

Improving the Substitute Teacher Process



A Kelly® Company



Teachers On Call helps Minnesota district recruit, hire, train and manage qualified substitutes while providing ongoing and personalized support.

Hopkins Public Schools, with 7,200 students in K-12 near the Twin Cities in Minnesota, was having a problem with an increasing demand for substitute teachers during the 2013-2014 school year and being unable to maintain a steady supply of candidates.

Human resources staff from the district had to recruit, hire, train and manage substitute teachers, according to Nik Lightfoot, assistant superintendent and director of administrative services.

"An individual staffer was doing the recruiting, interviewing, onboarding, management and supervision and it became burdensome," Lightfoot says.

Enter Teachers On Call, which currently serves more than 150 school districts in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin, and is expanding into additional states across the Northwest. Teachers On Call recruits year-round, eliminates district payroll and HR responsibilities, including annual background screening, and uses technology that makes it easy for schools and teachers to enter absences. The company also makes it easy for its large pool of substitute teachers to pick up jobs in school districts such as Hopkins from a secure web portal.

"We've had some excellent service and a great working relationship with Teachers On Call," Lightfoot says. "They have added value to the work that we do."

Lightfoot says that using Teachers On Call made an immediate impact on Hopkins's ability to

meet substitute teaching needs. The fill rate for substitutes went from 96.5 percent in the year before Hopkins starting working with Teachers On Call to 98 percent in the first year, and it is currently close to 99 percent. Lightfoot says removing the burden of Hopkins having to do recruiting, interviewing, onboarding, management and supervision of substitute teachers made for the better operational efficiency.

“We received very positive feedback about the time demands that used to be placed on human resources, that we now can utilize in different ways,” Lightfoot says. “Teachers On Call allowed us to streamline some of the operational costs associated with hiring substitutes.”

There was also very little transition needed for the substitutes that Hopkins was already using, because Teachers On Call added those substitutes into its expanding pool of candidates using the same absence management system that substitutes had been using with the district.

“By transitioning our substitutes that had special relationships, we were able to maintain those networks and connections,” Lightfoot says. “There wasn’t much of a change, and people could still maintain their ability to utilize and request substitutes through the absence management system because we still maintain it.”

Teachers On Call provides not only substitute teachers, but also paraprofessionals and teacher aides. Substitutes receive weekly pay, bonuses and even 401k plans, which increases the quality and depth of the pool of substitutes.

“They were offering bonuses and other benefits that we couldn’t offer,” Lightfoot says.



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