# Breaking Through Burnout:
MTSS As A Model For Practical And Effective Team And Self Wellbeing

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Annual Conference 2025
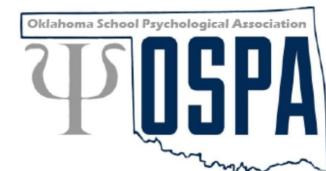
Session Description

This session addresses educators' unique burnout challenges through an intergenerational lens, shares data indicating improved retention from implementation of these strategies, and offers workspace for wellness support approaches via a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) model.
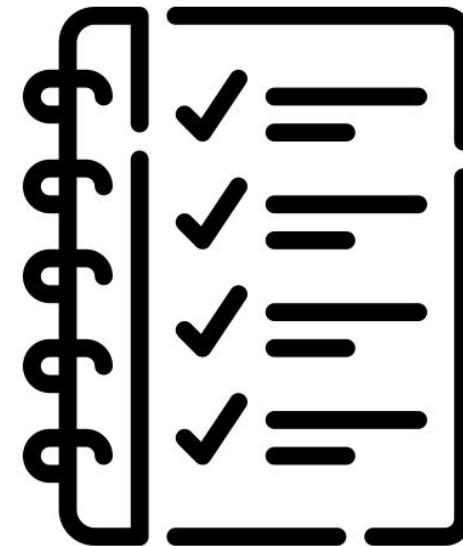
Session Objectives

This session will help participants...

1. Understand the unique challenges educators face and factors that contribute to burnout with an emphasis on intergenerational trends and characteristics.

2. Conceptualize how using a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) model can facilitate systems-level, targeted, and individual strategies to improve educator well-being and job satisfaction.

3. Collaboratively discuss and design differentiated strategies for data collection, provision of wellness initiatives and interventions, and allocation of resources to support educators and improve wellness and retention.

4. Identify and share effective resources and approaches to supporting educators as leaders, colleagues, and professionals in educational settings.

5. Examine data that demonstrates the effectiveness of implementing MTSS models in school settings with opportunities to discuss successes, challenges, and future directions for continuous improvement.

Meet the Presenters
# Who We Are and Our "Why"

Acknowledgements

Andrea Walsh, EdS, NCSP

President and Founder

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Burnout in Education Facts and Factors
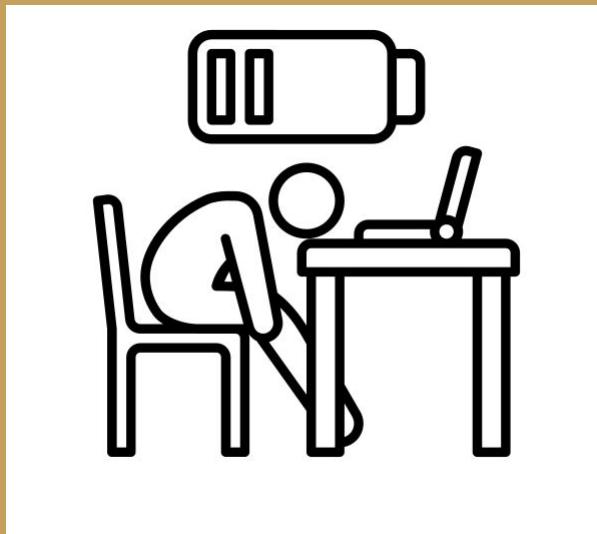
Studies Show…

In a 2022 study of over 4,000 **teachers**,

➢ 81% said their overall ==workload has increased.==
➢ More than half (55%) said they have ==less planning time== due to staff shortages and other factors.
➢ The mixture of extra work and fewer resources has caused ==unprecedented stress== in the profession.
➢ which has, in turn, led to ==increased levels of burnout.==

Studies Show…

❖ At least <mark>300,000 public school teachers and other staff left the field</mark> between <mark>February 2020 and May 2022</mark>- The Wall Street Journal

❖ According to a June 2022 Gallup poll, K-12 <mark>teachers report the highest burnout rate of all U.S. professions</mark>, with more than four out of every 10 teachers noting that they feel burned out "always" or "very often" at work.

❖ The situation gets only uglier when you consider many of the predominant <mark>challenges teachers face</mark>

    safety concerns

    low salaries

    funding deficits

    declining mental health (not new issues, but old problems that have spread their roots deep within the classrooms)

Rand Study (2023)

1. Teachers are more stressed out at work compared to other working adults.
2. Teachers are more likely to experience burnout.
3. Report lack of resilience.
4. Current emotional state affects quality of instruction, classroom management, and relationships with students.

5 Insights Teacher Morale in 2024

1. Teacher morale is lower than school leaders perceived (83% of teachers say their morale is lower or the same compared to last year, compared to 69% of leaders).
2. Most educators don't want their children to become educators.
3. Teachers want more instructional autonomy.
4. Professional development is irrelevant (48%).
5. Teachers increasing work non-paid hours (3 hours more per week when compared to pre-Covid).

Studies Show...

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration:
  - 83% of workers deal with work-related stress.
  - 54% of workers report that work stress affects their home life.
  - 65% of workers surveyed have characterized work as being a "very significant" or "someone significant" source of stress each year from 2019-2021.

- Gallup State of Global Workforce Report 2024:
  - 41% of employees report experiencing "a lot of stress"
    - Those working with bad management are nearly 60% more likely to be stressed than those with good management practices.
  - 45% of respondents working in education report feeling "burned out".
  - 48% of respondents working in social services report the same.

Studies Show...

- The Brink- Pioneering Research from Boston University reports:
  - 79% of workers reported experiencing work-related stress in the past month (2021)
  - Willis Towers Watson's 2022 Global Benefits Attitudes Survey reported:
    - 44% of nation's workers are actively seeking new jobs or new careers.
- The media has called it "The Great Resignation".
- Gallup's 2024 State of the Global Workplace Reports:
  - $8.9 trillion lost in global GDP due to low engagement
    - 23% reported being "Engaged"
    - 62% reported being "Not Engaged"
    - 15% reported being "Actively Disengaged"
  - 34% of employees are "thriving" in their overall wellbeing
  - 41% of employees experienced a lot of stress the previous day
  - 20% of employees experienced a lot of loneliness the previous day
  - 52% of employees say they are watching for or actively seeking a new job

Burnout Crisis

➔ The burnout crisis has been ==exacerbated by a national educator shortage== — enrollment in teacher preparation programs has plummeted, a trend amplified by the pandemic, and schools throughout the U.S. are competing for a shrinking pool of qualified teachers.

➔ Some teachers quit because of the ==challenges of teaching during a global pandemic==, while others, took note of the Great Resignation and ==found higher-paid opportunities in other industries.==

➔ Those who stick to their career ==report feeling exhausted and disillusioned with the role they had once considered to be their dream job.==

American Psychological Association
2023 Work in America Survey

When workload exceeds capacity, it can lead to anxiety, stress and burnout.

American Psychological Association "Employers Need to Focus on Workplace Burnout: Here's Why" article (2023) reports:
Employees who experience true workplace burnout have a:

- 57% increased risk of workplace absence greater than two weeks due to illness (Borritz et al., 2010)

- 180% increased risk of developing depressive disorders (Ahola et al., 2005)

- 84% increased risk of Type 2 diabetes (Melamed et al., 2006)

- 40% increased risk of hypertension (von Känel et al., 2020)

American Psychological Association 2023 Work in America Survey

- ❖ Emotional exhaustion (31%)

- ❖ Didn't feel motivated to do their very best (26%)

- ❖ A desire to keep to themselves (25%)

- ❖ A desire to quit (23%)

- ❖ Lower productivity (20%)

- ❖ Irritability or anger with coworkers and clients (19%)

- ❖ Feelings of being ineffective (18%)

School Psychology Burnout

- 5% of practicing School Psychologists leave the field each year.

- 16% plan to leave their current position within the next 5 years.

- 8% intend to leave the field entirely.

Burger, 2022

School Psychology Burnout

- 1/3 of School Psychologists report high levels of emotional exhaustion.
  - As high as 46% in some states.

- 12-26% low sense of efficacy or achievement.

- 90% experience occasional burnout.

Burger, 2022

School Psychology Burnout: Key Causes

- Excessive Workload and Caseload
- Role Overload and Changing Responsibilities
  - Shortages
  - Practice Model
- Lack of Administrative Support
- Lack of Supportive Relationships
- Work Climate
- Salary and Economic Factors

Burger, 2022
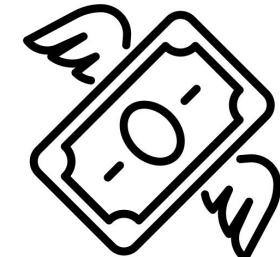
School Psychology Burnout: Implications

- **Emotional Demands of the Job/Contributors of Burnout:**
  - Compassion Fatigue
  - Secondary Trauma
  - Decision Fatigue
  - Moral Injury
  - Emotional Labor

Burger, 2022; Brock et al, 2016

Burnout in Education: Intergenerational Considerations

Fournet, Bill (2024), *Lead For Tomorrow*, October 4, USSA Conference, Tulsa, OK

EMPLOYEE ~~WANTS~~ ^ ARE CHANGING
EXPECTATIONS

Gen Z and Millennials EXPECT:

- Their employer to care about their wellbeing.
- Their leaders to be ethical, open, and transparent.
- Leaders who support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Gallup 2022

CAREER CHOICE

BOOMERS
PARENT'S FOOTSTEPS

GEN X
BEST PAYING JOB

MILLENNIAL
FIND YOUR PASSION

GEN Z
CHANGE THE WORLD

CULTURAL CONTEXT

EVENTS THAT IMPACTED & SHAPED THEIR WORLDVIEW

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

Great Recession

Social Media Boom

Smartphone Revolution

Pandemic

Ferguson Unrest

Parkland Shooting

Rise of Influencer Culture

MILLENNIALS "Y"

VS

Gen-Z

BF
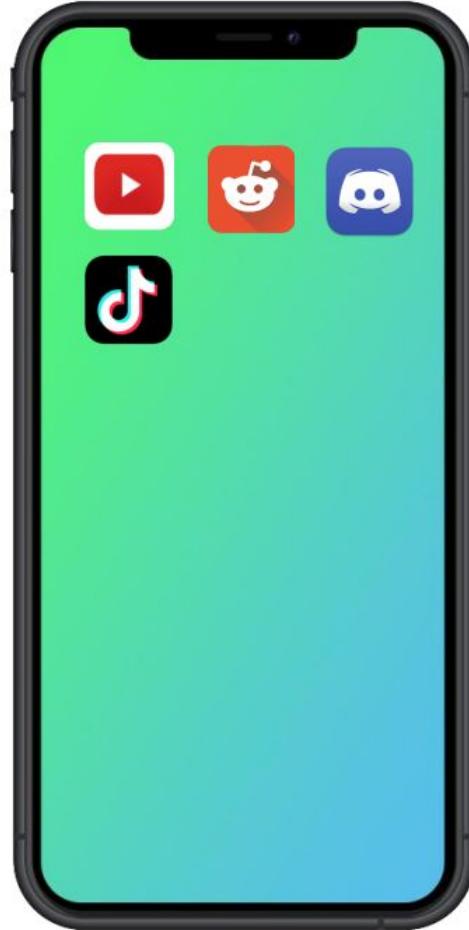
ARE YOU CONSIDERING HOW OTHERS WANT TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK?

	BOOMER	GEN-X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z
FEEDBACK	Don't appreciate feedback	Appreciates real-time performance feedback	Immediate, consistent feedback	Face-to-Face, short, concise
KEY MESSAGE	Appreciate their dedication, hard-work, & long hours	Be clear about desired results	Making an impact & contributing to the organization	Focus on career growth & stability. Making an impact to the world

CHANGING DEMANDS OF THE WORKFORCE

The Change in Leadership

Past	→	Future
My Paycheck		My Purpose
My Satisfaction		My Development
My Boss		My Coach
My Annual Review		My Ongoing Conversations
My Weaknesses		My Strengths
My Job		My Life

Source: *It's the Manager,* Clifton

QUICK TO AN OPINION?

"They're lazy"

"They don't have a work ethic"

"They lack time management skills"

ASKING QUESTIONS?

Do they understand my ask?

What does good like?

How do they prioritize their time?

IMPACT OF BURNOUT

63% more likely to take a sick day

23% more likely to visit the emergency room

2.6 times as likely to leave their current employer

"We reviewed data from 6,500 people. *Gen X is exhausted*.

If this were 1950 and a Gen X walked into a doctor's office, he or she would be *hospitalized over their stress*."

- Huffington Post

LEADING IN GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY

- **Traditionalists or Builders (Born 1929-1945)** who would say something like "Be grateful you have a job" when they think about their expectations and experiences. They are great storytellers and full of resilience.
- **Baby Boomers (Born 1946 – 1964)** who would say something like "I deserve better" when they think about their expectations and experiences. They are great life coaches, and full of wisdom. Give them the bottom line.
- **Generation X (Born 1965 – 1982)** who would say something like "Keep it real" when they think about their expectations and experiences. Seek authenticity and realism from them. They are resourceful and great at seeing the pros and cons of a situation. They do not want to be micromanaged.
- **Millennials or Gen Y (Born 1983 – 1995)** who would say something like "Life is a cafeteria" when they think about their expectations and experiences. Leverage the confidence and energy of them. They are optimistic, tech savvy, and aware of influence. They want to do meaningful work.
- **Gen Z or Centennials (Born 2001 – TBD)** who would say something like "I'm coping and hoping" when they think about their expectations and experiences. They are the best with short and frequent communication, and want the freedom to do their work in their own way.

https://blog.leadr.com/lead-in-generational-diversity

INSIGHTS TO KEEP IN MIND:

➢ **Effective leaders play chess not checkers. In chess each piece is different, in checkers all the same**

➢ **No one size fits all for leadership**

➢ **Generations bring their own strengths, weaknesses, personalities, and learning styles**

➢ **Build bridges not walls**

➢ **Take time to get to know others who are very different**

https://blog.leadr.com/lead-in-generational-diversity

We need to treat teachers like thoroughbreds not pack mules

- Dr. Anthony Muhommad (Solution Tree Conference, 2024, Tulsa, OK)

MTSS As Model to Promote Educator Wellbeing

Table Talk

1. **What is your experience with Burnout? What signs of burnout do you see:**
   a. In yourself?
   b. In your colleagues/peers?
   c. In your supervisees?

2. **Based on our learning of intergenerational differences in expectations and experiences of Burnout, what new insights or approaches might you consider for:**
   a. Recognizing your own needs?
   b. Recognizing the needs of colleagues/peers?
   c. Recognizing the needs of your supervisees?

Evidence Based Strategies and Resources to Combat Burnout

- The educator Burnout Epidemic has caught the attention of many educational and mental health communities.

- The fact that Burn Out exists is well known and well documented- with less emphasis on causes and research-based solutions.

Evidence Based Strategies and Resources

A recent edition of the American Psychological Association's *School Psychology* journal published a special issue focused solely and specifically on teacher stress, burnout, and well-being.

"This special issue promotes scholarship on school personnel well-being, safety, and systemic factors that can be leveraged to make schools healthier places for all." (Herman & Reddy, 2024)

Healthy Educators Need Healthy Schools: Supporting Educator Work-Related Well-Being Through Multi Tiered Systems of Support

- State, Ouellette, Zaheer, & Zahn (2024) shared a collective focus on using a systemic view of educator well-being to shift responsibility from a within-person view of well-being. In particular, the authors articulated a comprehensive and holistic conceptual framework for understanding and supporting teacher well-being using MTSS.

- The articles highlights the urgency for work-related well-being supports for educators, with a particular focus on <u>system changes</u>.

- **Individual self-care is necessary, yet insufficient.**
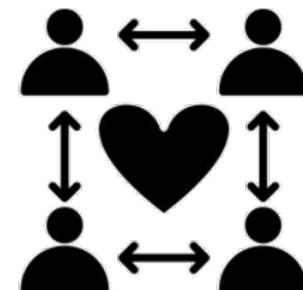
Educator Well Being Via MTSS

- State et al.'s (2024) article provides an excellent roadmap for creating optimal educator supports. They described an MTSS for school personnel that can work in parallel with an MTSS for students. A benefit of this approach in schools already using MTSS for students is that it calls attention to the *overlap between educator wellbeing and student wellbeing.*

- School Climate and Culture Considerations: Organizational fairness and consistency, equity considerations, transparent procedures, & resources (tangible, knowledge/PD, emotional support, social support networks).
  - Individual Level
  - Interpersonal/Team Level
  - Organizational Level

Educator Well Being Via MTSS
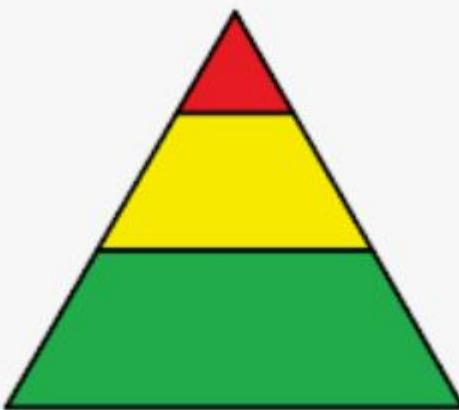
- Why MTSS?
  - MTSS enables a critical shift away from placing the responsibility for well-being on the individual by building in systematic mechanisms for change.
  - MTSS is a familiar framework, as most states are recommending the implementation of tiered systems of support to promote and support student well-being (Bailey, 2019).
  - MTSS allows for a continuum of supports to meet a continuum of well-being needs. (well-being is a process rather than a state).
  - Flexible & feasible.
  - Evidence based.

State et al., 2024

Educator Well Being Via MTSS: Foundations

- **Foundations help with buy in!**
  - Incorporating the perspectives, experiences, and feedback of people directly involved in the implementation of MTSS framework increases buy-in and engagement as people feel heard and valued.

- **To appropriately address educator stress, <u>causes</u> must be carefully considered, and educator perspectives about solutions should be elevated.**
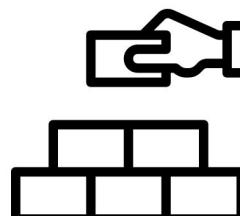
Educator Well Being Via MTSS: Foundations

- **Data collection systems and data-based decision making play a key role in all activities.**
  - Needs Assessments
  - Resource Mapping
  - Screening and Benchmarking
  - Continuous Quality Improvement Through Progress Monitoring
    - Effectiveness, Implementation Fidelity and Social Validity.

- **Good data can help identify appropriate interventions and the acceptability and efficacy of supports.**

State et al., 2024

Framework:

State et al., 2024
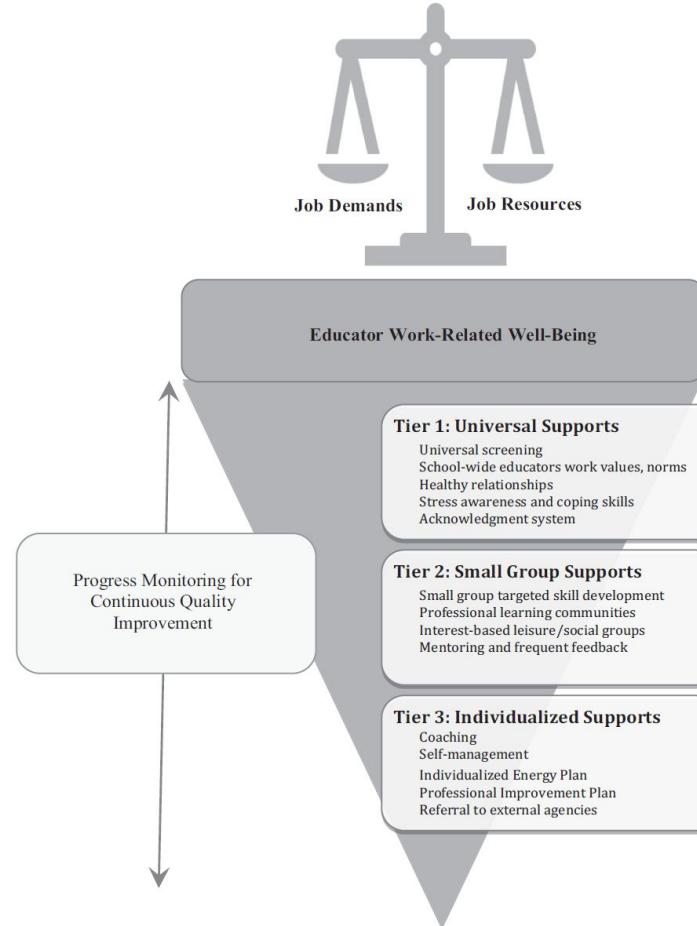
Tier 1 Supports for Educator Well Being

- **Tier 1 focuses on cultivating a positive school culture and climate and can include:**
    - Streamlining job demands
    - Ensuring educators have necessary resources and training
    - Increasing individual and shared capacity to cope with stress
    - Promoting well-being as a priority
    - Developing school values and norms emphasizing educator well-being
    - Increasing opportunities for building healthy and supportive relationships.
    - Organizational restructuring

State et al., 2024

Sample Tiered Strategies for Educator Work Related Wellness: Tier 1

Targeted Areas	Tier 1 Examples
Streamline job demands and provide necessary resources	• Reduce unnecessary workload by eliminating paperwork and meetings that do not meet an explicit purpose • Provide flexible hours and scheduling to meet diverse needs • Discontinue practices staff agree are no longer effective and replace with evidenced based practices • Survey educators about professional development topics for increasing effectiveness in role • Apply to grants and additional funding opportunities, when possible, to increase physical and educational resources
Increase individual and shared capacity to cope with stress and promote well-being	• Leadership commits to promote a positive culture and climate, optimize communication with and across educators, and implement shared decision making • Leadership commits to provide positive feedback and support to staff • Leadership offers school-wide professional development opportunities to increase stress management skills such as mindfulness, behavioral strategies, cognitive behavioral approaches, and stress reduction interventions (e.g., Self-Care Options for Resilient Educators program can be implemented school-wide) • Leadership creates physical spaces in schools where such skills can be practiced (e.g., yoga or meditation room), and provides the time for staff to engage in practicing the skills (e.g., mindfulness hour) • Create group spaces and opportunities to normalize talking about well-being and to problem-solve solutions to shared problems when appropriate
Develop and support school values and norms that emphasize educator well-being	• Develop and/or incorporate school-wide wellness values (e.g., "Be kind to yourself and others," "Clear communication, strong connection," "Together we strive") • Reinforce staff for demonstrating shared values with preferred rewards ("I caught you being kind to yourself" tickets distributed and exchanged for reinforcers such as special parking spot, pass to skip a meeting, educator of the week award) • Encourage regular well-being checks at the start of faculty meetings (e.g., "Share the emotion of the day") • Encourage positive peer reporting (e.g., public board where staff can leave positive comments or express gratitude for peers)
Increase opportunities for building healthy and supportive relationships between staff	• Leadership provides opportunities for social bonding and social support • Examples could be coffee break time; structured group discussions during grade-level and/or faculty meetings; peer mentoring opportunities; "on-call" lists specifying who people should call for hands-on support in a specific area; "check-in" partners where each staff member has a designated partner that they check-in with regularly

State et al., 2024

Tier 2 Supports for Educator Well Being

Tier 2 offers an opportunity for data-based differentiation of strategies to provide target, small group, more intensive support for selected educators.

- **Small group mentoring**
- **Check in Check out peer support (or admin support)**
- **Support with classroom management**
- **Organizing small group social or leisure activities offered during or after school**
- **Shared interest groups (e.g., book club, walking lunch, yoga sessions, paint night, Bingo evening) can be offered for interested educators**
- **Group activities may specifically be created to address equity in well-being, such as creating a counter space for BIPOC faculty or other Affinity Groups.**

State et al., 2024

Sample Tiered Strategies for Educator Work Related Wellness: Tier 2

Targeted Areas   **Tier 2 Examples**

| Targeted, small group trainings to strengthen specific skills as identified by assessments | • Opportunities to socialize by creating shared interest small groups (e.g., book club, walking lunch, yoga sessions, paint night, Bingo evening)
• Create counterpaces for BIPOC faculty or other opportunities to get together
• Create PLC that provide technical support or peer-to-peer problem-solving opportunities
• Encourage PLCs to cocreate wellness plans, implement them, and keep each other accountable |

State et al., 2024

Tier 3 Supports for Educator Well Being

- **Individualized services and supports might be necessary for educators who experience significant distress, burnout, or are reporting difficulties with performing their professional duties.**
- **Tier 3 supports should be personalized as they are dependent on the specific challenges experienced by the individual.**
- **Effective strategies may include:**
  - **Self Management Techniques/Tailored Goal Setting**
  - **Coaching**
  - **Referral to community mental health support services.**

State et al., 2024

Sample Tiered Strategies for Educator Work Related Wellness: Tier 3

Targeted Areas

Tier 3 Examples

Individualized services and supports provided in supportive and confidential one-to-one mentoring and coaching relationships

- Use coaches as needed to guide and support educators who need to further strengthen their instructional and behavioral management strategies
- Encourage the use of self-management strategies such as self-monitoring, goal setting, goal evaluation, self-reinforcement
- Individualized Energy Plan (Kelly-Vance, 2019)
- Self-Directed Stress Management Plan (Ansley et al., 2016; Blinder et al., 2018)
- Professional Improvement Plan developed to optimize strengths and problem-solve barriers

State et al., 2024

MTSS for Educator Work-Related Well Being: Implementation Flowchart

Foundations
- Establish a representative wellness team
- Assess needs and buy-in using schoolwide surveys, general screeners, and focus groups
- Identify existing services, expertise, and resources
- Identify gap between current needs and resources
- Reallocate or identify new resources as needed

Implementation
- Develop action plan based on results of needs assessment and resource mapping
- Establish data-based decision-making system
- Establish a menu of a continuum of evidence-based supports
- Monitor acceptability, fidelity, and effectiveness of supports

Continuous Quality Improvement
- Engage larger community
- Seek sources of funding
- Advocate for policy changes
- Review data regularly to inform ongoing revisions to process, procedures, and supports

State et al., 2024

MTSS for Educator Work-Related Well Being: Other Considerations

- Equity and privacy issues.
- Normalizing asking for help – and then receiving it.
- Elevating shared responsibility of policymakers, school leadership, teacher preparation programs, and educators themselves.
- It is critical to create opportunities for schools to share their knowledge and experiences implementing these models and how they addressed barriers along the way.

State et al., 2024

Table Talk

1. **Do you think MTSS is an effective framework for addressing educator burnout? Why or why not?**

2. **What aspects of MTSS do you think would be most critical for systems to implement to ensure success?**

Authentic Examples of Effective Change

Six Causes of Burnout at Work

1. Workload

2. Perceived Lack of Control

3. Lack of Reward or Recognition

4. Poor Relationships

5. Lack of Fairness

6. Values Mismatch

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW PRESS

THE RISE OF CHRONIC STRESS AND
HOW WE CAN FIX IT

THE BURNOUT
EPIDEMIC

JENNIFER MOSS
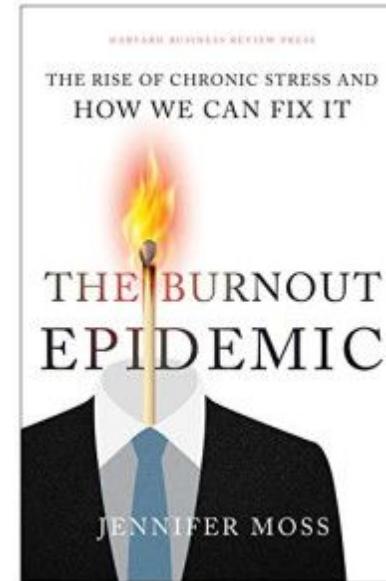
Universal Supports For All Staff at CPS (Tier 1)

- Workload Management

- Positive Work Culture

- Clear Communication

- Access to Resources

Targeted Supports (For At-Risk Staff) at CPS (Tier 2)

- Mentoring and Peer Support

- Flexible Accommodations

- Check-ins and Coaching

- Targeted Professional Development

Retention Rates in Special Education Department

- 24 Special Education Teachers at CPS (vs 20 in 2022)
  - 2022 - 55% returned
  - 2023 - 65% returned
  - 2024 - 77% returned
  - 2025 - 83% returned
    - 1 moved into administration (in district)
    - 1 moved out of state (husband was relocated)
    - 1 moved into administration (in another district)
    - 1 changed districts
- 12 Related Service Employees (vs 8 in 2022)
  - 92% returned

2024-2025 Anonymous Staff Survey Results (Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers)

Joy level (Scale of 1-5):

78 % rated 4 or 5

21% rated 3

0% 1 or 2

Suggestions to move that needle higher: More time, higher budget, and the most common answer: SUMMER - ready for a break!
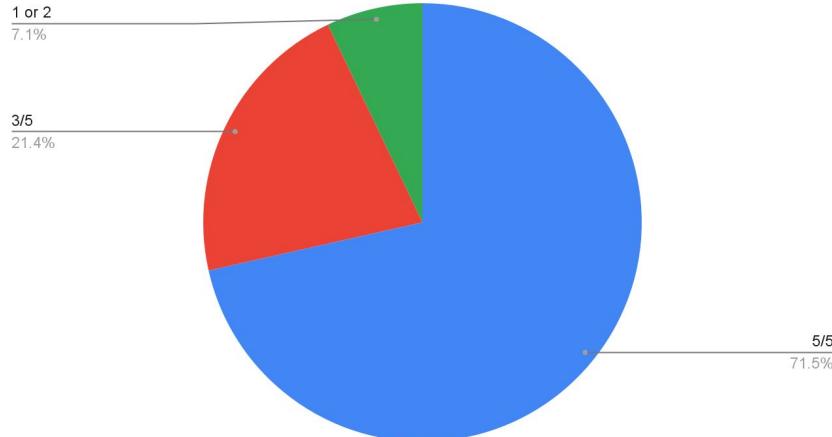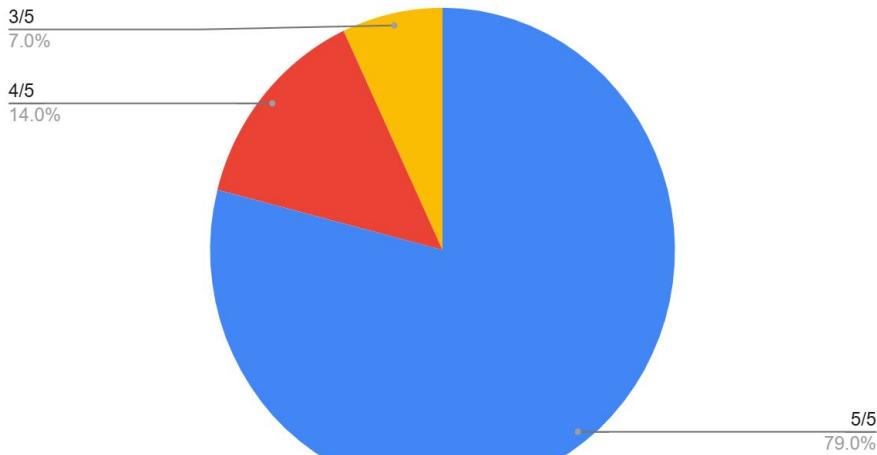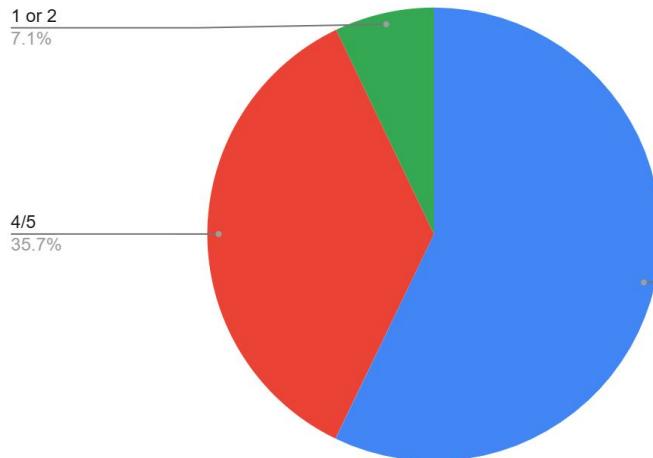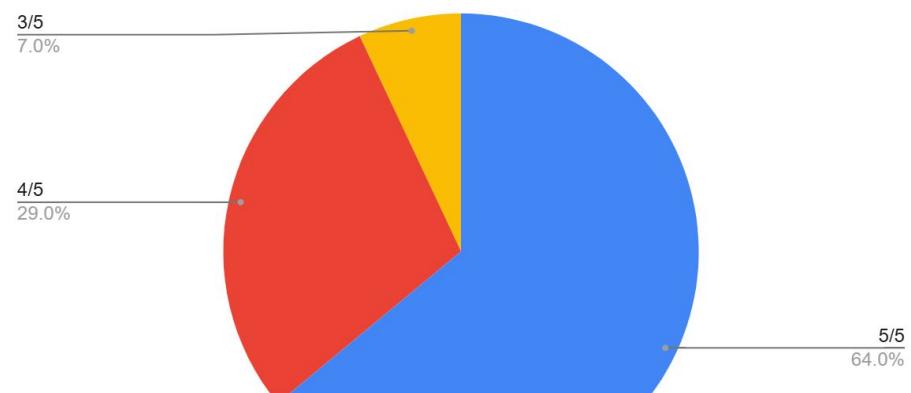
Wellness in Motion :)

Chapter by Chapter, Stronger Together: Survey Results from CPS Book Club

- **Do you feel the book club provides a safe and supportive environment to share your thoughts and feelings?**
  - 100% answered Yes

- **How much did you enjoy book cub?**
  - 100% answered 5/5

- **What did you enjoy most about book club?**
  - It's a pocket of guaranteed fun in my calendar.
  - The team atmosphere and casual nature.
  - Getting to chat with and getting to know people I don't get to see often or maybe wouldn't have at all of it wasn't for book club.

Book Club Fun!

- **How has the book club impacted your sense of community with other teachers?**
  - When I see people from Book club at district events, I can smile and strike up a conversation because I actually know them.
  - I would feel much more comfortable reaching out to one of them with work related issues now than I would have before.
  - It has helped me get to know the team on a more personal level which makes collaboration at school a lot more smooth.
- **What other activities would you like to see our Special Education team participate in?**
- Bonfire evening, Group fitness, Trivia night, Comedy show, Paint and sip event, Anythinghow

Building Internal Capacity for Retention: Aspiring Leadership Academy (ALA)

🌟 "Grow Your Own": A Strategic Leadership Pipeline

ALA is a multi-year initiative to develop future school leaders from within the district.

Aligns with MTSS Tier 1 for Staff: universal support for professional growth and engagement.

Builds internal leadership capacity and creates clear career advancement opportunities.

Enhances teacher motivation, belonging, and purpose — key factors in staff retention.

Addresses leadership turnover proactively by investing in internal talent.

Retention Through Advancement: ALA Outcomes

~ 70% of ALA participants have moved into admin roles - with the majority retained within our district.

Year	Participants	Now in Admin Roles	Within District	Outside District
Year 1	5	5	5	0
Year 2	3	2	0	2
Year 3	11	6	5	1

Retention Rates at Cimarron Public Schools

| 2023-2024	2024-2025
36 Staff Members	41 Staff Members
81% of Staff Returned	80% of Staff Returned
75% Certified Staff Retained	73% Certified Staff Retained
100% Support Staff Retained	93% Support Staff Retained
67% New Hires Retained	67% New Hires Retained
Reasons: Retired, NRH, PI	Reasons: Left Education, Life choices, NRH, PI

OKDOE Educator Engagement Survey

STRENGTHS:

- TRAINING
- HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE
- ACCESS TO RESOURCES TO DO THE JOB WELL

IMPROVEMENTS TO BE MADE:

- MOTIVATING TO CONTRIBUTE MORE
- BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
- ONLY 12 OUT OF 41 PARTICIPATED
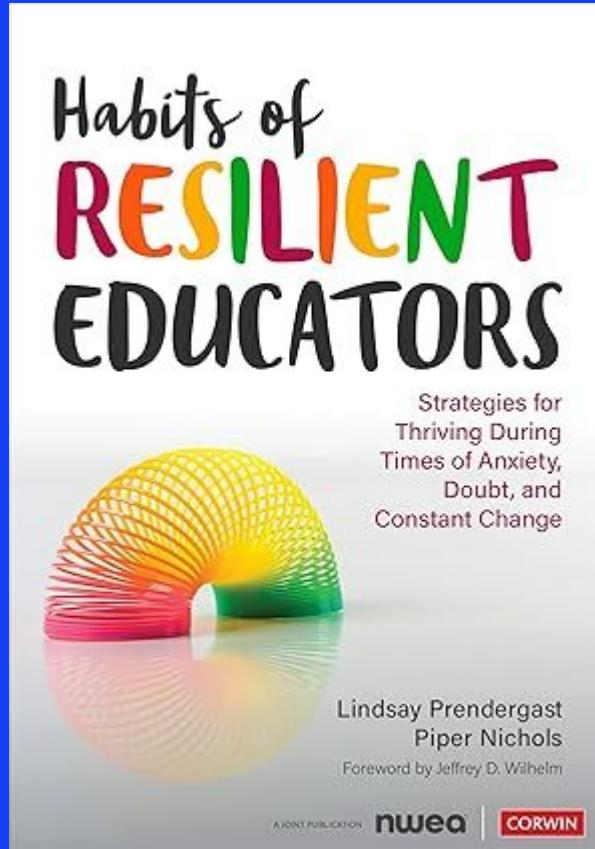
VOLUNTARY BOOK STUDY:
- MEET AT RESTAURANTS OR BACKYARD PATIOS
- YOUR WHY OR PURPOSE
- COLLABORATION VS ISOLATION
- SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS
- DATA TO DRIVE DECISIONS
- ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES
- GOAL SETTING
- USING FEEDBACK EFFECTIVELY
- PRIORITIZING TASKS
- AVOIDING NEGATIVITY
- PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: APPLYING RESILIENCE

Table Talk

1. **After hearing the strategies and data from Jackie's and Jill's lived experiences, which ideas were a good fit for you? Which strategies would you like to implement for:**
   a. **Tier 1**
   b. **Tier 2**
   c. **Tier 3**
2. **Do you have additional ideas or inspirations that would be beneficial at Tiers 1, 2, and 3?**
3. **How might you collect and evaluate data to support your implementation of Burnout Strategies across each Tier?**

Cool Cool Cool

But what if I feel disempowered to change the system?

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

**FREQUENTLY MISUSED PSYCHOLOGICAL TERM**

Self-care

"

I think 'self-care' has been taken over by capitalism and is fed to us as a laundry list of to-dos. There's exercise and nutrition and sleep and boundaries and bubble baths. While it's beneficial to include those things in daily life, self-care shouldn't be used as a proxy for self-compassion. There's a *being* versus *doing* distinction—you can go through the motions of self-care without having any self-compassion."

DR. THEKLA BRUMDER ROSS

A Milwaukee-based clinical psychologist and national leader in addiction medicine who teaches self-compassion to medical students

You Can't Patch Up Pervasive Burnout with a Bubble Bath!

- Self Care was never meant to be a cure-all.
- Many high achievers use Self Care as a band-aid for an unsustainable life.
- Self Care cannot fix deeper problems like misaligned values, overcommitment, or overfunctioning.

- *"What if your problem isn't lack of rituals—it's that your life is built around over-functioning, perfectionism, or constantly proving your worth?"*

Sauer-Zavala, 2025; Walsh & Stevens Olinger, 2025

When Self Care Becomes Self Avoidance
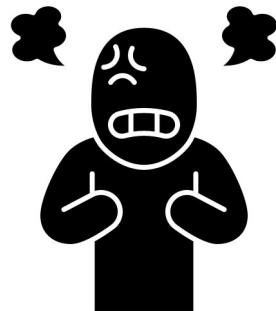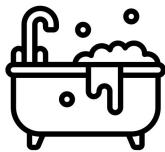
- **Self Care is necessary but not sufficient.**

- We expect Self Care to manage problems we are too scared or too exhausted to change.

- We conflate *Personal* Self Care (exercise, meditation, aligning our chakras, all the things) with *Professional* Self Care (setting boundaries, focusing on change and not relief, protecting your energy, telling the truth about what needs to change).

Sauer-Zavala, 2025

Practical Strategies for <u>Professional</u> Self Care

- Focus on your WHY.
  - We lose our way when we lose our why.
- Internalize and Act Upon your Sphere of Influence:

What you can control

What you can influence

Everything else outside of your control and influence
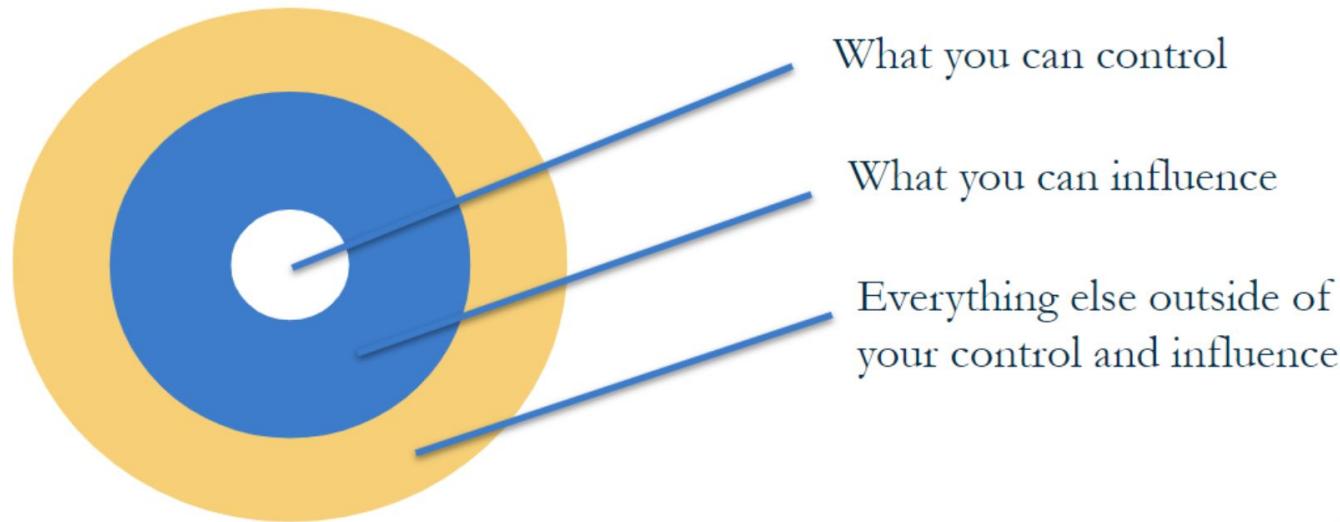
Practical Strategies for <u>Professional</u> Self Care

Build & Practice Resilience Skills	Replace Overfunctioning Practices	Connect & Collaborate
Learn About the Science of Hope, Happiness and Gratitude	Automate and Eliminate	Plan Fun Ways to Share Your Passion
Find a Resiliency Partner	Boundaries (Email, "No", etc.)	The Art of Advocacy - Be the Change!
Digital Detox	Lose Control!	Join Affinity Spaces
Don't Expect or Seek Validation- Validate Others and Yourself!	" I can't do X, but I can do Y".	Monitor Unhealthy Competition
Allowing & Practicing Meaningful Breaks	Document Your Time Let The Balls Drop	Foster Supportive Work Environments
Acts of Altruism- Including Mentoring	Insist on Work Life Balance	Ask. For. Help.

Sauer-Zavala, 2025; Walsh & Stevens Olinger, 2025; Burger 2022.

Practical Strategies for <u>Professional</u> Self Care

- **Look at Alignment, Not Aesthetics!**

  Is your life built around what you value—or what's expected of you? Who gets to define what you "should" be doing? How can you advocate for better working conditions, better compensation, and your professional role?

- **Focus on Systemic Changes, Not Just Relief!**

  Instead of endlessly soothing the stress, ask what is causing it. That might mean delegating. It might mean quitting (yes, quitting).

Sauer-Zavala, 2025; Burger, 2022, Walsh & Olinger, 2025
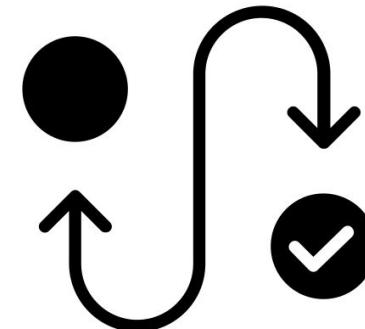
Final Thoughts on Self Care to Combat Burnout

- **Stop Outsourcing Your Peace!**

  - Self-care is not about products. It is about protection—of your time, your energy, your sense of self. It is about saying no, taking space, and building a life you do not need to escape from every Friday.

- **Self-Care ironically involves more than yourself.**

  - Prioritize your support system!

  - The importance of Community Care in changing systems that promote burnout.

Beard, 2020; Sauer-Zavala, 2025; Burger, 2022; Walsh & Olinger, 2025

Final Thoughts on Self Care to Combat Burnout

It is Time to Redefine and Practice True Self Care.

True self-care involves sacrifice, discomfort, abandonment, honesty, community, and commitment to making choices in your best interest.

Beard, 2020; Sauer-Zavala, 2025; Burger, 2022, Walsh & Olinger, 2025

Table Talk

1. **What are some strategies you can use to truly engage in professional self care to help combat personal burnout?**

2. **What are 3 unhealthy habits (target behaviors) that are likely reinforcing burnout? What are 3 healthy habits (replacement behaviors) you can work on in 2026?**

Summary & Conclusions:

- **Burnout is a threat to our profession- which will ultimately impact the children, families, schools, and communities we serve.**
- **Our educators need work environments that are supportive of their wellbeing.**
- **An MTSS framework is uniquely positioned to allow for organizational restructuring and building of equitable systems of support for all educators.**
- **There are local examples and data to show how systems-level changes have improved educator wellbeing.**
- **Personal Self care is a necessary, but not sufficient for combating professional burnout. School Psychologists should learn about and practice effective strategies to promote their own wellbeing.**

Right Now Resources:

- **The Burnout Epidemic:** https://www.amazon.com/Burnout-Epidemic-Rise-Chronic-Stress/dp/1647820367

- **Resources from Rebecca Branstetter:** https://rebeccabranstetter.com/

- **Frontalobe.com**

Healthy Educators Need Healthy Schools: Supporting Educator Work-Related Well-Being Through Multi Tiered Systems of Support

State, T. M., Ouellette, R. R., Zaheer, I., & Zahn, M. R. (2024).

Questions & Comments

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