

SPS Staff Well-Being Update

Dr. Jane Lizotte, Asst. Supt. for Community Partnerships & Well-Being

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"Education is a human endeavor,
and learning is built on
relationships.

Creating a culture of care in our
schools is a necessary endeavor in
the best of times and an
imperative when times are tough."

Sean Slade & Alyssa Gallagher

EdWeek's 'A Culture of Care': How Schools Can Alleviate
Educator Stress This Year



**“Good relationships keep us happier,
healthier, and help us live longer.”**

– Robert Waldinger, [The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness](#)



“When schools are driven by the needs of their people, not just the curriculum or school improvement plan, **employee happiness increases, and student engagement and learning skyrockets...Building a culture of caring does not happen overnight.** It requires ongoing effort and action for the shift to create real change, yet it is also something that you can start to affect tomorrow.”

EdWeek's *'A Culture of Care': How Schools Can Alleviate Educator Stress This Year*

Strategic Commitment: *Enhanced Well-Being of All*

Strategic Priority: Promote Student and Staff Wellness:

Expand opportunities for students and staff to strengthen mental health and physical wellness in support of overall well-being.



Well-being encompasses the comprehensive dimensions of a well-lived life, including these elements shared via Gallup's global research:

- **Career wellbeing:** You like what you do every day.
- **Social wellbeing:** You have meaningful friendships in your life.
- **Financial wellbeing:** You manage your money well.
- **Physical wellbeing:** You have energy to get things done.
- **Community wellbeing:** You like where you live.

Wellness vs. Wellbeing: What's the Difference?

By Ryan Pendell

Creating a Culture of Care in the Shrewsbury Public Schools

SPS staff highly respect one another and value time and opportunity to collaborate. Recent staff well-being survey data and conversations with staff in school and district meetings, indicate a strong desire to increase and diversify collaboration opportunities.

Unprecedented levels of stress are the greatest challenge facing educators today, and are negatively impacting public education. Providing staff with strategies, resources, and opportunities that focus on stress management is imperative. SPS leadership teams are tasked with scrutinizing how the ways in which our work is done can reduce *or* increase stress on the system and the people within it.

Stress and Exhaustion Come in Many Forms

- Emotional fatigue
- Physical burnout
- Meeting overload
- Information overload
- Change fatigue
- Depression

[Harvard Business Review-Special Issue, Spring 2024](#)

“What does the research say about structural supports that enable teacher well-being?”

This is the central question in **Structural Supports to Promote Teacher Well-Being**, a brief by the **Annenberg Center at Brown University**, one of the resources studied by the SPS Staff Wellness Leadership Team. School and district leadership teams are reviewing our organizational structures (schedules, curriculum commitments, etc.) and interventions (including allocating time and establishing practices for collaborative work, building connections, and managing workload) to meet the well-being needs of staff in the weeks and months ahead.

Recommended Action Steps:

Building a Systemic and Sustainable Culture of Care

These action steps shared by Slade & Gallagher 2021 in EdWeek mirror those suggested by SPS staff in recent weeks and months. They highlight what many of our staff believe to be most impactful to their well-being:

- **Acknowledge individuals.** Throughout the year, highlight individuals and share about who they are both personally and professionally.
- **Demonstrate care.** Engage your team in non task-oriented discussions. Ask how they are doing during these times. Be genuine.
- **Show your human side of leadership.** Ask questions, admit vulnerability, listen actively. Check on how your team is doing and ask them what would reduce stress.

- Provide training and professional development. Invest in and expand the skills and mindsets of everyone in your school.
- The old saying goes: “Put your money where your mouth is.” If you make a tangible investment in building a culture of care, your staff will know that you are serious about it. This can range from scheduling more time for collaboration, to hiring support staff, through to professional learning. Your budget is a moral document.

Administration of Staff Wellness Surveys

- Panorama-June 2023
- Survey Monkey-January 2024

Additionally, school leadership teams survey staff two or more times during the school year to obtain their input on a variety of topics, including culture and collaboration.



Shrewsbury Public Schools

"Spring 2022-23 - Teacher and Staff Shrewsbury Public Schools: Teacher and Staff Survey 2022-23, Shrewsbury Public Schools: Teacher and Staff Survey 2022-23"



Summary

Topic Description

Results

Belonging

92%

School Climate

Perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school.

97%

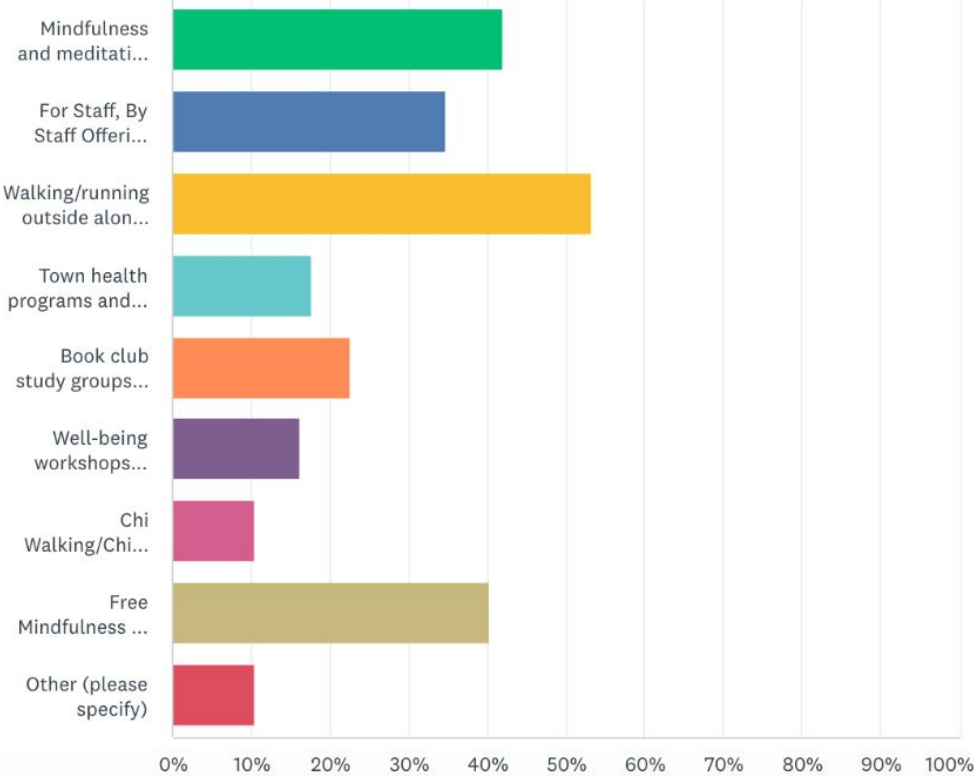
Background Questions

Demographic information about survey-takers.

73%

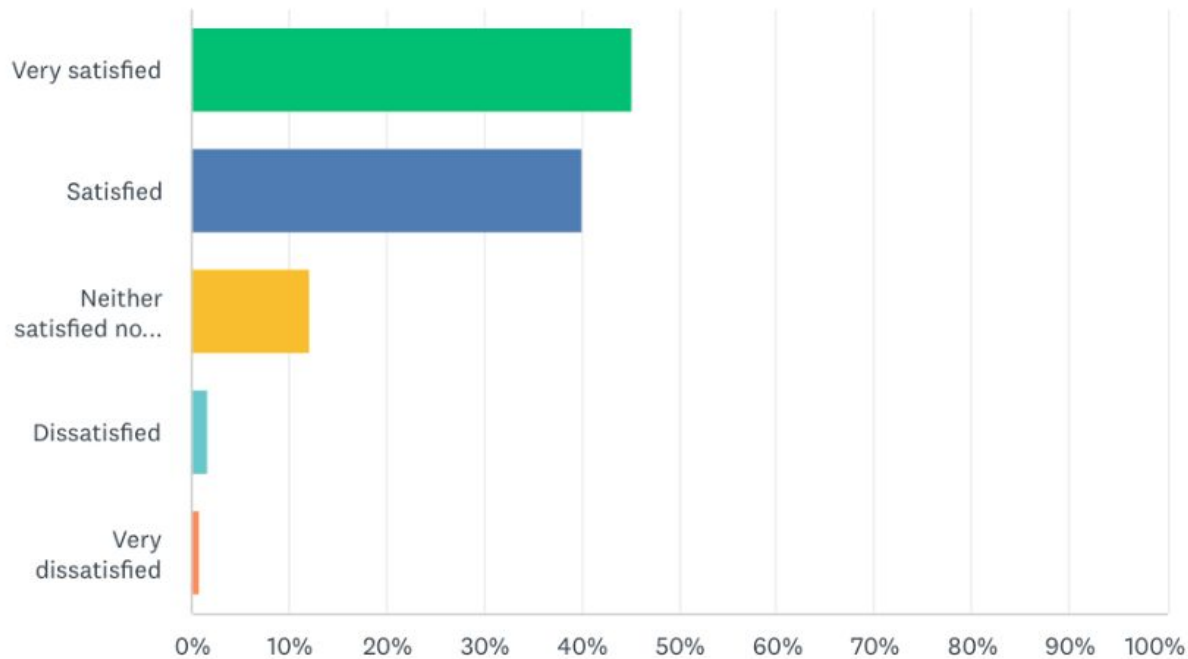
What specific offerings and/or practices have you either participated in or plan to participate in? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 124 Skipped: 42



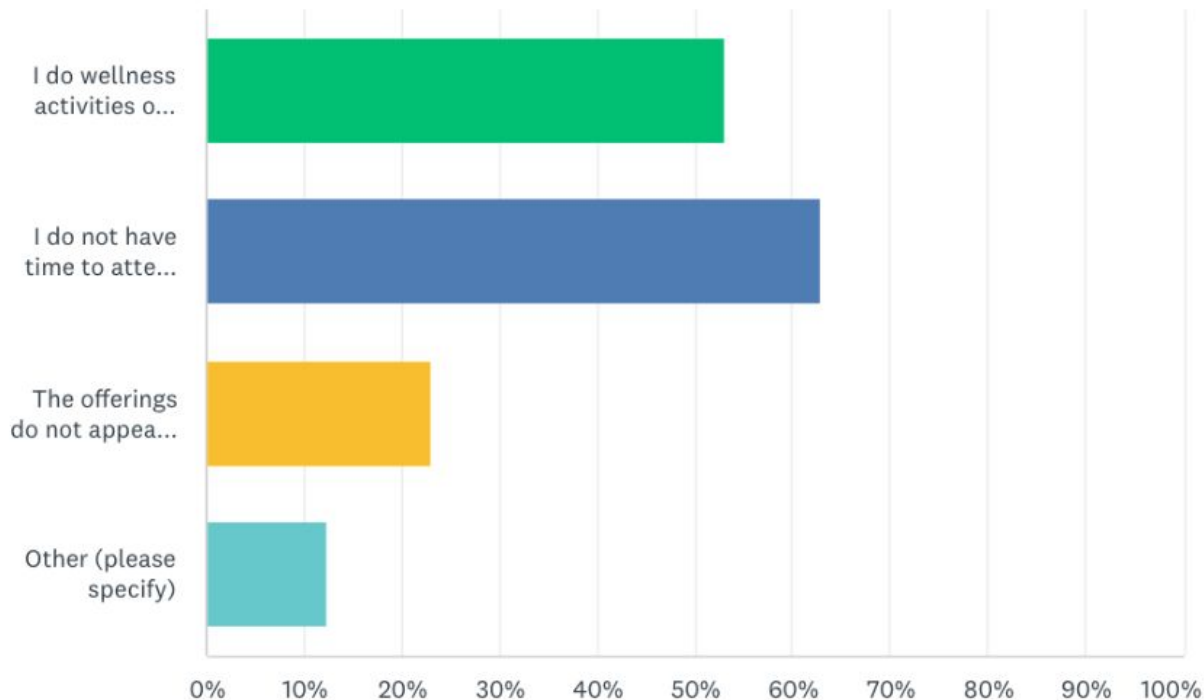
If you participated in any of the above, how satisfied were you with the quality of the program(s)?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 51



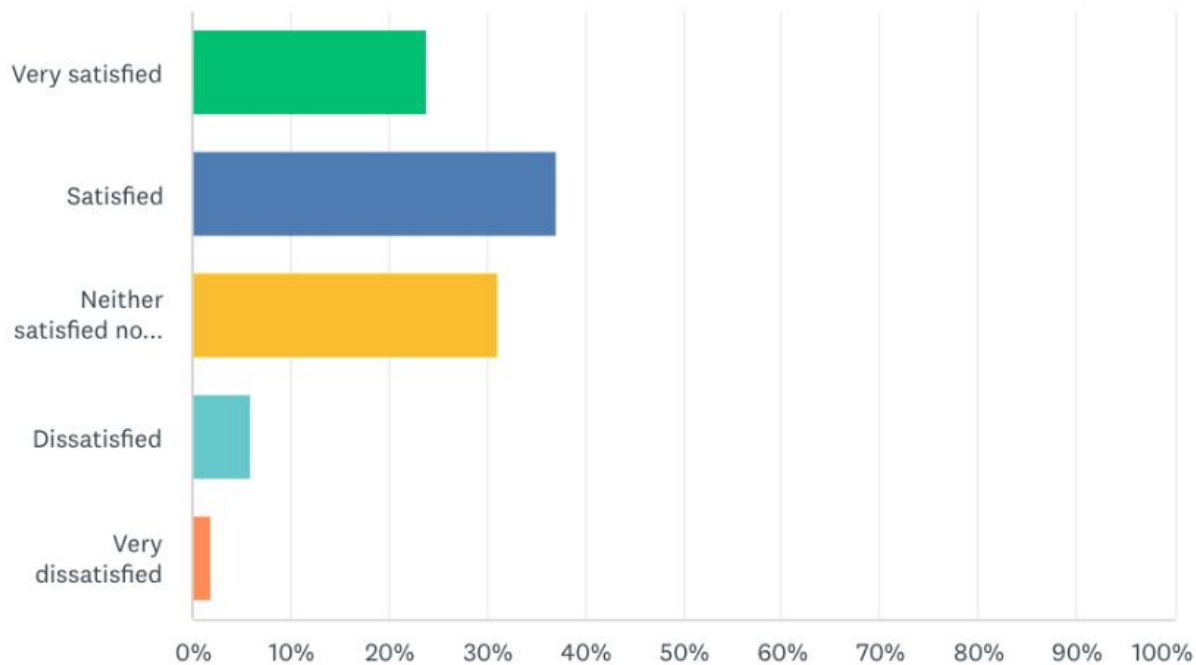
If you do not participate in SPS wellness offerings, what are the reasons?
Check as many that apply.

Answered: 113 Skipped: 53



Please rate your overall satisfaction with the wellness offerings for staff in our school district.

Answered: 151 Skipped: 15



For Staff, By Staff: Winter Offerings

Class	Day	Time	Location	Instructor
Crochet for Beginners	Mondays	3:30-4:30	SHS	Chris Besaw
Embroidery Design	Tuesdays	3:30-4:30	SHS	Adelina Baka
Intro to Pickleball	Wednesdays	4:00-5:00	Beal	Monica Clune
Designing Custom Wooden Signs	Wednesdays	4:00-5:00	RISE	Jen Tabor
Ceramics	Thursdays	4:15-5:15	Shewood	Deirdre Kunar
Yoga	Thursdays	4:15-5:15	Beal	Beth McInerny
Yoga and Mindful Movement	Thursdays	2:50-3:50	SHS	Beth Morin
Reiki Healing Medication	Wednesdays	5:00-6:00	Beal	Elyssa Glassman

Next Steps: Building and supporting *a culture of staff wellness* across the Shrewsbury Public Schools

1. Development of a *SPS Staff Well-Being Program and Framework* is actively underway, thanks to the efforts of the SPS Staff Wellness and other leadership teams across the district. The program is designed to address workplace stress and articulate the needs of staff, while outlining how the district will work to provide solutions to those needs.
2. The program will both focus on how to assist colleagues in balancing and coping with the significant challenges inherent in public education and *how the ways in which that work is done can reduce or increase stress on the system and the people within it.* The program is targeted for completion by **April 15th.**

3. Research ways to receive expert help [at low-no cost] that focuses on how to best approach the issue of staff stress.
4. The Staff Wellness Leadership Team, teacher leaders, and administrators continue to look at a range of systemic supports to address staff stress, with the understanding that one size does not fit all.
5. Our schools will benefit greatly from **staffing capacity** to ensure that this important work is done with fidelity. The Superintendent's Budget Recommendation includes a **Well-Being Coordinator** position in FY25, using the funds currently set aside for the Mindfulness Director position. This person would coordinate and provide well-being supports for both students and staff to address needs related to stress management, emotional regulation, etc. Additional information on this proposed role will be shared later in the budget process.

Coming Soon!

- *Struggling Well* workshop for all staff with Lea Christo, Assumption University and Karen Gutekanst, Sherwood Middle School (Wednesday afternoons-every other Wednesday) at SMS from 4-5 p.m. beginning in mid-March.
- **Spring Wellness Retreat** with Jordan Grinstein and Beth McInerny for all staff-Sunday, March 24th, 1-4 p.m.
- Collaboration opportunities that provide educators with WIN (What I Need) blocks over the coming months.