

'All In' for staff health and wellness!

Our Chinook's Edge Staff Health and Wellness Team wasn't surprised at the high response to the recent staff wellness survey. They have been working together on this priority for over two years now and already knew that staff across our division are compelled to build health and wellness priorities into each day. With 860 responses to the survey, our Staff Wellness Team has been given a clear mandate! Our Board is highly supportive of our efforts to promote and support wellness with students and staff, as well. With high engagement from all corners, and equipped with important and specific survey data to guide us, we are ready to move forward.

Superintendent Kurt Sacher was very supportive of a teacher's suggestion that we more formally address staff wellness. This was first suggested a few years ago when work was getting underway on the Social Emotional Framework Development for our students. It quickly became evident that, if our staff are to be effective and impactful in their work with our students, they need to be healthy and well. As well, it was identified that our genuine safe and caring culture would be enhanced by clear staff wellness structures and supports.

Wanda Christensen (recently-retired Associate Superintendent of Student Services) launched the Staff Wellness Team initiative at that time, and has passed the torch to Ray Hoppins (Associate Superintendent of People Services). This project has been supported by Becky Krauss (School Health Facilitator) and a team of Health Champions from every school. Our division's new Staff Health and Wellness Worker, Aaryn Manning, came onboard last fall (see Celebrating Chinook's Edge, Nov 6, 2017).

What's next?

The Staff Health and Wellness Team has reviewed, discussed and synthesized data from all the survey responses. They formulated a one-page graph of survey feedback and staff priorities, they are determining actions, and continue to bring the project alive in our school communities.

Aaryn and Becky have presented the findings to the Central Office Leadership Team (COLT), school administrators, division office staff, and other staff groups. Our Board of Education supports this initiative, we've got Health Champions in place at every school, and the COLT Team has spent considerable time determining how best to move forward.

Top Priorities

COLT is moving ahead in the direction outlined on the Staff Health and Wellness Team's graph. The Team identified three categories of response:

- * **Individual** (What is your wellness plan for yourself?)
- * **Workplace** (Wellness plan for your staff?)
- * **Division** (What standards and boundaries could COLT set across Chinook's Edge?)

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Staff Health and Wellness Champions



Staff Wellness Essence Statement: We will embrace environments that support health and wellness, empowering all staff to thrive as compassionate, healthy and well balanced individuals.



Celebrating

staff health and wellness

COLT has determined the following five action items, as a place to start:

- 1) Compiling information on staff fitness opportunities and discounts, to be shared with all staff.
- 2) Individual Program Plan (student IPP) processes will be clarified and streamlined to reduce unnecessary staff time. Marcie Perdue, Associate Superintendent of Student Services, has been working to ensure schools more fully understand when an IPP is actually needed.
- 3) Field Trip forms will soon have capability of being completed entirely online, reducing communication timelines and eliminating the need for staff time managing, monitoring and collecting forms.
- 4) The Staff Health and Wellness Worker (Aaryn Manning) position has been expanded to 0.5 FTE, as Aaryn continues to support staff across the division.
- 5) The Board, Teachers Matter and school admin teams have been supportive of a bold new approach to staff wellness! "Weekdays 'Til 6:00... In CESD, we don't email/text on weekends or after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays." After strong reflection, COLT is prepared to make this bold statement to reduce the amount of distraction from text and emails that staff are engaged in around the clock.

How might No. 5 work: We know we can't turn off the world completely and that there will be times when a serious or emergent item needs to be addressed through email and text from time to time. But we believe we've underestimated the impact on our staff by being available 24/7. This item, perhaps beyond all others, is weighing on our staff. COLT has outlined detailed thoughts and strategies on this - be sure to read the document that is being sent with this bulletin! We're ready to begin this now, and will roll it out to parents in early fall. Be patient with one another, as we learn this new/old way of doing business!



Online field trip forms training - one example of simplifying our processes.



Aaryn Manning and Becky Krauss presenting Staff Wellness initiative to Division Office staff.

Note from Kurt: Thank you for embracing this effort! Chinook's Edge has amazing champions, resources and partnerships. I hope you feel empowered and appreciated as we continue moving forward with our Staff Health and Wellness priorities. We were told that what stood out to the Wellness Champions was the importance of connections and relationships; work/life balance; the desire for wellness PD or embedded health activities; and the importance of feeling appreciated.

We are determined to enhance wellness for staff, including the capacity-building skills necessary to address the increasing challenges many of our students are bringing to the classroom. It is our sincere intent to make the wellness of our staff a top priority. Please join us in creating an authentic culture of caring, where our staff feel validated and supported in the work they do for our students.

Kurt Sacher



Proof! At the Central AB Science Fair, Grade 9 Hugh Sutherland School student, Hailey Gale, showed judges that multitasking doesn't work well. People work better when they're in a quiet environment and focused on one task. Be focused on your family and your personal life when the workday is done!