



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of School Performance

Department of Human Resources

North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227

Website: <https://www.pps.net>

To: School Board Directors, Portland Public Schools

From: Dr. Jon Franco, Chief of Schools
Sharon Reese, Chief Human Resources Officer

Date: August 18, 2022

Subject: **Hard to Fill Financial Incentive: A Strategy to Create a Stronger and Thriving Substitute Teacher Workforce**

Last fall, the PPS School Board authorized a financial incentive to encourage substitute teachers to fulfill assignments in schools. Following further analysis of substitute fill rates, we are requesting approval to increase incentive pay for substitute positions at twenty-five schools with historically low substitute fill rates for the 2022-23 school year.

Strategies to Creating a Stronger and Thriving Substitute Teacher Workforce

Here at Portland Public Schools, we believe that every student deserves a learning experience that is high-quality, inclusive and joyful—regardless of zip code, income, race or disability. Substitute teachers are critical to creating a continuity of learning when a student’s regular teacher is absent.

In an effort to recruit, retain and build a thriving substitute workforce, the offices of School Performance, Teaching and Learning, and Human Resources have developed a series of initiatives aimed at creating a stronger substitute teacher workforce, reducing many of the challenges experienced during the global pandemic. Informed by data, a review of substitute and administrator survey, and through consultation with a group of school leaders, here are our five key strategies for the school year:

1. **Guidance to Schools:** Provide guidance, support and resources to better support substitute educators
2. **Aligned PD Scheduling:** Limit district-driven professional development requiring large quantities of substitute educators
3. **Targeted Recruitment:** Build targeted substitute recruitment strategies aim at increasing and diversifying the substitute educator pool
4. **Professional Development:** Strengthen professional learning opportunities for substitute educators to gain additional knowledge and skills, including in effective classroom management, culturally-responsive teaching, and racial equity
5. **Hard to Fill Financial Incentives:** Offer financial incentives that encourage higher fill rates at schools with historically low fill rates



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Strategy - Hard to Fill Financial Incentives

Staff request the School Board's authority to increase incentive pay for substitutes at schools with lower than 75% fill rate in 2021-22 (25 schools):

Current Incentive: \$15/day and \$10/half day

Proposed Incentive: \$50/day and \$35/half day

The approximate cost of this increase to the incentive is \$550,000 and will be funded by vacancy savings from the 2022-23 school year.

Last school year, PPS experienced a high number of teacher absences and unfilled sub jobs, which led to inconsistent experiences for students and challenging day-to-day working conditions for staff. Here is a quick comparison between last year (2021-2022) and before the pandemic (2018-2019):

2018-19: 94% fill rate with 0 below 70%

2021-22: 77.8% fill rate with 17 schools below 70% (includes 13 Title 1 Schools and 6 Middle Schools)

Early this year we sent a survey to all substitute teachers to better understand what they found to be important as substitute teachers at PPS. 89.6% of the 310 respondents said that daily pay rate was "very important." Flexibility was ranked as second most important factor for being a substitute educator and location was ranked third most important factor for where they filled vacancies.

By increased incentive pay, we believe that more substitute teachers will be incentivized to fill vacancies.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution
- B. Memorandum of Understanding

Please see [this draft resolution](#) and [this Memorandum of Understanding](#) for your consideration.