

# How Paul Public Charter built a substitute community that shared its values

## The challenge: creating a substitute teacher program

Paul Public Charter School in Washington D.C. tried just about everything to develop a successful substitute teacher program.

An internal pool? Too expensive, and not enough substitute teachers to cover all openings. Outside agencies? Not enough substitutes, and some agencies couldn't accommodate the school's billing processes.

"It really wasn't working," recalls Pamela Merkerson, Paul Public Charter's Director of Talent Management.

Merkerson estimates that about one-third of substitute teacher requests went unfilled as a result. That took a big toll on the school's full-time educators, who were often forced to give up planning periods to cover for colleagues.



- Serves 700 students in grades 6-12 in Washington, D.C.
- Filled 1,595 teacher absence days with Swing
- Improved their fill-rate from 67% to over 93%

*“Our teachers rely on the fact that if they have to be out for any reason, their classroom will still function appropriately because the folks we’ve had from Swing were exemplary,” say Merkerson.*



## Growing the right sub pool with Swing

Paul Public Charter officially partnered with Swing Education in August 2017. With an assist from Swing, Paul Public Charter has significantly increased its fill rate, decreased the burden on full-time teachers and administrators, and given students more consistent learning opportunities.

“Substitute teachers are a completely necessary component of every single day in a school,” Merkerson says. “Swing allows us to be able to plan well and keep everything moving in light of teacher absences and/or vacancies.”

## The benefit of getting to pick favorites

Swing’s technology has helped Paul Public Charter increase the efficiency of its substitute teacher operations, improve its fill rate, and build a substitute teacher pool that’s an ideal match for its values and community.

“We have been able to craft a group that works best for our school by using the favorites list,” Merkerson says. “So when we have educators from Swing and they’ve worked really well with our students, we can put them on our list and keep them coming back very regularly.”

The school’s administrators and full-time teachers are now able to spend more time doing what matters most: directly supporting students.

“I think that we’re blessed,” Merkerson says. “We’ve been really lucky to find some substitute teachers from Swing that we think of as part of the Paul family. Our teachers rely on the fact that if they have to be out for any reason, their classroom will still function appropriately because the folks we’ve had from Swing were exemplary.”