

## **How To Become A Substitute Teacher**

Substitute teachers are critical for providing continuity of instruction when teachers are absent on our schools. The substitute teacher helps maintain the many ongoing programs for students in spite of emergencies and illnesses that occur among faculty.

Not just anyone can be a substitute teacher. You must be licensed by the State of Illinois. To be eligible for a substitute teaching license, you must hold a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The bachelor's degree does not have to be in an education-related field.

A substitute teaching license is valid for substitute teaching in all grades of the public schools, prekindergarten through grade 12. The license is valid for 5 years and may be renewed with the payment of registration fees without evidence of passing a test of basic skills.

If a person already holds a valid professional educator license (or an educator license with stipulations), that person is already qualified to be a substitute teacher and does not need to apply for a substitute teaching license.

To apply for a substitute teaching license, a candidate must submit an application online in the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS). During this process, a \$50 fee (plus a processing fee) is assessed electronically when the application is submitted, so a credit/debit card must be readily available. The web sites for this information appear at the end of this article.

An official transcript must be sent to ISBE showing an awarded bachelor's degree. The address is at the end of the article. It should be noted that to be official, transcripts must be submitted in the sealed envelope from the college or university or be sent directly by the institution. If ISBE receives a transcript that is not in a sealed envelope from the university or is not sent directly from the university, it will be considered unofficial and cannot be used for evaluation purposes.

Official transcripts can also be taken to any of the Regional Office of Education #3 (ROE #3) offices and the staff will be happy to scan and submit them to ISBE on behalf of the applicants. The Illinois State Board of Education recommends this method and assures applicants that the process is faster if it is done this way. ROE #3 has offices in Greenville, Taylorville, Effingham, Vandalia and Hillsboro. The addresses and phone numbers are shown on the ROE #3 web site that appears at the end of the article.

Once the transcript is received and reviewed, the substitute teaching license will most likely be issued. When the license is issued, the substitute teaching candidate will need to register it. The cost is \$50 (\$10 per year). This fee is also payable by debit/credit card through ELIS.

After receiving the license via ELIS, the next step toward substitute teaching in the ROE #3 (Bond, Christian, Effingham, Fayette and Montgomery Counties) region is to stop by one of the five County offices and apply for an ROE #3 Substitute Authorization Certificate. The cost is \$25.

The Regional Office of Education and Illinois statute law requires a physical examination by a board-certified and licensed physician. The ROE #3 staff will also arrange a fingerprint criminal background check for the candidate through Bushue Human Resources, which will also perform a search on the Illinois Statewide Sex Offender Database and the Illinois Statewide Child Murderer and Violent Crimes Against Children Database as required by law. Additionally, the license holder will be required to fill out "Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status" and "Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9" forms. The cost for the background check and associated searches is \$52.

If all background checks are satisfactory, a Substitute Authorization Certificate will be issued by the Regional Office of Education. This certificate allows the license holder to substitute teach at any school in the five counties comprising the ROE #3 region without additional background checks and associated costs. The Substitute Authorization Certificate is only valid in the school districts within Bond, Christian, Effingham, Fayette and Montgomery Counties. The Regional Office of Education maintains all records for the substitute teaching license holder indefinitely.

The total cost to acquire and register a substitute teaching license through the Illinois State Board of Education, and then become authorized to substitute teach in an education service region such as ROE #3 is \$177.

### **What's next?**

The next step is to let the twenty public school districts and fourteen non-public schools in the region know that the substitute teacher is available to substitute teach.

The Regional Office of Education maintains an online database of substitute teachers that is available to the school districts. This does not, however, guarantee that they use it as a means to find substitute teachers for their classrooms.

As with any other job, the best way to find employment is to use a personal touch. Figure out whether if you prefer spending time in a classroom with teenagers in middle and high school or with younger students. Keep in mind that kids in pre-K through 2nd grade require more custodial caregiving. Students in grades 3-5 can challenge authority a bit more, but they are also ready for meatier academic subjects. And be sure you have a thick skin before working with older kids. Some of them like to give substitutes a hard time.

After deciding which grades you'd like to teach, it's a good idea to visit area schools to introduce yourself and get on their substitute registry. Take along a copy of your license and a résumé highlighting the skills that might be helpful in the classroom. Alternatively, call the districts you'd like to sub for and ask how to apply to be a substitute teacher. Some districts may require an application process and interview. Some may not.

When you are hired as a substitute teacher, each district will have its own set of procedures that may require quite a bit of information on your part, primarily so that you can be paid. Most will provide you with a handbook that outlines the rules, regulations, schedules, calendars and myriad other details that go along with the day-to-day routines of schools. Don't be surprised if everything is not written down in black and white, so don't be afraid to ask questions. Many of the procedures that take place in school classrooms are based on traditions and custom.

One of the larger school districts in the region has the following information on its web site:

“When you receive the Substitute Teacher Authorization in the mail from the ROE, bring it to the District Board Office. In addition, please bring your Driver's License and Social Security card. We require copies of all three documents for our files. We will give you a payroll packet to be completed in our office. Once the packet has been completed, you will be entered into the District's system and may begin substitute teaching. We recommend you go to all District school buildings and introduce yourself to the secretaries so they can put a face to the name. Also, take a few minutes to introduce yourself to our secretary who works with substitute teachers. She calls the last minute subs every morning for all the schools.”

**Web sites mentioned in this article:**

ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) Web site:

<https://www.isbe.net/>

ISBE - Substitute Teaching License:

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Requirements.aspx>

ISBE – Frequently Asked Questions:

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>

ISBE – How to Videos

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Licensure-Webinar.aspx>

ISBE – Educator Licensure

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure.aspx>

ISBE - ELIS Log In Page:

<https://sec3.isbe.net/IWASNET/login.aspx>

ISBE mailing address:

Illinois State Board of Education  
Educator Licensure  
100 N. 1st Street  
Springfield, IL 62777

ROE #3 mailing address:

Regional Office of Education #3  
1500 W. Jefferson St.  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
(618) 283-5011

ROE #3 Web site:

<http://www.roe3.org/>