

Instigate guidelines for substitute teachers

This is in response to the letter titled "Teachers: No reward for showing up."

Performance pay has been touted by lawmakers as extra money for "excellent" teachers.

However, as an earlier letter pointed out, the only way to even be considered for this pay, regardless of all other activities, is to have perfect attendance two out of the four quarters in a school year.

Anyone who has ever worked with children will know that being able to work this long in a stretch is next to impossible.

Perhaps a smarter idea would be to hold parents accountable for not keeping their sick children home, since they spread illnesses like the flu to all the other students and the teachers.

We do not have a "right to regularly not show up for work," but we do have a right to take a day to recuperate and take care of personal business, just like every other professional in the "real world."

The principal should check on each classroom to make sure a valid activity has been provided for the students of absent teachers.

The real problem the letter writer is referring to, however, lies in lack of strict guidelines for substitute activities.

First, the principal should check on each classroom to make sure a valid activity has been provided for the students of absent teachers.

At the beginning of each year, teachers are required to provide "emergency" lesson plans for unexpected absences. A lesson plan does not imply a cartoon video.

Secondly, substitutes should be subject to review, making sure they followed the teacher's instructions. They should be reprimanded if they did not.

Of all my sick days, only once

were my thorough instructions followed. Having served as a substitute prior to full-time teaching, I was flabbergasted at the lack of regard substitutes had for my clearly laid out plans, which took several hours to prepare, despite whatever condition I was in.

This cost my students two days of learning each time, since we are on the block schedule, and I had no recourse other than to hope I never had that substitute again.

This is where the problem lies. Substitutes are required to have at least 60 hours of college credit (associate's degree), which means they are educated people.

They should be able to follow directions, just like a temporary employee would, and teach, since that is their title. They should answer to someone if they don't do so, just like we do.

SARAH DUNCAN,
high school teacher,
Jacksonville