

Center for Collaborative Solutions – Council of Governments

Substitute Survey – November 2015



A survey was sent to 1300+ active COG substitutes via email on November 11th, 2015 and closed on November 19th. Just over 400 substitutes completed the survey. The vast majority were substitute teachers, though some classified substitutes responded as well.

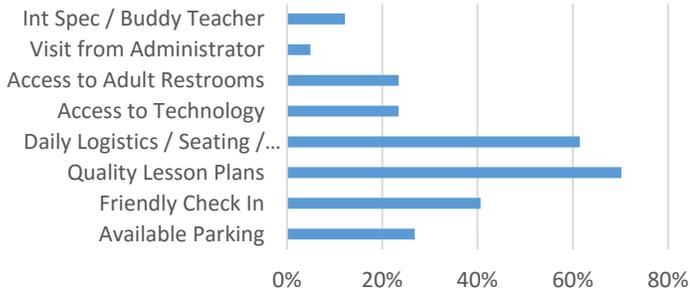
The purpose of the survey was to gather data to inform recruitment, retention, and service delivery within the consortium.

The survey contained 25 items, including 3 asking for narrative responses. Some items allowed only one response, others allowed respondents to choose all applicable items from a list. Responses to each item are reported as bar graphs on the following pages. Narrative responses are at the end.

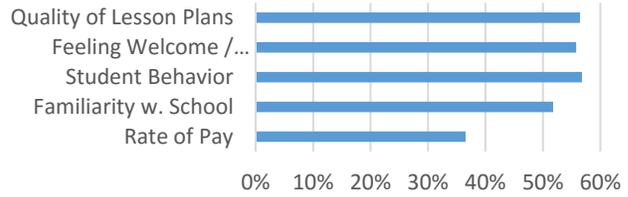
Number of Respondents

Entire CCS – COG: 407

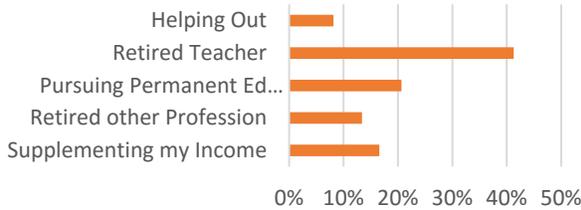
What's Very Important when Subbing



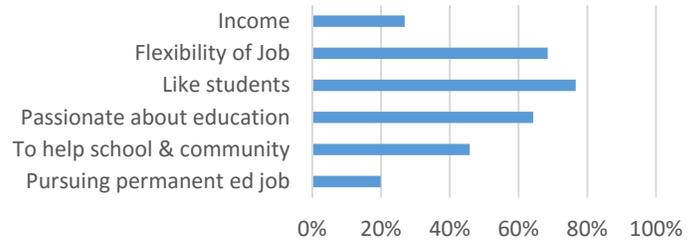
"Very Important" in Decision to Return to School



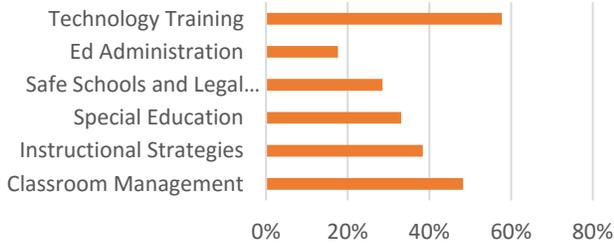
Which best describes you?



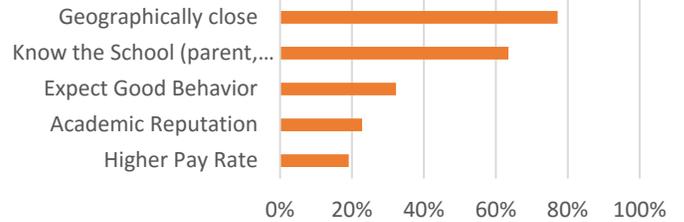
"Strongly Agree" Reasons they Substitute



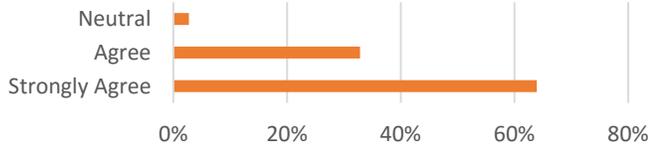
What free PD would you attend?



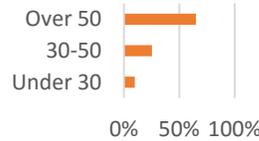
Why did you choose your districts?



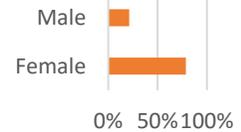
Treated Respectfully by Staff



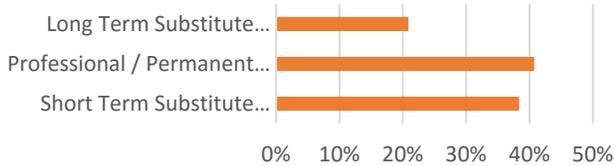
Age



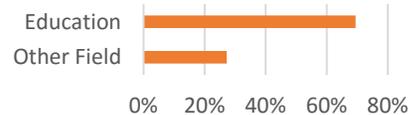
Gender

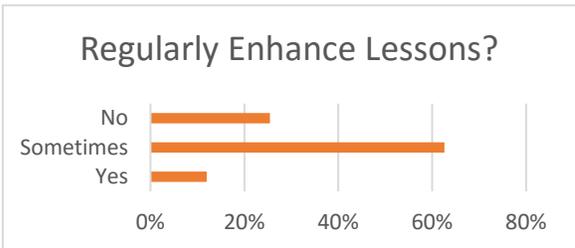
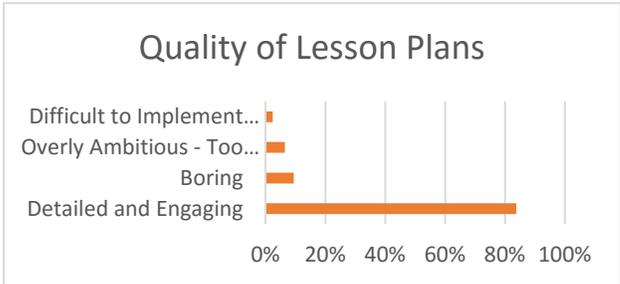
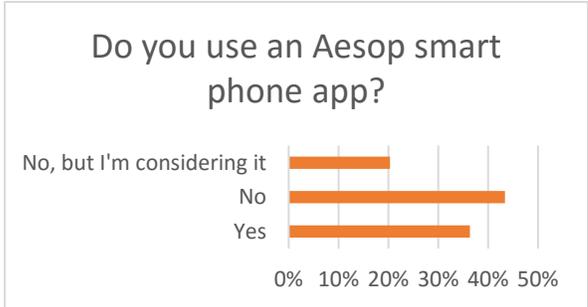
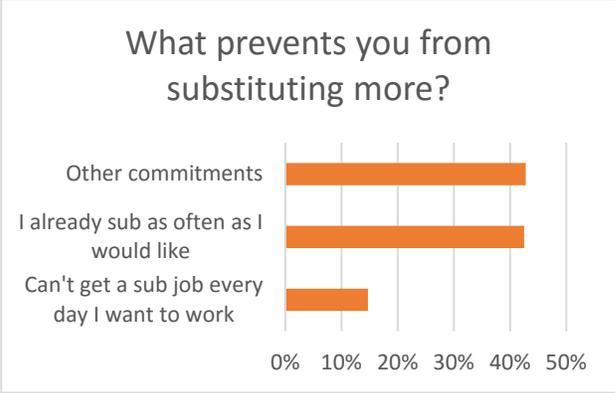
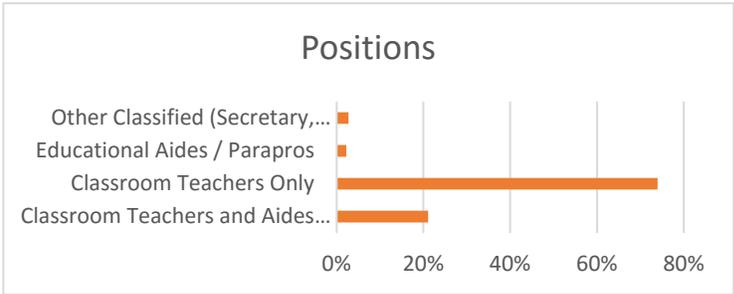
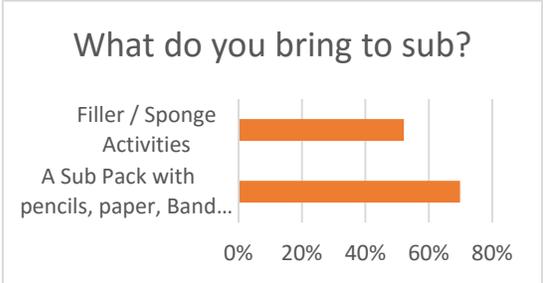
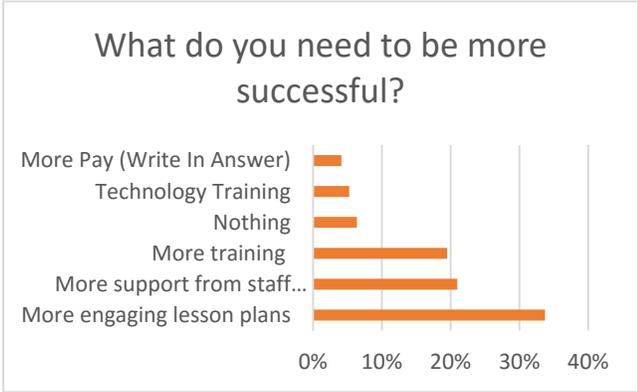
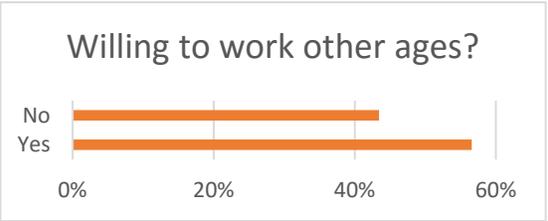
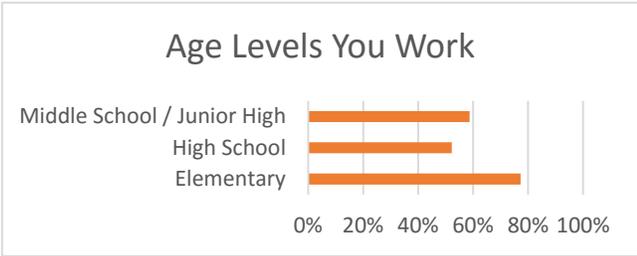
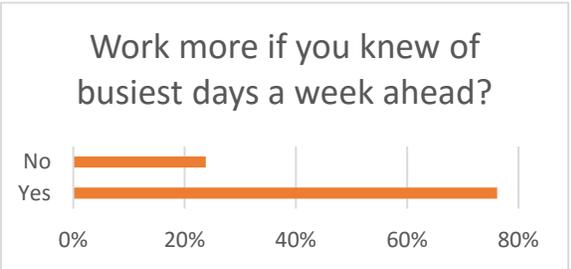
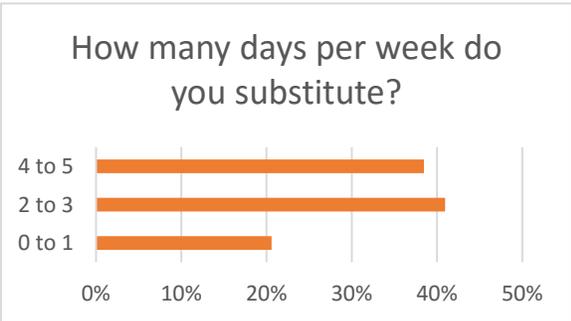


License Type



College Degree





Narrative Responses

What message would you give to **teachers** about substitutes?

"Most of the teachers know me or could ask someone about me. I just want to say thanks for trusting me with your kids. I know the bond between students and teachers; after a while they're 'our kids.'"

"I would like the teachers I sub for to know that I come into their classroom trying to make the day just like it would have been if they had been there. I can only do that if I can understand the teacher's expectations for me and for the day in which I am subbing. I want the teacher to feel confident that their students will be safe, encouraged, and taught."

"Leave work that will engage the students not bore them...this affects behavior in classroom."

"A seating chart or name tags is very important. I am not going to learn 15 to 75 names in one day. Remember, I may never be back to your classroom but I want to do a good job while I am there."

"A sub folder is very helpful - leave lists of student names, any allergies, special needs (those on IEPs, etc.), and accommodations needed for students, updated seating charts. How-to's: basic daily routines, recess/lunch duty responsibilities."

"Detailed plans are extremely helpful. Also, seating charts and classroom rules. Don't assume that we all are not really qualified - easier to have challenging things to complete."

"Don't plan the entire day to revolve around the smart board - if something does not open, I have to punt...."

"Don't use jargon or assume that the sub knows either the staffer or the school layout. Clearly describe where materials are as well as where to go for help, whether that's a teacher or a student. Seating charts and school maps are great. If technology/smart boards are in use, a set of instructions/passwords are a big help."

"I love feedback. I want to know what I did well, what you want me to do, and what I should not do with your students. Also, I love when you leave a detailed plan. "

"I love the fact the teachers I sub for trust me with teaching their students. With detailed lesson plans, I actually feel like I'm making a difference rather than babysitting with ditto sheets and videos. The students enjoy their day better too!"

"It is important that substitutes have detailed notes about any issues a student may have that the substitute would not be able to anticipate, such as medical, emotional, or learning needs. Also, it is VERY important that substitutes have lists of what students are with them at every part of the day for emergency purposes."

"I am a certified Teacher and can teach lessons. There is no reason to present busy worksheet work to a sub that is familiar with teaching."

"Leave details about: classroom procedures, seating charts, Health/Educational needs of special needs students, helpful students, names of team members, detailed lesson plans, all the materials needed for the lesson, map of the school, number of office and nurse"

"Please ensure that substitute teachers have clear work plans for each bell. It is important to have current seating charts and attendance rosters. We are not babysitters, we are teachers so if you trust us

and we are able, let us teach not just hand out busy work. Please grade the work that the students turn in so they know there are consequences to not doing the work.”

“Substitutes sometimes teach subjects they are not as familiar with as other subjects, but we adapt. We help students without knowing all the issues the students face, but we try to not take it personally when the students do not respect us. We care about students or we wouldn't teach. Welcome us into your school.”

What message would you give to **principals** about substitutes?

“If I know I'm needed and wanted I will never say no unless I'm sick.”

“1/2 days are hard to accept because of the pay. Once you are committed to a 1/2 day you can't take a full day job that becomes available.”

“If substitute teaching requires a 4 year degree, why do you pay minimum wage?”

“Let subs know when the school is having special days - like testing, wear jeans to work day, etc.”

“Ensure there is an impression of trust. Access to technology and staff facilities is a demonstration of trust or lack thereof. Giving a sub a classroom of kids but not access to teacher tools demonstrates a misalignment of priorities.”

“Equipping subs with a knowledge of pick-up and drop-off procedures makes those things much less stressful. Often, bus call/ car line is the most unorganized part of any school.”

“I have only had one principal stop in when I subbed. It was great to see her. I felt appreciated and I knew I had help if I needed it.”

“I have worked in a few buildings where the principal came to my classroom to check on the status of how the day was going - usually @ midday and then thanked me at the end of the day, and again inquired about my experience. I was very appreciative of that gesture.”

“There should be a plan in place for every substitute new to the school to have a tour of the school prior to their first teaching assignment in the building. Why you can go to a building for the first time and have no idea where special classes are held, or the location of playgrounds, lunchrooms, teacher lunchrooms or even a teacher restroom! Sometimes you are left with a first grader to tell you where rooms are, no kidding!”

“I would like to learn how to use and be allowed to use smart boards and other forms of technology being used by the class room teachers.”

“It's important for subs to have access to building entrance codes or be paired with a teacher who does for recess duty, etc. It isn't safe or smart for subs to be locked out of buildings with a group of students!”

“I've learned to love my job through the years as I have become a professional substitute teacher. I can proudly say this. The staff has been like family and the children fulfill a great heartfelt need for me. If I could ask or wish for anything-I'd love to be a building sub.”

“Make sure they know the ins and outs of your building- where things are for faculty i.e.: restrooms, lounge, how adults order lunch in the cafeteria, etc.”

“Please don't automatically believe the student over the sub if they come to you saying a negative. Some students think it is humorous to lie.”

“Principals want us to be the teacher in the classroom: however, they don't want to train us or give us the ability to log onto computers. How are we able to help students when working in computer labs or use the smart boards in the classrooms?”

“Support us. Kids try to take advantage of us, so make it clear this will not be tolerated.”

“The schools I prefer to go back to are the ones that principals personally welcome me and make me feel appreciated.”

“There is a tremendous talent pool of retired teachers who would likely sub if the money paid to substitute teachers was a decent daily wage. Could retired teachers be paid at a higher level than non-certified substitutes? I do not understand why this talented group of educators is not invited back to guest teach. Respect their expertise, however, with a daily wage that is not such an embarrassment. This would be such a good answer to today's quality substitute teacher shortage.”

“We are happy to be here, ready to work as a part of your team to best prepare these students for the world ahead.”

“We are sometimes in this job or school for one day; please understand that we may not know all the school rules.”

“You have great candidates for future job openings in your building. It makes a difference if you stop in and see us at least once.”

“I think that each substitute is different but it would be possible to set up a system where all substitutes can be trained in such a way that teachers can have the same expectations of all substitutes.”

What message would you give to **new substitutes**?

- “1) Come early to read through lesson plans and ask questions of colleagues.
- 2) Come with a bag of age appropriate tricks that are fun and educational.- The classroom teachers are one with their students. A sub will follow the lesson plan and may end up with some time at the end of that segment. You want to be able to fill that with something meaningful.
- 3) Try to learn each child's name at the beginning of the school day.
- 4) Come prepared, as you may have recess duty.
- 5) Follow the lesson plans left, they spend hours on them and expect them to be followed. Do your best!
- 6) At lunch or if plan time before end of day, write notes back to the teacher so they know how the day went. If no time, stay after school and leave your detailed notes.
- 7) In your notes, if you feel that you may have erred on some taught topic - let them know so if they need to present it again or smooth something over they can. If you feel that if even with your best - they are still having trouble with a task and you feel it needs to be hit again - leave a note.

8) Please do not criticize the teacher's room, lesson, etc. to the students. They "love" their teacher. Be respectful you are a guest in their room.

9) Do hesitate to ask for help!

10) I think that these apply to all subs."

"Be direct- if you aren't sure of something, ask! Also, remember that these are kids and we are supposed to be nurturing them as well as teaching- don't be nasty and you don't know what these kids backgrounds are, so be patient! "

"Be enthusiastic and engaging with the students from the moment they walk in. When students see a sub they immediately think "party!" but if you keep the students engaged and stay on task they will know that today is just like any other day and you have control over the classroom. Even if the lesson plans are confusing, you are nervous, you don't know what to do... act like you do, the student have no idea. "

"Be in the classroom early enough that you have time to go over the lesson plans and understand any disciplinary system in place. Make certain that you understand when and what is required or consult another teacher if things are unclear. Don't be afraid to ask another teacher or an administrator for assistance with anything. Stay focused and teach the lesson assigned. If you can add relevant factual information do so, but remember to let the teacher know. Be attentive; walk around the room as you teach. This helps with management. Watch your language and demeanor to be respectful towards all. Lastly, be certain to leave notes about what was/was not accomplished. Include specifics about student issues along with names. If you feel the need to say that the plans were inadequate, do so without sounding whiny about it-after all you don't know what was going on. Leave the room, including any collected papers (label and clip these) in good order, but don't take it upon yourself to rearrange everything. "

"Bring LOTS of extra materials... pencils, paper, stapler, tape, chalk, markers, crayons, scissors, etc. As well as extra age appropriate lessons."

"Choose your schools carefully, it make some trial and error, but know that there are some rewarding situations and that there are others that are unpleasant."

"Come to work well rested, well fed, and wearing comfortable shoes. While it is important to keep hydrated, you may not have adequate opportunities to use the restroom."

"Discipline must be first. As a substitute without it teaching cannot happen."

"Don't be afraid to sub for intervention (special education) teachers. I never would have gone back to school to pursue a degree in special education if I had not subbed for that position. I thought I wanted to be a 1st grade teacher. I am now extremely passionate about special education."

"Don't be scared to tell the kids to stop a behavior, they really do know better. Don't be afraid to ask a student for advice about how the teacher normally handles a situation. If they are working on a project, allow them some freedom to quietly work together. Smile a lot and be positive."

"Download Subfinder. It's the only way to get jobs that you want before others."

"Get as much information as possible before getting to your assigned classroom "

“Get to know your students by name and build relationships. It's an investment and will help you have a better classroom experience.”

“Have an open mind. Be there to serve. Think of your students as your employer. They deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. Be verbal regarding your desire to be there and let them know you care with actions and words of encouragement. Bring candy. :)”

“If possible, establish a relationship with teachers whose classes are cooperative so that they will give you first chance at their sub jobs. This will save the time of constantly looking for jobs and also guarantee you a pleasant working situation. Subbing is not easy - do what you can to make it a workable assignment. Try to learn the kids first names by no later than noon. Being able to call students by name is a big advantage! Take notes for the teacher during the day. You may forget something important if you wait until 3:00.”

“Keep subbing even after a not so good day because it is through years of experience that you build confidence and natural love, firmness, wisdom, and understanding for the little people who will one day be adults too. The greatest lesson we can impart to the students is love and acceptance to them, where they have our example of faith in them linked to their academic potential.”

“Know that working with students is a learning experience. The more you substitute teach, the better classroom management skills you will acquire. Remember, you are always the adult in the room. Keep the students safe while you complete Lesson Plans for the day. Leave names for the teachers of those students who could not seem to follow the classroom rules as well as what you accomplished for the day. Thank each teacher for the opportunity to teach their students for the day and for their understandable and excellent Lesson Plans.”

“The aides and paraprofessionals are your friends and are fellow professionals. They are of immense help. Treat them with the respect they deserve.”

“The secret to success is learning the names of the students so they you can recognize them for great behavior and let those who are not following expectations that you know who are they are.”

“Plan on "babysitting" if you are at the high school level. Yes, high school teachers rarely leave actual plans for new subs because they think you don't know what you're doing, so each bell will be a "study hall" and that makes for a VERY long, boring day. Plan on actually "teaching" if you are subbing at the elementary level. Teachers will leave you very comprehensive, easy-to-follow plans (yes, they know you don't do this every day), so follow the plans. Can't believe how many teachers I've heard talk about how a sub did not follow the plans, and they're not sure what happened in their classroom that day. If you don't want to "teach" then don't accept jobs at elementary schools. Have never done middle school, so I can't comment on that.”

“Positive rewards over negative consequences! Try to use the teacher's classroom management set up if you can. “

“Start the day off strict, you can always ease up if needed but it is hard to gain control once it is let go.”

“Subbing is usually a good experience. If you have a bad day, do not get defeated. Most days are ok. Substitute teachers are rewarded in so many different ways from feeling good to help out schools and their students and to make life easier for teachers when they need a day off.”

“Substitute teaching is a good way to keep your hand in the career you spent your professional life in. If you are looking for a full-time job in education, it could possibly open the door for your future teaching position as it allows others to see you practice what you were trained to do and here of openings in the district. Substitute teaching allows you to serve children and make a difference in their lives. Substitute teaching is great. You have the flexibility to teach grade levels and days that you are available. Substitute teaching is very rewarding!!!”

“Take jobs in all grade levels. This is a good opportunity to learn about developmental stages of students. You also learn classroom management and teaching techniques from each experience.”

“The message I give to new substitutes is be very creative, patient with students, not afraid, etc. Also, have good classroom management skills, because with troubled students you have to be in control.”

“The teaching knowledge that you gain from substituting is the most valuable teacher education you will ever have. “

“These are some teacher's kids. Please respect both the teacher and the students. Treat them as if they were your own biological sons, daughters, nieces, or nephews. You are RESPONSIBLE for them!”