



# Platte County

HOME OF THE PIRATES

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Platte County Board of Education  
**From:** Dr. Rob Gardner, Assistant Superintendent  
**Subject:** Adjustment in Substitute Pay  
**Date:** October 14, 2022

Recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality staff is an essential function of any school district committed to providing the best learning environment for children. We are currently experiencing a challenge with the number of candidates that are interested in applying and remaining in the current workforce as a substitute. Since we manage our own substitute pool, the responsibility to hire and retain substitutes falls solely on District staff to recruit and retain these employees.

### Current Issue

Several surrounding districts have adjusted their rate of pay in an attempt to attract substitutes to fill the vacant positions that occur on a daily basis. Across our District, we have noticed a drop in our ability to recruit and retain substitutes, as well as fill the available openings each day.

HR continues to monitor and analyze our weekly fill rate for substitutes and routinely encourages substitutes to complete a staffing survey which identifies barriers that are preventing substitutes from accepting available openings. Through these surveys, three emerging themes have been prevalent; lack of competitive pay, desire for a flexible schedule, and hesitation to accept openings based on the location or specific assignment.

Currently, the District is able to consistently fill about 40 positions due to absences each day, however, on days where staff absences rise, we have been unable to secure a varying number of the substitutes needed. Since classroom coverage is our top priority, District administration has implemented assorted measures which have included certified staff members covering classes during their planning periods, cancellation of scheduled certified staff member professional development, reassignment of specials teachers, dividing up students and placing them with an alternate classroom teacher, hiring an increased number of permanent substitutes, and utilizing classified staff in the classrooms. While these steps have helped, the need for substitutes still remains.

Additionally, the lack of our ability to secure classified substitutes is creating operational concerns, primarily in the custodial and paraprofessional positions. Our research indicates that Platte County currently ranks 5<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in our rate of pay for paraprofessionals and 7<sup>th</sup> out of the Local 15 for custodians. Although the rankings indicate competitive full-time pay, our substitute rates for both of these positions begins at \$14.00 per hour. We believe this pay rate differential prevents candidates from applying or accepting these work assignments.



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## Background Information

Each year, the Human Resources Department embarks on a process to collect and analyze salary information from surrounding school districts regarding competitive rates of pay for all job classifications, including substitutes. We commonly refer to these surrounding districts as the Local 15. This internal process is designed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our pay schedules, relative to other districts, after adjustments and new salary schedules have been adopted by their respective school boards. Specific to this purpose, Platte County ranked the short-term (hourly) and long-term rate for substitutes across the metropolitan area. Through our research, it was determined that Platte County currently ranks 5<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in our daily rate of pay and 7<sup>th</sup> out of the Local 15 in our long-term sub rate for substitutes.

## Current Short-Term Pay Rankings for Substitutes within the Local 15

School District	Hourly/Daily Rate of Pay	Position Ranking
Park Hill	\$19.00 / \$142.50	1
West Platte	\$18.66 / \$140.00	2
Liberty	\$17.33 / \$130.00	3
Excelsior Springs	\$16.00 / \$120.00	4
Blue Springs, Platte County	\$15.60 / \$117.00	5
Ft. Osage, Independence, Kearney, Lee's Summit, NKC, St. Joseph	\$15.33 / \$115.00	6
Ray Pec	\$14.00 / \$105.00	7
Grain Valley, Smithville	\$13.33 / \$100.00	8

*\*Information was collected and verified from the Local 15 by internal HR staff on 9/23/22. All comps were based on the provided hourly wage multiplied by a 7.5-hour day and then rounded to the nearest dollar for ease of comparison.*

## Current Long-Term Pay Rankings for Substitutes within the Local 15

School District	Hourly/Daily Rate of Pay	Position Ranking
Smithville, NKC	\$26.67/\$200.00	1
Park Hill	\$22.40/\$168.00	2
Kearney	\$21.33/\$160.00	3
Liberty	\$20.67/\$155.00	4
West Platte, Independence	\$20.00/\$150.00	5
Lee's Summit	\$19.20/\$144.00	6
Ray Pec, Platte County	\$18.67/\$140.00	7
Ft. Osage, Excelsior Springs	\$18.00/\$135.00	8
Blue Springs	\$17.73/\$133.00	9
St. Joseph	\$16.67/\$125.00	10
Grain Valley	\$14.67/\$110.00	11

*\*Information was collected and verified from the Local 15 by internal HR staff on 9/23/22. All comps were based on the provided hourly wage multiplied by a 7.5-hour day and then rounded to the nearest dollar for ease of comparison.*



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## Recommendation

For purposes of attracting and retaining staff members in this critical shortage area, administration respectfully requests the Board of Education to approve an increase to the short-term and long-term rates of substitute pay as follows:

- Increase the short-term rate for classroom substitutes from \$15.60 to \$16.50, or \$123.75 per day. This would move our ranking from the current spot of 5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> within the Local 15.
- Increase the long-term rate of a substitute from the current rate of \$18.67 per hour/\$140 a day to \$20.67 per hour/\$155 per day. This would move our ranking from the current spot of 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> within the Local 15.
- Increase classified substitute pay from the current rate of \$14.00 per hour to \$15.00 per hour.
- Increase classified long-term substitute pay from the current rate of \$14.20 per hour to \$15.50 per hour.
- Modify the requirement to substitute for the same person for five consecutive days to simply substitute five consecutive days prior to the long-term rate applying.

Pay adjustments are allowable under Board Policy GDBA – Support Staff Compensation, subsection Salary Schedules, specifically states: *Each support staff member will be placed on the appropriate schedule commensurate with, but not limited to, job category and experience with the district. When creating a salary schedule, the Board may recognize characteristics beneficial to the district, such as training, licenses, and employment in high-need areas, in addition to traditional factors such as years of experience.*

We believe approval of this recommendation would increase our ability to attract and retain substitutes as well as increase the motivation for substitutes to accept more open positions. We will continue to monitor our substitute fill rate and listen to staff feedback regarding additional solutions.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Dr. Rob Gardner  
Assistant Superintendent