



EMPOWERING COLLEGE  
STUDENT SUBSTITUTE  
TEACHERS

MARCH 2018



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
The Power Of College Students As Subs.....	2
Core Design Elements .....	4
Program Models.....	7
Navigating the K-12 Substitute Space .....	10
Getting Started.....	12
Conclusion .....	14

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# INTRODUCTION

Substantial is an organization working to improve the substitute teaching experience for everyone. In searching for solutions to the shortage of high-quality substitute teachers in public schools, we realized that college students + substitute teaching = an amazing opportunity for everyone. We're not the first people to have this idea<sup>1</sup>, but as far as we can tell, we are the only organization trying to amplify it. College students in most states can substitute teach, and yet we see over and over that they aren't.

We first tested this idea as a small experiment with Stiles Hall, a non-profit service learning institute affiliated with UC Berkeley. After helping incubate a small cohort there, we helped embed substitute teaching as compensated fieldwork in the education department. We also helped Mills College to create an official course on substitute teaching. Along the way, we've collaborated with folks at Monmouth University and Bank Street College of Education who have also seen the power of college student subs and are pursuing the challenge in interesting ways.

We wrote this guide to share our knowledge and lessons learned from helping college students become substitute teachers and jumpstarting programs in partnership with colleges and universities. **Our goal is to make it easy for colleges and college students to start their own initiatives.** By inspiring others to create solutions for their own communities, we hope to collectively increase the number of college students having meaningful experiences as substitute teachers while also increasing the number of well-prepared subs available to K-12 schools.

The following sections of this guide offer ideas to spark your creativity as well as tangible details to help get you started:

- **The Power of College Students as Subs.** Making a case for college students as subs is critical to getting folks on board. We'll share why we think this is such a great idea, and where you can look for further inspiration.
- **Core Design Elements.** Through our own experimentation we've figured out what matters most in a program like this, from meeting the immediate needs of college student substitutes to opening doors for them in the future.
- **Program Models.** How a program looks and feels can vary dramatically. And it should! Here we offer examples for how to structure a program tailored to your community's context and needs.
- **Getting Started.** Inspiration and ideas are great to get you motivated, but actually getting something off the starting blocks is hard. Here we'll offer some super practical ideas for how to get started and what to think about as you do.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/24/AR2006052400155.html>



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# THE POWER OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AS SUBS

70% of college students<sup>2</sup> work at least part-time, and more than half of those working are in the sales or food/personal services fields. It's true that we're in need of more substitute teachers in the US, and there are lots of ways to increase the sheer volume of available subs. But the magic of college students goes well beyond *just* providing more subs for our schools. These are young people looking for their purpose in life and next steps after college; why not connect them with a job that's something more than just work? In case you still need some convincing, allow us to share why we think this is an idea too good to pass up.

## FLEXIBLE, PAID WORK

The reality is that most students are working so they can learn, but they can't always work in ways that best support their status as a student. Substitute teaching is an extremely flexible option that allows students to make their own schedule and change it on the fly, allowing the demands of their schoolwork to come first. An added benefit is that while substitute teaching is a low paying job option for most fully employed adults, it's a relatively high paying option for college students, especially compared to retail or food service options.

## MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE

When students graduate from college, there is often little on their resumes that demonstrates their skills as a professional. While substitute teaching will be most compelling for students who continue to work in education, it provides a great story for anyone. And that's because substitute teaching itself offers truly interesting experiences that students are unlikely to get in other, more traditional part-time jobs. Substitute teaching lets students step up into a significant leadership role; it's a big deal for them to be in charge and that responsibility is magic on its own. But teaching is also creative work that gives students the opportunity to be adaptive and innovative. They get to test their own limits in a way that's simply not possible when work is discrete and predictable.

## INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING (ACROSS MAJORS AND SUBJECTS)

Our country is in need of teachers, and yet we see fewer students entering traditional teacher preparation programs. Most liberal arts colleges—and many universities—don't explicitly prepare students for a particular job after they graduate; it's not uncommon for students (across majors) to stumble into teaching after a few years. Substitute teaching is a proactive way for college students to "try out" teaching, regardless of their major or academic interests. However, without structure, support or reflection, we think substitute teaching is less likely to blossom into a full-time teaching career; this is a gap we hope can be filled by programs that intentionally support college students as subs.

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<sup>2</sup> Carnevale, A. P., Melton, M., Price, E. W., & Smith, N., (2015). *Learning While Earning: The New Normal*. Retrieved from <https://cew-7632.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Working-Learners-Report.pdf>

## COLLEGE/K-12 CONNECTION

The benefits of college students as subs aren't limited to the students themselves. The higher education institutions that support these students stand to benefit as well. It can be a struggle for colleges and universities to build relationships with their K-12 neighbors, often because research requests and community service programs are seen as potentially "more work" for school districts. Substitute teaching is an excellent bridge into a mutually beneficial working relationship because it offers help with an existing—and pressing—district need. And of course, the biggest benefit of all is to the K-12 students themselves. There is immense benefit in having college students in our K-12 classrooms, showing K-12 students what's possible, answering questions, engaging in dialogue. The more we can make college real for K-12 students the better.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS - COLLEGE STUDENT SUBSTITUTE EXPERIENCES

### A Text Message Recounting of a College Student Sub's Experience in the Classroom

Verizon LTE 3:37 PM

Student: I have nothing to do. I've finished everything.

Me: is that true? Everything? I'm really good at finding things to do. I'm never bored. Is there anything else you want to work on before you hand me the reins?

Student: nope.

Me: okay. Well, we will work on my college homework together. I am learning dart manipulations for fashion design.

Student: <her eyes light up> you're in college?

Me: Yep. Again. I already have a Master's, I just keep going back to learn new things. Now I'm learning to sew so I can make epic costumes.

Student B: I have nothing to do either.

Me: is that you saying you want to learn patternmaking?

Student B: <He gets up and sits next to me>

Student C: I want to learn to sew! Look st this skirt I tried to make. It's very simple but I did a Zipper too!

A little later...

Student A: Can I take this home to show my mom?? This is so cool! I didn't even know what a dart was and now I made one!

Student C: I wish I had been done with my work so I could have done this !!

Student B: I can't believe I learned something for once. This was fun. Thank you!

### UC Berkeley College Student Subs Reflect on "Why Substitute Teaching?" - Spring 2017

"When I think back to when I was a student and had a substitute teacher they never got respect...and that needs to change. And I want to be that substitute teacher that students are like "oh wow, she actually can teach us and isn't here to just babysit." So I think that's a huge part, that in society that needs to change...I want to be part of that change."

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"Being a teacher is a really huge commitment. And I think by subbing before I actually go into getting a teacher credential and being in the classroom permanently, for the sake of my own sanity and the sanity of the students. I need to be sure. And subbing is a really good way to do that."

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"This whole experience has helped me ease into the responsibilities of adulthood. To have a job that will lead me to my career is very helpful. Also to not be afraid to ask questions to people in higher positions, like Human Resources or to school principals."

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"I see the importance of substitutes in classrooms. Although not permanent, subs were key pieces of my education. I also want to be a permanent teacher one day so in class experience is great. Lastly, I was also seeking a second job to help support me.Wit"

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# CORE DESIGN ELEMENTS

No matter the size, structure or owner of a program, we've learned there are five things that empower students to become successful substitute teachers and help them get the most from their experience.

## 1. BECOMING A SUB: NAVIGATING THE PERMIT AND HIRING PROCESSES

The process to obtain a substitute teaching permit generally varies by state. Some states, however, leave the decision up to the local school district, in which case there may be variation from district to district. And the process to get hired, though generally similar everywhere—apply, interview, onboard—definitely always has its unique quirks based on context. Most importantly, unlike other jobs where employers seek applicants out and move them through the hiring process, becoming a sub is a highly self-motivated process. If we don't help students understand and navigate it, they are likely to drop off—which, while understandable, represents a missed opportunity for both students and schools.

Whatever the state process, you can be assured that it will be bureaucratic and a little tricky to navigate. It's really important that you help break down this process for students because it's likely going to feel new and foreign to them; most will not have applied for a professional permit or public position before, and the rules for doing this are just different.

So how do you make this easy for students? The best way is to go through the process yourself, document the steps, and make a chronological checklist with specific tips for navigating your particular college or university's systems to get what you need. Of course, if you're not a college student it can be difficult to do this; you can either ask a student to attempt the process and work with them to document it, or you can mimic the process, as a student *would* do it. This is a great task for students to practice a lot of real world skills, so consider enlisting the help of a student employee or volunteer.

## 2. WORKING AS A SUB: SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Students will get little to no training from the school district on how to be a successful substitute, so this is a critical piece of any program that is supporting college students to substitute teach. The specifics of this will vary based on the context for your program, who's leading the charge, and the students who might participate.

In addition to whatever in-house resources or existing student expertise exist at your school, there are also lots of free online resources you can use to support students to learn basic skills that will help them be successful in the classroom; we've created a series of Substitute Teaching Resources available on our Google Drive: <https://bit.ly/2J5vvo2>.

## *HERE ARE THE MOST BASIC SKILL AREAS NEEDED TO HELP COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED IN THE CLASSROOM*

### **CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

It's important to help students learn what it takes to be "the adult at the front of the classroom" and lead with confidence. This is where you may want to focus on tangible skills like: body language, tone of voice, and physical movement, and also soft skills like: respect, asking questions, and building rapport.

### **GIVING DIRECTIONS**

This is one of the most important and often overlooked skills for subs. It's actually really hard for almost everyone to give quality directions that are clear, concise and specific. It's important to practice this because giving directions is often the primary way that subs communicate with students.

### **GROUP MANAGEMENT**

This is a big one! And one that every educator is constantly trying to get better at. The key here is to be proactive and positive, focusing on the behavior you want to see. Tell students what "to do" rather than "not do" and help prevent issues before they arise. Many new subs focus on consequences and how to address bad behavior, assuming it will happen, rather than thinking about how they can set students up to be successful in the first place. In addition to proactivity, it is important to practice how you'll "recover" when things do go off course.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES**

Unfortunately, subs aren't always left the most inventive lesson plans—a worksheet might be the best they can hope for in some schools. However, we also know that the more engaging the activity, the more likely you are to have a great class period. Subs can "boost" the content left by the teacher by getting a little creative with the instructional techniques or methods of engaging with content—if they know some!

### **YOUR "TEACHER" VS. "PUBLIC" SELF**

This last one is especially critical for young educators and college students in particular. All educators are actually considered very public figures, and like it or not, what you do personally can impact you professionally; it's important to draw a clear line between your professional self and personal self. In practice, this looks like managing permissions on social media, maintaining boundaries with students, dressing professionally, and using appropriate language. Of course, all professionals need to adhere to certain standards, but there is an added element of scrutiny in teaching and so it's important to address this and continue to keep a dialogue open around this tension.

### 3. PEER SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: SHARED EXPERIENCES

This is hugely important when it comes to substitute teaching—a traditionally isolating job. In our early experiments, peer support was the most impactful element of a cohort experience. Students were able to share challenges, lessons learned, tips, and encouragement – from the permitting process to the classroom.

Creating this supportive environment works especially well with college students; they are already learning from each other constantly, and because they have one very big thing in common, it's really easy to build quick rapport. Consider how you can structure your program to leverage peer-to-peer interactions. This can range from student led discussion sections to informal meet-ups at the student union—whatever allows students to connect on a regular basis, share their experiences, and build a community of support.

### 4. CONTEXT AND CAREER PATH: THE START OF A PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

Whether or not a student pursues a career in teaching, being a substitute might very well be their first professional job. For many this will be their first time making decisions about retirement plans and union membership. For some, this will be their first time completing a W-2. For others, this may be the first time they are working in a job where they are treated as “an adult.” No matter what the specifics, it's a great time to talk about starting a career path and how substitute teaching will fit into that narrative.

For many students, this will be the start of a love of teaching – and that's something to foster! It's easy to find recruiters who will want to talk to prospective teachers, from Teach for America to Urban Teachers, local graduate schools of education (perhaps even on your own campus), or online options like TeachNow. There are many ways to become a teacher, and exposing students to these options will help your program become a pipeline beyond substitute teaching.

### 5. REFLECTION: MAKING MEANING AND PERSONAL GROWTH

This experience will be transformative for students. They have recently been K-12 students, and this is the first time they will see “the other side” of how things work in a school district. They will also be faced with the same challenges their teachers faced, which can be a jarring feeling. If you create space for students to reflect on what they're experiencing, they have the opportunity to turn these feelings into action.

Reflection is also a critical aspect of getting better as a substitute teacher. Substitute teaching provides the perfect mechanism for rapid iteration and improvement—you never work with the same set of students twice, and you always know more at the end of every day. But that's only true if you spend time unpacking the experience. It's important to take time to think about not just what went wrong, but *why* it went wrong; not just what went right, but *why* it went right. And most importantly, how you can tweak your own actions and behavior to impact the outcomes for students in your classroom.



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# PROGRAM MODELS

There's no one right way to organize college students to substitute teach, but what we do know is that some organization is needed to help students plug into this opportunity. We also know that every university has the potential to connect students with substitute teaching— whether you're an enterprising student, a passionate professor, or a partnership-minded department chair—it's just a matter of finding, designing, and championing. Once you're committed to thinking about how to connect college students with substitute teaching, you'll start to see lots of ways that it can plug in at your university.

We've worked with two universities to pilot and test several different ideas for how this can work, and along the way we came up with a few additional models that we haven't yet had the chance to test. Any configuration you can imagine will likely work if you address each of the core program elements and are thoughtful about implementation. We'll offer some strategy and advice in the final section of this guide.

## STUDENT CLUB/GROUP

Student-organized groups often accomplish the most impressive acts of change on a college campus, and are an extremely powerful network for influence.

**Structure:** In this structure one or more students would come together to create either an unofficial or campus-registered group to organize and support students interested in becoming substitute teachers.

**Opportunities:** This is an excellent way for different student populations to think about how they can organize to serve local youth in an authentic way. Because substitutes can choose how and where they work, they can prioritize working with schools in particularly high need areas. This is also a great opportunity to start small—this doesn't have to be anything more formal than a set weekly meeting at a dining hall on campus, where students help and support each other through this process; think of it like a study group!

**Considerations:** At some institutions, there are existing structures in place that support student-led courses, allowing students to also earn credit -- this is a great option to explore as a way to "double" the benefits. Additionally, existing clubs or organizations that have requirements around service, such as fraternities and sororities, may find that "adopting" a local school in need and providing them with substitute teachers is a much more impactful type of service.

**This Will Work Best If:** An individual or set of individuals are motivated by the cause and attempt to begin the process themselves before inviting others to join them. Peer coaches and experts will help smooth the process for others.

## COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY COURSE

Schools of education typically offer credit-bearing courses for student teaching. In this model, a professor would launch an official, credit-bearing course that prepares students for substitute teaching either during the course itself or at some point in the future. Creating and teaching this course could be an excellent opportunity for graduate students who are former K-12 teachers.

**Structure:** A graduate student or professor designs and teaches an official university course. This includes crafting a syllabus, getting approval from an academic department, and recruiting students.

**Opportunities:** For institutions that have separate teacher credentialing programs or graduate courses of study, this can be a great recruitment mechanism because it showcases your teacher education philosophy in a hands-on way and is likely to attract students outside the education department.

**Considerations:** It will be important to differentiate this course from any other teacher prep courses, as this is not a “crash course” for teaching. If there are costs associated with getting a substitute teaching permit, find out whether it’s permissible to require it as part of the class. If it’s not, you can adjust course content and offer alternatives such as volunteering and school site visits, if students choose not to pursue their permit.

**This Will Work Best If:** You have a champion on staff who feels passionately about service to K-12 schools and perhaps has existing relationships with a local district or school(s).

## COMPENSATED PRACTICUM

Many majors, minors, and certificates require a practicum—practical application of theory in a real life situation. Where these intersect with education, practicums are often unpaid internships or volunteer hours at local schools and nonprofit organizations, ranging from tutoring to after school care. With some investment substitute teaching could easily be included as an option.

**Structure:** The foundation of this model will be a partnership agreement with the school district, or for ease of implementation, one or two school sites within the district. Students should apply to and interview for the practicum placement, and once accepted can volunteer while they apply to the district as a sub. This will allow them to immediately begin practicum requirements, while getting to know the school, staff, and students—relationships that will help them to be successful.

**Opportunities:** Connecting students to schools provides connections that may lead to more students pursuing teacher careers, even if their education minor was not intended to be instructionally focused.

**Considerations:** Working through the school district bureaucracy to get something like this approved can be challenging, working through a school site can help. Be sure to set clear goals for the students time on campus and any requirements for substitute teaching, in advance.

**This Will Work Best If:** There are local schools that are in need of substitute teachers and there is some advance planning for practicum requirements.

## COMPENSATED TEACHING PRACTICE

For students that are pursuing an undergraduate teaching credential, their student teaching requirement is often insufficient to prepare students for all aspects of solo teaching; many students actively seek or desire additional classroom practice. This is especially necessary to allow students the time and repetition to make certain teacher behaviors “automatic.”

**Structure:** There are many ways to set this up within your existing program. It could be as an official course, self study, student led group, departmental extracurricular program, or simply a workshop to get students started with an informal meet-up.

**Opportunities:** Substitute teaching is a great way for to test out various grade levels and school cultures to find the perfect fit. It can be a great way for prospective teachers to find the *right* first teaching job, which makes it more likely they will persist.

**Considerations:** Substitute teaching is a slightly different skill set than full time teaching, so it's important to address the similarities and differences to help students think about how to best apply their teaching skills in this environment. You may also need to challenge internal attitudes and mindsets around substitute teaching, so that it is viewed and framed as an opportunity rather than a risk that might “put students off” teaching.

**This Will Work Best If:** You have strong students or staff who can self-organize this outside the traditional curriculum, and if you have success stories you can point to that will encourage your teaching candidates to try.

## INSTITUTION SPONSORED PROGRAM

Substitute teaching offers some really unique benefits and there may be institutes, centers, or affiliated nonprofits on campus that see a strong connection between their mission and helping college students substitute teach. In particular, those with a focus on equity and justice may find substitute teaching to be a welcome mechanism for their members to tangibly impact some of these factors locally, as insufficient substitute teachers disproportionately impact low income students and students of color. One other very natural fit is employment centers on campus, who could run programming—perhaps in conjunction with the education department—to facilitate this as a flexible job option for working students.

**Structure:** An entity on campus creates a extracurricular program to support students substitute teaching, or folds this in as a delivery mechanism or service component of an existing program.

**Opportunities:** If your institute/center has specific content it hopes to share with K-12 students, it may consider training college student subs to deliver it as alternative instruction on pre-planned teacher absence days.

**Considerations:** Depending on your mission a specific partnership with schools that match interest criteria may be more effective and a partnership with the local district more necessary.

**This Will Work Best If:** An existing entity on campus has a strong point of view for how substitute teaching aligns to their existing mission or directive.

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# NAVIGATING THE K-12 SUBSTITUTE SPACE

You don't need to build a formal relationship with a school district to get college students subbing, but it's good to know how the substitute teaching environment works in school districts. And if you're looking to build relationships with local schools or districts to do research or for other means, starting by bringing them subs is a great way to get the ball rolling!

Some districts hire and manage substitute teachers themselves, and others outsource this work to a third-party agency. This can vary by district and state. Working with an outsourced provider doesn't make any difference, it just means students will apply and be "employed" by that agency instead of the school district.

Regardless of how a district manages this function, all districts handle substitute teaching as part of their Human Resources or Personnel Services Department. This department also handles a lot of other key work in a district, including teacher recruitment. Substitute teaching is often at the bottom of their list, so initially it may be challenging to capture their attention. But when you do, HR leaders get excited about igniting college students to be subs and developing a potential new teacher pipeline pathway. As former teachers and principals they care deeply about kids.

## BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

It's not necessary, but building a relationship with the HR Department in a school district can be a good idea for a few reasons: 1) you might be able to smooth the pathway for hiring, 2) school districts are all about relationships, so building one only helps in the long term, 3) you might start to make some connections for full time teacher hiring, 4) you'll learn about an outsourced provider, if the district uses one. You never know where a connection might lead, so go for it!

But also be aware that they may not have the time and/or bandwidth to engage with you. And they may not see your vision for this work. That's ok! At the very least know that they will be grateful for more subs, and potential future teachers especially.

The best strategy is a simple one: write a clear email about what you're doing and send it to the Chief HR Officer or HR Executive Director (you can almost always find their email online if you look hard enough). Chances are you'll get one of these responses:

- **Nothing.** This is ok! You just want to let them know, and keep trying, as you go. Eventually, if you start bringing them great subs, they'll want to pay attention.
- **A quick response** acknowledging your email. This is the same strategy as above, keep them informed with any major updates.
- **A referral** to the substitute manager or outsourcing company. It's great to try and build a relationship with the substitute manager as well, as this person will be the gatekeeper for subs into the district. Follow-up on this one! If the intro comes from their supervisor they will be more likely to prioritize talking with you.
- **An enthusiastic reply** and interest about doing more or finding time to connect.

## BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS

An alternative path into any school district is always through their individual schools. With a program designed to attract substitutes, school principals are going to be interested. That's because when a district doesn't have enough substitutes, principals are the ones who feel that pain most acutely. For every teacher absence without a substitute, they must scramble to find a solution; that can mean asking teachers to give up their prep periods, splitting students among other classes, or forgoing their own responsibilities and stepping back into the classroom for a day, among other options. In some schools this is almost a daily occurrence, and it's always a challenge.

Working with one or two motivated schools can help you find a home within a district (if it's particularly large) and learn how to navigate the system with a little bit of guidance. School principals are notoriously busy, so we suggest leveraging an existing connection or starting by dropping by the school with a flyer or documentation to see if you can talk to the school office manager—they are the gatekeepers and make everything work in a school building! From there, you may be able to meet the principal, and if they are excited by the idea, they can provide either a site for students to get started or an introduction to the district administration.



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# GETTING STARTED

When you're building anything new, the best idea is to start small and iterate. Get one or two students interested and have them go through the process themselves. They will learn so much, and it will be much easier and faster to create basic materials with real lessons learned. This also doesn't have to start out as anything super formal—let that evolve over time. If you at least touch on each of the core elements we mentioned above, you're going to be in great shape. We recommend making templates and directions that detail the process for becoming a sub, setting a rough structure for how students will interact, and then iterating from there. Don't spend so much time designing the perfect program that you fail to get something in motion.

**Start Small:** ask a few professors that teach education related courses to identify and personally invite a handful of students to your program. You can even write the email for them! Personal invitations from professors really help students see their own potential to teach.

The easiest place to begin is with getting the “how to become a sub part” nailed down. Start by making directions and a checklist for students. Try to include the entire process, from getting the permit to getting hired at a school district. From there you can start to recruit students and layer in core design elements as you build and iterate.

## TIPS FOR TACKLING “HOW TO BECOME A SUB”

1. **Do your research.** Go to your state department of education website and look for substitute teaching permits or legislation. Look at local school district websites to see what documentation they have and what the application process looks like. Be sure you know any special requirements for college students, if they exist.
2. **Ask questions.** Policy is often vague, so when in doubt or if you're at all confused call the state agency or whoever grants teacher permits and ask questions. You need really specific instructions that will be easy for students to follow. Call your local school district, county office of education or regional service center and ask them those same questions, again. The more answers you have the better chance you have of getting it right. Remember policy is often open to interpretation.
3. **Put it in your own words.** Nothing helps you understand something better than having to teach someone else. Creating your own documentation for the process will help you do that. And it will help you surface more questions and quirks for you to research.
4. **Be specific.** As you create your own documentation, take it out of the general and into the specific. If you need a transcript to prove you're enrolled in college, where do you get that transcript on campus? Which version of the transcript meets the state's requirements? Does it need to be original, signed, stamped?

5. **Explain the why.** This isn't just about getting a permit; it's about learning how the system works navigating it effectively; understanding the "why" behind things helps people to get them done. As much as possible share context, gained either from your own experience or by asking questions from people inside the system and sharing back their answers. If you don't know why something is a part of the process, it's worth finding out.

## PRACTICAL IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND

None of these are barriers to you getting started, but we've come across a few things that are important to share:

1. **Cost** - In almost every state substitute teaching comes with costs: permits, fingerprinting, ordering transcripts, mandatory training programs. It's important to know up front that this can be a challenge for some students. Think about how you can message these to students and get creative with helping students cover this if it poses a burden: your college may have funds available to sponsor student clubs, or students could create a kickstarter or approach local businesses or chambers of commerce for sponsorship.
2. **Hiring Process** - School districts do have a hiring process and screen sub applicants, but they aren't super strict about it. Relevant experience can range from babysitting, to summer camp counselor, to being a TA in a course, or even experiences from high school like peer tutoring or running extracurricular clubs. When they apply, students should showcase their particular passion and anything that's relevant to them succeeding in the classroom.
3. **Be Proactive** - Almost everywhere, becoming a substitute is *as easy as you want it to be*; substitute applicants drive the speed and completion of the process. That's not to say that getting hired as a sub is particularly difficult. You do just need to check the boxes, and be proactive about doing it.
4. **Timing** - Districts hire year-round for subs, but it's still important to think about timing. Consider how long it will take for students to get their permits, and how they will engage while they are waiting to complete that process.

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## CONCLUSION

Substitute teaching may seem like a small thing, but it's a big way to make an impact in your local community and in the lives of college students. This might just be the way a student finds their career, or becomes confident enough in their teaching skills to persist in the classroom after graduation. A growing number of higher education institutions are seeking ways to provide real world opportunities and career paths to current students. And more and more young people are seeking ways to make a positive impact on their communities.

We are committed to helping cultivate college students as substitute teachers and will provide open source resources, ideas, inspiration and connection between individuals and institutions taking on this challenge: <https://substantialclassrooms.org/college-subs>.

If we can help you get started, if you have a success story you want to share, or if you simply want to say hello, please reach out to us [college-partnerships@substantialclassrooms.org](mailto:college-partnerships@substantialclassrooms.org). Together we can help improve the 10% of time all students spend with substitute teachers.