

## OAKWOOD CUSD 76

### The Challenge

Oakwood CUSD 76 has problems finding certified teachers to hire. It is a rural school between two larger, higher-paying districts.

### Strategic Local Investments

#### Strategy 1: Culture and Climate

Most importantly, we want to keep the teachers we have. We want to make sure they feel appreciated and valued, and we want to create a working environment that encourages candidates to choose Oakwood over a possibly higher-paying position in another school district. Satisfied staff are more apt to recommend us to others, serving as the best recruiters. We used grant funds for monthly meals to staff, free school lunches for staff, activities/games throughout the year, and a huge Staff Appreciation Week in May.

#### Outcomes

- Two long-term subs have chosen to be employed at Oakwood as they work toward their teaching degree because of the culture in our buildings.
- All staff who are working toward a degree have continued their employment with Oakwood in hopes to secure a certified position in the school district.

#### Strategy 2: Recruitment

We used grant funds on teacher recruitment activities, such as creating materials for job fairs and registering for the job fairs in our area. Job fairs give us an opportunity to showcase our climate and culture and the perks (e.g., mentors free lunches, paying certification fees, etc.) that distinguish us from other districts.

#### Outcomes

- Hired a full-time teacher for the English language arts position that was previously filled by a long-term sub. This was a direct result of the 15 resumes we collected at the Illinois State University job fair.

#### Strategy 3: Staff Support

Once we get new staff in the door, we need to make sure they have the support they need through mentors, reimbursement for classroom supplies, professional development books, etc.

#### Outcomes

- Grant funds pay for 12 mentors for new staff as well as our long-term subs. These mentors support new staff with learning software, procedures, curriculum, instruction, etc.
- All teachers received a new desk and chair to update classrooms and give teachers what they want.
- All teachers received a \$200 Amazon gift card to reimburse them for out-of-pocket expenses and to purchase items for their classrooms throughout the school year.



**\$185,075**