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## **SEMS-to-SmartFind*Express* Transition Improves Substitute Management A Case Study: Fulton County Schools**

Whether you work for the New York City Department of Education, the largest school district in the country ... a small, rural district like Sulphur Springs (CA) School District ... or somewhere in between, technology updates can be daunting. However, just as computers and cell phones periodically need updating to optimize performance, software services require changes as well.

Successfully upgrading software or replacing previous-generation hardware requires coordination, teamwork and planning – but the effort is worthwhile in the long run. That’s why eSchool Solutions is working with SEMS customers to upgrade hardware and transition to the best substitute management system available: SmartFind*Express*. eSchool Solutions created SEMS two decades ago, and since then, technology has drastically advanced – mandating that we develop a more sophisticated software program. SmartFind*Express* combines the latest technology with our first-hand experience in automating substitute management, enabling districts to work smarter and more efficiently.

### **Transitioning to SmartFind*Express* “Worth the Effort”**

Fulton County (GA) Schools recently transitioned from SEMS to SmartFind*Express* and Linda Coffey, Substitute Services Manager, said the new system is a noticeable improvement over SEMS.

“SmartFind*Express* is a breeze to use. We haven’t had one bit of trouble. Switching to the new software was definitely worth the effort,” she explained.

Overseeing a district that encompasses 92 schools, more than 100,000 students and 11,000 teachers, Fulton County School administrators knew that transitioning to SmartFind*Express* would be a challenge. However, with approximately 800-1,100 absences to fill each day, they also understood the value of investing in the latest substitute management software.

“We’re not a mega-district, but switching to SmartFind*Express* was still the right choice for us. SEMS was great, but the new program gives us the ability to place even more qualified subs in classrooms,” Coffey added. The result? Fewer “lost” learning days.

### **Pre-Planning Fuels Successful Transition**

To make the transition to SmartFind*Express* as smooth as possible, Fulton County Schools emphasized pre-planning – educating, training and frequently communicating with system operators, teachers and substitutes. The goal was for everyone to be “in the know” before the system went live.

Spearheading the pre-planning effort, Coffey first reached out to each school’s substitute coordinator – holding multiple meetings to inform them about upcoming changes and how their schools would be impacted. eSchool Solutions provided training manuals, which Coffey customized and distributed throughout the district, enabling system operators to get a head start learning SmartFind*Express*’ new features and functionality. In addition, Coffey conducted numerous meetings with IT department staff to coordinate the hardware update and backup server installation.

"To optimize SmartFind*Express* – and make sure it functioned correctly from Day 1 – we upgraded our hardware and purchased a backup server. We'd been operating with outdated servers and phone systems for years," Coffey explained. "With eSchool Solutions' assistance, we were able to assess our hardware needs and implement the appropriate changes."

### **SmartFind*Express* Enhances Substitute Management**

After installing and conducting extensive tests on SmartFind*Express*, Fulton County Schools went live on January 2, 2008 – when the students and teachers returned from winter break. The results were even better than district administrators projected.

"Transitioning to SmartFind*Express* has definitely improved our substitute management. Most importantly, we've seen an increase in fill rates, but there are also administrative benefits," said Coffey.

Thanks to improvements in SmartFind*Express*, Fulton County administrators are receiving fewer calls and requests for assistance from substitutes and teachers. For example, instead of calling the office for updates, teachers can track their absenteeism and subs can use SmartFind*Express* to monitor how many days they've worked. Additionally, substitutes can update their schedule availability online. The program also includes a reminder tool for people who forget their log-in information. Spending less time answering these types of questions, administrators are able to better utilize resources.

As Coffey explained: "These extra functions save administrators significant time. Our substitute management is noticeably more efficient and effective, thanks to SmartFind*Express*."

To learn more about SmartFind*Express*, contact your sales manager today.