



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Nursing

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Date: 11/3/17

To: Joe Sawyer, Patrick Collins, Meg Belsito, Barb Malone

From: Noelle Freeman

Re: Request for increase in substitute nurse compensation rate

I respectfully request your consideration regarding an increase in the compensation rate for substitute school nurses. I believe that the current rates of \$20/hr for day-to-day substitutes and \$30/hr for long term substitutes are insufficient for recruitment and retention of quality staff.

Some information for your consideration:

- Our sub nurse compensation rate has not increased for at least 10 years
- Nurses have left Shrewsbury to work as per diem employees elsewhere, including:
 - Worcester Public Schools - pay rate \$41/hr
 - Framingham Public Schools - pay rate \$200/day
 - UMass Hospital - per diem rates start at \$40/hr and increase with level of experience
- Substitute nurses are often used to accompany groups on field trips; finding coverage for these trips is increasingly difficult; there is risk that trips may need to be cancelled or rescheduled if medical needs require a nurse to be present and no nurse is available
- As the needs of our student population have increased over the last several years (medical issues as well as mental health/behavioral issues), substitute nurses have commented that the compensation is not adequate for the skills required to cover our health offices
- Our pool of substitute nurses is small (currently 10 nurses), despite efforts to hire qualified candidates
- 70% of substitute nurses that we employ are also employed elsewhere and therefore are available to us on a limited basis
- We currently have 2 long term substitute school nurse positions posted (SHS and OMS); applicant pools are small (2-5 candidates per posting)
- As Director, I have covered health offices for school nurse absences as often as possible in order to decrease our need for substitute nurses, and will continue to do so
- The compensation rate for nurses who cover health offices during summer program is \$45/hr

For these reasons, I request that the compensation rates be increased to \$30/hr for day-to-day substitute school nurses, and up to \$40/hr (dependent on experience) for long term substitute school nurses.

Based on substitute nurse usage during the 2016-17 school year, the financial impact of these changes going forward would be an increase of approximately \$9000 for daily substitutes over a full year (approximately \$6,750 for the remainder of this year), and an increase of approximately \$10,000 for the anticipated hire of a long term substitute for SHS for the remainder of this school year. Long term substitute nursing costs will vary depending on need in future years.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to discuss this with you further and answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

Noelle

Noelle Freeman, BSN, RN, NCSN
Director of Nursing