

Vicarious Trauma, Teacher Retention, and the City

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CENTER FOR
CITIES+SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

Proposed Agenda

- Overview of the larger project
- Project Presentations
 - Teacher Wellness and Retention
 - Newcomer Teachers and Wellness
 - Principals and Teacher Wellness
- Discussion and Next Steps

Addressing Vicarious Trauma in Oakland's Teachers

Sarah Snook



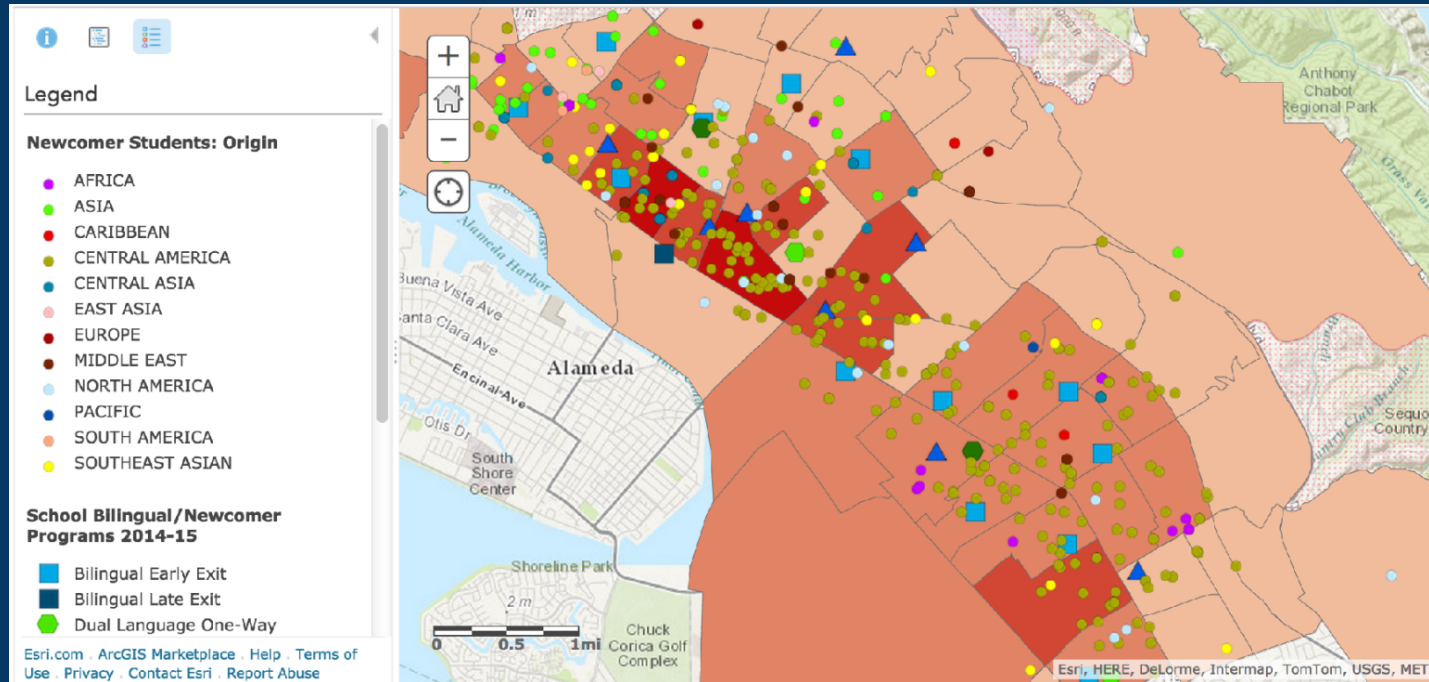
What is Vicarious Trauma?

American Counseling Association:

“The emotional residue of exposure felt after people become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured.”

Who are Newcomer students?

Oakland Unified School District defines newcomer students as those who have been in the United States for less than 3 years and speak a language other than English at home.



Why Oakland?

FROM 2002-2015

117 CHILDREN

WERE SHOT AND KILLED IN OAKLAND

FROM 2012-2013 TO 2016-2017 THERE WAS A

110% INCREASE

IN NEWCOMERS IN OUSD

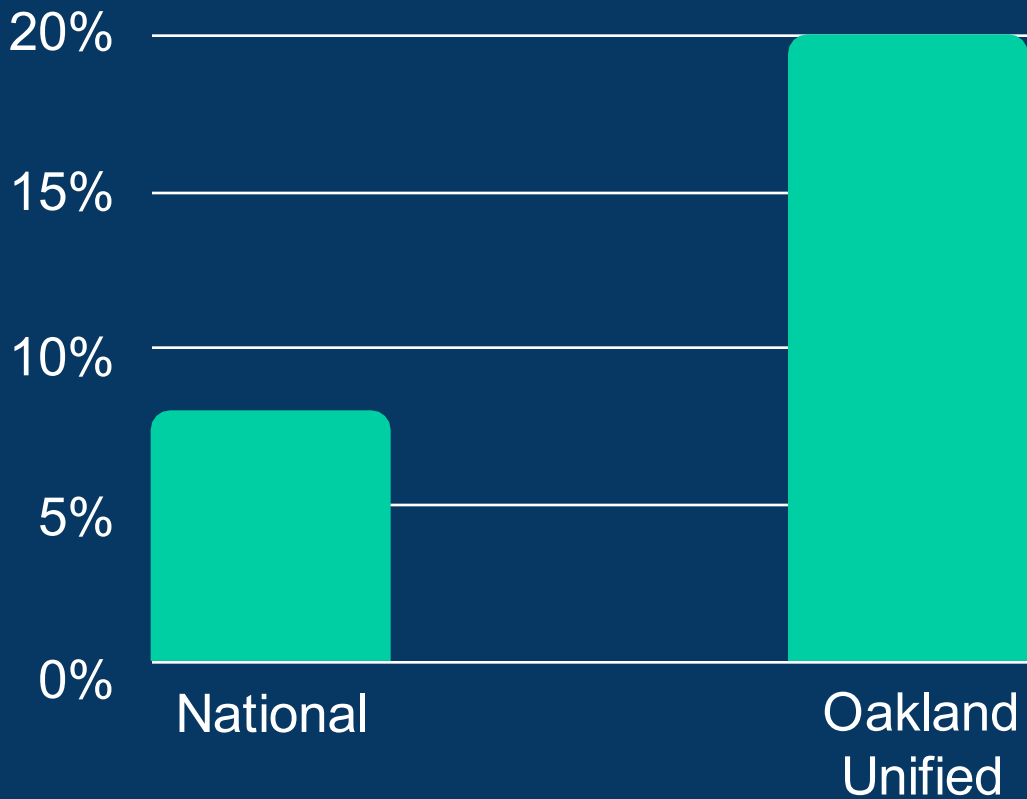


OF 2017-2018 OUSD NEWCOMERS

**25% are Refugees &
23% are Unaccompanied**



Teacher Attrition



Study	Shifting Culture
University of Northern Colorado	Four dimensions to prevent and intervene to address vicarious trauma: personal wellness, organizational, supervision, and education. This study suggests that the goal of an organization, or in this case, a school, should be to create a culture where teachers feel like they can “seek support and assistance when they are struggling”
Louisiana State University/Tennessee at Chattanooga	Organizational and personal wellness plans to address stress and trauma must go beyond physical wellness. An ideal wellness program would address all of the following dimensions of wellness: “(1) physical health, (2) leisure, (3) relationships, (4) work pursuits, and (5) an area of their choosing (spiritual, financial, hobby)”
University of Michigan	An evaluation of a school-based wellness program in Atlanta, TeachWell, identified the impact of the program on teacher job satisfaction, a key predictor of teacher retention. The program implemented wellness classes throughout the school year for teachers, which gave them practices to improve their own wellness and the wellness of their students. However, the study found no indication that the program increased student or teacher outcomes on any measure and have attributed this to low participation and buy-in from teachers.

Shifting Culture

The most important aspect of combatting vicarious trauma is to create a supportive culture. Districts and schools can make organizational changes to allow and encourage teachers to seek support or talk about their mental health. The goal should be to shift wellness culture to something collectively managed and away from individualism.



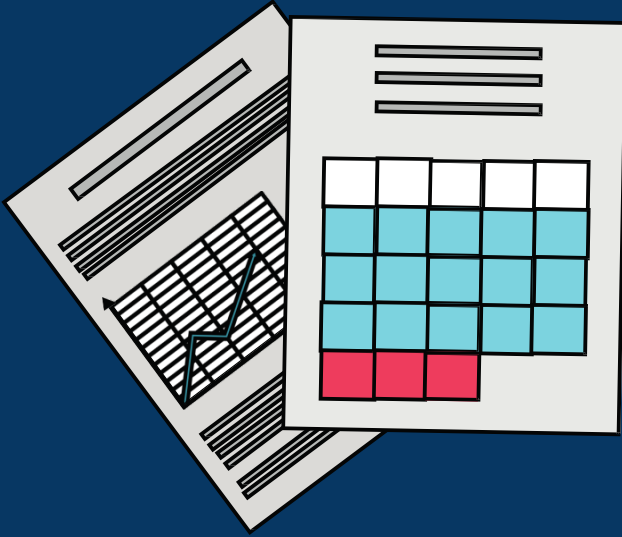
Mental vs. Physical Wellness

Many wellness programs in school districts focus on physical health and while this is part of wellness, it doesn't capture the full range of wellness or work to manage vicarious trauma.



Teacher Buy-In

Teachers should be involved in the creation of a wellness program at their school site, as OUSD has done. Teacher buy-in to wellness is just as important as student buy-in in the classroom.



Assessing Newcomer Teacher Wellness Grants

Melissa Henne



Newcomer Teacher Wellness Grant

1

Support Wellness
Activities

2

Improve Teacher
Resilience

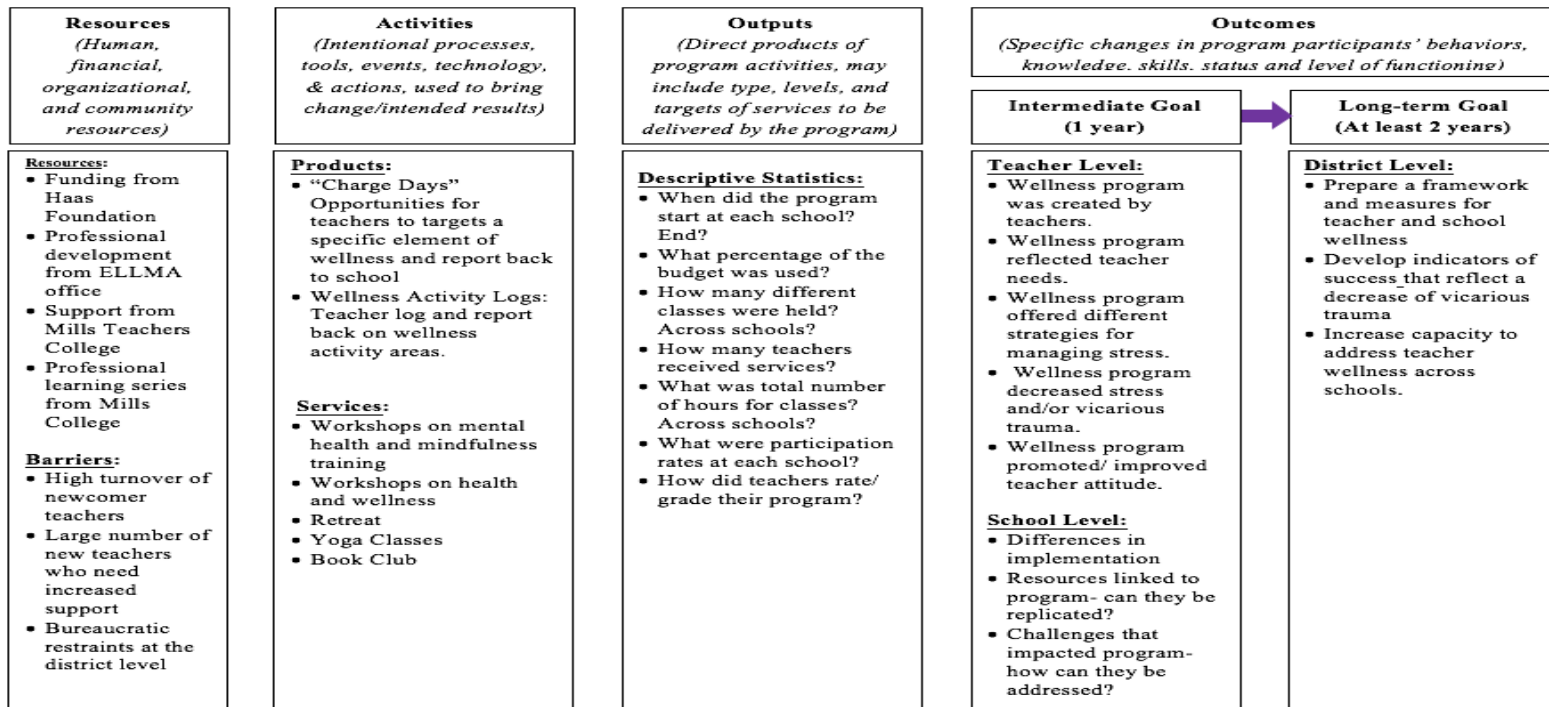
3

Replicate Effective
Strategies

4

Improve Retention and
Classroom Teaching

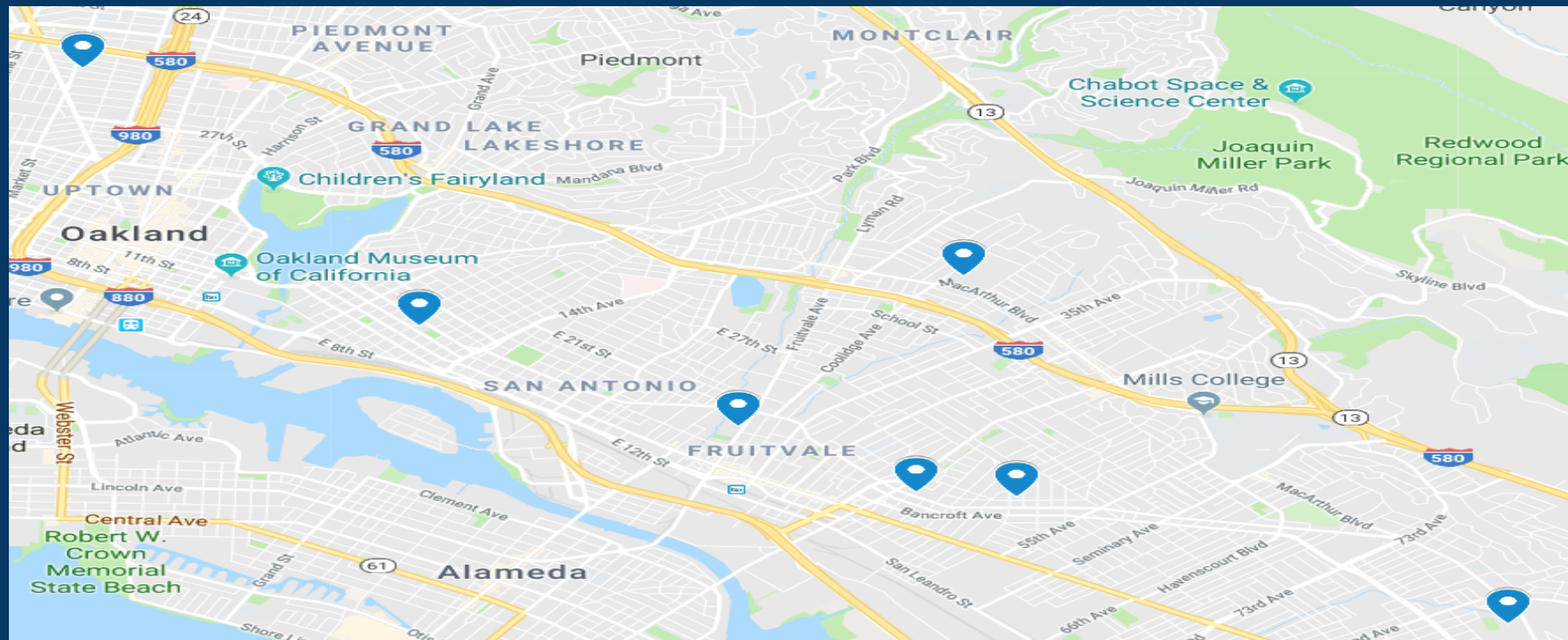
Teacher Wellness Pilot Logic Model



Methodology for Evaluation



Teacher Wellness Schools



Understanding Structure: Teacher Coordinators

What is Working:

- Acted as intermediary between district and school site.
- Responsible for coordinating resources.
- Grant was opportunity to support relationships.

What Needs Improvement:

- Streamline the approval process.
- Create template for pilot schools.

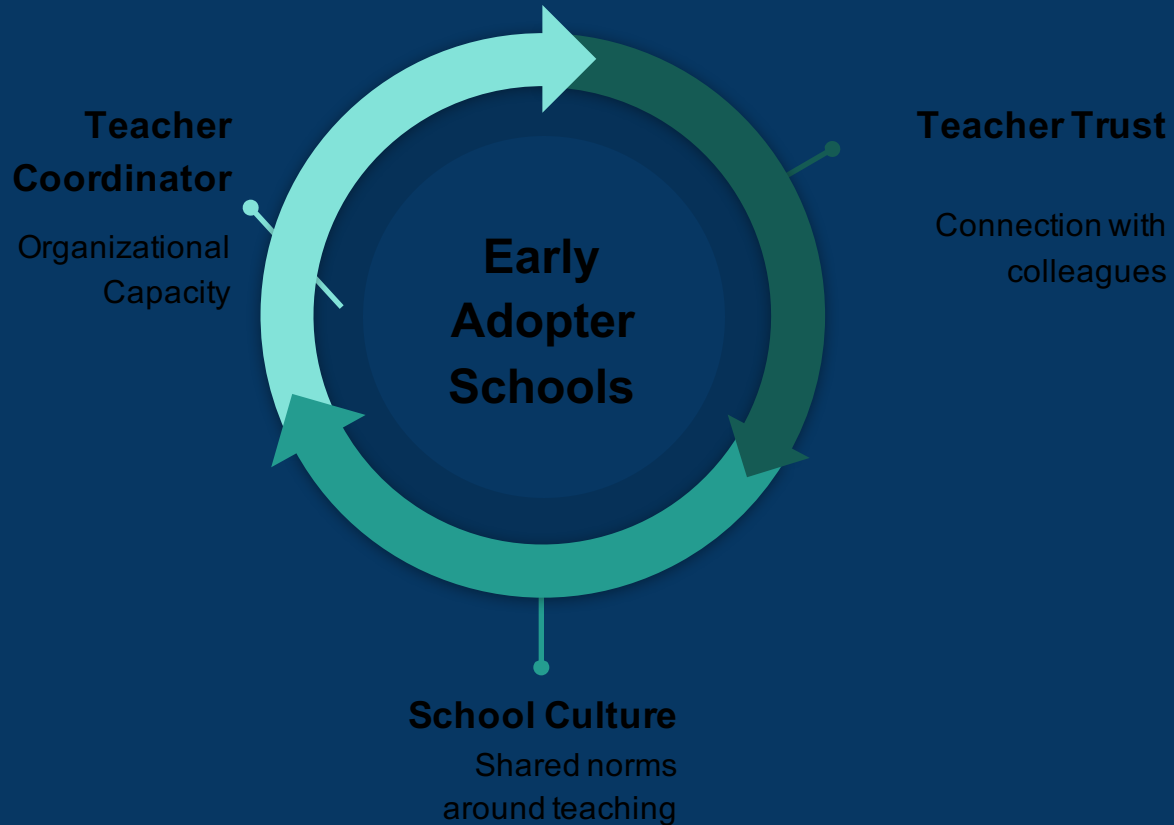
Understanding Content: Focus Group

What is Working:

- Teachers were appreciative of wellness activities.
- Gave teachers time to reflect upon their work.
- Highlighted the collective nature of their work.

What Needs Improvement:

- Difficult to find common time.
- Perception of wellness as individually centered.



Understanding Implementation: Survey Topics

Formative

Participation rates, numbers of classes, budget

Teacher

Teacher rating, satisfaction, buy-in, alternatives

School

School climate and culture, focusing on support and collegiality.

Understanding Implementation: Next Steps

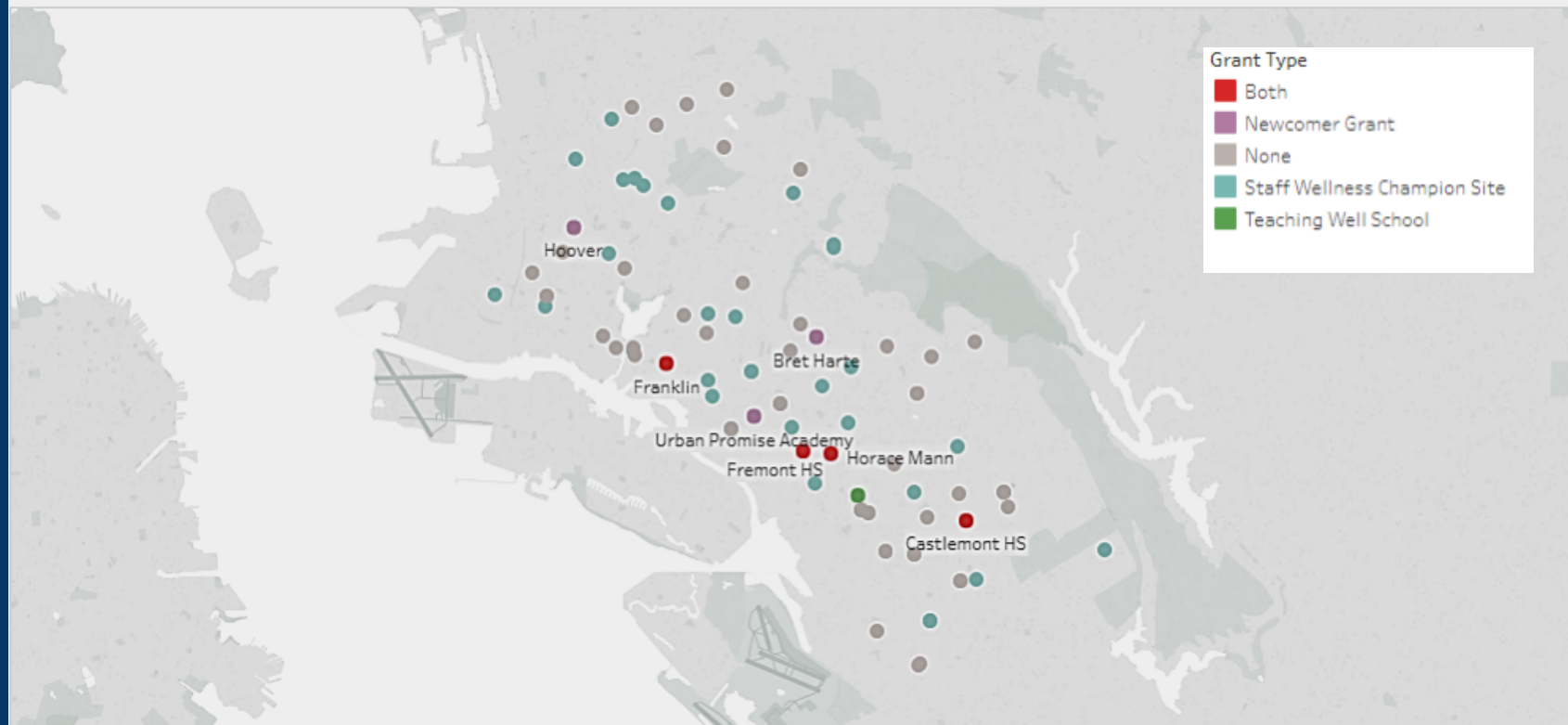
- Analyze both within and across schools.
- Create a framework of relevant factors.
- Explore how pilot program can be improved and replicated.
- Connect with larger issues of teacher retention and improved instruction.

Understanding How Principals Can Disrupt Vicarious Trauma in OUSD

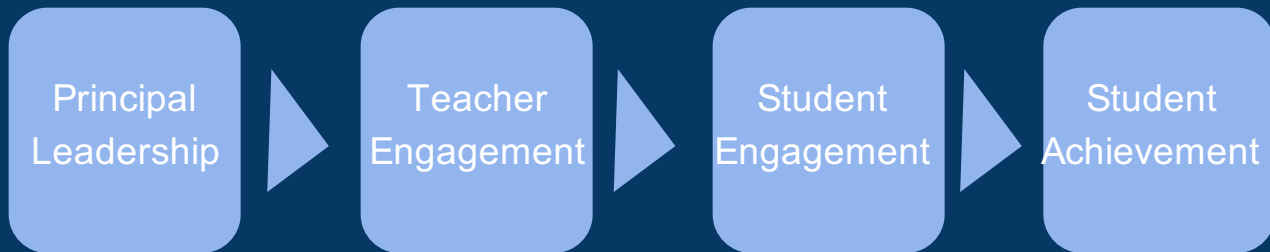
Anna Radoff

Mapping OUSD Wellness Strategies

OUSD Wellness Grants



Teacher Wellness and OUSD Teacher Leadership



Effective principal leadership can result in higher student test scores and a narrowing of the black-white opportunity gap.

Waters et al

Case Study of Roosevelt Middle School

“We are driving teachers out instead of recognizing that staff sustainability must be a top value to have a school in which students thrive”

-Cliff Hong

- Bi-weekly staff meeting on wellness
- Semester survey on staff wellness
- Relationship with teachers before trauma occurs
- Belief in high culture of achievement
- Paid staff hours to focus on wellness

Hierarchy of Gratitude

Happy Hour

Yoga

Coffee in the teachers lounge

Identifying behavior support

Appreciations and shout outs

Veteran teacher mentor programs

Teacher pay

Increasing housing prices

Lack of public transportation

EMERGING

DEVELOPING

THRIVING

Teacher Wellness and OUSD Teacher Leadership



Case study examples of programs within the district that are principal focused



Streamlining data collection and surveying



Principal understanding of wellness in the principal selection process and training



Principal rubric for self-evaluation of wellness



Professional development that is targeted and efficient

Thank You

