

Washtenaw County Schools Consolidation of Substitute Services Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the issue?

At the request of our local school districts, in February 2007, WISD issued a Request for Proposal to Consolidate Substitute Services. Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD) received three responses that were reviewed by an evaluation committee composed of representatives from local school districts. Upon the evaluation committee's recommendation, the WISD Board chose the system that many other ISDs districts are already using. The system comes in two parts: Aesop for absence reporting and substitute placement and Professional Educational Services Group, LLC (PESG) for employment and payroll processing.

2. What does this mean?

Substitute calling, placement, and employment, as well as teacher absence reporting, will be done by these two companies.

3. Why is it being done now?

Schools are under increasing pressure to do more with less, while keeping resources in the classroom. This is being implemented now, after several months of careful study and planning, because it creates an effective, cost efficient, countywide system to secure quality substitutes for the classrooms in Washtenaw County.

4. Which school districts are participating?

All ten public school districts in Washtenaw County: Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake, Willow Run, Ypsilanti and Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD) are participating. Saline, however, is using a different vendor, which it already uses for another purpose, for the employment of the substitutes.

5. Who will be affected?

Those who are currently registered as substitutes and those who want to be substitutes in Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake, Willow Run, Ypsilanti and Washtenaw Intermediate School District.

6. When will it start?

Our goal is to have the system functioning by the end of this school year, including an orientation process for substitutes. Training of staff who need to use the system will take place during the summer, including right before the start of the school year. Then, everything will be ready for use starting next school year (2007-08).

7. If I am subbing now, what do I need to do?

If you are already subbing, we will contact you in early May to start the enrollment process. If you don't hear from us, contact PESG at (616) 891-0509.

8. How will it work?

Those who wish to become substitutes in any of the public school districts in Washtenaw County will need to enroll in this new system and receive instructions on how to use it. Teachers in the participating school districts will also receive instruction in its use.

9. Are any other places using similar systems?

Yes. It is becoming more commonplace, locally and statewide. In fact, three of our local districts already had a substitute call-in system in place. Statewide, these ISDs: Livingston, Ottawa, Kent, Monroe, Wayne, St. Joseph and Jackson are either using or exploring similar systems.

10. What are the benefits for students?

- Our students will gain from a proven system that offers appropriate classroom coverage when their regular teacher is unavailable.
- Our students' achievement will be positively impacted as teachers request preferred substitutes, increasing classroom management consistency.
- Our students will continue to grow as they work with regular substitutes who are familiar with their learning styles.
- Our students will benefit from lesson continuity, as teachers and substitutes communicate via e-mail about lessons and learning objectives.

11. What are the benefits for substitutes?

- Substitutes will be paid a standardized rate, eliminating unevenness across the county. Whether subbing in Ann Arbor or Manchester or any other Washtenaw County school district, they'll receive the same daily rate: \$75/day.
- Substitutes will receive one, combined paycheck for the work they've done in any of the participating Washtenaw County School Districts during a pay period.
- Longer-term subs (31 school days or more) will receive the same daily rate: \$180/day.
- Substitutes can keep more of their pay. Substitutes will no longer be required to contribute up to 4.3% of their pay to Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System—Member Investment Program (MIP).
- Substitutes will now be able to purchase group health insurance.
- Substitutes can easily access the system via the Internet or phone, 24/7.

12. What are the benefits for teachers?

- Teachers can schedule planned absences ahead of time.
- Teachers can choose from a preferred list of subs which they can create.
- Teachers can e-mail subs or call to see if they are available or to communicate about lessons.
- Teachers can easily access the system via the Internet or phone, 24/7.

13. What are the benefits for schools?

- It generates cost savings by taking advantage of economies of scale.
- It is a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
- It aligns with the Governor's request for consolidation of services, (although not instituted because of it.)
- It automates and standardizes the sub-calling and sub-placement functions and reporting of teacher absences.
- The contractor handles sub calling and payroll processing.
- Schools will not be required to contribute the mandatory 18% they would have had to contribute to the state's retirement system on top of the sub's hourly rate (statistics show the majority of subs don't retire from the system.)
- The contractor is responsible for worker's compensation and unemployment costs.
- Districts can use long-term subs for classroom continuity for as long as needed (without a requirement to hire them after 150 days.)
- Teacher substitutes will be offered a standardized daily rate, eliminating competition across the county.
- Schools can also use the service for other categories of workers, like: paraprofessionals, aides, custodians, and secretaries.
- The contractor will conduct the training for Blood borne pathogens and Right to Know. Districts will only have to provide district- and site- specific training.
- After deducting service fees, schools will realize an overall cost savings of more than \$600,000, countywide, which can be used for student programming. [The savings are even greater if you factor in the time saved in sub-calling and payroll processing.]

14. How can I get more information?

Contact WISD or your local school district. Or visit: www.contractsubs.com.