

# Little Ferry School District's Effective Substitute Teacher Solution



## Challenges

- Instruction was interrupted by unfilled teacher absences
- Administrators were stressed managing substitute teacher coverage
- Staff had to pause normal responsibilities to cover for absent teachers

## Solution

### Swing Education

## Results

- More consistency and continuity in instruction due to better absence coverage
- Reduced burden on school administration
- Improved staff morale



## About Little Ferry School District

- Serves 950 students across two school sites in Bergen County, NJ
- Recognized as a high-performing school district by the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC)
- Founded in 1894; celebrating its 125th anniversary this year

### Little Ferry School District's innovative solution to the substitute teacher shortage has paid big dividends.

With Swing Education, Little Ferry can now reach hundreds of local qualified substitute teachers at the push of a button. By leveraging Swing's technology and large pool of substitute teachers, Little Ferry is able to cover more teacher absences, more efficiently -- something that provides big benefits to students and staff alike.

"For the students' sake, it's good for their educational progress, and for staff it's good for morale because they know they won't be pulled in different directions covering for an absent teacher," says Frank R. Scarafale, Little Ferry's superintendent.

"It has made it a lot more pleasant to come to work in the morning when you know that your vacancies are filled."

## Getting Started with Swing Education

Prior to partnering with Swing Education, Little Ferry School District relied primarily on another substitute teacher service to cover absences. Over time, however, the district determined that it would be best served to consider a second provider.

Enter Swing.

“I said, ‘You know what? I have to do my staff a favor,’” says Scarafile, Little Ferry’s superintendent. “Because realistically, they were the ones that had to cover when we couldn’t get a substitute teacher. That does bad things for the morale of the staff, and it hurts students who lose continuity in education. So we decided to give Swing a try.”

Initially, Little Ferry used Swing to cover absences only on district-wide workshop days. But after getting more familiar with the benefits of Swing’s technology (which allows administrators to quickly push requests to a large pool) and substitute teachers, the district adopted it as a more primary option.

“To our delight, it has been a great partnership. We’re 100% satisfied,” Scarafile says.

## Avoiding the Early-Morning Scramble

Scarafile is one of several administrators who coordinates substitute teacher coverage at Little Ferry School District. Before partnering with Swing Education, he was all too familiar with the challenges of the early-morning substitute teacher scramble.

When a teacher called in sick -- or a substitute teacher request from the day before went unfilled -- staff had to sweat to coordinate coverage before the first bell rang.

Fortunately, that’s no longer the case.

“When I start work in the morning, if I see that I don’t have coverage, I put in a request for Swing,” Scarafile says. “And I have to say, almost 90% of the time I have a sub that day. I’m really impressed.”

“It’s very rare that I come in and I have nobody pick up teacher absences.”

## A Successful Partnership

For Scarafile and Little Ferry School District, the decision to use Swing as a more primary provider of substitute teachers has been relatively straightforward.

“Do you want an open, unfilled classroom, or do you want a better than 90% chance of it getting filled? That’s exactly the way to put it -- the only way to put it, really,” Scarafile says.

Couple that with the quality of educators and the support Little Ferry receives from Swing’s team, and the district is excited about how the partnership will continue to pay dividends for staff and students.

“I’ll tell you what, Swing’s substitute teachers have been punctual, professional, and personable,” Scarafile says. “The billing has been easy to deal with, and the support has been great.

“We don’t have any complaints.”