

How does teacher stress and burnout impact student achievement?

The mental health and well-being of students in Canadian schools has become a growing concern – but it’s not just children’s well-being that’s concerning. Recent research demonstrates that the well-being of both students and teachers go hand-in-hand. In particular, increased teacher well-being leads to more supportive teacher-student relationships. Despite this evidence, a Canadian Teachers’ Federation survey shows that 85% of teachers find that poor work-life balance is affecting their ability to teach the way they would like to teach.

THE IMPACTS OF TEACHER STRESS AND BURNOUT INCLUDE:

<p>Impact on teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorer health outcomes: High blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, and depression. • Increased absenteeism: In Canada, the average work days lost per teacher (i.e. in schools, colleges, universities and training centres) jumped from 8.9 in 2014 to 11.9 in 2018. • Lower job satisfaction: There’s a close relationship between high levels of teacher burnout and low job satisfaction and commitment.
<p>Impact on students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced motivation and achievement: Teacher burnout and depersonalization (i.e. feelings of disinterest towards one’s job) negatively impacts teaching quality and student motivation (e.g. disruptive behaviour, low sense of belonging, weak belief in ability to succeed, lower grades). • Higher stress levels: Higher levels of teacher burnout is linked to higher cortisol levels in children, which is a biological indicator of stress.

ON THE FLIPSIDE, HERE ARE THREE WAYS THAT LEADERS CAN CREATE A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE THAT PROMOTES TEACHERS’ WELL-BEING:

<p>Promote mental fitness: teachers who have a positive sense of how they feel, think, and act generally have a sense of relatedness (i.e. connectedness) with fellow staff, believe their strengths and skills are valued, and have autonomy to collaborate and provide feedback.</p>	<p>Develop team resiliency: school staff who persist, bounce forward, and thrive in the face of adversity usually demonstrate strong relationship practices and professionalism, positive attitudes, emotional intelligence, and adaptation skills.</p>	<p>Embody positive leadership: administrators who are committed to helping teachers achieve their highest potential and succeed show compassion and gratitude, know the strengths/interests of their staff, clarify roles and expectations, and provide opportunities for growth.</p>
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The factors that promote student well-being are, in many ways, the same as the factors that promote teacher well-being. A positive school climate leads to reduced teacher absenteeism, fewer teachers leaving the profession, stronger teacher-student relationships, and improved student achievement. Targeted training for school teams and leaders on mental fitness and resiliency practices that foster teachers’ sense of relatedness, competency, and autonomy represent an important first step in improving school climate, reducing teacher stress, and enhancing student achievement.

For online resources and references please visit:
www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education

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