

# **Brooks County 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

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January 19, 2011

Mr. David Perry  
Brooks County Independent School District

Dear Mr. Perry:

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

The report's recommendations will help Brooks County ISD improve its overall performance as it manages student behavioral related issues. The report also highlights model practices and programs being implemented in BCISD in 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John O'Brien".

John O'Brien  
Director  
Legislative Budget Board

cc: Mr. Calixto Mora  
Mr. Roel Garza  
Mr. Israel (Sonny) Villarreal  
Mr. Richard Garcia  
Mr. David Longoria  
Mr. Eric Ramos  
Mr. Steve Villarreal



# BROOKS COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM REVIEW

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Brooks County Independent School District (BCISD) located south of Corpus Christi in Brooks County, is bound on the north by Duval and Jim Wells counties, on the east by Kleberg and Kenedy counties, on the south by Hidalgo and Starr counties, and on the west by Jim Hogg County. Brooks County comprises 942 square miles of brushy mesquite land. The 2009 population estimate for Brooks County was approximately 7,400. The 2008 median household income was slightly more than \$25,000, compared to \$50,000 for Texans as a whole.

Brooks County ISD is the sole school district in the county with seven contiguous school districts: La Gloria ISD (105 students), Kenedy Countywide CSD (88 students), Santa Gertrudis ISD (375 students), Ramirez ISD (38 students), San Isidro ISD (282 students), Edinburg CISD (30,647), and Jim Hogg County ISD (1,137 students).

According to the 2008–09 Academic Excellence Indicator System’s (AEIS) latest published data, Brooks County ISD served 1,469 students. BCISD’s student demographics show there are slightly more boys than girls with the majority (97 percent) of students classified as Hispanic. The district’s teachers nearly mirror the student demographic composition as 91 percent are also of Hispanic ethnicity. This is consistent with the ethnicity of the county’s residents as a whole since 91 percent identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

More than half of the students are considered at-risk (59.3 percent) with 84.4 percent of students classified as economically disadvantaged. About 4 percent are English language learners while nearly 5 percent are migrant students. All four schools in the district (two elementary; one middle school, and one high school) are rated “Academically Acceptable” according to the state’s accountability rating for 2010. Data about the graduating class of 2008 indicates that the Completion II Rate of the district’s high school graduates was 88.5 percent.

Further, 2008–09 data shows that 39 percent of the district’s 131.1 teachers have been teaching for more than two decades and 27 percent are described as teachers with one to five years experience. The average ratio of students to teachers in BCISD is 11.2 to 1 with an annual budget of \$15.6 million or approximately \$9,600 per pupil.

The district’s website provides information regarding the Board of trustees, district schools, departments, policies, district calendar, resources, educational links, and information about Brooks County.

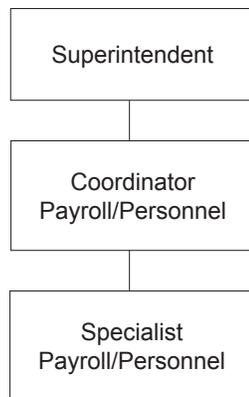
According to the district’s website, the superintendent has been in education for 46 years; 34 of those as a superintendent in various districts. His public education was in the city of Falfurrias with classes in the building now occupied by the Brooks County ISD administration. However, after many years of service, BCISD’s superintendent retired as of summer of 2010. The district posted a notice soliciting applications for the position. According to the notice, qualifications for the position constitute the following: Masters Degree or above, valid superintendent’s certificate in Texas, five years experience in school administration with central office experience preferred.

In July 2010, the Board of Trustees hired a new Superintendent. Brooks County ISD is served by Regional Education Service Center II (Region 2) comprised of 42 other independent school districts including seven charter schools. Region 2 covers approximately 11,000 square miles with its headquarters located in Corpus Christi. Region 2 services include but are not limited to professional development, certification, cooperative purchasing, telecommunications, computer services, and other technology related fields. In addition, Region 2 offers professional development programs and workshops in a wide range of topics, including curriculum revisions, school bus driver re-certification, substitute teacher training, and advocating for children, to name a few. Region 2 Human Resources director stated that besides staff development services to member districts, human resource services are limited to posting job vacancies; a service Brooks County ISD takes advantage of.

### HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resource functions at BCISD are handled mainly by three individuals. **Exhibit 1** shows the organization of Brooks County ISD human resource services. As shown, a coordinator and a specialist are responsible for payroll and personnel services with the specialist reporting to the coordinator, who in turn reports directly to the superintendent. The coordinator and specialist handle all

**EXHIBIT 1  
BROOKS COUNTY ISD HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATION  
2009–10**



SOURCE: Brooks County ISD website and payroll/personnel department documents, March 2010.

employment related processes and procedures. Each individual can perform the other's tasks. The Payroll/personnel functions are guided by a detailed School District Business Office Checklist that provides month-by-month guidelines and tasks to be completed.

Employment opportunities, contacts, job application forms, and related information are available on the district's website. Applications can be downloaded and submitted to the payroll/personnel office. The district also posts job vacancies on the Region 2 website but the application forms and related processes are completed through the Brooks County ISD personnel/payroll office. Application forms provide the necessary information for pre-employment screening and approval action by the Board of Trustees. A Brooks County ISD staff directory including all employees, positions, and contact information is available in a spreadsheet format.

**DISTRICT FINANCIAL AND STAFF PROFILE**

According to the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Mid-Year Collection, March 2010 data, Brooks County ISD actual expenditures for 2008–09 to 2009–10, declined from \$20.5 million or \$13,313 per student to \$17.8 million or \$12,100 per student. Additionally, expenditures for recruiting personnel and other human resource activities are included in the district's general administrative budget. In Fiscal Year 2009, the district's general administration expenditures were listed at \$833,846 or 4.7 percent of the district's overall general fund while curriculum/instructional staff development expenditures

were reported at \$109,585 or 0.6 percent of the general fund.

**Exhibit 2** shows the position and number of full-time equivalent (FTE) Brooks County ISD employees for 2008–09. Total employees for BCISD were listed at 269.8. The superintendent reports a goal for staffing schools of one teacher per 13 students, but actual class size at the high school and for specialty classes at other schools vary significantly depending on courses. The district reports that the goal is to maintain student teacher ratios at or lower than 13 to 1. The student teacher ratios in 2008 were 11.2 to 1. However, the superintendent reports that ratios are expected to increase if the district has further revenue decline.

**EXHIBIT 2  
BROOKS COUNTY ISD EMPLOYEES  
2008–09**

POSITION	NUMBER FTE
Teachers	131.1
Professional Support	19.3
Campus Administration (School Leadership)	7.8
Central Administration	5.8
Educational Aides	29.0
Auxiliary Staff	76.8
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>269.8</b>

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

**Exhibit 3** shows Brooks County ISD teacher turnover rates compared with the average of rates for districts in Region 2 and statewide. As shown, Brooks County ISD teacher turnover rates have been consistently lower than Region 2 district and statewide averages.

**EXHIBIT 3  
COMPARISON TEACHER TURNOVER RATES  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Brooks County ISD	12.7%	11.6%	12.2%
Region 2 District Average	15.6%	15.0%	15.0%
<b>State Average</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>

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

**Exhibit 4** shows the average Brooks County ISD, Region 2 district and statewide teacher salaries for three years. As shown, Brooks County ISD average teacher salaries have remained higher than the Region 2 district average and lower than the state average.

**EXHIBIT 4  
AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Brooks County ISD	\$43,743	\$44,912	\$46,097
Region 2 District Average	\$43,584	\$44,765	\$44,911
<b>State Average</b>	<b>\$44,897</b>	<b>\$46,179</b>	<b>\$47,159</b>

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

**Exhibit 5** shows three-year student enrollment for Brooks County ISD and three contiguous districts. As shown, Brooks County ISD student enrollment has declined since 2006–07, while La Gloria, Santa Gertrudis, and Jim Hogg County ISDs enrollments have increased.

**EXHIBIT 5  
STUDENT ENROLLMENT  
2006–07 THROUGH 2008–09**

DISTRICT	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
<b>Brooks County ISD</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>1,469</b>
Jim Hogg County ISD	1,090	1,100	1,127
La Gloria ISD	94	103	105
Santa Gertrudis ISD	348	362	375

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

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROGRAM**

Substitute teachers are recruited by advertising in the local newspaper and posting advertisements on the district and Region 2 websites. However, the district has not developed a formal job description for substitute teachers. Brooks County ISD substitute teacher qualifications require at the minimum, nine semester hours of college credit or successful completion of the Region 2 “Treasuring Our Paraprofessionals” (TOPS) certification training. TOPS’ four-day training held at Region 2 in Corpus Christi is at the expense of the substitute teacher for a total of \$150. TOPS training topics include reading, writing, and math as well as sheltered instruction, classroom management, and diversity awareness training. Additionally, substitute teachers are required to attend a formal district orientation program and are provided a Substitute Teacher Handbook.

The rate of pay for substitute teachers is as follows:

- Non-degreed: \$60 per day;
- Degreed, including but not less than an associate degree: \$65 per day;
- Certified degree: \$80 per day;

- Long-term of 15 consecutive days or more for the same regular teacher (if the substitute is degreed or certified): \$100 per day; and
- No long-term compensation increase for non-degreed substitutes.

Per pupil cost for substitute teachers in 2008–09 (using PEIMS data), as shown by Texas Education Agency, Salaries or Wages for Substitute Teachers, Actual Expenditures, Object Code 6112 is reported as \$182,433 or \$122 per student [\$182,433 substitute teacher’s expenditures /1,495 students]. An examination by consultants revealed, because of a misclassification of personnel for pay purposes (addressed later in this report), the actual cost for substitute teachers in 2008–09 is nearly \$77 per student. Compared to the state average estimated at \$84 per student, the Brooks County ISD’s per-student cost for substitute teachers is below the state average.

No benefits other than wages for services rendered are paid to substitute teachers.

**Exhibit 6** shows the 2008–09 Brooks County ISD actual *adjusted* cost per student for substitute teachers and three of the contiguous school districts. As shown, Brooks County ISD substitute cost per student is lower than the three contiguous districts.

**EXHIBIT 6  
BCISD AND CONTIGUOUS DISTRICT PER STUDENT COST  
FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS  
2008–09**

DISTRICT	PER STUDENT COST FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS
<b>Brooks County ISD</b>	<b>\$77</b>
Jim Hogg County ISD	\$132
La Gloria ISD	\$99
Santa Gertrudis ISD	\$156

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

**DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

The district’s administrative policies (LEGAL and LOCAL) are maintained through a subscription to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) policy service. During the onsite review the Board of Trustees were revising several policies including DEC (LOCAL) related to the sick leave bank and reducing the number of local leave days for employees from ten to five. Each Texas district receives an

allocation of five personal non-cumulative days (state days) if not used by the employee. Districts, however, can supplement personal leave days with additional local leave days that can be cumulative.

District policies provide for a range of benefits for regular employees such as a “buyback” of unused local personal leave days at retirement.

Additionally, the district has approved a perfect attendance incentive program for all full-time employees starting in 2010–11.

Policies, (LEGAL and LOCAL), addressing employment requirements (DBA and DBAA - LEGAL), and personnel positions including substitutes (DPB – LEGAL and LOCAL) are current. While policies DMA (LEGAL), DMC (LOCAL), and DMD (LEGAL and LOCAL) address various professional development requirements and options for regular teachers.

Job descriptions are provided for all employee positions except substitute teachers.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In an effort to improve efficiency of operations, accuracy of data entry, and employee and support staff satisfaction, a new employee hire and attendance system is scheduled for implementation in 2010–11.
- Brooks County ISD has taken several actions to curb teacher absenteeism and reduce costs for substitute teachers.

## FINDINGS

- Brooks County ISD’s methodology of allocating substitute teacher budget funds for positions other than substitute teachers places the district at risk of not being able to budget adequately for this expenditure.
- BCISD does not formally evaluate substitute teacher performance.
- The district lacks a substitute teacher recognition or incentive program.
- Substitute teachers do not have an opportunity to provide feedback to the district.
- The Brooks County ISD Employee, Student and Substitute Teacher Handbooks do not address critical

topics such as bullying, harassment, and medical or other emergency procedures.

- The district’s Substitute Teacher List contains inactive or ineligible individual’s names and does not reflect a substitute’s areas of certification or specialized training.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Differentiate and separate from the substitute teacher’s funding account those employees who are not substituting for absent teachers.**
- **Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument.**
- **Recommendation 3: Create a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers.**
- **Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a process for substitute teacher feedback.**
- **Recommendation 5: Update the district’s Employee, Student and Substitute Teacher Handbooks to include critical topics.**
- **Recommendation 6: Periodically purge the substitute teacher list of inactive or ineligible individuals and redesign the system to reflect a substitute’s specialized training, certification, or other qualifications.**

## DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE AND PAYROLL PROCESS

In an effort to improve efficiency of operations, accuracy of data entry, and employee and support staff satisfaction, a new employee hire and attendance system is scheduled for implementation in 2010–11. This system will eliminate the need for paper forms and the distribution of multiple copies of payment forms for substitute teacher payroll.

Brooks County ISD currently uses a manual paper process to report teacher absences and submit substitute teacher payroll. The reporting of an absence and the documentation of the hired substitute are listed in one “Absence from Duty” form. In addition, the substitute must complete a “Substitute Report”, a three-part payroll form, for the purpose of being paid.

Teachers must complete the “Report of Absence” section of the “Absence from Duty” form in advance for planned absences, or upon their return to work for unanticipated absences. The form requires the teacher to complete identifying information, date(s) of absence, and select 1 of the 19 options listed as the reason for absence, such as illness, staff development, personal leave, parental leave, jury duty, illness-in-the-line-of-duty, etc. The Absence from Duty form is submitted to the school campus office where the accuracy of the information is verified and the name of the substitute teacher is added, if a substitute was required.

The substitute of record prepares the Substitute Report form and then provides a “Payroll Verification” (another three-part form listing the dates worked) which is signed by both the substitute and the school campus official. The Substitute Report form and Payroll Verification form copies are routed according to the following:

- White copy – Campus files;
- Yellow copy – Substitute; and
- Pink Copy – Payroll.

The *Absence from Duty* and the *Substitute Report/Payroll Verification* (pink copy) forms are submitted to the human resources/payroll office for entry into the payroll database for issuance of a paycheck to the substitute. An entry is also recorded regarding the teacher’s records, to ensure the absence is charged against the correct absent teacher’s leave account. This process is highly paper dependent, requires redundant written information, is difficult to monitor for accuracy, and overall, is relatively inefficient.

The new system, Timeclock Plus, a technology-based system for reporting employee time and attendance for payroll purposes, is scheduled for implementation during summer 2010 for the 2010–11 school year. This technology-based system has been purchased at a cost of approximately \$30,000. The system uses a fingerprint recognition methodology to identify employees, including substitute teachers, who are clocking in, and transmits this information directly into the payroll system. This system will allow payroll staff to review the accuracy of time and attendance data entry prior to each scheduled payroll run. The system will enable routine reporting of all record keeping related to payroll.

**ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES**

Brooks County ISD has taken several actions to curb teacher absenteeism and reduce costs for substitute teachers.

According to district board meeting minutes, in December 2009, the Board of Trustees proposed a revision of policy DEC (LOCAL). Policy DEC (LOCAL) previously provided each employee with 10 personal leave days. Modifications to the policy would reduce personal leave days to five.

In addition, the board also initiated two new provisions as incentives for improved employee attendance. Beginning with 2010–11, full-time employees with 100 percent attendance per semester will be paid a \$500 attendance incentive. Employees with two or fewer absences will be eligible for a \$300 attendance incentive as shown in **Exhibit 7**. In addition, upon retirement from the district, employees with unused local leave days will be eligible for additional pay for each day of personal unused leave. Administrators will receive \$100 per day, teachers \$80, and all other employees receive \$60 per day.

**EXHIBIT 7  
BROOKS COUNTY ISD  
EMPLOYEE PERFECT ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES  
2010–11**

TIME LINE	ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT FOR SEMESTER *	ATTENDANCE INCENTIVE
Semester 1 (Fall)	100 % Employee Attendance	\$500
	If no more than 2 absences	\$300
Semester 2 (Spring)	100 % Employee Attendance	\$500
	If no more than 2 absences	\$300

\*Jury duty, court subpoena, comp time, and school leave will not be counted against an employee’s attendance.  
SOURCE: Brooks County ISD Superintendent’s office, 2010.

In March 2009, a board majority of five members out of seven (five for, one against, one abstained) voted to accept the policy revisions starting in 2010–11.

The board’s policy revisions and new incentives for improved attendance were actions taken to also help reduce the costs of substitute teachers. In 2008–09, Brooks County ISD expended \$114,883, or approximately \$77 per student, for substitutes for regular classroom teachers.

**Exhibit 8** shows a reduction in substitute costs in 2008–09 as compared to the previous year 2007–08. Substitute teacher costs as a result of teacher determined absences slightly improved by almost \$300, however, substitute teacher costs due to district determined absences dropped by more than \$13,000. In total, when factoring the “shadow substitutes” (discussed in recommendation 1 of this report) costs, the district reduced substitute teacher costs by more than

**EXHIBIT 8  
BROOKS COUNTY ISD  
COST FOR TEACHER ABSENCES REQUIRING SUBSTITUTES  
2007-08 THROUGH 2008-09**

ABSENCE BY CATEGORY	2007-08 SUBSTITUTE COSTS	2008-09 SUBSTITUTE COSTS
Teacher*	\$67,768	\$67,473
District**	\$58,921	\$45,410
<b>Total Substitute Teacher Cost Initiated by both Teachers and District</b>	<b>\$126,689</b>	<b>\$114,883</b>
Shadow Subs***	\$117,495	\$67,550
<b>Total Cost for All Substitutes</b>	<b>\$244,184</b>	<b>\$182,433</b>

\*Teacher-determined absence.

\*\*District or school-determined absence.

\*\*\*Shadow Subs are discussed in Recommendation 1.

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

\$61,000. If, however, “shadow substitutes” are not calculated into the total cost, the district’s substitute teacher expenditures decreased less dramatically by only \$11,806 from 2007-08 to 2008-09.

**DETAILED FINDINGS**

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER COSTS (REC. 1)**

Brooks County ISD’s methodology of allocating substitute teacher budget funds for other positions other than substitute teachers does not capture nor reveal the actual amount spent on substitute teachers per student.

District documents provided to the review team for 2007-08 and 2008-09 for substitute teacher expenditures indicated that the district funds substitute teachers, teacher assistants, paraprofessionals, and other employees from the same fund; substantially inflating the true cost of substitute teachers. In 2007-08 district figures for substitute teachers show a cost of \$165.55 per student, while 2008-09 per student costs were \$122. When expenditures for other positions other than substitute teachers are extracted the per student cost drops to \$85.89 and \$76.84, respectively for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

A significant number of employees listed as special education shadows paid as substitutes, were not hired as substitutes for absent teachers, but instead hired to work with special needs students. The district identifies these employees as “shadow subs.” Shadow substitutes work throughout the school year providing support services to special needs students. District administration stated that their salaries are budgeted and paid from the substitute teacher budget account as a matter

of convenience. Documentation from BCISD administrative officials indicate that in 2007-08 the district appropriated \$60,000 for special education shadow substitutes and actually expended \$117,495. In 2008-09 the district again appropriated \$61,300 and actually spent \$67,550 for shadow substitutes.

Exhibit 9 shows the actual cost for regular substitute teachers and “shadow subs.” As shown, the district cost for substitutes is inflated by a substantial amount when all positions are combined.

**EXHIBIT 9  
BROOKS COUNTY ISD  
COSTS FOR SUBSTITUTES AND SHADOW SUBSTITUTES  
2007-08 THROUGH 2008-09**

CATEGORY	2007-08 SUBSTITUTE COSTS	2008-09 SUBSTITUTE COSTS
<b>Substitute Teacher Cost</b>	<b>\$126,689</b>	<b>\$114,883</b>
Shadow Subs*	\$117,495*	\$67,550*
<b>Total Cost for All Substitutes</b>	<b>\$244,184</b>	<b>\$182,433</b>

\*Shadow Substitutes funded by substitute teacher funds.

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

During interviews conducted with the district’s budget office staff, it was revealed that no budget and accounting exceptions had been noted regarding the use of the substitute budget account for payment of “shadow subs.”

It is critical that districts account accurately for staff when using a specified account code such as code 6112 designated in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for the purpose of “classifying the gross salary and wage expenditures/expenses for substitute teachers and may be used with Function 11 (Instruction) and Function 13 (Curriculum Development and Instructional Staff Development).” Accurate accounting reports regarding the expenditure of budget funds for specific classifications of employees are very important to district leaders, and board members in helping make sound and accurate budgeting and reporting decisions that will later impact the district.

In order to correctly budget and account for “shadow subs” and to improve the accuracy of budget expense accounting for substitutes for regular teachers, the district should differentiate and separate from the substitute teacher’s funding account those employees who are not substituting for absent teachers.

Implementing the recommendation to provide accurate regular teacher substitution cost information can be accomplished with existing resources and should result in providing realistic substitute teaching cost figures.

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER EVALUATIONS (REC.2)**

BCISD does not formally evaluate substitute teacher performance.

A review of the Substitute Teacher Handbook, BCISD’s primary document to guide orientation of substitutes, does not contain information regarding how or if the district conducts an evaluation of a substitute teacher’s performance.

The three Brooks County ISD principals interviewed by the review team, stated that no formal or regular evaluation of substitute teacher effectiveness is conducted prior to or during teaching. Any judgment related to determining the continued employment of a substitute is informal and may be based on information provided by other teachers or school staff. When significant issues arise such as inability to control students or failure to repeatedly follow regular teacher lesson plans, the substitute is typically terminated and not called to return to that school.

Ensuring that quality substitute teachers are placed in the classroom in the absence of their regular teacher is important as it may impact a student’s performance according to studies. Emerging research on the effect of extended teacher absences indicate that teacher absences of ten or more days has a negative effect on student academic performance. A study conducted by the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, examined the impact of teacher absences on student achievement. The researchers concluded that

statistically significant evidence exists that teacher absences of ten or more days in a students’ school year has a negative influence on achievement. The study was conducted with students in fourth grade mathematics.

While formal performance evaluations of substitute teachers are not prevalent in many school districts, some districts such as Northside Independent School District (NISD), are conducting formalized reviews of a substitute teacher’s performance. NISD, a leader in developing and implementing substitute teacher induction and assessment programs has been benchmarked as a district using best practices in the area of substitute teachers, by Utah State University’s Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI), the higher education forerunner in studying substitute teaching.

As shown in **Exhibit 10**, Northside ISD in conjunction with Utah State University developed an evaluation instrument to help assess substitute teacher performance. The exhibit lists the criteria for assessment, an overall rating, and provides the evaluator an area for specific comments. The review process is conducted by the absent teacher and administrator or designee.

The complete evaluation form (not shown) provides direction for use of the instrument, allows for dates substitute duties were performed, subject(s)/grade level taught, and the name of the evaluator.

Brooks County ISD should develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument. The district should consider including the school principals in the development of the evaluation instrument

**EXHIBIT 10  
NORTHSIDE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER EVALUATION SAMPLE**

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.

A substitute teacher serving a school on a regular basis could be evaluated only once or twice each year or if more frequently when unusual performance issues arise, rather than on each occasion of employment. Results of the evaluation of substitute teachers should be shared among the administrators of the schools so they may be informed regarding the effectiveness of the substitute at the various grade levels and or classes.

Implementing the substitute teacher evaluation instrument can be accomplished with existing personnel and at a minimal cost to cover the printing of evaluation forms, estimated at \$0.10 per form. Printing 500 forms would most likely be adequate for up to five years, at a one-time cost estimated at \$50 (\$0.10 x 500 forms).

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

The district lacks a substitute teacher recognition or incentive program.

Brooks County ISD provides benefits, incentives and recognition events and programs for regular teachers and other employees, however, substitute teachers are not provided organized recognition, incentives, or fringe benefits.

Policy DEA (LOCAL) and DEC (LOCAL) provide a comprehensive array of benefits including salaries and wages, five days personal leave, sick leave, access to a sick leave bank, perfect attendance incentives, and health and life insurance benefits for full-time employees. An examination of district policies and interviews with payroll/personnel staff reveal that other than the substitute teacher's compensation and an increase in compensation when a substitute teacher works more than 10 days for the same absent teacher, no benefits are provided.

Examples of other BCISD recognition programs for teachers and other full-time employees include:

- Annual service awards including service pins at each five-year interval of service;
- Scheduled luncheons;
- Designated teacher appreciation days; and
- Upon retirement a specially designed blanket inscribed with the employee's name.

In addition, campuses hold employee recognition events and district and campus parent and booster groups participate in the recognition of teachers and coaches for accomplishments.

Principals also write special notes of appreciation to employees for having performed well.

The Substitute Teaching Division (STEDI) at Utah State University conducted a poll of what a school district can do to help substitute teachers feel more appreciated. **Exhibit 11** shows a summary of the results of the poll.

Nationwide, substitute teachers are recognized in several ways, for example, a National Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week has been held annually since 2003 with the ninth annual events scheduled for May 2-6, 2011. The 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. A website at <http://stedi.org/subm/events/subweek/> provides downloads of documents including:

- Sub-Week 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 Sub-Week;
- 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.

Some school districts, such as St. Tammany Parish Public Schools, Louisiana, conduct a *Substitute Appreciation Day* throughout the school system and recognize a substitute teacher employee-of-the-year for each school. A select committee then designates one substitute to represent the district and a special reception is held. Finally, an award is presented at a school board meeting. Recognition of the importance of substitute teaching is included on the district's web page at [http://www.stpsb.org/employment\\_intro.php](http://www.stpsb.org/employment_intro.php).

Monetary and certificate recognition can be considered as an incentive for substitutes to participate in training deemed important by the school district.

**EXHIBIT 11  
SUBSTITUTE TEACHING DIVISION POLL OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

RESPONSES	PERCENT IN AGREEMENT
Substitute teachers said they would appreciate contact from the school principal.	3%
Substitute teachers requested higher pay.	7%
Substitute teachers requested a breakfast or luncheon periodically or once a year.	8%
Substitute teachers said a small gift would be greatly appreciated.	10%
Substitute teachers said something that makes them feel appreciated is when teachers and staff are welcoming and inviting.	17%
Substitute teachers requested increased communication.	23%
Other suggestions, include:	27%
1. I feel most appreciated when I am allowed to teach instead of just babysit!	
2. ... the district should be a little more discriminate in their hiring process...so teachers might have more faith in substitutes.	
3. At least hearing that you did a good job would really help.	
4. 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.	
5. It would be nice to receive a certificate following a long-term assignment.	
6. I would like to know if my efforts were well received and if not, what I could do to improve as a substitute.	

SOURCE: STEDI website, May 2010.

The district should create a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers. Developing and implementing a substitute recognition program can be accomplished by adopting some of the suggestions provided by other districts' programs. Many of the suggested activities can be accomplished at no cost to the district, while certificates of recognition can be produced for minimal cost. The estimated costs of producing certificates of recognition for substitute teachers is approximately \$100 per school. The annual cost for Brooks County ISD could be \$400 or (\$100 per school x 4 schools).

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS' FEEDBACK (REC. 4)**

Substitute teachers do not have an opportunity to provide feedback to the district.

The district does not require formal feedback from substitute teachers regarding their substituting experience. Typically, as reported by interviews with the principals during the review team's onsite work, a substitute teacher at the end of the day may leave the regular teacher notes relating to lessons completed or other significant information on student issues. However, this is an informal process and at times inconsistent. Principals indicated that feedback of this type is useful as they review their individual school teacher handbook.

Without feedback, lesson plan shortcomings or significant student management issues may go unrecognized by the regular teacher or administration. Tahoka Independent School District (TISD) has implemented an easily completed substitute teacher feedback form. The completed form is submitted to the regular classroom teacher and can be provided to the school's administration. **Exhibit 12** shows the contents of the TISD Substitute Teacher Feedback form.

The form provides valuable feedback to the regular teacher concerning student behavior, attendance and an opportunity to make suggestions that could potentially result in helping the substitute in future assignments.

Feedback forms such as this can easily be adapted to include any additional information that may be useful to all. The district should develop and implement a process for substitute teacher feedback. If Brooks County ISD implements a substitute performance assessment process, this feedback can be useful in guiding discussions on improvement of the overall substitute teaching process.

Implementation of a formal substitute teacher feedback process can be accomplished at an estimated annual cost of \$.10 per form, or \$100 annually for 1,000 forms. Factoring out 30 percent for estimated consecutive days of teacher absences, results are approximately 1,000 reportable

**EXHIBIT 12  
TAHOKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM  
2009–10**

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER FEEDBACK**

Substitute's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class or Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please take a moment to write your comments about your experiences in my classroom.

Questions:

1. Did any students seem to have difficulties understanding the material or completing the assignments? If yes, please name them and explain.
2. Were any students absent? If yes, please name them.
3. Were any students particularly helpful? If yes, please name them and explain.
4. Were there any students with behavior issues? If yes, please name them and explain.
5. It would be helpful next time if ...
6. Additional comments.

SOURCE: Tahoka Independent School District, Superintendent's office, April 2010.

substituting opportunities annually. This number of forms is based on an estimated 1,000 days of substitute teaching and does not provide for preparing a feedback form for each consecutive day of substituting for the same teacher.

**EMPLOYEE, STUDENT AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOKS (REC. 5)**

The Brooks County ISD “All Campuses Employee/Student” and Substitute Teacher Handbooks do not address critical topics such as bullying, harassment, and medical or other emergency procedures.

While district handbooks provide guidance for many important procedures, they do not address critical topics, resulting in the possibility that regular teachers or substitutes may not be informed in how to handle these situations.

The Brooks County ISD All Campus Employee and Student Handbook contain information related to numerous topics including instructions on teacher absence from duty, incentive pay for perfect attendance, grading procedures, workshops/staff development, tutorial classes, substitute teacher lesson plans, general teacher information, and other provisions. The handbook, however, does not have a table of contents or subject matter index nor does it cover critical information regarding medical/school emergencies, bullying or harassment.

The district's Substitute Teacher Handbook, also without a table of contents or subject matter index, contains

information relevant to substitute teachers but also lacks in fundamentally critical topics much like the all employee/student handbooks. The handbook covers the following topics:

- Personal requirements;
- Professional responsibilities;
- Benefits;
- Keys to good subbing;
- A comprehensive dress code;
- Detailed suggestions for handling a variety of potential problems;
- Specific guidelines for student discipline;
- Responsibilities and specific requirements for each of the district's schools; and
- Rates of pay.

Comprehensive handbooks usually address approved procedures for handling a crisis or emergency event, managing aberrant student behaviors, including bullying and harassment issues, reporting suspected child abuse, or other situations that teachers may have to confront. A best practices handbook that models a comprehensive approach is shown in **Exhibit 13**.

**EXHIBIT 13  
SAMPLE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOK  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

TOPIC	CONTENTS
1. Introduction.	Welcome, Overview, Orientation, Training, Photo I.D. Badge, Web-based Support & Information, and Evaluations.
2. Substitute Employee Management System (SEMS).	Overview, Registration, Social Security Number, Logging on to Web Center, Requesting and Pre-Assigning Substitutes, Job Numbers/Calendar of Jobs, Call Out Times, Reviewing and Canceling Jobs, Searching for Jobs, Setting Date of Unavailability/Do Not Disturb, and Lost/Forgotten PIN Numbers.
3. Responsibilities of Substitute Teachers.	Ethical Behavior, General Duties, and Classroom Duties & Instructional Responsibilities.
4. Responsibilities of the District, School, and Full-time Teachers.	District Staff, School Staff, and Full-time Teacher.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 2009–2010 Substitute Teachers Handbook, April 2010.

BCISD should update the district's employee, student and substitute teacher handbooks to include critical topics. Making handbooks for regular teachers and substitute teachers user-friendly and comprehensive should minimally include a table of contents. Addition of a subject matter index can be very helpful in locating specific information.

Revising the regular teacher, student, and substitute teacher handbooks can be accomplished with existing personnel and at no additional cost to the school district other than the printing of revised handbooks. The cost for producing the handbooks is a routine expenditure included in anticipated

district expenditures; therefore, no increase in printing costs should be incurred.

The handbooks should also be available on the district's website for use by school district personnel and substitute teachers at no additional cost to the district. Substitute teachers can be required to download a handbook in preparation for their required orientation session.

***SUBSTITUTE TEACHER LIST (REC. 6)***

The district's substitute teacher list contains inactive or ineligible individual's names and does not reflect a substitute's areas of certification or specialized training.

The Substitute Teacher List also contains the status of participation in the local orientation program, but does not reflect the areas of certification (if applicable) or special training such as training in a special area such as the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or special education program. The lack of information makes it difficult to determine the appropriate matching of substitutes to classes, especially if the substitute is newly approved.

There was no evidence provided to the review team that the substitute teacher list is systematically purged of personnel no longer employed or available, resulting in inefficient use of campus staff designated with substitute teacher assignment coordination responsibilities.

BCISD's Substitute Teacher List, dated March 22, 2010, contained 85 names, however, 28 of the individuals listed were shown as not having completed the district's orientation program and eight were without fingerprinting pursuant to Texas Administrative Code Section 153.1111 or fingerprinting was noted on the list as pending. Two principals commented that several of the listed personnel were no longer available. They further noted that some were not desirable substitutes due to their lack of adequate student control in the classroom or had not followed procedures prescribed in the district's Substitute Teacher Handbook, including such tasks as properly reporting student attendance and providing passes to students leaving the classroom.

In addition, the Brooks County ISD Teacher Substitute List is organized into seven color coded columns headed by the statement "*ONLY SUBSTITUTES ON THIS LIST MAY BE CALLED TO SUBSTITUTE.*"

1. Name;
2. Identification number;
3. Status of fingerprinting;
4. Status of orientation participation;
5. Telephone number;
6. Days available to substitute; and
7. Grade or subject area preferred or approved.

The use of color coding on the list assists district personnel in identifying whether the individual is new, degreed, has undergone fingerprinting or not. Color codes used are as follows:

- If certificated (name of substitute is color coded yellow);
- If degreed (name of substitute is color coded blue);
- New substitute (name of substitute is color coded green);
- Substitutes with fingerprinting pending (fingerprint column entry coded green); and
- Substitutes without fingerprinting (fingerprint column entry coded blue).

While the color coding and information is helpful, it is more important that substitute teacher listings provided to principals and other school staff be up-to-date. Inaccurate listings cause school personnel to make unnecessary calls to unavailable or undesirable substitutes, resulting in an inefficient use of staff and administrative time. Effective practices involve a systematic review of substitute lists to ensure accuracy. Levelland Independent School District and Northside ISD for example, systematically purge substitute teaching lists and maintain up-to-date substitute listings.

The district should periodically purge the substitute teacher list of inactive or ineligible individuals and redesign the system to reflect a substitute's specialized training, certification, or other qualifications. Substitutes who have not completed all requirements for substituting should be removed from the list. A simple memorandum providing the status of applicants could be provided to school staff on a periodic basis if they need to know the status of applicants seeking approval to substitute.

The Substitute Teacher List could be further improved by renaming the seventh column from *GRADES* to *GRADES/SPECIALIZATIONS* and creating a series of codes to identify preferred grades/subject levels and specialized training or skills possessed including the representative codes in a footnote to the document.

Adding a code to identify specialized completed training would provide useful information to the school staff responsible for selecting and assigning substitute teachers. Classes with special education students and DAEP students often offer behavior challenges that can be more effectively managed by personnel with specialized training or

preparation. Likewise, knowing a substitute’s areas of certification can provide valuable information to guide placement, particularly for secondary school classes.

Interviews with central office and school-level personnel reveal that they believe that easy access to the status of substitute teachers’ specialized training would assist in making a decision on who to assign to cover classes of challenged students.

Codes could be as follows:

A, B, C: Designate elementary, middle, or high school level preference;

D-1, etc.: Designate a curricular area of preference (art, music, special education, DAEP, vocational and academic subjects or areas);

E-1, etc.: List certification areas such as Spanish, mathematics, biology, physics; and

F-1, etc.: Lists specialized training such as DAEP, child restraints, medical areas.

Other optional or required training could be incorporated into this format. Required training could be noted with an asterisk if the district deemed such designation important.

Districts such as Northside ISD provide detailed information on their substitute teacher lists as a best practice to help inform school staff of the optimum placement of substitutes.

Implementing the recommended purging of inactive or undesired substitute teachers and the inclusion of additional information on the Substitute Teacher List can be accomplished with existing personnel at no additional cost. The purging of the list can be accomplished quarterly or monthly, depending on a determination by the payroll/personnel coordinator, by having the payroll/personnel specialist contact each school secretary for the information. Also, an annual purging can be accomplished by requiring substitutes to submit a request for continued placement in May or June of each year.

The coding revision process can be completed at no additional cost and by adding the suggested codes to the list.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
1. Differentiate and separate from the substitute teacher’s funding account those employees who are not substituting for absent teachers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Develop and implement a substitute teacher evaluation instrument.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$50)
3. Create a recognition and incentive program for substitute teachers.	(\$400)	(\$400)	(\$400)	(\$400)	(\$400)	(\$2,000)	\$0
4. Develop and implement a process for substitute teacher feedback.	(\$100)	(\$100)	(\$100)	(\$100)	(\$100)	(\$500)	\$0
5. Update the district’s Employee, Student and Substitute Teacher Handbooks, to include critical topics.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6. Periodically purge the substitute teacher list of inactive or ineligible individuals and redesign the system to reflect a substitute’s specialized training, certification, or other qualifications.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$500)</b>	<b>(\$500)</b>	<b>(\$500)</b>	<b>(\$500)</b>	<b>(\$500)</b>	<b>(\$2,500)</b>	<b>(\$50)</b>

