



Arlington
Public
Schools

Human Resources

BRIEFING REPORT

APRIL 2017





HUMAN RESOURCES

The Department of Human Resources works collaboratively with all stakeholders to provide service and support in a positive and proactive manner. Human Resources is committed to creating and sustaining desirable and rewarding employment opportunities for current and prospective staff. High-quality service, assistance, support from Human Resources positively impacts employee satisfaction. By helping to build meaningful and supportive relationships, Human Resources seeks to inspire and invigorate individuals to pursue avenues of professional development and growth. The Department of Human Resources focuses on maintaining a high level of responsiveness to the needs of all employees—past, present, and those to come.

Employee Assistance Program

The Arlington Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a comprehensive workplace program designed to identify and mitigate individual and organizational barriers to optimal employee productivity. The EAP develops and delivers services and resources to support the health and well-being of APS and the Arlington County Government employees. In addition to EAP core services, the staff is responsible for Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Department of Transportation (DOT) compliance, APS Wellness Initiatives, and crisis response for staff.

Major Services Provided

- Crisis response
- Employee counseling
- Employee engagement and retention activities
- Wellness program

Talent Acquisition & Management

The Office of Talent Acquisition and Management, along with Employment Processing, works collaboratively with all stakeholders to “Inspire Generations” by providing personal and customized service and support in a proactive and positive manner to recruit, select, develop, and retain a superior workforce. Leading a workforce initiative that focuses on recruiting, hiring, and investing in a high quality and diverse staff, increasing the pool and retention of highly effective employees, and recognizing the expertise of future leaders is the ultimate focus of Human Resources.

Major Services Provided

- Recruitment, selection, and retention engagement of all staff
- Monitoring staff licensure
- Manage staff performance evaluations

- Employment Processing: hiring and induction of new employees
- Collaboration with schools, departments, and offices to provide professional learning and scholarship opportunities
- Substitute management

Employee Benefits

APS employees are provided a variety of benefits, both mandatory and optional. The school division and the employee share the costs of most programs. The “employer costs” are budgeted and coordinated by HR.

Major Services Provided

Selection and administration of:

- Retirement Plans, including the Virginia Retirement System (VRS)
- Social Security
- Life Insurance
- Health and Dental Insurance
- Worker’s Compensation
- Unemployment Compensation
- Long-term Disability
- Flexible Benefits
- Long Term Care
- Transit Subsidies
- Housing Assistance

Payroll Services

The Payroll Office is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the payroll program including, but not limited to: disbursing semi-monthly payroll for all employees, reconciling payroll data, maintaining documentation to include leave records, taxation, and adherence and monitoring of federal and state tax laws, and year-end tax summaries and submission.

Major Services Provided

- Processing and management of semi-monthly payroll
- Time and attendance administration
- Taxation compliance

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS/PAYROLL, RELATIONS AND WELLNESS

Accomplishments and Celebrations

- APS employees in the VRS Hybrid Plan continued to increase their voluntary contributions to their retirement savings. Several joint retirement educational sessions were held to help employees learn the importance of saving for retirement and how to start making voluntary contributions.
- Coordinated the transition of APS School Board Cash Match Program to Supplemental Retirement Plan 403b/457b vendors to maximize employee investment savings.
- Achieved increased participation by employees in the EAP Winter Wellness Physical Activity event.

- Recognized APS timekeepers through a new awards program during the 2016-17 school year to acknowledge high performance and increase morale.
- Added several new benefits options for employees:
 - Parental Leave
 - Vision Plan
 - Increased availability of commuter subsidies to employees, consistent with our commitment to Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

What We Have Learned

With the increased use of technology throughout APS, we can leverage new employee communication strategies during Open Enrollment and throughout the year to raise employee awareness and understanding about the APS employee benefits program.

Benefits information needs to be provided using different technology formats including social media, and addressing the diverse employee population by increasing printed materials available in a variety of languages in addition to English.

Data on employee inquiries has revealed a need for increased access to employee benefits information. To meet this need, the Benefits Team will implement a new system and provide on-site employee benefits support for school-based staff. The Benefits Team is also currently working to improve the employee benefits orientation process to streamline the process for newly-hired staff to select and sign-up for benefits and ensure consistent messaging.

Moving Forward

- EAP will implement incentives for completion of employee health risk appraisals or annual physicals to improve health outcomes for members of our APS workforce.
- EAP will implement surveys for new clients to evaluate EAP impact on employee health and productivity.
- The Benefits Team will expand employee communication strategies for Open Enrollment and implement on-site meetings at schools throughout the school division to increase employee understanding of and participation in the benefits program.
- The Benefits Team is developing a 3-5 year plan to identify and monitor trends relative to benefit usage, including implementing creative strategies for employee communication materials. This plan will address increasing benefit costs while incorporating benefit strategies based on data obtained from the Compensation Study.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Accomplishments/Bright Spots/Celebration

- At the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, 95% of our teaching positions were filled to ensure every student began the school year with a highly qualified teacher.
- 82% of APS teachers have an advanced degree.
- APS consistently maintains a 98% rate of highly qualified teachers on the Instructional Personnel Report through the Virginia Department of Education.
- For the last two years, APS has held an annual High Needs Job Fair to recruit for "hard-to-fill" areas such as: ESOL/HILT, Special Education, Montessori, American Sign Language, Math, Science, Dual Endorsed, Bilingual, and Substitute Teachers.

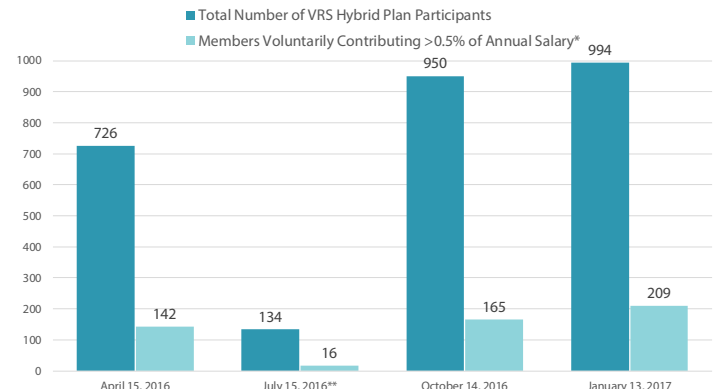
APS Assistant-to-Teacher Spotlight

Marlene Cordero is the first APS Counselor to graduate from the Assistant to Teacher Program. Marlene has worked for APS for the last 12 years as the Bilingual Family Resource Assistant at Gunston Middle School. She was selected to participate in the Assistant to Teacher Program in May 2012. After taking the required admission tests for grad school, and passing the official transcripts verification as an international student, she was accepted in the Master's of School Counseling Program at The George Washington University. Marlene graduated in May 2016, participating in a two-year accelerated cohort program. Marlene was hired by APS as a School Counselor at Gunston Middle School for the 2016-17 school year. "The Assistant to Teacher Program motivated me to challenge myself to reach my career aspirations and offered me the opportunity that I had pursued for years. The financial assistance, support and encouragement I received from the program were constant and important to me. The program has helped me to grow as a person and as a professional who wants to reach higher in life."



Data that Provides Insight

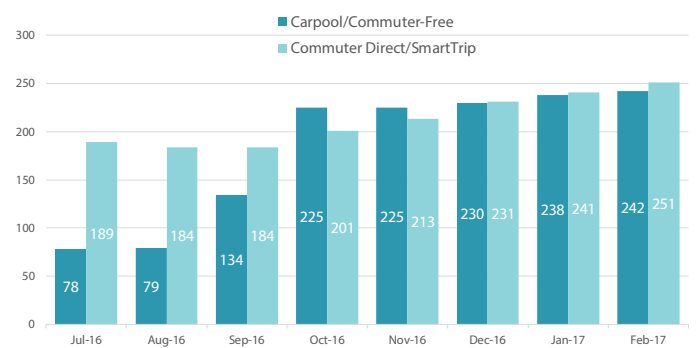
Increased participation in the Virginia Retirement Voluntary Hybrid Investment Plan



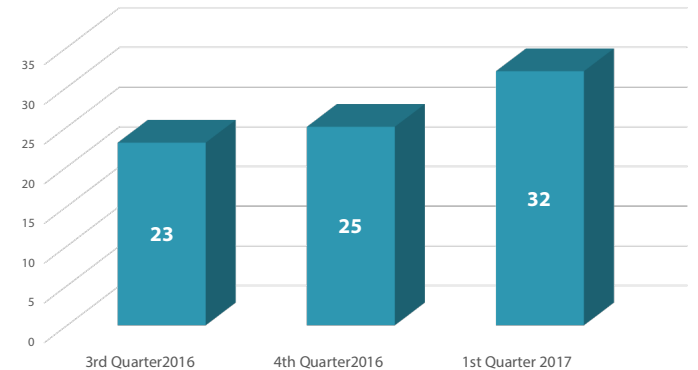
* First 0.5% Auto-Escalation went into effect January 1, 2017.

** For 10-month/11-month employees, VRS deductions are not processed during the summer break.

Increased participation in Employee Participation of Commuter Benefits Programs



Number of approved Paid Parental Leave Requests under APS' Family Medical Leave Policy for birth and/or adoption of children



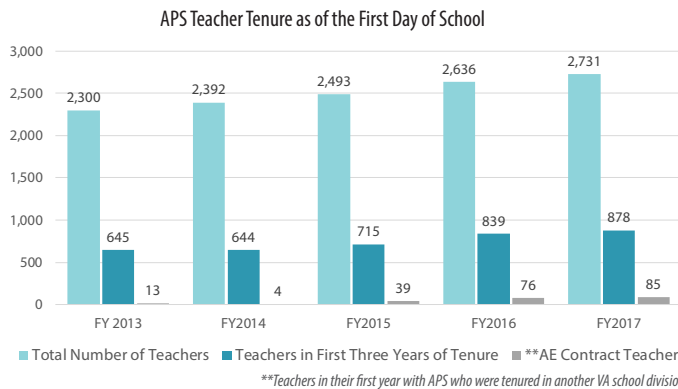
- During 2016-17, APS held its second Support Staff Job Fair to recruit Extended Day, Food Services, Maintenance, and Transportation positions.
- In its 5th year of existence, the Assistant to Teacher Program has supported over 125 participants. Assistants are provided with coursework analysis and planning to meet licensure requirements set forth by the Virginia Department of Education. Scholarships, mentoring, student teaching experiences as well as seminars on résumé writing and mock interviews are provided. Twenty-four graduates of this program have been hired in APS teaching positions to date. At the end of last year, the program yielded its first employee to obtain a Master's Degree in Counseling.
- APS continues to offer several cohort programs through local university partnerships that build staff capacity and support recruitment and retention efforts. In addition, these programs provide a pool of dual-endorsed teachers qualified to teach in high-needs areas to meet the unique needs of all students:
 - **Reading** – This cohort focuses on deepening the participants' knowledge of literacy to meet the specific needs of all children. The first cohort will be completed in the summer of 2018 and participants will receive a Master's Degree in Reading.
 - **ESOL/HILT** – The option provides training and opportunities to expand participants' knowledge of best practices to meet the diverse learning needs of English Language Learners with the end goal of helping students to achieve their fullest linguistic and academic potential. The first cohort will be completed in the summer of 2017 and participants will be eligible for an ESOL/HILT endorsement in addition to their current Virginia Department of Education license.
 - **Gifted and Talented** – This group accepts teachers on a rolling basis and allows them to engage in learning opportunities with teachers from neighboring school divisions. The focus is to prepare them to become Resource Teachers for the Gifted and to expand their current ability to meet the unique abilities, needs, interests and potential of all APS students.
 - **Special Education** – This opportunity provides teachers with opportunity chance to complete the coursework needed to add a Special Education endorsement to their current license. The coursework series will begin in summer of 2017 and will prepare a cadre of teachers to fill Special Education positions and receive additional instructional strategies to meet the unique needs of all of the students they currently support.

support, and overall job satisfaction. HR will collect and analyze data trends and develop programs to support retention of teachers and district-level leaders.

- The talent management team will work to develop programs that focus on succession planning, teacher leadership development and mentoring. In addition, the team will also focus on building a robust professional development catalog of offerings to address APS employee needs, both instructional and non-instructional. This work will also center on increasing diversity, which is at the heart of succession planning, and creating a strong leadership team. Recruitment efforts will focus on effective research-based marketing strategies, seamless on-boarding of employees and training programs to support entry into positions. Internal recruiters will be trained on strategies for developing a diverse workforce. Staff will also focus on analyzing data to determine trends that will support targeted recruitment efforts. Research shows that many of the top Fortune 500 companies recruit their new hires exclusively through employee referrals. This is a powerful recruitment tool that can only be achieved if current staff invite friends and colleagues to become part of APS because they feel valued and supported by their leaders and experience a healthy work-life balance.
- APS continues to be a market leader in teacher compensation, which supports our ability to recruit and retain a strong and talented teacher workforce. While efforts have built a strong foundation for recruiting a high-quality workforce, specifically the instructional staff, moving forward Human Resources will seek to:
 1. Expand on existing efforts that have a strategic focus on increasing partnerships for increasing diversity and inclusion strategies in hiring;
 2. Build a succession plan that promotes the growth of aspiring instructional leaders through an internal leadership development program;
 3. Increase social media presence which has become a highly valuable tool for recruitment; and
 4. Establish metric systems that will measure recruitment and retention efforts to drive data-based decisions. Captured metrics will support the development and implementation of a strong, data-based human capital strategic plan with emphasis on talent management and leadership growth from within.

What We Have Learned

- APS continues to have a stable teacher workforce. As the number of teachers increases over time, the number of new teachers to the profession and seasoned teachers from other Virginia school divisions is also increasing.



- The APS HR Department will continue to work towards developing a system that not only measures turnover rates, but identifies the trends that impact turnover. As a result, APS can use systematic data to determine next steps. Studies suggest that aside from retirement, other factors for leaving the profession are attributed to personal reasons, pursuit of different career opportunities, salary, leadership

Moving Forward

- Design and implement a 3-5 year comprehensive plan for addressing recruitment of a diverse and highly-qualified instructional workforce, which includes substitute management, is reflective of the APS student population, and positions APS to meet the division's future for instructional needs and personalized learning. The plan will also guide HR's work to review and assess a total compensation package that includes, but is not limited to, compensation, benefits and career advancement. These elements will have a direct impact on our ability to recruit and retain high-quality talent.
- Develop and implement a consistent, systematic online on-boarding process for all new employees.
- Collaborate with the Department of Instruction to develop a professional learning framework that enhances our workforce's professional growth opportunities, while continuing to focus on improving student learning and outcomes.

APS Teachers for Tomorrow Spotlight

The Department of Human Resources is partnering with the Department of Instruction to support APS high school students who would like to consider a career in education. The Teachers for Tomorrow Program is currently being offered at two of the comprehensive high schools and allows students to participate in internship opportunities at APS elementary schools and to be mentored by a classroom teacher.

Melat Tarekegn, a student in Wakefield's Teachers for Tomorrow program, along with Shaivy Mukherji, Wakefield High School Family and Consumer Science teacher, attended the 2017 Virginia Educators Rising Leadership Conference at Osborn High School in Manassas City. Melat participated in an individual event, "Children's Literature (K-3)" She wrote a children's book and presented it to a panel of educator judges which included APS staff Ruth Bilodeau from the Career Center and Vicki Taylor from the Office of Professional Development. APS is very proud that Melat represented Wakefield High School at this state event and is excited about her aspiration to become an educator!

