



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is the ability to balance satisfaction and good functioning at work and home while experiencing minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000). The inability to maintain work-life balance can lead to stress, strain, and psychological distress (Sana & Aslam, 2018). Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the responsibilities of the two separate roles become incompatible (Frone, 2003).



Why is it important?

- A lack of work life-balance can result in negative outcomes, including physical and mental fatigue, agitation, and sleep loss (Erdamar & Demirel, 2014).
- Work-life balance is associated with employee motivation, productivity, and well-being (Byrne, 2005).
- Employees with work-life balance have greater organizational commitment and are less likely to leave their jobs (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019).

In Practice

To encourage a positive work-life balance, school leaders should provide a positive school culture that allows employees to openly discuss their struggles and collaboratively find solutions to address them.



What can schools do?

School management can provide a work environment that recognizes the importance of work-life balance by:

- Creating a supportive climate that acknowledges the negative impact of work intensification by taking concrete steps to prevent it.
- Establishing and maintaining open communication with staff to ensure they are supported in relation to workload concerns.
- Working alongside staff members individually to help them prioritize their work, highlighting both essential and non-essential tasks.



Leader Reflection

School leadership can prioritize employee well-being and work-life balance through the following specific actions:

- Set boundaries by coordinating regularly scheduled “catch-up” time to be used at staff’s discretion (e.g., responding to e-mails, grading student work etc.).
- Look into roles and responsibilities where little autonomy exists and allow staff to dictate how they will conduct this work.
- As much as possible, assess current work responsibilities and redistribute and eliminate any redundant or unnecessary work responsibilities.
- Actively monitor staff workloads to ensure that individuals do not overcommit themselves.
- Explore a variety of ‘hacks’ intended to reduce staff workload (e.g., rotated assignments, shorter meeting times, paring down initiatives etc.).
- Establish a supportive professional community where staff feel comfortable disclosing concerns and sharing strategies to make work more manageable (Bartlett et al., 2021).

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