



## From the SD20 Wellness Committee Psychological Health and Safety at your workplace

Each site will receive a small grant based on the number of people at the site (see below) to begin discussing and addressing issues negatively impacting psychological health and safety. This approach has been endorsed by School District 20, CUPE and KCTU.

The 2023 Survey responses in SD 20 showed that of all staff:

- **46% felt it was unsafe to speak up at work**
- **60% had significant or serious concerns about trust and school cultures**
- **28% reported concerns over being bullied at work**

These data indicate problems with psychological health and safety in our district's schools and worksites. Addressing these problems can improve wellbeing, job satisfaction and school effectiveness.

### 1. Budget

Site	Staff	Budget
Operations	42	\$1,554
FES	43	\$1,591
GES	47	\$1,739
KES	47	\$1,739
KCLC	17	\$629
JLC	75	\$2,775
RCS	27	\$1,000
RSS	38	\$1,406
SBO	51	\$1,887
SHSS	67	\$2,479
TR	53	\$1,961
WEB	32	\$1,184
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>\$19 944</b>

***Supervisors: The amount listed below will be transferred to your budget. Any unused funds as of June 30<sup>th</sup> will be returned to the district Well at Work budget to be redistributed the following school year.***

## **2. Structure for Deciding Focus**

A three-person group (CUPE, KCTU, P/VP for schools or 2 CUPE, 1 Supervisor for Operations) to brainstorm ideas to bring to a meeting for the area(s) of focus. One suggestion is to use your existing JOHSC to begin brainstorming and then bring to the larger group.

## **3. Possible Areas of Focus**

The site-based money is to be anchored in improving the psychological wellbeing at your site. As you recall, there are 13 factors that impact psychological wellbeing which may assist in helping determine your area of focus. These are listed on the last page of the memo.

Some possible areas of focus could include:

- Increasing civility and respect
- Reducing loneliness and isolation at work
- Building a better community and more connections among staff in our school
- Creating psychological health and safety in our meetings
- Encouraging dialogue, perhaps by more use of small groups in staff or other meetings
- How to improve our school's culture
- How to better address conflict when it happens

Once the area of focus is chosen, a plan to use the site-based money targeted at that focus should be decided. Some examples are listed at the end of this memo which were also part of the SD20 report, but may also include:

- Access a resource (book, video etc.) or person to support discussion or action in support of psychological health –
- Pay for refreshments and snacks while staff meet to:
  - Create a plan to discuss how to improve the culture at the site (organizational culture);
  - Create a plan to build efficiencies linked to wellbeing within the worksite (workload management, involvement & influence);
  - Create agreements on how all staff interactions will occur (civility & respect)
- Provide release time (teachers) or pay (CUPE members) for a small group to develop new approaches to share with all staff.
- Funds to bring in someone from this or another district to share how they addressed making their workplaces psychologically safer.
- Use of funds to implement the agreed upon site-based plan to promote wellness and inclusion (ie. social events, guest speakers, opportunities to engage with colleagues, print based resources, book clubs etc)
- Other?

**4. Sharing the Journey**

In June, we will ask that each site share their approach (a one-pager) so we can learn from each other about ways to promote psychologically healthier schools and workplaces.

We look forward to hearing back from you about your successes and challenges in this process. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on the Wellness Committee.

**Wellness Committee**

Katherine Shearer, Superintendent  
Marcy VanKoughnett, Asst. Superintendent – HR  
Liz Johnson, Manager of Health & Safety

Heather Skarbo, CUPE Local 1285  
Andy Davidoff, KCTU  
Wendy Cutler, PVPA

## What Does a Mentally Healthy Workplace Look Like?

The 13 factors below have been shown to prevent harm to mental health and promote psychological wellbeing. Together, they form Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.



### **Organizational Culture**

The workplace is characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness.



### **Psychological & Social Support**

Coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns and respond appropriately.



### **Clear Leadership & Expectations**

Leadership is effective. Employees are supported so they know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization & if there are upcoming changes.



### **Civility & Respect**

Employees are respectful & considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with students, parents, and the public.



### **Psychological Competencies & Demands**

There is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of their job.



### **Growth & Development**

Employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional, and job skills.



### **Recognition & Reward**

There is appropriate acknowledgement & appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner.



### **Involvement & Influence**

Employees are included in discussions about how their work is done & how important decisions are made.



### **Workload Management**

Tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the available time.



### **Engagement**

Employees feel connected to their work, and are motivated to do their job well.



### **Balance**

There is a recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family, and personal life.



### **Psychological Protection**

Employees feel safe asking questions, reporting problems, or proposing a new ideas without fearing negatives consequences to themselves or their job.



### **Protection of Physical Safety**

Management takes appropriate action to protect the physical safety of employees.

## Appendix C: Resources for Identified Strategies

*(from the Advisor's Report on Staff Wellbeing in SD 20)*

### Psychological Health and Safety

*Increase awareness and understanding of psychological health and safety among employees.*

- [Being a Mindful Employee: An Orientation to Psychological Health and Safety](#). A free online 1.5-hour course hosted by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Includes quiz and completion certificate. Suitable for onboarding new employees as well as for existing employees.
- [Putting psychological and social support on the agenda workshop](#). Includes all materials and guidance on facilitating an effective team discussion on psychological and social support.

*Expand leaders' and supervisors' expertise in managing psychologically safe workplaces.*

- [Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment & resources help leaders](#) identify and reinforce psychologically safe employee-management skills.
- [Meeting Pulse's](#) article [How to Foster Psychological Safety in Meetings](#) provides a roadmap for making meeting safer.
- *Well at Work's Shaping Health School Environments and Systems and Cultures that Support Wellbeing* workshops help district and school leaders and supervisors better understand psychological health and safety. Learn more [here](#).

*Build stronger working relationships among staff in different roles as one strategy to address loneliness.*

- The [Building Stronger Teams](#) workbook provides activities to build team resilience, foster civility and respect, and build emotional intelligence. Most activities take 30 minutes or less and are suitable for staff meetings.

*Increase the use of Indigenous-informed restorative processes*

- School Mental Health Ontario's [Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool for School Staff](#) can prompt employees to consider their skills, knowledge and self-awareness when engaging with colleagues and others who don't share their culture and identities.

### Organizational Culture and Values

*Walk the talk. Address the gap between the District's values, etc., and the day-to-day reality.*

- Gustavo Razzetti's [culture mapping tool](#) could frame discussions about the District's current culture and identify a way forward. Consider using an external facilitator to facilitate the discussions.
- [Putting organizational culture on the agenda workshop](#) helps you facilitate a team discussion to address workplace culture. The facilitator guide, slide deck and participant guide are provided.

*Visibly position workplace wellbeing and district culture as shared responsibilities.*

- Gustavo Razzetti's article [Why Building Company Culture is Everyone's Responsibility](#) provides the rationale for viewing culture as a shared responsibility.
- See [Appendix A](#) for the rationale for a shared responsibility around workplace wellbeing.

### *Focus on meetings*

- The [Guide to Developing Team Norms](#) provides a framework for establishing and gaining buy-in for guidelines about how colleagues interact and communicate.
- The [Building Stronger Teams](#) workbook provides activities to build team resilience, foster civility and respect, and build emotional intelligence. Most activities take 30 minutes or less and are suitable for staff meetings.
- Examples of meeting check-ins that build connection: [check-in example](#), [Circle of Appreciation activity](#), and [Strength Finder](#).

### School/Worksite- Specific Issues

#### *Develop and implement an employee code of conduct.*

- Sample codes of conduct from [Burlington Public Library](#), [Niagara College Canada](#) and [Brandon School Division](#).

#### *Train and utilize facilitators to support school/site-based meetings.*

- Simon Fraser University's [constructive deliberations resources](#) can support meaningful discussions that strengthen relationships, build a collaborative culture and contribute to staff wellbeing and professional fulfilment.

#### *Encourage school or role-specific groups to meet and explore how to address an issue of concern might be addressed.*

- Research articles such as Betty Achinstein's [Conflict Amid Community: The Micropolitics of Teacher Collaboration](#)<sup>1</sup> or Andy Hargreaves' [Push, Pull and Nudge: The Future of Teaching and Educational Change](#)<sup>2</sup> could be used to stimulate thinking about the nature and levels of conflict in schools, or how to foster collaboration.
- [MeetingToolchest.org](#)'s [Collaborative Culture Maturity Model](#) helps participants reflect on their current meeting style and shape how they can improve future meetings. The website provides a variety of tools and articles to support improved meetings.

### Workplace Wellbeing Structures and Strategies

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<sup>1</sup> Achinstein, B. (2002). Conflict Amid Community: The Micropolitics of Teacher Collaboration. *Teachers College Record*, 104(3), 421–455.

<sup>2</sup> Hargreaves, A. (2015). Push, Pull and Nudge: The Future of Teaching and Educational Change. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 9(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.36510/learnland.v9i1.749>