



Lexington Public Schools

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TO: Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Bob Harris
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DATE: September 14, 2010

RE: **NEW "IN-HOUSE" MODEL FOR THE DELIVERY OF
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER SERVICES**

Background

Until last June, the Lexington Public Schools contracted for its teacher substitute services through Kelly Services and OPIS. These contracted services included recruiting, training, scheduling, and payroll processing for our per diem substitute teachers. In exchange for these services, we were charged an administrative fee each time we used a per diem substitute to fill a position. This fee was in addition to the per diem compensation the substitute teacher received. During the 2009-2010 academic year, these management services alone cost the district \$117,655.67 based on a total of 5247.8 absences that were filled at a rate of \$22.42 per substitute per day.

Prior to the 2009-2010 academic year, vendors employed the substitute teachers who worked in our classrooms. Just prior to the opening of school in the summer of 2009, Kelly Services told us that they would no longer employ substitute teachers due to liability issues. Therefore, we needed to assume the role of employer for our substitutes. Although, in the short-term, the task of processing payroll for approximately 125 new employees on very short notice seemed daunting, in the long-term the change turned out to be extremely beneficial because we now had an existing pool of substitutes who worked for us and were on our payroll.

Later that fall, while attending the AASPA national conference, I learned that the same web-based scheduling and reporting software used by Kelly Services (known by the product name AESOP) was also available for purchase on an annual subscription basis. After a thorough review of this product and the other cost factors involved in conducting the substitute services model in-house, we purchased a subscription to AESOP and began to re-organize our efforts accordingly. As a result, this year we will be able to improve the delivery of substitute services at a reduced cost to the district. Including start-up costs and the hiring of a part-time Substitute Services Assistant to support the model, the estimated savings in year one will be approximately \$26,700 (see attached).

The New "In-House" Model

The transition to AESOP was seamless for both our substitutes and our staff because they were already familiar with this system. In brief, AESOP works in the following manner. On a daily basis, Administrative Assistants at the building level log teacher absences into the system that then are posted instantaneously on-line to each school's preferred pool of substitutes. Substitutes accept assignments on-line or by automated phone call and receive a confirmation number. If all substitutes from the preferred pool decline employment on a given day and

an opening is still not filled, then the system initiates an automated telephone calling process to all substitutes in the general pool in order to fill the absence. This process take place simultaneously for all teacher absences entered in the system for that day. In the event that an absence is reported just prior to the start of the school day, our Substitute Services Assistant is available at 6:45 a.m. Monday through Friday to help process the absence and fill the opening. Although the process is automated, teachers are still required to report their daily absences to their building administrators in advance and receive approval for absences such as for personal leave and attendance at conferences.

Improvements

I have listed below recent improvements that our new “in-house” model offers to our substitutes, our teachers, and our students:

- Substitutes are required to have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree to be considered for employment. Many of our substitutes have advanced degrees;
- Substitutes must complete a modified version of the on-line employment application we use for teachers;
- Substitutes are interviewed by our own HR staff giving us greater control over who is hired to work in our schools;
- Substitutes who are not licensed teachers are required to complete an on-line training through “SUBHUB,” and an in-person training on site before they are assigned to work in the classroom;
- Substitute compensation has been increased enabling us to attract and retain more qualified applicants and remain competitive with our cohort communities (per diem substitute rates range from \$74 per day to \$100 per day in our comparable communities);
- Schools have the ability to fill absences with substitutes who have the specific skills and content knowledge required for each assignment;
- Schools have the ability to maintain a list preferred substitutes. This can also be done at the department level at the high school.
- Teachers can attach their lesson plans on-line so that their substitute can prepare in advance for the coming school day;
- AESOP provides users with increased reporting capability so that principals and the HR Office have the tools to monitor employee absence and maintain higher daily fill-rates, and;
- AESOP has the capability to fully integrate with MUNIS for payroll and accruals.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, we believe that this “in-house” model will enable us to deliver a more effective and efficient substitute services program by employing high quality substitute teachers who will provide continuity of instruction to our students when their teachers are absent.