A Measure Suited for Your School

Researchers have found no "right way" to measure wellbeing, "The evidence suggests that there is little consistent agreement on how well-being should be measured, how instruments should be designed or which dimensions should be included" (Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016). Thus you must be the wellbeing expert in your context. You know the students, faculty, and staff whose lives this work will touch. All the advice given must be considered generalizable rather than prescriptive.

Consider the purpose and strengths of each measure. Short measures tend to offer "quick global snapshots of wellbeing," while longer ones tend to "provide a more comprehensive assessment" (Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016, p.   ). Measures that focus on specific aspects of wellbeing, like gratitude or hope, are "conceptually narrower and, as a result, are better equipped to facilitate more focused assessment" (Linton, Dieppe, & Medina-Lara, 2016, p.). If you are just beginning to measure wellbeing, a global and general assessment might provide the broad view needed to help orient you to your school's wellbeing situation. Once you have done this, you may benefit from identifying specific areas that need attention in your context and using a specific measure to assess these areas. For example, if after a short, general assessment you find a specific grade level seems to be struggling, consider talking with the teachers and staff about what they have noticed and what they think may help. If as a team you decide to focus on gratitude, use a gratitude measure to track the effectiveness of

your interventions.

Consider the available resources, such as time, money, and personnel. For example, pressures on time and personnel will necessitate shorter measures. In addition, the length and content factors can result in response burden for participants. Response burden leads to "lower response rates, reduced completion, and reduced data quality" (Rolstad, Adler, & Ryden, 2011, n.p.). Consider the literacy abilities of your population, which may limit which measure you administer, the languages you administer it in, and whether you administer it online or with paper and pen. Consider how often you want to administer the measure: "More frequent measurement will allow more detailed tracking of levels of well-being, picking up on short-term variation in response to particular events and seasons" (NEF, date, p. 15). Consider the consent you will need from parents, students, and staff. For example, asking for parental consent for students to take the survey anonymously may cause difficulty in identifying struggling individuals and implementing specific Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions on their behalf.

When considering your resources, you must recognize that no measure is truly "free." There are several necessities that affect the ultimate cost of administering and responding to a survey, including personnel, facilities, equipment, materials, expertise to interpret results, and opportunity cost. If a district doesn't have the personnel, equipment, or expertise to administer, analyze, and respond to the results of a measure, a "free" measure may end up costing more than you anticipate after paying for the resources and reports. Thus while several measures included in this resource are "free," you must think critically about the needs and resources of your school to determine the ultimate costs. Paying for a service that can accurately interpret your results could end up actually being cheaper and much more effective.

After considering your resources, focus on what you can control. Start

with small wins to build momentum. You must "avoid undue burden on students or staff" and focus on "the domains which [your school has] the capacity to influence" and "what consequential action might be taken as a result" (EBPU et al., date, p. 9). Be sure that you are prepared to act on what you measure. For example, you may choose to focus on gratitude for your students not only because it will benefit your students, but also because your school is positioned to help in y and z ways. When you have completed these considerations, our intervention resource can help you in deciding what factors of wellbeing you are prepared to improve with targeted interventions.

Finally, consider ways to measure wellbeing outside of the tools listed here. For example, qualitative measures such as interviews, focus groups, or narratives can help fill in missing pieces of information (Renata, 2019). After taking a general census sample, consider disaggregating the data to look at similarities across demographics and populations. Disaggregating data can help you make the most of each survey as you look for significant differences involving genders, races, ethnicities, grade levels, and socio-economic status (National Center, 2012). Consider using multiple measures and triangulating the results to better pinpoint your school's strengths (betterevaluation, DATE). These tools will help you get as much information about your school's wellbeing as possible so that your decisions are informed by accurate data and information.

Section Summary

- There is no one right way to measure wellbeing. Use what you know about your context to inform your choice.
- Consider the purpose of each measure. Your resources will affect how often you measure and whether you decide to survey students and staff anonymously.
- Each measure should be focused on an aspect of wellbeing that you can influence through interventions. Be prepared to act on what you learn.
- Consider using qualitative as well as quantitative measures, disaggregating your data and triangulating results from multiple measures to get as much information as possible.

Suggestions for Further Research

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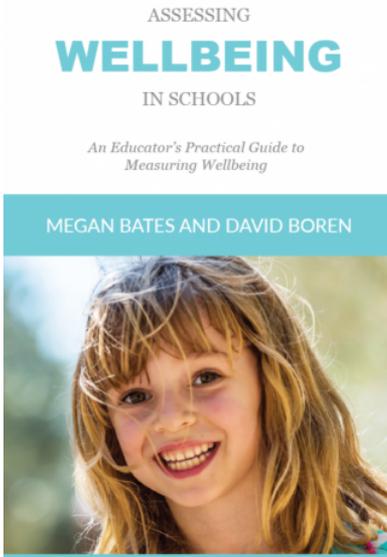
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