



Watertown Public Schools

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MEMORANDUM

To: Watertown School Committee
Cc: John Brackett, Interim Superintendent
From: Mary DeLai, Interim Director of Business Services
Date: April 27, 2017
Re: Recommendation to Increase Substitute Teacher Rates

As you may be aware, Watertown Public Schools has had difficulty over the past few years filling daily teacher vacancies as a result of an insufficient number of substitute teachers. Not having a sufficient pool of qualified candidates can be very disruptive to classrooms and schools in our district. In many cases, instructional assistants are asked to cover vacancies which means that those individuals are not available to provide necessary services to students or classrooms to which they are assigned for a given day. We have identified this as a significant issue that we need to remedy.

This challenge is one that many districts face and, in fact, in a recent survey that I sent to School Business Officials in other districts, seventy percent stated that they had difficulty procuring a sufficient number of substitute teachers. Most identified lack of competitive rates as one of the primary causes. Attached to this memo, you will find the results of a recent survey we issued to collect data on the rates districts are currently paying to substitute teachers. You will see that the rates range from a low of \$65 to a high of \$146.39. The average is \$84.43 per day.

Currently in Watertown, we pay substitutes a rate of \$85 per day. While our present rate may seem commensurate with the average, it is important to note that (a) the survey includes a number of communities in Central and Western Massachusetts where the cost of living is lower than our region, and (b) what is most important is what our neighboring communities are charging as this is the area from which we are most likely to draw substitute candidates. If we look primarily at the communities which border Watertown, we see that the average is closer to \$105. Even excluding Cambridge, the average is close to \$91.

Another trend that we are seeing in districts is the creation of a two or three-tiered substitute rate schedule whereby retired teachers and certified teachers are paid a higher rate than non-certified teachers (in the attached survey results, you will see this as multiple rates in a particular cell). We believe that such a strategy will also help Watertown to attract high quality substitute teachers.

Therefore, we are requesting that in order to address the challenge we face, we recommend increasing the rate paid to substitute teachers and differentiating our rates based on qualifications. We are proposing the following rates:

- Non-certified substitute teachers: \$95 per day
- Substitute teachers holding a MA teachers license: \$105 per day
- Retired teachers (from WPS or other districts): \$125 per day

We will continue to identify additional strategies for attracting high quality substitute teachers to the district including more expansive recruiting practices, extending training and professional development opportunities to our substitute teachers, and ensuring that lesson plans and other resources are readily available to substitutes.

Daily Substitute Rate Comparison

	Sub Rate	Neighboring Communities	
Belmont	85.00	Belmont	85.00
Beverly	80.00	Cambridge	146.39
Billerica	75.00	Newton	97.67
Blackstone-Millville	75.00	Waltham	90.00
Braintree	90.00	AVERAGE	104.77
Cambridge	146.39	AVERAGE, excluding Cambridge	90.89
Carlisle	85/95		
Douglas	85.00		
Gloucester	75.00		
Greenfield	70/80		
Medway	95.00		
Milford	75/95		
Natick	112.00		
Newburyport	75.00		
Newton	97.67		
North Adams	75.00		
North Andover	75.00		
Northampton	75/80/85		
Norwell	80.00		
Oxford	71.00		
Sandwich	70.00		
Somerville	70/90		
Sudbury	85.00		
Uxbridge	65.00		
Waltham	90.00		
Watertown	85.00		
Wayland	75.00		
Webster	75.00		
Wellesley	102.00		
Weymouth	75.00		
Winchester	80.00		
Woburn	90.00		
Wrentham	80.00		
AVERAGE	84.43		
HIGH	146.39		
LOW	65.00		