



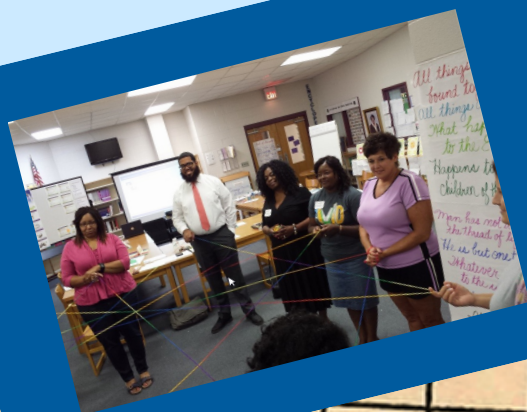
BARR[®]

Same Students. Same Teachers.
Better Results.

ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS AND MORALE

A Back-to-School Toolkit for Administrators

*Choose from strategies designed
to foster healthy relationships
among staff and boost morale
throughout the year.*



FIND OUT MORE AT
barrcenter.org

“My mission in life is
not merely to
survive, but to
thrive; and to do so
with some passion,
some compassion,
some humor, and
some style.”

Maya Angelou



Dear Administrators,

Welcome back to a new school year!

The BARR Center recognizes that school administrators have very difficult jobs, especially given the context that we find ourselves in this fall. We also realize that school administrators have extremely rewarding and meaningful jobs, as you have the opportunity to positively impact the lives of many young people and educators. Please accept our gratitude and know that the actions you take each and every day truly change lives.

It is with this in mind that the BARR team is pleased to share the following set of materials with you. We hope that they are helpful to you and your administrative team. With the goal of starting the year off focused on relationships, we invite you to take part in an administrator challenge: go through the toolkit and highlight at least one activity in each section that you can commit to this year. Then put it on your calendar as a reminder to follow-through.

We also encourage you to visit us at barrcenter.org, or connect with us on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram using the handle @BARRCenter.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for students, educators, and families.

Sincerely,

The BARR Team

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STARTING THE YEAR STRONG

Activities and ideas for setting your staff up for a successful year

ENHANCING TEAM RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Encourage individual socialization and connection among colleagues.

- Consider pulling ideas from the [Teacher Toolkit](#), or websites such as the Greater Good in Education (see [here](#) and [here](#)).
- Model meeting starters, ice breakers, and fun activities that teachers can use with their students or can use during team meetings when you are not present. Pull ideas from places like [these](#).
- Greater Good in Education offers several other ideas including, [Staff Meeting Rituals that Build Trust and Community](#) and [36 Questions to Increase Connectedness](#).
- Facilitate an I-Time with your staff (see page 10).

Schedule a back-to-school social event to allow staff to reconnect. This could be done virtually.

Schedule regular coffee or social hours. These could also be done virtually.

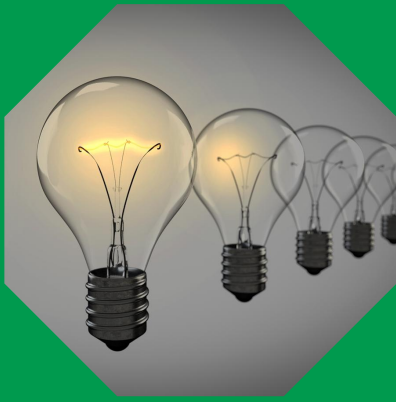
Have at least one staff competition to boost creativity, team spirit, and fun

- Virtual trivia
- Game show or bingo
- Art, photo, or writing contest
- Team spirit weeks

HIGHLIGHTING TEAM SUCCESS AND ENHANCING SCHOOL/TEAM SPIRIT

- Provide time for “shout outs” from staff to staff - have staff write them out on small pieces of paper and give them to the person after.
- Do informal temperature checks on staff frequently as the year gets going.
 - If you notice there is stress about deadlines, grading practices, etc., you can respond and support.
 - Temperature check on staff occasionally as the year gets going.
- Encourage self care!
- Create and use social media platforms. Post photos of teachers in action and positive things happening across the school community.
- Use a “joke of the day” during morning announcements.
- Use inspirational articles and videos at staff meetings or through email updates to remind staff about the value of their work.
- Provide short and positive private praise to teachers. Something as simple as a sticky note praising the way a lesson was introduced, or an email thanking them for something they contributed in a meeting goes a long way.





STARTING THE YEAR STRONG

Activities and ideas for setting your staff up for a successful year
(continued)

HONORING STAFF AS PROFESSIONALS

Communicate clearly as early as possible regarding explicit expectations, processes, and logistics.

- Be sure to revisit these expectations consistently and follow-up individually as necessary.

Honor teachers' time and build time into schedules for teachers to complete tasks.

- Allow sufficient time during back-to-school week for teachers to set up their classroom (virtually or in person).
- Give teachers work time to process new information. Make yourself available for questions as they do this.
- Create intentional time for PLCs and grade-level meetings in your master schedule.

Create a Newsletter and/or weekly highlight email that is sent out regularly.

- Avoid multiple emails and send less with more content.
- Send out a survey to determine where staff might need support.

Provide Professional Development on topics such as:

- Stress Management, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Compassion Fatigue
- Effective Teamwork
- Classroom management
- Building relationships with students and prioritizing SEL
- Co-teaching

CARING FOR STAFF AS HUMAN BEINGS

- Be aware of your staff's needs. Some staff may have experienced a significant loss or stress during this time. If there have been changes or uncertainty around the return to school plan, staff may be feeling anxious as well.
- Check in with each staff member individually for at least a few minutes - ask staff explicitly how they are doing and what they need.
 - Provide resources around stress management and plan follow-up check-ins with staff who indicate they need more support.
- Creating a safe school environment. Part of prevention is preparation.
 - Prepare for the "what-ifs" and recognize both student and staff needs.
 - Effectively preventing crisis or at least minimizing the effects of crises involves managing the school community's needs and addressing concerns before they escalate.
- Self-care should become part of the school culture rather than the responsibility of each individual staff member.
- Establish an approach to address secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue systemically.
 - Tap in, tap out
 - Buddy classrooms
 - Boundary-setting
 - Self-care in the background
- Set aside time for staff to process any concerns they may have regarding returning to school (if possible, have extra mental health staff)
- Communicate and share your district's wellness resources regularly.



MID-YEAR BOOST

Strategies for enhancing morale and engagement mid-way through the year

Enhancing Team Relationships and Collaboration

- Encourage individual socialization and connection among colleagues.
 - Consider pulling ideas from the [Teacher Toolkit](#), or websites such as the Greater Good in Education (see [here](#) and [here](#)).
 - Model meeting starters, ice breakers, and fun activities that teachers can use with their students or during team meetings in which you are not present. Pull ideas from places like these (link to Range.co icebreakers).
 - Greater Good in Education offers several other ideas including, [Staff Meeting Rituals that Build Trust and Community](#) and [36 Questions to Increase Connectedness](#).
 - Facilitate an I-Time with your staff (see page 10).
- Schedule a mid-year social event to allow staff to reconnect. This could be done virtually.
- Continue regular coffee or social hours. These could also be done virtually. Have another staff competition to boost creativity, team spirit, and fun.
 - Virtual trivia Game show or “back-to-school” themed bingo
 - Art, photo, or writing contest
 - Team spirit weeks

Highlighting Team Success and Enhancing School/Team Spirit

- Broadcast academic or social-emotional growth publicly
 - PowerPoint presentations shared with the School Board or parent organization
 - Share work of the BARR team with the rest of the faculty.
 - Newsletters, posting (as appropriate) on social media.
- Hold time for “shout outs” from staff to staff - have staff write them out on small pieces of paper and give them to the person after.
- Do informal temperature checks on staff frequently as the year gets going.
 - If you notice morale is dropping, add in an activity to boost spirits.
- Continue to use social media platforms and share positive photos of teachers in action and things that are happening across the school community.
- Use a “joke of the day” during morning announcements or staff meetings.
- Use inspirational articles and videos at staff meetings or through email updates to remind staff about the value of their work.
- Continue praising teacher efforts. Simple gestures such as a sticky note praising a lesson, or an email thanking them for something they contributed in a meeting goes a long way.



MID-YEAR BOOST

Strategies for enhancing morale and engagement mid-way through the year (continued)

Honoring Staff as Professionals

- Clear communication regarding any changes in the return to school plan.
- Pull expertise from teachers for in-house PD.
- Provide ample time for grading and paperwork.
- Encourage sharing of resources and ideas among teachers (within/across grade levels and departments).
- Send out a survey to staff to determine where they might need support.
- Model leadership during meetings that you expect teachers to display with their classes (both virtual and in person meetings).
- Provide Professional Development on topics such as:
 - Knowing the signs of compassion fatigue and how/where to get support if needed.
 - Classroom management and procedures
 - Rebuilding and fostering relationships as students move back to the classroom
 - Data Analysis and Instructional Implications
 - Intervention best practices

Caring for Staff as Human Beings

- Be aware of your staff's ongoing needs. Recovery after a pandemic will take time.
- Continue to periodically check in with each staff member individually - ask staff explicitly how they are doing and what they need.
 - Provide resources around stress management and plan follow-up check-ins with staff who indicate they need more support.
- Create a safe school environment. Part of prevention is *preparation*.
 - Continue to prepare for the "what-ifs" and recognize both student and staff needs as you plan for the next school year.
 - Effectively preventing crisis or at least minimizing the effects of crises involves managing the school community's needs and addressing concerns before they escalate.
- Self-care should continue to be part of the school culture rather than be the entire responsibility of each individual staff member.
- Reiterate expectations, protocols, and resources for teachers.
- Communicate and share your district's wellness resources regularly.



Year-End Celebrations

Ideas for ending the year on a high note.

Highlighting Team Success and Boosting Year-End School/Team Spirit

- Have at least 1 staff competition with a year-end flair (art, photography, or writing contents, trivia, game shows, etc.)
- Broadcast academic or social-emotional growth of the student population publicly
- Hold time for "shout outs" from staff, to staff. Have staff write these out on small pieces of paper and give them to the individual afterward.
- Do informal temperature checks on staff frequently as the year closes.
 - If you notice there is stress about deadlines, grading practices, etc., you can respond and support.
- Encourage self-care!
- Continue regular coffee or social hours, virtually or in-person.
- Incorporate photos from the year in a year-end slideshow of staff and students.


Honoring Staff as Professionals

- Communicate clearly about year-end deadlines, expectations, and activities.
- Provide ample time for grading and paperwork.
- Be sure to carve out time in the schedule specifically for celebration and wrap-up.
- Support teachers need for time and avoid unnecessary meetings.

Caring for Staff as Human Beings

- Continue to help school staff meet their basic needs
 - Encourage exercise through walk-and-talks
 - Offer healthy snacks during long meetings
 - Provide meals and snacks during teacher appreciation weeks or as a thank-you for the year.
- Ensure self-care is taken seriously by staff and is communicated as a priority by building in time for self care into the school day.

Preparing for Next Year by Reflecting on This Year

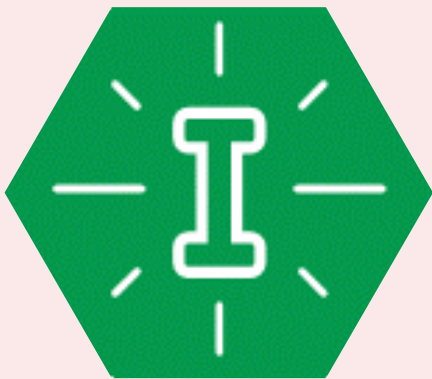
- Consider meeting with grade-level and department leads to share insights.
 - Engage staff in reflection activities, such as 1-up, 1-down, where they share what they felt was most positive and what they felt had the most room for growth.
 - Gather feedback from staff, students, and families over the summer. This can be done through anonymous surveys.
- 

I-TIME ACTIVITIES FOR STAFF

Many of the I-Time lessons in each of the three volumes involve activities that are fun for adults to do together. Facilitating the lessons (or abbreviated versions of the activities) with your BARR team, or with your full faculty provides opportunities for staff to form deeper connections and to have fun together. Leading lessons with your entire staff, say during a faculty meeting, also provides insight into and demystifies the I-Time lessons that the BARR team(s) are using.

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* denotes that the lesson has been adapted for virtual delivery.



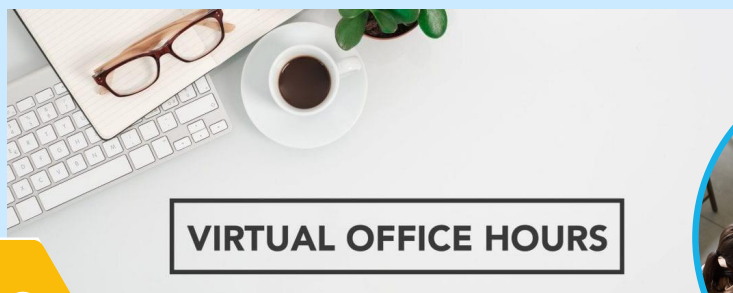
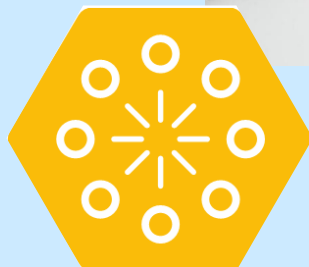
ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Below you will find several helpful tools and resources for your consideration.

- The first section includes links to various BARR tools that have been created in the past. *Please reach out to your BARR coach should you need a fresh copy of one of these documents or have questions about how best to use them.*
- Finally, the last section includes links to articles for further reading, each of which have been identified as helpful for school leaders.

Additional BARR Tools for Administrators

1. [Rare Birds Energizer](#)
2. [Teacher Back-to-School Toolkit](#)
3. [Risk Review Community Resources Tool](#)
4. [Transition & Change Protocol Document](#)
5. Recommendations for [Virtual Office Hours](#) Best Practices
6. Teacher [Prep Considerations for I-Time Lessons](#)





ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Articles for Further Reading

- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has created an [SEL Roadmap](#) for ensuring a social-emotional learning focus when reopening schools. This helpful tool includes considerations for a variety of critical practices, essential questions, and tools for planning a successful, SEL-focused reentry.
- The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) collaborated to create the [School Reentry Considerations: Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19](#) document, outlining recommendations for the most effective ways to resume school after the COVID-19 shutdown.
- Experts from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network share recommendations with the Teaching Tolerance staff for educators in supporting students through COVID-19 using [A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus](#).
- In collaboration with 18 superintendents, Panorama has released an easy-to-read [SEL Playbook](#) for educational leaders, equipped with recommendations for incorporating SEL into the school.
- Through research funded by the Institute of Educational Science (IES), this guide includes pointed recommendations for [Integrating a Focus on Equity Into Social-Emotional Learning](#), in your school.
- In this ASCD *Educational Leadership* article, [Leading Together / Deepening Faculty Dialogue](#), the importance of teachers working together is emphasized, along with protocols for facilitating better conversations.

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