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# IMPACT

UASSP E-Magazine

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by Kim Monkres, UASSP President

**CHANGE: FROM RESENTMENT TO ROUTINE**  
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**SYTHESISING RESEARCH ON ONE-TO-ONE  
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### UASSP SECRETARY CONFERENCE

MARCH 18, 2021  
THANKSGIVING POINT  
RED BARN  
3003 THANKSGIVING WAY  
LEHI, UT 84043

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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### UASSP SUMMER CONFERENCE

JUNE 8, 2021  
WESTGATE RESORT & SPA  
3000 Canyons Resort Dr.  
PARK CITY, UTAH

[REGISTER HERE](#)

3

### UASSP WINTER CONFERENCE

January 24-26, 2022  
St. George, Utah

## FROM the EDITOR

So, you have made it past mid-term during a crazy school year. In the spring we had no idea what we would really be dealing with once school started. Now we know that school this year is all about being able to pivot, frequently, as numbers change and mandates change. In President Kim Monkres' message she reminds us that we are where we need to be. We're taking care of our students and our teachers, maybe more than ever before. Our own grit and perseverance have been tested, and we have certainly made it far enough to know, we can finish out this year with confidence that we are being the people the world needs us to be. Even if that "world" is the halls of our own schools, we matter. It has definitely been a year of change, sometimes daily. A school culture that embraces change is no accident. Travis Henderson describes how important it is to cultivate a culture that embraces learning and growing if they really want to cultivate that same culture for students. He believes we can train our teachers to be innovators, without a world-wide pandemic as the impetus. While the current situation has probably forced many schools into a full, one-to-one situation for the school year, it wasn't a huge step given that so many schools in the state were already very close to that ratio. But being a one-to-one school comes with its own set of challenges. Nick Harris provides administrators with valuable information about how to address those challenges, including the training necessary to build teacher skills and knowledge. He advises administrators to seek feedback from teachers and to provide training based on that feedback. It's not just about getting technology in the hands of students; it's about making sure their teachers can use the technology to enhance student learning.

Being in education is also about learning how to balance all the pressure for yourself and your staff. Education is a job that comes with many intrinsic rewards, most teachers know that. It's still important to recognize that there are ways to help teachers deal with the professional and personal stresses that they face every day. David Boren provides plenty of practical ideas about how to increase the wellbeing of your entire staff physically, emotionally, financially, and occupationally if you want them giving their best to students. Last, but not least, John Vincent shares some ideas from his many years of experience and practical approach to being the "principal teacher" in a school. A point that's worth repeating, we are all still teachers, even as administrators. And if we're really good at our job, we know we are all still students.

Follow UASSP on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) so we can re-post your school life through social media. We look forward to receiving ideas from you this year. Deadline for SUMMER is May 31. Deadline for WINTER is December 31



Julie Barlow grew up working in the family printing business before becoming an English teacher and yearbook adviser. She began her 24 year teaching career at Green River High School then moved to Layton High School. Currently she is an assistant principal at Layton High School.

# Who You Were Meant to Be

by Kim Monkres

Principal, Snow Canyon High School

## President's Message

☞ Okay, I am admittedly stealing this title. A very thoughtful teacher gave me the children's book, *The World Needs Who You Were Meant To Be*, by Joanna Gaines. After reading the book, my eyes seemed to be sweating. Under normal circumstances, I am not a very emotional person, but nothing about the current situation is normal, and my allergies were really bad (okay, they were tears).

Am I really where I am supposed to be? Am I really doing what the world needs me to do? And, are you wondering the same?

If you are, let me go back to the book. The premise of the book is that each person is set to take the "ride for our lives" by building his/her own hot-air balloon. With the supplies, each person will build the balloon differently. Some people will work quietly

thinking through every possible step, some will be collaborative and ask various opinions. There are those who already have a plan and prefer to be rigid, and some who like to go with the flow, and take things as they come. A person may rely on their intelligence and another

may rely on their creativity. Whatever it may be, in the end, "Some of us are teachers and share what we know. But all of us are learners. Together is how we grow!"

It has been a year for the books, and we are on quite a ride. We have spent the year worrying about our staff, students, community, and family; it has been extremely stressful. We have been building this as we go, and there is no doubt we have all done things a little differently, and that is okay. Some of us have been in-person the whole time, some of us are using a hybrid model, and others are still waiting to see their students in-person. We have been on an endless wheel of problem-solving, trying to provide the best education for our students, with a target that seems to continuously move. Whatever the method your school/district is using to deliver instruction and support to students, take a moment to

give yourself a high-five for showing up to the battle! It is because of YOU the students of Utah have been able to continue to learn. It is because of you, your staff has had a place to vent their frustration in juggling it all. It is your leadership in which solutions were created with these same staff members. It is because of you and your selflessness that all of the good we are witnessing is possible. You are to be acknowledged, congratulated, and celebrated! It is because of you and your leadership that students have a place to go, to learn, and to grow.

We often talk about the grit and perseverance of students, but your grit and perseverance should be acknowledged.

The cancellation of the UASSP mid-winter conference was

heartbreaking. The Board was looking forward to providing a retreat to celebrate the phenomenal administrators in our State, and you all deserve a celebration. Although we could not meet in person, we hope you know how much we admire all you are doing for your schools. This experience has been

challenging, frustrating, exhausting and you have all held true to this year's theme, Rise Up and Lead! We look forward to the Summer Conference to celebrate your growth and accomplishments during a very challenging time. So, if you are asking yourself, How did I get here? Is this real life? What is that horrible smell? Oh, that is just the district-purchased hand sanitizer.

Is this where I am supposed to be? Am I really doing what I am supposed to be doing? YES! The answer is, yes! I will again defer to Joanna Gaines, as she says it best, "You're one of a kind, and it's so clear to see: The world needs who YOU were made to be." Thank you for your determination, your leadership, and your example. I am forever grateful to be in the company of such outstanding leaders who push me to continue to become who I was made to be.



# CHANGE:

## From Resentment to Routine

by Travis Henderson

Vice Principal, North Sevier High School

☞ The only thing constant in education is that it will always be changing. Demands and expectations of educators are erratic, but the target of inspiring mentally fit, well-rounded, lifelong learners (among other attributes) remains the same. Learning to pivot is no longer something that happens once or twice in a tenured career. Learning to pivot is a mindset more than the knowledge thereof. Learning to pivot is a culture that must be built. Too often we jump straight to changing actions before we have set up ourselves, and those around us, for success.

Our building administration has been lucky enough to work with world-renowned educational culture expert Jimmy Casas for the past few years. One of his main points of emphasis is about “undercurrents” and how they can hurt the culture of schools. We can easily force change through authority, but this often creates such undercurrents. Undercurrents come in the form of negative lunch-time conversations, doing the “bare minimum,” or even fighting against the sought after mission and vision. These will eventually lead to frustration and ill-will towards change. Casas talks about changing the way people think in order to change the way they act. This helps to create a culture of innovation and improvement rather than one of compliance. This is the single most important consideration for creating change. Just as we want our teachers to inspire kids to WANT to learn, leadership must inspire teachers to do the same. Educational leaders must remember before there is a change in action, there must be a change in mindset. Without first changing this way of thinking, leadership may

mislabeled groups of teachers for actions which were fostered by the same leadership.

For hundreds of years in education, change has been slow and gradual. Like anything else in modern society, modern education is now changing at an increasingly faster pace year after year. Younger teachers are often more receptive of change because this is the educational world that they grew up in and for which they were trained. Veteran teachers, however, accepted a job offer that looked very different from the job they have today. This difference in philosophy and many others is often assumed to be a lack of mo-

Once an organization has a positive culture of innovation and reflection, the rest comes much easier. Schools are filled with teachers who make up one of the most intelligent and motivated demographics in the entire world. Teachers are capable of learning to change and making any change that the demands of education require of them. Just as any other human being, they must understand the “why.” “Because I said so” wasn’t a good enough reason coming from our parents - why would it be now?! Even the best cultures reject change when there is no understanding of the “why.” “Why is this change necessary? Why is this best for me? Why is this best for my students?” These are all questions that must first be answered before meaningful change can realistically be expected. As school leadership, if we are unable to effectively answer these questions, we may need to reevaluate the desired change. Once a positive culture and motivational questions have been addressed, change will occur with proper training and support.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic created the largest single demand for change in the history of education. “The pivot of all pivots!” We were lucky enough at our school that this happened recently and not five years ago. Five years ago, we didn’t have a culture of change. We didn’t provide legitimate reasons for making changes. We didn’t have the necessary culture. Five years ago we spent a year of faculty meetings arguing about a hat policy! Changes were made out of compliance, not out of desire. Since then, we have built a culture of investment and innovation that made this gi-



tivation, initiative, and work ethic. Not only is this assumption unfair, it further hinders the movement towards a more positive, holistic culture. It isn’t until an organization has a culture that embraces change, that it can consistently pivot as a single unit according to demand.

ant pivot possible.

When Covid hit the U.S. in March and schools went virtual, many educators struggled to do so with confidence and fidelity. Nobody had the training for this. When I showed up to our emergency faculty meeting on Monday (after schools were told to go remotely on Friday), I asked my teachers to throw out every educational practice, prep material, and traditional philosophy of education they had ever had. Instead of responding to me with anger and frustration - which they had every right to do - the response could be summed up in one statement: "Tell us what we need to do." Teachers who could literally barely log into their emails before, learned to stream classes live, online and provide interactive

**"Just as we want our teachers to inspire kids to WANT to learn, leadership must inspire teachers to do the same."**

activities to students over a screen. Teachers who had concrete grading schemes showed empathy, understanding and flexibility that they had never been expected to show before. They knew students were going to struggle, didn't have technology at home, and didn't have proper support at home. Of course training was provided for most of this, but because we had the correct culture in place, it wasn't a matter of will or attitude. We all knew this was what was best for our students and that was all that mattered.

We had more change, innovation, and

collaboration in a 3-hour faculty meeting than we saw in the previous ten years. This wasn't out of luck or overwhelming positivity. It wasn't even that our staff was shoulders above those in other schools around the world (even though I am personally biased to think that). This was only able to happen because our leadership and staff had spent years building a culture that thrived in this situation.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and well after it has faded from our memories, educators will be expected to innovate. As long as we are able to maintain the culture we have built, these changes may be painful, but they will take place with exceptional unity and success. As building leadership, we must begin the process to build a better culture now! We must provide the "why" and we must provide the support needed when we expect change. Not only will pivoting become routine, it will be welcomed!



Travis Henderson is 29 years old and lives in Salina, Utah. Travis is the Vice Principal and Instructional Coach at North Sevier High School. Previously Travis taught English, Economics, and General Financial Literacy and was the wrestling coach at NSHS. He likes working with the North Sevier school and community. "Go Wolves!"

# Synthesising Research on One-to-One Initiatives for Administrators

## by Nick Harris

Online Digital Learning Director, Weber School District

Some of the most hotly contested arguments in education today are about the increasing role of technology in schools (Gherardi, 2017). In his book *Education 3.0*, Lengel (2013) describes schools of the 19th and 20th centuries and the fact that some current schools (as of his writing in 2013) might still look like the schools of yesterday by failing to adapt technologically. He describes communities that are “disappointed with their schools and seeking to transform them, but are not sure which direction to take” (p. 17). Conversely, Sheninger (2019) prefaces his book, *Digital Leadership* by encouraging school leaders, no matter where they are starting from technologically, to “cultivate competent learners” and praises school leaders for being willing to create a vision and lead out by implementing strategic processes that can provide students with opportunities to learn “critical competencies” (pp xv-xvi). Both authors suggest the introduction and use of digital devices as one of the major vehicles for change within schools, and proceed with an

entire book dedicated to the subject. One way many schools and districts are attempting to transform schools and expand access to technology the way Lengel and Sheninger suggest is by initiating one-to-one (1:1) computing programs (Donovan, 2010; Bebell & O’Dwyer, 2010; Topper & Lancaster, 2013). In a much more limited scope, this article presents school administrators with a synthesis of a representative sample of research on 1:1 technology initiatives, detailing the cautions, purposes and benefits of these programs.

The Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) project from the early 1980’s is generally agreed upon as the beginnings of the one-to-one (or 1:1) computer movement. According to Donovan, Hartley and Strudler (2007), “ACOT was the first large-scale initiative providing one-to-one access to students and teachers in the K-12 setting” (p. 264). As of 2017, EdTech Magazine (2017) reports that nationally, “more than 50 percent of teachers now have a one-to-one student-to-device ratio” (para. 1). These numbers are far higher in Utah, according to UETN’s (2019) School Technology Inventory, with over 556,000 digital devices statewide which translates to about 0.84 digital devices per student. It is true that, with the help

of our legislators and school administrators, schools are largely turning to technology to increase learning in the classroom (Harris et al., 2016).

Long before students or teachers get devices in their hands, successful one-to-one initiatives consider their infrastructure and network (CoSN, 2019). Lengel (2013) describes a “carefully planned” and “efficiently installed” reliable network that would “enable members of the school community to access the information and services they need” (p. 66). A robust infrastructure is the equivalent of a building’s foundation and, in the same way the building will fall without the foundation, research suggests a lack of infrastructure as a major reason teachers and administrators fail in the implementation of one-to-one programs (Lamb, 2018).

Once a robust infrastructure is in place, school leaders should spend time thinking about and becoming familiar with the many educational technologies available to schools that can aid in students’ creation and consumption (Sheninger, 2019). For

example, an important aspect of a successful one-to-one initiative is the implementation of a high-quality, low cost digital solution such as Google’s Chromebook. Without an operating system or hard drive, these machines are cheap and easy to manage for technology experts on the backend. These devices are a practical choice for administrators (Jesdanun, 2017). By far, Chromebooks are the technology utilized in Utah schools with over 266,000 devices in students’ hands as compared to less than 100,000 iOS tablets or Mac laptops (UETN, 2019). However, it should be noted that there are several devices like the Chromebook on the market and, therefore, one-to-one initiatives are sometimes difficult to study. Another reason for this is the myriad options schools and districts have for both building a network and deciding on hardware and software. Bebell and O’Dwyer (2010), in a meta-analysis of five different research studies of one-to-one initiatives, describe the difficulty in comparing initiatives each with a unique program including hardware, software, implementation models and even expectations.

Just as a solid infrastructure is literally the foundation of



promising one-to-one initiatives, building teachers' infrastructure (figuratively) as a foundation in quality training is essential. Harris et al. (2016) points out that one-to-one technology, being a new phenomenon, needs to be introduced with caution. Kul (2018) suggests school leaders approach professional development with care as digital technology becomes more prevalent because, he claims, very little consideration has been paid to the creation of innovative professional development. With a focus on student learning, personal devices can be a significant tool for educators to create student-centered environments, but not without proper training (Aitken, 2017). Doran and Harold (2016) assert that, "generally, the goal is to enable teachers...to deliver more personalized content to students, to boost students' technology skills, and to empower children to do more complex and creative work" (para. 10), but, again, school leaders would do well to invest a significant portion of professional training to increase the odds of teacher success (Sheninger, 2019). Lua and Murray (2018) underscore this assertion by stating that with mobile technologies readily available, teachers are expected to teach either online or via blended learning; however, the research suggests that they might be attempting this without opportunities to develop pedagogical skills for teaching online.

The expectation to teach without proper training can cause concern as different teachers bring differing levels of comfort to technology use (Donovan et al., 2007). In order to better address teacher concerns within a one-to-one adoption, Donovan et al. (2007) offer three recommendations that include, a) aligning professional development with teacher concerns, b) offering teachers a voice in the adoption, and c) to be patient with the process of change. In fact, several studies mention the prolonged time it might take for teachers and students to be comfortable and effective within a one-to-one initiative (Lamb, 2018; Doran & Herold, 2016; Harris et al., 2016).

Part of that time means longer-duration and sustained professional development as Topper and Lancaster (2013) contend that while workshops and summer in-service can be helpful, it might be insufficient for change of this magnitude. Taking the time to properly train teachers is key according to the Speak Up report from Project Tomorrow, which collected feedback from over 343,500 students, parents and teachers in the 2018-19 school year. The report states that "82% of parents of school aged children say that the effective use of technology in school is important for their child's future," and that "parents' #1 concern about technology use at school...is that tech usage varies too much from teacher to teacher" (p. 10). In other words, almost all parents see the importance of technology, and their biggest concern is the effective and standardized implementation of that technology. Bebel and Kay (2010) conclude, "It is impossible to overstate the power of individual teachers in the success or failure of 1:1 computing" (p.

47).

Thriving one-to-one initiatives have teachers that are well-trained and understand the subtle differences of teaching using digital tools, but they also need school leaders that are committed to seeing the initiative through (Topper & Lancaster, 2013). The authors found that a clear indicator of success is not only a strong commitment, but also a vision that is "communicated, understood, and promoted at all levels of administration" and that "absent this commitment, the ultimate success of a 1:1 initiative is difficult to evaluate and may result in confusing messages" among teachers (p. 352). Lamb (2018) points out the importance of teachers and

**"With a focus on student learning, personal devices can be a significant tool for educators."**

leaders having a strong understanding of the technology and how it works for teaching. She goes on to discuss the level of pedagogical and technical understanding necessary for a successful implementation and offers advice for leaders to consider distributing leadership wherever possible. Additionally, Bebell and O'Dwyer (2010) found, in a meta-analysis across several studies, the need for school and district-level leadership for 1:1 initiatives and programs to be successful. They continue, "overall, the studies presented here point to the need for preparing school leaders and leadership teams for the implementation of 1:1 initiatives" (p. 10).

Once teachers and leaders have undergone significant professional development and access to digital devices is ubiquitous among teachers and students, what does the research say about the benefits of a one-to-one initiative? Is the cost of "going 1:1" worth the expense?

Goodwin (2010) provides evidence of three advantages that emerged from his research. First, learners seem to be more engaged. He cites a 4 year study in Texas that found students in one-to-one environments were less likely to have discipline issues. Second, this same Texas study elucidated that students' computer skills were far greater than neighboring school districts' students. Third, he found multiple instances of cost savings in areas of printing, textbooks and assessments. Goodwin (2010) goes on to discuss additional advantages in a study he found by Greaves et al., (2010). In this study of over 900 schools in the US, the authors identified nine factors that seem to contribute to increased levels of learning in one-to-one school districts. The top three factors were uniform integration of technology in every class, sustained professional development (both of which have been identified earlier in this article), and providing time for student collaboration and creation.

Bebel and O'Dwyer (2010) also contribute positively to the research in their meta-analysis by finding that even though implementation and programs varied across the schools, the research showed that learning practices changed and student achievement gains were measurable, along with an increase in students' research abilities when compared to control groups. In

**"The top three factors were uniform integration of technology in every class, sustained professional development... and providing time for student collaboration and creation."**



addition, several of their studies report an increase in student engagement. According to evidence from student surveys, as well as teacher and administrator interviews, “student engagement increased dramatically in response to the enhanced educational access and opportunities afforded by 1:1 computing” (p. 11). Quite possibly the most positive findings came at the end of the research in which Bebel and O’Dwyer point out that nearly all of the authors they studied note in some way the “massive potential for 1:1 computing models to transform education” (p. 12).

Another extensive meta-analysis performed by Zheng et al. (2016) adds to the research by examining over 90 studies. The findings are quite impressive in that the impact of one-to-one laptop programs was positive across several subject areas including English, Writing, Math and Science. Other benefits in writing, editing and revising were uncovered also. Researchers noted the amount of writing published by students across a wide variety of subjects.



There are also positive implications from one-to-one initiatives that aren’t necessarily laptops. In a single, three-year study performed by Tay (2016) in a school piloting iPads, perception survey and group interviews of both teachers and students were used to determine that using iPads increased learner engagement and collaboration. It also found that the students using iPads performed better on year-end examinations than their non-iPad-using classmates.

The positive results aren’t always gains in achievement or engagement, however. Escuenta et al. (2017) published a review covering more than one hundred studies regarding educational technology. Granted, these are not specific to one-to-one programs, but findings in educational technology would obviously apply to a one-to-one initiative. One study in particular stands out because it is so novel. The authors found that computer-assisted learning in the form of personalization in math, as well as online behavioral interventions, such as large-scale messaging campaigns showed “considerable promise” (p. 87).



A final benefit found in several of the meta-analysis and discussed in almost every research article found for this review is the positive relationship with one-to-one programs and 21st-century skills; although,

it is noted that these are harder to measure (Topper & Lancaster, 2013; Goodwin, 2010; Lamb, 2018). Doran and Herold (2016) write, “there was a wide consensus in the studies we reviewed that use of laptops promotes 21st-century learning skills” (para. 18), but they note that studies rarely measured growth of these skills compared to a control group.

Although Doran and Herold (2016) reported generally favorable results of the initiatives they researched, they did note a few one-to-one disasters as well. For example, they cite a 2009

survey by the National Center for Education Statistics in which 1:1 computers were used mostly for basic skills rather than design or creation. Another study highlights the students who used computers as part of a one-to-one initiative scored lower than the average on international math and reading tests. Luo and Murray (2018) studied teachers’ attitudes about student learning in a one-to-one envi-

ronment. Their findings were also less-than-ideal in that teachers generally embraced the idea of being 1:1, but were quick to point out the drawbacks and, overall, showed mixed attitudes toward the 1:1 environment. The authors also noted that without teacher guidance, students were quick to engage in non-academic activities, which led to lower teacher attitudes.

In contrast to the positive finding mentioned above, Goodwin (2011) contends that most of the larger-scale research studies from 2005 to 2010 found either mixed or no results for one-to-one computer programs. A specific example was found in the state of Maine—a statewide program—and, notably, the largest one-to-one initiative in the United States at the time. After 5 years the program evaluations showed little to no effect on student achievement. It should be noted that technology proponents argued that 21st-century skills weren’t measured on the state assessment. Goodwin goes on to discuss that similar, low-to-no effect results were found in Michigan and in Texas, writing scores actually went down.

The research studies cited above offer a bit of a mixed message. How effective are one-to-one initiatives? Topper and Lancaster (2013) offer valuable insight into a convoluted subject. “Successful adoption and implementation of 1:1 initiatives in k-12 schools require a complex set of tasks and activities, supportive resources, as well as communication of a vision for adoption and collaboration among all stakeholders” (p. 356). They discuss the careful amount of planning required, the well-established and maintained funding necessary, the allocation of resources, as well as the training and high levels of support needed, not to mention the patience

required for these types of initiatives to yield positive results.

The purpose of this article was to provide administrators an accessible way to see what the research says are benefits from going one-to-one, as well as some of the cautions. In closing, there are two perspectives administrators on the verge of stepping into a 1:1 implementation should keep in mind: First, Harris et al. (2016) concludes that “teaching does not simply become easier due to the technology that is in place in the classroom” (p. 380). Students still, and always will require a skilled teacher to learn from--whether that be online or in person, and, second, Edutopia (2012) reminds us that “today’s kids are born digital--born into a media-rich, networked world of infinite possibilities. But their digital life is more than just about cool gadgets; it’s about engagement, self-directed learning, creativity, and empowerment.

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# WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS: Principals Supporting a Balanced Ride

by David McKay Boren  
Educational Consultant

When I was in high school I drove a bulky old Jeep Wagoneer that I called my battlewagon. One day while driving home from school, the entire back end of my battlewagon flew into the air. The car swerved out of control and as I wrestled the steering wheel, fighting to keep the car on the road, my little brother yelled, "Hey, there goes our tire!" Sure enough, our back right tire rolled past us and careened into the ditch. Luckily, we were able to stay on the road and finally scraped to a stop. Rather than trying to drive home on the remaining three tires, we temporarily abandoned our beloved car and walked home. Later we found out that the lug nuts on our rogue tire had been loose, which caused the tire to eventually sheer off the bolts. We welded new bolts onto the beloved old battlewagon and it gave us several more years of devoted service, as long as we kept the tires aligned, balanced, and tightened.

Just as my car needed four balanced and aligned tires in order to provide a smooth ride, we all need balance and alignment in four key areas of our lives to enjoy the beautiful and treacherous journey of working in schools. In addition to finding balance in our own lives, as school leaders we have the added responsibility to do what we can to help our teachers find balance in these four areas as well. I will present some basic research in each of these areas, along with a few practical things we can do as school leaders to enhance teacher wellbeing.

## Tire 1: Physical Wellbeing

*Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.* -Doug Larsen

Eat. What we eat directly im-

pacts our thinking and performance. A study of over 5,000 students revealed that students who ate more fruits and vegetables were 41% less likely to fail a basic literacy assessment, even when controlling for family income levels (Florence, Asbridge, & Veugelers, 2008). A diet high in fats decreases alertness acutely and may have an impact on an individual's ability to function (Celmer, 2017). Healthier fats such as those found in avocados, nuts, and olive oil send messages to our brain to stop eating (Schwartz et al., 2008), while eating foods high in carbohydrates and sugars damages our appetite-control cells, sending messages to our brains that we need to eat more, even when we don't (Andrews et al., 2008). Most of us are strong adherents to the "see food" diet. We eat what we see. If chocolates are placed in front of us, we eat them. If nuts or dried apples are placed in front of us, we eat them. If we're given water, we drink it. If we're given soda pop, we drink it.

Move. Popular books like *Spark*, by John J. Ratey (2013), and *Brain Rules*, by John Medina (2014), document in depth the numerous benefits of exercise in combating depression, ADHD, addiction, Alzheimer's, and mood disorders. They also document the strong correlation between exercise and increases in neuron production, flexible thinking,

sustained attention, cognitive flexibility, alertness, and problem solving. This is true for both children and adults. One interesting study found that thirty minutes of daily exercise will not keep us healthy if we spend the rest of our day sitting (Owen, et al., 2009).

Sleep. Many of us struggle to get enough high-quality sleep. Tom Rath explains, "While growing up in a hard-working city in the Midwest, I learned that needing sleep was a sign of weakness...I have learned that one less hour of sleep is not equal to an extra hour of achievement or enjoyment. Instead, the exact opposite occurs. When you miss an hour of sleep, it decreases your wellbeing, productivity, health, and ability to think. Yet, sleep continues to be the first

thing people sacrifice" (2015, p. 138). Even if we're in bed for eight hours, the quality of sleep may be significantly impacted by our other stressors. Anything we can do as school leaders to help mitigate the financial, social-emotional, and occupational stress of

our teachers will likely help them sleep better. In addition to stress, the late-night use of cell phones leads to poor sleep and creates lower engagement and fatigue in the workplace (Lanaj, et al., 2014).

Here are a few ideas to consider for improving physical wellbeing in our schools:



- Provide healthy snack options in faculty rooms, at faculty meetings, and in our offices.

- Provide students and teachers with incentives other than sweets.

- Encourage teachers to eat a healthy breakfast, reducing the need to snack. Have a bowl of fruit in the faculty room for those who tend to miss breakfast.

- Provide standing/rolling desks and desk treadmill for those who will use them.

- Have some friendly faculty competitions (# of steps taken, days without screens, etc.).

- Schedule faculty activities before or after school (volleyball, yoga, walking, etc.).

- Make the gym and exercise equipment available to teachers before and after school.

- Ask a local rec center for reduced membership rates for teachers.

- Conduct low-risk meetings on the move, walking the halls or grounds rather than sitting.

- Schedule brief movement breaks during long meetings or PD days.

- Provide a brief health tip in weekly newsletters or emails.

- Create a safe and happy school culture that will not keep teachers and students up at night, anxious and worried about issues at school.

### **Tire 2: Social-Emotional Wellbeing**

*I don't like that man--I must get to know him better. -Abraham Lincoln*

When we have a community of people we can count on—spouse, family, friends, colleagues—we multiply our emotional, intellectual, and physical resources. Ed Diener and colleagues conclude: “Like food and air, we seem to need social relationships to thrive” (2008, p. 66). In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) concluded: “The people we interviewed from good-to-great companies clearly loved what

they did largely because they loved who they did it with.” One of the longest-running psychological studies—the Harvard Men study—followed 268 men from their entrance into college in the late 1930s all the way through the present day. From this wealth of data, scientists have been able to identify the life circumstances and personal characteristics that distinguished the happiest, fullest lives from the least successful ones. In 2009, George Vaillant, who directed the study for 40 years, summed up the findings in one word: “love—full stop.” Our relationships with others matter more than anything else. Social bonds don’t just predict overall happiness, but also eventual career achievement, occupational success, and income. While it is not necessary that all colleagues become best friends or even that everyone like one another all the time, it is crucial that there be mutual respect, authenticity, and safety in our schools. Rather than coercing employees into awkward icebreakers or forced bonding activities, it is better to create the conditions that allow relationships to form more organically. The best leaders give their employees the space and time to let moments of social connection develop on their own (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). While some principals may see teacher socializing as a waste of time, thoughtfully providing sufficient time and physical space for teachers to publicly commune, celebrate, decompress, and practice mindfulness leads to higher productivity, performance, and wellbeing (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Dutton, 2003).

Here are a few ideas to consider improving teachers’ social-emotional wellbeing:

- Start the year off with a faculty-family barbeque or picnic.

- Help teachers make the faculty room comfortable, inviting, and safe. Pop-

corn machines and pebbled ice machines go a long way.

- Make time in each meeting for teachers to get to know others not on their teams.

- Do a class swap. Teachers in different grades take each other’s class for an hour.

**“Social bonds don’t just predict overall happiness, but also eventual career achievement, occupational success, and income.”**

- Leave physical notes (with a small treat of course) for teachers and encourage them to do the same for each other.

- Write a note of appreciation to a teacher’s significant other or parent, thanking them for their support of the school and the teacher.

- Cover teachers’ classrooms for 30 minutes on their birthday.

- Leave a favorite treat on a teacher’s desk just because.

- Create a chill room with moon sand, stress balls, calm music, flowing water, etc.

- Bring in the masseuse!

- Create fun faculty traditions, parties, and friendly competitions.

- Create faculty spotlights for the hallways.

- Make teachers aware of free or reduced family and personal counseling services.

- Be there for each other at wed-



dings, funerals, and other important life events.

### Tire 3: Financial Wellbeing

*We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. -Winston Churchill*

While we likely did not go into education for the money, our level of financial wellbeing has a significant impact on our effectiveness at work. It was only somewhat amusing as a new teacher on a new teacher salary, to realize that if I were a student, I would qualify for free lunch. As the cost of living increases without commensurate increases in salary, finances can get particularly tight for our teachers. In order to make ends meet, some of our teachers have to find other employment opportunities, leaving less time and energy for planning, grading, and de-stressing. In one study, four out of five employers report that their employees' personal financial issues impact their job performance in the following ways: feeling more stress at work, an inability to focus and complete tasks at work, and increased absenteeism and tardiness (Miller, 2018).

While we may not have direct control over large issues like salary and benefits, or the way our particular district addresses financial matters, here are a few possibilities to consider for improving the financial wellbeing of teachers at our schools:

- Invite a representative from Utah Retirement Systems to help teachers better understand their retirement accounts and investment options.
- Invite a district or district-sanctioned financial planner to meet with individual teachers to discuss district-specific investment plans and loan forgiveness plans.
- Ensure that all new teachers understand the district's salary schedule.
- In a faculty book club, read material on financial wellbeing (Dave Ramesy, etc.).
- Hire an hourly aide to help teachers apply for grants.
- Maintain a well-stocked supply room. Provide extra supply money to new and needy teachers.
- Dedicate some funds for teacher stipends: (eg. team leaders, committee chair, summer collaboration, other additional duties, etc.).

• Hold a monthly drawing with a \$50 supply money reward.

• Invite teachers to contribute to a sunshine fund that can be used to help teachers in need.

### Tire 4: Occupational Wellbeing

*Why are our schools not places of joy? -John Goodlad, 1984, p. 242*

There is ample evidence that when we feel good at work, and when we see our work as a calling, we are much more effective (Cameron, 2012; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Interestingly, "engaged workers report similar levels of satisfaction on working and nonworking days, with only slight increases in stress and a positive boost in interest levels when they were at work" (Rath & Harter, 2010, pp. 20-21). A positive work climate has been found to enhance decision-making, productivity, creativity, social integration, and prosocial behaviors (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Unfortunately, only 20% of people can give a strong "yes" response to the question, "Do you like what you do each day?" (Rath & Harter, 2010, p. 15). When asked why they disengage from and eventually leave the profession, teachers cited some of the following reasons: too many classroom intrusions, lack of support for student assessment, lack of autonomy, negative school culture, minimal time for collaboration, and lack of shared leadership and decision-making (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). While we as school leaders cannot fully "fix" all these challenges, we can do a lot to create the "conditions for people to do their best work" and to experience higher levels of occupational progress and wellbeing (Pink, 2011, p. 86).

Here are a few ideas to consider improving teachers' occupational wellbeing:

- Provide safe coaching and mentoring opportunities.
- Provide ample opportunities to continue learning (classes, conferences, book clubs, collaboration, peer observations, school visits).
- Provide teacher leadership opportunities (team leader, committee leader/member, peer coaching).
- Find ways for teachers to publicly appreciate and celebrate each other (e.g. coworker appreciation box to be read at

meetings, etc.).

• Hire a copy aide and/or supervision aide to complete some of the more menial tasks, giving teachers more time to plan, prepare, teach, assess, intervene, and enrich.

• Respond promptly to teachers' requests (heating/cooling, lighting, cleaning, repairs, work orders, equipment, etc.).

• Keep announcements and other interruptions to a minimum during class times.

• No emails or phone calls to teachers or parents after 5 p.m. or on the weekends.

• On weekends, as soon as students go home, send teachers home.

• Encourage teachers to appropriately employ their unique talents, interests, and strengths in decorating their classroom, in how they teach, etc.

While there are likely many other possibilities for enhancing teacher wellbeing, let us be wise in this pursuit. We cannot do all good things at the same time, nor do we have full control or responsibility for the wellbeing of our teachers. However, there is much that we can do. As legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden urged, "Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." I recommend Adam Saenz's book, *The Power of a Teacher*, Tom Rath's book, *Are You Fully Charged?*, Shawn Achor's book, *The Happiness Advantage*, and Kim Cameron's book, *Positive Leadership*. Any of



these would be a great read with a faculty book club interested in exploring teacher wellbeing more in depth. If you're interested in really assessing student, teacher, and school wellbeing in a more targeted way, you may want to take a look at book that a colleague and I recently published called *Assessing Wellbeing in Schools* (Bates &

Boren, 2020).

Just as a 1984 Jeep Wagoneer needs tires that are well-balanced and aligned, our teachers need balance and alignment in these four areas. Loose bolts, low air, or worn treads in any one of these areas will result in a bumpy or even dangerous ride. We should each reflect and counsel with others about what we can realistically do as a school to support physical, social-emotional, financial, and occupational wellbeing. While we all want effective schools, we as leaders do not focus on nurturing teacher wellbeing simply as a means to higher test scores. Rather, we focus on teacher wellbeing because we truly care about our amazing teachers, and realize that it is our moral obligation to nurture and care for each individual within our stewardship. As we do, our teachers and our schools will experience a smoother, well-balanced, and even enjoyable ride, which in the end is more effective for everyone.

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# A REFLECTION: Over the Years

by John Vincent

Asst. Principal, Herriman High School

Over the years you learn a few things, yes? And right about the time you feel pretty seasoned, well, something else comes along. In the years ahead if you're rocking in the chair and telling stories - whilst sounding unbelievable to some, you can smile knowing they're all true.

Trust. We need it more than ever in education. It's a popular word these days. After many years in the high school, a few suggestions from my experiences:

Get to the parent first before the student does. When something significant happens, communicate to the parent first - the good and bad. They will love you for it and believe you more than their student and others who follow. They will begin to trust you.

Run away from sarcasm. It's often putting others down in the guise of humor and it is a hard read for students. Don't do it. I've seen it batter relationships and unravel teaching. Sincerity opens learning. It's authentic. Sincerity builds trust.

Isolate issues. Deal with what is really happening and perhaps not so much with the situations surrounding the core event. When you isolate issues your vision becomes clearer, and your decisions better, because you simplify. There is great power in simplicity. Understanding happens. It builds trust.

Speaking of simplicity.... Oh good heavens! We need it in education. It doesn't necessarily mean something is less valid and it shouldn't make you feel insecure or on the defensive. People love simplicity. Much of what I have heard after many years is how things get too complicated. Humans, I think, tend to complicate things. We all know we should keep it simple, but it takes some bravery. Simplicity builds trust.

Keep PLC's in perspective. They are goals and plans... as a group together. They should be bottom up and not top down. Too many districts tell you the way it is supposed to work and don't listen to how you feel it should work. Individual teachers working together

in departments should decide how to best increase their definition of student learning. Companies run around the country making millions of dollars selling PLC stuff. People buy into it. Yup, they really do. Some even want you to dance and get excited. Others give you long checklists that mean little or nothing to most. You look at it and say "great, more stuff!" And off it goes to file thirteen. PLC work best in small groups with autonomy. That's where trust is built.

Don't worry so much about vision and mission statements. Many don't know the difference between the two, most don't read them, and in their efforts to include everything they often mean nothing. Can you recite the one in your school? Do people even read that wordy thing on the wall? It's kind of like when they say at graduation about going forward into the future. What does that mean? I would love to see a vision statement that says: We want students to graduate and be happy. The mission statement would then say: We want more students to graduate and be happier than last year. Nice! I trust those statements and I can understand them too.

Return phone calls. It builds trust. Emails too especially when they're both timely.

Trust your colleagues. They are probably smarter than you are. And... you guessed it - it builds trust.

Got problems with troubled students not doing well? Check to see how well they read. You will be surprised. At the high school level it's very much a problem and the student can often hide it pretty well. When they know you know, and you are helping them, they will trust you.

Make your decisions. Input from others is important and needed, but trust yourself.

Meetings need to be fewer and shorter. It's sobering to realize something that has been done so well for so long, shouldn't be done at all (Peter Drucker). Meetings longer than two hours are mostly counterproductive. Personally, I switch off and (in my mind) go fly fishing or ride my bicycle, or I think about what I need to do after the

**"Got problems  
with troubled students  
not doing well?  
Check to see  
how well they read.  
You will be surprised."**

(not stupid, but close) meeting. Shorter meetings will build trust and people will like you.

Avoid useless jargon. Jargon clouds meaning and understanding. We do this like-way-too-much-dude in education and I am not sure it helps. Why do we do it? It drives most parents nuts, I'll tell you that, and the students don't know what we're saying. Assistant principal and vice principal don't mean the same thing. An administrator is one who administers, and a principal is a lead teacher. As in "the principal teacher." Teacher efficacy pretty much means teacher efficiency. Recovering something like credit is hard to do if you didn't have it in the first place. Maybe credit make-up is better? I suppose cognitive thinking would be about the same as thinking about thinking....you get the drift, right?

Data. Would love to jawbone about this in a future article.

Acquired knowledge and skills is learning. Learning in a formal way is education and education in a more formal way is a school, and a school is a factory system. You may not like it, but it is. It is also a pyramid organizational structure. It fits both definitions. Both system and structure have inherent weakness and strength. We can talk about breakaway schools, reforming schools, or transforming schools or whatever else, but until the structure and system change, in the end, it becomes about compliance. Nevertheless we are on this good ship and it is noble and worthy of our continuing pursuit to have it become better through trust.





# IMPACT

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