



Teacher Wellness: Creating Schools Where Educators Thrive

WVPEC June 2025



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Superintendent,
Floyd County Public Schools



Our objectives:



Highlight the importance of teacher wellness for **school success** .



Introduce **actionable strategies** based on the latest research.



Write or draw all of the things that are on a teacher's "plate" in 2025.



Causes of Teacher Burnout



Emotional Exhaustion

The emotional labor of supporting students, families, and colleagues can lead to fatigue.



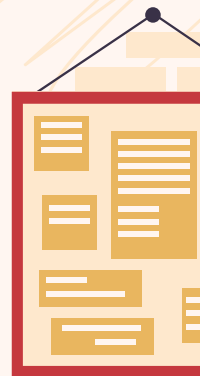
Depersonalization

Teachers under chronic stress may develop negative or detached attitudes toward their students or colleagues.



Reduced Personal Accomplishment

Teachers often feel ineffective or undervalued when they lack the resources, time, or support to meet student needs.





Why teacher wellness **matters**:

- Teacher burnout affects 50% of educators within their first five years.
- Burnout contributes to high teacher turnover, which disrupts student learning and increases recruitment costs.
- Teacher absenteeism and reduced engagement impact the overall school climate.
- **Positive wellness initiatives lead to higher retention rates and better student outcomes.**



Research Insights

Effective Ways Schools Can Support Teacher Wellness





**Supportive
School Culture**



**Promote Physical &
Emotional Health**



**Professional
Autonomy**



**Address Workload
Issues**



**Ensure Leadership
Support**



**Improve Compensation
& Benefits**

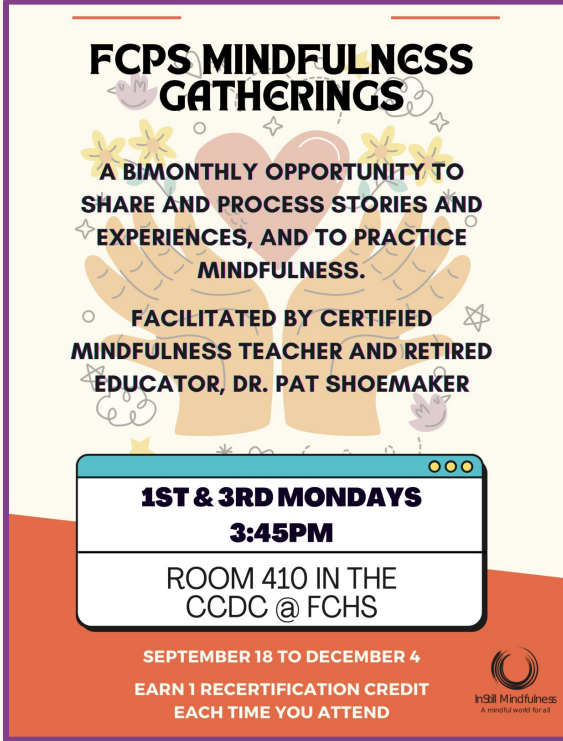
Supportive School Culture

- Promote a culture of appreciation through recognition programs and celebrations of successes.
- Encourage peer support by creating opportunities for belonging and connection.



Promote Physical & Emotional Health

- Create wellness spaces in schools for relaxation and recharge.
- Offer incentives for physical activity, such as fitness challenges or discounts on gym memberships.
- Implement stress management initiatives like mindfulness training, yoga sessions, or mental health workshops.
- Provide access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offering counseling and other mental health resources.

A poster for FCPS Mindfulness Gatherings. It features a central illustration of two hands holding a heart, surrounded by stars and flowers. The text is arranged in a clear, hierarchical layout. At the bottom, there is a logo for InSight Mindfulness.

FCPS MINDFULNESS GATHERINGS

A BIMONTHLY OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE AND PROCESS STORIES AND EXPERIENCES, AND TO PRACTICE MINDFULNESS.


FACILITATED BY CERTIFIED MINDFULNESS TEACHER AND RETIRED EDUCATOR, DR. PAT SHOEMAKER

1ST & 3RD MONDAYS
3:45PM

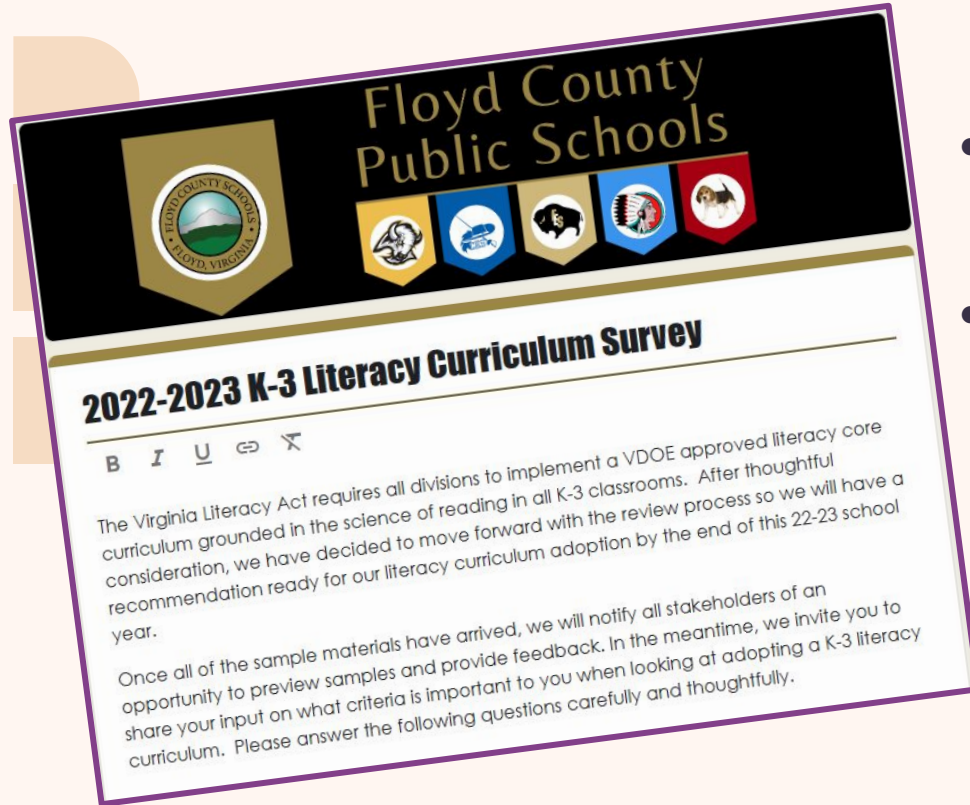
ROOM 410 IN THE
CCDC @ FCHS

SEPTEMBER 18 TO DECEMBER 4

EARN 1 RECERTIFICATION CREDIT
EACH TIME YOU ATTEND

 InSight Mindfulness
A mindful world for all

Professional **Autonomy**



- Involve/trust teachers in decision-making processes, especially in curriculum development and instructional strategies.
- Allow flexibility in how teachers manage their classrooms and workloads. Stop micromanaging!

Address Workload Issues

- Reduce administrative burdens by streamlining paperwork and scheduling.
- Provide adequate planning time within the school day to minimize after-hours work.

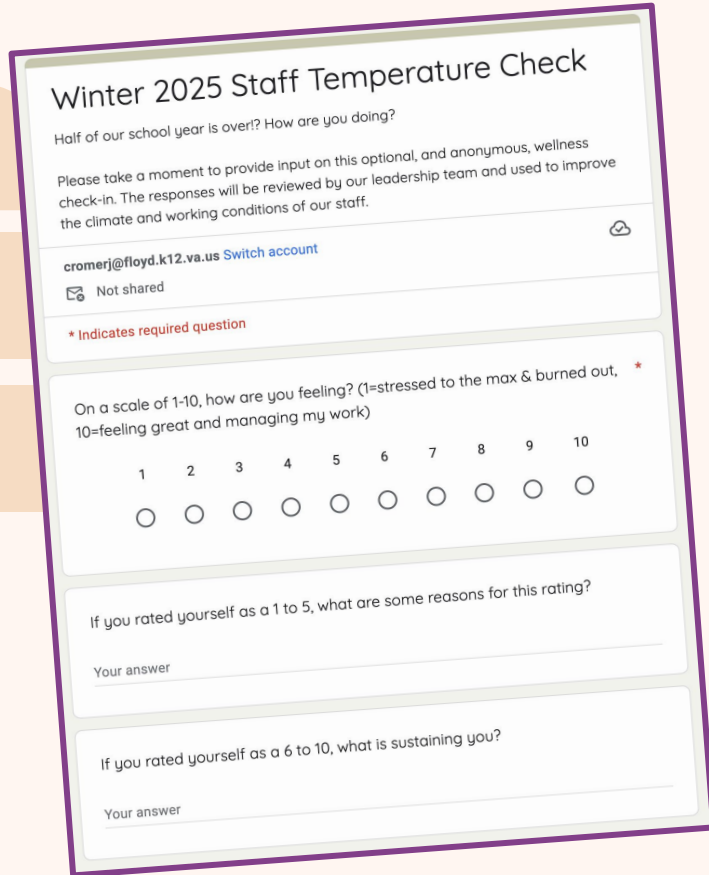


Using AI in Special Education

AI can help Special Education teachers

- Lesson Planning Support
- Can assist with creating IEP goals or documenting student progress
- Provide strategies to support students with behavioral/emotional challenges
- Help design personalized learning materials
- Suggest accommodations

Ensure Leadership Support



Winter 2025 Staff Temperature Check

Half of our school year is over! How are you doing?

Please take a moment to provide input on this optional, and anonymous, wellness check-in. The responses will be reviewed by our leadership team and used to improve the climate and working conditions of our staff.

cromerj@floyd.k12.va.us [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

On a scale of 1-10, how are you feeling? (1=stressed to the max & burned out, 10=feeling great and managing my work) *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

If you rated yourself as a 1 to 5, what are some reasons for this rating?

Your answer

If you rated yourself as a 6 to 10, what is sustaining you?

Your answer

- Leaders can build trust by maintaining visibility, actively listening, responding thoughtfully, and demonstrating consistency in their actions.
- Train administrators to recognize signs of burnout and provide targeted support.
- Encourage open **communication**, where teachers feel safe discussing challenges and seeking help.

Improve Compensation & Benefits

Educator Group	Anticipated Canvas Modules Release	Approximate Completion Time	Stipends*
K-5 Reading Specialists	September 2024	3 - 4 hours per module	\$1,000
K-5 Teachers (e.g., classroom, SPED, ESL)	June 2024	2 - 3 hours per modules	\$1,000
6-8 ELA Teachers	September 2024	2-3 hours per modules	\$1,000
6-8 Content Area Teachers	September 2024	1-2 hour per module	\$750

*We will be offering two dates of payment. Send a completion email to Tammy Hubbard and Robert Ratcliffe by November 8 to be paid by November pay period or by April 4 to be paid on the April pay period.

- Advocate for competitive salaries and comprehensive health benefits, including mental health coverage.
- Offer stipends for extracurricular responsibilities or additional workloads.
- Provide creative non-monetary perks such as extra personal days, meal delivery vouchers, comp time, etc.

**Think of one teacher
you admire and
consider what
makes that teacher
thrive.**



Stay Interviews

Stay interviews are structured, one-on-one conversations between leaders and employees designed to understand what keeps staff engaged and what improvements can enhance their job satisfaction.

- Identify factors that motivate teachers to stay.
- Uncover potential challenges before they lead to burnout or turnover.
- Strengthen relationships between staff and leadership.





BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER

2024-2025 FCPS Stay Interviews

Directions for Conducting Stay Interviews

1. **Purpose:** These interviews aim to understand what motivates and retains our top teachers, ensuring they feel valued and supported in their roles.
2. **Timing:** Allocate 10-15 minutes during the mid-year goal meeting for this conversation.
3. **Tone:** Create a positive and open atmosphere. Listen actively, and let the teacher guide the conversation.
4. **Documentation:** Use this form to capture key insights, but avoid turning the conversation into a survey. Focus on building trust.
5. **Follow-Up:** Be prepared to share any immediate follow-up actions or let the teacher know how their feedback will be used to improve their experience at the school.

Thank you for prioritizing these conversations to support and retain our exceptional staff!

Connection to the School: *

What do you love most about working at our school?
What keeps you excited to come to work every day?
What do you think makes our school unique or special?

Your answer

Professional Growth and Support: *

Do you feel like you're growing professionally this year? Why or why not?
What opportunities for professional development have been most helpful to you?
How can I better support your goals and professional growth?

Your answer

Job Satisfaction: *

What part of your role brings you the most satisfaction?
What challenges do you face that make your job harder?
Is there anything about your role or workload that you'd like to change?

Your answer


Team and Relationships: *


How would you describe your relationships with your colleagues?
Do you feel valued by your team and administration? In what ways?
What can I do to help strengthen our school's sense of community?

Your answer



Case Studies

- 
1. **Stand and Move:**
Find someone in the room who has the same case study as you.
 2. **Introduce Yourself:**
Share your name, role, and school division.
 3. **Discuss Your Case Study:**
 - Read the scenario together if needed.
 - Work through the discussion questions provided.
 - Be ready to share 1 key takeaway with the larger group.




You'll have about 5 minutes to discuss. When time is up, we'll regroup and share highlights.






Case Study #1



At Green Hill Elementary, the principal is described by staff as “nice but never around.” While the school’s test scores are average and behavior incidents are manageable, the most recent climate survey revealed that 78% of teachers felt unsupported by school leadership. Several comments read:

- *“No one checks in on us.”*
- *“I feel like I’m on an island.”*
- *“We only hear from the principal when something’s wrong.”*

Recently, a strong mid-career teacher turned in her resignation, citing burnout and feeling “completely alone.”





Case Study #2

In Ridgeview Middle School, teachers report staying hours after school each day to grade, plan, and manage required documentation. Planning time is often absorbed by IEP meetings, administrative walk-through debriefs, and frequent district updates. A veteran science teacher shared, *"I love teaching, but this is not sustainable. I don't even have time to eat lunch."*

A new teacher with great potential quit mid-year. When asked why, she said: *"I couldn't keep up. I felt like I was constantly failing."*

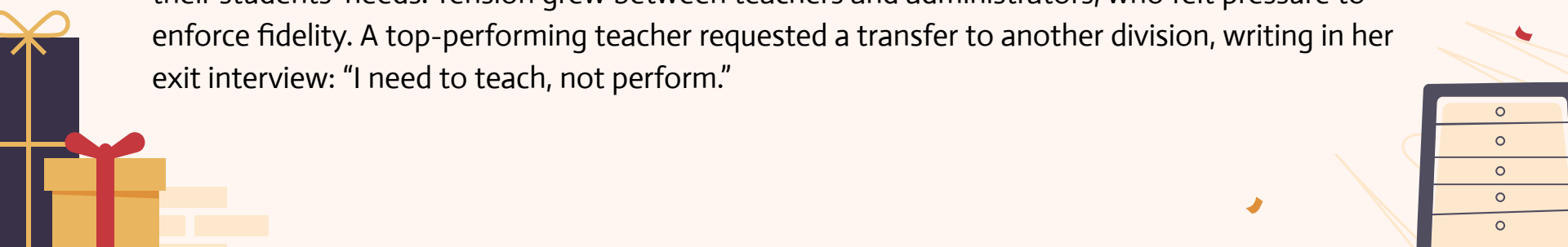


Case Study #3

At Cedar Grove High School, the division recently adopted a new district-wide instructional framework that includes scripted lesson components and strict pacing guides. School leaders were instructed to monitor implementation during walk-throughs and provide feedback weekly.

At first, implementation went smoothly, but within a few months, teachers began to express frustration. One English teacher said, “I used to love crafting lessons based on my students’ interests, but now I feel like I’m just delivering a script.” Another said, “I can’t reteach when kids are struggling—we’re told to stick to the calendar.”

Several teachers began informally pushing back, skipping pieces of the framework to better meet their students’ needs. Tension grew between teachers and administrators, who felt pressure to enforce fidelity. A top-performing teacher requested a transfer to another division, writing in her exit interview: “I need to teach, not perform.”






Case Study #4

During a beginning-of-year staff meeting at Maple Valley Elementary, the principal emphasized the importance of work-life balance, encouraging teachers to “unplug” after hours and “set boundaries.” Staff appreciated the sentiment, but the goodwill quickly faded.

Within weeks, teachers began receiving late-night emails from administrators with requests for data, lesson plans, and survey responses due the next morning. Teachers who didn't respond promptly felt scrutinized or left out of decisions. One teacher shared privately, “They tell us to take care of ourselves, but they don't respect our time.”

Morale dropped. The staff began to question whether leadership truly valued their well-being—or just said the right things at the right time.



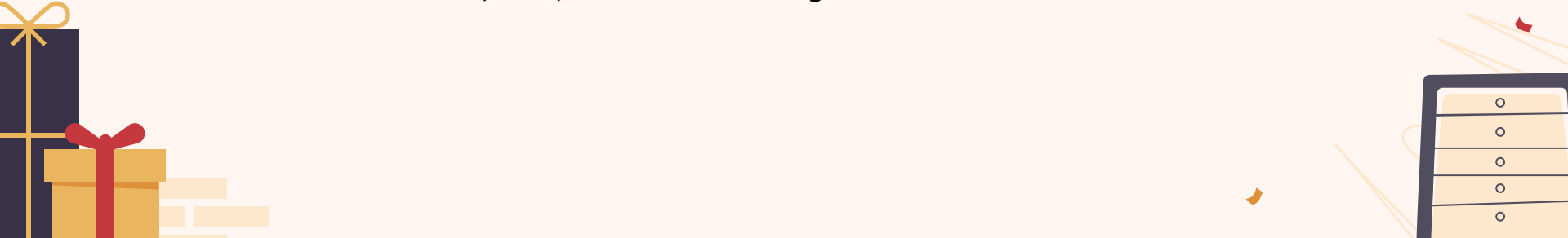


Case Study #5

In Blue Ridge School District, the superintendent conducted a top-down rollout of new initiatives focused on school climate, data-driven instruction, and teacher growth goals. These initiatives were well-intentioned and aligned with state priorities but were implemented without direct teacher input.

As the year progressed, central office heard growing complaints from teachers and principals about initiative fatigue. At one school, a teacher anonymously wrote, “If leadership ever asked us what we needed—or even how we were doing—it would make a huge difference.”

When a building leader shared this comment with the superintendent, the response was: “We don’t have time for touchy-feely stuff. We need to get results.”





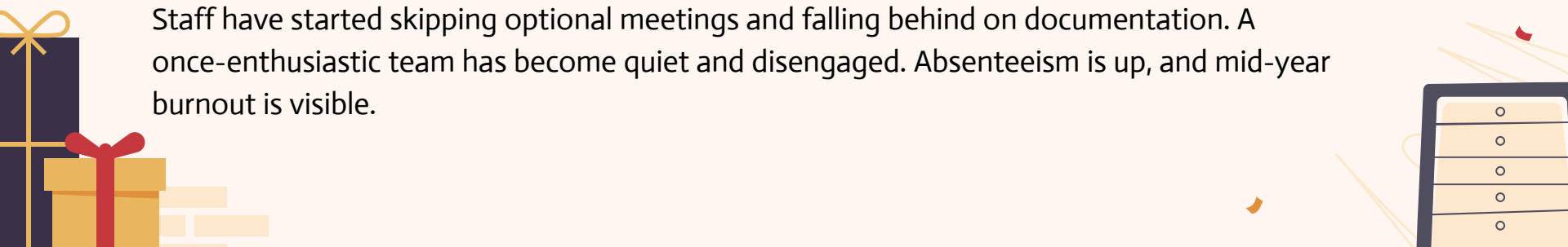
Case Study #6

At Pine Hollow Middle School, leadership is known for being innovative and student-focused. Over the past year, they've introduced several new initiatives: a weekly advisory program, a revised RTI documentation system, a new data dashboard, a restorative practices pilot, and a book study on culturally responsive teaching.

Each initiative is valuable on its own—but together, they've stretched staff thin. Teachers often say, "Everything is important... but there's just too much."

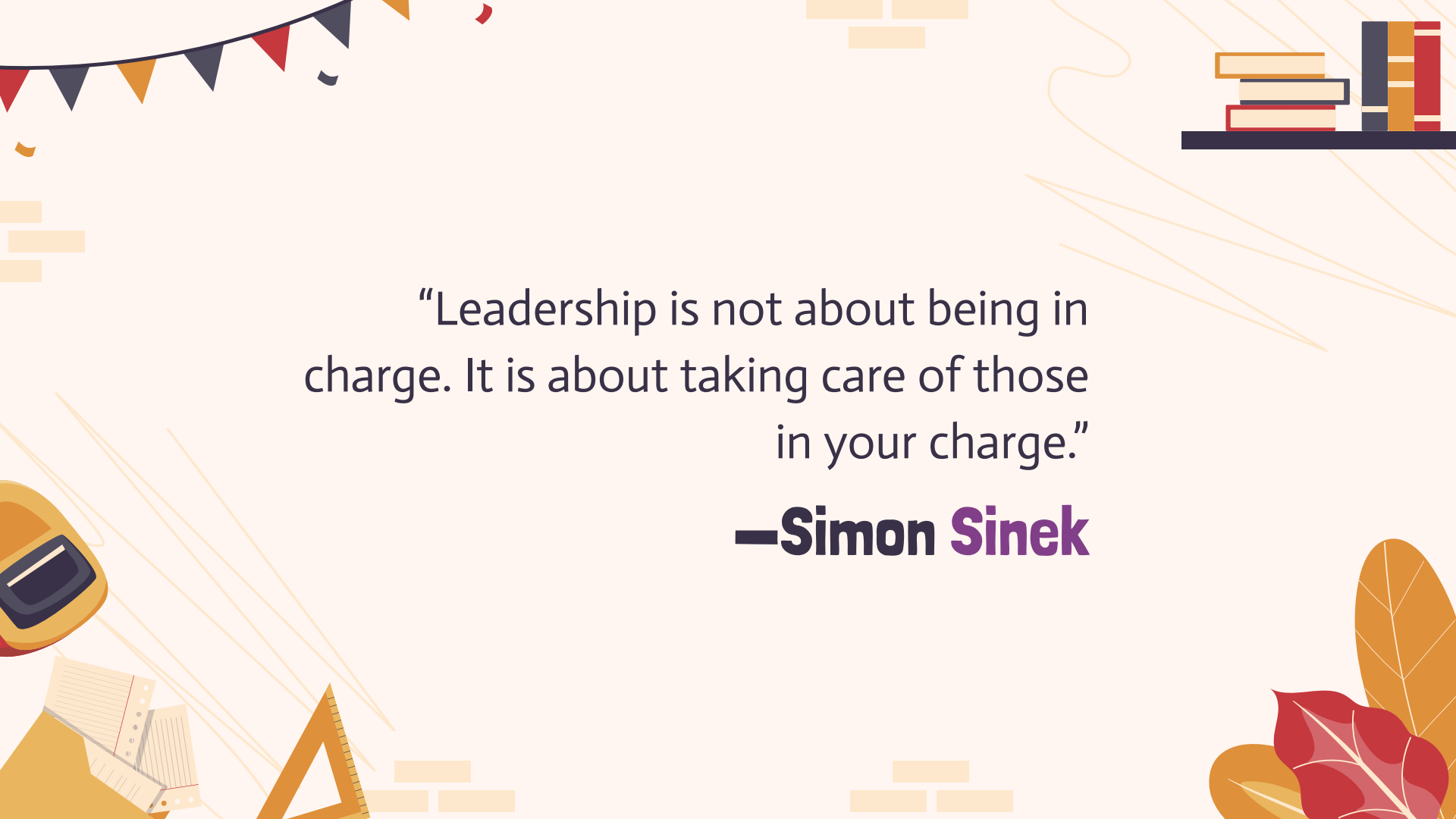
One teacher shared in a meeting: "Every time we raise concerns, we hear, 'It's just one more thing.' But it's not. It's the tenth one more thing."

Staff have started skipping optional meetings and falling behind on documentation. A once-enthusiastic team has become quiet and disengaged. Absenteeism is up, and mid-year burnout is visible.



Action Plan

Supportive School Culture	Staff shout-outs, mentoring programs, school climate teams
Promote Physical & Emotional Health	Wellness Wednesdays, optional yoga/meditation sessions, walking meetings
Professional Autonomy	Choice in PD, opportunities for innovation and pilot programs
Address Workload Issues	Limit new programs, consider teacher-led calendar audits, reduce meetings
Ensure Leadership Support	Regular check-ins, leadership listening tours, anonymous feedback channels
Improve Compensation & Benefits	Extra personal days, meal delivery vouchers, comp time



“Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge.”

—**Simon Sinek**



THANKS!

Feel free to reach out with any questions!

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