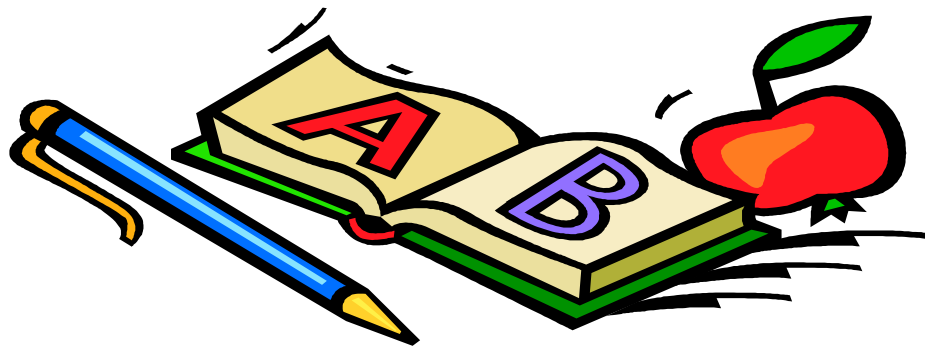


Polk County Schools

Substitute Teacher Handbook

BOARD APPROVED: December 14, 2004



**SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS
MAKE
THE
DIFFERENCE**

SCHOOL BOARD OF POLK COUNTY

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One day as I got out of bed,
So sick I could not hold up my head,
I called the school and quickly said,
I can't come in for I'm nearly dead.

A few minutes later I walked the way
To the Pearly Gates on a golden ray.
But Saint Peter said that I could not stay,
I must return without delay --
No sub for my class could be found today.

Written by: Joene Bedwell
Denison Middle School

Shared by: Betty Jean Woodard
Denison Middle School
May 23, 1995
School Board Work Session

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A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Substitute Teacher:

Welcome and thank you for your willingness to serve the students of Polk County. Substitute teachers are a critical part of our organization and an invaluable resource. We depend on you to maintain our everyday operations and to meet our goal of providing the highest level of education to every student.

We're pleased to have you join our team at Polk County Schools. Again, thank you for your dedication and commitment to our students and we hope you find your classroom experiences rewarding.

Sincerely,

*Gail F. McKinzie, PhD
Superintendent of Schools*

POLK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Polk County Public Schools, the unifying force of our diverse communities, is to ensure each student achieves his or her academic potential and creatively influences society through a synergistic educational system characterized by stimulating and challenging learning experiences; instruction that meets individual needs; responsive, nurturing learning environments; and full involvement of our families.

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Job Title: Substitute Teacher

The School Board authorizes the employment of individuals who meet Basic Qualifications/Employment Paperwork for Substitute Teaching to work in place of regular teachers on a day-to-day basis as the need arises and in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Teachers.

Classification: While on duty, a substitute teacher is an instructional employee of the School Board.

II. Basic Qualifications/Employment Paperwork for Substitute Teaching

To be considered for employment as a substitute teacher in Polk County an individual must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. Age: Must be at least 18 years old
- B. Education: Must have earned at least 30 semester hours of college credit (or the equivalent) from an accredited or recognized college or university. (Foreign degrees and/or credit must be evaluated by a recognized credential evaluation agency. The evaluation of the foreign credits must verify the equivalent of at least 30 semester hours.) An official transcript must be provided to substantiate the credits/degree awarded.
- C. On-line Employment Application
- D. Fingerprint Clearance: Appointment scheduled at Orientation
- E. Drug Clearance: Appointment scheduled at Orientation
- F. Fee: \$100 money order or cashier's check payable to Polk County Schools to cover the cost of the fingerprinting, drug test and training materials.
- G. Orientation and Training: Completion of two days of mandatory training comprised of four training sessions. There is no payment for attending the Orientation and Training sessions.
- H. Satisfactory References: References will be checked by district staff
- I. Employment Paperwork:
 - 1. Social Security Card: Three copies
 - 2. Driver's License: Three copies to include the back if validated by renewal sticker.
 - 3. Notarized Oath of Loyalty and Notice of Information/Waiver Form
 - 4. Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) (If non-citizen, valid work permit.)
 - 5. W-4 (Completed during Orientation)
 - 6. SEMS Profile (Completed during Orientation)

III. Substitute Classifications, Salary and Time

Classifications

Substitute Teacher Classifications are in accordance with the Polk County School Board Salary Handbook [Appendix A].

Salary

The Salary for substitute teachers will be in accordance with the Polk County School Board Salary Handbook [Appendix B].

Time

Time is reported for substitute teachers during two pay periods each month. Time reported and approved for the 1st-15th of each month is paid at the end of the month. Time reported and approved for the 15th to the end of the month is paid on the 15th of the following month. Checks for substitute teachers are mailed from the District Payroll Office to the address provided on the W-4, so it is imperative the mailing address on file with the Human Resources office is accurate and up-to-date at all times. The Payroll Department recommends substitute teachers keep a detailed personal record of the days worked in a given period. Questions about salary payments should be directed to the Payroll Department immediately after receipt of the payment in question.

Substitute Teachers (with the exception of D1 Provisional Substitute and D1 Associate Teachers) are scheduled to work 7.5 hours a day or less (depending upon the position vacancy). Any time worked over 7.5 hours a day will not be paid.

IV. Benefits

Social Security Alternative

Substitute teachers do not contribute to Social Security. Generally, they do not participate in the Florida State Retirement System nor are they eligible for insurance policies offered by the school system, however, as a substitute teacher, you will be a member of a Social Security Alternative Plan. The Plan Administrator sends detailed information to substitutes after they receive their first paycheck [Appendix C].

V. Responsibility of District Substitute Teacher Placement Office

Upon a candidate's successful completion of Orientation and Training, the Placement Office will:

- Establish a personnel file
- Review and verify minimum educational requirements
- Check references
- Review and verify fingerprint report
- Review and verify drug test
- Create personnel records in both SAP and SEMS
- Create profile on SEMS
- Mail approval letter

VI. Responsibility for Substitute Calls

In order to be an active substitute teacher and be called for jobs, substitutes must be enrolled in the automated Substitute Employee Management System (SEMS). When you receive your approval letter, follow the instructions provided to register in SEMS [Appendices D, E and F].

You may access SEMS either by phone 863-534-0455 or on the Internet at <http://polk-fl.net/sems>. You may call SEMS at 863-534-0455 24 hours a day. **The Help desk numbers are 534-0457 and 534-0458 and are staffed Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** Schools begin posting jobs on the automated calling system at 4:30 p.m. the day before the actual job. See Instructions for using SEMS [Appendices D, E and F].

VII. Remaining Active in the System

Maintaining Continuity

A substitute will remain active in the SEMS system unless he/she breaks employment continuity. To maintain continuity, a substitute **must work at least three days each ninety-day period or prearrange through SEMS to be taken out of the system for a prescribed period of time** [Appendix G].

Any request for a "prearranged leave" that will extend into another school year will be considered on an individual basis. "Prearranged leaves" cannot be approved retroactively.

VIII. Reinstatement

If continuity is broken, an individual will be required to complete a new On-Line Application, Request for Reinstatement Form, Substitute Teacher Profile, Fingerprints and Drug Test. A fee of \$85 payable to Polk County Schools will be charged to cover the cost. This fee must be paid prior to reinstatement [Appendix H].

IX. How to Establish Yourself as a Substitute Teacher in the Polk County Public Schools

Once you receive your letter of eligibility, we recommend you contact the person in charge of substitutes at the school(s) where you would like to work. It may either be the principal, assistant principal, dean or secretary. Get to know these people! See your School Locator Guide for directions to schools, telephone numbers and school beginning and ending times.

Schedule your call or visit to the school after students are in class and before 11:00 a.m. The first and last half hours are hectic in any school. Request a copy of each school's substitute teacher handbook and become familiar with the rules and procedures outlined. If you have not taught before, we recommend you arrange a time with the school to observe different classroom situations. You may also consider making yourself a substitute teacher "survival kit". **There are training classes offered to all Polk County School Board Employees by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) [Appendix I].**

X. Evaluation

According to an amendment to Florida Statute 1012.35, districts are required to assess the quality of instruction delivered by substitute teachers who provide instruction for more than 30 days in a single classroom [Appendix J "QPOI-Quality Performance Observation Instrument"].

XI. General Liability of Substitute Teacher

General liability of School Board instructional personnel for injuries suffered by students while in their care is a subject of concern for many employees. Substitute teachers have the same protection as regular teachers while employed and acting within the scope of their employment. While on duty, a substitute teacher is an instructional employee of the School Board.

Injuries to a student that result in liability are caused by: (1) the **intentional act** of an employee, or (2) the **negligent act** of an employee. For example, an **intentional act** would be hitting a student out of anger; a **negligent act** would be leaving a classroom temporarily unsupervised and a student becoming injured during the employee's absence. There is absolutely no protection from personal liability afforded an employee found to have committed an intentional act resulting in injury to a student.

Other ways employees may make their employer liable include: failing to report child abuse, neglect, or sexual harassment. The School Board is an equal employment agency and harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated among its students or employees on the basis of any protected class.

Frequently, our jobs require us to handle confidential, sensitive information that is protected by policy, state and federal laws, like the Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Inappropriately releasing this information to third parties may subject you to civil and criminal penalties, and may also subject the School Board to liability and penalties.

There is protection from personal liability for negligent acts committed within the scope of employment. In such cases negligence may result in the School Board being liable. The liability of the School Board is limited by Florida Statute 768.28 to \$100,000 per person and \$200,000 per occurrence. The employee is protected from a money judgment unless it can be proven that the negligent act was so gross in nature that it almost reached the degree of being intentional. In other words, employees are protected from liability for acts of simple negligence, and the School Board bears that liability.

Such protection or immunity is completely dependent upon the employee's acts. An employee will be protected so long as he/she acts within the scope of his/her employment, works within the Board's policies and rules, and exercises good old-fashioned common sense. Otherwise employees shall be on their own to defend and bear liability at their own expense.

If the injury resulted from an act of simple negligence on the part of an employee, then the Board will defend and no money judgment award will be issued against the employee personally.

**SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORTS AND REQUESTS FROM PRINCIPALS TO
REMOVE A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER FROM A SCHOOL'S LIST OF APPROVED
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

Incidents of a significant nature are reported to the District Office by the school Principal. Each significant incident is reviewed by District Staff to determine if the substitute should be permanently removed from the District's list of approved substitutes. The substitute teacher is notified in writing of the outcome.

Significant Incident Reports will be filed in the substitute teacher's personnel file at the District Office and may be a consideration for future employment as a regular teacher. A substitute teacher shall receive written notification of any report of Significant Incidence where disciplinary action is recommended [Appendix K].

The principal of each school has the authority to remove any substitute teacher from his/her list of approved substitutes, if the substitute teacher does not meet the Mission and Vision of the school (as determined by the school principal). Removal from a school's list based upon Mission and Vision does not constitute a Significant Incident; however, if three different schools request that a substitute teacher's name be removed based upon Mission and Vision during one school year, the substitute teacher will be permanently removed from the District's list of approved substitute teachers.

