



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



# *Employee Wellness Strategy*

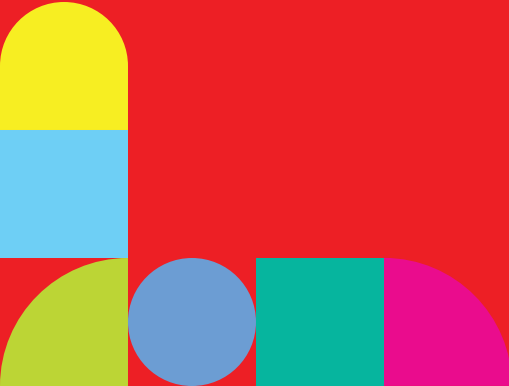


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# Contents

- Executive Summary** .....3
- Introduction**.....4
  - Considering Our Strategic Plan through an Employee Wellness Lens ....4
  - Frameworks for Considering Employee Well-being .....5
- Current Employee Wellness Resources** .....6
  - Internal Resources .....6
  - External Resources .....8
- Data, Reporting and Auditing in Employee Wellness Planning**.....9
  - Data & Reporting .....9
  - Auditing .....10
  - A 4-year Plan for Continuous Improvement of Data, Reporting & Auditing .....12
- A 4-year Plan for Employee Wellness Program Growth** .....13
- Conclusion** .....15
- Closing Statement** .....15



## *Executive Summary*

Employee Wellness matters. The well-being of our employees directly and indirectly impacts our ability to achieve the ambitious goals articulated in our strategic plan. The Employee Safety and Wellness team within the People, Culture and Leadership department is committed to a strategy that will help our district to optimally achieve our strategic goals.

A combination of proactive and responsive internal and external resources and services will be used to help ensure employees and leaders receive support in developing, nurturing and maintaining environments that are conducive to fostering employee wellness. We are building capacity to gather data, metrics and insights about our current state. Those insights will help inform organizational leaders and enable informed risk management decisions.

Intentional efforts will be made to improve existing core wellness services, and to deliberately expand wellness supports based on evolving operational needs.

Key expected outcomes include enhanced organizational capacity to foster employee wellness, improved wellness of employees at the individual and community level, and improved ability for the OCDSB to demonstrate success in these areas in tangible ways.



# Introduction

## Considering Our Strategic Plan through an Employee Wellness Lens

OCSDB’s Strategic plan outlines a framework of core values and key areas of focus that serve to guide our efforts. The following table summarizes prominently featured elements of the strategic plan, and provides commentary highlighting the significance of employee wellness in relation to these matters.

**Table 1: Strategic Plan Elements and Employee Wellness Considerations**

Strategic Plan Element		Employee Wellness Considerations
Core Values	Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees have the right to equitable and inclusive access to well-being resources</li> <li>• Enhancing leaders’ capacity to promote wellness is key to continued success</li> <li>• Supporting employees through medical absence and accommodation needs supports core values</li> </ul>
	Community Building	
	Responsible Resource Use	
	Leadership Development	
Key Areas of Focus	Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a social responsibility to care for the well-being of our employees</li> <li>• Well employees help contribute to optimized learning environments</li> </ul>
	Well-being	
	Social Responsibility	

Intentional consideration of employee wellness will help optimize the extent to which we achieve our stated mission: “To build a learning community that provides students with equitable opportunities to reach their potential and develop into respectful, creative, and knowledgeable community members who contribute to society.”



## Frameworks for Considering Employee Well-being

A variety of contemporary frameworks and models are used to help employers consider employee well-being. Although different approaches may consider different factors, commonly considered elements include factors that affect employees in their workplaces and away from work. They also include a combination of proactive resources to help promote individual resilience, and responsive resources that provide assistance when individuals are injured, ill, or otherwise unwell.

The People, Culture and Leadership department has identified six key pillars which are summarized in the following image.



The OCDSB currently relies upon a variety of internal and external resources to help support employees in these six areas of well-being. Additional information about resources supporting these facets of employee wellness are available in the guideline titled "*Wellness Matters!*" and available through the Employee Safety & Wellness team.

# Current Employee Wellness Resources

## Internal Resources

The Employee Safety and Wellness team is comprised of a variety of professional staff with expertise in the disciplines of occupational health and safety and disability management, as well as support staff. The key resources and services provided by the Employee Safety and Wellness team is summarized below.

**Table 2: Key Resources and Services Provided Internally by Employee Safety & Wellness**

Occupational Health & Safety Resources & Services	
Resource or Service	Description
Training, Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help reduce risk of workplace injuries and illnesses</li> <li>• Support employees, supervisors and senior leaders in understanding of roles and responsibilities related to occupational health and safety</li> <li>• Control risks associated with specific hazards such as workplace violence, slips, trips and falls, and hazardous materials.</li> </ul>
Investigation of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses & Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support investigation of workplace incidents by supervisors</li> <li>• Identify contributing factors and corrective actions to reduce risks</li> <li>• Investigate critical injuries as defined by health and safety legislation</li> </ul>
Joint Health & Safety Committee Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the internal responsibility system</li> <li>• Collaborate with worker and management representatives to help drive continuous improvement of safety in our workplaces</li> </ul>
Liaising with Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the resolution of work refusals and complaints</li> <li>• Help ensure regulatory compliance with issued MLITSD orders</li> </ul>



Disability Management Resources & Services	
Resource or Service	Description
Employee Wellness Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support employees and supervisors by facilitating access to a variety of virtual and in-person wellness resources</li><li>• Examples include our Employee Assistance Program and Sick Leave benefits</li></ul>
Management of Medical Absence and Accommodation Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support employees and leaders in facilitating early and safe return to work following absences and in consideration of accommodation needs</li><li>• Help ensure regulatory compliance with the duty to accommodate in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code</li></ul>
Attendance Support Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support improved attendance by collaborating with employees who experience elevated rates of absenteeism</li></ul>
Tragic Event Response Team and Critical Incident Stress Management Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide on-site support for employees following tragic, traumatic or otherwise stressful events</li><li>• Connect employees with specialized resources such as counsellors and other treatment providers as appropriate</li></ul>





## External Resources

In-house provision of employee wellness resources and services is supplemented with service offerings provided by expert third parties. A summary of current third-party resources is summarized below.

**Table 3: Key Employee Wellness Resources and Services Provided by External Parties**

Resource or Service	Description
Employee Assistance Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides a suite of services for employees and their family members, including counselling and expert advice about a variety of topics such as stress management, nutrition, child care, elder care, financial affairs and legal matters</li></ul>
School Board Cooperative Incorporated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides summary analysis of work-related injuries and illnesses and certain types of non-occupational medical absences, and performs benchmarking of these metrics against other</li></ul>
Public Services Health and Safety Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides expert services in completion of safety-related project work, such as Job Hazard Analyses and risk assessments</li></ul>

In addition to providing these noted resources and services, third parties also help ensure capacity for business continuity and provision of core services during potential periods of operational challenges such as unexpected staffing turnover events. OCDSB will continue to evaluate performance of current service providers. Our employee well-being strategy will also incorporate consideration of emerging needs, and identify additional third-party service providers to help support continuous maturation of our programs.



# Data, Reporting and Auditing in Employee Wellness Planning

## Data & Reporting

Through current management of core employee wellness functions, the OCDSB generates a variety of different sources of data. These data are used for a variety of different purposes, including ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation, helping to manage medical absence and accommodation cases, and to analyzing benefit usage rates. Different types of data are housed in a variety of different platforms, and there is limited integration potential between those platforms.

Data optimization is a part of the OCDSB's employee wellness strategy. Our goal is to compile different types of employee data that have historically been considered in isolation and present them in a singular integrated dashboard. The dashboard will be used to track trends over time, and to help provide support to senior leadership in making informed risk management decisions. Examples of data that will be considered in holistic analyses going forward are summarized in the following table.

**Table 4: Examples of Data Sources for Consideration in Our Future Employee Wellness Dashboard**

Data Source	Anticipated Insights
Numbers of Interventions from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, reasons for those interventions, and outcomes (e.g. orders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indication of compliance with occupational health and safety legislation</li></ul>
Numbers and categories of reported workplace injuries, illnesses, incidents Employee Violence Incident Reports, and safety concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of areas of priority focus for workplace injury and illness prevention initiatives</li></ul>
Numbers and categories of medical absence (Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability & Workplace Safety & Insurance Board) and medical accommodation cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced understanding of operational impacts of absenteeism and accommodations</li></ul>
Usage rates for 3 <sup>rd</sup> -party Wellness Resources (e.g. employee assistance program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of aspects of wellness with which employees may require additional supports at work and at home</li></ul>
Employee Survey Results (e.g. employee engagement, perception surveys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indicators of different facets of psychological safety</li></ul>



First iterations of our employee wellness dashboard will focus on compiling data that is readily available from a variety of sources. As data is analyzed over time and trends emerge, the dashboard will evolve in terms of complexity and content to help support the Board’s needs. Data will be used to help design our employee wellness initiatives, to quantitatively measure forward progress, and inform our various stakeholders about employee wellness status.

## Auditing

There are various contemporary standards and frameworks against which employee wellness programs can be audited. Auditing against recognized standards helps enable a clear understanding of the current state or baseline level of maturity. It also provides a reliable method for tracking incremental progress toward a desired future state.

Information about some common employee wellness auditing tools is summarized in the following table.

**Table 5: Auditing Resources for Measuring Status and Maturation of Employee Wellness Programs.**

Resource	Description
Audit against Mental Health Commission of Canada’s Psychological Safety Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess components of workplace psychological safety, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Organizational Culture</li><li>- Psychological and Social Support</li><li>- Clear Leadership &amp; Expectations</li><li>- Civility &amp; Respect</li><li>- Psychological Demands</li><li>- Growth &amp; Development</li><li>- Recognition &amp; Reward</li><li>- Involvement &amp; Influence</li><li>- Workload Management</li><li>- Engagement</li><li>- Balance</li><li>- Psychological Protection</li><li>- Protection of Physical Safety</li></ul></li></ul>

<p>CSA Z1000: Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess workplace health and safety management systems, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership and Organizational Commitment</li> <li>- Hazard Identification and Assessment</li> <li>- Hazard Control</li> <li>- Ongoing Inspections</li> <li>- Qualifications, Orientation and Training</li> <li>- Emergency Response</li> <li>- Incident Investigation</li> <li>- Program Administration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>National Institute for Disability Management and Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess key components of medical absence and accommodation case practices including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy Development</li> <li>- Information and Communication Management</li> <li>- Benefit Design and Influences</li> <li>- Knowledge and Skills of Disability Management Practitioner(s)</li> <li>- Occupational Ergonomics</li> <li>- Health Promotion and Wellness</li> <li>- Injury, Disability, and Lost-time Patterns</li> <li>- Disability Cost Benefit Data</li> <li>- Early Intervention</li> <li>- Case Management Procedures</li> <li>- Workplace Accommodations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Formal auditing against established standards can help supporting continuous improvement. As OCSDB's systems continue to mature, increasingly sophisticated auditing tools can be used to help facilitate continued optimization.



## A 4-year Plan for Continuous Improvement of Data, Reporting & Auditing

The following table provides a proposed 4-year plan for continuous improvement in the use of data, reporting and auditing to help facilitate maturation of our employee wellness program.

**Table 6: 4-year Plan for Employee Wellness Program Data, Reporting & Auditing**

Strategic Element	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Data & Reporting	Understand potential data sources and limitations	Produce dashboard and reports using existing sources of data (primarily lagging indicators)	Expand dashboard to include more leading indicators and balanced analysis	Continuous improvement of balanced analysis
Auditing	Continue current informal processes	Develop auditing plan (including budgetary considerations)	Complete audits, develop action plans to address findings	Implement action plans, plan for next audit cycle

Increasingly sophisticated continuous improvement opportunities will be identified as reporting and auditing practices advance in maturity.



# A 4-year Plan for Employee Wellness Program Growth

A primary focus over the next four years will be to assess, evaluate, and continuously improve our current core functions. This will be facilitated through intentional development of internal staff, strategic engagement of third-party resources, and deliberate measures to enhance organizational capacity through support of our leadership community. As current-state information and data are gathered and analyzed, insights will be derived that will help clarify current and future operational needs. Auditing of our current processes over time will allow measurement of forward progress and program maturation.

In addition to maintaining our core services, we will seek opportunities to expand our employee wellness program offerings. Rate of growth will be influenced by a variety of factors, including resource availability and organizational capacity. Our ability to expand wellness program offerings will also be dependent on findings of analysis of performance of current state practices focused on occupational health and safety and disability management. Enhanced stabilization of these current core functions will help ensure a solid foundation for program growth in other areas of employee wellness.

The following tables summarize a potential 4-year trajectory for incremental continuous improvement to OCDSB’s Employee Wellness Program offerings. Table 7 summarizes key tactical initiatives that are in progress or are planned for completion during the 2023-24 year. Table 8 summarizes potential initiatives that could be completed during future years.

**Table 7: Employee Wellness Program Initiatives In-progress or Planned for 2023-24.**

2023-24 (Initiatives In-progress or Planned)	
Initiative	Description
Slips, Trips & Falls Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce risk of workplace injuries by promoting awareness of slip, trip and fall risk factors</li> </ul>
Enhanced Workplace Violence Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve awareness about workplace violence resources with new training to be delivered April 8<sup>th</sup></li> <li>Improve risk assessment tool to help reduce risk of workplace violence</li> </ul>
Enhanced Management of Asbestos Containing Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving recordkeeping practices by continued digitization of records related to management of Asbestos Containing Materials</li> </ul>



Joint Health & Safety Committee Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the Joint Health &amp; Safety Committee by providing leadership and assistance with respect to committee governance, and managing workplace health and safety hazards</li> </ul>
Updated Attendance Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current attendance support resources to optimize support for employees experiences elevated rates of intermittent absenteeism</li> </ul>
Mental Health Training Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run pilot training initiative to help leaders better recognize mental health risks at work, and develop enhanced support strategies for employees</li> </ul>
Enhance Employee Assistance Program Use Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of various underutilized facets of services through a variety of electronic and in-person communication techniques</li> </ul>

**Table 8: Employee Wellness Program Potential Future Initiatives for 2024-25 through 2026-27.**

2024-25 (Potential Initiatives)	
Initiative	Description
Mental Health Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assuming favorable outcomes from 2023-24 Pilot, provide mental health training to leaders across the organization</li> </ul>
Workplace Violence Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplace Violence Risk Management training to help supplement currently-used Behaviour Management Systems training</li> </ul>
Ergonomics Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a program for reducing employee risk of musculoskeletal disorders (e.g. sprains, strains and repetitive strain injuries)</li> </ul>
2025-26 (Potential Initiatives)	
Initiative	Description
Hearing Conservation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce risk of noise-induced hearing loss for employees who are exposed to high levels of noise at work</li> </ul>
Peer Support Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program through which employees have access to trained peers who can provide support and connect other to specialized resources</li> </ul>



2026-27 (Potential Initiatives)	
Initiative	Description
Early Intervention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a program that identifies key indicators to prompt early intervention and scenario-specific provision of wellness supports</li></ul>
Contractor Safety Risk Management Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect the OCDSB from regulatory compliance risks by building a program to help ensure the safety of contractors</li></ul>

As the OCDSB embarks on increasingly structured analyses of current state performance, our findings may result in identification of opportunities for other initiatives that are not presented in the tables above. Similarly, the sequence and timelines for potential future initiatives may be adjusted as more information is gathered about current needs.

## ***Conclusion***

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The OCDSB has a strong foundation of internal and external resources and supports through which employee wellness is cultivated, protected and promoted. Increasingly intentional consideration of data and metrics will help identify evidence-based strategic opportunities for improvements and continued maturation of our wellness programs. Formal auditing will help enable structured measurement of progress. The Employee Safety & Wellness team will continuously improve our currently offered core employee wellness services, and we will seek opportunities to expand our services.

Continued focus on employee wellness programs is expected to generate positive outcomes that align with our Strategic Plan. Employees will experience positive outcomes such as improved resilience, higher levels of engagement, and stronger feelings of well-being. Leaders will benefit from enhanced capacity to be conduits between themselves and beneficial wellness resources for their employees. The OCDSB will realize strategic benefits, such as optimized learning environments, and enhanced demonstrable commitment to social responsibility and equity, inclusion and diversity.

## ***Closing Statement***

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Staff in Employee Safety & Wellness is always available to help with any questions related to the safety and well-being of employees.



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