



A true partner for student achievement

The North Kansas City Schools find real collaboration in Kelly Educational Staffing®—for less cost and more insight into substitute teacher management, clerical staff, and nursing personnel

The North Kansas City Schools (NKCS) serve families living in the neighborhoods and municipalities of southern Clay County, Missouri. Among the largest districts in the Kansas City metro area, it features 21 elementary schools, five middle schools, and four high schools. NKCS is known for innovation and excellence, offering academically rigorous learning for nearly 19,000 students. Through its collaboration with Kelly Educational Staffing (KES®) for a substitute teacher management solution, the district has recognized a true business partner that's fully aligned with its own high standards for student achievement. 

The challenge

In a recent school year, the North Kansas City Schools earned an Annual Performance Report (APR) score of 92.1 percent: the highest score among districts of similar size in Missouri. That same year, NKCS achieved a graduation rate of 93.4 percent: the highest in the district's recorded history. Yet just one year before, budget concerns and the advent of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) had compelled North Kansas City Schools to reconsider one of its biggest logistical challenges: the management of substitute teachers.

The North Kansas City Schools already had an effective system in place for substitute teachers that filled more than 90 percent of open classrooms. They had a good pool of qualified talent. But when the district came up short, teachers were asked to do double duty or to give up planning time to fill a missing spot. Teachers occasionally couldn't take days off because there weren't enough substitutes available, which can lead to low morale in the district's full-time teaching staff.

Further, managing substitutes is a very time-consuming job for school districts. Ongoing administrative responsibilities continued to add up. The substitute pool had to be recruited, screened, and constantly scheduled. Payroll had to be managed, and last-minute calls made—each time diverting administrative staff from their core educational mission.

Results at a Glance

CHALLENGE

- Providing substitute teacher placements equal to high-quality standards
- Relief from ongoing administrative responsibility in managing substitutes
- \$660,000 in ACA health insurance costs for qualified substitute teachers

SOLUTION

- KES provides insurance so the pool and use of retirees is not limited
- Transitioned an existing pool of substitutes and expanded it to ~600
- Delivery of recruiting resource and service that the district can't sustain

RESULT

- Quality substitutes without limited hours or costly medical insurance
- Improved classroom placement rates to consistently higher than 98%
- Year-round service excellence; reporting for more visibility into trends

The district was also looking for new ways to keep expenses low and mitigate the impact of federal health insurance coverage required by the ACA. Under the law, NKCS employees who work an average of 30 or more hours per week during the school year must be covered—which would add \$660,000 to the district's health insurance expense for the estimated 110 substitute teachers who would qualify.



The solution

By partnering with KES, the district avoids paying health insurance because the substitutes are KES employees and insurance is provided by Kelly®. Plus, the coverage impacts mostly substitutes who take over for long-term absences. NKCS leaders agree that it's better for students to have one long-term substitute than a series of teachers in the event of an extended absence.

In Missouri, retired teachers are limited to 550 hours of work yearly as district employees in order to keep drawing state retirement benefits. As KES employees, they aren't limited—allowing the district to engage more of these high-quality substitutes for the short- or long-term. Over the past five years, the number of NKCS students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) offerings has more than tripled. Access to qualified substitute talent is becoming more critical with each passing year.

KES has a team of people recruiting year-round and interviewing all day long, delivering a level of resource and service that the district can't sustain on its own. In the past, NKCS maintained a pool of about 180 substitute teachers. KES transitioned many from the existing pool, and then quadrupled it to a total of nearly 600. Co-branded advertising helps to attract talent to the district in a crowded market.

The result

North Kansas City Schools has been happy with the results. Classroom placement rates have been improved to consistently higher than 98 percent. Another advantage cited by the district is the benefits offered, which help to retain substitute teachers in the pool. Besides health insurance, KES offers weekly pay, plus training and perks such as 401K plans. The partnership allows the district to retain more high-quality substitutes without limiting hours or providing costly medical insurance.

In its first school year, NKCS staffed only substitute teachers through KES. In its second year, the district added clerical help—featuring school administrative personnel in the main district office during summer hours. District leaders plan to add eight new healthcare professionals in year three, both RNs and LPNs.

Kelly Educational Staffing offers daily reporting on teacher absenteeism and other important data that's in-depth and easy to view, which has helped to identify work pattern trends and areas for improvement. NKCS officials can view data by district, school, position, or absence reason—including lead times, placement rates, and time-to-place. Reporting helps to drive even further efficiencies, through value-added KES consultation that turns this data into useful and actionable information for the district.



A key contact from the North Kansas City Schools endorses the comprehensive solution for any other district, noting:

"We appreciate the collaborative relationship between North Kansas City Schools and Kelly Educational Staffing. It is reassuring to know that KES has the depth and capacity to ensure our classrooms will always be covered with high-quality substitutes."

—Dan Clemens, Superintendent, North Kansas City Schools

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