

The Teacher with a Huge Mental Load

Julia MacLeod Cohen

- Brooklyn, NY, 43 years old
- High school English teacher, Avenues: The World School
- Four kids in a blended family with her partner, ages 7, 9, 9, and 12

HER JOB:

Full-time, in-person classroom teacher for ninth graders at a prestigious for-profit independent school

PARENT SUPPORTS SHE HAS USED:

- Care concierge service
- Streamlined hiring process



Julia's Story

Being with kids all day long was why Julia—who has worked at five independent schools over two decades—chose to go into teaching in the first place. “You are doing direct, important, incredibly meaningful work whether you’re 23 or 63,” she says. Ironically, though, at 43, with two kids, and two new step-kids, it was also harder than ever to show up for work every day, and balance her increasingly complex home life. “In the past few years, I ended a marriage, sold a house, moved to New York, changed jobs, blended two families, and bought two other houses,” Julia says, still amazed she survived it all.

She credits her school's HR, whose inclusive approach incorporates thoughtful, streamlined, processes, and a care concierge benefit. The program gives teachers four

hours of personal administration support per month—think: sitting on hold for a health insurance claim—a critical benefit for an employee who is required to work in person during standard business hours. “The leadership here gets it. I feel respected not just as a professional, but as a person,” says Julia. And in fact, so much of her mental load was lifted by the program that she was able to be prouder of her teaching than ever, doing 1:1 meetings with kids, and pinch-hitting for other teachers. Julia knows that the impact is more than financial: “Our school's mission is to educate future world leaders. Every extra minute I spend helping them learn to write, to think, to advocate is making good on that promise.”

“I just knew that my family was getting the support that it needed while I was busy supporting other people's children.”

Impact: Reduced stress

“This program acknowledged the fact that teachers can really struggle to serve the needs of other people's families over their own,” says Julia: “With the care concierge, I was able to stop worrying that the necessary thing for my family wasn't happening. It was.” Stress is negatively associated with productivity and job satisfaction.

Impact: More equitable distribution of work for all

As the only teacher in her immediate cohort who has kids, Julia was also the only one who needed to take time during

the school day for mom admin work. “We actually don’t all have the same needs,” she says, “and I didn’t want my childless colleagues to have more of a burden just because they’re more available—the program really made things more equitable.”

Impact: Fewer days of missed work

Without the program, “I certainly, certainly would have missed work for these things, and that’s expensive for the school to have to pay substitutes,” she says.

Impact: Ability to take on extra work

With more wiggle room in her schedule, Julia found herself using that time beneficially for her employer:

- She subbed into other classrooms more often than ever before.
- She shared knowledge and strategy with her colleagues.
- She provided countless students with 1:1 meetings—building their skills and confidence, and their tuition-paying parents’ satisfaction.

Impact: Employee loyalty

“Maybe they’re buying my loyalty, but yes, they can have it,” says Julia with a laugh. “Most of my friends are educators, and when I talk about Avenues, everyone is jealous. No one wants to be an ineffective teacher. So a school that helps you be a more effective teacher is one where any wise teacher would want to stay and would want to contribute as much as possible.” Replacing an employee like Julia can cost an employer 6 to 9 months of salary, making retention highly valuable.

Impact: Trust in HR

“They are onto something so thoughtful and caring,” says Julia. She felt seen as a whole person from the very first days of the school’s efficient hiring process, and the care concierge program doubled down on that feeling of being valued. Research found that when organizations increase their level of trust with employees, each worker produces \$10,185 of additional revenue per year and takes 13% fewer sick days. “I realized they must be really expansive in their thinking, interested in my productivity, my creativity, helping me do what I do best.” And, Julia says, because of that, she feels like she has an open door in HR whenever she needs it.

Calculating the employer’s estimated R.O.I. on benefits she used in the past year

INVESTMENT

Care concierge program	\$1,069
One-Year Investment	\$1,069

RETURNS

Trust in HR	\$10,185
Fewer sick days (calculated using 13% of average work absence of 8 days/year, prorated to typical market pay, plus the market day rate of a substitute teacher: \$635.55 + \$207.24):	\$842.79
Fewer absences for family needs, plus the market day rate of a substitute teacher: \$1,222.22 + \$199.27(2):	\$1,620.76
Retention savings based on typical market pay:	\$55,000
One-Year Savings	\$67,648.55

62.3x R.O.I.