

THE STANDARD CONNECTION

Keeping in Touch
with Our CTA Members



A QUICK OVERVIEW

According to national statistics, more than 40% of educators leave the profession within the first five years, with many citing exhaustion and burnout as causes. It can be difficult to maintain a necessary work-life balance when you have so many responsibilities. But we've focused this edition of *The Standard Connection* on ways you can avoid imbalance and alleviate stress.

In this issue, you can discover techniques to focus and sustain your energy. If you never seem to have enough time, we have some suggestions to help you manage your schedule. Self-care is not just a fad, it's a necessity, so check out some easy wellness practices you can incorporate into your daily routine. And finally, explore the recently updated Member Service Center website.

Feature Story: Stay Energized	2
Be Well, Work Well: Organize Your Time	4
Know Your Coverage: Updated Member Service Center Site and New Educator Enrollment Opportunity	5
What's Trending: Self-care	6
Comfort Food: Recipe	7

Come See Us!

Stop by our table at these CTA member conferences, take our survey and get a free coffee gift card!

New Educator Weekend (South)
December 6-8 – San Diego

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference
December 13-15 – San Francisco

Good Teaching Conference (North)
February 7-9 – San Jose

New Educator Weekend (North)
February 21-23 – Santa Clara

Equity & Human Rights Conference
February 28-March 1 – Irvine

Good Teaching Conference (South)
March 13-15 – Garden Grove

To learn more about these conferences or to register, visit ctago.org

Feature Story

Stay Energized

As the school year progresses and the holiday season approaches, you may be feeling overwhelmed by the demands of your job and your life. Finding the balance between your obligations as an educator and your personal needs is key to sustaining energy levels that last throughout the year and beyond.

Education is a profession that can drain you emotionally, mentally and physically. Managing stress and maintaining boundaries are essential when you're trying to keep your energy up and your spirits high. Finding work-life balance is important for your overall wellness and for your stamina. Here are some ideas to help you keep up your energy and avoid burnout.

Find what fuels your passion

Is it time to rediscover a hobby or interest that fueled your fire? Maybe you need to find a new creative outlet or pastime? Whatever it is that gives you joy — from hiking to baking to music — make it a priority. Give yourself permission to do something you love daily and tap into that energy throughout the day.

Focus on one positive thing

Days can be overwrought with challenges, and perhaps you feel like you're not having the impact you hoped for when you chose to be an educator. But you are, and there is always a moment to give you hope or encouragement. Think about those positive interactions, consciously hone in on one every day, and let it motivate you.

Connect with colleagues

A rule of physics is that energy is ongoing and transferable. So, if your energy is waning, find support from others who can offer encouragement, advice or assistance. Also, if you're in a position to help another, do so. It will, in turn, give you a boost. Educators are unique and stalwart, especially when they bolster one another.



Don't beat yourself up

Stay focused on the big picture. If you have a bad day or are second-guessing your actions, try to concentrate your energy on solutions and outcomes. Keep in mind that you can only take on so much. Be patient with yourself and remember that education is a process — for you and your students.

Make time and take time

The saying "You can't draw from an empty well" is especially poignant for educators. As individuals who shape young minds and give so much in the process, you have to make time for yourself. Understand what you need to feel your best every day beyond the basics of rest, nutrition and exercise. Take time to recharge and energize.

Students can also experience fatigue going into the winter months. Here are a few suggestions to keep them excited and engaged before the holiday break:

- Change up the routine to keep them alert.
- Do some stretches to activate their bodies and their minds.
- Hold small group discussions to encourage cooperative learning.
- Turn a lesson into a game. There are many different apps available that can help make learning more interactive.
- Rearrange your classroom. Move desks, create workstations and mix things up.



JUST FOR LAUGHS

What is a scarecrow's favorite vehicle?

An Autumn-mobile.



4
Be Well,
Work Well

Organize Your Time

New Member Service Center

Know Your Coverage

Our CTA Member Service Center site has been updated with a new look and easier navigation to help you find information you may be looking for. There you can access plan details, calculate insurance needs, contact The Standard and more.

The updated website includes:

- Disability and Life Insurance plan details
- Easy online application
- Online claim submission
- Informational videos
- Insurance needs calculators
- A simple way to submit a question or message to The Standard



Access the new Member Service Center:

1. Go to CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard
2. Log in with your CTA login
3. Click on "Access The Standard's Member Service Center" in the sidebar

Help New Educators or District Transfers Get CTA-endorsed Coverage

If you have a brand-new CTA member in your district starting their first job or a long-time member who transferred to your district, please remind them of their limited-time opportunity to apply for CTA-endorsed plans without answering any health questions.



When applying for coverage within 180 days of starting work, they can:

- **Protect their paycheck** with Disability Insurance
- **Protect their loved ones** with up to \$200,000 of Life Insurance

They can apply online at: standard.com/cta/newhire



REMINDER

As you start your new school year, some of your benefits might have changed. Be sure to check your paystub to make sure The Standard coverage is being deducted.

You've heard the phrase, "Make the most of your time." When you have so much to accomplish in a single day, let alone a semester or a school year, it's vital to be an organizational ninja. Staying on top of the things you have to do will allow you to find more time for the things you want to do. Here are some time management strategies that can help you stay organized.

Prioritize your to-do list

There are things that you have to do every day as an educator. Set your priorities first thing each day to stay on track in case of interruptions. Also, keep your list doable and do not take on more than you can tackle.

Automate & streamline tasks

Take advantage of apps that can help you simplify and manage day-to-day tasks like grading, attendance and notes. You can also lesson plan, assign work, and communicate with families using tech tools.

Open up the windows

Plan some undesignated windows of time to catch up on projects, catch up with a student or colleague, or just catch your breath. If you have some extra time set aside to tackle the unexpected or even get ahead, you're less likely to feel overextended.

Plan ahead, but stay flexible

You can start a day or week with the best intentions. You've planned your time, written lists, kept track in a planner, and then something derails you. Not to worry. Utilize aids or classroom helpers, bump some less important tasks, and get back to your priorities when possible.



What do you get if you drop a pumpkin?

Squash.

What's Trending

Self-Care

The term self-care is making the rounds in various media, but the practice is as old as humanity. More than ever, self-care refers to activities that are relaxing, refueling and rejuvenating. For educators, self-care is critical to job performance as it can improve energy, patience, creativity, endurance and more. Here are a few ways to incorporate more self-care into your routine.

Listen to an uplifting podcast: Explore podcasts that motivate and boost positivity like The Good Life Project or Happier with Gretchen Rubin. There are also numerous podcasts dedicated to inspiring, supporting and uplifting educators specifically.

Take a moment to meditate: Stillness can often be a wellspring for inspiration. Calming your mind can help focus your energy. Here are some apps that can guide you: Calm (free through their Calm Schools Initiative), Headspace and Insight Timer.

Be a lifelong learner: Beyond certifications and requirements, find an outlet for learning. Whether you take a class for fun at a local community college or enroll in online courses, ongoing enrichment is good for your mind.

Take a deep breath: Aromatherapy can be used to relax, focus, ease sickness, boost your mood, and more. Whether worn or diffused, be sure to choose pure, botanical essential oils that are naturally extracted and therapeutic-grade.

Comfort Food

Recipe

Grandmothers and moms everywhere know that hearty comfort food is good for the soul. Autumn is a time for casseroles, and self-care sometimes means putting something yummy in your tummy. The word casserole actually describes a cooking vessel that was communal — what was cooking in the pot was meant to be shared. Casseroles became an American staple during the Depression and wartime years. Easy, freezable and tasty, casseroles can provide make-ahead convenience to save you time during a busy workweek. Here is a delicious take on a classic dish:

Hot Chicken Salad (serves 4)

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cooked chicken (hand shredded or chopped)
- 1 ¾ to 2 cups reduced fat sharp cheddar
- 1 ½ cups chopped celery
- ¾ cup sliced almonds (lightly toasted)
- 1 teaspoon dried onion flakes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup light mayo
- ¾ cup light sour cream
- 1 cup crushed wavy potato chips

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Mix all ingredients except chips in a large bowl, then transfer to a greased casserole or baking dish.
3. Spread mixture evenly, then cover with crushed chips.
4. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes.
5. Uncover, and bake an additional 10-15 minutes (until bubbly and chips start to brown).



JUST FOR LAUGHS

How do you fix a broken pumpkin?

With a pumpkin patch.



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We want your input
Take a quick survey about *The Standard Connection*, and you'll be entered to win a \$50 cash gift card. Just scan the QR code next to your address, or visit www.bit.ly/TheStandardSurvey to get started.

Staying balanced can be particularly challenging for educators who devote so much time and energy to their schools and students. In this edition of *The Standard Connection*, we're exploring ways to help you align your work demands and your well-being – from maintaining your energy to staying organized or making time for self-care.

In this issue: FIND BALANCE

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