

Labor Management Partnership Moves the Needle on Employee Wellness

San Leandro Unified School District | San Leandro, CA

THE CHALLENGE

Recognizing the importance of wellness to student and employee success, satisfaction and achievement, San Leandro Unified School District (USD) is working to create a healthy school environment for all. San Leandro USD historically acknowledged the importance of employee wellness, but had no active plan. Led by the teachers' union, employee wellness rose to the forefront of labor management efforts during the 2015-2016 school year, uniting labor and management in a shared goal and serving as the first step towards a long-term cultural change to promote employee health.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- K-12 grades
- 8,673 Students
- 582 Teachers and classified staff
- 65% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals

STUDENT ETHNICITY

- 48% Latino
- 15% Black/African-American
- 10% Caucasian
- 23% Asian
- 3% Multiracial
- 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

ACTION STEPS

San Leandro USD's initiative began when employee wellness was included in bargaining discussions between the San Leandro Teacher's Association and the district management. Ultimately, the Collective Bargaining Agreement included language specifying that a labor-management group

convene to explore strategies to address employee wellness. The Labor Management Committee worked on an employee wellness policy, stressing employee health, the tie to

student success, and the commitment to a working partnership between labor and district management. During the school year, the CA School Employee Association (representing classified employees) and other unions were invited to participate on the committee. Mutual respect between the groups continued to develop throughout the planning process.

IMPACTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Due to the strong labor management partnership, a number of employee wellness accomplishments were quickly realized:

- Adopted the employee wellness policy and developed a comprehensive plan to create a culture of health with the district.
- Labor Management Committee functions as an ongoing group beyond the agreed time in the contract.
- Instituted a Wellness Champion structure (champions at each school implement activities to promote student and employee wellness).
 - Champions serve as the visible point person for wellness at their school, distribute wellness information, and bring the school perspective to the Labor Management Committee. Champions work to adopt and implement employee wellness policies at their school sites.
 - A .2 FTE district wellness champion

"As we created the policy and shared ideas, we [union and school administrators] became a unified driving force."

San Leandro Teachers Association (SLTA) Representative

coordinator supports policy implementation and works with school level champions.

- Staff Break Room Refresh
 - Labor Management committee helped implement a Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools Action Plan grant to refresh staff break rooms in every school.
 - With union input, teachers were surveyed to understand their priorities for the break rooms.
 - District administration contributed to the break room refresh by painting and reflooring break rooms when needed.
- Additional employee wellness activities for teachers and classified employees include:
 - Employee wellness interest survey
 - Flu shots
 - Stress management classes
 - Physical activity breaks during meetings

KAISER PERMANENTE CONTRIBUTION

Kaiser Permanente supported the success in San Leandro USD in a number of ways. First, consultation was provided to support a high functioning labor-management partnership. Second, Kaiser Permanente assisted with development of the comprehensive employee wellness plan and a calendar for implementing the plan.

Kaiser Permanente has furthered employee wellness implementation by providing resources to San Leandro USD including: grants to support the break room refresh, health education classes and materials, flu shots, and district wide physical activity and healthy eating contests to build excitement for, interest in, and adoption of healthy lifestyles.

LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons from San Leandro USD's impressive journey will inform other school districts working towards an impactful and sustainable employee wellness program.

- **Codify employee wellness in a district policy** that spells out the role of the district, including:
 - Professional learning opportunities for employees
 - Partnership with local bargaining units to identify strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors
 - Promoting employee participation in health promotion programs
- **Garner early buy-in** from all stakeholders (management, unions, school board and employees).
- Facilitate culture change for employee wellness through **clear and consistent communication and ongoing collaboration** between union representatives and district management.
- **Engage employees in meaningful ways** in planning and implementing the employee wellness policy. Be responsive to employee preferences and priorities.

“Collective problem-solving and having the union at the table early is crucial.”
San Leandro USD Leadership Representative

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