Developing a Comprehensive Employee Wellness Program

Emporia Public Schools
Why Wellness?
When employees believe their employer cares about their health and well-being, they are ...

- 10x less likely to be hostile
- 17% more likely to be working there in one year
- 38% more engaged
- 28% more likely to go the extra mile for the organization
- 18% more likely to recommend their workplace
Research on Wellness Programs

- A **2011 study** published by the *American Journal of Health Promotion* demonstrated that health care costs rose at a 15 percent slower rate among wellness program participants when employers consistently offered a wellness program to their employees.

- A **review of 72 studies** published in the *American Journal of Health Promotion* showed an average corporate wellness return on investment (ROI) of **$3.48 per $1** when considering health care costs alone, **$5.82 when examining absenteeism** and **$4.30 when both outcomes are considered.**
What is workplace wellness?

- Wellness is a state of physical, mental, and emotional fitness.
- Some might call it *Well-being*.
- Employee wellness today often includes physical well-being, mental well-being, and financial well-being.
Background - Emporia Public School District

- Emporia Public Schools is a PreK-12 Public School in East Central Kansas serving approximately 4,600 students.
- Over 1,000 part-time and full-time employees
- Diverse Student Population
  - 65% Free/Reduced Lunch
  - 40% Hispanic Population
- Diverse Work Force
  - 1/3 are baby boomers
  - 1/3 are millennials
History of Our Wellness Program

2014-15 School Year:

1. Formed a Committee - all stakeholders represented
2. Completed a Needs Assessment
3. Researched Other Wellness Programs
4. Designed Our Program

2015-16 School Year:

1. Began Wellness Program
2. Found Corporate Sponsors
3. Overwhelming Employee Response
4. Evaluation of the Program - Metrics and Survey
Components of Our Wellness Program
Components of Emporia Wellness Program

- Completely voluntary
- Biometric Screenings
- Health Risk Assessment
- Encouraged Preventative Exams
- Encouraged participation in physical, mental, financial, and healthy activities
- Fun monthly challenges
- Monthly Wellness Blasts (our main source of communication)
- Found community and corporate sponsors
- Offered Incentives for meeting certain requirements
Incentive Level 1 - White

Requirements

1. Complete the district biometric screening
2. Complete the district Health Risk Assessment (HRA) survey
3. Attend the district sponsored Health Fair - Saturday, September 19th from 8am to Noon
4. Complete at least one district wellness activity or event
Incentive Level 2 - Black

Requirements

1. Successfully complete all requirements of Level 1

2. Complete a well check (well women check, well man check, eye exam, dental check, flu shot, or other preventive care exam)

3. Complete two more district wellness approved activities or events (In addition to the one activity in Level 1)
Or
Incentive Level 3 - Red

Requirements

1. Successfully complete all Level 1 & 2 requirements

2. Complete a district wellness class (group fitness class, financial fitness, healthy eating, stress management, etc)

3. Complete 3 more district approved wellness activities (6 activities total)
Or
Group classes offered to employees at no charge:

- Zumba
- Yoga
- Bootcamp
- Stress Management
- Financial Fitness
- Healthy Eating
- Wellness Everyday
- Meditation
Monthly Wellness Challenges

August - “Walk this Way”
Goal is to walk at least 150 minutes a week.

September - “Smoke on the Water”
Drink at least 6 glasses (12 oz) of water per day.

October - “(Don’t) Pour Some Sugar on Me”
Cut the number of grams of sugar you consume each day in half.

November - “We are going to “Pump”kin You up”
Try some new healthy recipes that include pumpkin or pumpkin seeds.

December - “Holiday Project Zero”
Try to keep your weight neutral over the holidays of Thanksgiving thru New Years Eve.
Monthly Wellness Challenges

January - “Eat at Home January”
Eat home cooked meals rather than going out to eat.

February - “The Heart Will Go On”
Goal is to get more exercise to increase your heart rate.  2-3 times per week

March - “Green Day”
Goal is to eat at least 2-3 servings of green veggies a day.

April - “Just Breathe”
Goal is to set aside some time each day for meditation, reflection, prayer, yoga or other relaxation activities.

May - “I Like to Ride my Bicycle”
SO to Dirty Kanza  Try to bicycle more this month.  Either stationary or the real deal.
Healthier Food Options

- Added healthier options to our current vending machines used by staff. Goal was to have at least 30% healthy options.
- Added drink options like bottled water, unsweetened teas, flavored waters, etc to vending machines.
- Added healthy food options as well as the fun stuff when providing food and beverages at socials and in the break room.
- Our food service provided two health staff meal options this past year. They offered a chicken sandwich and a very good chef salad option. They delivered to each school if ordered by 9am.
The Results
Participation Rate of Employees

Participation Rate - Year 1

- Registered: 42.5%
- None: 57.5%

Image: Woman holding a t-shirt with the text "Body Mind & Soul."
Summary of the Wellness Program - Participation

Total Number of Participants who Registered for the Program: 567

Total Number of Participants who Completed Level 1: 320

Total Number of Participants who Completed Level 2: 230

Total Number of Participants who Completed Level 3: 190
Summary of the Wellness Program

Preventative Exams - 300 total

Total Number of Activities: 1219

On Your Own Activities: 902 (74%)

Group Classes: 321
  ● Yoga/Zumba - 66

Total FitBit HRs Awarded: 90

Total Number of Employees Earning Cash Incentive: 194

Total Wellness Days Earned: 73
End of the Year Evaluation Results

63% exercised more regularly as a result of the Wellness Program

49% changed their eating habits

31% reported losing weight

27% reported having more energy/feeling less fatigued

25% reported feeling less stressed

20% reported improved biometrics (blood pressure, glucose)

17% reported less illnesses and absences
Satisfaction Rate from Employees

75.5% of participants scored the program as a 7 or higher (on a scale of 1-10)

20.4% scored the wellness program a 10/10

53.7% of participants found the Biometric Screenings beneficial

68.1% of participants found the incentives as motivational
Impact on Certified Absenteeism

-30% absences due to personal illness
-22% absences due to medical appointments
-74% absences due to maternity leave
-16% total absences
Success Stories Shared by Employees

- Someone lost 20 pounds and got their cholesterol to healthy levels
- Someone participated in the Walnut Turkey Day Dash for the 1st time
- Someone is preparing to complete their first ½ marathon
- Someone has lost 15 pounds and kept it off!
- Someone’s blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels were the best they’d ever been at their yearly physical
- Someone has lower blood sugar levels and is eating healthier
- Someone has lost 20 pounds and has increased their water intake habits
- Someone has lost 40 pounds since August and 35 of those after starting Profile (a weight management program)
- Someone has lost 27 pounds since January and is feeling much better
Success Stories Shared by Employees

- Someone has lost 10% of their total body weight
- Someone had a positive appointment with their rheumatologist
- **Someone feels encouraged by administration and colleagues and has made time for themselves for the first time in 3 years. Has also lost 10 pounds**
- Someone stated “Anywhere you go in Emporia you see the Wellness Program t-shirts”
- Someone reported their blood pressure is way down and they are totally off caffeine
- Someone no longer uses artificial sweetener in their coffee
- **Someone lost 8 pounds, 1 ¾ inches of their weight and had their BMI decreased from 25 to 23**
- Someone lost 20 pounds this year and became more aware of their intake of sugars and carbohydrates
- **Someone has lost nearly 60 pounds this year and is eating healthier.**
Lessons Learned

- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
- Keep it strictly voluntary
- Provide Incentives not punishments
- Tell them the “Why”
- Build partnerships in the community with gyms, YMCA, Rec centers, health food stores, etc.
- Evaluate your program and ask participants for suggestions.
New and Improved for 2016-17

- Received a $50,000 Wellness grant from Health Insurance Company
- Increased requirements for incentives
- Added online health coaches as an option for employees
- Partnered with a wellness company to create a Fitbit Dashboard for employees.
- Added a 4th Level Incentive
- Offering more flexible requirements for busy personal lives.
- New Twitter account @EPSwellness
Questions?

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