

ELGIN/NEW LEIPZIG PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #49

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Daniel R Ludvigson, Superintendent, Ele. Principal



Home of the Coyotes

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Members of the Senate,

My name is Daniel Ludvigson and I am both the superintendent and elementary principal of Elgin/New Leipzig Public School. We are a rural school of about 156 students. In the past few years we have had to search for an elementary teacher, counselor, special education teacher, a music teacher, and an agriculture teacher. I want to share the difficulties we have faced as well as the measures we have taken to attract and keep staff.

For all of the above stated positions we had one applicant. For music I received the applicant by calling around to colleges and looking for graduates that would be interested in filling our opening for 2021-2022. For the agriculture position our leaving teacher put out feelers to find an interested candidate and because of that we got an applicant. For our special education position, we advertise for several months and found no one. I started to work with colleges to see if I could get one of my paraprofessionals certified as a teacher, but they were several years away. I also looked at contracting out services with our regional education association as desperation set in. We eventually got one applicant. The reference check on this applicant had red flags and brought concerns but being they were the only applicant we hired them with a hiring bonus. This has unfortunately not panned out and the individual is leaving our school mid-February. The elementary teacher position was luckily filled by a paraprofessional who was a licensed teacher who happened to live in the community. Though this worked out well, she was the only applicant again.

In addition to having difficulty even finding a candidate we have had to take measures to attract them to our small school. Two counselors ago we provided a tuition incentive program. The nature of this program was essentially, you work for us for three years and we pay up to \$2,000 towards your student loans or education bills. This was offered to our current agriculture teacher as well and for \$4,000 a semester. The agriculture teacher before worked for a year after our school help pay for their education. They paid back 66% as per the incentive program but we were unable to keep the teacher. The music teacher who joined us now as a paraprofessional and will be our music teacher in 2021-2022 was also provided a tuition incentive program.

As you can see we have trouble finding candidates and even when we do find candidates we often have to go to lengths to attract them to our school. Paying for education loans has not been 100% successful in retaining these teachers but it has helped us to keep those positions filled. The teacher shortage is pronounced in our rural communities and the administrators in these areas have to go to much greater lengths to keep qualified candidates than then had to 10 years ago.

Thank you for your time.

Daniel Ludvigson

The mission of the Elgin/New Leipzig Public School District is to provide a positive and safe environment that promotes lifelong learning to all individuals.