



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHRONIC DISEASE DIRECTORS
Promoting Health. Preventing Disease.



Spotlight on Success Republic School District (Missouri, USA)

District-level work is supported, in part, by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors through the National Initiative to Advance Health in K-12 Education by Preventing Chronic Disease and Promoting Healthy Behaviors Project.



Investing in Staff Wellness to Foster Connection

Believing that a positive school culture and strong relationships lead to better outcomes for all, Republic School District has taken a strategic and sustained approach to staff wellness through structured goals, leadership development, communication, and shared learning. The district has already made strides in strengthening support for the adults who support their students.

At the heart of Republic's work is a goal to grow adult social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies across the district. The district has identified key leaders to participate in professional development rooted in adult SEL research. Training content comes from [Brené Brown's](#) work on vulnerability and trust-building, as well as the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) and [Panorama Education](#). Monthly leadership meetings provide a space for continued reflection and learning, so that everyone is on the same page and using the same language across all sites. Looking forward, the district will extend this learning to all staff by providing implementation guidance and gathering feedback to improve future training. The end goal is to have leaders model SEL practices that build relationships, reduce burnout, and create more connected school communities.

In addition to adult SEL, Republic is working to increase access to existing staff mental health resources. After conducting an inventory of resources (including Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits, community-based services, and in-district wellness offerings), the district created a visual resource to help staff more easily find help when they need it.

Republic's approach goes beyond one-time efforts by embedding wellness into ongoing routines and culture-building activities. Monthly "Tigers on Two" professional development messages focus on practical topics like boundaries, connection, stress management, and self-compassion.



Topics are chosen based on staff feedback and include evidence-based tools and practical reflection strategies. The district also launched a staff recognition program, modeled after successful programs in other districts, to recognize both certified and classified staff. Communication channels such as monthly wellness newsletters, leadership meeting updates, and campaigns help reinforce the importance of staff well-being throughout the year. These strategies not only raise awareness but also create a sense of shared purpose and connection among staff.

Republic's wellness work is not one and done. The district uses climate survey data, staff needs assessments, and reflective conversations with leaders to continually adjust its approach. For example, while previous mindfulness sessions showed initial promise, the team realized they needed more systemic supports before expanding those offerings. As a result, they are exploring targeted training for instructional coaches and leaders. The district is also looking for ways to tie wellness to existing policies and procedures, including adding staff work-life balance guidelines to the employee handbook.

Republic School District's wellness strategy is all about continuous improvement. With strong leadership, district-level coordination, and a deep commitment to staff connection and care, the district is building the structures and practices to create lasting impact. Their example shows how a team-centered, proactive approach to staff well-being can become part of a district's culture, and in doing so, support student and adult success.

This project is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$400,000 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



Looking for resources to help your school community with staff well-being?
Visit <https://chronicdisease.org/cahc/school-health/staff/>