion of the 4th grade serves as a pivotal juncture, substantially dictating the future socio-economic paths of students, thereby positioning elementary educators at the forefront of ensuring that students reach this essential milestone.[9]

Introducing Mental Health Paid Time Off (PTO) for teachers in the School District of Philadelphia is a strategic move with far-reaching benefits. It prioritizes teachers' mental health, directly linking to better teaching and student learning. It sets out to decrease teacher burnout and boost staff retention by giving teachers time to recharge mentally. This approach goes beyond typical pilots that might focus on updating curriculums or integrating new technologies, as it aims to ensure the long-term sustainability and well-being of the teaching staff, contributing to a more robust and supportive school environment.

Moreover, this pilot positions the district as an attractive workplace amid widespread teacher shortages. By emphasizing the importance of teachers' mental health, Philadelphia demonstrates that it is a district that values and invests in its staff, making it more likely to attract and keep high-quality educators. Doing so provides stability and dedication in the workforce and is crucial for the ongoing improvement and success of the district's educational achievements.

The Impact of External Stressors on Educators

The teaching profession faces intensified challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and socio-political events exacerbated by institutional cultures discouraging leave usage. Urban educators, highlighted in the Philadelphia Urban Ace Survey (2012-2013), face distinct pressures. In neighborhoods like Fairhill, with 61% living below the poverty line, students experience a higher rate of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). [8] The traumas faced by young students significantly affect educators' mental health, particularly elementary school teachers, crucial for children's development. They grapple with increased challenges worsened by the pandemic, including remote teaching and heightened emotional support needs.

One explicit example is the shooting death of Walter Wallace in October 2020 in Cobbs Creek, Philadelphia, identified as an ACE urban catchment area.[10] After being killed during a mental health emergency, looters rioted and destroyed neighboring businesses, leading to

---

[9] Philadelphia ACE Survey," Philadelphia ACE Project, accessed January 31, 2024, https://www.philadelphiaaces.org/philadelphia-ace-survey

[10] Max Marin, "'Shoot him': Body camera footage shows officers who shot and killed Walter Wallace Jr.," WHYY, November 4, 2020, https://whyy.org/articles/shoot-him-body-camera-footage-shows-officers-who-shot-and-killed-walter-wallace-jr/.

city-wide curfews, police presence, and psychological stress, which could disrupt learning.[11]

(Graphic created by the Philadelphia ACE Task Force, sourced from philadelphia aces.org).

Advocating for Comprehensive Support Systems

Areas like Tioga and Eastwick, similarly affected by economic hardship and limited access to resources, further illustrate the pressing need for comprehensive support mechanisms. Addressing this necessitates targeted interventions, including professional development in trauma-informed teaching, enhanced mental health resources for educators, and community engagement efforts to mitigate these neighborhoods' broader socio-economic challenges.[12] Research highlights the significant impact of teachers' emotional well-being on their performance and student outcomes.[13] Emotional well-being, or lack thereof, manifests in teaching
performance, including attention to detail, memory, learning, decision-making, and relationship-building within schools. Positive emotions like joy and curiosity can enhance

11 Nicole Chavez, "Unrest after Walter Wallace Jr. Shooting Boiled Over from the Disconnect between a Philadelphia Community and Police," CNN, November 1, 2020, https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/01/us/philadelphia-police-community-tensions-walter-wallace/index.html.

[12] Advancing the Work of Trauma-Informed Care," EDC - Education Development Center, accessed January 31, 2024, https://www.edc.org/blog/advancing-work-trauma-informed-care

[13] Dreer B., "On the Outcomes of Teacher Wellbeing: A Systematic Review of Research," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023): 1205179, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1205179.

engagement and promote a more conducive learning environment.

Addressing the Escalating Teacher Attrition Rate and Its Broad Economic and Social Impact

In 2022, the attrition rate among teachers in Philadelphia escalated to unprecedented levels, with 13% of School District educators and 23% of charter school teachers exiting their roles, marking a significant rise from 2018 when 16% of charter educators and 7% of district teachers had departed.[14] The economic ramifications of not addressing teacher well-being are complex, extending beyond immediate costs to broader socio-economic consequences. High turnover rates, fueled by inadequate support and high-stress levels, not only necessitate increased expenses on recruitment and training but also undermine the quality of education, leading to a less prepared future workforce.[15]

Investing in Teacher Well-Being and Learning from Successful Initiatives

Enhancing teacher well-being goes beyond educational policy; it invests in society's future. We create a more resilient education system by prioritizing teachers' mental health, benefiting students and society. Studying successful mental health support initiatives for teachers in other districts can offer valuable insights for the proposed pilot in Philadelphia. Educators have developed various programs and resources to support their mental health, such as the Happy Teacher Revolution, which offers a network of teachers promoting wellness in their communities through online and virtual training and support group meetings, and the collaboration between mindfulness applications like Calm and Headspace with educational organizations to provide free access to teachers and promote mindfulness practices.[16]

Post-pandemic stress in teachers has underscored the need for supportive strategies. The PERMA model can enhance well-being and job satisfaction by emphasizing Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.[17] Teachers applying PERMA might

---

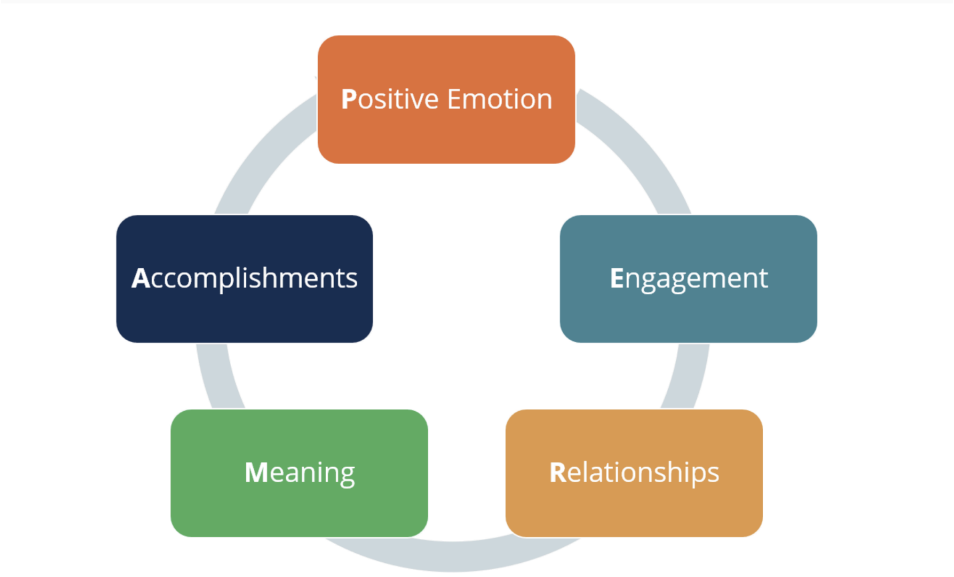
[14] More teachers quit in 2022, but Philadelphia charter schools saw less attrition than district," The Philadelphia Inquirer, February 11, 2024, https://www.inquirer.com/education/philadelphia-teachers-leaving-district-charter-attrition-20240211.html .

[15] Economic Policy Institute, "The Teacher Shortage is Real, Large and Growing, and Worse Than We Thought," Economic Policy Institute, August 23, 2016, https://www.epi.org/publication/shortage-of-teachers/.

[16] Research on Mindfulness," Mindful Schools, accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research-on-mindfulness/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw17qvBhBrEiwA1rU9w_0UQfE4NkQtDPtBOSIs6G_yCYeYZuvajt7HXd454_hcx4HwG2KUgBo CAeQQAvD_BwE.

17 David García-Álvarez, Manuel J. Soler, and Laura Achard-Braga, "Psychological Well-being in Teachers During and Post-COVID-19: Positive Psychology Interventions," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): Article 769363, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.769363.

keep a gratitude list, balance work and personal life, connect with loved ones, and engage in hobbies like joining a well-being book club. Allowing rest and activities that foster positive emotions and mental health days can boost resilience, productivity, and a sense of achievement, contributing to professional success.



(Image credit: "The PERMA Model" by Corporate Finance Institute. Available at: Corporate Finance Institute.)

Providing teachers with mental health PTO aligns with the PERMA model of well-being by fostering positive emotions through necessary breaks, enhancing engagement by allowing teachers to recharge and return to work more focused, improving relationships with students and colleagues by reducing stress-induced irritability, reconnecting teachers with the meaning in their work during time off, and boosting their sense of accomplishment by supporting their mental health and professional efficacy.[18] This holistic approach not only aids in their well-being but also enhances the educational environment, making it a beneficial initiative for teachers and students alike.

[18] The PERMA Model: Your Scientific Theory of Happiness," PositivePsychology.com, accessed [Date of Access], https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/.

Pilot Program Proposal

A Pilot Proposal for Mental Health PTO in Philadelphia

The Mindful Educators Initiative for educators in three Philadelphia Urban Ace schools draws on findings from the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute and the UChicago Consortium on School Research, which demonstrate a clear connection between teacher support systems and improved student learning outcomes.[13] This initiative aims to alleviate teacher stress and create a supportive work atmosphere, thereby boosting educators' capacity to enhance student literacy and academic achievements through a comprehensive approach that benefits everyone involved.

This pilot will grant eligible and participating educators three days designated explicitly for mental health purposes, in addition to the ten days they receive at the start of the school year.

In this pilot's future work section, we recommend that administrators encourage participating teachers to use "mindful days" for mental health as intermittent leave. This approach involves teachers taking leave as needed—partial or specific days off—to manage their mental health and reduce the administrative burden of securing substitute teachers. We will refer to days used for mental health purposes as "mindful days" to lessen stigma.

This section introduces the Mindful Educators Initiative within the School District of Philadelphia, focusing on supporting teachers' mental well-being. It emphasizes the program's dedication to upholding confidentiality and privacy regarding teachers' mental health information, ensuring a secure and encouraging setting for participants.

Introduction

- **Background**: The teaching profession is acknowledged as highly stressful, impacting teachers' mental health significantly. The proposal advocates introducing Mental Health PTO as a proactive measure to address these challenges.
- **Objective**: The primary goal is to offer teachers dedicated time off to address mental health concerns, enhancing their overall well-being, job satisfaction, and retention rates within the District.

Selection Group Method

- **Formation of a Selection Committee**: A diverse committee will be established, comprising representatives from the school district, mental health professionals, and teacher advocacy groups. Members will sign confidentiality agreements to protect applicants' privacy.
- **Application Process**: A confidential online application form will be designed to collect necessary information without disclosing sensitive details, employing secure technology measures to protect the data.
- **Review Process**: Applications will be reviewed using a standardized evaluation rubric that focuses on the demonstrated need for mental health support and anonymizes personal information to maintain confidentiality.

- **Fair Allocation of Resources**: A transparent scoring system will be developed to allocate Mental Health PTO based on the severity of mental health concerns, ensuring fairness and equity in the distribution process.

Confidentiality and Privacy Measures

- **Data Security**: Advanced security measures, such as secure servers and encryption methods, will be utilized to protect sensitive application data, and security protocols will be regularly updated.

  Confidentiality Agreements and HIPAA Compliance: To ensure the stringent protection of applicants' personal information, all committee members, including external professionals, must sign confidentiality agreements. [19] These agreements are critical for maintaining privacy and adhering to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.[20] By doing so, the team safeguards sensitive health information and meets federal privacy standards, mitigating the risk of unauthorized disclosure and ensuring that the handling of personal data aligns with national privacy and security requirements.[21]

- **Anonymous Reporting**: An anonymous reporting mechanism will be established for teachers to raise concerns about potential breaches of confidentiality. Prompt investigations and resolutions will be provided for any reported issues.

- Combining methods like data masking and de-identification, generalization with data swapping, and synthetic data creation is critical to ensure confidentiality in a mental health PTO pilot for teachers.[22] These strategies obscure personal details and rearrange data to prevent identification, while synthetic data mimics accurate statistics without exposing personal information. [23]

Return on Investment (ROI)

- **Evaluation Metrics**: Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be developed to measure the program's impact on teachers' mental health, with regular assessments of the ROI through analysis of retention rates, job satisfaction surveys, and productivity metrics.
- **Feedback Mechanism**: A feedback system will be implemented to gather insights from participating teachers on the effectiveness of the Mental Health PTO. This feedback will be used to continuously improve and adjust the program.

---

[19] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "HIPAA Training and Resources," last modified January 20, 2023, https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/training/index.html.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] What Data Anonymization Is and When You Need to Implement It," Usercentrics, accessed April 1, 2024, https://usercentrics.com/knowledge-hub/data-anonymization/.
[23] Khaled El Emam and Luk Arbuckle, "Introduction," in *Anonymizing Health Data: Case Studies and Methods to Get You Started*, 1st ed. (Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, 2013), https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/anonymizing-health-data/9781449363062/ch01.html.

Conclusion

This proposal presents a comprehensive plan for implementing a Mental Health PTO pilot program, with a strong focus on confidentiality, fairness in resource allocation, and the anticipated benefits for the educational community within the School District of Philadelphia. The initiative aims to foster a supportive and resilient environment conducive to high-quality education by prioritizing teachers' mental health.

Overview of the Mental Health PTO Allocation Scoring System

The "Mental Health PTO Allocation Scoring Rubric" is designed to allocate Mental Health PTO to teachers fairly and address their mental health needs. The rubric comprises six weighted criteria, including quantitative and qualitative data, professional growth engagement, support program utilization, school environment, and collaborative communication. Evaluators assess each criterion and compute an actual score that determines PTO distribution. The scoring legend offers clarity to guarantee transparency and fairness in the allocation process. This rubric is essential to the district's commitment to educators' mental well-being, providing a systematic and quantifiable approach to evaluating their needs.

The "Mental Health PTO Allocation Scoring Rubric" actively measures and addresses teacher mental health issues, aiming to distribute Mental Health Paid Time Off (PTO) fairly and effectively. This rubric scores teacher applications against established criteria to determine PTO needs.

Mental Health PTO Allocation Scoring Rubric

Instructions:

1. Assess the severity of mental health concerns among teachers using the rubric.
2. Assign points based on the criteria met and multiplied by the weighted percentage to determine the actual score for each category.
3. Add the actual scores to find the total score that will guide the allocation of Mental Health PTO.

Criteria	Excellent (5 Points)	Good (4 Points)	Satisfactory (3 Points)	Fair (2 Points)	Poor (1 Point)	% of Total Score	Actual Score
Quantitative Data	Minimal sick leaves; lowest stress levels reported; very few mental health incidents.	Few sick leaves; moderate stress levels reported; few mental health incidents.	Average number of sick leaves and stress level reports; some mental health incidents.	High number of sick leaves; high stress levels; many mental health incidents	Very high number of sick leaves; very high stress levels; numerous mental health incidents	30%	[Score]
Qualitative Data	Detailed narrative reports including comprehensive, extremely positive audit and support group feedback.	Comprehensive narrative reports; minor concerns with positive staff and support group feedback.	General narrative reports; some minor concerns with positive staff and support group feedback.	Limited narrative reports; mixed staff concerns with some negative feedback.	Vague or critical narrative reports; negative staff and support group feedback.	25%	[Score]
Professional Development and Training	Full participation in mental health training; proactively includes mental health in PD plans.	Good participation in mental health training; includes mental health in PD plans.	Satisfactory participation; somewhat includes mental health in PD plans.	Limited participation in mental health training; rarely includes mental health in PD plans.	No participation in mental health training; does not include mental health in PD plans.	15%	[Score]
Supportive Resources and Programs	Full utilization and easy access to all available mental health resources and peer support.	Good utilization and easy to most available mental health resources and peer support.	Satisfactory utilization; adequate access to some mental health resources and support.	Limited utilization; access to few mental health resources and peer support is challenging.	No utilization; access to mental health resources and peer support is very poor or non-existent.	15%	[Score]
School Culture and Climate	Highly positive well-being culture; psychological safety and recognition of initiatives are exemplary.	Positive well-being culture; psychological safety is maintained and initiatives are usually recognized.	Adequate culture of well-being; some psychological safety and occasional recognition of initiatives.	Mixed culture of well-being; psychological safety and recognition of initiatives are inconsistent.	Poor culture of well-being; lack of psychological safety and non-recognition of initiatives.	10%	[Score]
Collaboration and Communication	Exceptional collaboration and communication regarding mental health needs and resources.	Effective collaboration and communication regarding mental health needs and resources.	Adequate collaboration and communication regarding mental health needs and resources.	Limited collaboration and ineffective communication regarding mental health needs and resources.	Poor collaboration and communication regarding mental health needs and resources.	5%	[Score]

(Illustration of the budget allocation for the Mental Health PTO Pilot Program, with the majority of the budget dedicated to salaries (89.5%), followed by implementation costs including PTO compensation (3.8%), development (3.3%), and evaluation (3.3%).

Criteria:

Six distinct criteria make up the rubric:

1. Quantitative Data (30% of Total Score): Evaluators review sick leave records, stress level surveys, and mental health incident reports. Lower leaves, stress levels, and incidents result in higher scores, indicating healthier mental status.
2. Qualitative Data (25% of Total Score): This criterion includes Teacher narratives, staff meeting anecdotes, and support group feedback. Scores reflect the richness and positivity of qualitative data.
3. Professional Development and Training (15% of Total Score): Active participation in mental health training and including mental health in development plans score highly.

4. Support Programs and Resources (15% of Total Score): Accessibility and use of mental health resources and support determine the scores in this area.
5. School Culture and Climate (10% of Total Score): Evaluators score the school's culture based on its support for well-being, psychological safety, and recognition of mental health initiatives. May use The National School Climate Center as a resource.
6. Collaboration and Communication (5% of Total Score): Scores depend on the effectiveness of the school's collaboration and communication around mental health resources and needs.

Scoring Process:

Evaluators assign scores from 1 to 5 for each criterion. They then multiply these scores by the criterion's weight to get the 'Actual Score.' Adding these scores together gives a total score that determines the PTO allocation.

Scoring Legend:

The legend defines each score, from '5' for exceptional fulfillment of criteria to '1' for inadequate fulfillment.

Purpose:

The rubric ensures transparent, consistent, and fair allocation of Mental Health PTO, reflecting the genuine needs of the teaching staff. It is essential to the school district's broader mental health support strategy.

Program Implementation Strategy

Program Overview:

Our pioneering Mental Health PTO pilot program, spanning two years as outlined in the provided timeline, prioritizes the well-being of educators in the Philadelphia Schools system. Fifty teachers will be selected based on a predetermined rubric and granted three designated mental health days off. These days will offer a range of support, from relaxation to seeking professional assistance, ensuring a holistic approach to mental wellness. By integrating best practices from extensive research, we aim to cultivate a supportive environment where educators can thrive personally and professionally.

Best Practices:

Designing a mental health PTO policy for teachers in the School District of Philadelphia, or any other district, should consider several best practices informed by research and case studies. Here are three key recommendations:

1. **Encourage the Use of PTO for Mental Health**: It is crucial to normalize the use of PTO for mental health purposes. A recent Gallup poll highlighted that employee stress is at an all-time high, making mental health days essential for well-being. Encouraging teachers to take mental health days without fear of stigma or repercussion can help prevent burnout and improve overall performance. This approach benefits the individual teachers and contributes to a healthier, more productive educational environment.

2. **Separation of Sick Days and PTO**: Some experts suggest that sick days should be distinct from regular PTO to encourage teachers to take time off when unwell without dipping into their vacation time. This separation can incentivize teachers to stay home when sick, which is particularly important in a school setting to prevent the spread of illness. Flexibility in policy application, especially regarding mental health, can further support teacher well-being. Teachers also get spring and winter breaks, which are considered PTO. This can be an issue if the audience for this pilot goes outside of school districts.

3. **Teacher Involvement in Mental Health Initiatives**: Teachers play a crucial role in the mental health ecosystem of a school. Their perspectives are invaluable in developing mental health competencies and support systems within the school environment. Engaging teachers in the conversation around mental health PTO policies can lead to more effective and tailored approaches that meet their specific needs and the needs of the students.

Proposed Team Members:

- Program Coordinator (1)
- Mental Health Experts (2)
- Fundraising Coordinator (1)
- Training Facilitators (2)
- School Liaisons (2)
- Outreach Coordinator (1)
- Volunteer Coordinator (1)
- Communication Team (2)
- Evaluation Team (2)
- School Representatives (2)
- Stakeholder Engagement Team (2)
- Support Team (2)

Year One: Planning and Recruitment

August - September: Program Design and Preparation	October - November: Study Group Selection and Training	December - February: Recruitment and Planning	March-May: Finalize Program Details and Logistics	June: Year-End Review and Pre-Implementation Assessment
Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Oversees the planning process, manages timelines, and coordinates efforts. • Mental Health Experts (2): Psychologists or counselors with expertise in curriculum development and mental health education. • Fundraising Coordinator (1): Manages fundraising efforts, including grant applications, sponsorships, and donor relations.	**Resources Needed:** • Program Coordinator (1): Leads the selection process, communicates with schools, and coordinates logistics. • Training Facilitators (2): Conduct orientation and training sessions for school staff and volunteers. • School Liaisons (2): Communicate directly with selected schools and assist in logistical arrangements.	**Resources Needed:** • Outreach Coordinator (1): Develops recruitment materials, engages with stakeholders, and coordinates outreach efforts. • Volunteer Coordinator (1): Recruits, trains, and manages volunteers or peer mentors. • Communication Team (2): Manages communication channels and engages with schools, students, teachers, and parents.	**Resources Needed:** • Program Coordinator (1): Finalizes program schedules, activities, and resource allocation. • Evaluation Team (2): Develops assessment tools, conducts pre-implementation assessments, and analyzes data. • School Representatives (2): Liaison between schools and program coordinators, ensuring readiness for implementation.	**Resources Needed:** • Program Coordinator (1): Leads year-end review and assessment activities and incorporates feedback. • Evaluation Team (2): Analyzes readiness assessment data and provides recommendations. • Stakeholder Engagement Team (2): Gathers feedback from stakeholders for program improvements.

Year Two: Implementation

August - September: Program Launch and Kickoff	October - November: Initial Implementation and Monitoring	December - February: Ongoing Implementation and Evaluation	March-May: Mid-Year Review and Adjustment	June: End-of-Year Evaluation and Reflection
Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Plans and executes program kickoff events and ensures smooth launch. • Training Facilitators (2): Conduct orientation and training sessions for participants. • Mental Health Experts (2): Provide on-site support and guidance during program launch.	Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Oversees initial implementation, monitors progress, and addresses challenges. • Monitoring Team (2): Collects data on program activities and key performance indicators. • Communication Team (2): Facilitates reporting and feedback mechanisms.	Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Provides ongoing support and guidance and addresses challenges. • Support Team (2): Addresses any challenges or issues during implementation. • Evaluation Team (2): Analyzes ongoing data and assesses program effectiveness and impact.	Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Coordinates mid-year review activities and implements adjustments. • Stakeholder Engagement Team (2): Gathers feedback from stakeholders for program adjustments. • Training Facilitators (2): Develop and deliver training sessions based on review findings.	Resources Needed: • Program Coordinator (1): Coordinates end-of-year evaluation and reflection activities and synthesizes findings. • Evaluation Team (2): Analyzes final data and prepares evaluation reports. • Communication Team (2): Share outcomes and lessons learned with stakeholders.

Focusing on teachers in urban ACE catchment areas and specifically targeting elementary school teachers is a strategic approach to address students' critical stage of literacy development. This decision is rooted in the understanding that early literacy, particularly reading proficiency by 4th grade, strongly predicts future academic success and overall life outcomes.

Research from Annie E. Casey Foundation highlights the significant challenges and disparities in reading proficiency, noting that a substantial proportion of 4th graders do not meet reading proficiency levels, with particularly alarming rates among children from low-income and minority backgrounds.[24] The implications of not achieving reading proficiency by this critical juncture are profound:

1. **Academic Struggles**: Students who do not read proficiently by fourth grade are more likely to face educational challenges, including higher retention risks in later grades, dropping out, or failing to graduate on time.[25]
2. **Socio Economic Impact**: The lack of early reading skills is linked to reduced earning potential and an increased likelihood of poverty in adulthood. There is also a strong correlation between low literacy levels and higher rates of incarceration.[26]
3. **Intergenerational Effects**: Low literacy levels can affect not just the individuals but also their future families, impacting the language, cognitive, and academic development of their children.[27]

Given these implications, it is essential to focus on teachers working with students in the most critical developmental years, especially in environments challenged by adverse childhood experiences. Teachers in these settings are at the forefront of addressing educational needs and broader social and emotional challenges that can impact learning.

Educational initiatives like "Read by Fourth" in Philadelphia aim to rally communities and resources around ensuring all children are reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade, recognizing this milestone's pivotal role in a child's educational trajectory and overall life chances.[28] By providing targeted support and resources to teachers in these crucial roles, there is

---

[24] Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Low Reading Scores Show Majority of U.S. Children Not Prepared for Future Success," January 29, 2014, https://www.aecf.org/blog/low-reading-scores-show-majority-of-us-children-not-prepared-for-future-s.

[25] Ibid.

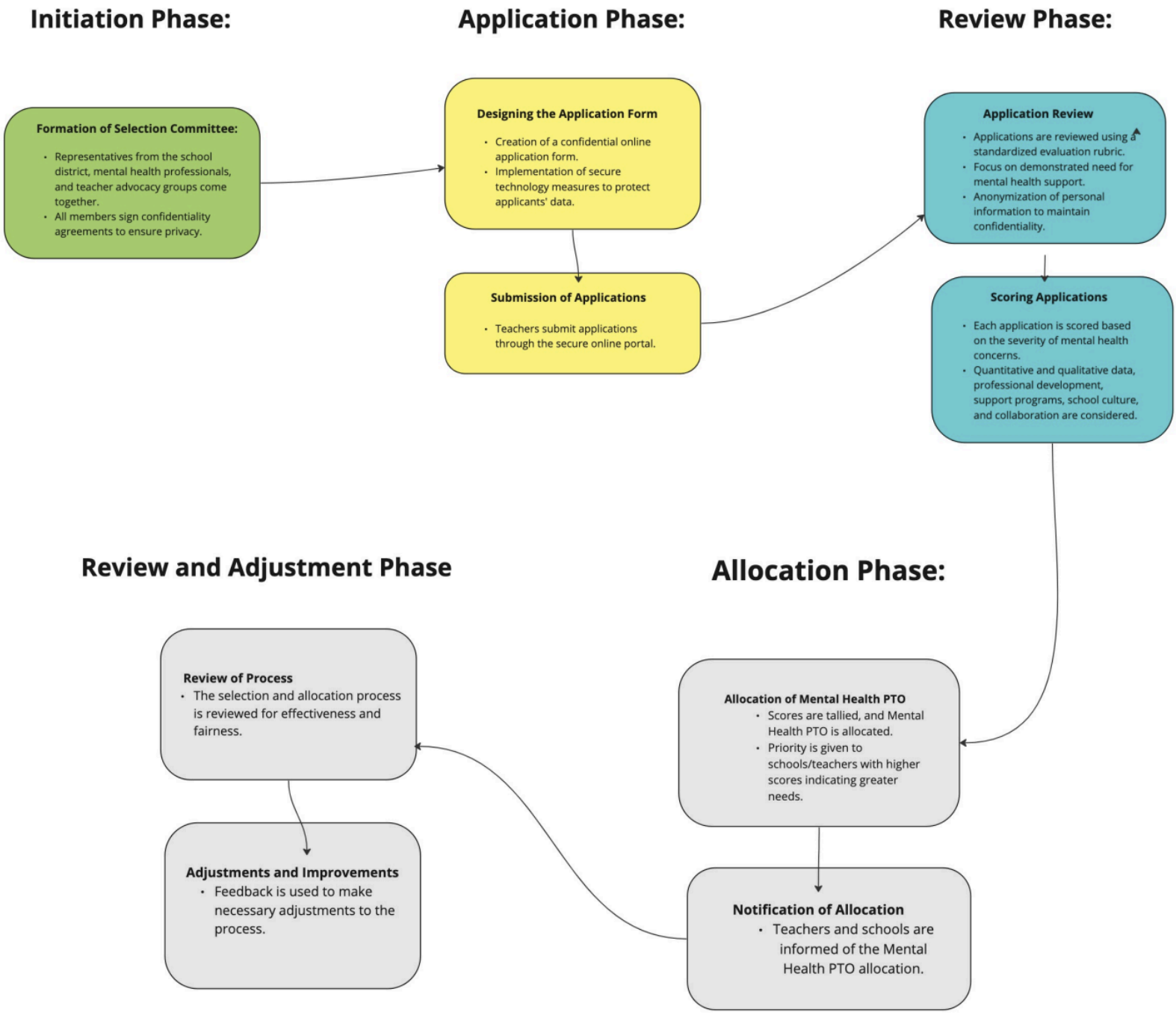
[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

28 Michael T. Nietzel, "Low Literacy Levels Among U.S. Adults Could Be Costing The Economy $2.2 Trillion A Year," Forbes, September 9, 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaeltnietzel/2020/09/09/low-literacy-levels-among-us-adults-could-be-costing-the-economy-22-trillion-a-year/?sh=54b5a2a34c90.

an opportunity to significantly impact the futures of countless children, setting them on a path to success rather than struggle.[29]

29 Reasons Why Teachers Play a Crucial Role in Society," Teachers of Tomorrow, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.teachersoftomorrow.org/blog/insights/reasons-why-teachers-play-a-crucial-role-in-society/.



(Flow Chart depicting the step-by-step Mental Health PTO Allocation Process for the School District of Philadelphia, highlighting phases from committee formation to PTO distribution.)

Stakeholder Engagement and Support

The "Stakeholder Engagement Plan" section presents a strategic approach to actively involve critical stakeholders in the Mental Health PTO pilot within the School District of Philadelphia. This comprehensive plan specifies methods for identifying stakeholders—including teachers, administrators, and community members—and structures their engagement through informational sessions, regular updates, feedback mechanisms, direct involvement opportunities, and educational workshops. Each plan component aims to ensure transparency, encourage active participation, and maintain open communication, striving to build strong support for the pilot's goals. The plan seeks to showcase the initiative's benefits by creating a collaborative environment and rally broad-based support for its successful implementation and potential expansion.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan:

Identification of Key Stakeholders

- Teachers, school administrators, district officials, mental health professionals, parents, students, and teacher unions.
- Community organizations and local government representatives.

Information Sessions

- Host initial information sessions for each stakeholder group to outline the project's goals, benefits, and expected outcomes.
- These sessions address concerns, answer questions, and gather initial feedback.

Regular Updates

- Establish a regular communication schedule, utilizing newsletters, emails, and social media to provide progress updates and share success stories.
- Create a dedicated section on the school district's website for project updates and FAQs.

Feedback Mechanisms

- Implement various channels for stakeholders to provide feedback, including online surveys, school suggestion boxes, and dedicated email addresses.
- Organize periodic town hall meetings, both in-person and virtual, to facilitate open discussions and gather feedback.

Involvement Opportunities

- Invite stakeholders to participate in subcommittees or working groups focusing on different aspects of the pilot, such as policy development, program evaluation, and community outreach.
- Offer volunteer opportunities for parents and community members to support program initiatives and events.

Stakeholder Workshops

- Conduct workshops to educate stakeholders about mental health awareness, the importance of PTO for mental health, and the details of the pilot program.
- Use workshops as a platform for collaborative problem-solving and co-creation of program components.

Success Metrics Sharing

- Share data and findings from the program's evaluation with stakeholders, highlighting successes and areas for improvement.
- Use metrics to demonstrate the program's impact on teacher well-being, student outcomes, and the broader school environment.

Buy-in Strategies:

Highlighting Benefits

- Emphasize the positive impact of the Mental Health PTO pilot on teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention.
- Present data and research supporting the link between teacher well-being and improved student outcomes.

Personal Testimonies and Case Studies

- Share stories and testimonials from districts with similar programs, focusing on the positive changes experienced by teachers and students.
- Create case studies that showcase the program's potential benefits for the Philadelphia school community.

Engaging Influencers

- Identify and engage respected teachers, administrators, and community leaders who support the program to act as champions, sharing their insights and endorsing the pilot.
- Leverage the influence of teacher unions and professional associations to advocate for the program.

Demonstrating Cost-Effectiveness

- Present a cost-benefit analysis highlighting the potential savings from reduced teacher turnover and absenteeism and improved teacher performance.
- Compare the costs of implementing the Mental Health PTO pilot with the financial and social costs of teacher burnout and turnover.

Pilot Program Success Metrics

- Define clear, measurable objectives for the pilot program, including specific outcomes related to teacher well-being and student achievement.
- Commit to transparency in evaluating and sharing the pilot's results, using success metrics to argue for broader implementation.

Community and Parental Engagement

- Engage parents and the community by highlighting how teacher well-being benefits student learning environments and outcomes.
- Organize community forums and discussions to raise awareness and gather support from a broader audience.

By implementing this comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan and buy-in strategies, the project can effectively communicate the value of the Mental Health PTO pilot, ensuring widespread support and successful implementation in the School District of Philadelphia.

Possible Challenges:

Budget Constraints

Limited financial resources may hinder the program's implementation, as funding is required for administration, monitoring, and providing mental health resources.

Administrative Resistance

Some school administrators may be skeptical about the program's benefits, concerned about its impact on teaching schedules, or hesitant to change existing policies.

Cultural Barriers

There may be a stigma associated with mental health issues or taking time off for mental health, which can deter teachers from utilizing the PTO effectively.

Mitigation Strategies

For Budget Constraints

- **Leverage External Funding**: Explore grants and partnerships with mental health organizations and nonprofits that can provide financial or in-kind support. Presenting a

strong case for the program's potential benefits can attract external funders interested in educational and mental health initiatives.

- **Cost-Benefit Analysis**: Conduct a detailed cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the long-term savings associated with reduced teacher turnover and improved teacher performance. This can help justify the initial investment to stakeholders and decision-makers.
- **Phased Implementation**: To minimize initial costs, start with a small-scale pilot in a limited number of schools. Use the findings from this pilot to refine the program and build a stronger case for broader funding.

For Administrative Resistance

- **Engage Administrators Early**: Involve school administrators in the planning and development phases to ensure their input is considered and they have a stake in the program's success. This can increase buy-in and reduce resistance.

- **Provide Training and Support**: Offer workshops and training sessions for administrators to understand the program's benefits, how it operates, and how they can support their staff in utilizing it. Educating them on mental health's impact on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes can also shift perspectives.

- **Showcase Success Stories**: Share evidence and case studies from other districts where similar programs have led to positive outcomes. Seeing tangible benefits can help alleviate concerns and resistance from skeptical administrators.

For Cultural Barriers

- **Awareness and Education Campaigns**: Launch campaigns within the school district to educate about mental health, its impact on work performance, and the importance of seeking help. Normalizing conversations around mental health can reduce stigma.
- **Anonymous Utilization Options**: Ensure that the process for applying for and utilizing Mental Health PTO is confidential, allowing teachers to take leave without fearing judgment or repercussions. This can encourage more teachers to take advantage of the program.
- **Peer Support and Advocacy**: Establish a network of peer advocates or mentors who can share their positive experiences with the program, offer support, and encourage others to utilize the PTO without fear of stigma.

By addressing these challenges with thoughtful and proactive strategies, the School District of Philadelphia can successfully implement the Mental Health PTO pilot program, paving the way for a healthier, more supportive teaching environment.

Budget Overview and Resource Allocation

Budget and Resources

The School District of Philadelphia's budget actively prioritizes enhancing mental health and well-being in schools. It strategically allocates District operating and federal relief funds, dedicating a significant portion to the schools' direct operations. Page 23 of the budget reveals that the District plans to spend approximately $2.291 billion on instruction, support, and operational costs in schools. This spending plan includes $1.283 billion for general and special education instruction and $493.6 million for critical school operations like facilities, utilities, and transportation

The budget also earmarks $514.4 million for various essential support services within the school ecosystem, with $108.6 million expressly set aside to employ nurses, counselors, climate staff, and psychologists. [30] This investment, exceeding $109 million, highlights the District's dedication to strengthening a support network that meets the comprehensive needs of both students and staff, fostering an environment conducive to teaching, learning, and overall well-being.[31] Such strategic fund allocation mirrors the District's commitment to mental health and establishing a supportive educational atmosphere.

The Mental Health PTO program in the Philadelphia School District spearheads an innovative push to boost the welfare of 30-50 elementary school teachers in urban areas impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). The initiative allocates $76,000 to $120,000 for operational expenses, setting aside funds for development, implementation, and evaluation phases, excluding salaries. The program designates $30,000 to enhance teacher well-being by compensating for 3 PTO days per teacher. Committed to a comprehensive approach, the District contributes $93,500 toward the salaries of a diverse and specialized team that includes Program Coordinators and Mental Health Experts. Showcasing the District’s dedication to fostering a healthier educational environment, the total investment in the program reaches $169,500 to $213,500 without staff salaries and $263,000 to $307,000 when including wages.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

Budget Item	Original Salary	% of Salary Allocated	Allocated Salary Cost	Taxes & Benefits (22.5% of Allocated Salary)	Total Salary Costs	Non-Personnel Costs (Low-High)	Total Costs (Low-High)
Program Coordinator	$60,000	10%	$6,000	$1,350	$7,350		$7,350 - $7,350
Mental Health Experts (x2)	$200,000	10%	$20,000	$4,500	$24,500		$24,500 - $24,500
Fundraising Coordinator	$50,000	10%	$5,000	$1,125	$6,125		$6,125 - $6,125
Training Facilitators (x2)	$100,000	10%	$10,000	$2,250	$12,250		$12,250 - $12,250
School Liaisons (x2)	$80,000	10%	$8,000	$1,800	$9,800		$9,800 - $9,800
Outreach Coordinator	$45,000	10%	$4,500	$1,012.50	$5,512.50		$5,512.50 - $5,512.50
Volunteer Coordinator	$40,000	10%	$4,000	$900	$4,900		$4,900 - $4,900
Communication Team (x2)	$90,000	10%	$9,000	$2,025	$11,025		$11,025 - $11,025
Compensation for PTO Days						$18,000 - $30,000	$18,000 - $30,000
Cost for Substitute Teachers						$37,500	$37,500
Total Direct Costs						$66,000 - $110,000	$66,000 - $110,000
Total Budget Estimate (Excluding Salaries)							**$180,537.50 - $224,537.50**
Total Budget Estimate (Including Salaries)							**$295,075 - $339,075**

Budget Notes:

- The allocation of 10% of each program staff's salary to the pilot initiative significantly reduces the total direct salary costs, ensuring a more efficient financial strategy for the program's pilot phase.
- The pilot budget reflects a comprehensive approach to the Mental Health Pilot program. It incorporates diverse expertise from coordinators, facilitators, liaisons, and various teams to support the program's inception and detailed evaluation.
- Provisions for compensating Paid Time Off (PTO) are integrated into the budget's implementation portion, signifying a well-structured financial plan that acknowledges the welfare of our team members.
- The success of the Mental Health Pilot program is deeply interconnected with the synergetic efforts of the team, necessitating open and regular communication with all educational stakeholders involved in the initiative.
- The program's sustainability and expansion hinge on our continuous fundraising efforts and active stakeholder engagement. These are essential components and the program's lifeblood, ensuring its enduring impact and scalability.

Limitations:

Scalability and Generalizability:

Despite its potential limitations, the pilot program can show positive outcomes. However, these may not seamlessly translate to diverse educational settings due to varying access to mental health services in rural areas and high student-teacher ratios in urban environments. Additionally, school size and budget differences could hinder the program's scalability. Adapting the program effectively across various contexts without diminishing its effectiveness poses a significant challenge.

Long-Term Sustainability:

The initiative's sustainability is a critical concern, given its reliance on dedicated resources like funding for Mental Health PTO and counseling services. Efforts to secure long-term sustainability, such as forming partnerships with local mental health organizations or advocating for increased mental health funding, may face hurdles in educational systems with limited budgets and competing priorities. Consistent support is beneficial and necessary to maintain current offerings and expand the program's reach.

Measuring Impact and Success Metrics:

Quantifying the success of the program in terms of mental health improvements and teacher retention is a complex task, given the subjective aspects of mental well-being. Nonetheless, the evaluation framework incorporates qualitative and quantitative metrics, including pre-and post-program surveys, participant interviews, and rigorous data analysis. This comprehensive approach ensures the validity and reliability of our findings. It is vital to create definitive, quantifiable outcomes that effectively represent the program's influence on teacher mental health and retention, though it presents challenges. Commitment to this objective is unwavering, with a promise to execute a comprehensive evaluation process.

Future Work

- **Proactive Mental Health Management: Empowering Teachers Through Intermittent Leave**

  Intermittent leave, also known as FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act), is a resource that enables employees with documented medical conditions to manage their health needs effectively.[32]

  Under our PILOT program, teachers should be encouraged to schedule intermittent leave proactively for mental health reasons. Being proactive with mental health days allows them to plan days off in advance, particularly during anticipated heightened stress. This approach acknowledges the importance of taking breaks at the onset of decline rather than waiting until exhaustion sets in, fostering a culture of self-care and proactive health management.

  Moreover, by allowing administrators to input these planned leave days in advance, seamless arrangements can be made through ESS, the district's substitute teacher provider. [33] This proactive coordination ensures uninterrupted classroom coverage when teachers prioritize their mental well-being, thereby maintaining educational continuity while supporting the holistic health of educators.

- **Evaluating Success: Assessing the Impact and Continuous Improvement of the PILOT Program**

  Measure the PILOT's outcomes and assess the program's impact. Examples include measures related to improved teacher absenteeism and retention rates, self-reported levels of stress and burnout, student academic performance, and feedback from teachers, administrators, and students.

  Combine these methods for qualitative and quantitative data collection to gather data on the program's impact. Examples may include surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation protocols, and analysis of administrative records. Also, mechanisms for continuous improvement should be established based on evaluation findings and stakeholder feedback. This may involve making adjustments to program policies, procedures, and support services to better meet teachers' needs and promote positive outcomes.

---

[32] U.S. Department of Labor, "Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)," accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.

33 Substitute Services," The School District of Philadelphia, last modified July 14, 2023, https://jobs.philasd.org/opportunities/substitute-services/.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as proposed in this strategic plan, the Mindful Educators Initiative is a pivotal advancement toward enhancing teachers' mental well-being and retention within the School District of Philadelphia. By acknowledging the unique stressors faced by educators, especially those in high-poverty, ACE urban areas, this pilot program aims to provide a much-needed support system through Mental Health Paid Time Off (PTO). The initiative addresses the immediate concerns of teacher burnout and attrition and posits a long-term strategy for improving educational outcomes for the district's most vulnerable student populations.

Furthermore, the pilot's focus on elementary school teachers in urban ACE catchment areas is deeply insightful. It acknowledges the pivotal role these educators have in molding children's early educational experiences, which lay the groundwork for their future academic achievements and overall life paths. By bolstering these teachers' mental health, the initiative indirectly but significantly enhances the quality of education and the well-being of countless students, underlining the far-reaching societal benefits of this proposal.

The comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan further enhances the program's potential for success by ensuring widespread support and collaboration across various sectors within the educational community. By proactively addressing potential challenges and outlining clear mitigation strategies, the plan demonstrates a thorough understanding of the complexities involved in implementing such an initiative within a large urban school district.

In essence, the Mindful Educators Initiative represents a holistic and forward-thinking approach to addressing the mental health challenges educators in the Philadelphia School District face. Its success could serve as a model for other districts grappling with similar issues, ultimately leading to a more resilient, supportive, and effective educational system that benefits teachers and students alike.

Bibliography:

Annie E. Casey Foundation. "Low Reading Scores Show Majority of U.S. Children Not Prepared for Future Success." January 29, 2014. https://www.aecf.org/blog/low-reading-scores-show-majority-of-us-children-not-prepared-for-future-s.

Axios. "Public Schools See Surge in Teacher Resignations, Retirements." Axios Philadelphia, September 11, 2023. https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2023/09/11/public-schools-teacher-resignations-retirements-data.

Barnum, Matt, and Kalyn Belsha. "Protests, donations, lesson plans: How the education world is responding to George Floyd's killing." Chalkbeat, June 2, 2020. https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/6/2/21278591/education-schools-george-floyd-racism/.

Chalkbeat Philadelphia. "Racial, Economic Inequities Persist in Philadelphia Schools, New Report Says." Chalkbeat, January 13, 2021. https://www.chalkbeat.org/philadelphia/2021/1/13/22230116/racial-economic-inequities-persist-in-philadelphia-schools-new-report-says.

Chavez, Nicole. "Unrest after Walter Wallace Jr. Shooting Boiled Over from the Disconnect between a Philadelphia Community and Police." CNN, November 1, 2020. https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/01/us/philadelphia-police-community-tensions-walter-wallace/index.html.

Dreer, B. "On the Outcomes of Teacher Wellbeing: A Systematic Review of Research." Frontiers in Psychology 14 (2023): 1205179. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1205179.

Economic Policy Institute. "A Policy Agenda to Address the Teacher Shortage in U.S. Public Schools." Accessed March 22, 2024. https://www.epi.org/publication/a-policy-agenda-to-address-the-teacher-shortage-in-u-s-public-schools/.

Economic Policy Institute. "The Teacher Shortage is Real, Large and Growing, and Worse Than We Thought." August 23, 2016. https://www.epi.org/publication/shortage-of-teachers/.

Eboigbe, Loretta I., et al. "The compounded effect of the dual pandemic on ethnic-racial minority adolescents' mental health and psychosocial well-being." Current Opinion in Psychology 52 (2023): 101626. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101626.

Freeze, Christopher. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Crime." FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, April 9, 2019. https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/adverse-childhood-experiences-and-crime.

García-Álvarez, David, Manuel J. Soler, and Laura Achard-Braga. "Psychological Well-being in Teachers During and Post-COVID-19: Positive Psychology Interventions." Frontiers in Psychology 12 (2021): Article 769363. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.769363.

Marin, Max. "'Shoot him': Body camera footage shows officers who shot and killed Walter Wallace Jr." WHYY, November 4, 2020. https://whyy.org/articles/shoot-him-body-camera-footage-shows-officers-who-shot-and-killed-walter-wallace-jr/.

Mindful Schools. "Research on Mindfulness." Accessed March 9, 2024. https://www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research-on-mindfulness/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw17qvBhBrEiwA1rU9w_0UQfE4NkQtDPtBOSIs6G_yCYeYZuvajt7HXd454_hcx4HwG2KUgBoCAeQQAvD_Bw

Nietzel, Michael T. "Low Literacy Levels Among U.S. Adults Could Be Costing The Economy $2.2 Trillion A Year." Forbes, September 9, 2020. https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaeltnietzel/2020/09/09/low-literacy-levels-among-us-adults-could-be-costing-the-economy-22-trillion-a-year/?sh=54b5a2a34c90.

Philadelphia ACE Project. "Philadelphia ACE Survey." Accessed January 31, 2024. https://www.philadelphiaaces.org/philadelphia-ace-survey.

PositivePsychology.com. "The PERMA Model: Your Scientific Theory of Happiness." Accessed March 15, 2024. https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/.

Research and Development Center (EDC). "Advancing the Work of Trauma-Informed Care." Accessed January 31, 2024. https://www.edc.org/blog/advancing-work-trauma-informed-care.

Substitute Services." The School District of Philadelphia. Last modified July 14, 2023. https://jobs.philasd.org/opportunities/substitute-services/.

Teachers of Tomorrow. "Reasons Why Teachers Play a Crucial Role in Society." Accessed March 24, 2024. https://www.teachersoftomorrow.org/blog/insights/reasons-why-teachers-play-a-crucial-role-in-society/.

The Philadelphia Inquirer. "More teachers quit in 2022, but Philadelphia charter schools saw less attrition than district." February 11, 2024. https://www.inquirer.com/education/philadelphia-teachers-leaving-district-charter-attrition-20240211.html.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. "HIPAA Training and Resources." Last modified January 20, 2023. https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/training/index.html.

U.S. Department of Labor. "Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)." Accessed March 24, 2024. https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.

Usercentrics. "What Data Anonymization Is and When You Need to Implement It." Accessed April 1, 2024. https://usercentrics.com/knowledge-hub/data-anonymization/.