

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Substitute Teaching Advocates

**FROM:** Geoffrey Smith, Director  
Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University  
Fax: 435 797-0944 • Geoffrey.Smith@usu.edu

**DATE:** September 14, 2007

**RE:** Talking Points for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

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**Background**

The U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor is currently drafting legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is also commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind. As part of the reauthorization process, the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University submitted a proposal to be included in the reauthorization legislation that would allow for increased training of substitute teachers, principals, permanent classroom teachers, and managers of substitute teachers throughout local districts.

We are pleased to report that out of the thousands of proposals submitted to the Committee for their consideration, STI's proposal has been included in the draft of the reauthorization legislation.

**Talking Points**

- Given the impact substitute teaching has on school performance and student achievement, current law does not provide districts with the ability to provide adequate training for substitute teachers.
- Formal training of substitute teachers has been shown to improve the quality of education, lower school district liability, reduce the number of student and faculty complaints, and increase retention rates of substitute teachers.
- To give you a better sense of the current landscape with regard to substitute teaching:
  - ❖ As much as one full year of a child's elementary and secondary education is taught by substitute teachers;
  - ❖ Less than one in four school districts provide training for substitute teachers;
  - ❖ No training is given to substitute teachers in 77 percent of school districts in the United States;
  - ❖ Over half (56 percent) of school districts never have a face-to-face interview with substitute teaching candidates;

- ❖ Poorly trained substitute teachers have a negative impact on student academic performance and achievement;
  - ❖ Nine out of the ten lowest-ranked States in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing allowed substitute teachers with only a high school diploma to teach in their schools;
  - ❖ In 28 States principals may hire anyone with a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED) who is age 18 years or older; and,
  - ❖ Schools with lower academic achievement are twice as likely to allow less qualified substitutes in the classroom.
- The cost of improving substitute teaching overall and increasing the effectiveness of substitute teachers themselves is fairly minimal. Unfortunately, school districts currently lack the much-needed resources to accomplish this task.
  - By providing districts with the opportunity and flexibility to improve the proficiency and skills of substitute teachers, we are improving the educational quality within schools.
  - As I have been informed, the draft reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act includes several policies that would improve substitute teaching by allowing local districts to increase training for substitute teachers, principals, permanent classroom teachers, and managers of substitute teachers.
  - The language within the draft reauthorization legislation would allow local districts to increase training for substitute teachers, principals, permanent classroom teachers, and managers of substitute teachers. More specifically, the legislation would:
    - ❖ Authorize a new demonstration program for the purpose of training substitute teachers, substitute managers, and permanent teachers and rigorously evaluating the effect of the training on student achievement and school performance.
    - ❖ Under the program, funds could be used to:
      - Train substitute teachers in classroom management, effective teaching strategies that address a variety of student learning needs and styles, teacher professionalism, and educational laws and issues.
      - Train principals and permanent teachers in effectively integrating substitute teachers in school operations, such as: proven practices in recruiting and retaining substitutes; proven practices in preparing students for substitutes; planning for the effective integration of substitutes in school operation; and use of permanent substitutes.
      - Develop a resource kit for substitute teachers that contains: short whole-class critical thinking activities; independent student activities; and, teacher-directed activities and leans organized by subject matter.
  - I respectfully request that you support these proposals included within the Committee on Education's draft legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. If I can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (435) 797-3182.

### [Write & Call Your Representative](#)

We need your support in making Members of Congress aware of this important provision! Your voice and your opinions are powerful. If you take the time to convey your support of this provision to your elected officials and follow up with them, your message will have a great impact.

We are respectfully requesting that you send a letter to your Member of Congress and let them know your support for the substitute teaching proposal contained within the House Committee's version of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Mail is extremely slow on Capitol Hill, so we encourage you to FAX your letters and follow-up with a personal phone call to the Member of Congress or his/her Legislative Assistant for Education Policy. Please feel free to reference the above Talking Points during your phone call.

Also, please be sure to send copies of your letters to the Substitute Teaching Institute (Fax: 435-797-0944) so we can keep track of your correspondence. This helps us coordinate efforts, and by knowing who is doing what and where, helps us to be more effective.

To obtain your elected official's fax and phone numbers, please follow the directions below:

- Click on the "[Write & Call Your Representative](#)" link. This link will direct you to "Search by ZIP Code." <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/?lvl=L>
- Enter your 5-digit Zip Code. Your Representative's name will appear under the *President & Congress* heading. [*You do not need to write your Senator. We are only asking that you send a letter to Member of the House of Representatives*]
  - ❖ If there is more than one Representative listed, you will need to enter in your complete 9-digit Zip Code (Zip+4). If you don't know your Zip+4, please enter in your address. This will provide you with your Representative's name.
- Click on the Representative's name. This will direct you to the appropriate contact information. Please fax your letter directly to your Representative's Washington, DC, office.