

A VOLUME IN PERSPECTIVES ON MENTORING

# Mentoring *for* Wellbeing *in* Schools

Benjamin Kutsyuruba  
Frances K. Kochan

EDITORS

## Advanced Praise for *Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools*

*Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools* shines light on wellbeing in studies of mentoring in K–12 education. This collection, edited by Benjamin Kutsyuruba and Frances Kochan and authored by a group of expert mentoring scholar-practitioners, examines the wellbeing of students, teachers, and leaders through frameworks and applications of mentorship practice in schools. This collection provides researchers, practitioners, and policymakers alike with a rich array of wellbeing in mentoring relationships—not as an add-on feature of mentorship but rather an essential aspect of mentors’ support and role. As demonstrated from various perspectives, a culture of wellbeing in schools has multiple benefits for people and organizational cultures, including teacher and leader preparation. Readers, especially those concerned with the flourishing of schools in a pandemic world, will walk away better prepared to make mentoring work.

—**Carol A. Mullen**, PhD, Professor, Virginia Tech  
and Immediate Past-President, University Council  
for Educational Administration

I am delighted that the impressive chapters in this edited collection on mentoring in schools does not, like many others, promote mentoring merely as a means of facilitating the learning, development, effectiveness and/or retention of those who are mentored. Rather, whilst recognizing and valuing the positive impact mentoring can have in these areas, the authors of this work understand that mentoring program participants are not resources but real people, with feelings and emotions, and more or less capacity (influenced by the contexts in which they find themselves) to empathize with, care for, enthuse and support the learning, development and wellbeing of others, as well as each other. As a result, these authors prioritize the deployment of mentoring as a means of enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of all those who participate in mentoring programs. Effectively marshalled by Kutsyuruba and Kochan, respected international authorities on mentoring, the authors provide a wealth of examples and guidance on much-needed means of promoting wellbeing and human flourishing in schools. Given the vast number of threats and impediments to the wellbeing of students, trainee teachers, established teachers, and principals worldwide, this work is extremely timely. Arguably, it should be compulsory reading for school principals, mentors, teacher educators, mentor trainers, education researchers in these spaces, and—perhaps more importantly—anyone who holds public office and makes or has the capacity to influence decisions which impact the work of school teachers and principals.

—**Dr. Andrew J. Hobson**, Professor of Education, University of Brighton, UK,  
Editor-in-Chief, *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*

The editors of *Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools*, Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba and Dr. Frances Kochan, have brilliantly designed and compiled the sixteen chapters in a format easily accessed by school administrators, teachers, students, principals, facilitators, community leaders, as well as organizations. The valued researched models, specific experiences, numerous vignettes, and generous ideas come from various noted authors who have shared their evidence-based mentor models, practices, and strategies to sustain individual wellbeing and successes in schools, communities, and business environments across the globe. I endorse this extraordinary collection of highlighted mentoring and wellbeing model resources to individuals and teams who desire to grow, impact, and enrich wellbeing, resiliency, and efficacy in their environments. A resource to be utilized with humans throughout the world today, tomorrow, and in the future.

—**Nancy Phenix-Bourke**, EdD, International Mentoring Association  
President Emeritus

What is mentoring if not at least for wellbeing? Edited by esteemed scholars and mentors, Benjamin Kutsyuruba and Frances Kochan, and authored by 25 colleagues, this book is a welcomed contribution to the education field. The literature is replete with calls for more attention to the development of reliance structures, systems and supports for wellness, wellbeing, and mental health. In the experience of many, myself included, personally and interpersonally mediated support (dyadic, network, or group based) are highly efficacious and even essential when provided through developmental relationships or mentoring connections. I am grateful for the important contributions of each of these authors.

—**Keith Walker**, Professor, Educational Administration  
University of Saskatchewan

Regardless of the current naysayers and considerable challenges of learning, working, and leading in schools, this book indicates it is entirely possible to significantly improve the dynamics within schools. Editors Benjamin Kutsyuruba and Frances Kochan, together with foremost leaders in the field of mentoring in the United States, Canada, and internationally, have compiled clear, substantial, and definitive information about how mentoring can help each participant in the learning process thrive: namely, by engaging in mentoring. The authors present concise and practical information, complete with impeccable research and case study examples, of the power of mentoring to promote wellbeing. As a four-decade leader in education, I found the book's message quite hopeful while backed with significant and current research about the worth and impact of mentoring. Right in the introduction, the book provides a summary of each of the chapters as a tool to help readers focus on populations and practices of greatest interest. As mentoring has the capacity to bring vitality into the schools, it is a most welcome practice. This book serves as a good reminder and positive guide for helping people flourish while building on the best characteristics of those in schools, whether they are students, teachers, or leaders.

—**Dr. Kathleen Sciarappa**, International Mentoring Association (IMA)  
Mentor Trainer; Board Member

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# **Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools**

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A volume in  
*Perspectives on Mentoring*  
Benjamin Kutsyuruba, *Series Editor*

## Perspectives on Mentoring

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# **Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools**

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*edited by*

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# FOREWORD

I have lived long enough and taught long enough to realize that every era in the 21st century in the world of public education in the United States has brought about a new “reform,” complete with accompanying “buzz words.” When I started as a principal in the late ’90s, it was *Goals 2000* from the U.S. Department of Education and President Bill Clinton. From 2002–2010, roughly, we had *No Child Left Behind* in the Bush administration. “Achievement gaps” and “AYP” (Annual Yearly Progress) became the language of funders and advocates. During the Obama years, we had the *Race to the Top* and the creation of *Common Core Standards*. There was heavy emphasis on testing to these standards. “International benchmarking” became the battle cry for would-be reformers. *Common Core* eventually lost its glamour, and “school choice” became the single education reform of the Trump presidency most aligned with growing skepticism of the power of the federal government to control schools. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were still mandated, and testing was as important as ever, until COVID hit, and accountability went haywire. More recently, we have seen the culture clashes over the attention in the curriculum and pedagogy to critical race theory. The result of so many changes in schools is what we can call “initiative fatigue.” Every school year, in every school, there are new mandates from state or federal education agencies. There is never enough time given to master a new plan before another follows on. Teachers and principals in schools are exhausted from the constant barrage of change. Exhausted teachers and leaders cannot possibly have the capacity to give of their best to those whom they have pledged to put first and foremost: the students.

I assert that the wellbeing of teachers and principals indirectly affects the wellbeing of students. Thus, it is time for this book, in which the authors of each chapter call for giving attention to the wellbeing of school teachers and principals. I do not view the recent emphasis on wellbeing for school personnel as just another “fad” or “buzzword” in educational change, but rather, an important and vital concept for effective, everyday functioning for all educators.

It has been said, “If you love what you do, and are passionate about your profession, you never really “work” a day in your life.” Well, I dare say, this can be questioned. Teachers and administrators I know, started out with passion and purpose and joyfully invested the hours required to give their best for students every day. But, as time has passed, the “system” has put more and more responsibility on them, more regulations, accountability, and demands to please local, state and federal bureaucracies, not to mention pleasing a new breed of parents. The COVID pandemic exacerbated the stressors. I know many who have quit, during or right after COVID, never to return to education. Schools all over the country are starting the school year in August with dozens of teacher vacancies unfilled. Colleges of Education are struggling to recruit students to prepare for the teaching profession. The promise of a few thousand more dollars in salary is failing to attract teachers to get advanced degrees to move into administration. The hard truth is: It’s going to take more than a love for kids, one’s subject area, or leadership aspiration to have ‘staying power’ in the education profession. We have to find a way to give care to those who choose to work in schools, and we have to prompt them to find ways to take care of themselves, too. Thus, this decade is ripe for the rising emphasis on wellbeing in schools.

The corporate world has already learned that today’s worker seeks a workplace that is flexible and responsive to one’s personal needs, emphasizes wellness programs, and acknowledges one’s need for work–life balance. It’s a challenge for organizational leaders to create a culture that fosters a commitment to the goals of the organization, while simultaneously satisfying the members’ needs for personal growth, professional advancement, and some fun in the workplace. Enter the positive psychology movement that informs us on ways to empower individuals through encouragement of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and vitality/health (the PERMA model; Seligman, 2018). Competencies that promote wellbeing are positively correlated with academic success (Seligman, 2011). A description of each of these components is below:

- *Positive Emotions*: sufficient experience of positive emotions, such as gratitude, is positively correlated with wellbeing.
- *Engagement*: deep immersion in activities can create flow where one is highly competent and feels deeply fulfilled at the same moment.

- *Relationships*: the affirmation people experience in relationship allows them to see themselves and others as worthy of kindness and justice.
- *Meaning*: human beings seek meaning and purpose and feel fulfilled when they fit into a larger whole.
- *Achievement*: executing plans and achieving goals in the face of obstacles is intrinsically rewarding.
- *Vitality/Health*: nutrition, fitness, physical care and stress management are associated with both physical and mental health. (Norris, 2015)

It often takes a while for good ideas in corporate life and in research to trickle down to public education, but it is starting to happen, thanks to education researchers in higher education who are investigating how positive concepts of wellbeing can be translated into school workplace cultures. There is strong potential for an improved quality of life for educators through implementation of wellbeing concepts. And this edited volume of contributions from researchers contains example after example of how wellbeing can be enhanced in the school workplace through *mentoring*.

Mentoring is universally acknowledged as an activity that provides support and encouragement, especially to newcomers in a profession or job role. Mentoring can be enacted in many ways: formal or informal, one-on-one or in groups, experienced-to-novice or peer-to-peer, face-to-face or virtual. There are examples of each of these formats in this book.

A mentor can serve as a guide, coach, encourager, teacher, advisor, listener, reflective partner, and supporter. The majority of research in the field of mentoring is based on the seminal work of Kram (1985) who identified the career and psychosocial benefits of mentoring for the mentee. Ragins and Verbos (2006) have used a relational perspective to define mentoring as “a developmental relationship that involves mutual growth, learning, and development in personal, professional, and career domains” (p. 92). Thus, a mentor can assist a mentee with the development of career competencies (skills) and personal and professional behaviors and dispositions. The mentor is in a unique position to be the person who can enact each of the elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing: encouragement of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and health/vitality. Effective mentoring involves careful listening, and asking, not telling. The mentor can lead a mentee to be reflective by asking the mentee timely, probing questions. The mentor helps the mentee “go to the balcony from the dance floor” to view behaviors, actions, and dilemmas from a new perspective. As the mentee becomes more reflective, the result is increased self-understanding. The mentee is led to examine his/her own practice, attitudes, behaviors, goals, and that elusive “work–life balance.”

Indeed, I do not see how an individual could achieve a high level of wellbeing without a mentor. If I were trying to get to wellbeing myself, I

suppose, I could try to do positive self-talk to create positive emotions. I could make myself stay engaged in my work by sheer determination. I could keep my relationships in healthy order. I could think about how my life has meaning, and I could strive to accomplish my goals. But these solo activities in isolation would not be near as rich as if I had a supportive learning partner—a mentor, either peer or more experienced, to walk beside me. To quote an African proverb: “If you want to travel fast, travel alone. If you want to travel far, travel together.”

The chapters in this book provide the reader with excellent examples of individuals who are working tirelessly in their own context to promote wellbeing and flourishing of their colleagues and mentees. There are examples of mentoring with “at promise” young adolescents, pre-service teachers, teachers at the induction stage, special education teachers, and new principals. In each chapter, the authors illustrate how mentoring through a lens of the wellbeing concepts has enhanced the flourishing of the individuals studied. Career and psychosocial supports were given and resilience was strengthened. Indeed, the positive psychology movement, coupled with the long-standing knowledge of the benefits of mentoring, is opening up a bold, new world of potential for personal and professional development in the school workplace. Unlike the responses that school personnel have made when presented with yet another new initiative, such as the ones I started off discussing in this foreword, there will be no Initiative Fatigue when wellbeing concepts are introduced in schools. Teachers and principals will welcome the support of mentors who understand the concepts of wellbeing and who themselves, are well-becoming. May the movement grow and flourish in schools, and may educators find renewed joy, commitment, passion, and meaning in serving the students they care for.

— Linda Searby

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## CHAPTER 1

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# INTRODUCTION

## Mentoring as a Facilitator of Wellbeing in Schools

**Benjamin Kutsyuruba**

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Acclaimed for its multiple benefits, mentoring is a widely recognized and implemented practice in the field of education. The overarching dimension of mentoring, commonly accepted across scholars, is that mentoring is a developmental relationship (Domingues & Kochan, 2020). Mentoring entails forming a mutually supportive, trusting, and meaningful association between individuals with differing levels of experience, expertise, and knowledge in particular contexts. Mentoring is based on a process of “critical friend” (Costa & Kallick, 1993) who provides assessment feedback to an individual—a student, a teacher, or an administrator—or to a group. A critical friend is a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person’s work as a friend. “A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward” (p. 50) and is an advocate for the success of that work. At its core, mentoring is about helping, advising, supporting, and

guiding mentees or proteges to gain a wide variety of skills, abilities, and attributes. Research indicates that mentoring facilitates the growth and learning of mentees, reduces stress, increases their motivation, and creates a safe context for them to achieve success and develop independence, self-confidence, decision-making and problem-solving skills (Allen & Eby, 2007; Lacey, 2000; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Hobson et al., 2009; Portner, 2008).

However, another outcome of mentoring, less often discussed, is the positive impact that mentoring can have on the wellbeing<sup>1</sup> of both the mentor and mentee. There are multiple views on the notion of wellbeing, with most definitions referring to various dimensions of wellness, such as physical, social, emotional, financial, intellectual, spiritual, environmental, and occupational (Diener et al., 2017). The notion of wellbeing, in general, includes both hedonic aspects of feeling good (positive emotions) and eudemonic (conducive to happiness) aspects of living well that entail experiences of positive relationships, meaningfulness in life, and work, senses of mastery and personal growth, autonomy, and achievement (Keyes, 2003; Ryan et al., 2008; Seligman, 2011). As Hobson (2016) argued, supporting the wellbeing of mentees and protégés is an essential part of the mentor's role. Mentors have the capacity to support the wellbeing of their mentees, providing coaching, guiding, advocacy, counseling, help, protection, feedback, and information that they would otherwise not have (Kutsyuruba, 2012). Effective mentoring aims "to support the mentee's learning, development and wellbeing, and their integration into the cultures of both the organisation in which they are employed and the wider profession" (Hobson, 2016, p. 88). Moreover, by adapting positive perspective and challenging mentees' negative self-views, mentors can grow mentees' self-confidence and self-esteem, thus enhancing their overall wellbeing (Eby et al., 2008; Johnson, 2007; Rhodes, 2005).

Mentoring in education often has the dual aims of personal support and professional learning that help mentees to assimilate into new roles, responsibilities as well as to develop employment-related skills. The primary intended beneficiaries of the mentorship may be students, student teachers, early career or more experienced teachers, and school leaders. As such, the potential impact of mentoring on the wellbeing of students, teachers, and leaders in schools is far reaching. Researchers have found youth in schools increasingly view mentoring practices beneficial for their overall development and learning (Schenk et al., 2021; Hylan & Postlethwaite, 1998). According to Goldner and Mayselless (2009), high quality mentoring relationships that children have are positively associated with their social and academic adjustment and contribute to perceived academic competence, social support and wellbeing. In teacher education, researchers observed a positive connection between mentoring and student teachers' wellbeing and flourishing (Briscoe, 2019; Dreer, 2021; Wilcoxon et al., 2019). For

educators, especially at the early career stages, mentoring supports help them not only survive but also thrive, grow professionally, and build their capacity to maintain and sustain their wellbeing (personal and of others) (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017; Kutsyruba et al., 2019; Shanks, 2017; Squires, 2019). Mentoring benefits are not only limited to early career stages but also instrumental for experienced teachers who no longer have the formal supports through induction can benefit from peer coaching and informal mentoring (Bressman et al., 2018; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hobson et al., 2009). School leaders, likewise, may benefit from professional and institutional structures and supports in the form of mentoring aimed at leadership development (Hobson & Sharp, 2005; Searby & Armstrong, 2016).

Reflecting on the current evidence base in the field, Hobson and Nieuw-erburgh (2022) noted that on the whole, wellbeing has not been a substantive focus of the vast majority of research studies on mentoring in education. They continued with the hopeful statement that the promotion of participants' wellbeing, and the wellbeing of those they love, live and work with, could be brought to the front and centre of both the aims and objectives of mentoring and educational research agenda. As Acton and Glasgow (2015) argued, "compiling more knowledge on the factors that support and enhance teachers' wellbeing is important in encouraging greater sustainability within the profession" (p. 100). Evidently, there is a need for a better understanding of the role of mentoring in supporting wellbeing of students, educators, and leaders. Therefore, we initiated the work on this edited volume to explore how mentoring can promote mental health, build resilience, develop capacity to maintain, sustain, and promote emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing *for all* in the K–12 school settings. We endeavoured to seek out researchers and practitioners that have undertaken work in this area with the purpose of helping others understand and offer practical suggestions on how educational professionals can attune to the importance of maintaining their own wellbeing and fostering the wellbeing among those they teach and with whom they work. Furthermore, learning how wellbeing could be supported through mentoring in different locales and diverse settings would help with understanding the specific, contextualized factors conducive to flourishing in educational institutions.

In this introductory chapter, we first provide a brief overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of wellbeing in K–12 contexts. We then discuss the potential impact of mentoring on the wellbeing of students, teachers, and leaders in schools. Finally, we introduce the contributed chapters to this book and provide a guide to readers regarding what each of the chapters in this edited book brings to our collective understandings of the role of mentoring for wellbeing in the school settings.



## FRAMING THE CONCEPT OF WELLBEING

Wellbeing is a key concept in the fields of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. Scholarship in these fields demonstrates that focusing on positive attitudes in personal and organizational lives increases individuals' resilience, vitality, and happiness, decreases stress, anxiety, and depression, and results in general wellbeing; in turn, these positive outcomes have been associated with success and improved performance (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Multiple studies pointed out that there are benefits and advantages of focusing on the goodness, virtuousness, and vitality in one's life and interactions and relationships with others (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Cameron & Caza, 2004; Cameron et al., 2003; Roberts & Dutton, 2009). Rather than adopting a deficit-model approach of trying to repair the negative and destructive qualities in individuals, positive psychology encourages the development of positive outlooks, habits, and mental models with a focus on describing and building positive characteristics (Achor, 2011; Ben-Shahar, 2008; Keyes, Frederickson, & Park, 2012; Seligman, 2011). Studies have shown that understanding strengths and using a positive lens of inquiry—as opposed to a deficit model of thinking—can decrease stress, anxiety, and depression and can increase resilience, vitality, and happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Representing a shift away from a perspective that emphasizes deficits, gaps and shortcomings, this view is aligned with the growing body of research in the science of positive development in organizations.

Using this positive lens, schools and other educational organizations can be viewed as living and breathing systems that are created for and by the people within: interconnected, developing, and progressing (Clarke, 2000). Such living systems are constantly in a state of change, dynamically respond to the environment, and have the best interest of the whole system in mind. According to Wheatley (2006), a living system heals and grows by creating stronger relationships within. Hence, there is a need for paying attention to schools as living systems, for noticing and responding to these living systems from a positive, generative, and appreciative approach (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003; Walker et al., 2021; Whitney et al., 2010) that considers the wellbeing of those that are involved in the everyday activities of the system. Therefore, in schools, wellbeing is not just an individual responsibility; it becomes a collective and organizational imperative for those who run schools to ensure they are resourced in ways that support and promote the wellbeing of those who work and learn within them (Cherkowski et al., 2020). If schools create and sustain conditions where developmental relationships and the importance of wellbeing are highlighted, everyone in the school learning community is more likely to flourish (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018, 2019).

As noted before, in a broad sense, wellbeing entails aspects of feeling good (positive emotions, positive relationships, a sense of meaning) and functioning well (feelings of engagement and achievement) (Seligman, 2011). Therefore, wellbeing is a highly subjective state and heavily influenced by contextual and societal variables (Diener et al., 2017). Marks and Shah (2005) posited that “well-being is more than just happiness. As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community” (p. 505). Wellbeing is understood as peoples’ positive evaluation of their lives and includes positive emotion, engagement, satisfaction, and meaning (Diener & Seligman, 2004). In turn, a focus on positive emotions enlivens peoples’ further resources for intellectual, physical, social, and psychological capabilities (Diener, 2000; Fredrickson, 2008; Fredrickson et al., 2008).

Subjective wellbeing consists of five main elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2018). Due to its holistic approach into understanding what allows individuals to have a sense of wellbeing in their lives, this PERMA model has become the foundation of human flourishing studies. Viewed as the pinnacle of human functioning (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Gable & Haidt, 2005), flourishing is closely linked with notions of resilience, self-fulfillment, contentment, and happiness (Haybron, 2008; Martin & Marsh, 2006; Seligman, 2011). Keyes (2016, p. 101) defined flourishing as “the achievement of a balanced life in which individuals feel good about lives in which they are functioning well.” Flourishing, therefore, is more than pursuing inner happiness (emotional wellbeing); it concerns positive positioning of oneself towards life (psychological wellbeing) and in relation to other individuals (social wellbeing) (Kutsyruba et al., 2021). Whereas “self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy” signify positive psychological functioning, “social coherence, social actualization, social integration, social acceptance, and social contribution” represent aspects of positive social functioning (Keyes, 2002, pp. 108–109).

Similar to Seligman’s (2011) theory of flourishing, Noble and McGrath’s (2015) model of wellbeing outlined a broad focus beyond feeling good and promoting a positive outlook (positivity) to include the need for relationships, strengths, purpose, engagement, resilience, and having meaningful goals or outcomes. Taking a different angle, Dodge et al. (2012) defined wellbeing as “a balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced” (p. 230). These authors added that stable wellbeing is achieved when individuals have the psychological, social, and physical resources they need to meet certain psychological, social, and physical challenges. This view allows to understand wellbeing as experienced along a continuum that stretches beyond meeting demands or surviving challenges

and extends to experiencing wellbeing as thriving or flourishing within the school environment (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Spreitzer et al, 2005; Quinn, 2015).

## **CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTORSHIP AND WELLBEING IN K-12 SETTINGS**

Paying attention to own and others' wellbeing can be especially challenging nowadays as students and educators are finding themselves studying and working under demanding conditions and often in complex and stressful environments. However, prior studies have shown the positive impact that mentoring can have on the wellbeing of youth, teachers, and leaders. As these categories are the main focus in this edited volume, in the next sections we briefly outline empirical evidence of mentoring impact on the above populations.

### **Mentoring for Wellbeing of Youth**

Young adolescents or youth mentorship relationships are commonly a non-parental figure that guides and supports youth (Du Bois & Karcher, 2005). As emotional closeness and sense of belonging is crucial for development (Austin et al., 2020), mentorship can play a large role in facilitating the development of wellbeing. Roughly 50–80% of children and adolescents in the United States reported having an informal community mentor (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). Although parental support is also crucial for child development, research suggests that having external supports such as mentors can make youth feel more supported and trusting (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). Mentoring offers commonly positive relationships that help youth develop their sense of identity and prosocial skills and coach them through challenges (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021; Raposa et al., 2019). In addition, mentorship relationships are associated with stronger academic and social adjustment (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009).

Mentoring for youth can be crucial for their academic competency, social skill development, and wellbeing (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009). In fact, youth who have positive mentorship relationships commonly have improved mental and physical health, alongside a greater quality of life and less stress (Crisp et al., 2020; Oarga et al., 2015). Youth involved in mentorship programs are also more likely to volunteer and become involved in leadership opportunities in the future (Crisp et al., 2020). In addition, through mentorship programs for youth commonly produce emotional closeness and cultivate positive outcomes (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009). All

of these outcomes can lead to the improvement of youth wellbeing through mentorship programs and support.

Mentorship for marginalized youth is particularly important. As Weiston-Seran (2017) argued, it is important for marginalized youth to have a relational mentor and see themselves within their mentor. Students of color continue to face barriers which impact their success and attrition rates, but as research suggests, mentorship can support resilience (Ramos, 2019), career competency (Lindwall, 2017), and a sense of belonging (McQuillin et al., 2022). In addition, marginalized youth experience higher levels of emotional trauma, mental illness and discrimination which impacts their daily living (Sapiro & Ward, 2020). Marginalized youth benefit greatly from having a mentor for support and to use as a sounding board for their lived experiences (McQuillin et al., 2022; Sapiro & Ward, 2020). Therefore, providing culturally responsive and empathetic mentorship becomes essential to supporting optimal development and success. As a word of caution, there needs to be ethical boundaries with youth mentorship programs due to risk of overdependency or separation anxiety with youth mentorship programs. Youth sometimes become dependent on their mentors for emotional support or crave inappropriate interactions due to their strong dependency. This leads to negative interactions and potentially negative outcomes of the relationship overall (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009).

## **Mentoring for Wellbeing of Teachers**

In teaching, mentoring practices begin with the pre-service teaching at the teacher education programs. Mentoring in teacher education programs occurs between the faculty liaison (supervisor) and teacher candidates both on campus through direct instruction and on practicum through observation of teaching (Chin & Kutsyuruba, 2011). However, the bulk of mentoring pre-service teachers is done by school-based teacher educators (also known as cooperating or associate teachers), who support student teachers during their practicum placements as part of teacher education program requirements (Hagenauer et al., 2020). Research has shown that mentor teachers have a crucial role not only in shaping student teachers' experiences and learning (Smith & Lev-Arik, 2005), but also in their overall development and wellbeing (Chalies et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2014; Dreer-Goethe, 2023; Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019; Squires, 2019). Beyond teacher education stage, mentoring is usually associated with teacher induction and socialization phases of the early career stage, which is known for its "make it or break it" nature. In this regard, effective mentorship is seen as one of the most crucial components to support individual beginning teachers' needs that help them not only survive but also thrive (Doerger, 2003; Kutsyuruba,

Walker et al., 2019). Mentoring supports early career teachers through coaching, guidance, advocacy, counselling, help, protection, feedback, and information to new teachers (Wong, 2004). Supportive and trusted relationships are “paramount to successfully assist novice teachers in adjusting to teaching requirements” (Smith, 2002, p. 47). However, mentoring is also an essential component of the mid-to-late career stages, where it becomes a powerful and important means to help teachers sustain their commitment to the teaching profession and support a feeling of wellbeing as they continue throughout their careers (Winter et al, 2019). Birkeland (2011) argued that experienced teachers also require opportunities to reflect, set goals, and assess their effectiveness through mentorship.

Regardless of the teaching career stages, the literature on teacher wellbeing highlights key negative factors like stress (Farber, 2000; Vesely et al., 2013) and work–life imbalance (Burke & Mcateer, 2007). Negative effects of stress on teachers’ wellbeing and professional growth entail isolation and anxiety (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), tension in relationships (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2012), reduced self-efficacy, strained teacher–student relationships, burnout, and higher rates of teacher absenteeism and teacher turnover (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Kyriacou, 2001), reduced morale, thwarted educational goals, and increased probability of quitting (Leroux & Théorêt, 2014). In England, Hobson and Maxwell (2017) found that the single most prominent individual factor inhibiting teacher wellbeing was the perception of having an unmanageable workload or a poor work–life balance. In this regard, related benefits of mentoring have been identified in the literature. Mentoring has been found to decrease novice teachers’ stress (Allen & Eby, 2007), enhance their feelings of competence (Lindgren, 2005), increase their work satisfaction and commitment (Stanulis & Floden, 2009), accelerate their personal development (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009), and reduce attrition and turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Mentoring creates a positive learning environment that supports individual learning and development and successfully fosters beginning teachers’ competence and wellbeing (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017; Richter et al., 2013). Hellsten et al. (2017) observed that mentors can provide beginning teachers with a sense of perspective and emotional support which increases beginning teacher wellbeing.

Teachers become reflective thinkers and co-learners if mentoring environment is based on collaboration (Clandinin et al., 1993; Kochan & Trimble, 2000). Collaborative and nonjudgmental settings, as opposed to micromanagement and close supervision, successfully foster teachers’ competence and wellbeing and help generate ideas for improvement of their craft (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010; Richter et al., 2013). Mentoring fosters emotional peer supports in relationships that are built on trust (Dempsey & Christenson-Foggett, 2011; Donne & Lin, 2013; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015) and respect (Fenwick, 2011). The emotional support that beginning teachers

received from their peers was cited as an important factor in helping them through tough times in their new role (Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Dempsey & Christenson-Foggett, 2011; Fox et al., 2010; Friedrichsen et al., 2007; Gellert & Gonzalez, 2011). Effective mentoring approaches help educators grow in their confidence and competence, as manifested through the increased professional knowledge, skills, beliefs, and motivation, in turn resulting in enhanced sense of wellbeing, professional success, and reduced turnover (Lauermann & König, 2016; Le Maistre, Boudreau, & Paré, 2006). Finally, mentoring can help teachers to not only survive but also thrive and build their capacity to maintain and sustain wellbeing (personal and of others) by growing their resilience (Kutsyruba, Walker et al., 2019). Greater resilience enhances teacher motivation and commitment to deal with work–life challenges and positively affects teaching effectiveness, heightens career satisfaction, builds working relationships, prepares teachers to adapt to changing conditions in education, and helps maintain their personal wellbeing (Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Le Cornu, 2013).

## **Mentoring for Wellbeing of School Leaders**

Given the continuous expansion of the principal's responsibilities, it is crucial to analyze the effects on the wellbeing and professional roles of principals (Wang et al., 2022). The main source of stress for principals includes maintaining a work–life balance (Mahfouz, 2018), overseeing school operations (Doyle-Fosco et al., 2023), achieving a healthy, and managing significant emotional demands (Wang et al., 2022). In addition, Richardson (2020) notes that there is a large amount of isolation in the profession that can impact their wellbeing and mental health. Research suggest that promoting meaning and purpose in principalships yields stronger wellbeing in the school community (Cherkowski et al., 2020; Dicke et al., 2018; Doyle-Fosco, 2022;). In addition, some research focuses on enhancing collegial relationships to promote principal wellbeing (Doyle-Fosco, 2022), alongside their involvement with mentorship programs.

The literature suggests that mentorship is a significant aspect of principalship (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). Mentorship commonly provides novice principals with an opportunity to network, grow, and reflect on their professional development (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). From this, mentees develop social networks and building capacity for professional growth (Kay et al., 2009). In addition, principals who receive mentorship are commonly more successful in attaining their goal and feeling supported (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). In terms of wellbeing, Connery and Frick (2021) focus on how wellbeing can be central to formalized mentorship programs. Although most mentorship programs are built around professional development and

induction, Connery and Frick (2021) noted that skills such as time management, work–life balance, leadership, problem-solving, and the general support mentorship provides led to a positive impact on wellbeing of principals. When principals have a stronger instructional leadership and mentorship, their wellbeing is commonly improved in term.

Chen and colleagues (2023) conducted a bibliometric review of principal wellbeing from 1962–2022. The review revealed that principal wellbeing is a continuous concern globally despite difference in policy, practice and principal responsibilities worldwide. The two key themes of principal wellbeing among articles are the factors that impact wellbeing and the interaction of wellbeing and leadership (Chen et al., 2023). A challenge of this area of research is lack of clear and consistent definitions and indicators of across populations (Chen et al., 2023). As a few researchers suggest, wellbeing is more than simply being healthy (Diener et al., 2017), rather mentorship should holistically address leadership and wellbeing, principal development and principal burnout and stress (Chen et al., 2023; Riley et al., 2021). By approaching mentorship for principals holistically, this can promote greater wellbeing, enhance professional development, and increase the retention rate (Chen et al., 2023).

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

As evident from above discussions, wellbeing seems to be one of the key (yet less frequently examined) outcomes of mentorship for youth, educators, and school leaders. This edited volume expands and adds to the existing literature on mentoring in schools, by offering a collection of works from other authors who further examine mentorship and wellbeing and establish the connection between two phenomena. Through these chapters, authors advocate for greater attention to how to support and nurture wellbeing as central to mentorship efforts in K–12 school settings.

This volume is loosely organized based on the focus of mentoring that authors describe. Without clearly defined sections, we structured the chapters in this book to tell the story of wellbeing that starts with the general overview of effective mentoring for wellbeing and then shifts the focus on mentoring of youth. The middle of the story zooms in on the mentoring of teachers, describing various perspectives on growing the wellbeing of pre-service teachers, early career teachers, and mid-late career teachers. The next chapters describe approaches to grow a community of educators through mentoring and developing teacher leaders as agents of change and facilitators of wellbeing. Finally, the last several chapters detail studies and models for nurturing and promoting wellbeing among and through school leaders in national and international settings.



In Chapter 2, HeeKap Lee offers a general perspective on mentoring that can apply across various mentoring relationships in education. The author proposes a new mentoring model for mentees who experience trauma and adversity by emphasizing mentees' personhood. The author argues that effective mentoring should be considered in two dimensions: affirming personhood and relation actualized. Affirmation refers to acknowledging each mentee and appreciating the cultural contexts that have been negated by the traditional mentoring process. As many mentees experience personal trauma and adversities in their lives through academic, financial, relational as well as spiritual issues, especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, Lee recommends taking on a new mentoring framework, changing the mentoring focus from developing the mentee's cognitive, visible areas to social-emotional, non-cognitive dimensions; from narrowly divided standards to holistic curriculum, from measuring quantitative change to measuring the wellbeing of mentees in community. This chapter offers specific strategies and tactics to effectively implement personhood in the mentoring process.

In Chapter 3, Laura Garrison-Brook focuses on youth mentoring. The author argues that *purpose* is a central element in life that defines people's actions, generates goals, and provides them with a sense of meaning. Purpose is the central to the work of Discovering My Purpose (DMP), a non-profit organization focused on helping teenagers and young adults live happier, more purposeful lives. Throughout the chapter, the author discusses different ways that attention to purpose in mentoring can help students, especially those often labeled as at-risk, become less anxious, less likely to be substance abusers, less depressed, and more resilient. Using a positive, potential-oriented term of *at-promise* youth, the chapter describes the program, *Conversations on Purpose*, which provides mentors with the layered discussion prompts to help their youth mentee explore their strengths, the things they love to do, and the ways they can be of service to the world. This chapter concludes with several practical ways for mentors to jumpstart easy and natural conversations with their mentees around what matters to them and how purpose can impact their wellbeing.

In Chapter 4, Imandeep Grewal, Amanda Maher, Sara Muchmore, and Johnnetta Ricks, who are a part of the NEXT Scholars program, share their mentorship practice which includes a collective of aspiring teachers, faculty, and a diverse group of practicing PK–12 educators in Southeast Michigan. As authors detail their journey from an informal discussion group to a formal mentoring initiative, they demonstrate how the purely one-to-one mentoring relationships for some cultural and racial groups can limit its aims to one person's professional journey and the defusing of their individual professional challenges. Instead, they argue for a collective approach to mentorship that aims at ecological systems health and aspires building and sustaining environments where all members can flourish. Drawing on the



stories from students and classroom teacher partners, they highlight the importance of attention in mentoring to individual and collective identity development, wellbeing, persistence, and sense of action. Drawing from a cellular metaphor, the authors provide ways for improving the health and wellbeing of teacher education participants and institutions from the ground up.

In Chapter 5, Seema Rivera describes mentoring of preservice teachers and emphasizes the benefits of strong mentorship both for mentees and mentors. This chapter details the experiences of two STEM preservice teachers who are scholars in the STEM Up NY program, a Robert Noyce scholarship program at Clarkson University that is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to help strengthen STEM teaching and learning in high-need schools. Both preservice teachers had individually assigned mentor while completing a full year teaching residency in an urban high school. In this study, using narrative inquiry methodology, Rivera focuses on the perceived benefits and impact that the mentoring relationship can have on wellbeing of preservice teachers and their mentors. The chapter demonstrates ways in which mentor-mentee relationship can be meaningful to both educators, positing that strong, positive interpersonal skills can lead to high-quality mentorships. In turn, a positive mentor-mentee relationship was found to be connected to wellbeing of both parties.

In Chapter 6, Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Brooke Parker, and Haley Clark provide a comprehensive literature review on the role of mentorship in promoting the wellbeing of teachers at different career stages within K–12 education contexts. Research indicates that teachers are increasingly affected by work-related challenges and stress, burnout, work–life imbalance, which lead to higher retention rates and decreased overall wellbeing. The authors examine the psychological, relational, and professional benefits of mentorship for teacher wellbeing. For early career teachers, mentors offer emotional support, improving self-efficacy, and navigating challenges. Mid-late career teachers also benefit by finding personal fulfillment in mentoring and gaining relevant professional support. The chapter calls for a holistic mentorship approach that emphasizes emotional and psychosocial benefits alongside career growth, creating a collaborative and supportive school environment for educators.

In Chapter 7, Carol Radford starts off with an ever-important question of how those in an education profession can focus on the needs of novice teachers and keep them inspired. She posits that intentional focus on teacher wellbeing expands mentoring conversations beyond the typical professional content learning to the deeper, more individualized experiences of being a teacher. Using the notion of mindful mentoring, the author builds upon her extensive experience and shines a spotlight on three ways to direct the attention of mentor program leaders toward mentoring

practices that promote teacher wellbeing. Radford argues that by creating a collaborative mentoring curriculum, integrating wellness strategies into mentoring conversations, and expanding one-on-one mentoring to include group mentoring, programs for teachers can engage novices in meaningful conversations to support their growth and wellbeing.

Chapter 8 serves as a review of literature and a call to action that promotes the importance of using context specific mentoring practices centering on individual wellbeing and confidence. In this chapter, Lauren May argues that mentoring can promote novice teacher confidence and wellbeing if it is implemented in ways that move away from one-size-fits-all, generalized strategies for improvement and focus more on the individual teacher and their contextualized environments. The process of developing a teacher identity involves a repositioning in which the individual moves from identifying as a student to identifying as a teacher. Thus, using a lens of the dialogical self, the author describes the process of developing unique I-positions for a new teacher identity, *I-as* and demonstrates how structured reflexivity with a mentor can be instrumental for a novice teacher to learn how to engage in deeper reflection-in-action. May describes the importance of both pedagogical mentoring, that focuses on instructional practice or management strategies for classroom implementation, and emotional mentoring, that repositions the mentor as a therapist with a focus on mental health and guidance, in meeting the individual and context-specific needs of novice teachers and growing their confidence in the profession and overall wellbeing.

In Chapter 9, Sara Hoeve and Susan Brondyk describe the benefits of extending the mentoring relationship beyond the student teaching semester and into the induction years as a means of addressing emotional burnout, increasing teacher efficacy, and reducing the teacher shortage. Use a multi-case study approach, the authors detail new model for university-based induction support that the faculty and staff created and implemented at Hope College. It emphasized mentor continuity in building resilience in new teachers and helping them successfully adapt to challenging experiences by adjusting to external demands. Using the lens of disequilibrium, the authors argue that the accumulation of negative experiences can often weigh on new teachers, cause discouragement, and decrease their confidence and efficacy. The model provided ways for mentors to help beginning teachers to adapt to challenging experiences. Supervisors were able to leverage the trust that already existed from the student teaching semester, provide continuity in moving novices' instructional skills from the educator program into the first year of practice, and use their prior knowledge of the teacher's skills and struggles to maintain a growth trajectory in their practice. In turn, working closely with a mentor who knows them well allowed mentees to adapt and flourish. This chapter highlights the potential benefit

of the model to both teacher education programs and K–12 districts as they partner to support beginning teachers.

In Chapter 10, Tara Mason describes how high-quality mentorship can positively impact the issues of special education teacher well-being, shortage, and retention. As author argues, one of the ways to address the critical issue of special education teacher shortage, worsened by the recent pandemic, is to offer high-quality mentorship designed to support the unique roles and responsibilities within special education. This chapter delves into the evidence-base of providing quality mentoring within educational contexts and proposes a framework (model) for mentoring future special education teachers and supporting their wellbeing. The framework, which stems from the review of the mentoring models, mentoring best practices, special education-specific competencies that promote a healthy work and life, and findings from a small study completed in a western mountain state in the United States, offers illustrative examples of collaborative practices between mentor and mentee that promote support and resources where needed for new special educators. The author posits that in order to train and retain future special educators, such mentoring model can offer a mechanism to promote wellbeing, work–life balance, effective training, and retention of special education teachers.

In Chapter 11, Teri Rubinoff, Noa Daniel, and Christine Chin describe the work of The Mentoree, a collaborative mentorship community for educators at every and any stage of their careers that is grounded in professional learning, well-being, and efficacy. The Mentoree is a boardless and borderless virtual space that supports educators globally through mentorship grounded in co-regulating relationships that support educator wellbeing and provide a foundation for the professional learning that leads to a sense of efficacy. The authors detail their approach to mentorship for well-being at The Mentoree through the conceptual framework of Self-Reg as a mindful practice. Based on the feedback from mentees obtained through surveys, focus groups, and documented mentorship conversations, this chapter illustrates the benefits that autonomy and choice have on educator wellbeing. The authors conclude that teachers can benefit from maintaining a mentorship mindset throughout their careers and posit that flexible and supportive virtual mentorship, like the one offered at The Mentoree, has the potential to cultivate a collaborative mentorship community that is grounded in professional learning, wellbeing, and efficacy.

In Chapter 12, Suzanne Molitor argues that although mentoring continues to be one of the most important components of new teacher induction, the voices of induction mentors who support novice teachers beyond the pre-service year are relatively absent. This chapter is based on the qualitative study that explored induction mentors' understanding of their role as teacher leaders in one large school district in Ontario, Canada. The author

presents empirical findings obtained from interviews conducted with 17 secondary school induction mentors involved in the implementation of the provincial New Teacher Induction Policy in Ontario, Canada. Analysis of interviews conducted with mentors, who operate apart from hierarchical leadership roles and who have repeatedly mentored new teachers, amplifies and extends understanding to complement existing literature in the area of mentoring and teacher leadership. In this chapter, the author describes how induction mentors define their role as teacher leaders, how professional learning impacts their role understanding, what challenges they encounter, and what reciprocal benefits impact their professional wellbeing. The experiences and reflections of these mentors provide an original perspective on mentoring as teacher leadership and its potential to change isolationist workplace cultures in secondary schools.

In Chapter 13, Tyrone Bynoe argues that school leader positions are negatively affected by socio-emotional imbalances that school leaders develop overtime, forming the acute need for rehabilitation to regain wellbeing and a sound mind. To counter these effects, the author offers a conceptual model of the knowledge, skills, and commitments that are key for an effective mentoring program to foster wellness in school leaders so that they can develop and mature in dispositions that yield authentic experiences of self-actualization, self-care, and self-assurance. The author describes the school principal mentoring programs as consisting of a meaningful continuum of school leadership training from initial preparation to professional development up to approximately five years of experience. The chapter first leads the reader through the review of the literature on the imperative of wellbeing for leader mentoring and training, arguing for readjustments in the continuum of advanced supervisory preparation, especially during the first five years of an administrator's journey. Finally, the author details a conceptual model comprising the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions (or commitments) which establish and nurture wellness through school principal mentoring programs.

In Chapter 14, Rhonda Wheeler, Ellen Reames, and Angela Adair, examine whether informal mentoring in the areas of personal and professional wellbeing can improve the work life-balance of school principals. The authors argue that past research regarding principal mentoring strongly suggests that personal growth and professional growth can be realized through mentoring by those who have walked similar paths. The connection between a principal's personal and professional well-being is critically important and lends itself to informal mentoring relationships that tend to have fewer boundaries and can better attend to the specific mentor and protégé's needs. The authors detail their multi-phase exploratory qualitative case study that examined informal mentoring practices and how they may positively influence school principals' well-being and work-life balance. The

findings of their study substantiate the need for informal mentoring opportunities for school principals in the area of wellbeing and stress reduction techniques as school leaders' mentors were instrumental for encouraging them to practice self-care and attend to their own wellbeing.

In Chapter 15, Rebecca Stroud Stasel and Michelle Massey opens a conversation on mentorship and wellbeing in the transnational contexts of international schools overseas. As the authors reflect upon some of their mentoring experiences in the context of living and working overseas as expatriate educators, they consider the need for including and prioritizing wellbeing as part of the mentorship experience of mentees. The chapter includes examples from the authors' experiences in the context of international schooling via five vignettes that serve as starting points for reflection on how an educator's wellbeing can be supported with mentoring. This chapter draws from Seligman's PERMA model, a heuristic for wellbeing that includes positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, to guide ongoing dialogues between the two authors as they unpack challenges and priorities for mentoring in the context of living and working overseas as expatriate educators. This chapter provides practical ways to include wellbeing into activities and a mentoring agenda for international teachers, mentors, and leaders, calling for an approach that prioritizes wellbeing within mentoring programs and activities.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, Frances Kochan synthesizes the lessons learned from the chapter contributions in this book and reflects on the steps forward towards promoting wellbeing as an imperative for mentoring initiatives in the school settings.

It is our hope that collective knowledge, wisdom, conceptualizations, and best practices described in these chapters will invite further dialogue and promote the work and sustainable efforts in schools across the world towards bridging the connection between mentoring and wellbeing and promoting dedicated attention to how school organizations and communities, and people within them, can learn, grow, and flourish.

## NOTE

1. Although various spellings of the term exist in the literature (i.e., wellbeing, well-being, or well being), in this volume we use "wellbeing" for consistency (except for the instances of direct quotations and references from the authors that chose to use alternative spellings).

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