

Substitute teachers needed

Pay increase necessary among Porter County schools

Temporaries unable to work full week

Whenever a regular teacher is out of school for illness or personal reasons, a substitute teacher is required to help fulfill the educational needs of that teacher's students.

While more-often-than-not the substitute teacher does an honorable job in replacing the absent teacher, there may still exist the occasional substitute who sometimes struggles to meet some basic needs that we believe are necessary for the educational process to continue.

With that thought, we, at the *Sandscript*, recently have noticed a

low number of substitute teachers available. We also recognize that this problem is caused by many factors, and in this editorial, we will briefly address two of them. These factors include the inability of the Duneland School Corporation to hire substitutes for an extended period of time and to attract substitute teachers due to a low salary.

Inability to hire substitutes for extended periods

Unfortunately, the problem of increasing the number of substitute teachers available on a given day is tied to the fact that the Duneland School Corporation cannot hire them for more than 30 hours per week. This is due to part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which requires anyone working over 30

hours per week be provided health insurance by his employer. If this expensive requirement were not in effect, motivated substitute teachers pursuing work for a full week would be able to do so and possibly work as permanent substitutes when a teacher is out for an extended period.

Substitute wages

Substitute teachers at the Duneland School Corporation currently earn \$60 for working one full day (roughly 7:25 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.), which has been the salary for over a decade. It makes sense that when there is a decrease in the supply of a particular labor force, the employers will need to raise wages in order to attract more prospective workers. As a result, we believe that the wage for working a full day as a substitute

teacher should be increased to \$75.

A wage increase, however, may be a simple endeavor for the Duneland School Corporation itself, but in order to make sure one particular school district does not attract a majority of substitutes in the area, the districts in Porter County have tried to keep the substitute's wages consistent throughout the county. Consequently, we, at the *Sandscript*, call for *all* school districts in Porter County to agree to raise the wages of substitute teachers to \$75.

If the Duneland School Corporation is going to attract more substitute teachers, it needs the cooperation of the rest of the county to raise wages. It is a good lesson plan.

This editorial represents a majority opinion of the Sandscript editorial board.

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Tobacco outside of school none of school's business

Legal acts subject to punishment

Greg Mochen
Sandscript Editor-in-Chief

As amended by the Duneland School Corporation Board of School Trustees in 1997 and revised in both 2003 and 2004, the Positive Life Program here requires registered students to submit themselves to random drug-testing for various controlled substances. Also required is a pledge not to buy, possess, or use any tobacco products ... even outside of school.

Students required to register for the program include any student who

is involved in a co-/extracurricular activity or who is signed up to park his car on campus.

While forcing students to give up their fourth amendment right through drug-testing because of the decision to participate in a "privileged activity" is certainly controversial, and being no fan of tobacco use myself, what bothers me the most about the Positive Life Program as it stands now is the section regarding tobacco.

Outside of the Positive Life Program, the Board already prohibits the use of and/or possession of tobacco products by any student on school property or at any school related event, which is the way that it should be. The school should only be concerned with events that either hinder the educational environment

of other students or which occur on school property. In no way can someone convince me that the use of tobacco outside of school is in any way the school's business.

The program, as illustrated on page 60 of the school student handbook, justifies this by stating that the Duneland School Corporation's goal "to educate all students to their fullest human and academic potential" is impossible while the "health and safety" of students is endangered. In and of itself, an honorable notion.

But frankly, teachers and school employees should not be "patrolling" off-campus areas of Chesterton like police officers in the interest of protecting students' "health and safety." Under that justification, I suppose the Positive Life Program could justify punishing students for

the "dangers" of riding a skateboard on Calumet Ave. or of eating a hamburger at McDonald's.

It also should be noted that while the Board could justify the tobacco clause of the program on the basis that tobacco possession and use is illegal for students below the age of 18, the clause still applies to students ages 18 and above for whom possession and use is perfectly legal, if those students so choose. I find it hard to believe that students should have to worry about being punished for an activity outside of school property that actually is within the law.

I hope that the Board will review this program as it stands and amend it to, at the very least, allow for the use of tobacco outside of school property by students for whom it is legal.

This commentary represents the opinion of the author only.

And while we're on the subject ...

Do you believe students should be punished for tobacco use outside of school?



"No, if a person is of legal age, they should be able to [use tobacco]. They know the risks to their own health."

-Meg Modesto
senior



"I believe that once somebody turns 18, they should be able to use tobacco at their own risk outside of school."

-Andrew Balon,
senior



"No, if I'm 18, it is legal for me to smoke tobacco, so I believe that if one is of legal age, they should not be punished."

-Ashlee Dennis,
senior



"Although I do believe tobacco is bad, I think that if you are of age, then you should be allowed to do it."

-Garritt Slatcoff,
junior



"I think the school should not be able to punish you for tobacco use out of school. It is your choice what you do ..."

-Matt Kozuszek,
sophomore



"I think that tobacco is very bad. They should be able to punish you. They are interested in your future."

-Ella Whitmore,
freshman