

# Kelly Educational Staffing®

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Scott Smith and I am the Vice President of Kelly Educational Staffing, a specialized service line of Kelly Services, Inc.

With me today is Eileen Candels from Kelly's Greater Hartford District Office, Kathleen Johnson represents Kelly's South-Central Connecticut District, and Meg Bernhard from Kelly's South-Eastern Connecticut District.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns about Raised Senate Bill 1016 in an effort to provide context for why I respectfully, yet strongly, oppose this bill. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you and the committee members to Kelly Educational Staffing, about our services and to clarify the nature of our partnerships with schools in Connecticut and throughout the United States.

To understand our business, it is important to first understand the related challenge confronting schools.

On any given day, 8-10% of the teachers in the United States are absent from the classroom. To give this some perspective, it can be expected that, on a daily basis, more than 300,000 teachers will be absent from classrooms around the country. This is not to say that there is malicious intent or abuse in the system. On the contrary, these are educators that are out of the classroom for good reason – reasons that any professional might need to be away from work, or they need to be away for the classroom for professional development opportunities. Of concern, however, is our experience that shows schools are successful in finding a qualified substitute for that individual only 75-85% of the time, on average. Both anecdotal and empirical findings show us that these percentages are consistent with percentages found in Connecticut.

Better than any, this committee understands the downstream impact of teacher absenteeism. Moreover, the impact is amplified when a quality substitute is not available to provide continuity in the learning process. The disruption begins in the classroom and ripples throughout the system. Staff scrambles to find a substitute, principals often get involved, teachers are pulled from planning periods, and classes get doubled up, taken to the gym, or put in front of a movie. Regardless of action taken, it tends to fall short of the learning activity needed to attain the student achievement objectives championed by the district and, with certainty, the learning process will be disrupted.

This is just part of the challenge, and it is the part that is most visible and easy to understand. Lying below the surface is a comprehensive process that goes into recruiting, interviewing, screening, training, scheduling, and managing substitute employees. Even those districts considered to be well staffed report to us that they have limited resources to carry out all of the elements of a well-run substitute program without compromising another portion of their human resources responsibilities.

So districts have turned to Kelly Services for the same reason other types of organizations have been doing so for the past 60+ years – because they need help solving a staffing problem. Over ten years ago, it was clear to us that the needs of educational institutions were very different than those of other types of organizations and a specialized service line within Kelly Services was formed.

Since 1999, Kelly Educational Staffing has worked with thousands of schools across 45 states, working in partnership to solve staffing problems. We are best known for our program for managing substitute teachers. In our ten-year history, we have sent substitutes to more than 3.5 million classrooms. During this time, we have also

been providing an increasing number of substitutes to our partners' school and estimate that this number will exceed 80,000 classrooms filled in Connecticut during the 2008/2009 school year.

With that as context to our program, here are some details as to how it works:

1. **RECRUITING.** Kelly has been in many communities for many years, so we know how to tap into that community's talent pool. However, at Kelly Educational Staffing we only recruit individuals that fit the desired profile provided by the public schools with which we partner.
2. **SCREENING.** All of our partners in education require that substitutes meet certain requirements. In many cases these requirements are outlined in state law. At no point does Kelly Educational Staffing circumvent these requirements. There are other criteria that must be met prior to becoming a substitute teacher. Some of these criteria vary by district and/or state. Kelly Educational Staffing also has its own requirements that must be met. For example, Connecticut requires that an FBI fingerprint be conducted. We implemented further requirements to improve currency and broaden scope such as a county criminal check and a National Sex Offender Registry check. We also conduct education and employment background checks. States vary in terms of educational background requirement – some requiring no more than a high school diploma – others requiring forms of teacher certification. Again, Kelly adheres to the states' requirements and district policies.
3. **INTERVIEWING.** Seemingly an obvious element to a program, but our experience shows it is not uncommon for districts to lack the resources to interview candidates. Each candidate is interviewed prior to becoming a substitute teacher with Kelly Educational Staffing.
4. **TRAINING.** With limited time and resources, many districts are not able to provide comprehensive training to substitute teachers. When a substitute teacher is employed with Kelly Educational Staffing, we will always provide the district-provided training materials on policies and procedures. We will also provide training on Kelly's policies and procedures, and always provide training to prepare them for working as a substitute. Prepared substitutes are more likely to be successful and thus more likely to want to come back again, providing better continuity to the learning process for students.
5. **SCHEDULING.** The human-capital-intensive process of teachers reporting they will absent and the associated process of finding and scheduling an available substitute is managed by Kelly, with great efficiency.
6. **SUPERVISION AND DIRECTION.** While we manage much of the end-to-end process of the program, the direction, supervision, and control of the substitute remains with the school. In other words, Kelly is not establishing what lesson plans or activities will be utilized. Once the substitute reaches the school, their guidance and supervision comes from that school, just as it does for all personnel in the building.
7. **MANAGING.** Based on feedback from the school, we provide constructive feedback to the employees. In the instances where the school does not feel a good fit exists, we will counsel the individual or take appropriate action.
8. **BENEFITS.** As the employer of the substitute teachers, we provide a variety of benefits to them including access to a full menu of health care and insurance plans, weekly pay, employee discount programs, and opportunity for other types of work during the summer months. These are often benefits not previously available to them.
9. **COMMUNICATION.** An important part of our process is conducting regular performance reviews with our customers. This provides a structured opportunity for both parties to exchange feedback to keep the overall process optimized. During these meetings we provide a great deal of data about our performance,

as well as trends we see in the data regarding teacher absenteeism (e.g., reasons, days of week, by location, etc.) We discuss strategies for addressing efficiency opportunities often citing best practices from other districts in the state and around the county.

Partnerships between school districts and Kelly Educational Staffing are comprehensive arrangements that are established only after a great deal of planning and discussion. Each contract gains the approval of many stakeholders including Human Resources and Finance departments, superintendents, teachers, principals, and usually a publicly conducted vote by the district's school board.

Few things will impact a child's education more than teacher and classroom experiences. That said, we believe along with our customers, that any system that can provide continuity to the student learning process eight percent of the time should be considered seriously. A district will make many decisions throughout the course of a year but few, if any, will be as visible in impacting the classroom experience of a student as partnering with Kelly Educational Staffing.

I will conclude my comments by reiterating my appreciation for your time and attention to this matter. We believe this to be an area of the education system deserving of more attention and thoughtful consideration. I hope we have given sufficient voice to the nature of our services and the thousands of full time teachers and substitute employees in Connecticut that would be affected by this bill. Kelly Services is an organization that has a large network of employees working throughout the state of Connecticut. We employ dozens of individuals in Connecticut's cities and towns that work tirelessly to help, literally, thousands of their fellow Connecticut citizens find temporary and full time work with Connecticut-based organizations – many of which are public schools.

If there is any additional information I can provide at this time to clarify my opposition to Raised Bill 1016, I welcome questions from the Committee at this time.