

## TPA April 2019 Action: Showering Teachers with Support so Children Can Bloom

We are advocating for social and emotional learning for our students. Let's also promote social and emotional wellness support for our teachers.

Let's talk about one of the most noble professions known to humankind. Let's talk about teaching and our teachers. Not just on Teacher Appreciation Week, or Teacher of the Year receptions, let's talk about every teacher on a random Tuesday in April. Let's talk about what they need to thrive and flourish.

### Background:

Teachers report their work stressful 61 percent of the time, as compared to the general public, who find their work stressful 30 percent of the time according to the 2017 study by American Federation of Teachers. A 2018 study by the University of Missouri found that 93 percent of elementary school teachers report a high stress level with only 7 percent of survey respondents identifying themselves as having low levels of stress and high levels of coping with their jobs. Nationally, 45 percent of teachers leave the profession within five years of teaching (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Doris Santoro, Assistant Professor of Education at Bowdoin College, notes that the problem appears to be twofold: teacher burnout and, teacher "demoralization." While teacher burnout is described as individual inability to cope with the demands of the profession, teacher demoralization stems from teachers not given the support they need to be an effective educator. While we see burnout as an individual issue, the demoralization is on a system which including all of us from policymakers, administrators, parents and communities.

Stressed, disconnected, demoralized, compassion-fatigued teachers are unavailable to embody, model, and teach these essential life long skills. **What teachers tells us they need is a consistent, authentic, wholehearted support of a community** and creation of wellness spaces where they come together to practice self-care as a professional development. **Let's Be Part Of That Community.**

To start the conversation and to engage in declarative action let's start with 3 simple prompts:

- Recall a time when an interaction with a teacher sparked your curiosity or joy
- Now imagine you have a magic wand and with it you can create the best possible support for that teacher. What's that support look like?
- What is the simple, easy concrete step in the next 24 hours you can do toward that action? **What's your example?**