Although it may seem obvious, the fact that students need to be healthy, well-fed, well-rested, and emotionally stable in order to be successful in school is often overlooked when we solely focus on a student’s attendance, behavior, and course grades. Identifying underlying Resiliency skills can lead to the root causes when those measurables appear the suffer. If an adult can identify whether a student may be missing out on sleep, or meals, or dealing with a chronic health issue, then they can better help that student cope and address a well-being issue before it results in academic failure.

Well Being

Healthy Snack Options should be made available to students. In addition to a healthy lunch program, many schools provide healthy snacks throughout the day, or even have vending machines that offer healthy options rather than soda and potato chips.

A School Garden can give a school the ability to combine healthy eating with educational classes and programs by creating a school garden or garden club where students can participate in growing healthy fruits and vegetables.

Newsletter Tips are a great way to reach parents at home and help students’ well-being. Provide health tips in a section of the school newsletter that is sent home. Health tips can cover topics such as healthy eating, getting a good night’s sleep, helpful study practices, etc.

Empathy Programs can be implemented school-wide. There are many programs and activities available that help kids understand that many of the issues and feelings they have are common amongst their peers. Programs like “Challenge Day” (www.challengeday.org) or even sharing empathy-focused activities in an Advisory period can help with students’ emotional well-being.

Physical Activities should be widely available and encouraged. Making sure that students have plenty of physical activities available to them throughout the day can create healthy habits. Things like school-wide pedometer challenges, or after school clubs like Zoomba, yoga, weightlifting, in addition to after school sports can also promote healthy living in our students and provide them with an outlet.

Physical Education is often a requirement for all students to ensure they are exposed to physical activity on a regular basis.

Health Education can help teach kids about their bodies and the effects of what they eat. It can expose them to healthy lifestyles and help them with making healthy choices.

A Healthy Breakfast Program can provide breakfast to students to ensure they all have the opportunity to start the day with a good healthy meal.

A Healthy Lunch Program is essential for a student’s health. Not only should students have enough to eat--appropriate for their age--but they should also be provided with healthy options including plenty of fruits and vegetables, salads, whole-wheat breads and pastas, etc.

A School Nurse available throughout each school day can ensure students have someone to go to for health-related assistance. Additionally, teachers are able to refer students to a nurse in cases where they may notice a student in need.

Group Counseling can be available for students to discuss common social issues that they may be facing. It can also be made available for situations requiring grief counseling, etc.

Students’ Well-Being

What are some things that can be done school-wide and in our classrooms to help students with their health and well-being?

Backpack Program is an initiative many schools are implementing in coordination with outside organizations like United Way. The program enables students who are specifically identified for the program to pick up a backpack filled with food and easy to prepare meals before the weekend to ensure they have access to regular meals. (example: www.thechildrenshungerproject.org)