CAUSE ADVISORY

2019-20 Update: Substitute Shortages

The union continues to share potential remedies.

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CUSD Colleagues, Board members, and Community Stakeholders,

Since the arrival of Superintendent Diane Rigby, Assistant Superintendent Maureen Fitzgerald, and Human Resource Director Diana Zapata-Kotowski, CAUSE Leadership has continued sharing concerns and potential remedies associated with inadequate substitute coverage across the District.  This includes substitute coverage for both faculty and support staff.   And WHY?  Because those who work in the trenches, directly serving students in the teaching and learning environment, know that the District’s substitute posture undermines student learning and safety.

To make matters worse, CAUSE Leadership has learned that select District administrators have been assigning blame for the District’s inadequate approach to substitute coverage; going so far as to suggest that employees who use their contractually protected leave options are behaving “inappropriate” and contributing to employee absenteeism.

To be clear, taking contractually protected leave is neither "inappropriate" nor "absenteeism." Although such suggestions are utterly baseless, the Union remains committed to proactively supporting the CUSD where it can.  Therefore, we are again providing potential remedies to help the CUSD improve its substitute posture.

From the union's perspective, we believe that improving the District's substitute posture would be best done by taking a 3-pronged approach, including:

1.) Incentivizing substitute compensation.

2.) Developing more effective and strategic recruitment  techniques.

...&...

3.) Amending Certificated & Classified Contract/s to Improved Effect.

If further developed, CAUSE leadership believes that CUSD could implement an effective response to the challenges associated with this issue.  We are interested in helping the CUSD's students reap the benefits of a more effective substitute posture.   The Union believes that a more comprehensive approach to the recruitment and maintenance of a high-quality substitutes would result in several benefits to the teaching and learning environment, including but not limited to:

1.)   increased substitute/s experience and job capacity

2.)   increased professional loyalty (to CUSD from our )substitutes’

3.)   increased knowledge of administrative and site-safety protocols

4.)   increased substitute/s familiarity with the student body

5.)   decreased inefficiency (*i.e. fiscal & material*) surrounding the daily scheduling and placement of substitutes

6.)   increased knowledge of routes and routines associated with support staff roles (custodial, secretarial, grounds, instructional aides, etc)

7.)   increased familiarity with content expectations and grade-level expectations

8.) increased recruitment opportunities for both substitutes considering careers in education and/or District agents trying to fill faculty or support staff positions

Please take a moment to share any other suggestions and/or concerns you may have.   We believe these will help the Union, as we help District management resolve the current substitute condition.

In Unity,

~ j. Hotchner \* CAUSE President

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PS.  Below, you will find **specifics** about each of the "three prongs" mentioned above.   We encourage you to review these opportunities, share them with any interested parties, and help us promote improvements across the District and community.

**1.)  Incentivize Substitute Compensation :**

     **A. Create a standing sub-pool**

- How many teacher subs are needed on any given date across the District?  Could this figure serve as the basis for a permanent sub-pool, the members of whom are paid at *'step1/column1'* or at a higher hourly rate?

- Could that sub-pool serve as full-time or consistent part-time employees on a year long contract?

- Could this increase the loyalty, capacity, and familiarity of our subs?

**B. Hold a substitute fair:**

- Could we provide a single and efficient opportunity to register for LIVE-SCAN & finger-printing,  take the CBEST, complete job applications, etc.?

- Could we offer to reimburse the costs (i.e. of fingerprinting, CBEST, etc.) once a sub has provided a given number of service days?

**C. Raise compensation levels:**

- offer increased hourly pay

- offer full or limited access to health benefits

- Could this make CUSD more attractive to those serious and interested about substitute work?

**2.) Develop More Strategic and Effective Recruitment Techniques :**

\* Develop a relationship with credentialing offices at local universities and colleges (i.e. UCSB, Antioch, Westmont, SBCC, etc.)

\* Could we develop a new kind of teacher training opportunity; a version of student teaching that would function like a full time substitute?

\* Could we offer priority consideration for hiring?

\* Could we increase or better target our advertising in the local papers, radio, movie theatres, etc. ?

\* Could we tap retired teachers to provide service?

**3.) Amend Certificated & Classified Contract/s to Improved Effect:**

\* Offer to "Buy-Back" leave days, annually or bi-annually, in order to discourage employees from embracing a “use-it-or-lose-it” approach to earned leave time.

\* Offer contractual incentives for those who use less than an established percentage of their earned leave in a given year.

**\* C.A.U.S.E. - Yes We Can ! \***