Principled Principals:

The Essential Role of Leadership in Disrupting Vicarious Trauma for Teachers in OUSD

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PLUS

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Report Context

The Center for Cities and Schools recognizes that schools and cities must collaborate in order to create equitable, healthy, and sustainable cities. Founded in 2004, the Center for Cities and Schools (CC+S), partners with school districts and cities in the San Francisco Bay Area and across the country to provide an interdisciplinary approach to UC Berkeley research. CC+S seeks to build capacity by providing educational and civic leaders opportunities to collaborate on professional development and studies.

This report is situated in a larger research and citywide context. Last year the Center for Cities and Schools witnessed firsthand the trauma faced by Oakland Unified School District. The events led to conversations between CC+S and OUSD about support systems already in place in the district. Currently, there are district provided wellness programs and wellness programs. Such programs supported by district offices and district partners, but the programs are primarly ad hoc. The Office of Health and Wellness wants to create a theory of change and strategically plan, as well as understand the larger context of Oakland and the role of the city in teacher wellness.

Simultaneously, the Haas Foundation partnered with CC+S to evaluate a grant given to the Office of English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement (ELLMA). The grant was part of a larger grant intended to support teacher wellness among newcomer teachers. CC+S connected the Haas Foundation and initiatives that already exist within the school district. CC+S is evaluating the newcomer grant and researching national best practices for teacher wellness through the PLUS fellowship.

Our Goals and Objectives

This report recognizes that change cannot be made without leadership support and builds upon the research provided in the PLUS reports. It moves from the newcomer program evaluation to a system wide approach to teacher and staff wellness. The report expands on the best practices PLUS report that found leadership is essential to supporting teacher wellness.

While cities and school throughout the country face issues of staff sustainability and teacher wellness, this report is intended for use by Oakland Unified School District. The OUSD Health and Wellness Office is thoughtfully considering the path forward. This report highlights best practices from research and connects them to practices that already exist within the school district. The report also seeks to highlight opportunities for engagement with UC Berkeley and future capacity building research.

CONTENTS
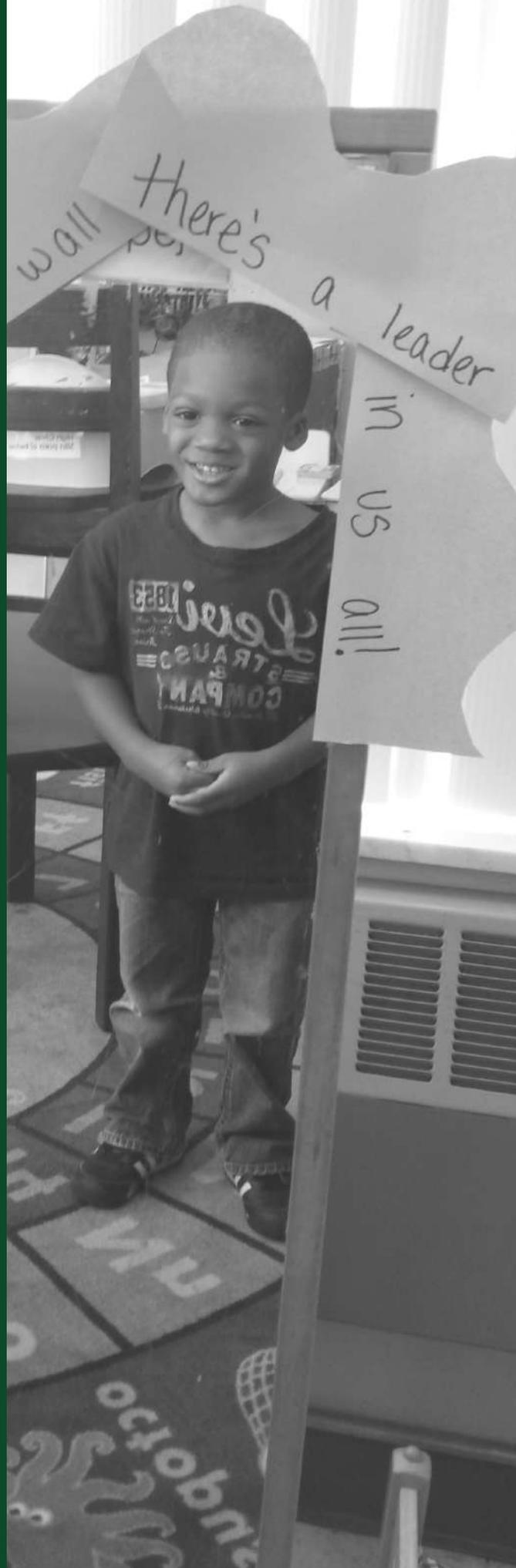
Executive Summary

THIS SECTION INCLUDES FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUSD

Oakland Unified School District faces increasing teacher attrition and unsustainable levels of stress among teachers. Citywide pressures, such gentrification and lack of transportation, impact schools and teachers. OUSD currently has wellness programs both district provided (the Office of Health and Wellness) and through district partnerships (the Teaching Well and the African American Male Achievement). The initiatives have largely been ad hoc or driven by inspired individuals rather than system level change. Principal leadership is necessary to support teachers and ultimately student achievement.

In order for principals to assist teachers and make real, lasting policy changes, district level support is necessary. OUSD should help principals tie wellness to the larger mission and vision of schools. Principals should believe that staff sustainability is a essential part of serving students and increasing student achievement.

Previous research reveals the importance of principals in moving from wellness as a physical state of well-being to a deep cultural belief in collective efficacy. Principals establish tone and norms of behaviors. Changes start with physical wellness but must shift to a culture of support. Wellness must become embedded in every day interactions and be continuously monitored and implemented.

To support teachers and address the roots of teacher trauma and wellness, educational leadership is an essential part of the school day and school culture. School system supports should view the whole teacher and acknowledge that teachers require emotional support. Furthermore, in an effort to comprehend the whole teacher, OUSD is aware that teachers' lives extend beyond schools and city created stressors impact teachers.

Recommendations for OUSD to encourage principal-led-support systems:

1. Apply Wellness Champion-style storytelling to case studies examples for principals
2. Explain intervention points to principals
3. Weigh school-culture sensitivity when hiring and training principals
4. Streamline data collection and surveying
5. Encourage principals to utilize a self-evaluation rubric

Methodology

THIS PAPER IS BASED ON ON INTERVIEWS AND A LITERATURE REVIEW

To inform this paper, a national literature review of principal and school leadership impact on teacher wellness was conducted. While scholars have studies this area, there are major limitations to academic studies on school leadership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review utilized journal databases and library catalogues. When searching for articles the report used articles that were relevant to the topic and based in the United States. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were included. All information was ethically considered for accuracy and confidentiality.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews referenced in this report were semi-structured and conducted between January 2018-April 2018. Interviews were conducted with eight principals, three teachers, various UC Berkeley research partners, and two OUSD non-profit partners. Interviews were conducted over the phone and in person.

See Appendix A for sample interview questions.

TEACHER WELLNESS AND THE CITY IN CONTEXT: OAKLAND

THIS SECTION INCLUDES IDENTIFIED CITY FACTORS THAT IMPACT TEACHER WELLNESS

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL CONTEXT

One of the stated goals of the Haas Foundation and the Center for Cities and schools is to target students who are the "furthest from opportunity".[1] Encompassed in this category are barriers to success for Oakland Unified School District students and teachers: housing, violence, gentrification, and immigration. This context is included because it drives the how in Oakland, like many large urban centers, teachers and students are being pushed further into poverty and the ways this places stress and trauma on individuals.

Before Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) can better understand how principals can support teachers in stressful situations, the district should understand how a student's stress and trauma leads to trauma transfer for teachers. The following are regional burdens that impact Oakland students and place traumatic demands on teachers.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

OUSD's homeless population is increasing. More than 1.3 million children in the US are homeless and in the 2016-2017 school year OUSD saw an increase of more than 50% in homeless students.[2] According to the district's McKinney Vento (a federal homeless count required in schools), 1600 students were homeless last year.[3]
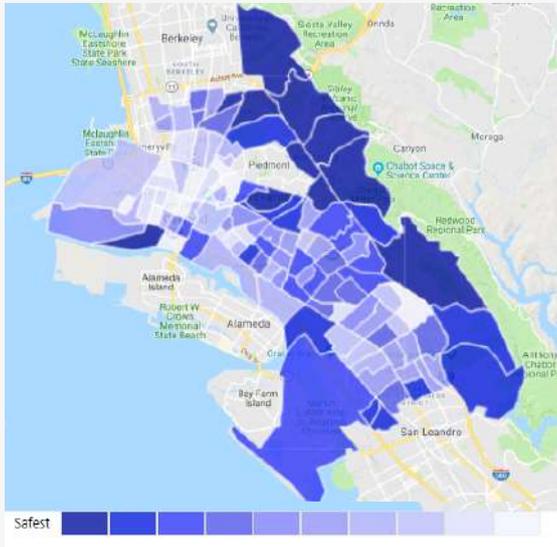
Figure 1: OUSD Racial Demographics 2000-2017
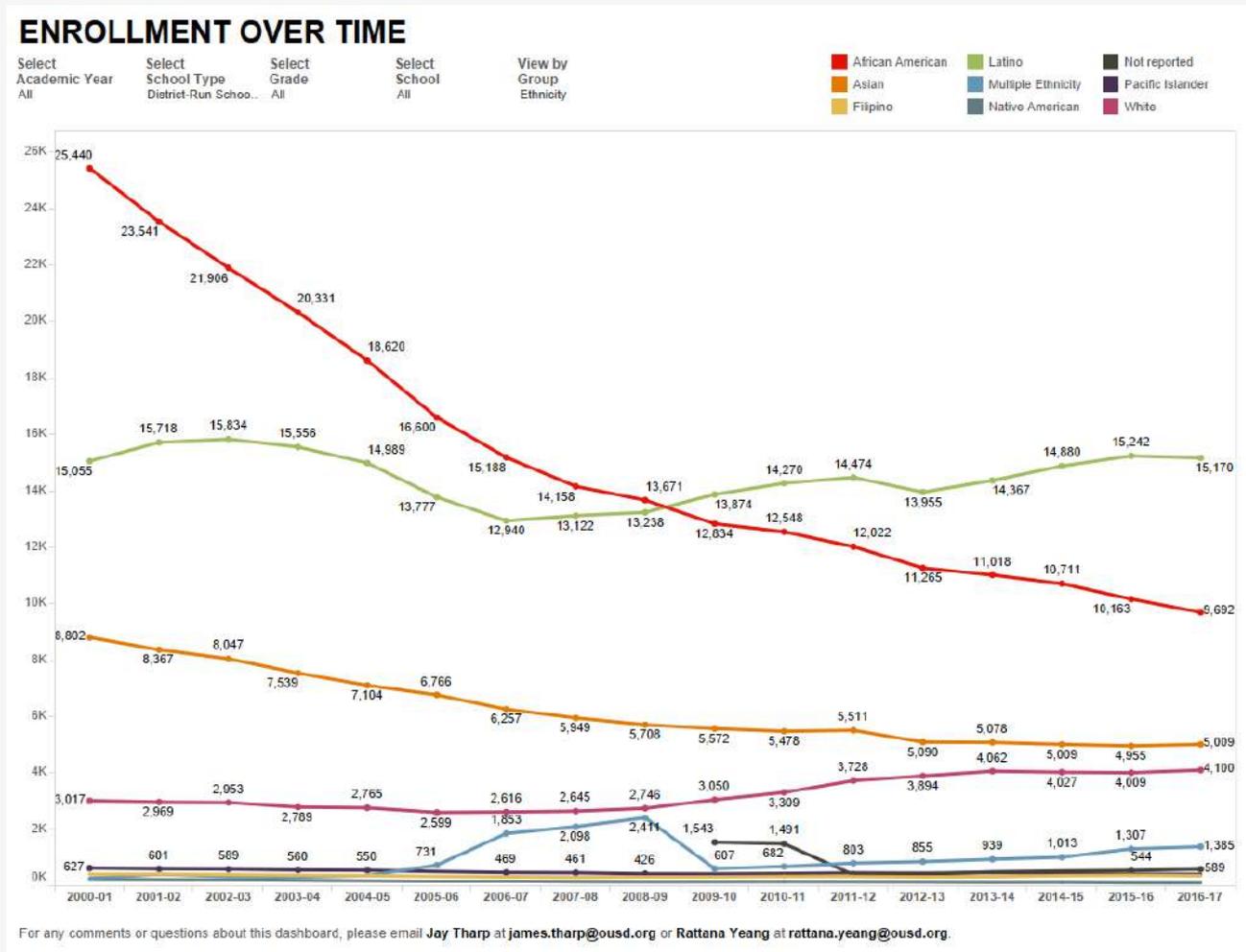
Data from: OUSD Enrollment Dashboard [4]

Moreover, displacement leads to families leaving OUSD and the demographics of the city changing. There are large racial equity issues within OUSD and the regional context leads to increased trauma within the district. Oakland has seen a decline in the number of African American students which serves as an indicator of displacement.

IN 2016-2017 OUSD SAW A 50% INCREASE IN HOMELESS STUDENTS

VIOLENCE

Figure 2: Crime Statistics in Oakland

In addition, 117 children under the age of 18 were shot and killed in Oakland between 2002 and 2015.[5] Severity of crime informs the level of trauma that students experience in different Oakland neighborhoods. Therefore, this indicates the level of vicarious trauma that teachers experience while living and working in areas of Oakland.

Data from Neighborhood Scout [6]

IMMIGRATION AND THE ASSAULT ON LEGAL RIGHTS

Furthermore, immigration and newcomer populations are increasing within OUSD. In 2016-2017 there were 480 unaccompanied minors, 269 asylee students, 366 refugee students, and 22,000 newcomer students.[7] These numbers are rapidly increasing year to year. Since 2012 there has been a 110% increase in the newcomer population and almost a quarter of all newcomers are unaccompanied.[8]

HOW CITY PRESSURES LEAD TO TRAUMA TRANSFER

Housing, violence, and immigration rights all impact students in OUSD. As students process and deal with these stresses, teachers are forced to support teach across a variety of needs. Consequently, trauma transfers from students to teachers in a process called vicarious trauma. The American Counseling Association explains vicarious trauma as "a state of tension and preoccupation of the stories/trauma experiences" described by individuals and bearing witness to the pain, fear, and terror that survives endure.[9]

Teachers deal with student trauma firsthand and manage the resulting behavioral issues. Without wellness supports vicarious trauma builds up over time, leading to teacher burn out and ultimately student outcomes suffering. OUSD should understand how each of the above issues impacts teacher vicarious trauma and to what extent these factors lead to teacher attrition.

The Physical and Emotional Toll of Teacher Wellness

THIS SECTION INCLUDES HOW TEACHER WELLNESS AND TEACHER STRESS HAVE REACHED UNSUSTAINABLE LEVELS

Oakland is not unique in facing issues of teacher wellness and teacher stress. In 2012, The MetLife Survey of American Teachers found teacher satisfaction was at 25 year low.[10] 51% of teachers surveyed reported feeling "great stress" several days a week.[11] In addition, teachers rank second, only to physicians, in high daily stress.[12] Public health literature explains that teacher stress has moved from healthy tension to exhaustion and declining levels of performance.

Figure 3: The Yerkes-Dodson Model[13]
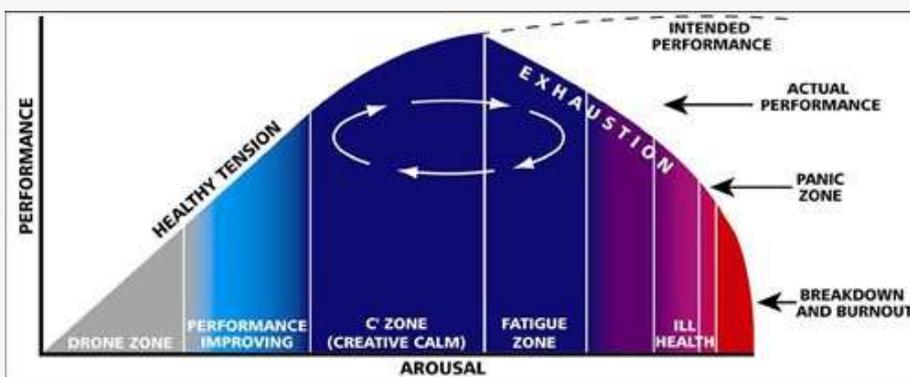
"YOU HEAR STORIES ABOUT STUDENTS LOSING FAMILY MEMBERS TO GUN VIOLENCE AND HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR THEM TO GET TO SCHOOL. YOU START TO WONDER IF ANY AMOUNT OF ENERGY WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE. DOES IT EVEN MATTER?"

As evidence in the research, OUSD is experiencing a pivot from stress levels to burnout. Current teacher stress levels are reaching dangerous levels that result in breakdown and burnout. Teachers experience a deterioration in health and performance. The Yerkes-Dodson Model is grounded in cardiology research and illustrates how when stress is compounded over time without a release, leads to poor health outcomes.[14] Tension as a whole is not unhealthy. Individuals need some motivation to move from the drone zone, where tasks are unengaging and repetitive, to the c-zone, in which they are concentrated and curious.

While there is some merit to healthy tension, within OUSD, teachers are in the "fatigue" and "ill health zone". There is consistently demanding stamina that cannot be maintained. As teachers experience trauma transfer there is a physiological and emotional response. Vicarious trauma lowers teacher's beliefs that they can impact students, causing them to leave teaching.

In an interview one teacher stated, "You hear stories about students losing family members to gun violence and how difficult it is for them to get to school. You start to wonder if any amount of energy will make a difference. Does it even matter?" Teachers cite feeling physically and emotionally exhausted as the reason they leave teaching or move to the "breakdown and burnout" section of the Yerkes-Dodson Model. When teachers are unable to manage stress and have effective supports for release, they will eventually leave the profession.

The reality is: improving teacher working conditions means better learning places for students.

The Relationship between Teacher Retention and Vicarious Trauma

Too few principals the understand the relationship between teacher trauma and teacher retention. It is a stated goal of OUSD and the organizations supporting this work to increase teacher retention rates in Oakland. Nationally, the teacher attrition rate hovers at around 8%, but Oakland Unified loses about 19.5% of their teachers in a given year.[15] This rate is the highest it has been in over a decade.

Figure 4: OUSD Teacher Retention 2006-2017

Retention of Teachers in OUSD

Over the past 11 years, OUSD has had on average **2,295 teachers** each year. The yearly retention rate has averaged **82.8%** returning in any position and **81.5%** returning as teachers each year.

	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Grand Total
Total Teachers	2,393	2,376	2,333	2,341	2,231	2,099	2,141	2,177	2,278	2,359	2,513	2,295
Number Returning in Any Position	1,950	1,977	2,027	1,952	1,799	1,760	1,807	1,800	1,897	1,933	1,992	1,899
Percent Returning in Any Position	81.5%	83.2%	86.9%	83.4%	80.6%	83.8%	84.4%	82.7%	83.3%	81.9%	79.3%	82.8%
Number Returning as Teachers	1,898	1,947	2,010	1,932	1,763	1,744	1,779	1,774	1,860	1,898	1,955	1,869
Percent Returning as Teachers	79.3%	81.9%	86.2%	82.5%	79.0%	83.1%	83.1%	81.5%	81.7%	80.5%	77.8%	81.5%

-**Teachers** are defined as providing direct instruction to students (funded from object codes 1105 and 1119). This does not include STIP subs nor other substitutes (in previous versions of this dashboard STIP subs were included).
-This analysis includes both General Education and Special Education teachers.

Data from: OUSD Staff Retention Dashboard [16]

Teacher attrition is expensive for OUSD. 71.5% of teachers leave the district within five years.[17] With them, teachers take experience and social capital. Teachers with more experience are more effective and have better student outcomes.[18] One principal noted, "It's common sense that the longer you teach, the better you are. But the real quality comes from teachers knowing and connecting with students over time." Retention of teachers in OUSD results in better teacher-student relationships.

Moreover, teacher attrition causes the district to spend money recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers. The Human Resources Department in OUSD has internally calculated the cost of teacher attrition. Oakland must address the issue of teacher retention to avoid high social and economic costs.

"It's common sense that the longer you teach, the better you are. But the real quality comes from teachers knowing and connecting with students over time."

71.5% of teachers leave OUSD within five years.

Current OUSD Wellness Initiatives

Oakland Unified School District recognizes that teacher wellness is an urgent issue. There are currently district-run and district supported partnerships that benefit the emotional and physical well-being of teachers.

WELLNESS CHAMPIONS

Oakland Unified School District has Wellness Champions at schools throughout the district. Wellness Champions are staff members at schools who are given a small compensation to promote physical, emotional, and social wellness for staff at their schools.[19] The champions coordinate activities with school site staff.

There are currently 33 Staff Wellness Champions (27 elementary school and 11 secondary school). Elementary Wellness Champions receive $850 a year and secondary schools receive $1100 in grants.

See Appendix B for a full list of schools and the amounts given.

NEWCOMER GRANTS

Funded through the Haas Foundation, the Newcomer Office gave $3000-$5000 targeted wellness grants for Newcomer teachers in OUSD. Seven schools received funding for staff designed wellness projects.

See Appendix C for a full list of schools and the amounts granted.

TEACHING WELL

The Teaching Well is an Oakland based non-profit that focuses on supporting teacher wellness. The Teaching Well provides trauma sensitive trainings and professional development at schools. In addition, they provide one-on-one coaching and principal coaching to address culture change.

The Teaching Well is currently at Greenleaf Elementary School. After working with Teaching Well in 2016-2017, Greenleaf saw a 50% decrease in teacher attrition.[20]

OUSD WELLNESS POLICY

Oakland Unified School District has a Wellness Plan. Passed by the School Board in 2006, the wellness policy is aimed at students, but includes teachers. It serves as a foundation to build upon for further teacher wellness. The Wellness Plan covers nine subsections: [21]

1. Nutrition
2. School Gardens
3. Physical Education and Physical Activity
4. Comprehensive Health Education
5. Positive School Climate

6. Physical School Environment
7. Access to and Coordination of Student Health Services
8. Staff Wellness
9. Assessment and Communication

While the majority of the categories are student focused, both the staff wellness and positive school climate subsections create a need for principal involvement and demonstrate a district understanding of the importance of the work. The policy also gives the superintendent the authority to implement and evaluate the policy.[22]

Staff Wellness makes up a short portion of the Wellness Plan. The paragraph states that the District recognizes that it is necessary and that it supports "safe and supportive working conditions that will attract and retain staff members". The Wellness Plan also states that wellness will be aligned with collective bargaining agreements and state and federal regulations.

Positive school climate addresses social emotional learning, bullying, discrimination, and parent engagement, and promotes restorative justice.[23] These policies directly impact teacher wellness through student discipline and responses. Positive school climate does not set up staff members to have support to deal with behavioral issues using restorative justice practices. In short, the policy does not represent the urgency of teacher wellness may be updated with new research and programming.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

Tracking and data collection on school climate is necessary to understanding the long-term impact of teacher wellness. There is variation in school related trauma and how principals and school leadership react to this trauma. School climate surveys present schools with opportunities to quantitatively analyze how teachers and staff members perceive school culture and wellness.

The state of California requires that schools administer the Healthy Kids Survey (HKS) and the California School Staff Survey (CSSS) each year. Both surveys are administered at school level and the data is made public through School Climate Report Cards. HKS and CSSS have a set of required general questions and districts may also add additional questions. First implemented in 2007, the survey was intended to provide data addressing teacher recruitment and retention. The survey also assesses equity, bias, and cultural competency among staff members and teachers.[24]

The CSSS asks questions that seek to understand the working environment for staff. Some of the questions are about safety and school discipline/behavior, while other address deeper levels of staff wellness.[25] Questions that ask about positive relationships are focused on trust among staff and participation in decision making.

Examples of questions that evaluate positive relationships among staff members include:
1. Is this a supportive and inviting place for staff to work?
2. Does the school promote trust and collegiality among staff?
3. Does the school promote personnel participation in decision making?

See Appendix D for a full list of questions asked in California School Staff Survey.

Improving OUSD Wellness

Current projects within OUSD are often focused on the physical health of teachers. Wellness Champions and the Newcomer Grants were primarily utilized for programming such as yoga and massages. While important, physical wellness is not the only way to address vicarious trauma among teachers.

In order to better improve wellness programs, OUSD should move from the physical aspects of stress to changing the overall culture and mindsets of schools. Physical wellness programs, such as yoga, empower teachers to manage stress, but do not address trauma. Wellness programs can be expanded to create solutions and supports that deal with vicarious trauma before it occurs, rather than management of physical manifestations of stress.

This shift from physical wellness to culture of schools is when principals become essential.

The Role of Principals

THIS SECTION EXPLORES HOW TO BEST IMPROVE TEACHER WELLNESS AND TEACHER RETENTION. OUSD SHOULD CONSIDER THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING TEACHERS AND SHAPING SCHOOL VISIONS.

PRINCIPALS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Principal leadership is directly tied with student achievement. One study of principal leadership found that quality principal management increases test scores by ten percentage points.[26]

Principals are able to increase teacher engagement which in turn leads to more student engagement and student achievement. The figure below shows the sequential relationship among principals and student achievement.

Figure 5: Principal Leadership, Engagement, and Student Achievement [27]

Principal Leadership → Teacher Engagement → Student Engagement → Student Achievement
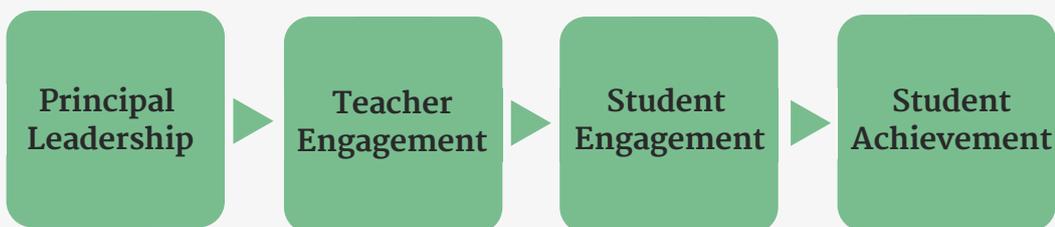
Principals are only able to impact student achievement when there is teacher buy in and a belief in a larger school vision. Lifting up teachers requires a deeper understanding among leadership.

OUSD as a whole, and schools individually, should focus on making wellness a part of their vision. Principals can create healthy relationships before trauma occurs. Principals should be equipped to deal with uncertain situations and teachers should be able to trust principals to deescalate stress. This partnership between principals and teachers requires district administrative support of principals at the school sites.

Establishing Collective Efficacy

Research shows wellness programs must include a vision of communal and high expectations. Johnson and Bireland claim teacher stress and attrition are the result of poor administrative support. Beginning in 1999, this longitudinal study followed fifty teachers in order to understand how school settings and careers are impacted by their teaching environment.[28]

Johnson and Bireland find that principals set the culture and tone for schools. Principals establish norms that can either foster teacher collective efficacy or create teacher silos. They find that principals create a culture of collaboration that invests in teachers as part of an education team. Teachers express feeling isolated and a feeling of "competition" rather than "collaboration" with colleagues. As evident in the study, principals are the primary determinant of collaboration among teachers.[29]

Shifting School Culture Over Time

A sense of collective efficacy is necessary to support student success and wellness overall. Collective efficacy is the believe that groups members have in the ability to organize and achieve their goals through communal action[30] In schools, principals establish norms of behavior and establish the belief that students can learn, regardless of barriers. One principal illustrated this: "I know that I set the tone for everyone. I try to model how my network helps collaborate and make change for any student who walks in the door." The principal identified that she/he should model collaboration and the belief that all students should be held to high levels of academic rigor.[31]

Schools with high collective efficacy scores cite principal leadership as driving their sense of achievement.[32] In these schools, teachers explain feeling empowered to collaborate and collectively lesson plan.[33] One teacher states, "It is just so much easier when I am given work time to plan with other teachers. They know what I am going through and have so many new ideas. I feel like I am being challenge to do better and not just more by myself."

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When teachers observe their peers, it creates a community of professional learning. Teachers name peer observations as more effective in their teaching practice than traditional lecture-style professional development.[34] Collective planning also creates a norm of constant instructional improvement. A collaborative learning environment enables teachers to feel supported and creates a culture of care. Principals in OUSD can support collective efficacy by designing teacher mentor programs or small group instruction planning.

Trusting Relationships

In schools with positive school culture, principals value and trust teachers. Teachers feel involved enough in the decision-making process to give feedback and principals trust teachers to make choices.[35] In schools without principal support, teachers feel there are negative consequences for offering ideas or individually addressing problems.

In a longitudinal study of over 400 Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider find that principals who speak honestly with colleagues about successes and failures are considered more dependable.[36] In schools where teachers reported relational trust with principals, mathematics and readings scores for students increased.[37]

Establishing trust and shifting school climate is more than surface level appreciations and a retreat once a year. While these activities can help, trust and culture have to be moved in day-to-day exchanges.[38] The words and actions of principals and teachers each day create a collective capacity that can be deepened through organizational change and support.[39]

"I just care about my teachers. I like them as people first and teachers second. When you do that, they want to work with you not for you. And at the end of it, we are all here for the kids."

Principals establish trust through day to day interactions and actively listening to teachers. These small connections build into stronger principal-teacher relationships. Principals and teachers should focus on treating each other as people. Empathy and genuine sense of kindness creates a culture in which teachers feel compelled to stay. One interviewee summed it up: "I just care about my teachers. I like them as people first and teachers second. When you do that, they want to work with you not for you. And at the end of it, we are all here for the kids."

There will always be factors that lead to teacher attrition. Pay, family demands, relocation, and many more will cause teachers to leave schools, but if principals do not establish healthy relationships with colleagues, teachers will burnout and leave OUSD. Ultimately, this costs Oakland and an erosion of a cohesive vision for the school.[40]

Equity and the Principal Effect

Teacher wellness and principal support has a profound impact on student equity goals. After classroom instruction, the most important factor influencing student learning was school leadership, explaining almost a quarter of the variation in student learning across schools. Moreover, quality principal leadership is more profound among high poverty, high needs schools.[41]

In research conducted by Goddard and Salloum, principals were found to have a profound impact on reducing the opportunity gap. Collective efficacy can lead to additional effort, creativity, and persistence among teachers, which may increase achievement and reduce the opportunity gap.[42] Teacher identified collective efficacy is associated with a 50% reduction in the black-white achievement gap.[43]

Teachers in low income school districts, like OUSD, are twice as likely to leave and state dissatisfaction with their working conditions as the reason.[44] According to the Public Agenda Foundation 80% of teachers prefer a school with strong administrative support to a school with higher salaries.[45]

Case Study: Roosevelt Middle School

THIS SECTION HIGHLIGHTS THE WELLNESS WORK OF ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THEIR CONNECTION TO BEST PRACTICES LITERATURE

Roosevelt Middle School serves as an example of quality principal support for wellness programming in OUSD. Roosevelt takes a holistic approach to supporting school staff and integrates wellness as a part of the overall school vision.

Clifford Hong is the principal of Roosevelt Middle School. Cliff states that his overall mission is to create a school in which students thrive and names staff sustainability as a top value. In order to support this is states that the goals and metrics for evaluation have to be established and evaluated each year.

In order to support staff wellness, Cliff has created a staff survey, administered twice each year. The questions are more specific than the California School Staff Survey. The survey asks staff members about if there is a work life balance. In addition, the survey asks open ended questions, such as, how the school can be more supportive. Cliff recognizes that qualitative and quantitative data must be utilized to understand and explain wellness. Cliff states that the California School Staff Survey is too long and complicated for staff to fill out completely.

See Appendix E for the full Roosevelt Survey.

The data from the survey is then used by the school leadership team and the staff wellness committee when they meet every other week. Teachers join a student group team or a wellness team at the start of the year and their planning takes place during contracted hours. One teacher is compensated to be the head of the team.

The school leadership team and staff wellness committee each meet with Cliff to discuss long and short-term goals. Some goals include near term changes (coffee in the staff lounge) and some are for the whole school year (peer facilitated professional development). Since implementing these committees, Roosevelt Middle School has seen their attendance increase to the second best in the district and suspension rates are down.

Cliff states that theory only goes so far, and principals need concrete examples on how to improve wellness. Cliff explains that harmful behavior by students is very difficult for teachers and often causes extreme stress. He maintains that this district has mandated restorative justice practices but does not reevaluate supporting behavior management with continued professional development. Cliff asserts that in situations of new programming, such as with restorative justice, principals need examples and models of implementation and continued support. As OUSD considers how the district will play a role in expanding wellness programming, there is a need for a district support of principals.

Recommendations

THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUSD IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE PRINCIPAL-LED-SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR TEACHERS.

1. Apply Wellness Champion-style storytelling to case studies examples for principals
2. Explain intervention points to principals
3. Weigh school-culture sensitivity when hiring and training principals
4. Streamline data collection and surveying
5. Encourage principals to utilize a self-evaluation rubric

Apply Wellness Champion-style storytelling to case studies examples for principals

Principals express frustration that there are not concrete, implementable solutions. In one interview a principal stated, "Far too often we are given education research. It is nice to know and I'm curious, but I'm struggling to keep my head above water. Data is great, but data doesn't help my teachers right away." Many principals feel that there are theoretical ideas and academic studies, but not actionable steps to be taken.

Currently, the Office of Health and Wellness shares examples of Staff Wellness Champion case studies. These case studies are used by Wellness Champions and twice a year the champions are gathered by the district meet and share ideas.[46] The same framework should be applied to principals and shared across the district.

"Far too often we are given education research. It is nice to know and I'm curious, but I'm struggling to keep my head above water. Data is great, but data doesn't help for my teachers right away."

Explain intervention points to principals

OUSD should explain different points for principals to provide wellness supports for teachers. Principals should start with physical wellness and move toward longer term culture shifts. The school district should help principals understand how gratitude and trust create systemic shifts in school culture.

Figure 6: Hierarchy of Intervention

Happy Hour

Yoga

Coffee in the teachers lounge

EMERGING

Identifying behavior support

Appreciations and shout outs

Veteran teacher mentor programs

DEVELOPING

Teacher pay

Increasing housing prices

Lack of public transportation

THRIVING
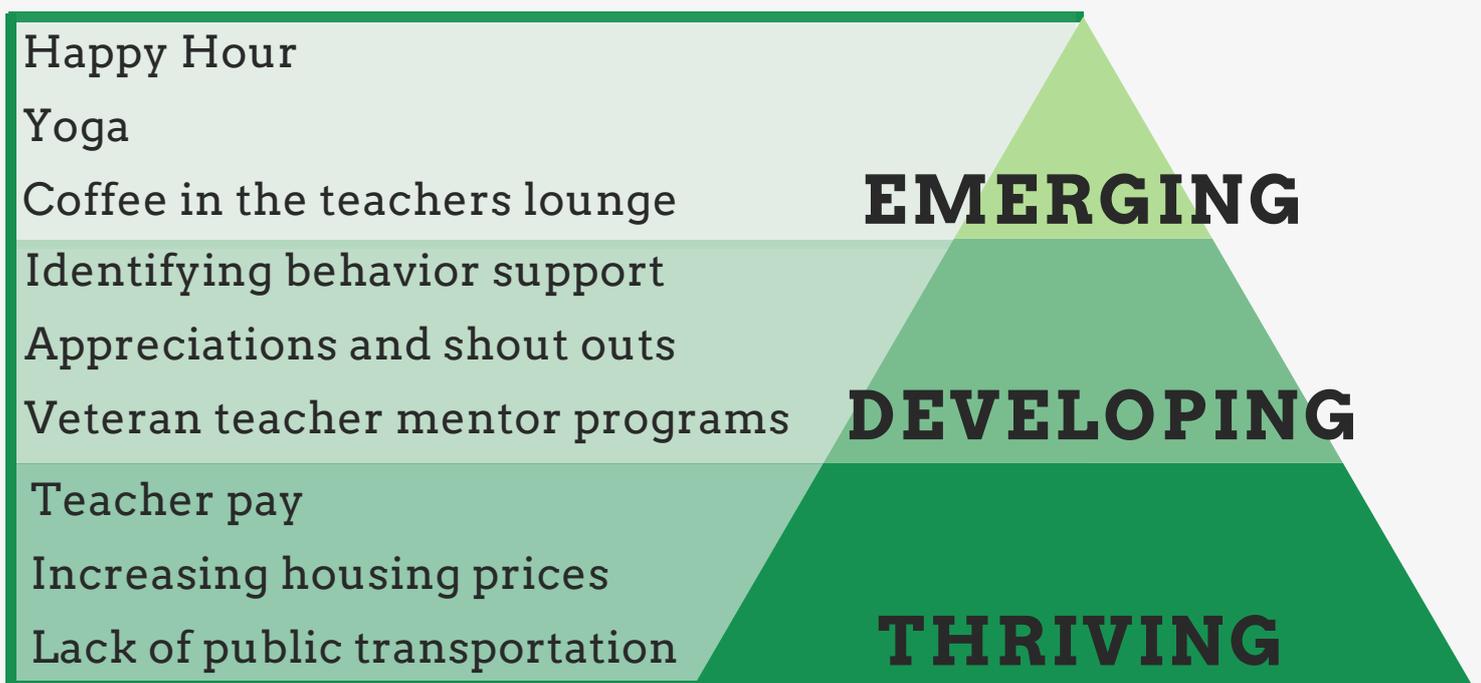
Principals should learn how physical wellness is surface level and long term change comes from cultural shifts. Emerging levels of intervention are within immediate principal control. As principals develop relationships and beliefs of collective efficacy they enter the developing level. Finally, when principals support thriving areas of wellness they move from school level interventions to city and system level approaches.

Weigh school-culture sensitivity when hiring and training principals

Prior to becoming a principal, training programs should include wellness as a part of their curriculum. OUSD can partner with the Principal Leadership Institute at UC Berkeley, as well as the Graduate School of Education to disseminate the findings of this report and further opportunities for principal education.

During the hiring process, OUSD should consider a principal's ability to impact school climate. The current selection process focuses on principal knowledge and skills, such as budgeting and evaluation.[47] Instead the principal selection process should include questions that assess principal's talents and understanding of school culture and mission.

After hiring, OUSD should encourage principal professional development that includes updated programming on teacher wellness. Previously, the OUSD Behavioral Health team contracted with UCSF Hearts, Project Prevent, and Response to intervention.[48] The presentations connected and explained compassion fatigue and secondary trauma, but failed to go beyond self-care techniques.[49] New professional development should focus on larger cultural shifts and school visions.

Streamlining data collection and surveying

Teachers are over surveyed and experience survey fatigue, leading to biased and faulty results.

Currently, OUSD collects teacher wellness data through the California School Staff Survey, internal retention surveys, the Gallup G12, and principal created surveys. While CSSS is required, many teachers complain it is long and principals are not given information on how to use the data. On the other hand, the G12 is short, but few staff members fill it out. The largest response rate of the G12 was at Greenleaf Elementary School with 11 staff members.

Rather than create a new survey and possibly cause survey fatigue, principals should combine all three surveys. Principals should use the Roosevelt Middle School Survey as an example, but the survey should be tailored to the specific school. The survey should ask questions that ask about school relationships. Moreover, there should be space for open ended response on how the administration can support teachers. The survey can also be tailored to ask about city stressors, such as if the teacher spends more than 50% of their income on rent.

See Appendix F for sample consolidated survey to align with rubric

Encourage principals to utilize a self-evaluation rubric

Principals can be held accountable and monitor their own progress. OUSD should encourage principals to use a self-scoring rubric that tracts their ability to shift culture over time.

The rubric is based on the UC Berkeley Principal Leadership evaluation and is informed by principal interviews. The continuum of emerging-developing-thriving is based on OUSD language and previous district created rubrics.

The goal of the rubric is to provide language for principals seeking to incorporate best practices from the literature with achievable tasks. Similar to the hierarchy of intervention, this rubric recognizes that physical wellness is not important as deep, meaningful relationships with staff members.

To best use the rubric as a tool, principals should use the rubric in conjunction with a staff survey. The sample survey illustrated in appendix illustrates how principals can streamline the entire process.

Principals should share the results of the survey and the rubric with staff members as part of their iterative process to improve. This rubric is a starting point for principals to use a framework and should be considered a fluid process that seeks teacher input and feedback.

Figure 7: Self-Evaluation Rubric
Language is adopted from the UC Berkeley Principal Leadership Institute

|	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	THRIVING
1. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE	a. Consider how to explain core values to staff b. Base decisions on how to build sustainability and from in a positive manner	a. Seek staff feedback on how core values align with your action b. Personally model staff sustainability and make healthy and balanced personal and professional choices	a. Support and recognize/celebrate practices that represent core values b. Involve staff to collectively develop systems that institutionally support staff wellness
2. DEMEANOR AND RELATIONSHIPS	a. Understand the proper feedback and language for different circumstances with staff members b. Create relationships with staff members c. Be flexible and cultural differences and understand that how people view authority inside and outside school	a. Give thoughtful and honest positive feedback that highlight the strengths of individuals b. Note and learn from professional peers c. Support a culture of inclusivity and positively recognize diversity of individuals and thought	a. Foster collective feedback and positive recognition of individuals and community. Call out improvement and ways to adjust. b. Create and maintain productive professional networks c. Create/support programs that promote collective well-being and sustainability with positive response systems
3. ORGANIZATION AND ACCESS	a. Explain how you will share information b. Use teachers' strengths to inform professional practices	a. Create small and large groups to make formal and informal policy decisions b. Share and discuss teaching practices	a. Collaborate with groups to iteratively design/implement short/long term needs b. Use the observations as content for professional development
4. RESILIENCE AND FLEXIBILITY	a. Understand how resilience of students and staff leads to equity and social justice b. Set high expectations and believe in every student's ability to succeed	a. Create affinity groups to engage staff on challenges and responses b. Highlight examples of high expectations and student success	a. Create ways to recognize equity and build it into staff daily staff interactions and relationships b. Recognize student success and high expectations requires administrative support

Limitations for Principals

Principals face limitations in being able to implement changes and recommendations. First, teachers dispersed over departments and have trouble convening or feelings included. Principals must find ways to bring together the whole staff and create a shared vision without overwhelming teachers and causing more work. The goal of implementing wellness programs should be to create efficiencies and recognize overlap.

Much like teachers, retention rates limit principals in OUSD. School leadership has an average attrition rate around 13% and is slightly higher among principals at 20%.[50]

Figure 8: OUSD School Leadership Retention 2006-2017

Retention of School Leaders

Over the past 11 years, OUSD has had on average **101 Principals** each year. The yearly retention rate has averaged **87.9%** returning in any position and **80.3%** returning as Principals each year. OUSD has had on average **49 Assistant Principals**. The yearly retention rate has averaged **81.5%** returning in any position and **61.9%** returning as Assistant Principals each year.
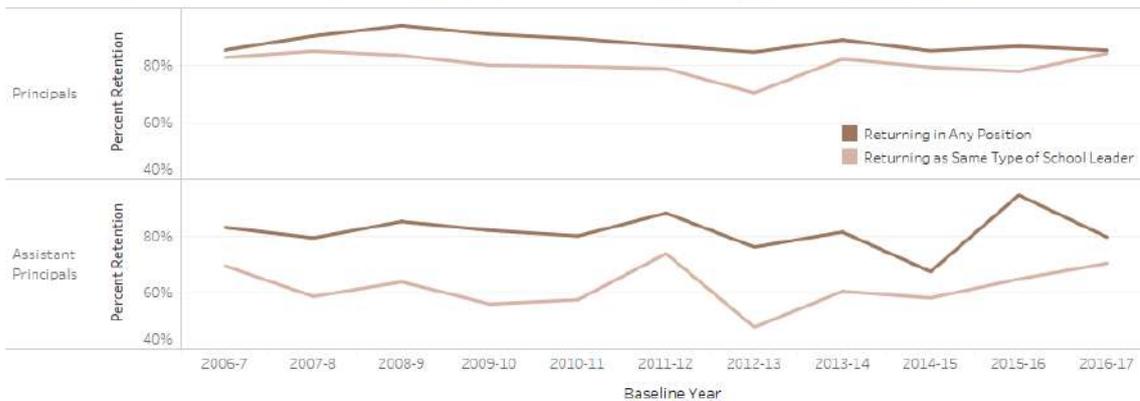
Use arrows at right to switch the data in the table below between Principals and Assistant Principals.   Principals ☐ Show history

	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Grand Total
Total Number	116	113	115	110	103	99	91	90	87	90	95	101
Number Returning in Any Position	99	102	108	100	92	86	77	80	74	78	81	89
Percent Returning in Any Position	85.3%	90.3%	93.9%	90.9%	89.3%	86.9%	84.6%	88.9%	85.1%	86.7%	85.3%	87.9%
Number Returning as Same Type of School Leader	96	96	96	88	82	78	64	74	69	70	80	81
Percent Returning as Same Type of School Leader	82.8%	85.0%	83.5%	80.0%	79.6%	78.8%	70.3%	82.2%	79.3%	77.8%	84.2%	80.3%

Data from: OUSD Staff Retention Dashboard[51]

Oakland Unified must consider the impact retention has on school management. With high rates of turn over comes loss of leadership and collective efficacy. Failure to retain principals severely limits the district's ability to implement lasting change.

Principals bring with them experience and OUSD faces increased costs when they must recruit and train new principals. In addition, the loss of a principal causes OUSD to lose social capital. New principals must establish new trust and relationships with teachers. During this process teachers may lose trust in the principal and culture of the schools, by extension harming student engagement and academic achievement.

Report limitations

First, terminology and language use remain inconsistent across studies. School leadership is sometimes inclusive of principals, staff, and associate principals, while other studies only use lead principals as areas of study. Focusing on one person as agents of change is problematic because it portrays a principal as a superhero and may miss other leaders within a school setting. Furthermore, wellness, trauma, and vicarious experiences are terminology traditionally used in public health settings. Education research is co-opting the terminology, but lack of uniformity makes comparisons difficult.

Second, education research on vicarious trauma relies heavily on self-reported data. School districts and schools face high variability in the challenges they face. Schools may face regional issues, which are difficult to generalize into recommendations across schools. Issues such as complex public financing structures and changes in state law can impact school settings. Furthermore, survey data that relies on personalized responses and identification of stress can be flawed even with large sample sizes. Teachers and staff may lack comparison points of represent a biased group.

Finally, measuring and studying complex issues of leadership and improvement are extremely difficult. In studies that claim correlation between principal leadership and test scores, the assumption is that principals can make improvements to highly complicated issues. Principal responsibility and leadership over professional development and teacher buy in is difficult to measure and improving principal capacity in issues such as content and curriculum instruction is a major challenge.

Research and Exploration Moving Forward

There are current opportunities to bring together all OUSD resources and connect department initiatives and avoid inefficiencies at the District level of who oversees and implements grants. Of the seven newcomer wellness grants given, four were to school that already had Wellness Champions. They are shown on the map below.

Figure 9: Map of OUSD Wellness Grants
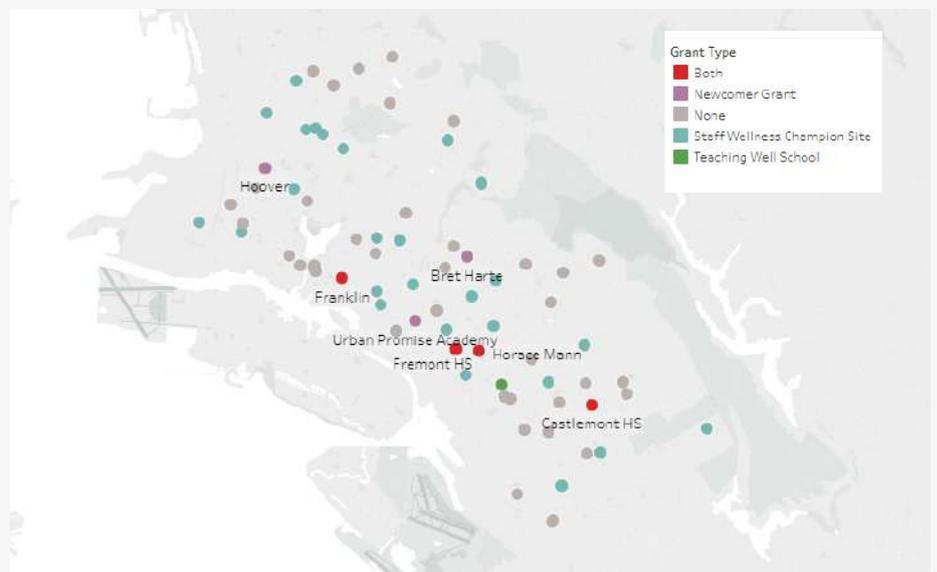
Interactive map available at:
https://public.tableau.com/profile/anna7489#!/vizhome/OUSD Site/Sheet1?publish=yes

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND OUSD PROGRAMS

These overlapping grants present an opportunity to best support teacher wellness at a system wide level. Moving forward, the District can communicate and decide who will coordinate and have ownership of wellness programming. The OUSD Office of Health and Wellness recognizes the need for departmental sharing and buy in.

Opportunities for CC+S and OUSD Partnership

The Center for Cities and Schools, along with UC Berkeley as a whole, can support OUSD through research and being a thought partner. Additional research could look into teacher trust and how it is established between teachers and principals in OUSD. CC+S could also provide the principal focused case studies for the school district.

The Human Resources Department within OUSD has conducted a large staff retention survey. This survey asks about teacher travel to work and living expenses. Further research should explore this quantitative data set. The data could inform how cities can better support the school district.

Additional research can also explain the nature of scaled circles of support: teachers create support for students, principals for teachers, districts for principals, and cities for districts. As these support circles expand, data is necessary to quantify and explain changes and best practices.

There is a belief in the district that teacher wellness is an urgent and pressing issue. Through partnership with UC Berkeley and the Haas Foundation funding and resources can be expanded. School wellness is essential for retaining quality teachers and improving student achievement.

Project Team and Partners

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UC Berkeley Campus Partners

Principal Leadership Institute: Rebecca Cheung, Academic Coordinator
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Appendix A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

1. How would you define teacher wellness?
2. What do you see as your role in teacher wellness?
3. What challenges do you think are unique to your school? OUSD?
4. What challenges do you think exist in all schools?
5. What challenges do you think are within your control and what is beyond the school?
6. How would you describe teacher wellness at your school currently? OUSD?
7. What programs exist to support teacher wellness at your school? In the district? Teachers?
8. Have you heard of other schools who support teacher wellness? What are they doing?
9. With more resources what would you like to do to support teacher wellness at your school?
10. What should the district do to support teacher wellness?
11. How do you evaluate teacher wellness at your school? How does the district evaluate wellness?
12. How do you think wellness impacts retention? What data exists on this? Research?

Appendix B

Elementary Staff Wellness Champion Sites: Receive $850 a year

Allendale	Grass Valley	Markham
Bridges Academy	Greenleaf	Martin Luther King Jr.
Burckhalter	Horace Mann	Melrose Leadership Academy
Emerson	Joaquin Miller	Montclair
Esperanza	Korematsu	Piedmont
Franklin	La Escuelita	PLACE at Prescott
Garfield	Laurel	REACH Academy
Glenview	Manzanita Community	Sankofa
Global Family	Manzanita SEED	International Community School

Secondary Staff Wellness Champion Sites: Receive $1100 a year

Castlemont High School	Montera Middle School	Roosevelt Middle School
Coliseum College Prep Academy	Oakland High School	Rudsdale Continuation High School
Edna Brewer Middle School	Oakland International High School	Street Academy High school
Fremont High School	Oakland Technical High School	

Appendix C

LIST OF OUSD NEWCOMER WELLNESS GRANTS -2017

Amount of funding received listed

Bret Harte Middle School	$5000
Castelemont High School	$4970
Franklin Elementary School	$5000
Fremont High School	$5000
Hoover Elementary School	$4392
Horace Mann Elementary School	$5000
Urban Promise Academy Middle School	$4080

Appendix D

Working Environment

Is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work (T2.8)

Promotes trust and collegiality among staff (T2.11)

Promotes participation in school decision making (T2.13)

Works to minimize paper work (T2.14)

Provides adequate benefits to support continued employment (T2.15)

Provides the materials, resources, and training to do job effectively (T2.16)

Provides relevant paraprofessional training (T2.20)

Provides the materials, resources, and training to work with special education (IEP) students (T2.21)

Provides complete state adopted instructional materials for students with IEPs (T2.23)

Uses objective data such as surveys, truancy counts, and test scores in making school improvement decisions (T2.7)

Data from California School Staff Survey[58]

ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF WELLNESS SURVEY

Results are internal and unavailable.

Appendix F

1. What is your role at BLANK School?

2. How would you rate the following statement:

I agree with the core values of our schools.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. How could you feel more connected to the school mission?

4. What can the administration do to help you feel more valued and connected to the school?

5. How would you rate the following statement:

If I am struggling (personally or professionally) I know where I can find help

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. How would you rate the following statement:

I feel like my feedback is taken seriously by the administration

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. How would you rate the following statement:

I feel like I have a work life balance

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. What is preventing or helping your find a work life balance?

9. How would you rate the following statement:

I feel professional supported to grow at our school

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. What professional development would you like to see more of? Less of?

13. How do you feel recognized and appreciated?

14. Anything else?

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