

Why Uplift Education is Adding Mental Health Breaks to the School Calendar This Year

The month of October is often known as Rocktober in education due to the long stretch of school days leading up to the holiday season. During this time period teachers and students often begin to feel the early signs of burnout and feeling overwhelmed. Uplift Education took a proactive approach last school year through getting input from staff and families about adding a fall break to help give teachers an opportunity to rest and renew before launching into the second quarter of the school year. This staff and student vacation time is to stay committed to the network's commitment to prioritizing student and staff well-being. The new fall break added this year to the school calendar serves to recognize the strain the last two years has placed on schools, and how school networks are dealing with calls to put more emphasis on mental health supports and social-emotional learning.

"We've had a lot of conversations over the last year talking about our academic calendar, and specifically one of the requests that was shared with us from our survey to parents was to look at a fall break as part of this conversation," Dr. Washington, President of Uplift said.

It is widely known that there is a relationship between academic performance and well-being, the better your health is, the better your academic performance.

Uplift's school year has gotten off to a strong start for its 23,000+ students. The network has enjoyed seeing their students show up each day excited to learn and deeply engaging in their studies. "Students have grown academically so much over the last ten weeks, and the network looks forward to seeing them meet or exceed grade-level expectations at the end of the school year and get the nation back from the learning loss that hit everyone during the pandemic," Dr. Washington said.

Uplift intentionally prioritizes student and teacher well-being. They have also heard overwhelmingly from their staff that they need more opportunities to refuel and to plan during the school year to keep up with the growing demands of being a teacher.

While students will receive a full week off, Uplift teachers and staff will return to campus after a three-day break and will engage in two full days of training and planning before students return the following week. Uplift is hopeful that well-deserved rest, renewal, and planning time will ensure that their teachers are ready to jump-start the second quarter of learning on a positive and impactful note. We deeply appreciate our staff, students, families, and communities' partnership and commitment to Uplift Education.