



A trusted source for quality substitute teachers

An urban district of 10,000+ students contracts an effective staffing program for its instructional and non-instructional staff.

The Consolidated School District of New Britain (CSDNB) serves New Britain, CT, a city of about 70,000 residents located just southwest of Hartford. The CSDNB is home to more than 10,000 students—attending one high school, four middle schools, and 10 elementary schools. The district has been partnering with Kelly Educational Staffing® (KES®) since 2003 to help resolve many of its ongoing challenges as an urban school system with a very culturally diverse student body.

The challenge

In 2001, the CSDNB program for managing its substitute teachers was decentralized, inconsistent, and inefficient. Placement rates across the school system were as low as 65 percent. With no automated scheduling technology in place, the district had limited access to its incumbent substitute placement service, from just 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. each day, and no capacity for longer-term planning. Plagued by a lack of quality candidates, the program didn't provide screening and training of its substitute teachers, and didn't monitor any of their performance.

As an urban school district, CSDNB is marked by many distinguishing challenges such as more frequent student mobility; larger concentrations of immigrant populations; greater racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; and higher concentrations of student poverty. More than three-quarters (78 percent) of students across the district qualify as minorities, and 44 percent come from homes where English is not the primary language. There are 38 separate languages spoken in the New Britain area.

Results at a Glance

CHALLENGE:

- Urban district with 15 schools/10,000+ students, and multiple cultures
- No automated scheduling technology; limited screening and training
- Demand for degreed substitute teachers; placement rates as low as 65%

SOLUTION:

- Staffing program for substitute teachers and non-instructional staff
- Web-based access to a scheduling and absence management system
- Ongoing assessment, training, and retention of substitute teachers

RESULT:

- Improved placement rates to 95%, with less cost for covering same classes
- District has hired up to 35% of new teachers from the KES pool
- Improved reporting visibility has reduced absenteeism and costs
- Quality of substitute talent has been recognized as driving value



The district was faced with increasing cost for its teachers, combined with increasing complaints about the quality and behavior of its substitute workforce. And because CSDNB is situated in Connecticut, where a four-year degree is required of substitute teachers, recruiters were constantly challenged to attract and retain a qualified pool. Many classrooms were left consistently without a substitute.

The solution

CSDNB partnered with KES to deploy a comprehensive substitute teacher management program. The solution features an automated scheduling and absence management system with 24/7 web-based access for teachers, substitute teachers, and school administrators. The technology delivers real-time reporting in a customized, in-depth, easy-to-view interface that includes reasons for teacher absenteeism as well as other important data, helping the district to identify work pattern trends and develop better forecasting.

Kelly Educational Staffing customized recruiting plans that helped the district to retain higher quality candidates. The KES solution also includes year-round recruitment of new substitute teachers to maintain a larger, more effective pool for New Britain schools. KES provides up to 130 substitute teachers on peak days, and an average of 75 substitute teachers daily across the district.

All new candidates are screened centrally for experience and credentials, then thoroughly oriented and trained with school handbooks customized with information from the district. KES then follows up regularly with on-site visits to each school, providing feedback and monitoring of substitute teacher performance. The KES program has expanded beyond instructional staff for the district to include paraprofessionals, office/clerical staff, and teaching personnel for its adult education classes.

The result

Since implementing the KES solution, substitute teacher placement rates have risen and remained at about 95 percent in recent years. This improvement translates into cost savings, since the district no longer pays class-coverage payments to paraprofessionals or extra-duty payments for teachers to fill those classes.

Access to computerized reporting systems by the New Britain schools' teachers, principals, and HR staff has allowed for much better long- and short-term planning. More centralized control and monitoring of the entire CSDNB program has led to vastly improved data and insight. Absence tracking includes daily and weekly reporting of teacher absences, customized by teacher, school, reason, and day of the week. This visibility has led to decreased teacher absenteeism, more consistency in educating students, and ultimately, to a reduction in overall spending for its substitute teacher program.

As one New Britain school administrator asserted, "CSDNB has not been able to recruit and retain substitute teachers that are as qualified, committed, trained, and reliable as those provided by KES." New candidates for both instructional and non-instructional personnel positions are of such a consistently high quality that in years of greater hiring needs, the district has hired up to 35 percent of its new full-time personnel from the KES substitute teacher pool. This has led to efficiencies which have delivered other significant cost advantages to the district. Additionally, the CSDNB isn't burdened with workers' compensation charges, unemployment compensation costs, payroll processing, or other employment taxes—everything is handled by KES. And the dismissal of staff members who don't fit the culture of the district is made easier, with less liability for CSDNB.

"Without Kelly Educational Staffing, it's likely that our placement rate would be about 65 percent, optimistically—meaning approximately 23 classrooms daily would have no substitute teacher. This would result in over 1,000 students each day having no teacher, and would require 60 or 70 other teachers to absorb these students in their already oversized classrooms."

—**Bob Stacy**, Former Chief Human Resources Officer, Consolidated School District of New Britain

For more information on how Kelly Educational Staffing can help meet your demand for more effective workforce solutions, contact your local KES branch or visit kellyeducationalstaffing.com today.