

Administrator Tips: Caring for Yourself and Staff in the Time of COVID-19

Purpose

This communication is a companion document to [Educator Resilience: Tips on Self-Care in the Time of COVID-19](#) and provides administrators with helpful tips and strategies for maintaining their personal well-being and supporting the well-being of their staff.

Introduction

Leadership is critical as schools continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 and the remote learning environment. It is important for administrators to be empathetic and understanding while supporting and responding to the needs of their staff. While leaders are making decisions that best support students, staff, and families, it is important to remember that in order to lead others, school administrators must first maintain their own well-being. A holistic support system can include administrative role modeling, emotional support, and the promotion of work-life balance in a telework environment.

Role Modeling

Through their own behaviors and guidance, administrators can model for their educators and staff how to integrate work-life obligations and engage in self-care during a crisis. Some strategies include:

- Model work-life balance by defining and adhering to boundaries.
- Take time during your day to do something for *you*.
- Use paid time off and sick leave when needed and encourage staff to do the same; refer staff to appropriate human resources personnel for assistance.
- Stay up-to-date on [safety and public health COVID-19 responses](#) as well as the most up-to-date wellness resources. Use established methods of communication to remind staff about these resources; be mindful of overcommunicating.

Emotional Support

Administrators should convey that they are sensitive to the impacts that COVID-19 has had on their educators and staff. Leaders can use the following techniques to provide emotional support:

- Listen to your educators and staff; validate that you are hearing their concerns. Maintain an open-door policy for them to talk through issues when needed.
- Monitor for signs of struggle and determine appropriate response.
- Understand the family situation of your employees; recognize that some employees may have loved ones who are requiring additional attention while others may live alone and could benefit from more frequent check-ins.

- Encourage casual conversations (e.g., lunch groups, social hours, etc.) to maintain collegial connections.
- Utilize the school support team to provide social-emotional support to educators and staff; creative allocation of school resources and skillsets can benefit staff as well as students.
- Provide personal recognition through phone calls, videos, or letters; if possible, coordinate gift cards, food/treat delivery, or yard signs from the community.

Promote Work-Life Balance

Administrators can support the work-life balance of their educators with the following strategies:

- Give (and model for) educators permission and strategies to set reasonable expectations of themselves and their students.
- Be flexible with deadlines; limit the amount of tasks and help to prioritize.
- Be mindful of communications; limit the number emails as well as the amount of text within (e.g., use bullets to communicate essential information and include graphics when appropriate).
- Adjust the teaching schedule when possible (e.g., limit number of days and/or amount of time working directly with students).
- Identify time within the work week for planning and collaboration.
- Establish a plan for covering teacher absences (e.g., working in teams so that teachers can support one another).

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Sources

[5 Simple Ways to Support Teachers Now](#)

[This is the Most Essential Skill Leaders Need to Work Through the COVID-19 Crisis](#)