

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHING**

### **Am I qualified to substitute teach?**

Applicants for substitute teaching must either have a valid or expired Michigan teaching certificate, **or** have completed a minimum of 90 semester hours of satisfactory college credit consolidated at one four-year college or university which is accredited by either a regional accrediting agency or by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). All applicants must also be able to pass a criminal history records check and unprofessional conduct check.

### **How do I prove that I'm qualified?**

You must provide a copy of your Michigan teaching certificate or official transcripts verifying completion of a minimum of 90 semester hours of credit as described above.

### **Can I submit Internet transcripts?**

No, the ISD is not permitted to accept transcripts obtained from the Internet. Please provide official transcripts. The college or university can mail them directly to us, or you can provide official transcripts that are "issued to student" in a sealed envelope. If you have opened the envelope, please discuss acceptability with the ISD contact person.

### **Must my credits be in education courses?**

No. They are acceptable even if none of the credits were in education courses.

### **Must I give my original teaching certificate to the ISD?**

No. Simply bring it to the ISD. A photocopy of the certificate will be made and the original returned to you.

### **I will have 90 semester hours completed shortly. Can I apply to sub now?**

No. You must be able to provide official transcripts showing that you have completed the 90 credits in order to be eligible to sub.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHING APPLICATION PACKET/PROCESS**

### **What forms do I need to fill out?**

You will need to fill out an application packet for the Copper Country ISD, as well as a contract and employment forms for GMS (the company with which most of the public school districts in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw Counties has contracted with for the provision of sub services and payroll for sub teachers.) Following is a checklist identifying the forms you need to fill out and other documentation that needs to be supplied at the time of application. Instructions are included with your application packet.

### **CCISD APPLICATION PACKET**

#### **APPLICATION FORMS**

- Substitute Teacher Application – basic information about your educational and employment background, as well as details concerning districts, grade levels, and subject areas in which you would like to sub.
- Applicant’s Statement - authorizes your current or former employer(s) to respond to an unprofessional conduct check. *(You cannot be included on our sub list until the employer responds to our request.)*

#### **CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK FORMS**

- Disclosure of Convictions/No Convictions
- Acknowledgement of Criminal History Check
- Livescan Fingerprint Request – which you will bring to the Houghton, Baraga or Keweenaw County Sheriff’s Department or other authorized Livescan agency. They will take your fingerprints and return the yellow copy to you, which needs to be returned to the ISD along with the other forms in your application packet. You will be charged \$64.25 at the Houghton County Sheriff’s office, \$49.25 by the Keweenaw County Sheriff’s office or \$70.00 at the Baraga County Sheriff’s office at the time your prints are taken, which covers the cost of having the prints taken, and the Michigan and FBI history checks. Fees are subject to change. The Sheriffs’ offices do not take credit card payments.

#### **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION NEEDED**

- Michigan Teaching Certificate or official transcripts

### **GMS EMPLOYMENT FORMS:**

- Individual Employment Contract
- Employment Eligibility Verification
- Michigan and Federal W-4 Withholding Allowance Certificates
- State of Michigan New Hire Reporting Form
- Copy of your Driver’s License, Social Security Card or Other Identification

- Electronic Deposit Form (if you choose to have your pay deposited directly into your bank account instead of receiving a check in the mail)

### Can I apply on-line?

Not at this time. CCISD application forms may be downloaded on this site and submitted via e-mail to [peggym@copperisd.org](mailto:peggym@copperisd.org) or via fax to Peggy Myllyoja at (906)482-1931. However, we will not accept e-mailed or faxed transcripts, and you must, of course, be physically present at one of the authorized agencies for fingerprinting.

### Can I specify where I want to sub?

Yes. You can specify schools, grade levels, subject areas, or even days of the week preferred. You may change your preferences with the ISD at any time during the school year, and districts will be made aware of the changes.

### Is there a deadline to apply?

No. You may apply at any time during the school year.

### Do I get interviewed?

No. Your eligibility depends entirely on the results of your background check, records check and documented qualifications to substitute teach.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BACKGROUND CHECKS**

### **Why do you conduct an unprofessional conduct background check?**

1996 Public Act 189 directs school districts to conduct the background check.

### **What is considered “unprofessional conduct?”**

The definition is, “...one or more acts of misconduct, one or more acts of immorality, moral turpitude, inappropriate behavior involving a minor, or commission of a crime involving a minor.”

### **How does the ISD conduct the unprofessional conduct check?**

One of the forms in the sub teacher application packet is entitled, “Applicant’s Statement.” This form explains the reason for the background check and authorizes the ISD to conduct it. The applicant must supply the name, address, phone number and fax number (if there is one) of at least one current or previous employer. The ISD sends a form letter to the employer asking if there has ever been any unprofessional conduct on the part of the individual. The employer will either sign off that there was no problem, or will provide the ISD with a letter indicating the nature of the unprofessional conduct.

### **What happens if my employer doesn’t respond to the letter?**

The employer is required by law to respond within 20 days of receipt of the letter. The ISD will attempt to contact him/her via phone if the response is not received. A letter may be sent to an alternate employer if necessary in an attempt to expedite the completion of the background check.

### **What happens if the employer responds that there were incidences of unprofessional conduct?**

If the unprofessional conduct falls into the parameters of the definition listed above, the applicant will not be placed on the sub list. If other employment issues are stated, they will be reviewed on an individual basis.

### **Do I have to pay for the background check?**

You do not have to pay for the unprofessional conduct check with a previous employer, but you do have to pay the applicable fee for having your fingerprints taken and read as part of the criminal history records check. The fee depends on the fingerprinting agency you use.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECKS

### Why do I have to be fingerprinted?

Public Act 83 of the Public Acts of 1995 makes a Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) criminal records check mandatory for individuals newly employed as a teacher, school administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse or school social worker (effective August 1, 1995). This is in addition to the State of Michigan criminal records check which is mandated in Public Act 99 of the Public Acts of 1992, as amended by Public Act 144 of the Public Acts of 1994 which went into effect with the beginning of the 1993-94 school year.

### Do I have to wait till my fingerprint results come back to sub?

No. We can place you on the list temporarily until the print results are received, as long as we have received the signed unprofessional conduct check letter back from a current or previous employer, you have signed the statement in your application packet identifying all crimes for which you have been convicted, and the fingerprint results have been requested.

### Do I have to get fingerprinted every year?

You should not have to be fingerprinted again as long as you are continuously on the active sub list or employed in any capacity in a Michigan school. However, if you become inactive for 12 months or more, you may have to get your prints taken again if you want to return to the active list.

### I had my fingerprints taken recently for another job. Do I have to do it again?

If you had your prints taken for subbing or regular employment in another school in Michigan on or after January 1, 2006, the ISD can request the print results from that district and you will not need to have them taken again or pay a fee. We will have you sign a form authorizing the release of the print results to us. If the previous district cannot locate print results or refuses to release them due to differing release policies, then you must have your prints taken again and pay the accompanying fee.

If you had your prints taken for non-school employment, we will not be able to use the results from the previous employer. The state conducts different types of checks for schools than for any other employment category, even those done for the medical/health occupations.

### I am a retired teacher who has worked in the local area for a long time. Do I have to be fingerprinted?

Many retired school employees were hired before fingerprinting was required and need to get fingerprinted in order to sub. If you did have your fingerprints taken for school employment on or after January 1, 2006, then you do not need to do it again, and the ISD can request the fingerprint results from your former district.

*Please note: If you simply want to sub for the district that you retired from, and your district is willing to keep you on the payroll as a sub, you do not have to sign up for the sub list as long as you are continuously employed by the district; however, fingerprinting requirements still apply.*

### How Do I Get Fingerprinted?

The instructions are provided in your substitute teacher application packet; however, the following is a brief synopsis of the process:

- Complete the applicant information on the Livescan Fingerprint Request form.
- Go to the Baraga, Houghton or Keweenaw County Sheriff's Department, or other authorized Livescan agency. The Houghton County Sheriff's Department will do fingerprinting on a walk-in basis, but prefers Tuesday or Thursday afternoons. The Baraga County Sheriff's Department does fingerprinting on Mondays between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. The Keweenaw County Sheriff's Department requires an appointment; please call 337-0528 to set up a time. Please note that you may encounter a wait at any of these offices, due to other official business being conducted.
- Bring the completed Livescan Fingerprint Request form with you. The fingerprinting agency will not be able to fingerprint you without the form.
- Pay the fingerprinting agent to have the prints taken. The Houghton County Sheriff's office charges \$64.25, the Baraga County Sheriff's office charges \$70.00 and the Keweenaw County Sheriff's office charges \$49.25. (This covers the cost of having the prints taken, as well as the State and FBI fees for having the prints read.) These fees are subject to change.
- Bring or send the yellow copy of the Livescan Fingerprint Request form back to the ISD, along with the other forms in your application packet, and your certificate or transcripts (unless your transcripts are being sent directly to the ISD by the college or university).

### What if there are arrests and/or convictions on my record?

Arrests without convictions or no contest pleas are generally not considered a problem, unless they are pending cases.

Convictions are reviewed on an individual basis; however, most misdemeanors that do not involve inappropriate contact with minors generally will not prevent you from being eligible to substitute teach. Youthful drinking offenses or minor driving violations, which constitute the majority of convictions typically reported, do not prevent an individual from subbing.

Schools are prohibited from employing individuals who have been convicted of listed offenses requiring registration as a sex offender.

Absolutely **ALL FELONIES** must be reported to the Michigan Department of Education by the ISD, regardless of their nature. In addition, both the Superintendent and Board of Education must agree in writing if they want to allow the applicant with the felony to work in the schools. The MDE makes the final decision, however, as to whether an applicant with the felony on their

record can be granted a permit to substitute teach. The ISD cannot override the MDE's decision. The applicant will be notified of their status.

**Will my misdemeanor conviction be disclosed to the school I sub at?**

The conviction will not be listed on the active sub teaching list; however, a school can request additional information about a sub at any time with the proper release.

**Where can I obtain more specific information about criminal history records checks?**

See more at the Michigan Department of Education's website at

[http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235\\_6947-16742--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235_6947-16742--,00.html)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PERMITS

### Do I need a permit?

If you are a certified teacher in Michigan, you do not need a permit, even if you want to sub in grade levels and subjects outside your areas of certification. In the past, certified Michigan teachers needed a permit if they wanted to substitute outside their areas of certification; however, we were notified on February 14, 2007, that this requirement was dropped by the State. If you are not a certified teacher, if your Michigan teaching certificate has expired, or if you have an out-of-state teaching certificate, you will need a substitute teaching permit.

### How do I obtain a permit?

Once the ISD has all of your paperwork processed, they will apply for the permit on your behalf.

### Is there a cost for the permit?

You will receive a bill for \$45 in the mail from the Michigan Department of Education. You must pay this bill by the due date, or the Department will rescind your permit.

### What happens if I don't pay the permit fee by the due date?

The MDE will rescind your permit if the fee is not paid by the due date. The ISD is notified that the fee wasn't paid, notifies you of the situation and then must notify the districts that they can no longer use you as a sub. If you want to be reinstated on the sub list, you must pay the fee. When the ISD receives notice that the MDE has received payment, you will be reinstated on the list.

### Can't I just pay for the permit at the ISD?

No. The payment must be sent directly to the Michigan Department of Education.

### My permit was rescinded during a previous year, but I'd like to re-apply for subbing this year. How can I do this?

You must contact both the ISD and MDE. First, pay the old bill directly to the MDE. If you no longer have the bill, please call the MDE Automated Billing System at (517)373-3310 to request another copy. The MDE will not accept an application for a new permit for the current school year until all outstanding fees are paid. Once the bill is paid, contact the ISD to indicate your intent to return to the list and update your preferences. The ISD can then submit an application for your new permit. Keep in mind that you will receive another bill for \$45 for the new school year. Please submit payment by the due date to avoid having a rescinded permit again.

Why didn't I receive a paper permit?

The MDE does not issue a hard copy permit for subs. After the ISD applies for the permit, you will receive a bill. As long as you pay the bill by the due date, your permit is valid.

I applied to sub during second semester. Why do I have to pay the full permit fee?

The MDE does not issue partial year permits. The fee is \$45 no matter when you apply.

I have a Ph.D. in a non-teaching field. Can I sub without a permit?

No. You must be a certified teacher in Michigan to sub without a permit.

I subbed in a different Michigan ISD earlier this year and paid my permit fee. Do I have to do this again when I register here?

No. Your permit is issued by the State and is good for subbing anywhere in the State for the school year. You will, of course, need another permit for the following school year.

Is a sub permit the same as a certificate?

No. A permit is not a teaching certificate. Subs occasionally refer to themselves as "certified" subs, or state that they have a sub certificate, but neither is a correct statement.

How many days am I allowed to sub?

A sub permit is valid for teaching on a day to day substitute basis for the full school year, but is not valid for regular or extended assignments to a single classroom of 90 days or more.

Do I have to pay for a new permit every year?

Yes, every year in which you want to sub, unless of course you become fully certified. If you are still on the active sub list at the end of the school year, the ISD will send you a letter during the summer break asking if you want to continue and asking that you update your information. If you indicate that you want to continue, the ISD will reapply for a new permit for you. If you do not respond at all, you will not be included on the sub list for the new school year.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT AS A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER**

### **Who is my employer, the ISD, GMS or the local school?**

GMS is your employer and generates your paycheck based on service time submitted to them by the districts in which you work. The ISD serves as the central educational agency for registering subs in the three-county service area, conducts the background checks, applies for any needed permits, and supplies the list of active subs to the districts. The local districts call their own subs, and the ISD does as well for programs that it operates, such as center based special education programs at the Copper Country Learning Center in Hancock, ISD satellite special education classes located in various local districts and area-wide Career and Technical Education programs.

### **Will the ISD provide a reference for me?**

Since sub teachers are not considered employees of the ISD, we cannot provide a job reference for them. We can, however, verify the status of a sub on the active sub teaching list. However, if the individual has served as a sub in a classroom operated by the ISD, the teacher or supervisor of the classroom may be willing to serve as a reference. Local district teachers for whom you've subbed, local administrators or GMS may also be able to provide a reference as needed.

### **When will I get called?**

You may be called to sub for a teacher in the instance of illness, extended leave or other planned absence. If the school is aware of the absence in advance, you will be called as far in advance of the absence as possible. In the case of sudden illness, you may receive a call early on the morning of the absence. District staff do their best to call as early as possible to allow the sub time to arrive at the school.

### **How much do I get paid?**

The pay varies between \$70 and \$85 per day depending on individual school district policies. Check with the business office of the school concerning pay rates.

### **Do I get separate checks for each district I work in?**

No. Since GMS is your employer, if you sub for GMS participating districts, you will get a combined paycheck reflecting all of the schools in which you sub during a pay period and one W-2 at the end of the year. If, however, you sub for non-participating districts, which include Arvon, Elm River and Grant, or for non-public schools in the area, you will receive separate checks and W-2s from them.

### Does GMS offer direct deposit?

Yes, and they encourage all employees to take advantage of it. An electronic deposit form is included as part of the packet of forms you receive at application time.

### How often will I get called?

We simply don't know. The ISD supplies the list of subs to the districts, and the calls are made by the individual districts. They are not required to report sub requests to the ISD. It will depend on a number of factors. (See "Why haven't I received any calls to sub?" below.)

### Why haven't I received any calls to sub?

There are a number of reasons why you may not have received calls, such as the following:

- No absences in the school(s) you agreed to sub for.
- No absences in the specific grade levels or subjects you agreed to sub in.
- Student teachers who are on the sub list covered for their supervising teachers.
- District has been using certain subs on a regular basis.
- Subs who are retired teachers are being given preference.
- Subs who are fully certified teachers are being given preference.
- Subs who have attended annual sub teacher trainings are given preference on the list.
- You have not signed a contract with GMS, and the districts are not using subs who are not GMS employees.

### How can I get more days of subbing?

Although all schools receive information about new subs as they are added to the list, it is highly recommended that you introduce yourself at the schools or at least call the school offices to announce your availability. It is also acceptable to touch base with the local schools' sub contacts to see if any days are available. A list of staff at the schools who are responsible for calling subs is available at the ISD office and on this website.

Also, please keep in mind that you may have narrowed down your preferences too much. For instance, if you specified that you want to sub in two of the districts in one subject area only, you will not get the same number of calls as an individual who is willing to sub in all grades, all subjects and all districts.

### How long does it take to get on the list?

The ISD cannot place an applicant on the active sub list until the unprofessional conduct letter is returned by your current or former employer. If you provide a fax number for the employer, it will usually speed up the turn-around time. It is possible to obtain a response the same day, but the employer is entitled to up to 20 days from receipt of the request. Once the ISD gets word that your signed contract and employment forms have also been submitted to GMS, you will also be identified as a GMS employee on the sub list and districts that have contracts with GMS will be able to call you.

### Is there training available for new subs?

A training is provided by the ISD at least once per school year. A session is normally offered during the summer just prior to the start of school. All active substitute teachers receive notice of the training, and registration is on a first-come, first served basis. Although it is not a requirement to attend, it can be very helpful to new subs. Topics include classroom management and discipline, legal issues, lesson plans, etc.

### Does the regular teacher leave a lesson plan for me?

Yes. The lesson plan should be available to you as soon as you arrive at the school. If not, please contact the school office for assistance.

### I'm a student teacher and my school wants me to sub for my supervising teacher. Can I do this?

Yes. Just be sure to register (apply) at the ISD in the same manner as any other sub applicant would. *Note: If you are interested in subbing in other districts once you're finished student teaching, just let the ISD know which schools to add to your preferences.*

### Can I refuse a request to sub?

You can certainly refuse to sub at any time if you have scheduling conflicts, etc. If you no longer want to sub at a particular district or in certain grade levels that you originally signed up for, you should let the ISD know to change your preferences on the list, therefore avoiding unnecessary calls.

### Am I allowed to sub in a district that I didn't specify on my application.

Yes, absolutely. If you decide that you like subbing for them, please call the ISD to have them added to your preferences.

### I indicated that I only want to sub in certain districts, but others are calling me.

Even though your preferences are listed on the sub list, a district that you did not sign up for may still call you if they are having difficulty getting a sub. This shouldn't happen often, and you can refuse if you like. (Suggestion: If you are getting a lot of calls from these districts, you may want to add them to your preferences. You can change your preferences at any time by calling the ISD.)

### I have changes to make to my personal information on the sub list. Who do I contact?

For all changes in information, please contact the ISD immediately. The ISD will forward all applicable changes to GMS after making adjustments to your information on the active sub list. Failing to do so would prevent local schools from getting the new data. This is particularly urgent in the matter of phone number, address and certification changes.

### Am I permanently on the sub list?

No. The ISD will send a letter every summer asking if you want to continue on the sub list for the coming school year. You must respond to this mailing in order to continue. If you do not respond, you must be removed. You can, however, return to the list within the school year without having to go through the application process again. If you let the entire school year lapse, then you will need to reapply.

### Can I receive my subbing requests electronically?

Although e-mail would be a sufficient mode of communication in an instance where a teacher's absence is known well in advance, it is not helpful for the typical sick day when a sub must be obtained early in the morning the day of the absence. Sub callers often make multiple phone calls in a very short period of time and need a quick answer. It is not advisable to rely on e-mail for this purpose.

### I need 24 hours notice in order to sub. Is that possible?

The ISD can include that information in your preferences on the sub list; however, that does not guarantee that schools won't still call you the day of an absence.

### How many subs are on the list?

There are typically between 150 and 200 subs on the list during a school year.

### Where do I go when I arrive at the school?

Go directly to the Principal's office unless you were instructed to report elsewhere. If you have questions concerning district policies, work hours, lunch breaks, attendance records, etc., please speak to someone in the office.

### How should I dress?

Individual districts have their own policies concerning dress, so if you are in doubt, please contact the Principal's office. Otherwise, it is best to dress professionally. This does not necessarily mean to show up in suit and tie (unless that is the district policy); however, you must be able to distinguish the teacher from the students.

### Is it possible to work half-days?

Yes. In fact, it is often difficult for a school to find someone who is willing to work a half day. If you are open to this, please be sure to note this on your application or contact the ISD to have it added to your preferences.