

A Florida public school district



High-volume substitute teacher program

One of the nation's top 25 largest public school systems deploys an integrated substitute staffing program to cover 8,400+ teachers in 160+ schools.

As one of Florida's top ten largest public school districts, the customer serves about 123,000 students through more than 160 schools. The district encompasses one of the largest Florida cities in terms of total land area. To help administer its substitute teacher management program over such a large expanse and populace, the school system partnered with Kelly Educational Staffing® (KES®) in 2001. The partnership has since yielded a history of reliably high-quality results, and expanded to include the placement of substitute teachers in the absence of paraprofessionals specialized in support of medically fragile students.

The challenge

The Florida public school district is responsible for a geography covering about 918 square miles, inhabited by roughly 900,000 residents. To accommodate this vast area, the district operates a wide range of educational settings, including 104 elementary schools, two K – 8 schools, 24 middle schools, 19 high schools, two 6 – 12 schools, seven alternative schools, and three exceptional student centers.

To help eliminate achievement gaps, the district's goal is for every school to be a high-performing organization, both academically and operationally, with academic and operational resources distributed through all its schools. But with more than 8,400 teachers across the system, as many as 600 to 800 substitute teachers are

Results at a Glance

CHALLENGE

- District with 160+ schools/123,000+ students over 918 square miles
- 125,000 – 150,000 absences each year, from 8,400+ active teachers
- Placement rates as low as 70%; particular issue filling same-day absences

SOLUTION

- Integrated staffing program to manage 2,000+ substitute teachers
- Regular reporting and access to real-time absence management data
- Placing substitute teachers specialized in handling the needs of medically fragile students

RESULT

- Improved placement rates to 99+%, with 600 – 800 on assignment daily
- 85% of district absences are filled with de-greed substitute teachers
- Insight led to 18% absence reduction; 27,500 fewer absences YOY

needed to cover absences on any given day, which can pose complex and costly logistical issues. Total absences in recent years over the system's total teaching workforce have ranged from 125,000 to more than 150,000 annually.

Furthermore, since the district and state require that substitute teachers have at least 60 semester hours of college, recruiting and scheduling a consistently high-quality workforce was presenting a challenge to the district. In 2001, average substitute teacher fill rates across the school system were sometimes as low as 70 percent.

The solution

For more than 10 years, the same core Kelly Educational Staffing management team has worked closely with the customer to develop, build, and execute a quality substitute teacher recruitment program—featuring the service excellence the district needed for truly efficient operations. Their comprehensive approach integrates an automated scheduling system technology, back-office systems support, and local front-line staff who are fully trained and dedicated to servicing the requirements of the district.

The system's leaders appreciate that only high-quality teachers—supported with high-quality, ongoing professional development—will drive a rigorous, intellectually and artistically challenging curriculum across the district. Measurable results are summarized and shared with the district in a regular partnership review, including teacher absence data, reasons for absence, and substitute teacher placement rates. Using this strategic insight, district leaders have identified further opportunities for administrative improvement and tighter controls, which have enhanced monitoring of teacher attendance and helped to manage absences from a high-level perspective.

After several years of success in managing its substitute teaching pool, the district implemented a new program with Kelly Educational Staffing to encompass providing substitute teachers who were specialized to support the specific healthcare needs of the district's medically fragile students in the absence of a paraprofessional.

The result

The large public school system has realized a number of qualitative advantages through a proven recruiting process that screens, matches, and presents only the most qualified personnel. The district was instantly freed up to reallocate more resources to its core functions, away from the scheduling and administrative burden that had previously overwhelmed its internal program.

KES now maintains a pool ranging from 2,000 – 2,250+ highly qualified substitute teachers to cover the district's day-to-day and long-term absences. Almost 85 percent of absences are filled within just one hour of notice, and 98 percent in less than six hours.

In recent years, approximately 85 percent of total district teacher absences were filled with substitute teachers holding a bachelor's degree. District substitute teacher fill rates have improved in partnership with KES to higher than 99 percent on average, with yearly Incident Reporting ratings hovering as low as 0.001 percent. KES also collaborated with the district to develop a focused training for substitute teachers who were placed to support its medically fragile students in the absence of a paraprofessional.

Leveraging ongoing statistics on absence reasons and volume, district leaders have gained a more holistic perspective on their operations. This insight turned the district's attention toward managing teacher attendance, and better control of how absences were tracked and defined internally, which contributed to an 18 percent reduction in absences: from 151,393 one year, to 123,933 the next. Five years later, teacher attendance levels remained stable.

Finally, providing substitute teachers in the absence of a paraprofessional to support its medically fragile students has driven even more efficiency—ensuring the district maintains a highly specialized workforce across all of its substitute teacher needs.

One satisfied district leader confirmed:

“Our district has developed a strong partnership with Kelly Educational Staffing based on these key principals: service commitment; integrity of process; recognizing the importance of screening applicants; and operational initiatives to track performance—but ultimately, it is founded on our mutual dedication to the success of the district and our belief in the academic success of every student.”

—District Leader, one of the nation's top 25 largest public school systems

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.