

# **Hooks Independent School District**

## **HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM REVIEW**

**Conducted by MGT of America, Inc.  
for the Legislative Budget Board**

**January 2011**



## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Robert E. Johnson Bldg.  
1501 N. Congress Ave. - 5th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

512/463-1200  
Fax: 512/475-2902  
<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>

January 19, 2011

Dr. Kathy Allen  
Hooks Independent School District

Dear Dr. Allen:

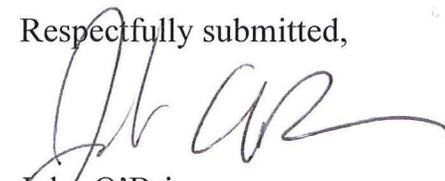
The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Hooks Independent School District's (HISD) human resources and substitute teacher programs.

The report's recommendations will help Hooks ISD improve its overall performance as it manages student behavioral related issues. The report also highlights model practices and programs being implemented in HISD to human resources and substitute teacher programs.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged MGT of America, Inc. to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

The report is available on the LBB website at <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>.

Respectfully submitted,



John O'Brien  
Director  
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Larry Allen  
Mr. Michael Smith  
Mr. Jim Whisenhunt  
Ms. Patti Whitehead  
Mr. Arthur Harpold  
Mr. Bill Whitten  
Mr. Joe Hubbard



# HOOKS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM REVIEW

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Hooks Independent School District (HISD) is located in the northeast corner of Bowie County in Hooks, Texas a few miles west of the city of Texarkana. HISD is one of 13 independent school districts in Bowie County. Founded in 1840, Bowie County is part of the Texarkana, Texas - Texarkana, Arkansas, Metropolitan Statistical Area. The population from a 2004 estimate is 90,248. Bowie County is named for James Bowie, the legendary knife fighter who died at the Battle of the Alamo, and its county seat is New Boston. Encompassing 923 square miles, Bowie County is one of 46 prohibition or entirely dry counties in Texas. Census data from 2000 also indicate that 23,438 families reside in the county and the population density is 101 people per square mile. The ethnicity of the county is 73.3 percent White, 23.4 percent Black or African American, 0.6 percent Native American, 0.4 percent Asian, 1.1 percent of other races, 1.2 percent of two or more races, and 4.8 percent Hispanic or Latino.

The age distribution of the county is as follows: 24.8 percent under the age of 18, 9.4 percent from 18 to 24, 29.6 percent from 25 to 44, 22.4 percent from 45 to 64, and 13.8 percent who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 36 years.

About 33 percent of households in Bowie County have children under the age of 18 living with them; 52 percent are married couples living together, 1.05 percent has a female householder with no husband present, and 29.1 percent are non-families. Twenty-six percent of all households are made up of individuals and 11 percent have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older.

The median household income is approximately \$33,000, and the median family income is approximately \$41,000. In 2002, the per capita personal income was \$24,233. Males had a median income of \$32,000, versus \$22,000 for females. About 14 percent of families and 17 percent of the population are below the poverty line, including 25 percent of those under age 18.

There are various ways of defining or categorizing districts as small, medium or large. One way is to use a district's student enrollment and categorize a district accordingly. Districts with a student enrollment of more than 5,000 students may be defined as large; those with 1,600 to 4,999 are considered medium and those with student populations of 1,600 or less

fall within the category of small. As such, using these definitions/categories, Hooks ISD is considered a small school district.

In 2008–09, HISD served approximately 1,069 students in three campuses (elementary school, Pre-K through grade 4), middle school (grades 5–8), or high school (grades 9–12). Approximately 34 percent of the students are considered at risk, and more than half (52.6 percent) are from economically disadvantaged families. About 2 percent of the students are English language learners. The district has been rated “Academically Acceptable” from 2006–07 through 2009–10, according to the latest school accountability ratings.

Completion Rates indicate the percentage of students completing high school (or equivalent). Standard campuses are designated with a Completion I Rate, while alternative campuses are designated with a Completion II Rate. As of 2008, the Completion I Rate in Hooks ISD was 98.6 percent with the Completion II Rate was 98.6 percent for the fewer than 100 high school graduates.

The Hooks ISD's mission statement is “to graduate responsible and productive citizens prepared for success by delivering appropriate and individualized educational experiences.” The district also outlines a series of belief statements to achieve its mission:

- *We believe empowering student passion for learning is essential to their future.*
- *We believe the lifelong process of adult learning is crucial to student success.*
- *We believe active leadership cultivates purpose driven leaders at every level.*
- *We believe change is inevitable; growth is the result.*
- *We believe acknowledging diversity strengthens learning.*
- *We believe collaboration and inclusion are cornerstones of a unified learning community.*
- *We believe that accepting individual responsibility results in shared accountability.*

Furthermore, the 2008–09 District Improvement Plan (DIP) set forth the district’s goals and objectives:

- *GOAL I: To perform to the standard of 80% and above on all Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests at all grade levels during the 2008–2009 school year.*
- *GOAL II: To improve district student attendance rate to 97% by the year 2009.*
- *GOAL III: To improve the district student completion rate to 98%.*
- *GOAL IV: To provide a safe and orderly school climate that facilitates learning.*
- *GOAL V: Promote parent, school, and community relationships that foster increased student achievement.*
- *GOAL VI: To provide research based, developmentally appropriate and relevant instruction that emphasizes higher order thinking skills.*

The Hooks ISD superintendent reports to the board of trustees comprised of seven district residents elected to three-year at-large rotating terms. The board’s 2009–10 budget comprised of \$9.9 million in revenues included \$1.7 million from local sources and \$8.2 million from the state and federal government. Annual expenditures per student averaged \$8,000, about 2 percent less than the state average. Of the district \$9.9 million budget, \$5.6 million was allocated for direct instruction while \$1.2 million was for maintenance and operations. To close the budget gap of approximately \$450,000, the district used reserve funds.

Hooks ISD is part of Regional Education Service Center VIII (Region 8) which offers assistance with researching and establishing workshops and other professional development opportunities. Other services include employment information (including online application services for client districts), a calendar of events, technology assistance, leadership support, and information on state and federal programs (such as English as a Second Language (ESL), homeless education, and Safe and Drug Free Schools). Hooks ISD participates in the online employment application services, paying \$1,000 per year for the service.

Leary ISD, New Boston ISD, Red Lick ISD, and Redwater ISD are contiguous school districts to Hooks ISD. As shown in **Exhibit 1**, student enrollment in New Boston ISD and Redwater ISD is comparable to Hooks ISD.

**EXHIBIT 1  
STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN DISTRICTS  
CONTIGUOUS TO HOOKS ISD  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Hooks ISD	1,060	1,049	1,069
Leary ISD	139	129	115
New Boston ISD	1,464	1,434	1,406
Red Lick ISD	397	395	434
Redwater ISD	1,111	1,124	1,083

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency data, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2006–07 through 2008–09.

**DISTRICT BUDGET**

Hooks ISD’s budgeted revenue for 2007–08 to 2008–09 declined from \$9,501 per student to \$9,246 with total 2008–09 budgeted revenues of \$15.78 million. Expenditures for recruiting personnel and other human resources activity are included in the general administrative budget. The general administrative fund for 2008–09 was \$387,424 or 4.1 percent of general fund expenditures. The curriculum/instructional staff development expenditures were reported at \$86,586 or 0.9 percent of the general fund.

**Exhibit 2** shows Hooks’ ISD teacher turnover rates compared with the average rates for districts in Region 8 (Mt. Pleasant), and statewide. As shown, the teacher turnover rates for HISD in 2008-09 are comparable to those of Region 8 and slightly higher than the state average.

New hire teachers for 2007–8 are reported as 13, for 2008–09 as 17, and for 2009–10 as 10. The 2008–09 school year new hires included four high school teaching/coaching positions.

**EXHIBIT 2  
TEACHER TURNOVER RATES  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Hooks ISD	15.3%	12.3%	15.9%
Region 8 Districts	15.7%	16.4%	15.6%
<b>State Average</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency data, AEIS, 2006–07 through 2008–09.

**Exhibit 3** shows Hooks ISD average teacher salaries compared with the two contiguous districts with comparable enrollments (**Exhibit 1**), and the statewide average. As

**EXHIBIT 3  
AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
<b>Hooks ISD</b>	<b>\$38,771</b>	<b>\$39,699</b>	<b>\$40,025</b>
New Boston ISD	\$36,307	\$40,295	\$44,554
Redwater ISD	\$35,996	\$38,794	\$40,714
<b>State Average</b>	<b>\$44,897</b>	<b>\$46,179</b>	<b>\$47,159</b>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Snapshot Report, March 2010.

shown, the Hooks ISD average teacher salary was the highest of the three districts in 2006–07, dropped to the middle position in 2007–08, and in 2008–09 was the lowest among the three districts. In all three years, Hooks' ISD average teacher salary was considerably below the state average.

**HOOKS ISD HUMAN RESOURCES  
DIVISION (HRD)**

Management of personnel is a critical function of a school district because personnel costs are a school district's largest expense, accounting for the majority of operational expenses. In 2008–09, Hooks ISD employed 170 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

**Exhibit 4** shows the total number and positions of Hooks ISD employees. The superintendent reports a staffing goal of one teacher for every 18 students although actual class sizes at the high school vary significantly depending on the course offering.

Personnel functions in HISD are performed by several individuals. The secretary maintains a calendar of events, employment application forms, and related procedural information.

**EXHIBIT 4  
HOOKS ISD EMPLOYEES  
2008–09**

POSITION	NUMBER FTES
Teachers	92.6
Professional Support	14.8
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	9.6
Central Administration	3.0
Educational Aides	32.9
Auxiliary Staff	17.1
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>170.0</b>

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2008–09.

The director of corporate and parental development, assisted by the director of curriculum and special programs, coordinates teacher and substitute teacher recruitment, and schedules a substitute teacher job fair in August. The personnel/payroll specialist is responsible for the day-to-day management of the district's automated substitute placement system and trains school personnel and substitute teachers in its use.

Employment opportunities, contact information, job application forms and related information are available on the district's website and may be downloaded for submission to the superintendent's office. Applicants may also apply through the Region 8 (Mt. Pleasant) website which provides an electronic process for submitting application forms. All application forms are appropriate and provide the necessary information for pre-employment screening.

**Exhibit 5** shows the organization of positions providing human resource services for Hooks ISD. As shown, the four positions responsible for most human resource services report directly to the superintendent: a secretary, two directors, and the business manager. In addition, a personnel/payroll specialist also responsible for human resource services reports to the business manager.

**HISD PERSONNEL POLICIES AND JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) policy service to maintain its legal policies. Local policies are developed or updated by the district and passed on to TASB for their review. All administrative policies including personnel policies are retained on the district's website.

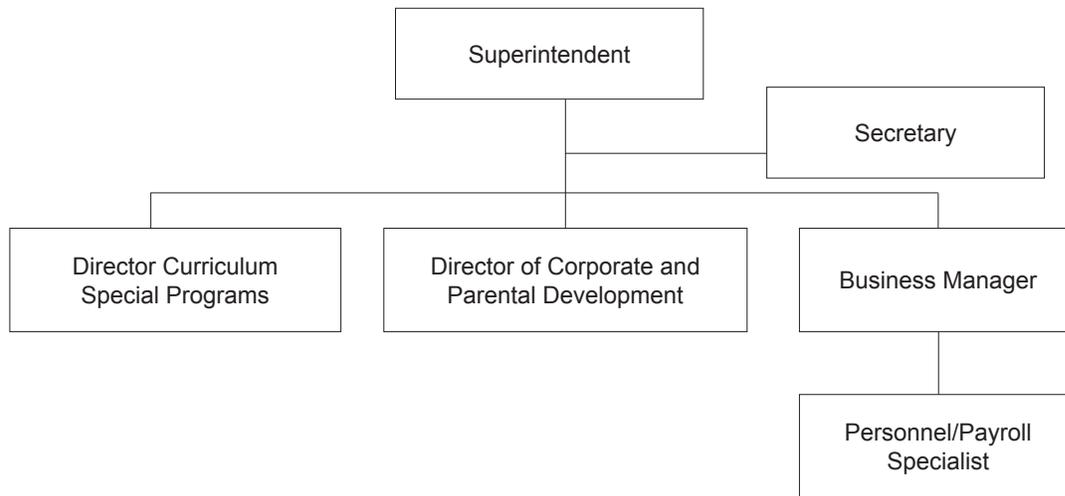
Job descriptions are available for all employee classifications except substitute teachers.

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM**

Requirements for employment as a substitute teacher in Hooks ISD are at a minimum, having a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Compensation for substitute teachers whether they have the minimum education level of a GED or are a certified teacher is the same; \$60 daily with an increase to \$80, retroactive to the first day after six weeks of continuous substituting for the same regular teacher.

The district currently has 55 substitutes listed on the active substitute register maintained in their automated substitute placement system. The district averages approximately six

**EXHIBIT 5  
HOOKS ISD HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATION**



SOURCE: Hooks ISD website and Payroll/Personnel documents, March 2010.

subs per day, adding approximately seven new substitute teachers annually.

**Exhibit 6** shows the cost for absent teachers due to either district required training or due to a teacher’s choice for personal reasons. As shown, district-determined absences account for nearly half of the total cost for substitute teacher placements in Hooks ISD.

**Exhibit 7** shows substitute cost per student. As shown, the cost per student for district-determined need for substitute teachers is \$24.27 (\$25,940/1,069) and the total cost for substitutes for all reasons is \$49.52 (\$52,938/1,069).

**EXHIBIT 6  
HOOKS ISD  
REASON AND COST FOR TEACHER ABSENCES  
REQUIRING SUBSTITUTES  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

CAUSE OF ABSENCE	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Teacher*	\$43,320***	\$31,548	\$26,998
District**	***	\$25,575	\$25,940
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$43,320</b>	<b>\$57,123</b>	<b>\$52,938</b>

\*Teacher determined absence.

\*\*District or school determined absence.

\*\*\*Teacher and District combined.

SOURCE: Hooks ISD General Fund, Object 6112 Report by Function, March 2010.

Overall, the statewide average cost for substitutes on a per student basis is an estimated \$84 while the average for Hooks ISD cost for substitute teachers is well below that amount. Hooks ISD’s aggressive and effective recruitment of substitutes may, in future years, increase this cost by reducing the number of occasions of other teacher and educational aides covering regular teacher classes.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- HISD successfully implemented a Substitute Teacher Job Fair in 2009–10.
- The district’s automated substitute teacher placement system has helped reduce staff and administrator time when contacting and placing substitute teachers.
- The Hooks ISD Employee Handbook 2009–2010 for regular employees represents a comprehensive best practices document.

**FINDINGS**

- Hooks ISD has not developed a job description for substitute teachers and has not reviewed and revised job descriptions thoroughly for other district positions.

**EXHIBIT 7  
HOOKS ISD  
COST PER STUDENT FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS  
2008–09**

NUMBER OF	COST PER STUDENT FOR SUBSTITUTES			
	TEACHER DETERMINED	DISTRICT DETERMINED	TOTAL	
Teachers	92.6	\$25.26	\$24.27	\$49.53
Students	1,069			

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS 2008–09, PEIMS Staff Counts and Totals, Fall Collection and Hooks ISD General Fund, Object 6112, Report by Function, March 2010.

- While HISD has a LEGAL policy (DMA) regarding professional training, it does not have a local policy that includes substitute teachers with supplemental training in areas such as teaching strategies on student discipline, bullying or handling special student populations.
- Hooks ISD does not provide substitute teachers with consistent information in the form of a handbook that covers district policy and procedural matters on critical topics.
- The district's automated substitute placement system is not regularly purged to ensure the system only includes the most current list of available and interested persons seeking assignments.
- Substitute teacher performance is not formally evaluated for effectiveness following an assignment.
- District and school based staff responsible for the automated substitute placement system have not cross-trained other personnel to handle the system in case of an unplanned or extended absence.
- While the district has programs that recognize regular teachers and other employees, substitute teachers at HISD are not provided organized recognition or incentives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Review and update all job descriptions and create job descriptions for positions without one, including the substitute teacher position.**
- **Recommendation 2: Create LOCAL professional training policies to include substitute teachers and provide supplemental training for them.**

- **Recommendation 3: Provide substitutes with a substitute teacher handbook.**
- **Recommendation 4: Periodically review and purge the web-based substitute teacher list to include only the most accurate information on qualified and available substitutes.**
- **Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument.**
- **Recommendation 6: Ensure that both central office and school-based staff are cross-trained in the automated substitute placement system.**
- **Recommendation 7: Develop a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers.**

### DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### SUBSTITUTE TEACHER JOB FAIR

HISD has successfully implemented a Substitute Teacher Job Fair.

Due to the district's remote rural location, and competition with other school districts in the area, HISD has found it difficult to attract sufficient substitute teachers. The district has, therefore, kept substitute teacher qualifications at a minimal level, requiring applicants have at least a high school diploma or GED equivalent, while salary remains competitive and ranges from \$60 to \$80 daily. Even with these actions, attracting an adequate number of substitutes has continued to be a challenge, as reported by principals, assistant principals, school secretaries, and central office administration.

The district currently has 55 substitutes listed on the active substitute register maintained in their automated substitute placement system and averages using approximately six subs per day.

During the 2008–09 school year, personnel led by the superintendent and the director of corporate and parent involvement organized a substitute recruitment job fair to attract additional substitute teachers. The job fair was planned for early August 2009 to ensure recruited applicants could be administratively processed and approved by the board of trustees prior to the beginning of 2009–10.

Planning included the following strategies:

- Advertising, including press releases, advertisements in the local newspaper, and website information in both district and Regional Education Service Center VIII, (Region 8) Mt. Pleasant websites.
- Billing the job fair exclusively for recruitment of substitute teachers.
- Creation of the job fair as a one-stop activity, completing job application, required screening, and other pre-employment and employment paperwork.
- Involvement of invited principals/assistant principals, and other district personnel for interviewing and processing prospective substitutes.
- Scheduling the job fair in two sessions, morning and evening, to maximize potential exposure.
- Locating centrally at the board of trustees' meeting room.

This first annual Substitute Teacher Job Fair was successfully concluded with the recruitment of seven additional substitutes that were approved by the board of trustees prior to the opening of the 2009–10. This number represented an approximate 13 percent increase in available substitutes.

Planning for the district's August 2010, second annual Substitute Teacher Job Fair was underway during the review team's onsite work.

#### **WEB-BASED SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PLACEMENT SYSTEM**

The district's automated substitute teacher placement system has helped reduce staff and administrator time when contacting and placing substitute teachers.

During attendance at an educational conference, the superintendent obtained information on a web-based substitute placement system and initiated an internal review with district personnel. School district officials were able to obtain additional, detailed information on several automated systems and their expected cost for implementation and

operation via a webinar. Additionally, they researched area school districts and discovered that automated web-based systems were successfully being used by several districts in the Region 8 Mt. Pleasant area. Consequently, in October 2009, the administration and staff of Hooks ISD began implementation of an automated web-based substitute teacher placement and absence management system (Aesop).

Upon acquiring the system, a contract was executed with a vendor for an estimated annual investment of \$3,750. Once the web-based system was operational, the actual cost to the district, with credits for small district and staff size, was \$2,707.

Interviews with central office administrators and staff, principals, and school-level secretarial personnel indicate that, for the first time, secretarial personnel assigned to contact substitutes prior to reporting to school each day are now at school on a regular schedule rather than at home attempting to contact and assign needed substitute teachers for the day. The acquisition of this system has increased efficiency, which according to district officials, off-sets the approximate \$300 monthly cost.

#### **DISTRICT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

The Hooks ISD Employee Handbook 2009–10 for regular employees represents a comprehensive, best practices document.

The review team's analysis of other small district's employee handbooks did not reveal a document as comprehensive as the handbook used in this school district. The 2009–10 Employee Handbook contains a detailed table of contents, easily located sections, and a subject index. **Exhibit 8** shows the handbook's detailed table of contents.

Presenting employees with comprehensive information regarding a district's rules, regulations, policies and practices is a win-win situation for both the district and its employees. The district feels like it has informed its employees with valuable and comprehensive information regarding the district's expectations while the employee has a thorough packet of important information located in one convenient document.

**EXHIBIT 8**  
**HOOKS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**  
**2009–10**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>DETAILED TOPICS</b>
Introduction.	Purpose of Manual.
Employee Handbook Receipt.	Form to be signed and dated.
District Information.	Description of the district; Mission Statement; Board of Trustees; Board meeting schedule for 2009–10; Administration; School calendar; School directory; and Helpful contacts.
Employment.	Equal employment opportunity; Job vacancy announcements; Employment after retirement; Contract and non-contract employment; Searches and alcohol and drug testing; Health safety training; Reassignments and transfers; Workloads and work schedules; Notification of parents regarding qualifications; Outside employment and tutoring; Performance evaluation; Employee involvement; and Staff development.
Compensation and Benefits.	Salaries, wages, and benefits; Annualized compensation; Paychecks; Automatic payroll deposit; Payroll deductions; Overtime compensation; Travel expenses reimbursement; Health, dental, and life insurance; Supplemental insurance benefits; Cafeteria Plan benefits (Section 125); Worker's compensation insurance; Unemployment compensation insurance; and Teacher retirement.
Leaves and Absences.	Personal leave; Sick leave; Local leave; Family and medical leave; Temporary disability; Worker's compensation benefits; Assault leave; Jury duty; Other court appearances; and Military leave.
Employee Relations and Communications.	Employee recognition and appreciation; and District communications.
Complaints and Grievances.	Procedures.

**EXHIBIT 8 (CONTINUED)**  
**HOOKS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**  
**2009–10**

Employee Conduct and Welfare.	Standards of conduct; Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; Harassment of students; Alcohol and Drug-abuse prevention; Reporting suspected child abuse; Fraud and financial impropriety; Conflict of interest; Gifts and favors; Associations and political activities; Safety; Tobacco use; Criminal history background checks; Employee arrests and convictions; Possession of firearms and weapons; Visitors in the workplace; Copyrighted materials; Computer use and data management; Asbestos management plan; and Pest control treatment.
General Procedures.	Bad weather closing; Emergencies; Purchasing procedures; Name and address changes; Personnel records; and Building use.
Termination of Employment.	Resignations; Dismissal or non-renewal of contract employees; Dismissal of non-contract employees; Exit interviews and procedures; Reports to State Board for Educator Certification; and Reports concerning court-ordered withholding.
Student Issues.	Equal educational opportunities; Student records; Parent and student complaints; Administering medication to students; Dietary supplements; Psychotropic drugs; Student discipline; Student attendance; Bullying; and Hazing.
Index.	Subject index.

SOURCE: Hooks ISD Employee Handbook 2009–10, April 2010.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **JOB DESCRIPTIONS (REC. 1)**

Hooks ISD has not developed a job description for substitute teachers and has not reviewed and revised job descriptions thoroughly for other district positions.

An assessment of job descriptions by the review team noted that some job descriptions such as those of the payroll clerk and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) clerk, have not been revised to include responsibilities currently undertaken by the personnel filling these positions.

The district contracts with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) who provides Hooks ISD with general job descriptions for most school staff. However, these broadly written job descriptions often do not capture all of the actual duties being performed by personnel in that position.

Further, some of the job descriptions do not indicate which duties are essential and which are nonessential. The skills for performing preferred or nonessential responsibilities could be acquired after employment, while the inability to perform essential responsibilities upon employment may potentially be a reason for immediate termination. Lastly, some of the current job descriptions do not provide a complete description of any necessary physical requirements for the position in question. Job descriptions help an employer recognize risks and hazards present in work situations.

As shown, **Exhibit 9** provides an example of a current Hooks ISD job description that lacks the distinction between essential and nonessential responsibilities. In addition, the physical requirements listed under “Mental Demands/Physical Demands/Environmental Factors,” lack specificity. For compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act ADA](#), it is important for a job description to accurately include the physical requirements of the job. Finally, the job description does not include the date when the job description was developed and/or last revised.

Poorly written job descriptions may impact communications between an employer and employee and may not fully express the complete understanding of a job position’s expectations and responsibilities. **Exhibit 10** shows a sample job description that highlights essential job responsibilities (with an asterisk), provides details for physical requirements, and uses a placeholder for adoption/revision dates. The major elements in the sample job description may be used for other positions to ensure that all elements of coding essential

responsibilities, complete physical requirements, and adoption or revision dates are consistently included.

Job descriptions are not fixed documents since circumstances can occur that may require a new or updated job description. It is a good practice to periodically review job descriptions as changes occur such as new skill sets or technology are introduced, new reporting lines are established, and new regulations or policies are set in place.

The district should systematically review and update all job descriptions and create job descriptions for all positions including the substitute teacher position. Job descriptions should be placed on the district’s website to eliminate the need to create hardcopy that is difficult to maintain in up-to-date condition.

This recommendation can be implemented with existing staff at no additional cost to the district other than the staff time to review/revise the job descriptions.

### **DISTRICTWIDE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER TRAINING (REC. 2)**

While HISD has a LEGAL policy (DMA) regarding professional training, it does not have a local policy that includes substitute teachers with supplemental training in areas such as teaching strategies on student discipline, bullying or handling special student populations.

Interviews conducted by the review team with administrators from all three Hooks ISD schools indicated that they believe substitute teachers could benefit from professional development related to student behavior management as well as strategies and techniques for teaching.

Currently each HISD school provides substitutes with an orientation session about the use of the district’s automated substitute placement system and a guideline of expectations tailored to the school where they will be performing their duties. No additional training is provided to substitute teachers. Substitutes are given a packet by the school that they will substitute at, listing substitute guidelines, however, each guideline is broadly written with little clarification information, or additional training. For example some Substitute Guidelines for the elementary school (revised on 3-31-2010) are as follows:

- Dress neatly and wear jeans on Friday only;
- Do not send any notes or make phone calls to parents without approval from the office;
- Maintain confidentiality at all times;

**EXHIBIT 9**  
**HOOKS ISD JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**MAY 2010**

**Job Title:** Assistant Principal  
**Reports to:** Principal  
**Dept. /School:** Hooks Junior High School  
**Primary Purpose:**

Assist the school principal in overall administration of instructional program and campus level operations. Coordinate assigned student activities and services.

**Qualifications:**

**Education/Certification:**

Master's degree.

Texas assistant principal or other appropriate Texas certificate.

Certified Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) appraiser.

**Special Knowledge/Skills:**

Thorough understanding of school operations.

Strong organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Ability to coordinate campus support operations.

**Experience:**

Two years experience as a classroom teacher.

**Major Responsibilities and Duties:**

**INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT**

1. Participate in development and evaluation of educational programs.
2. Encourage and support development of innovative instructional programs, helping teachers pilot such efforts when appropriate.
3. Promote the use of technology in teaching/learning process.

**SCHOOL/ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE**

4. Promote a positive, caring climate for learning.
5. Deal sensitively and fairly with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds.
6. Communicate effectively with students and staff.

**SCHOOL/ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

7. Participate in development of campus improvement plans with staff, parents, and community members.
8. Help principal develop, maintain, and use information systems to maintain and records to track progress on campus performance objectives and academic excellence indicators.

**PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

9. Observe employee performance, record observations, and conduct evaluation conferences. Serve as second appraiser for designated teacher appraisal system.
10. Assist principal in interviewing, selecting, and orienting new staff.

**ADMINISTRATION AND FISCAL/FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

11. Supervise operations in principal's absence.
12. Help plan daily school activities by participating in the development of class schedules, teacher assignments, and extracurricular activity schedules.
13. Supervise reporting and monitoring of student attendance and work with attendance clerk on follow-up investigations.
14. Work with department heads and faculty to compile annual budget requests based on documented program needs.
15. Requisition supplies, textbooks, and equipment; check inventory; maintain records; and verify receipts for materials.

**EXHIBIT 9 (CONTINUED)**  
**HOOKS ISD JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**MAY 2010**

- 
16. Assist with safety inspections and safety-drill practice activities.
  17. Coordinate transportation, custodial, cafeteria, and other support services.
  18. Comply with federal and state laws, State Board of Education rule, and board policy.

**STUDENT MANAGEMENT**

19. Ensure that students are adequately supervised during noninstructional periods.
20. Help to develop a student discipline management system that results in positive student behavior.
21. Ensure that school rules are uniformly observed and that student discipline is appropriate and equitable.
22. Conduct conferences on student and school issues with parents, students, and teachers.

**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

23. Participate in professional development to improve skills related to job assignment.

**SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

24. Articulate the school's mission to community and solicit its support in realizing mission.
25. Demonstrate awareness of school-community needs and initiate activities to meet those needs.
26. Use appropriate and effective techniques to encourage community and parent involvement.
- 27.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Share supervisory responsibility for professional staff with school principal. Supervise teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, clerical personnel and others as assigned.

**Working Conditions:**

**Mental Demands/Physical Demands/Environmental Factors:**

Maintain emotional control under stress. Work with frequent interruptions. Occasional districtwide travel; occasional prolonged and irregular hours.

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The foregoing statements describe the general purpose and responsibilities assigned to this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and duties that may be assigned or skills that may be required.

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCE: Hooks ISD personnel document, 2010.

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**EXHIBIT 10**  
**SAMPLE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION**

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**TITLE: SUBSTITUTE TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A valid teacher's certificate or;
2. A minimum of thirty college hours; and
3. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board of Trustees may find appropriate and acceptable.

**REPORTS TO:** Principal

**JOB GOAL:** To enable each child to continue the learning process as smoothly and completely as possible in the absence of the regular teacher.

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- \*1. Reports to the Principal's office upon arrival or fifteen minutes before the official school opening.
- \*2. Maintains as fully as possible, the established routines and procedures of the school and classroom.
- \*3. Teaches the lessons as outlined and prepared by the absent teacher.
- \*4. Consults with the building principal before initiating any teaching or other procedures not specified by the regular teacher.
- \*5. Follows all policies, rules, and procedures to which regular teachers are subject and which good teaching practice dictates.
- \*6. Writes a note about work completed at the end of each teaching day, and leaves it for the regular classroom teacher.
7. Reports to the building principal at the conclusion of the teaching day, and verifies whether or not the substitute will be needed on the next teaching day.
8. Displays tolerance necessary for accepting supervision for and criticism of duty performance.
- \*9. Works in harmony with supervisory and peer personnel.
- \*10. Uses professional information discreetly and judiciously.
- \*11. Supports administrative and Board policy.
12. Represents the school system to the community in a positive, professional way.
- \*13. Maintains a sincere, friendly attitude toward parents and pupils to ensure communication.

- 
14. Ensures that the classroom is orderly after completion of the instructional day.
  15. Performs such other duties as may be requested.
- 

\* **Essential job responsibilities which the employee must be capable of successfully completing upon initial employment.**

**PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB:**

May be required to push, pull, climb or lift 20+ pounds.

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:** Per Diem, at rates established by the Board of Trustees.

**EVALUATION:** Performance of this job will be evaluated in accordance with administrative policy.

Adopted:

Revised:

SOURCE: Created by the review team, 2010.

- Mark attendance with black or blue pens only;
- Appropriate language should be used at all times while on campus;
- Edible treats may not be given to students without permission from an administrator; and
- Students may be assigned time out by a substitute.
- Notes should be left for the teacher if detention is needed. Students may be sent to the office if their behavior becomes unmanageable.

The guidelines do not include further explanations or additional documentation to clarify or support each statement. For example, the guideline in reference to assigning “timeout” to a student by a substitute, is not accompanied by a student code of conduct to inform the substitute which student offenses merit discipline and if repeat offenses warrant a timeout, a visit to the office, or some other kind of in-school-suspension.

In addition, the guideline referencing “edible treats” is not thoroughly clarified. The state of Texas follows a Public School Nutrition policy that provides specific rules regarding Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) being offered or served to students. An excerpt from the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 4, Part 1, Chapter 26, Subchapter A, rule 26.3 reads:

(1) Elementary school campuses may not serve or provide access for students to FMNV and all other forms of candy at any time anywhere on school premises until the end of the last scheduled class.

(2) FMNV may not be sold or given away to students on school premises by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, guest speakers, or any other person, company or organization. For exemptions and a listing of foods and beverages restrictions, see §26.6 of this title (relating to Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)).

Substitutes benefit not only from information but from additional training. The district’s policy DMA (LEGAL) covers staff development as shown in **Exhibit 11**. The policy guides the district in professional staff development; what it should look like, how it must be conducted and includes a few examples of types of staff development.

While the policy does not indicate who should access staff development training, the policy by nature of its title, “Professional Development” is aimed at professional staff who instruct students; an area where substitutes readily fit. A substitute teacher, per the Texas Education Code Section 22.051, Subchapter B, is considered a professional employee and as such, may be afforded professional development as well. This section of the code defines a professional employee of a school district as shown:

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#### **EXHIBIT 11**

#### **EXCERPT FROM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY DMA (LEGAL)**

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- Staff development shall be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee (see BQB).
- The staff development provided by the District must be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the District and designed to improve education in the District.
- The staff development may include:
  1. Training in technology, conflict resolution, and discipline strategies, including classroom management, District discipline policies, and the Student Code of Conduct;
  2. Training that relates to instruction of students with disabilities and is designed for educators who work primarily outside the area of special education; and
  3. Instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the United States Supreme Court, regarding prayer in the public school.

*Texas Education Code 21.451*

SOURCE: Hooks ISD, Administrative Online Policy Manual June 2010.

Section 22.051, Subchapter B. CIVIL IMMUNITY. DEFINITION; OTHER IMMUNITY states that (a) In this subchapter, “professional employee of a school district” includes: (1) a superintendent, principal, teacher, **including a substitute teacher**, supervisor, social worker, counselor, nurse, and teacher’s aide employed by a school district; (2) a teacher employed by a company that contracts with a school district to provide the teacher’s services to the district;...

The district has not developed a local policy to ensure that substitute teachers can access professional/staff development regarding teaching strategies on student discipline, bullying, or handling special student populations.

The district should create a local professional training policy that includes substitute teachers and provide supplemental training for them. Training for newly approved substitutes with limited classroom teaching experience could be provided in various ways; internally, externally, at a Regional Education Service Center or through a contracted vendor. In addition, the board of trustees should decide who incurs the cost of the training.

The fiscal impact for this recommendation cannot be determined at this time until the district has made decisions on the extent of the training and the provider.

### **SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOK (REC. 3)**

Hooks ISD does not provide substitute teachers with consistent information in the form of a handbook that covers district policy and procedural matters on critical topics.

Substitute teacher applicants are provided a paper application packet containing required documents for employment. Upon the applicant’s acceptance of employment and approval by the board of trustees, a brief orientation session is conducted by central office. Substitutes are provided an access pin number and log in code to the automated substitute placement system and given instructions on how to access the system.

Apart from the orientation training session, substitute teachers are given a campus-based packet with limited information. The campus packet is intended to assist the substitute in their assigned responsibilities, typically including the following information:

- A list of substitute guidelines written in single statements that briefly direct the substitute regarding student supervision/discipline, lesson plans, class schedules, and student attendance procedures;

- A building map; and
- Daily or emergency lesson plan(s).

Substitutes do not receive any other information such as student discipline, emergency procedures, medical issues, student bullying, or student code of conduct.

In addition, the review team noted that the substitute packet’s “Substitute Teacher Guidelines” provided by the elementary and high school to each new substitute teacher do not consistently address all of the same topics. For example, the high school’s “Substitute Teacher Guidelines” do not include directions regarding the need for administrative approval prior to sending any notes or making any calls to parents, nor does it cover a substitute teachers dress code or use of appropriate language as does the elementary packet.

Along the same lines, the elementary school’s “Substitute Teacher Guidelines” do not give specific instructions regarding leaving students unattended, or any information about student cell phones, video games, toys, etc. Both packets also lack instructions on how to handle student medications, emergencies, safety codes, etc.

Further, while the district gets high marks for their employee handbook, the district has not yet developed a substitute handbook that could provide the substitute with information on critical information regarding policies and procedures on topics like student bullying, safety information, and computer guidelines.

Ideally, substitute teacher handbooks should be comprehensive in nature, as shown in **Exhibit 12**. The sample document displays a wide-ranging table of contents adapted from Northside ISD’s Substitute Teacher Handbook.

Still another example of a best practices handbook accessible at [www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us](http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us) is from Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia. The Gwinnett Substitute Teacher Training Manual’s table of contents is shown in **Exhibit 13**. As shown, the manual includes an outline of substitute teacher training workshops, as well as details on other important topics.

The significance of reporting suspected child abuse, properly managing medical emergencies, crisis situation management, and proper handling of students’ disruptive or violent behavior may result in liability for the district and potential job censure or loss for involved personnel. All of these potential negative outcomes can be minimized by ensuring that substitute teachers are well-informed regarding these and other significant topics.

**EXHIBIT 12**  
**NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**SAMPLE BEST PRACTICES SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**2009–10**

TOPIC	CONTENTS
Introduction.	Welcome, Overview, Orientation, Training, Photo I.D. Badge, Web-based support & Information, and Evaluations.
Substitute Employee Management System (SEMS).	Overview, Registration, Social Security Number, Logging on to WebCenter, Requesting and Pre-Assigning Substitutes, Job Numbers/Calendar of Jobs, Call Out Times, Reviewing and Cancelling Jobs, Searching for Jobs, Setting Date of Unavailability/Do Not Disturb, and Lost/Forgotten PIN Numbers.
Responsibilities of Substitute Teachers.	Ethical Behavior, General Duties, and Classroom Duties & Instructional Responsibilities.
Responsibilities of the District, School, and Full Time Teachers.	District Staff, School Staff, and Full Time Teacher.
Payroll and Employment Issues.	Rates of Pay, Special Notes Regarding Pay, Texas Workforce Commission, Teacher Retirement Benefits, Retired teachers, Social Security Options, Equal Employment Opportunity, Free College Tuition/Fees for Qualified Substitutes Teachers, Workers' Compensation, Removal From Service, and Annual Renewal of Service.
District Policies.	Dress/Grooming, Student Surveys/Personal Questions, Sexual Harassment, Advancement of Religion, Child Abuse/Neglect, Possession of Firearms & Weapons, Visitors in the Workplace, Cell Phones/Pagers, Smoking/Tobacco Products, Drug Free Workplace, School Breakfast & Lunch Program, Substitute Employee Agreement for the Acceptable Use of the District's Electronic Communication System, and Criminal Records Check.
Complaints and Grievances.	Purpose, Other review Processes, Nondiscrimination, Notice to Employees, Definition, Consolidation, Freedom from Retaliation, "Whistleblower" Complaints, General Provisions, Levels One – Four, Presentation, Hearing, and Closed Meeting.
Safety and Health.	Employee Injuries, General Safety, Safety and Protective Equipment, Communicable Diseases, Texas Hazard Communication Act, Asbestos Regulations, Pesticides Regulations, Clean Air Act, Campus Procedures, and Crisis & Emergency Resource Manual.
Closing Comments.	
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Substitute Employee Handbook.	Form
Substitute Employee Agreement for the Acceptable Use of the District's Electronic Communication System.	Form.
APPENDICES.	Appendices A – K.
INDEX.	Subject Matter Index.

SOURCE: Adapted from Northside Independent School District 2009–10 Substitute Teacher Handbook, April 2010.

Hooks ISD should provide substitutes with a comprehensive substitute teacher handbook. The district can easily adapt and incorporate many provisions already found in their existing Employee Handbook 2009–2010 into the proposed substitute teacher handbook.

Producing 100 (45–50 page) substitute teacher handbooks in-house will cost approximately \$0.10 per page or \$5 per handbook. Thus, the estimated total one-time cost to provide handbooks is \$500 ( $\$0.10 \times 50 \text{ pages} = \$5.00 \times 100 \text{ handbooks} = \$500$ ). If the district desires to avoid the cost

for copying, the handbook could be placed on the district's website and substitute teachers required to download and print their own copies.

**AUTOMATED SUBSTITUTE PLACEMENT SYSTEM (REC. 4)**

The district's automated substitute placement system is not regularly purged to ensure the most current information exists on the system. A review of staff listed in the system identified nearly 13 percent were no longer available to substitute. School-based staff assisted the review team in

**EXHIBIT 13**  
**SAMPLE GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>DETAILED TOPICS</b>
Letter to Substitute Employees.	Welcome and Purpose of Manual.
Substitute Teacher Training Workshop Outline.	Being Prepared and Professional; Classroom Management; Teaching Strategies; Special Education and Legal issues; and Policies and Procedures.
Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting.	Legal requirements and procedures.
Confidentiality of Student Records and Information.	Board policy and requirements.
First Aid and Safety.	School nurse and clinic program; Medication; Over the counter medication; and Student self-administration of asthma medication
Interrogations and Searches.	Interrogations; Search and seizure; Personal searches; Locker searches; Motor vehicle searches; and Search results.
Sexual Harassment.	Policy; Procedures; and Definition of sexual harassment.
Acceptable Use of Electronic Media.	Policy and procedures for personnel, substitute teachers, volunteers, and vendors.
Moment of Quiet Reflection.	Georgia legal requirements, moment of quiet and Pledge of Allegiance.
Student Conduct Behavior Code.	Policy statement; Scope of code; Statement of student misconduct; and References to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.
Elementary Modified Version of Student Conduct Behavior Code.	Detailed code.
Middle and High School Student Discipline Condensed Rules	Detailed listing of condensed rules.
Suggestions for Introducing Yourself.	Introduction suggestion; Setting student rules.
General Information and Tips	On call, day-to-day, as needed substitutes; Long term substitutes; Parking at school sites; Reporting to a school; Substitute teacher folders; Discipline; Practices that promote good behavior; Policies, procedures and practices every substitute employee must know; and Legal status of substitute teachers.

SOURCE: Adapted from Gwinnett County Public Schools, Gwinnett, Georgia, Substitute Teachers Training Manual, April 2010.

identifying seven individuals still on the system that were no longer substituting.

Staff assisting the review team on this exercise indicated that providing the names of inactive substitutes to the district’s central office substitute personnel/payroll specialist could be easily accomplished since the list currently only houses a total of 55 qualified substitutes.

Not purging the system of invalid information delays the ability to contact other qualified substitutes willing and/or available to take the assignment. Repeated unanswered calls in the automated system slows the selection of daily substitutes since the system does not recognize when an individual is no longer available to work due to a variety of reasons such as leaving the area, accepting a new position elsewhere, extended illness, or no longer has an interest in substituting. In some instances the delays sometimes result in additional calls having to be made by school personnel.

The district should periodically review and purge the web-based substitute teacher list to include only the most accurate information on qualified and available substitutes. Hooks ISD’s central office substitute contact/coordinator could request a school administrator provide a list of inactive substitutes quarterly to help in purging the system of incorrect and the Substitute Register could be purged.

This recommendation can be made with existing resources.

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (REC. 5)**

Substitute teacher performance is not formally evaluated for effectiveness following an assignment.

In interviews with the review team, the high school and elementary school principals stated that no formal or regular evaluation of a substitute teacher’s effectiveness is conducted following teaching. Any judgment related to a substitute’s performance is informal and may be based on information provided by other teachers or school staff. In addition, a review of various documents including school-level information provided to substitute teachers gave no evidence of an evaluation instrument used by any of the campus administrators to assess a substitute teacher’s performance.

Evaluating an individual’s performance not only provides opportunities to correct deficiencies, but may serve as a tool to communicate a district’s expectations, and helps all parties achieve goals, but more importantly may serve as a method to motivate employees.

More and more districts are using a formal process to evaluate the performance of their substitute teachers. One such district is Northside ISD, a leader in developing and implementing substitute teacher induction and assessment programs. This district has been benchmarked as a best practice by Utah State University’s Substitute Teaching Institute (the higher education forerunner in studying substitute teaching). As shown in **Exhibit 14**, Northside ISD in conjunction with Utah State University created an instrument to evaluate substitutes. The sample instrument details assessment criteria, a rating system and provides additional space for specific comments by the evaluator. Evaluations for substitutes are conducted annually by the absent teacher and administrator or a designee.

In addition, the evaluation instrument comes with instructions for the user, has a place to record the substitute’s

**EXHIBIT 14  
SAMPLE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	UNACCEPTABLE	N/A
Punctuality					
Followed Lesson Plans & Schedule					
Accuracy of Attendance and Other Forms					
Handling of Student Discipline					
Teaching Methods/Instructional Strategies					
Knowledge of Subject Matter Taught					
Professional Behavior With Students					
Overall Rating	Excellent	Good	Poor	Unacceptable	
Comments:					

SOURCE: Created from Northside Independent School District Substitute Teacher Evaluation form, April 2010.

date of service, the subject(s) and/or grade level taught, and a location to document the evaluator's name.

HISD should develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument. A substitute teacher that serves a school on a regular and routine basis could be evaluated once or twice annually unless unusual performance issues arise. The evaluation by be conducted jointly by the absent teacher and administrator or a designee.

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing personnel and at a minimal cost for the printing of the evaluation forms, estimated at 10 cents per form. Printing 500 forms would be adequate for up to five years at a one-time cost estimate of \$50.

#### **CROSS-TRAINED PERSONNEL (REC. 6)**

Central office and school-based staff responsible for the automated substitute placement system (Aesop) have not cross-trained other personnel to handle the system in case of an unplanned or extended absence.

Central office currently has assigned responsibility for the automated substitute system to the district's personnel/payroll specialist. This position not only deals with payroll, but is also responsible for ensuring that all substitute applicants have completed the necessary paperwork and background checks prior to being placed in the system. This position also serves as the system's trainer.

In the unforeseen case that the personnel/payroll specialist is out for an extended absence, or has left the district's employ, there is no other person in central office trained to oversee the duties required to maintain this system at a moment's notice.

A similar situation also exists at each district campus. Usually the campus secretary is the only individual trained at the school-level to oversee the automated substitute system. Consequently, if that individual is absent for an extended period of time, those duties cannot be efficiently carried out until a temporary person can be trained to oversee those duties.

In both cases, the lack of cross-training other individuals to cover the duties of overseeing the system not only creates a gap in service, but places the burden on someone else to assume those responsibilities. For example, campus based leaders such as the principal/assistant principal (assuming system knowledge) would be next in line to assume the

clerical responsibility of overseeing the system, an inefficient use of leadership's time and talent.

A more proactive and efficient use of personnel time is cross-training additional staff. In doing so, active pools of individuals are created that can step-in and oversee the system at a moment's notice.

The district should ensure both central office and school-based staff are cross-trained in the automated substitute placement system. At least one other central office staff member should be trained in all aspects of the system including conducting orientation and training for others. Within each school, the school secretary should also cross-train one or two persons to operate the system.

This recommendation can be accomplished by current personnel at no additional cost and during regular working hours.

#### **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVE PROGRAM (REC. 7)**

While the district has programs that recognize regular teachers and other employees, substitute teachers at HISD are not provided organized recognition or incentives.

Hooks ISD provides regular teachers a variety of special events and recognition throughout the school year such as the following:

- A special lunch bag for their birthday;
- A teacher breakfast at the beginning of the school year;
- A ham prior to Christmas;
- An end-of-the-year luncheon and recognition program; and
- Special events at each school to celebrate teachers.

However, the district has not adopted strategies to retain substitutes nor created any special recognition programs to motivate and retain this group of individuals.

Interviews with the superintendent and school-level administrative and secretarial staff reveal that obtaining and retaining substitutes is a continuing challenge for the district. To overcome the challenge, the district implemented an annual substitute teacher recruitment job fair as noted earlier. In spite of this activity, the district on occasion must still use regular teachers or educational aides to cover classes for

absent teachers. In 2009–10, the district identified a 13 percent drop in their substitute pool.

A retention strategy suggested by the Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI) at Utah State University, and Northside ISD is the development of a comprehensive substitute teacher recognition program. STEDI conducted a poll on what a school district can do to help substitute teachers feel more appreciated. **Exhibit 15** shows a summary of survey results identifying reasons that motivate substitutes to continue in this line of work.

A National Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week has been held annually since 2003 with the ninth annual event scheduled for May 2-6, 2011. The Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI), at Utah State University reports details of events and provides a menu of ideas, activities, and resources to assist schools and districts in planning effective substitute teacher recognition programs. A website at <http://stedi.org/subm/events/subweek/> provides downloads of documents including:

- Subweek planning schedule;
- Activities for local schools, administrators, and faculty;
- Activities for local parents, students, and the community;
- Activities for school districts and personnel offices;

- Featured daily activities for SubWeek;
- Helping substitute teachers feel more appreciated;
- National Substitute Teacher Week Proclamation;
- Public service announcement – 30 seconds;
- Public service announcement – 60 seconds;
- Sample “Letter to the Editor;” and
- Sample press release.

A review of these suggestions indicates that many recognition activities can be accomplished at minimal or no cost to the district. Monetary and certificate recognition can be considered as an incentive for substitutes to participate in training deemed important by the school district.

Some school districts, such as Broward County Public Schools, Florida have adopted a substitute teacher incentive program that provides a one-time bonus of \$500 for “Super Sub” status. Super Sub status is conferred once a substitute teacher has worked a minimum of 90 full days or more within the current school year.

The district should develop a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers.

Certificates can at the minimum be prepared for a nominal cost. A reasonable budget for this recognition could be less than \$100 per year for each school for the creation and

#### **EXHIBIT 15 STEDI POLL OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHER RESPONSES**

##### **RESPONSES**

3 percent of substitute teachers said they would appreciate contact from the school principal.

7 percent of substitute teachers requested higher pay.

8 percent of substitute teachers requested a breakfast or luncheon periodically or once a year.

10 percent of substitute teachers said a small gift would be greatly appreciated.

17 percent of substitute teachers indicated that when teachers and staff are welcoming and inviting they feel appreciated.

23 percent of substitute teachers requested increased communication

27 percent responded with other suggestions, including

- I feel most appreciated when I am allowed to teach instead of just babysit!
- The district should be a little more discriminate in their hiring process, ... so teachers might have more faith in substitutes.
- At least hearing that you did a good job would really help.
- I would feel much more comfortable and valued if I received at least some training. It would demonstrate the district’s commitment to providing quality substitutes.
- It would be nice to receive a certificate following a long-term assignment.
- I would like to know if my efforts were received well and if not, what I could do to improve as a substitute.

SOURCE: STEDI website, May 2010.

printing of certificates and other selected items. The annual cost for Hooks ISD’s three schools could be a total of \$300 annually.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

RECOMMENDATION	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	TOTAL 5-YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE TIME(COSTS) OR SAVINGS
1. Review and update all job descriptions and create job descriptions for positions without one, including the substitute teacher position.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Create LOCAL professional training policies that include substitute teachers and provide supplemental training for them.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. Provide substitutes with a comprehensive substitute teacher handbook.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$500)
4. Periodically review and purge the web-based substitute teacher list to include only the most accurate information on qualified and available substitutes.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5. Develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$50)
6. Ensure both central office and school-based staff is crossed trained in the automated substitute placement system.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7. Develop a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers.	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$1,500)	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$300)</b>	<b>(\$300)</b>	<b>(\$300)</b>	<b>(\$300)</b>	<b>(\$300)</b>	<b>(\$1,500)</b>	<b>(\$550)</b>