

# Georgia's K-12 Restart Working Group: Mental Health and Wellness

## Georgia's K-12 Restart: Mental Health and Wellness Working Group members:

**Ashley Harris**, GaDOE Director of Whole Child Supports & Strategic Partnerships (Chair)

**Cheryl Benefield**, GaDOE Program Manager for Safe & Supportive Schools

**Dr. Beverly Stewart**, Director of Student Support Services, Bibb County Schools

**Dallas LeDuff**, Director of Student Services, Oconee County Schools

**Dr. Kenya Gilmore**, Director of Prevention and Intervention Practices, Muscogee County Schools

**Chelsea Montgomery**, Executive Director of Counseling, Psychological & Social Work Services, Fulton County Schools

**Dawn Stastny**, President Elect of Georgia PTA

**Dr. Deborah Williams**, Assistant Superintendent, Columbia County Schools

**Evan Horton**, Incoming Superintendent, Coweta County Schools

**Dr. Terriyn Rivers-Cannon**, School Social Worker, Atlanta Public Schools

**Gwenetta Echols**, System School Social Worker/Wraparound Service Educator, Chattahoochee County Schools

**Erica Fener Sitkoff**, Executive Director, Voices for Georgia's Children

**Dante McKay**, Director of the Office of Children, Young Adults, & Families, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

**Teresa Hearn**, Regional Wraparound Coordinator, Pioneer RESA

**Leslie Myles**, Communities in Schools of Georgia

**Laura Ross**, School Counselor, Gwinnett County Schools

**Lynn Meadows**, Coordinator, Student Health Services, Fulton County School and State Director for the Georgia Association of School Nurses

**Layla Fitzgerald**, Program Manager, Office of Children, Young Adults, & Families, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities



*Georgia's K-12 Restart Working Groups provide considerations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure a safe and successful 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is not mandated, or state required. Local school districts have the authority and flexibility to meet their individual needs and be responsive to their communities.*

# General Considerations

## Questions to Ask

- ***How does the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process support the needs of students regardless of instructional modality?***
- ***Is there a referral process that has been clearly communicated to students and families for accessing services and supports?***
  - Where are community resource lists provided? If you do not have this list, could someone else supporting your community provide it?
    - Organizations to consider: GA Family Connection Partnership, RESA Wraparound Services Coordinator, Local Department of Public Health, Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT), Office of Family Independence/DFACS, Local Attendance and Climate Protocol Committee, Chamber of Commerce, TCSG/USG institutions serving your area, and other community support agencies.
  - Do resource lists include food, shelter, transportation, and other identified non-academic barriers with updated contact information?
- ***What organizations in your community are also working to support student and staff mental health and wellness (physical health)?***
  - Does the district have a repository of information for stakeholders about mental/physical health on its website?
    - Organizations to consider: GA Family Connection Partnership, RESA Wraparound Services Coordinator, Local Department of Public Health, Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT), Office of Family Independence/DFACS, Local Attendance and Climate Protocol Committee, Chamber of Commerce, TCSG/USG institutions serving your area, and other community support agencies.
  - Is there an established way for community members to assist the districts need in supporting students and staff?
- ***Does the district provide learning opportunities for parents and families to support student health and wellbeing?***
  - Are these opportunities regularly communicated? Is communication send in multiple formats? (Email, text, mail, etc.)
  - Are they offered in-person and virtually with language considerations of the served population?
- ***Does the district provide mental health resources to parents for personnel support or enrichment?***
  - How can parent engagement facilitators assist in this effort?
  - How can your PTA/PTO assist in this effort?
- ***Does the district partner with local institutions of higher learning to provide support and/or professional learning to staff?***
- ***How will emotional well-being be built into the curriculum and/or general educational programming?***

## Mental Health Supports

	District/School Considerations
	All items should be web-based.
	All items should be web-based and in-person.
	All items should be in-person.
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Foundational</b> <i>(basic best practices, guidance, and recommendations for all three levels)</i></p>	<p><b>Universal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a “check-in” system/opportunity for students to share their thoughts and experiences                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider mental health affirmations, growth mindset</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide lessons to support students’ mental and emotional well-being                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider students understanding and discussing current events</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide a list of mental health resources and support including contact information/links to websites</li> <li>• Promote relationship-building activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items to consider: Healthy conversations, respecting personal space, and other topics</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider phrasing to reduce anxiety (social distancing vs physical distancing)</li> <li>• Reinforce social skills to support interpersonal relationships</li> <li>• Allow time for students and staff to socially reacclimate</li> <li>• Establish a system to connect students and families to supports                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics to consider: Homeless students, threats/bullying, domestic violence, substance abuse, self-harm</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish small groups for students with specific concerns                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics to consider: Grief, Anxiety, Resilience, Support Systems, and Depression</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide a list of mental health resources and supports including contact information/links to websites</li> <li>• Establish small group discussion circles for students and staff with specific topics                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics to consider: Collective and communal impacts of COVID-19</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><i>Foundational – cont.</i></p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve school district social workers, school psychologists, mental health clinicians and school counselors to support students</li> <li>• Consider outside mental health partnerships (telehealth)</li> <li>• Provide family group session interventions</li> <li>• Identify potential funding sources to support mental health services for under-insured or uninsured students</li> <li>• Establish routine of check-in with students for social emotional learning and encouragement</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish referral agreements with community organizations/providers</li> <li>• Clearly and regularly communicate processes for monitoring student and staff wellness (include vulnerable populations) to students, families, staff and school community</li> <li>• Provide guidance to school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and all other staff serving students</li> <li>• Establish protocols for digital mandated report processes</li> <li>• Provide professional development on trauma informed and trauma responsive practices</li> <li>• Conduct virtual welcome back meetings at various levels (grade/school/cluster)</li> <li>• Access/create asset maps for currently available supports within your community</li> <li>• <a href="#">Article: Focusing on Learners and SEL: Looping Strategies to Welcome Learners Back</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Article: The Logistics of Remote Social Emotional Learning</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Mental Health Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mental Health Awareness Training for Educators</a> - Schedule through your RESA</li> <li>• <a href="#">Georgia Department of Education COVID-19 Webinars</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CCSSO: RESTART &amp; RECOVERY- Supporting SEL and Mental Health During COVID-19</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CDC: Social and Emotional Climate</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">An Initial Guide to Leveraging the Power of Social and Emotional Learning...As you prepare to reopen and renew your school community</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reunite, Renew, Thrive: Social and Emotional Learning Roadmap for Reopening Schools</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Center for Health and Health Care of Schools</a></li> <li>• Children’s Mental Health Campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Coalition to Support Grieving Students</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Council of the Great City Schools: Addressing Mental Health and Social Emotional Wellness in the COVID-19 Crisis</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities</a></li> </ul>

***Mental Health Resources – cont.***

- [DBHDD COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [2x2 Series: Daily Self Care Tips and Support for Managing Life](#)
- [DBHDD Regional Map with Service Areas](#)
- [GA APEX Program Overview](#)
  - [GA APEX School and Provider List](#)
- Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line [866-399-8938](#) 24/7 free and confidential support for people needing emotional support or resources during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Georgia Crisis & Access Line [800-715-4225](#) 24/7 support to help you or someone you care for in crisis.
- [Mental Health Resiliency Clubhouses](#)
- [MY GCAL Text & Chat](#)
- [Office of Children, Young Adults and Families](#)
  - System of Care Organizations
    - [Mental Health America of Georgia](#)
    - [NAMI – GA](#)
    - [VOICES for GA’s Children](#)
    - [VOX Atlanta Teen Communications](#)
- "Free Your Feels" MH Campaign created by VOICES (Jackson Spalding) and DBHDD launches 3rd week of August.
- [District Administration: What social-emotional needs will students return with?](#)
- Greater Good Science Center
  - [Student Well-Being](#)
  - [Well-Being During Coronavirus](#)
- [Georgia School Counselor Association: COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Georgia Parent Support Network](#)
- [GaDOE Whole Child Toolkit](#)
- [Kaiser Permanente: Planning for the Next Normal at School – Keeping students, staff, teachers and families safe and healthy](#)
- [Kansas State Department of Education: Social Emotional Character Development: Standards, Assessment and Instruction](#)
- [Mental Health America of Georgia](#)
- Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
  - [Mental Health Resources for K-12 Educators During COVID-19](#)
  - [Back to School After COVID-19: Supporting Student and Staff Mental Health](#)
- [NAMI Georgia \(National Alliance on Mental Illness\)](#)
- [National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement](#)
  - [COVID-19 Pandemic Response Resources webpage](#)
  - VIDEO: [When School Starts Back: Helping students and you cope with crisis during a pandemic](#)
  - VIDEO: [Supporting students with grief and loss](#)

- National Center for School Mental Health
  - [COVID-19 Resources](#)
  - [General Resources](#)
- National Center for Homeless Education
  - [COVID-19 Information](#)
- [National Human Trafficking Hotline- 1-888-373-7888 or Text 233733](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Life Line- 1-200-273-8255](#)
- [Our Students Have Strong Emotions Right Now, And That's Not a Disability](#)
- [Partnership Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [Peer2Peer Warm Line- 1-888-945-1414](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario: Supporting a Mentally Healthy Return to School](#)
- [Signals: Social-Emotional and Mental Health Development for Children and Teens - Interactive Webinar Series](#)
- Strong4Life
  - [Resilience and Emotional Wellness](#)
- [Suicide Prevention/Mental Health Resources GaDOE](#)
- [Supporting your child's mental health as they return to school during COVID-19](#)
- [UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools: Addressing Barriers to Learning](#)
- [University of North Carolina: Joey the Kangaroo and Coping with COVID Plan Coloring Book](#)
- [Voices for Georgia's Children: How Three School-Based Mental Health Providers Serve Students](#)
- [World Health Association: #HealthyAtHome- Mental Health](#)

## Wellness/Physical Health Services

	District/School Considerations
	<p><b>All items should be web-based</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish ways to continue promoting routine check-ups with pediatricians and other health care professionals to stay current on vaccines, screening periodicity schedules, and overall child well-being                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider: Connecting with health care provider(s) to coordinate telehealth services if there is currently telehealth capacity in the community.</li> <li>○ Coordinate with local federally qualified health center(s) to provide necessary services to students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide regular updates on the status of the state so school community remains informed</li> <li>• Replicate and adapt communication and referral protocols across student services and supports, e.g., mental health to physical health, and process for referral</li> </ul>
	<p><b>All items should be web-based and in-person.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish ways to continue promoting routine check-ups with pediatricians and other health care professionals to stay current on vaccines, screening periodicity schedules, and overall child well-being                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider: Connecting with health care provider to coordinate telehealth services if there is currently telehealth capacity in the community.</li> <li>• Coordinate with local federally qualified health center to provide necessary services to students</li> <li>• Consider: hosting a “doctor day” where clinicians visit the school to perform routine screenings such as those for oral health, vision, and hearing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>All items should be in-person.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish ways to continue promoting routine check-ups with pediatricians and other health care professionals to stay current on vaccines, screening periodicity schedules, and overall child well-being                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider: Connecting with health care provider to coordinate telehealth services if there is currently telehealth capacity in the community.</li> <li>○ Coordinate with local federally qualified health center to provide necessary services to students</li> <li>○ Consider: hosting a “doctor day” where clinicians visit the school to perform routine screenings such as those for oral health, vision, and hearing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Foundational</i> (basic best practices, guidance, and recommendations for all three levels)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to DPH and DOE safety, preventative and mitigation strategies outlined in guidance, e.g., isolation room.</li> <li>• Toolkit with lessons, videos, FAQs, etc. to educate students about the “why” behind physical distancing, handwashing, mask wearing, and proper hygiene             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with local health department to provide resources to families on general hygiene and personal care such as oral health, physical health and immunity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Coordinate with health/PE staff to share guidance on staying physically fit             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider: developing or connecting to an exercise and healthy habits video repository to encourage physical activity that is age appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide a list of pediatric and other health resources and services including contact information/links to websites</li> <li>• If available, work with clinicians providing services at school to ensure continuity of care and coordination of services/supports (i.e. school nurse, school social workers, school counselor, school-based health center staff)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that students with chronic conditions are being monitored appropriately (if there is capacity to do so)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If there is a school nurse available, establish regular check-ins with families of students with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, etc.</li> <li>• Establish referral agreements with community organizations/providers</li> <li>• At minimum, provide parents with the necessary information they would need to get their child to the referred physician/other provider</li> <li>• Clearly and regularly communicate processes for monitoring student and staff wellness (include vulnerable populations)</li> <li>• Provide a list of community resources to support needs of families, including food, shelter, and transportation</li> <li>• Establish and/or strengthen relationships with community providers in order to ease the process of getting families connected to necessary services             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include existing staff and initiatives in coordination of family support resources (McKinney-Vento, migrant, family engagement, ELL, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conduct virtual welcome back meetings at various levels (grade/school/cluster)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wellness/Physical Health Services Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action for Health Kids             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Alliance for a Healthier Generation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Bright Futures Periodicity Schedule: Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CCSSO: RESTART &amp; RECOVERY- Supporting Continuity of Health Service During COVID-19</a></li> <li>• Center for Disease Control and Prevention             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Assessing School Health</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Health and Academics</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**Wellness/Physical Health Services Resources**  
– cont.

- [Improving School Health](#)
- [Inclusive Physical Education and Physical Activity](#)
- [Virtual Healthy School](#)
- [COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools \(Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America\)](#)
- [Department of Community Health Service Map for Childhood Health](#)
- [Find a Federally Qualified Health Center](#)
- [Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
  - [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Georgia Department of Public Health Maternal and Child Health Coordinator Locator](#)
- [Georgia Shape: Healthy Habits](#)
- [GaDOE Whole Child Toolkit](#)
- [Health Barriers to Learning Resource Toolkit](#)
- [Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education: Appendix D: Health Considerations for Schools - Resuming Classes pp. 60-64](#)
- [Mercer Medical School- Mercer Medical Minute](#)
  - Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes
  - Wash Your Hands the Correct Way
- [Metro RESA Social-Emotional SEL Toolkit - Lessons on germs and respect from popular movies](#)
- [SHAPE America: Resources for Distance and Hybrid Learning for Physical and Health Education](#)
- Strong4Life
  - [Providers and Educators](#)
- [World Health Association: #HealthAtHomes- Physical Activity](#)

# School Staff Support

## District/School Considerations

- Create a “check-in” system/opportunity for staff to share their thoughts
  - Consider: Providing a physical space/designated time for teacher breaks
- Provide opportunity for school staff to have a Q&A with administrative team to target stress/anxiety surrounding reopening
- Communicate importance of staff well-being and establish clear processes for staff who become ill
  - Consider: Providing guidance about CARES Act employee options, care of students, protocol for informing leadership of positive test results and other items of concern
- Provide resources to support the well-being of staff (web-based and in-person)
- Provide motivational resources/activities for all staff to boost morale in uncertain times
- Explore state benefit plans and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to utilize available resources
  - Consider: Promoting the state health benefit plan (Be Well SHBP) and providing a summary document to share with staff for physical and mental health support
- Create peer support groups/teams for people in similar roles in the schools/district
- Establish Professional Learning Communities around topics of interests or concerns
- Establish or identify support line for staff
- Collaborate efforts with mental health agencies, health experts and physicians to host a district summit for staff/employees

*Foundational*  
 (basic best practices, guidance, and recommendations for all three levels)

### Professional Development

- New teacher training around school functions
- Nurse/medical professional trains staff on safety measures
- Trauma informed schools/practices
- Restorative practices
- How physical health impacts academic success (Health Barriers to Learning)
- School Climate
- Social Emotional Learning resources
- Student engagement and success
- Training on Suicide Prevention and basic mental health
- Create a resource list for school staff

### School Staff Support Resources

- [Be Well State Health Benefits Plan \(SHBP\)](#)
- [CDC – Coping with Stress](#)
- [Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta](#)
  - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information and Updates](#)

<p><b>School Staff Support Resources – cont.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Parenting Resources During COVID-19</a></li> <li>● Council of State Science Supervisors, in collaboration with the University of Colorado at Boulder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Self-Care Resources for Staff</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">2x2 Series: Daily Self Care Tips and Support for Managing Life</a></li> <li>○ Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line <a href="#">866-399-8938</a> 24/7 free and confidential support for people needing emotional support or resources during the COVID-19 pandemic</li> <li>○ Georgia Crisis &amp; Access Line <a href="#">800-715-4225</a> 24/7 support to help you or someone you care for in crisis.</li> <li>○ <a href="#">MY GCAL Text &amp; Chat</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Emory University – Wellness Guides</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Mental Health America of Georgia Online Support and Information</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Mental Health Technology Transfer Center: Tools for Educators During a Public Health Crisis</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia Support Groups and Programs</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Purdue University: Physical Health and Well-Being</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Thriving Schools by Kaiser Permanente</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">General Staff Well-Being Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Staff Wellness Checks</a></li> </ul>
--	---

General Guidance	Partners to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Arkansas Department of Education: G.U.I.D.E. for Life</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">American Academy of Pediatrics</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID- 19 Planning Considerations</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">American School Counselor Association</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">School Counseling During COVID-19</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">School Reentry Considerations: Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Georgia Association of School Nurses</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Georgia School Counselor Association</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Georgia Association of School Psychologists</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">COVID-19 Resources</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">National Association of School Nurses</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Georgia Department of Public Health</li> <li>● Georgia Family Connection Partnership</li> <li>● Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)- For youth transitioning to K-12</li> <li>● Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Office of Family Independence (OFI)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Fitness Centers and Local Health Clubs</li> <li>● Institutions of higher learning (TCSG/USG schools serving your area)</li> <li>● Local Attendance and Climate Protocol Committee</li> <li>● Local Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>● Local Department of Public Health</li> <li>● Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT)</li> </ul>

- [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [National Association of School Social Workers](#)
  - [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
  - [COVID-10 Resource Center](#)
- [NASN School Nurse Guidance](#)
- [Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports](#)
  - [Back to School After Disruptions](#)
  - [Responding to the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak through PBIS](#)
  - [Returning to School During and After Crisis](#)

- [Regional Educational Service Agencies \(RESA\)](#)

**A CRISIS HAS NO SCHEDULE**



**Georgia Crisis & Access Line**  
1-800-715-4225  
GeorgiaCollaborative.com

Help is available 24/7 for problems with developmental disabilities, mental health, drugs, or alcohol.

Provided through the Georgia Collaborative ASO



**2 x 2 Series:**  
Daily Self-Care Tips & Support for Managing Life

I'm not ok.

I'm here, and I'm listening.

CRISIS TEXT LINE | Text HELLO to 741741.



**Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line**  
**866-399-8938**  
Effective June 1, 2020 - Hours of Operation: 8 am - 11 pm

Logos for Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities, BHL, and beacon health options.

## Appendix Added September 2020: Staff Wellness

### Who?

Wellness matters for every school and district staff member – from the facilities teams charged with keeping buildings clean and sanitized, to teachers delivering content in a way they never have before, support staff whose wraparound responsibilities have become even more central to student success, and school and district leaders leading the charge in this great adaptation through the COVID-19 pandemic.

### What?

Wellness for staff means their physical, mental, and emotional needs are being met.

Staff are burdened. Teachers are being asked to innovate on a completely new level, and are pouring their energy into new teaching styles and building relationships with students both in-person and virtually. Where are faculty and staff alike drawing their energy and motivation to continue this work? This question should be top of mind for school and district leaders.

### Why?

Schools have a responsibility to take care of their staff just as they take care of students. Staff wellness should be a top priority in the 2020-21 school year and in the years that follow. We will get the most out of our staff when we invest most in them.

### How?

Create the space for staff to express concerns, share experiences, and ask questions.	
Resources	Suggestions for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life - Supporting Your Staff’s Emotional Wellness</a> Use this tool to prep before entering the space with your staff. Understand how to facilitate an effective conversation about their well-being.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Staff wellness checks</a> Use this tool to gauge where your staff are mentally, emotionally, and physically in a brief survey format.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a “check-in” system or consistent opportunity for staff to share their thoughts.</li> <li>• Consider providing a dedicated virtual and/or physical space and time for teacher breaks with discussion prompts on topics that address well-being.</li> <li>• Collaborate with local/regional mental health organizations, health experts, and physicians to host a district summit for staff/employees.</li> </ul>
Implement regular wellness activities and involve staff in the planning and implementation.	
Resources	Suggestions for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">(Video) Playbook for Healthy School Communities: Staff and Teacher Well-being</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create peer support groups/teams for people in similar roles in the schools/district.</li> </ul>

<p>Utilize this 13-minute video to understand how to facilitate Kaiser Permanente’s Thriving Schools Playbook for Staff and Teacher Well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Playbook for Healthy School Communities: Staff and Teacher Well-being</a> This easy to use, checklist-style tool will help you to implement critical “plays” that will help meet the needs of your staff.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life Educator and Staff Wellness</a> These tools from Strong4Life include 1-pagers on things like “Mindful Minutes,” “Feeling Energized,” “Letting Go,” and “Preparing for the Workday.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with a community fitness center to hold virtual exercise classes.</li> <li>• Try out a focused day of the week where different wellness topics are made a priority, i.e. “Wellness Wednesday.” Champion a school health professional, trained parent, or community member to lead this.</li> </ul>
---	---

**Intentionally provide opportunities and resources for staff to understand how to cope with stresses and practice healthy habits and self-care.**

Resources	Suggestions for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">BeWell State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP)</a> Organize a training for your staff on how to get the most out of the SHBP program or simply promote the program’s resources, which include fitness and health tracking capabilities, tips and tricks for stress management, webinars, health coaching, recipes, and more.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">CDC – Coping with Stress</a> Share this resource for information and resources on how to cope with stress and anxiety, along with a listing of national hotlines for crisis-related services.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Emory University School of Medicine’s Wellness Guides</a> Utilize these webinars during purposeful wellness breaks for staff – watch as a group and then discuss what resonated and how the tools can be applied to daily routines.</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Georgia Department of Behavioral Health &amp; Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) 2x2 Series: Daily Self-Care Tips and Support for Managing Life</a> The 2x2 Series is held live twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and each session provides attendees with mental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage your district’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAPs exist to support employees with their health and wellness – often offering counseling services among other resources.</li> <li>• Establish Professional Learning Communities around topics of interests or concerns among staff.</li> <li>• Create a Staff Wellness corner or page on your school’s website where teachers and staff can go to easily access the above-mentioned information.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to stay on top of their personal health by going to appointments and participating in health screenings as needed.</li> <li>• Partner with your district’s school nutrition staff to promote and encourage healthy eating habits among staff.</li> <li>• Keep messaging consistent for policies and procedures around staying healthy, what to do if you become sick, and paid time off/leave. Encourage this information to be consistently disseminated by the same person to alleviate any confusion.</li> </ul>

health tips about managing stress, grief, work/life balance, and wellness.

- [Healthier Generation COVID-19 and Back-to-School for Employers and Employees](#)

Share this website with staff looking to engage with quick videos and lists of tips on how to stay healthy at home with fitness breaks, hydration, and self-care.

Go the extra mile by using these resources as group discussion starters.

- [Mental Health Technology Transfer Center – Tools for Educators During a Public Health Crisis](#)

Share this 1-pager with staff and encourage them to place it in a location they'll see often – it's filled with reminders, tips, and associated apps to stay calm and healthy throughout the pandemic.

- [Rmc Health's Employee Wellness Smart Guide](#)

Share this resource with the individuals/team leading the staff wellness effort – it includes messaging and ideas about how to promote wellness among school employees.

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness – Georgia \(NAMI GA\) Support Groups and Programs](#)

Make these resources available and known to staff looking to engage in a support group. This website should be checked regularly for staff training opportunities including webinars and online education.





For additional information, go to:

[\*\*GaDOE.org/K12recovery\*\*](https://GaDOE.org/K12recovery)

