



Face the Facts: By the Numbers – Teaching is Hard

The teaching profession is a challenging one. Many teachers, regardless of age, come into the classroom with limited classroom experience, a lack of exposure to the sociocultural realities facing their students and their families, a lack of ongoing mentorship or support (commonplace in most other professionals), extraordinarily high levels of stress, with relatively low salaries and low levels of social capital.

Regardless of the acknowledged obstacles, most teachers enter the profession due to a profound desire to help support and shape the next generation. With so much on the line (and on their shoulders) we should be asking ourselves if we are doing enough to support them personally and professionally.

Today's teachers:

- Spend between 50 – 60 hours per week on teaching duties – including non-compensated school-related activities such as grading papers, bus and cafeteria duty, club advising and additional afterschool tutoring.
- On average, spend 1,100 hours of instructional time with their students (elementary) over the course of the school year.
- Teach an average of 25 students (elementary) and 100 students (high school). In some urban settings, class size can reach 32 students (elementary) and 35 (high school)
- Spend an average of \$450 of their own money to meet the needs of their students. This can include: extra school supplies, books, tissue and paper towels, cleaning supplies, snacks, art supplies etc.
- 92% of teachers buy necessary supplies for their own classroom.
- More than 50% of teachers pay out of pocket for field trips for students who could not otherwise afford to participate.
- Face unsafe or unsanitary working conditions: polluted air, water or crumbling infrastructure. 25% of today's teachers say unsatisfactory working conditions keep them from wanting to stay in the profession.
- Close to 50% of new teachers leave the profession during the first five years of teaching.
- Many do not receive any of the workplace wellness resources or support, considered standard practice in any traditional corporate setting.
- On average, teachers get about 23 minutes for lunch or personal time.

Imagine what consistent and coordinated participation in wellness programs would do to: increase teacher retention rates, improve productivity, decrease attrition and absenteeism, all while positioning teacher to be powerful role models for health and wellness. A great place to start is with the FoodFight's Teacher Wellness Workshop – a 1 hour professional development session (including a slide deck and talking notes) is available under the "Educate" tab in our toolkit.