



# Strategic insight and visibility for proven impact

Insight from a substitute teacher program leads to an empowered school district and better decision-making for student achievement.

Habersham County Schools is a public district serving the communities in and around Clarkesville, GA, encompassing a population of 43,000+ residents. The district is home to about 6,900 students in 14 schools: eight elementary schools, three middle schools, an alternative school, a ninth grade academy, and one high school. Using decentralized operations that weren't automated by any technology, the district was challenged by the administrative burden of maintaining an effective substitute teacher staffing program. Recruiting in a fairly remote area also presented a challenge. Kelly Educational Staffing® (KES®) quickly deployed a program that proved to be more efficient than their existing approach. It helped to improve placement rates, while also providing district leaders with new visibility into how teacher attendance correlates to student achievement in testing across its schools.

## The challenge

Located in the northeast Georgia foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Habersham County Schools (HCS) offers a continuum of educational services to its students through instructional programs that range from kindergarten through the secondary level, as well as extensive opportunities for those with special needs.

Before forming a partnership with Kelly Educational Staffing to manage its substitute teacher staffing program, HCS was struggling to fill all its classrooms when teachers were absent. The school district did not leverage any specialized scheduling or communication technology to help manage substitute placement. Typically, an administrative assistant, teacher, or principal at each school location would administer

## Results at a Glance

### CHALLENGE

- Recruiting in a remote area to cover absences for 500+ teachers in 14 schools
- No scheduling management tool or centralized approach to substitute teachers
- Personnel in each school recruited and maintained a pool of qualified candidates

### SOLUTION

- Consolidated the pool to retain ~50 existing, add ~100 new substitute teachers
- Deployed an automated scheduling system for administration of the program
- Customized reports sent to each school weekly for insight and state compliance

### RESULT

- Annual placement rates for the substitute teacher program maintained at ~99%
- Pool of about 130 now fills 500 – 1,000 teacher absences each month of school
- Correlation found between test scores and number of teacher absences per school

the process, contacting a shared pool of substitute teachers—some of whom were no longer actively working in the district. The school system was sourcing from a pool of roughly 250 – 350 substitute teachers across all schools, but that group was not refreshed on a regular basis, and many of the individuals listed were no longer available to work. HCS needed a program that could help to remove this administrative burden and redundancy from its schools.

## The solution

Today, the district gets sustained value from more efficient best practices and technology that support a more standardized approach. A local KES team provides reliable service to ensure that substitute teachers are scheduled in HCS classrooms on a moment's notice, saving the district both time and effort. The Kelly Educational Staffing team first collaborated to clean up outdated contacts and consolidate the pool, finally transitioning about 50 existing substitute teachers to employment with KES.

Expert recruiting practices were then used to engage about 100 additional teachers for the pool. KES identified many new candidates from nearby Piedmont College, a private liberal arts institution with an active school of education and degree programs in many fields of education. The team now maintains about 130 substitute teachers on average to cover 500+ teachers across the district.

KES also implemented an automated scheduling system for more efficient administration of the program. The tool features user-friendly internet- and phone-based scheduling technology, available for HCS staff and teachers to access 24/7. The entire absence management system functions online in real time, allowing KES to better handle last-minute absences and substitute requests, while leaving HCS staff with more time to focus on other important activities.

The scheduling technology was complemented by centralized customer service support, available before and after school hours, which works to fill open orders proactively and aid with absence creation or modification. Meanwhile, the local KES team creates customized reports that are sent to each school weekly, for reporting that can be submitted directly to the state for compliance. The local team also provides regular industry insight, data analytics, and consultation to the district based on this data—helping its leaders to establish benchmarks, identify trends, and find new opportunities to make better-informed decisions that have a more ongoing direct impact on student achievement.

## The result

Soon after regular reporting from the new technology gave district administrators better visibility into the working patterns in their schools, HCS teacher absences declined. Absentee rates later stabilized, as more and more teachers took advantage of the system's ability to schedule absences further in advance when possible. This flexibility also allowed them to dedicate more days to professional improvement, and to achieve a more satisfactory work-life balance.

For absence volumes that fluctuated between 500 – 1,000 placements monthly, the KES team maintained a pool of roughly 130 substitute teachers with an average placement rate of 98.7 percent in the latest school year. Reporting now gives HCS district leaders regular insight into the absence volume and placement rates for each individual school, with added detail based on separate days of the week, as well as different absence categories. This valuable intelligence led the school to identify a correlation between test scores and the number of teacher absences in each school.

Ultimately, the value of deploying scheduling system technology and best practices for substitute management went far beyond filling absences in the HCS. A number of ongoing advantages were also realized from the data produced through new technology and the informed decisions it helped the district to make. A heavy administrative burden was removed from personnel across all schools, creating more efficiency—which in turn has helped the district to maintain cost neutrality, and drive higher satisfaction for all stakeholders involved throughout its substitute teacher program.

A Habersham County Schools district administrator confirmed:

**“Service excellence and expertise from a recognized leader like Kelly Educational Staffing is just what our substitute teacher program needed to succeed. At first we were reluctant about the overall cost and adoption, especially in deploying new technology to help drive the program—but we were pleasantly surprised to find that our investment has returned a much better quality result, for about the same expense. Our partnership has a direct impact on teachers and students across the system, not to mention the insight and relief it offers to the district’s HR team.”**

—Angela Robinson, HR Personnel Director, Habersham County Schools



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](http://kellyeducationalstaffing.com) today.