

The Effect Sound Field Amplification has on Teacher Vocal Abuse Problems

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During the 1994-95 school year approximately 56% of 141 Dubuque, Iowa public elementary school teachers reported that they typically suffer from vocal abuse/fatigue problems at least once each school year. Eighty five or 60% of these teachers had never used sound field amplification equipment. These teachers estimated that they took 59 sick days each school year because of vocal maladies (.7 sick days/teacher).

Fifty six or 40% of the teachers had experience using sound field classroom amplification equipment. Those teachers estimated that when they were without the amplification equipment they averaged 52 sick days/year because of voice, jaw, or throat problems (.93 sick days/teacher). But, when they had the use of the amplification equipment they estimated that they took only 19 sick days/year (.34 sick days/teacher). It should be noted that about half of the teachers in this subgroup had histories of chronic voice problems. Almost all of the teachers reported that the sound field amplification equipment was user friendly and made it easier for them to project their voice throughout their classrooms.

This data would suggest that an increased use of sound field amplification equipment would result in a substantial annual savings for the school district in substitute teacher pay. The Dubuque Community Schools currently employs approximately 650 full time teachers. Their substitute teacher pay is approximately \$62.00 per day. Every 12-14 sick days saved by the District would cover the cost of another classroom amplification system.