

Elevating Education-System Employee Wellness

April 2026 Wellness Newsletter

Welcome back from Spring Break! The Employee Wellness column is brought to you by ODE's [School Wellness, Inclusion Safety & Health Team](#) (SWISH). This month we will learn about the great work happening in Glide school district, lighten our mental load with wellness podcasts from The Teaching Well, and a refresher on the interconnectedness of wellness work using the ecological model.

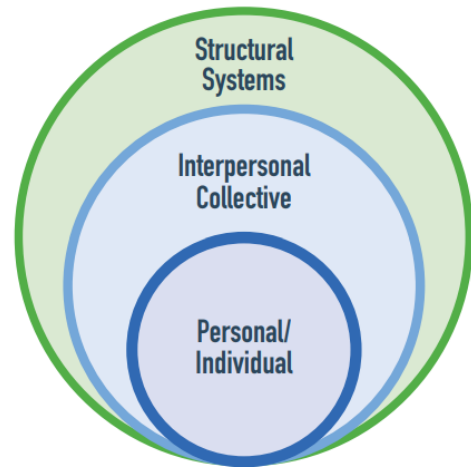
District Spotlight: Glide School District has supported over 90% of its employees with its employee well-being programs! The district has partnered with [Thrive Umpqua](#) to maintain a team of three wellness coordinators; this team works with a group of staff members to implement ongoing activities throughout each school year.

Using the Flourish Grant from Oregon Well-Being Trust, the wellness team has provided opportunities such as snow tubing, cross-country skiing, on-site chair massage, a Women on Weights club, in-service lunch days and self-defense and art classes, and the very popular soup-and-smoothie delivery during workdays.

The strongest well-being programs work to include all staff, and Glide School District's wellness team truly embodies this idea. Employees in the Transportation Department, for example, don't always have the time or availability to participate in on-campus activities, but a member of their team requested a foldable picnic table to use when the weather is nice. This purchase has helped the transportation staff enjoy spending time together outdoors and demonstrates that creativity and listening to the needs of employees are a cornerstone of well-being work.

There is an interconnectedness to employee workforce wellness work and how our environments, co-workers and individual wellness practices weave together to provide us with a space to show up for work and give our best. In [Creating a Culture of Care](#), the authors describe how "an ecological systems lens" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) supports leaders in understanding how culture and various experiences, relationships, environments and systems influence an individual, a group and/or a system." The three levels of this ecological system can be described as follows: **Individual** refers to what is going on within individual people (biologically, psychologically). **Collective** refers to individuals' interactions with each other; it includes relationships, community, and

collective experience. **Systems** refers to infrastructure, processes, organizational aspects, resources and policies that establish conditions for the ways people think and act. To effectively address education-level employee well-being, efforts need to be made on all three levels of this ecological system. The [four page summary](#) offers a way of thinking about the wellness practices and how they can transform school systems in a way that are inclusive and sustainable.



[The Teaching Well](#) is an organization of educators and clinicians who seek to stabilize schools by equipping educators with the resiliency and social-emotional skills to communicate and collaborate more effectively. The Teaching Well does a beautiful job of weaving all three levels of wellness work into their PD and support services. If you have some time to listen to a podcast on your way to or from school? [Check out a variety of podcasts](#) on topics such as burnout, boundaries, rest and recovery, compassion fatigue and my favorite, [Holding Fast: Staying Steady When you Need it the Most](#).

Big shout out and thanks to Oregon Well-Being Trust for sharing the work of districts and ESD's across the state to be featured in this newsletter. If you are interested in being featured in future communications, please reach out to Nat Jacobs at ode.healthyschools@ode.oregon.gov. We would love to hear from you!