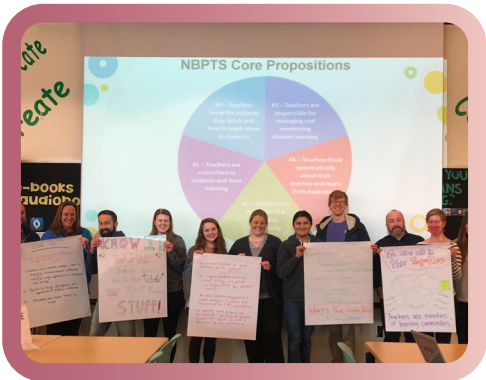


Professional Learning

BRIEFING REPORT



MAY 2020



Arlington
Public
Schools



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning opportunities in Arlington Public Schools are in place to improve student learning experiences and outcomes. Professional learning includes opportunities for individual development, team and school improvement, and program implementation of practices, curricula, and instructional strategies that APS has embraced as a school system. The Professional Learning Office (PLO) serves APS staff through supporting effective professional learning in APS. The services coordinated by this office include learning for teachers, assistants, administrators, and administrative support staff, as well as the coordination of and support for the Teacher Mentor Program, the Career Advancement Program, and university partnerships. The office also organizes and delivers in-service programs, workshops, seminars, and courses.

MAJOR SERVICES PROVIDED

- Coordinate county-wide professional learning and structures to support county-wide initiatives such as Administrative Conference, Professional Learning Communities, Professional Learning Days, Adaptive Schools, Cognitive Coaching, and Responsive Classroom.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate the provision for staff professional growth.
- Oversight and support for offices and schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating effective professional learning.
- Oversee the management of and assistance with the system (Frontline) that allows employees to register, record, and receive credit for workshops, courses, and training offered within APS.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate new educator orientation named "BASE Camp - Building and Supporting Educators".
- Equip veteran teachers with the knowledge and skills to provide each new teacher consistent, ongoing support during their first year of employment through the Mentor Program.
- Support teachers with an in-depth understanding of, and assistance with, the expectations and components of the APS knowledge and skills-based pay system for T-Scale staff to include CAP Portfolios I (local) and III (National Board Certification).
- Guide the work of the Instructional Lead Teachers (ILT) who are classroom teachers interested in serving in a leadership role. The PLO provides ILTs with enhanced opportunities to learn and grow and capitalizes on their skills and talents for the benefit of students. Areas of foci have been supporting the work of the DTL in professional learning communities, the Arlington Tiered System of Support (ATSS), and collaborative learning teams.
- Promote high-quality instruction through observation, feedback, and coaching cycles for teachers.
- In collaboration with Human Resources and Administrative Services created a framework for Administrator Competencies and led the development of professional learning for those competencies.
- In collaboration with Administrative Services, design Administrative Conference professional learning utilizing the newly developed Administrative Competency Framework.
- In collaboration with Human Resources and Administrative Services, provide support for evaluators and teachers in understanding the Teacher Performance Standards and the T-Scale evaluation process.
- Partner with universities to coordinate Field Placement Experience and Observations designed to provide students hands-on experience in best instructional practice..

BRIGHT SPOTS

The PLO partnered with Human Resources (HR) to develop a comprehensive plan to upgrade current IS systems which provides employees with an integrated **employee dashboard** allowing them to access the information, services, and PL needed during the lifecycle of their employment. These upgrades include seamless integration of the onboarding process, electronic contracts which replaced a paper version, professional learning and growth experiences, and substitute management. The PLO is coordinating the vetting of over 800 courses in the Frontline Resource Library to utilize as online learning opportunities for staff.

The PLO builds **awareness and communication about professional learning opportunities** utilizing the data in our single system of record. A new integrated system was brought online in March of 2020, Frontline Professional Learning Management (PLM). Prior to the new system, an area on the web page was created specifically for days of learning and early release days to summarize for participants, host schools, and administrators the learning activities on those days. The office continues to use the @APSLearns twitter account to highlight professional learning experiences.

In alignment with the APS commitment to retain highly qualified staff, the PLO manages the **Career Advancement Program (CAP)**. There are two opportunities in a teacher's career at APS to advance on the salary schedule based on demonstrated knowledge and skills. The CAP process recognizes a teacher's knowledge and skills and provides the opportunity to earn more in salary earlier in their career, leading to improved job satisfaction and retention. There continues to be growing interest in CAP. This year, 12 candidates were supported through the Local Portfolio process and 46 APS staff members have registered to attend a CAP overview session to learn more about the Local Portfolio option. In addition to the Local Portfolio, the PLO supports candidates who are pursuing National Board Certification through NBPTS. This school year, almost 80 teachers are being supported through the APS National Board support cohort during the 2019-2020 Assessment Cycle. At the end of 2019, 28 teachers had registered for the National Board Certification overview



to learn more about the incentives and support offered to candidates in our district. In the Spring of 2020, two options for the National Board Certification seminar were available to prepare teachers for their upcoming journey. The seminar is an important requirement to receive APS funding. Through the sessions, teachers learn about the extensive commitment to the process required and the incentives for pursuing National Board Certification.

Using the continuous improvement process, the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee met to reflect on the Career Advancement Program. In the most recent work, they collaborated and provided feedback about the eligibility forms and process for the Local Portfolio option. Based on the feedback from the group the Local Portfolio Eligibility applications for the classroom teacher and non-classroom teacher were combined into one application making the process more streamlined. Their work also resulted in aligning the language of the CAP Local Portfolio to the Professional Learning Framework and the updated Local Portfolio Manual.

To support APS in recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff, the PLO collaborates with HR to establish **university networks and partnerships**. PLO worked closely with HR and George Mason University (GMU) to develop an understanding of Field Experience and Student Teaching Placement within APS. GMU committed to bringing more field experience and student teaching applicants to the APS beginning in 2019-2020. Fall 2019-2020 brought seven field experience students from GMU, while in Spring 2019-2020, nine more GMU students were placed in APS. In addition, PLO was invited to take a more active role in collaborating with GMU and attended a Spring 2019 and Fall 2019 Early Childhood Education Advisory Council Meeting to help strategize ways to attract, support, and prepare George Mason undergraduate students for a career in education. This year, PLO initiated a revision of the Field Experience Placement Application. The new application process, in collaboration with HR, includes formal background checks and fingerprinting to ensure the safety of APS students and staff.

Based upon recommendations from the program evaluation and from the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee, in support of the system-wide goal of establishing a **single system of record for professional learning** for the APS





workforce, the PLO expanded the use of the online professional learning registration system to offices beyond Instruction. The PLO is in the process of training individuals in various offices to utilize the online professional learning registration system to advertise offerings, record registration, mark attendance, and conduct evaluation of professional learning offerings. In addition, school-based codes were utilized and school-based staff continue to be trained to manage the online professional learning registration system offerings for each building. This work has expanded the offerings entered and tracked via the online professional learning registration system. In addition, the PLO is excited about the improvements in the new system to include integration with Canvas, inclusion in single-sign-on, and a resource library.

The PLO is committed to supporting the creation of shared understanding and language of **effective professional learning** to include planning, implementation, and evaluation through the engagement of stakeholders. Instructional staff select offerings from the professional learning framework to enhance their practice.

The PLO implements **cognitive coaching strategies** by conducting planning, reflecting, and problem resolving conversations with schools and offices about supporting effective instruction through effective professional learning designs. These conversations result in building workforce capacity and more cohesive work. Nine cohorts, 358 participants, have completed the Cognitive Coaching Part I (days 1-4) seminar. A fifth cohort, 126 participants, has completed the second half (days 5-8) of the seminar. Participants provided evidence of implementation and impact on their practice via a follow-up survey (39 responses). 95% indicated they have implemented the strategies learned. The greatest areas of change in their practice are relationships, student or participant learning, and student/teacher/participant attitudes. 90% of respondents report student learning as being impacted. To build capacity a team of three staff engaged in the rigorous certification process to become agency facilitators.

In collaboration with the leadership in the Gifted Services, Social Studies, and Title I offices, fifteen cohorts have

completed the **Adaptive Schools** four-day seminar to support the effective facilitation of groups. This seminar provides leadership development in the “how” to lead effective groups, including collaborative learning teams. To increase our capacity to offer this seminar, two APS staff completed certification, and three are close to the completion of the extensive certification to be agency facilitators.

The PLO directly supports the work of **Instructional Lead Teachers (ILT)**. The work of the ILT focuses on supporting the initiatives of the DTL in the schools. The ILTs work on three goals: serving as a communication liaison between the Department of Teaching and Learning and schools, supporting the use of data with their schools, and providing feedback on the initiatives of the DTL. This year, all ILTs are engaged in the DTL area of focus in supporting school professional learning communities and effective professional learning.

The PLO is committed to supporting effective professional learning through **collaboration with other offices**. PLO works collaboratively with departments and schools to develop professional learning opportunities that are aligned with the Teaching and Learning Framework. These opportunities are offered to educators several times throughout the year, including BASE Camp, The Festival of the Minds (FOM) Professional Learning Conference, and APS Days of Learning. PLO helps to ensure that all professional learning opportunities offered on the Days of Learning are aligned with the APS Professional Learning Framework.

The PLO **prepares educators new to APS through the New Educator Orientation**. The event is a three-day comprehensive orientation designed to prepare educators new to APS for the first days and weeks on the job. Participating educators include teachers, counselors, psychologists, librarians, instructional specialists, attendance specialists, occupational

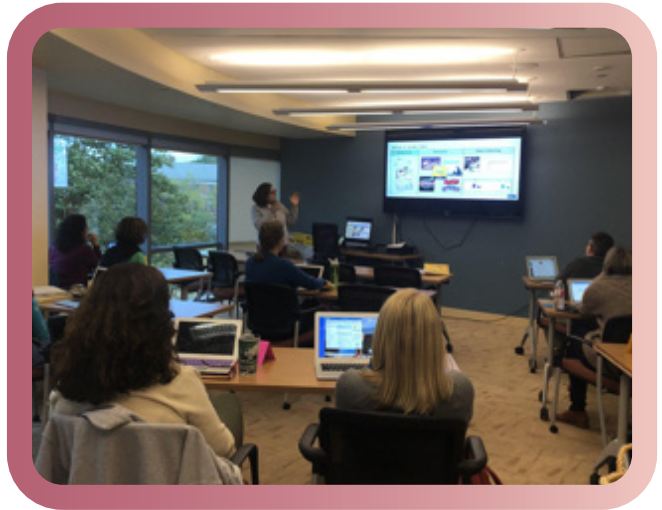


therapists, and physical therapists. The orientation, which occurred August 19 through 21, 2019, included content-based sessions on how to implement effective instruction. New educators also participated in four rotations to learn more about the following supports in Arlington: Special Education, Equity & Excellence, English Learners, and Mental Health. Along with receiving their devices on the first day, new educators learn about the APS system and structure, as well as system-wide support available to staff. In addition to the support provided during orientation week, APS educators new to teaching are assigned a trained mentor to provide ongoing support throughout the year. With the support provided, newly hired educators emerged from the orientation prepared for their first days of school, supported by colleagues as well as the school system.

Festival of the Minds professional learning conference occurs annually and provides sessions for all PreK-12 instructional staff to hone their instructional practice. At Festival of the Minds, APS staff share their knowledge, skills, and experiences as presenters and facilitators. This year's Festival was held in conjunction with our New Educator Orientation. The two events held in the same location at the same time provide a week of learning for the APS workforce. This week of learning incorporated choice in offerings as well as voice as APS staff apply to present.

The support and inservice days for **Instructional Assistants (A-Scale) and Administrative Assistants (G-Scale)** were incorporated into the August and October Days of Learning. 224 sessions were offered with 7,039 attendees. PLO collaborated with HR to offer opportunities during the October Day of learning for transportation staff around safety and best practice. In collaboration with HR, the PLO is in the second year of supporting pilot programs for Instructional Assistant professional learning. Swanson Middle School is in the second year of the program. In addition to continuing their work with the online modules, Swanson staff developed and hosted turn-around training during the February Early Release that they facilitated for new pilot schools - Barrett Elementary and Wakefield High School. Instructional Assistants at these schools, 84 in total, are working on the modules through the paid online subscriptions, as well as participating in the learning cycle with their administration and the training Instructional Assistants from Swanson. The PLO works to support these initiatives, serving as a liaison between the schools and the company providing the subscriptions. The PLO is also coordinating the development of our own APS modules to provide sustainable, job-relevant professional learning opportunities for Instructional Assistants.

Significant collaboration with HR has been focused on the **development of professional learning frameworks** for all staff. While in the past there has been a reference to THE or A (singular) professional learning framework, in actuality there is a need for several frameworks to guide the learning of all staff.



DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT

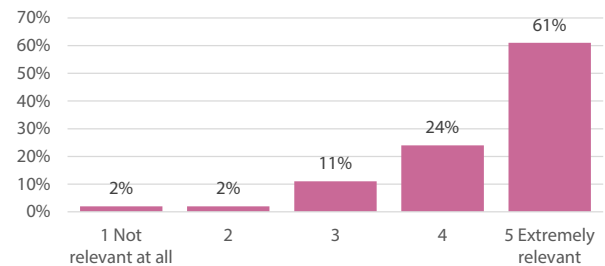
- Coordinated the offerings for the two days of learning with **224 sessions offered with 7,039 attendees.**
- The 2018 Your Voice Matters survey results showed that 33% responded favorably to the relevance of the professional learning whereas 85% responded favorably in the activity feedback form. The **2020 Your Voice Matters survey** included some changes to the professional learning questions to better analyze the data. The preliminary results showed an increase to **48% responding favorably to the relevance of school-based offerings and to 42% responding favorably to the relevance of central-office based professional learning.** G (100%), C (100%), P (93%), and X (71%) scales responded most favorably to the relevancy of the school-based sessions with lower ratings from T (49%) and A (43%) scales. X (76%), P (60%) and M (53%) scales responded most favorably to the relevance of central-office based sessions with lower ratings from the other scales: C (43%), T (42%), A (37%), E (33%), G (32%), and D (25%).
- Trained **113 new teacher mentors.**
- A total of **243 mentors were assigned to new teachers** for the 2019-2020 school year.
- 106 mentors of new educators**
- 137 mentors of experienced but new-to-APS educators**
- A **new Canvas course** was created to help support newly trained mentors. The course included four modules: Phases of New Teacher Development, Peer Observation, The Mentoring Continuum, and Coaching; and provided new mentors with the opportunity to practice coaching their mentees to work toward building capacity in our new educators.
- An online Canvas course was utilized for new educators that provided resources to help support them with licensure, leave, STAN, and information from **New Educator Orientation.** It also provided announcements and updates to help support them with required responsibilities throughout the year.
- Updated seven modules** to support new and experienced evaluators with the elements of the T-Scale evaluation process and provided face-to-face sessions throughout the year.
- Supporting **80 National Board candidates.**
- 18 T-Scale employees earned National Board Certification.**
- 9 T-Scale employees renewed their National Board Certification.**
- In partnership with local and regional universities, the PLO successfully **placed 62 field experience students** in the Fall of 2019 with APS classroom teachers.

2019-20 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

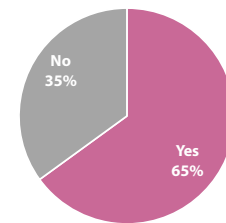
Continued use of the **activity feedback form** provides insight into the professional learning offerings. The second question is from Gallup, as part of their Net Promoter Score analysis of organizations, and serves as a research-based predictor of how attendees will discuss the session. While scores vary across different industries, an NPS of +50 is generally deemed excellent, and anything over +70 is exceptional (Amaresan, Swetha. "What Is a Good Net Promoter Score?." HubSpot. Retrieved 2/1/2019.)

1,186 sessions, 17,513 responses, 21,077 attendees (83% response rate)

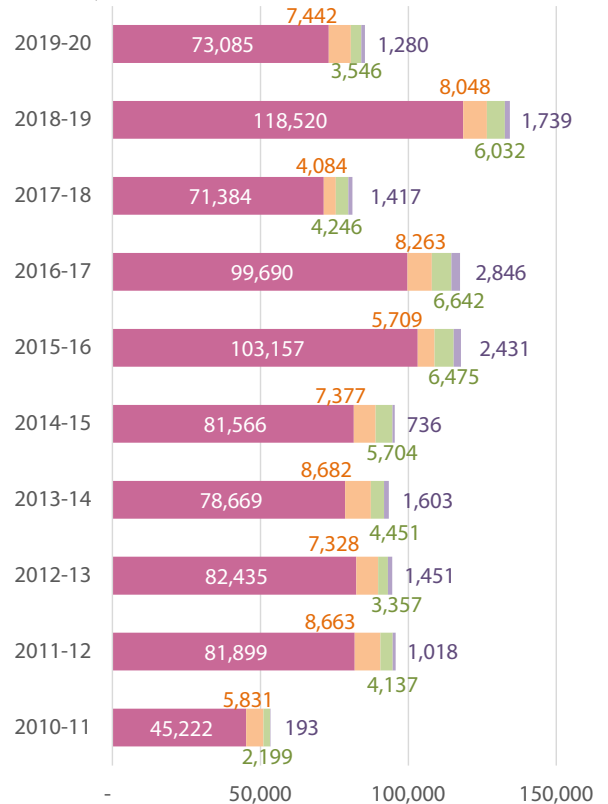
How relevant was this offering to your work?



Have you implemented any strategies from the offering into your practice?



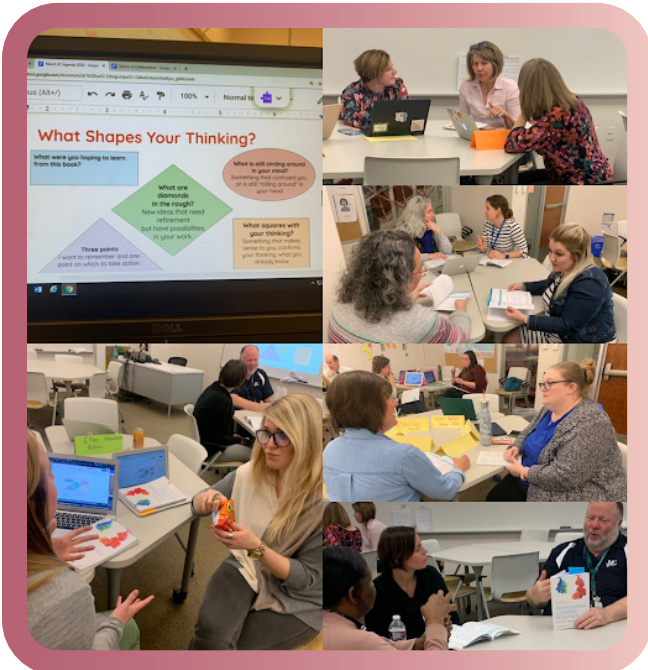
Total Hours of Professional Learning Recorded in ERO by Scale





WHAT WE LEARNED

APS is committed to engaging all staff in effective high-quality professional learning. This includes several considerations that impact long-range planning. To address the needs of adult learners, professional learning must be goal-driven and provide opportunities for meaningful work. APS acknowledges the varied experience and expertise staff bring to any new learning. The creation of goal-oriented competency-based professional learning through professional learning frameworks provides opportunities for autonomy in acquiring new knowledge and skills. The identification of accurate competencies for all scales is an essential part of this process and necessitates collaboration with many stakeholders and departments. The professional learning frameworks will allow staff to have control over their learning through varied opportunities while providing a clear purpose for the learning. In addition, effective collaboration with all departments is essential to the work.



MOVING FORWARD

The PLO will continue its work driven by vision, core competencies, and services. The creation and implementation of professional learning frameworks for all scales guide the learning for all staff in APS in a coherent, cohesive manner.

The PLO will continue to support APS staff in learning how to use the new Professional Learning Management System, Frontline. The PLO will continue to explore and master new ways to maximize the use and functions of this system to support the needs of all staff.

The PLO will continue to create courses and collaborate with departments to ensure that APS staff members have access to professional learning in a variety of ways, prioritizing effective strategies and tools for distance learning. The PLO continues to model the use of Canvas for professional learning, which familiarizes educators with these platforms to also utilize in their own classrooms for virtual teaching and learning. Given the recent global pandemic, the importance of having access to high-quality professional learning remotely is even more evident. In addition, the PLO will utilize the open text responses to the 2020 Your Voice Matters survey question, "What additional professional learning opportunities do you need?," to guide the topics of professional learning offered in the future.

