Staff wellness programs cannot thrive without the support of the population they serve.

Giving the entire staff the opportunity to vote and become involved in the planning and decision making of the program is one way to create a culture of inclusion and support. Ensuring that participants feel safe and respected during wellness activities is also critical to ensuring participation and sustainability. Also consider making the program an employee health benefit with incentive programs to improve participation and employee support. Strive to create activities that make involvement easy and fun!

Incentive programs should reward active involvement, such as attendance at wellness activities, as opposed to specific objectives, such as weight loss. Inappropriate incentive programs, such as one measuring weight loss, may cause stress, unhealthy competition, or harmful habits instead of encouragement, motivation, and actual improvements in health and wellness. Rewards can include small gifts like water bottles, pedometers, exercise equipment, books, or gift cards.

A supportive environment will also include an effective communication system, allowing for information to be shared easily and feedback to be readily provided. This will improve sustainability of the program and allow it to meet the direct needs of the staff and students. It is important to engage every participant in order to get thorough feedback.

Examples of strong communication tools include:

- Monthly emails
- Support groups
- Feedback forms
- Staff meetings
- Regular announcements and status updates
- Posters to present success and promote engagement
- Media posts and outreach
- Newsletters

If time during school is limited and not many participants are able to attend meetings for a face-to-face support environment, consider using social media, online surveys, voting systems, and newsletters to increase support and

Tip for Selecting Incentives

If funding is limited and cannot cover costs towards awards and incentives, consider simple gifts like baked goods from volunteers, donated gifts from local businesses, participation in special events, or recognition at all-staff meetings.