

School Wellness Council Question and Answer Section

Q: How does Pottstown fund the position of Wellness Coordinator?

A: David Genova began his work with the Pottstown School District as a grant funded Wellness Coordinator for only 10 hours/week. Administrators began to notice his work and increased his effort to full-time. The first year David was full-time was fully grant funded. However, in year two, David was half grant funded, half district funded. For the 2015/2016 school year, David's position will be 100% funded by the district.

David was able to track his activities, shared successes, report successes to administrators, and gained support within the district to fund this position.

Q: You mentioned inviting students to participate. Do you have any suggestions to improve student participation?

A: By inviting students to participate on your Wellness Council you are offering them opportunity to be a part of the decision making process that will ultimately impact their school environment. Because students have busy schedules they may not be able to devote as much time as needed, so consider having more than one student position on the council. Provide leadership and skill building opportunities. Make sure they understand how important student input is to the overall mission of a healthier school environment. Employing these approaches will empower students to get involved, stay engaged and promote your council's healthy initiatives to their peers.

In Pottstown, student participation has been promoted through extra credit opportunities for going above and beyond their usual activities. Check with your district to see which incentives are allowable in your district and attempt to find ways to benefit the student by providing them opportunities to develop and utilize skillsets.

Q: What do you suggest for school districts that would like to incorporate a staff wellness component?

A: Staff and administrator buy-in are two priorities to incorporating a staff wellness component to your district. The more evidence you have for success, the more likely you will get approved to incorporate staff into wellness. Locating current research on staff wellness, presenting results from an interest survey (of your staff), and finding available funding opportunities are a few ways to help build your case for staff wellness. Healthy workplaces lead to lower health care costs and healthy employees are more productive, have lower rates of absenteeism, and report higher job satisfaction. Encourage a staff member that is interested in health and wellness to join your Wellness Council. Offer activities for employees surrounding healthy eating and exercise. For example, begin a walking program to engage staff in regular physical activity. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation has great resources for encouraging staff wellness. [Click here to view their resources.](#)

Schools that are interested in staff wellness policies and practices should consider adding specific language to their wellness policies that parallel or even expand on student wellness. They should focus on integrating staff wellness into the coordinated school health program. In addition, staff needs should be assessed and activities should be specific to the adult population. Staff programs should focus on the identified activities that are easy to implement, in order to achieve support. Staff wellness provides a healthy living opportunity for employees, but also provides students with an additional healthy champion in their lives.

Q: Do you have a simple assessment form for schools to determine their “Wellness environment” and how well they are complying with their Wellness Policies?

A: PRO Wellness has put together a School Health Assessment Comparison Chart, which you will find [here](#). Each assessment tool offers something different, so this chart may be a good way to identify which tool would be most useful to you as you assess your wellness environment.

General Comments from attendees

“We have found it helpful to have a student run health council.”

“Board support is crucial.”