

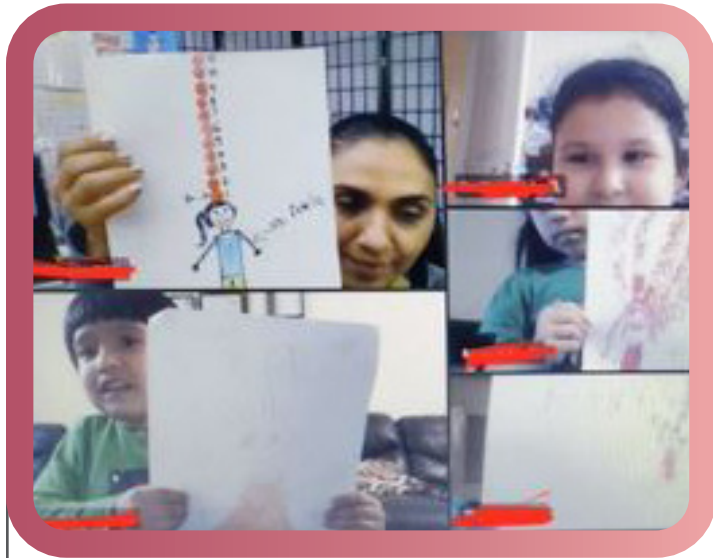


Arlington  
Public  
Schools



# Professional Learning BRIEFING REPORT

APRIL 2021



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# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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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 instructional staff through supporting effective professional learning. 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, Instructional Lead Teachers, 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 of instructional 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 the expectations and components of the APS knowledge and skills-based pay system for T-Scale staff to include Career Advancement Program (CAP) APS Local Portfolio and 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

### FRONTLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The PLO builds awareness and communication about professional learning opportunities utilizing the data in our single system of record. A new integrated system was launched in March of 2020, Frontline Professional Learning Management (PLM). The PLM dashboard displays data aligning the professional learning with APS Strategic Plan Goals. 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 offerings for each building. This work has expanded the offerings entered and tracked via the PLM. In addition, the improvements in the new system include integration with Canvas, inclusion in single-sign-on, and a resource library.

As trained staff propose activities in Frontline, they indicate the format of the activity. To date there have been 1,440 activities categorized in the following formats:

Activity Formats	Count
CLTs / Team Meetings	13
Coaching / Mentoring	7
Curriculum / Lesson Development Projects	13
Internal Meetings / Committee Work	10
Online Activity	938
Peer Observation	1
Professional Learning	337
Training	121
Total	1,440

Professional learning activities in Frontline PLM are aligned to the strategic plan goals. One activity may be aligned with multiple goals. Below is the summary of the Frontline dashboard data:

Strategic Plan Goal	Activities Completed	Number of Employees Engaged in Activities Aligned with this Goal	Total Hours of Learning Aligned with this Goal
Student Success	23,198	4,149	46,832
Student Well-Being	12,411	5,582	24,183
Engaged Workforce	36,591	5,167	88,440
Operational Excellence	9,115	4,560	37,595
Partnerships	3,677	1,998	5,871

In the dashboard data graph, the blue bar shows the number of activities completed. The purple line is the number of employees that have engaged in each goal for the school year. The green line is the number of hours of learning completed related to the goal for the school year.



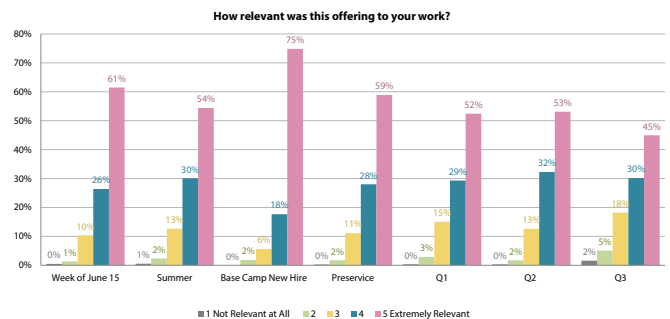
The PLO continues to learn the PLM system, analyze the data for reporting purposes, and understand the breadth of reporting available. In addition, the use of the Resource Library was pivotal in being able to offer self-paced, pre-recorded offerings throughout the year. The PLO is coordinating the vetting of over 800 courses in the Frontline Resource Library to utilize as online learning opportunities for staff. Of the 1,440 total activities offered since July 2021, 808 utilize the resource library to link to resources. A total of 93,288 hours of recertification hours and 3,364 training hours have been earned.

In addition to a virtual Frontline administrator/proposer training course, the PLO continues to support staff with Frontline functions. The PLO hosts weekly open office hours and sends a “tip of the week” for DTL staff.

### 2020-21 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

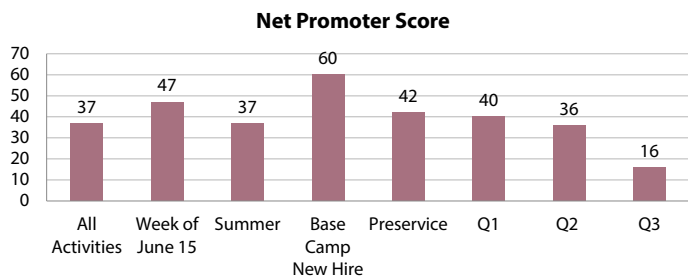
With 37,502 activities marked complete we have 19,843 evaluations responses from meeting and learning evaluations; a 53% response rate.

Continued use of the activity feedback form in Frontline provides insight into the professional learning activities. This provides leading indicator data on the relevance of APS professional learning offerings. We analyze two of the questions from the evaluation district-wide. The data from the first question, “How relevant was this offering to your work?”, shows that overall 85% of respondents rated the activity as 4 or 5 extremely relevant (same as last year). The graph below shows the ratings sorted out by events - the week of learning June 15, 2020, Summer, Base Camp- New Educator Orientation, Preservice, Q1, Q2, and Q3.



The second question “On a scale of 1-10, how likely is it that you would recommend this activity to a friend or colleague?” is based on the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and serves as a research-based predictor of how attendees will discuss the session. If participants had a positive experience and found it helpful, they are more likely to recommend the activity to a friend or colleague. Promoters are those who give a score between 9-10. They are loyal customers who will recommend offerings to colleagues. Passives are those who give a score between 7-8. They are relatively satisfied. They wouldn’t go out of their way to recommend the activity. Detractors are those who give a score between 0-6. They are dissatisfied customers who may damage your brand reputation by providing negative feedback or spreading negativity through word-of-mouth.

Ultimately, the NPS is the difference between the percentage of promoters and percentage of detractors. Keep in mind that this feedback is likely focused on the content of the activity rather than the delivery. While scores vary across different industries, the NPS can range from -100 to +100, an NPS of +50 is generally deemed excellent, and anything over +70 is exceptional ([Amarean, Swetha. “What Is a Good Net Promoter Score?”. HubSpot. Retrieved 3/19/2021.](#))



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, APS utilized the week of June 15 as a week of professional learning for teachers to learn new skills to teach virtually. DTL offered 184 offerings and 8,183 attendees completed the activities. Based on feedback from Instructional Lead Teachers (ILTs), the PLO made a significant contribution to the organization of the offerings as well as provided the guidance to support teachers sharing their technology triumphs, recording the sessions, and offering them as self-paced, pre-recorded offerings throughout the year. Teachers were encouraged to identify areas of need and select sessions to address their individual needs for preparing for virtual instruction. In addition, the PLO worked with Student Services to design and implement a required 3 hour self-paced course for all school-based staff about trauma sensitive schools. The PLO worked with DTL to identify areas of need for activity topics, such as distance learning, equity and SEL, to be responsive to teacher and student needs. Activities during the week of June 15 had a NPS of 47 and a relevancy rating of 87% of participants rating the session a 4 or 5 (5=extremely relevant to their work).

For the first time, DTL offered 177 summer activities as the district offered options for the new two floating days of professional learning and one floating day for compliance training in T-Scale contracts with 5,017 attendees completing the activities. In addition, the PLO staff implemented and managed approvals for the “Out of District Professional Learning” form in Frontline. Staff complete the form to request out-of-district professional learning to be added to their frontline transcript. The summer activities had a NPS of 37 and a relevancy rating of 84% rating the session a 4 or 5 (5=extremely relevant to their work).

### BASE CAMP

**BASE Camp**, formerly New Educator Orientation was rebranded in 2020 and launched for the first time on August 18, 2020. The rebranding was used as an opportunity to bring the focus of orientation back to new educators, as opposed to including all educators through Festival of the Minds (FOM). BASE Camp focused on implementing feedback from 2019 new educators, to help ensure that all new educators have access to what they need to be successful within APS.

BASE Camp took place August 17th - August 21st, with device distribution occurring the week prior, as well as open office hours to support any technology needs prior to BASE Camp. 212 new educators RSVPd for BASE Camp 2020. Educators had the opportunity to pick up their devices the week prior to BASE Camp so that they could attend all sessions virtually. Any educator who was not able to pick up their device was still able to participate in all Microsoft Teams sessions, with the only limitation being participation in the Canvas course due to myaccess@APS.

During the week of August 17th, new educators APS participated in a variety of sessions, some focused specifically on learning more about APS and the platforms utilized within the county, while others were more content



or grade-level specific. All new educators participated in the Welcome Ceremony and follow-up activities, Trauma-Sensitive Schools, and a Canvas course featuring APS-specific guidance on Equity, Special Education, English Learners, and Gifted Services. Educators also had the opportunity for a virtual lunch with their school administrators as well as a school-based information session. For the remainder of the week, participants engaged in a variety of sessions including sessions that were specific to their content area, as well as training on platforms such as Synergy and Canvas.

BASE Camp 2020 agendas include the following educator groups: Electives, Elementary General Education, Secondary General Education, Special Education, and Student Services. After BASE Camp was complete, all participants were sent a survey to fill out related to their experiences at BASE Camp. The survey was completed by 65% of BASE Camp participants.

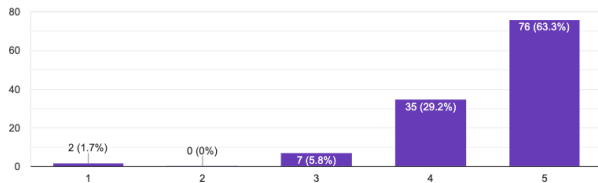
The Base Camp activities had a NPS of 60 and a relevancy rating of 75% rating the session a 4 or 5 (5=extremely relevant to their work)- the highest rated activities of the year.

When asked how relevant the required content sessions were:

- 63.3% of participants responded extremely relevant
- 29.2% responded very relevant
- 5.8% said helpful
- 1.7% said not relevant

How relevant were the content based required sessions during BASE Camp (sessions with your supervisor or department)?

120 responses



**PRESERVICE**

Arlington Public Schools incorporated two full weeks of preparation for staff to begin the 20-21 school year. DTL offered a variety of sessions that addressed specific skills staff needed to be prepared to support students in an unprecedented school year. The priority was to focus on how to successfully execute virtual instruction, from the basics to the more advanced techniques.

In collaboration with DTL Offices, PLO coordinated learning sessions (some live, some recorded, some self-paced) about Microsoft Teams, Equity, and responsive teaching, pedagogy for the virtual setting, tools within Canvas, mastering virtual education tools (Nearpod, Flipgrid, screen capturing), and content-specific training on new resources. The PLO also helped coordinate and support the districtwide Health and Safety Training.

A total of 50,445 “seats” in 267 sessions were offered during those two weeks for a total of 18,243 hours of professional learning completed by all scale types. Teachers and Instructional Assistants completed 18,017 of those hours. The preservice activities had a NPS of 42 and a relevancy rating of 87% rating the session a 4 or 5 (5=extremely relevant to their work).

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

With the Frontline system, a quarterly calendar was established for professional learning. The data remains fairly steady and favorable for Q1 and Q2 with a significant decline in Q3. In quarter 3 there was required professional learning for all teachers to prepare for the concurrent hybrid model. The “requiredness” left many feeling like their individual needs were not met in addition to many questions about the model as it was still in development.

PL Activities	Net Promoter Score	Relevancy	# of Self Paced Activities	# of Live Activities
Q1	40	81%	190	29
Q2	36	85%	131	14
Q3	13	75%	148	28

As identified in the APS calendar, A-Scale staff members participated in a Day of Learning in February. A-Scale staff members were provided with an organizer template designed by the PLO to plan their learning and were able to choose from a variety of offerings that supported learning within the district’s strategic plan goals, including sessions for supporting Students with Disabilities and English Learners. Additionally, staff were able to choose from sessions that help prepare them for supporting students in the hybrid learning environment. A-Scale staff members were engaged in 13 different sessions throughout the day, for a total of over 1,230 seats confirmed attended. 85% of staff rated their sessions to be “Extremely Relevant”, while 15% rated their session to be “Somewhat Relevant”. A-Scale staff continue to have access to many professional learning opportunities offered throughout the school year in Frontline PLM. The A-Scale activities had a NPS of 26 and a relevancy rating of 74% rating the session a 4 or 5 (5=extremely relevant to their work).

**CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM**

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 APS Local Portfolio and National Board Certification. 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 the Local Portfolio option. In the 2019-2020 school year, 7 T-scale staff members successfully earned a distinguished level of achievement from the evaluation panels, with 100% of respondents evaluating the support cohort as “extremely relevant” to their work. This year, 13 candidates are being supported through the Local Portfolio process and 27 APS staff members attended CAP overview sessions to learn more about the Local Portfolio option.

In addition to the Local Portfolio and as the second option of CAP, the PLO supports candidates who are pursuing National Board Certification through NBPTS. In December 2020, 25 teachers certified and 2 teachers renewed their certification. These teachers were recognized at the March 25 school board meeting. This school year, almost 40 teachers are being supported through the APS National Board support cohort during the 2020-2021 Assessment Cycle, as well as 20 teachers who are being supported through the National Board renewal cohort. This school year, 31 teachers attended the National Board Certification overview sessions to learn more about the incentives and support offered to candidates in our district, with 100% of respondents evaluating the session as “extremely relevant” to their work. In the Spring of 2021, the PLO implemented a hybrid National Board Seminar to help prepare 28 teachers for their upcoming journey in the 2021-2022 school year. 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.

## MENTOR PROGRAM

Each year, brand new educators, as well as experienced but new to APS educators, have the opportunity to be paired up with a current APS educator who will serve as their mentor. Brand new educators receive a full-year mentor, while experienced but new to APS educators receive a half-year mentor.

Educators are recommended by their supervisor to serve as mentors. Each year, around 100 new mentors are trained. Newly recommended mentors participate in Mentor Training

I and Mentor Training II, for a total of 6 hours of training. Mentor Training I is a Canvas course integrated with Nearpod, that provides an overview of the mentor program, mentor requirements and responsibilities, teacher retention, and the phases of a first-year educator. It also reviews language of support when coaching and the importance of pausing and paraphrasing. Mentor Training II goes into further depth regarding the phases of first-year educators and offers mentors more opportunities to learn about and practice coaching with their mentee.

Those who have mentored previously do not need to retake Mentor Training I and II. However, they are required to complete the Mentor Refresher Training every five years to continue their status as an active mentor.

In 2020, Superintendent Dr. James Lane announced a grant that would work to support new teachers in the state of Virginia. The APS Mentor Program worked with James Madison University (JMU) to bring this support to APS. JMU has identified current highly effective teachers and coaches within Virginia to help support and mentor educators in their first, second, or third year of teaching. These mentors have been trained in the six standards of professional practice and are working closely with 96 APS teachers to support them in a variety of ways including detailed and specific feedback on videos of their teaching.

## TEACHER EVALUATION

The Professional Learning Office continues to support the Teacher Evaluation process. This year, to help scaffold the documentation of staff professional learning, the PLO revised the Standard 6 form. The revisions provided a more detailed template for staff to complete with dates to reflect the new floating PL days included in teacher contracts. To support this change, the PLO released a sample video of a Beginning of Year SMART Goal conversation, to include the revised template. The PLO also presented the new template at an administrative council meeting. The PLO, in collaboration with HR, also hosted an open “Q&A session” for administrators to drop in with questions. This collaboration continued throughout the fall regarding teacher and administrator inquiries about SMART Goal flexibility for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Teacher Evaluation**  
Standard 6 Updates for the 2020-2021 School Year

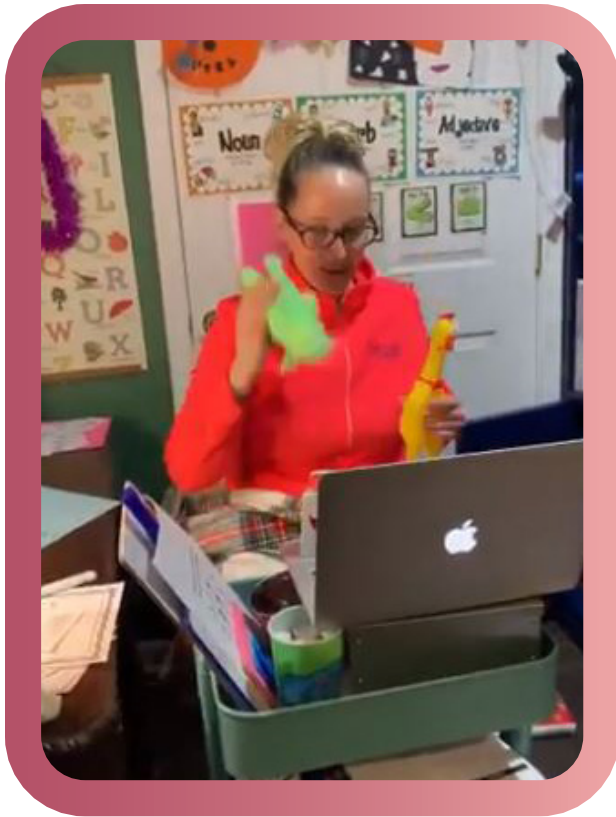
**Revised Standard 6 Form**  
Click the photo above to access the revised Standard 6 form via Google Docs.

**BOY Conversation Example**  
Click to watch an example of a Beginning of Year SMART Goal conversation with the PLP.

**What updates were made?**  
The Standard 6 template was updated to include a Professional Learning Plan (PLP).

**Why was Standard 6 updated?**  
The PLP will help facilitate conversations between staff and their evaluator about their plans for Professional Learning.

**Where can I learn more?**  
Our [APS Teacher Evaluation](#) website has several resources available for you to access for additional support.



### INSTRUCTIONAL LEAD TEACHERS

The PLO directly supports the work of Instructional Lead Teachers (ILT). Each school selects a teacher to be the school's ILT. ILTs receive a stipend for the additional leadership role in their building. The ILTs work on three goals: serving as a communication liaison between the DTL 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 schools in teaching virtual and in hybrid models and they provided valuable input to DTL on teacher and student needs.

### COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT OF OTHER OFFICE'S WORK

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, Administrative Conference, A-Scale Professional Learning Day, and APS Days of Learning. In addition, PLO collaborated with Human Resources and Finance to support instructional technology tools training for substitute teachers and repurposed extended day staff.

The PLO implements Cognitive Coaching and Adaptive Schools strategies by conducting planning, reflecting, and problem resolving conversations with department colleagues, schools, and offices about supporting effective instruction through effective professional learning designs. These conversations result in building workforce capacity and more cohesive work. While there were no new cohorts this year, the

PLO staff utilized the skills of coaching, planning, reflecting, and problem resolving conversations with various offices, staff, and schools.

Highlights of this work include the PLO team working with leadership teams to support their planning. The PLO supported an elementary school to develop an instructional focus for the 2021-2022 school year and DTL leadership in planning and facilitating several stakeholder groups to inform decision-making. In both cases, the PLO collaborated with the leadership team to develop the meeting agendas, data gathering, and analysis. The work is ongoing and the end result will be decisions aligned with stakeholder feedback and the district's mission and vision.

Members of the PLO team are also working closely with the DTL Equity and Excellence Office in the Cultivating Genius Cohort. This work will help bring an equity focus to the APS curriculum and the PLO team plans to reinforce this knowledge and understanding by finding ways to integrate the equity work into their office programs as well.

### YOUR VOICE MATTERS DISTRICT WIDE SURVEY DATA

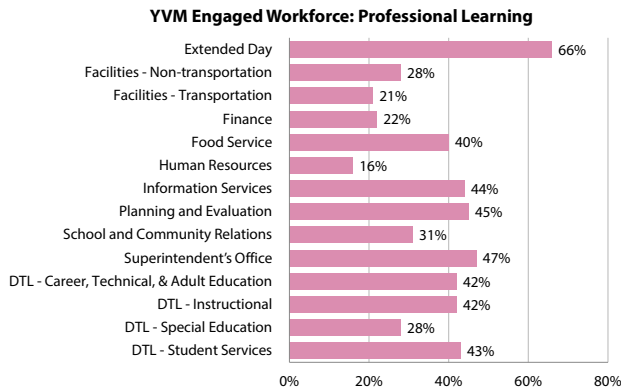
The Your Voice Matters (YVM) survey collects overall professional learning feedback from staff every two years (8 questions). The 2018 results showed that 33% of staff responded favorably to the relevance of professional learning whereas 85% of participants responded favorably in the specific activity feedback form. The 2020 YVM results showed an increase to 49% responded favorably to the relevance of school-based offerings. P (92%), and X (69%) scales responded most favorably to the relevancy of the school-based sessions with lower ratings from T (49%) and A (43%) scales. 42% of staff responded favorably to the relevance of central-office-based professional learning. X (76%), P (60%), and M (51%) 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%).

PL Question	% favorable
How relevant are the school-based professional learning opportunities to your work?	49%
How relevant are the Central Office-based professional learning opportunities to your work?	42%
How much input do you have in the professional learning opportunities available to you?	24%
How much has the professional development you've received at your school/APS improved your students' achievement?	38%
Overall, how well does school-based professional learning meet your needs?	40%
Overall, how well does Central Office-based professional learning meet your needs?	37%
How likely are you to recommend school-based professional learning to a colleague?	33%
How likely are you to recommend the Central Office-based professional learning to a colleague?	30%

When the engaged workforce section of the YVM survey (Strategic Plane Goal: Engaged Workforce Objectives 11 and 5) is analyzed by the department, the professional learning set of questions yields more insight into the satisfaction of

staff with the professional learning offered. The PLO will use this as baseline data in their future work in supporting each department. The four analyzed are:

1. How relevant are the Central Office-based professional learning opportunities to your work?
2. How much input do you have in the professional learning opportunities available to you?
3. Overall, how well does Central Office-based professional learning meet your needs?
4. How likely are you to recommend the Central Office-based professional learning to a colleague?



## DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT

- Trained 84 new teacher mentors.
- Assigned 256 mentors to new teachers for the 2020-2021 school year.
  - 108 mentors of new educators
  - 148 mentors of experienced but new to APS educators
  - 96 new teachers paired with current highly effective teachers and coaches within Virginia to support them in a variety of ways in collaboration with JMU (grant funded)
- Supported 70 National Board initial candidates and renewal candidates.
- 25 T-Scale employees earned National Board Certification.
- 2 T-Scale employees renewed their National Board Certification.
- Supported 42 Instructional Lead Teachers

## 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.

Through the APS reorganization as of July 1, the PLO will move from DTL to Human Resources and is charged with creating systematized frameworks, structures, calendars, and processes for professional learning for all staff. The PLO has planned a "listening" tour/interview for all departments during April, 2021 as well as a districtwide PL needs assessment that will be conducted in collaboration with Planning and Evaluation. This data as well as the YVM survey data by department will guide the PL priorities for future work and planning.

## MOVING FORWARD

The PLO will continue its work driven by vision, core competencies, and services. The repositioning of the PLO in HR will expand the work of the office to include learning needs assessments, creation of structures, processes, calendars, and programs for all staff learning. The creation and implementation of professional learning frameworks for all scales will 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 PLM, 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 effective professional learning in a variety of ways.

*"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow."*

-Anthony J. D'Angelo

