



ESS Proposal for New Teacher Assistants

Background:

- Healthcare costs are rising at a rate that exceeds the maximum tax levy
 - District healthcare costs have increased at an average rate of 6.7% over the last 5 years
 - Tax levy is constrained to 2% per year
- Healthcare coverage options are determined by collective bargaining and are fixed for the entirety of the contract period (typically 3-4 years).
- Contributions by certificated staff are regulated by [P.L. 2011, Chapter 78](#), which created a tiered system for health benefits contributions based on salary.



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Recommendation:

- Given the current financial situation, the district must find ways to reduce costs while also continuing to provide high-quality service through the significant contributions of current staff members.
- The district has determined that the most appropriate course of action is to use a staffing service to hire new TA's for future vacancies that arise.
- This would not affect the employment status of any current district staff member and would only come into effect when a position becomes available.



Projected Savings

Costs and Contributions:

- Health Benefits costs for TA's total over \$1.2M for the current year
- The district pays 96.4% of this cost, while the TA's pay the remaining 3.6%.
- The average district TA pays \$879/year for full health benefits coverage.
- In comparison, a 2019 study of large employers indicated that a typical employee in the US pays approximately \$4,400/year in health benefits costs.

Savings by Working with ESS:

- The district is estimated to save an average of \$13,000 to \$18,000 per position
- Historically the district has seen approximately 12% turnover per year in TA staffing
- The resulting savings is estimated to be \$75,000 to \$125,000 per year



Benefits

The District Would:

- Continue to be able to provide high-quality service to students with special needs
- Improve recruitment of TA's with specific backgrounds or certifications through the use of tiered compensation
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility to provide additional benefits to programming and facilities

The New TA's Hired Would:

- Earn a salary that is based on and competitive with the MEA salary guide in use for district-employed TA's
- Be eligible to purchase health benefits through ESS, which go into effect 30 days after the date of hire
- Be eligible to obtain other benefits from ESS such as 401(k)



Additional Information

- The district will maintain **control over the hiring process** for the new TA's, which means screening candidates, conducting interviews, and performing reference checks for each new hire
- The district will have full discretion to determine the **placement** of new TA's based on their strengths and ability to work with specific student populations
- The district will **train** new TA's according to district policies and protocols
- The district will **evaluate** new TA's using the same metrics as used for district-employed TA's
- The agreement stipulates that ESS will not pull TA's from their assignment in order to provide staffing solutions for another district or school.



Contact

If you have any questions about the information
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