

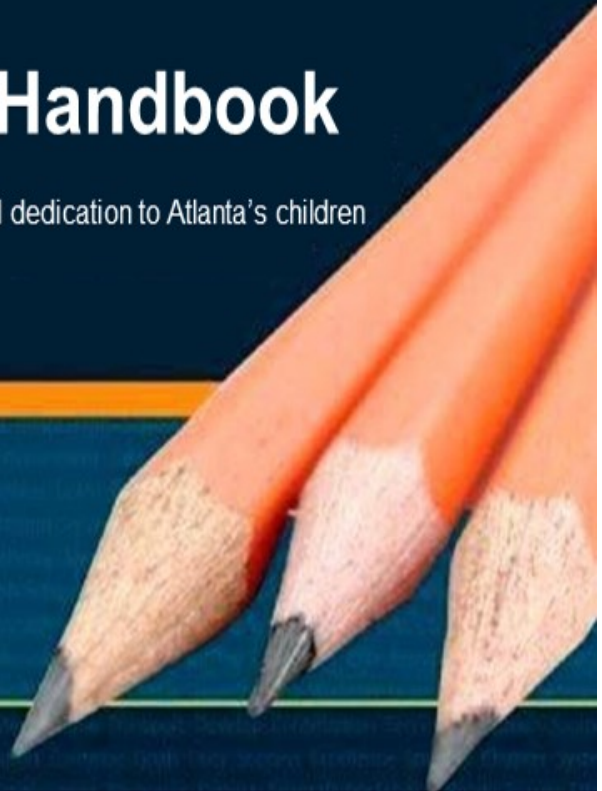


ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

2021 - 22

Employee Handbook

Thank you for your service and dedication to Atlanta's children



Welcome

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year with Atlanta Public Schools!

Thank you in advance for your service and dedication to Atlanta's children and Atlanta Public Schools. We are continuing our journey toward becoming a system that is one of the nation's top performing urban school districts in which all students will become lifelong learners equipped with the appropriate skills and competencies to be contributing members of society.

Whether your contribution is in the classroom, in transporting or feeding students so they are ready to learn, in ensuring clean and safe learning environments, or in managing District resources, *your* efforts are critical to achieving our shared goal. Although our job descriptions may vary, our focus is the same: student success.

With your continued dedication and support, we will move closer to the goal of excellence in all that we do for students every day in every classroom throughout the district.

UPDATES FOR 2021-2022

Required Online Ethics Training for All Employees

All employees will again be required to complete the annual online training on ethics and professional standards at APS. This year's course, titled "Ethics Elite Squad: Spreading Core Values throughout the Galaxy" is presented with a space cadet theme. **Training must be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of hire for all new hires. All other employees must complete their annual Ethics Training by Friday, December 3, 2021, as a condition of continued employment.** Check your APS email and the training link, [MyPLC](#), for more details. Completion of the annual training is mandatory for all employees. Failure to complete the training by the deadline will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Additional updates for the 2021-2022 School year include the following:

- Creation of the Equity and Social Justice Center (**See pages 7-8**)
- Face Mask Requirement (**See page 14**)
- Employee COVID-19 Guidance (**See pages 22- 24**)
- Paid Parental Leave (**See pages 25- 26**)
- Teacher Evaluation Appeals (**See pages 29-30**)

Table of Contents

Welcome	1
UPDATES FOR 2021-2022	1
Required Online Ethics Training for All Employees	1
Introduction	5
About This Handbook	5
About APS	6
Administration	6
Atlanta Board of Education	6
Equal Employment Opportunity	7
Our Shared Values	7
Ethics	7
Center for Equity & Social Justice	7
Reporting Violations and Whistleblower Protection	8
Corporal Punishment	8
Drug-free Workplace	9
Smoking	9
Falsification of Records	9
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation	9
Sexual Misconduct & Harassment	9
Child Abuse and Neglect	11
Supervision of Students	11
Employee Organizations	11
Complaints & Due Process	12
Complaint Policy Purpose	12
What is a Complaint/Grievance?	12
Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance	12
Policy Exclusions	12
Beginning Employment at APS	13
Required Documents	13

Email	13
Working at APS	13
Work Year	13
Workday Schedules & Punctuality	14
Emergency Closings	14
Dress Code	14
Face Mask Requirement	14
Records Management/Retention	15
Retention Schedule	15
Open Records	16
Subpoenas	16
Legal Holds	16
Electronic Media Usage	16
Social Media Usage	17
Unauthorized Tape Recordings	17
Infectious Diseases	17
Weapons	18
Care of Your APS Work Environment	18
Arrests and Convictions	18
Pay & Benefits	19
Pay Dates	19
Paid Holidays	19
Direct Deposit	19
Payroll Deductions	19
Salary Level	19
Summer Salary	19
Enrollment of Employees' Children in APS	20
Credit Unions	20
Supplemental Retirement Savings	20
Annual Benefits Open Enrollment	20
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	20

Medical Flex Plan	21
Insurance and Fringe Benefit Choices	21
Workers’ Compensation	21
Retirement	21
COVID-19 Employee Guidance	22
Return from Domestic and International Travel	22
Quarantine Guidance	22
Reporting Requirements	24
Leaves of Absence	24
Sick Leave/ Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	24
Timeshare Sick Leave Bank	25
Paid Parental Leave (PPL)	25
Workplace Accommodations	26
Personal Leave	26
Annual Leave/Vacation	27
Bereavement Leave	27
Educational Leave	28
Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave	28
Jury Duty	28
Leave for Employee Peer Advisory Representatives	29
Disputes Regarding Leave Balances	29
Your Personnel Records	29
Annual Evaluation	29
Teacher Evaluation Appeals	29
Learning Management Systems	30
Change in Job Status	30
Change in Personal Status	31
Reduction in Force	31
Records to Retain after Separation	31
Confidentiality and Access to Personnel Records	31
Employment Verification	31

Ending Employment with APS	32
Retirement	32
Resignation	32
Separation Process	33
Separation Steps	33

Introduction

About This Handbook

The *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* is designed to communicate and reiterate certain APS policies and procedures. The most current version of the *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* can be found in PDF format on the district website. This document is current as of the date noted in the lower left-hand corner of each page.

APS uses several resources to create this handbook. Resources include federal and state laws, Georgia Board of Education rules, Atlanta Board of Education policies and the administrative regulations of the APS superintendent. Throughout this document, you will find blue, underlined hyperlinks to the [online policy manual](#) and other useful information sources. Follow the links to learn more.

If you have questions:

- Ask your immediate supervisor.
- Follow the hyperlinks to the online policy manual throughout this handbook.
- Visit <https://go.boarddocs.com/ga/aps/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9DGK564F8144> for the online policy manual.
- Contact the Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345** or Erica Long, Senior Policy and Government Affairs Advisor, at Erica.Long@atlanta.k12.ga.us or **(404) 802-2874**.

No handbook can include or anticipate every issue, question, or concern that may arise. Each employee is required to be knowledgeable about the policies and regulations of APS and implement them in a spirit of good faith. When in doubt, please ask *before* you make a decision that could violate a law or policy and endanger your employment with the district.

The contents of this handbook are intended to provide a brief overview of the most referenced policies—it may not include every piece of information you need to know. APS reserves the right to revise, expand, or discontinue this information at any time. Only the Superintendent and the Board may approve changes to Atlanta Public Schools policies and administrative regulations.

If there is a conflict between the information in this handbook and any law, rule, policy, or regulation of the United States, state of Georgia, Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta Board of Education or Atlanta Public Schools, the law, rule, policy, or regulation is the controlling authority.

About APS

Established by ordinance of the Atlanta City Council, the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) opened three grammar schools and two high schools in 1872 to educate the youth of the city. These openings brought the total number of schools offering free education to the city’s children to seven, as the Freedman’s Bureau had established two schools for “Negro” children in 1866.

The primary objective of the district has not changed from those early days. In the 21st century, APS has a renewed focus on student success and strives to prepare every child for the future through effective and innovative teaching. Families, teachers, students, and the community are encouraged to fully participate in the educational process that offers rigorous academics and relevance to everyday life, and builds strong relationships among students, peers, and adults.

APS will operate over 90 learning sites and programs in 2021-2022. The district employs roughly 3,500 teachers and some 3,000-support staff in administrative, civil service, transportation, food service, leadership, and other roles.

Administration

The Superintendent is the APS chief executive officer and implements the policies and vision set by the Atlanta Board of Education. The senior leadership team of the district provides strategic direction for each division of the district.

The senior leadership team is as follows:

- Chief of Schools
- Chief of Staff
- Chief of Academics
- Chief Performance Officer
- Chief Strategy Officer
- Chief Operations Officer
- General Counsel
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Human Resources Officer
- Chief Equity & Social Justice Officer

The superintendent and senior leadership team are in the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership (CLL) at 130 Trinity Ave SW, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Atlanta Board of Education

The [Atlanta Board of Education](#) is an elected, nine-member body charged with overseeing the management of the Atlanta Public Schools. The Board has many responsibilities; however, its main functions are to approve the budget, to adopt policy, and to hire and evaluate the performance of the superintendent.

Six members are elected to represent the six educational districts of the city of Atlanta. Three additional at-large members are elected citywide. Board members are:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| District 1: | Leslie Grant | At-large Seat 7: | Kandis Wood Jackson |
| District 2: | Aretta Baldon | At-large Seat 8: | Cynthia Briscoe Brown |
| District 3: | Michelle Olympiadis | At-large Seat 9: | Jason Esteves |
| District 4: | Nancy Meister | | |
| District 5: | Erika Mitchell | | |
| District 6: | Eshé Collins | | |

The Board meets on a regular basis throughout the year on a [schedule available on the Web site](#). Board meetings and the Board office are in the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership at 130 Trinity Ave SW, Atlanta, GA 30303. The monthly legislative meetings of the Board are on [PBA 30](#), a broadcast service of the Atlanta Public Schools.

Equal Employment Opportunity

APS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status in any of its employment practices, educational programs, services, or activities. For details, please refer to [policy GAAA Equal Employment Opportunity](#).

Our Shared Values

Ethics

An effective school system requires employees of integrity, high ideals and expectations, and sensitivity to others in the school environment. Employees are responsible for understanding APS' ethical standards and applying them in daily activities. All employees are expected to—

- Make decisions based on what is best for students in all cases.
- Maintain honest, equitable, professional relationships with students, parents, and other staff members.
- Observe local, state, and federal laws, policies, rules, and regulations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research and competence in state-of-the-art practices in the employee's field of expertise.
- Maintain confidentiality of privileged information.
- Support cooperation between the school and the community.
- Avoid conflicts of interest (see [policy GAG Staff Conflict of Interest](#)).
- Avoid giving and receiving improper gifts (see [policy GAG Staff Conflict of Interest](#)).
- Refrain from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or propaganda of any kind.
- Safeguard school property, equipment, and materials.
- Implement board policies in a spirit of good faith.
- Comply with appropriate professional ethical standards.

See [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#) for more details. Educators and other certificated employees should also refer to the Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators from the [Professional Standards Commission](#) for additional ethical expectations.

Center for Equity & Social Justice

The Center for Equity and Social Justice (APS CESJ) was established in 2020 as the district's inaugural office devoted solely to advancing equity in education. The APS CESJ offers thought partnership and support for the implementation of equity focused best practices for various departments across the district. The center also examines current policies and practices, works to interpret, and eliminate inequitable practices and barriers to opportunity and brings together groups of community stakeholders to create inclusive and equitable conditions for all students. The mission of the APS CESJ is to positively

impact the lives of us learners and learning communities so that every single APS student thrives — not by accident, but by design. The vision of the APS CESJ is to inspire a renewed organizational culture and serve as a national model for intentional, explicit, and a sustainable model that challenges equity in education. The Center is comprised of three (3) offices: Equity Strategy & Coherence (ESAC)*, Federal Programs, and Family Engagement.

- The **Office of Equity Strategy & Coherence (ESAC)*** works to ensure that all the district’s organizational elements – culture, systems, structures, resources, and stakeholders – are utilized to enact a theory of change that is grounded in equity and a strategy aligned with a robust vision of excellence in teaching that is culturally and linguistically responsive. It is comprised of the Equitable Learning Environments, Equitable Resource Strategy, Equity Organizational Strategy, and Organizational Ombud’s Teams.
- The **Office of Federal Programs** supports building the district’s capacity to support the needs of our most vulnerable student populations. The office provides technical assistance, program monitoring and resources to district offices and schools to ensure that all students have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and to achieve proficiency on the state's high academic achievement standards.
- The **Office of Family Engagement** provides tailored resources through ongoing support and collaboration to schools and families to ensure student success.

Reporting Violations and Whistleblower Protection

If a potential ethical violation arises, notify your immediate supervisor, the Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345**, and/or the Executive Director in the Office of Internal Compliance at **(404) 802-2732**. You will not suffer any punishment if you make a report in good faith.

You can also anonymously report ethical or policy violations, as well as suspected instances of fraud, waste, and abuse through the APS independent hotline: **1-877-801-7754** or via <https://www.tnwgrc.com/AtlantaPublicSchools/>.

See [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#) for more details.

Corporal Punishment

APS prohibits the use of corporal punishment by all employees. Corporal punishment includes any consequence that results in physical pain or harm to students. On rare occasions, physical force may be necessary to restrain a person or to prevent injury in accordance with [policy JGF \(2\) Seclusion or Restraint of Students](#). When such force is used, it should be applied without anger and as a restraint rather than retaliation. Employees who find it necessary to use physical force with students should immediately provide a written report of the details to the principal of the school.

For details, please refer to policies [JCDA Student Behavior Code](#) and policy [JGF \(2\) Seclusion or Restraint of Students](#).

Drug-free Workplace

APS is a drug-free environment. Drugs, other than prescription medications in their original containers are prohibited on District property.

In accordance with the federal Drug-Free School and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 and Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, it is unlawful for any APS employee to manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use alcohol or a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug in the workplace at any time. Additionally, employees who seek treatment for a work-related injury through the district's workers' compensation insurance will be subject to a drug and alcohol test.

You have a duty to report to your immediate supervisor anyone who possesses or uses a controlled substance. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-free Workplace](#).

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on any property owned or leased by the Atlanta Public Schools as well as in any vehicle owned or insured by APS. All employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from smoking on district's property and in district vehicles. APS discourages using tobacco or nicotine in any form.

For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-free Workplace](#).

Falsification of Records

As with your job application, if you willfully submit false information on any records including, but not limited to, attendance records for an employee or student, records related to leave or workers' compensation, experience verification forms, and registration/enrollment records for your child or another student, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Atlanta Public Schools prohibits discrimination and harassment based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any other legally protected status. Acts of discrimination or harassment committed by any APS employees are violations of this policy and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Atlanta Public Schools prohibits retaliation against any person who has reported in good faith and/or cooperated with an investigation of, discrimination or harassment. Acts of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken against any offending employee up to and including termination.

For details, please refer to [policy GAEB Harassment](#).

Sexual Misconduct & Harassment

Everyone should learn and work in an environment that is free of discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual or sex-based misconduct.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation in recruitment, admissions, and counseling; financial assistance; athletics; sex-based harassment, which also encompasses sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence; treatment of pregnant and parenting students, treatment of LGBTQ+ students; discipline; single-sex education; and employment.

A person shall not be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Title IX is applicable to schools, local and state educational agencies, and other institutions that receive federal assistance from the Department of Education.

No recipient of federal financial assistance or other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its implementing regulations, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in a proceeding under Title IX. For a recipient to retaliate in any way is considered a violation of Title IX. Sexual Misconduct is any unlawful sexual act, any solicitation of any unlawful sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical; any act of child abuse, as defined by law; any solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student; or any sexual contact with a student. “Romantic relationship” includes dating a student or otherwise being involved in an inappropriate social relationship or any act of unlawful sexual harassment as the law defines.

Sexual Harassment is a specific form of sexual misconduct. While its definition depends upon the situation, it may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Quid pro quo
- Dating violence
- Stalking
- Domestic violence
- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity
- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexually motivated touching
- Offensive or unwelcome sexual advances or propositions
- Unwelcome, intentional touching of intimate body parts
- Graphic or degrading verbal comments about you or your physical attributes
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards, or letters
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature
- Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or obvious threats concerning your employment or educational status
- Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or obvious promises of preferential treatment about your employment or educational status, especially if supervisors make such demands
- Employees dating students and/or otherwise being romantically involved with a student
- Sexual violence, a physical act of aggression that includes a sexual act or purpose

Such conduct is unacceptable in APS, violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Any employee, contractor, or consultant who believes that he or she has been exposed to unwelcome sexual or sex-based misconduct should report the alleged act immediately to a principal, assistant principal, director, executive director, and another senior level administrator or directly to the director of the Office of Employee Relations.

Any employee receiving a report of possible sexual misconduct or harassment must *immediately* report the offense to the Office of Employee Relations at **404-802-2345**. Employee Relations will review concerns and recommend disciplinary or corrective action for sexual harassment incidents as determined to be warranted and appropriate. Retaliation against a complainant for reporting sexual harassment is prohibited.

If a school district has actual knowledge of sexual harassment against a person in an education program or activity of the school district, it must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

For details, please refer to [policy GAEB Harassment](#).

Additionally, every APS employee has important reporting responsibilities under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX includes a very specific definition of “sexual harassment.” Both employees and students may be victims (or perpetrators) of sexual harassment. Any APS employees who are aware of “sexual harassment,” as that term is defined by Title IX, **MUST** report it. You may report it directly to the APS Title IX Coordinator or to your supervisor, who will ensure that it is reported to the Title IX Coordinator. To learn more about Title IX and its requirements, you can review policy GAEB Harassment, policy JCAC Harassment, and the APS Title IX Grievance Process, all available on the APS [Title IX webpage](#).

Child Abuse and Neglect

To protect the welfare for all APS students, all employees and other persons working with students on behalf of the Atlanta Public Schools, *including contractors, consultants and volunteers* must report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect on behalf of children under age 18. You are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might result when you report these cases. Your school social worker or school principal can help you file a report. For more information, see [policy JGI Child Abuse or Neglect](#).

Supervision of Students

Students should be under assigned adult responsibility when they are in school, traveling under school auspices or engaging in school-sponsored activities. Employees assigned to students are expected to make decisions based on what is best for students, including providing for the safety of students in their charge.

For more information, see [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#).

Employee Organizations

All employees have the right to freely organize, join, and participate in any professional association or labor organization of the employees’ choice. The district does not discriminate against employees who choose to participate in any professional association or labor organization. The Board also does not discriminate against any institution for any grievance, complaint or proceeding.

For details, refer to [policy GBS Professional Organizations](#).

Complaints & Due Process

Complaint Policy Purpose

APS has a [complaints and grievance policy \(GAE\)](#) to help resolve work-related concerns that may arise.

Taking prompt action to resolve the concern improves employee morale, enhances job performance, and improves overall service to students and staff.

This section only includes general information about this policy. Please contact your school's main office or call the APS Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345** for complaint forms and other details.

What is a Complaint/Grievance?

A complaint is any claim by an employee of the school system who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of laws, rules, regulations or policies and procedures.

A grievance is a complaint that can be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level through APS' grievance process.

Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance

Consider discussing any concern with your immediate supervisor before filing a formal complaint or grievance. Grievances must be filed in writing within ten (10) days of the alleged act or from the date of the most recent incident. Complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation must be in writing and submitted as soon as possible and preferably no later than the workday or school day immediately following the alleged misconduct.

If this is not feasible, contact the APS Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345** with your on-the-job concern and details about filing a complaint or grievance.

Policy Exclusions

Policies [GAE Complaints and Grievances](#) and [GCB Classified Personnel Positions](#) do not cover complaints regarding:

- Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations.
- Professional development plans or work improvement plans.
- Adverse personnel actions against employees, such as termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension without pay, or written reprimand from the superintendent.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under [GAAA, Equal Opportunity Employment](#). Such claims shall include allegations of a hostile work environment.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct under [policy GAEB, Harassment](#).
- Allegations of retaliation or violations of whistleblower protections.
- Allegations under investigation by the Office of Internal Compliance.
- Matters of local school law or controversy appealed directly to the board under O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160.

Beginning Employment at APS

Required Documents

The Office of Human Resources (HR) requires the following documents from all employees prior to the first date of employment:

- An Employment Eligibility Verification Form from Human Resources to establish your right to work in the U.S. based on the [Department of Homeland Security](#) Employment Eligibility Verification process,
- A photo ID,
- A medical checklist (HR provides this form),
- Appropriate certificates/licenses, and
- A signed loyalty oath, pledged once during your career. Human Resources provides this form during onboarding.

NOTE: You must enroll or waive the benefits offered by Atlanta Public Schools or benefits offered by State Health Benefit Plan within **THIRTY-ONE (31) days of your adjusted hire date**. If you do not enroll within 31 days, your next opportunity for enrollment will be during the next Open Enrollment Period with an effective date of January 1.

If you are assigned to a position that requires certification or licensure, you must secure and maintain a valid certificate or license from the appropriate authority. For details, please contact the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) at www.gapsc.com or **(404) 232-2500**.

Email

All APS employees are assigned an email account. It is each employee's responsibility to check email on a regular basis and to maintain and archive email records as required by the [APS Records Retention Schedule](#). See Records Management/Retention, p. 14-15.

For details, please contact I.T. Client Support at clientsupport@atlantapublicschools.us or **(404) 802-1000**.

Working at APS

Work Year

All regular, full-time APS employees work either 201 days, 202 days, 211 days, 231 days or annual duty (252/261 days). The official, contractual academic year (or work year) and payroll schedule for each of these schedules is as follows:

201 Days, 202 Days, 211 Days, and 231 Days

The required working dates for each work year are based on the board-approved student calendar and are posted each year on the [Compensation website](#). The annual salary for each of these work calendars is divided evenly into 24 payments over 12 months. The first paycheck is deposited on or before August 31.

Annual Duty (252/261 Days)

The work year begins July 1 and goes through June 30 of the following year. This schedule coincides with the Board's fiscal year. The annual salary is divided evenly into 24 payments over 12 months. The first pay period is July 1 – 15, and the first paycheck is deposited on or before July 31.

Workday Schedules & Punctuality

The *minimum* on-premises workday for all full-time employees is 7.5 hours. The 7.5-hour workday for teachers and paraprofessionals include lunch. The 7.5-hour workday for all other employees does *not* include lunch. Each employee's work schedule is set by the supervisor based on the needs of the work site. For the 2021-2022 school year, employees in elementary schools work a minimum eight (8) hour workday.

It is expected that every employee arrives to work on time and is ready to start work upon arrival. Being on time is critical to the safety and success of students and for the smooth operations of the school district.

See [policy GARB Employee Time Schedules](#) and [regulation GARB-R\(1\)](#) for details.

Emergency Closings

APS cooperates fully with local emergency management preparedness authorities for natural and man-made disasters. The superintendent may close individual schools or all schools in the event of abnormal conditions, hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety, welfare, or health of students or employees. In cases of emergency closures, some critical employees, primarily in the Operations Division, may be required to report to work.

Tune in to [WSB-TV \(Channel 2\)](#), [WSB-AM 750](#) and [WABE-FM 90.1](#) or access the [APS Web site](#), [Twitter @apsupdate](#) or [APS Facebook page](#) for news about emergency closings.

Dress Code

All employees must dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for their job responsibilities and adhere to the established dress code rules. Your supervisor determines appropriate and inappropriate dress for your work activities and work site. For details, please refer to [regulation GBRL-R Employee Dress Code](#).

Face Mask Requirement

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) will continue to require face masks and will implement a Universal Mask wearing protocol in all schools and buildings for the 2021-2022 school year.

- If an employee refuses to wear a face mask, then the supervisor and/or manager would first attempt to explain the requirements to the employee and try to persuade the employee of the need to wear the face mask. If an employee continues to refuse the safety requirement, the supervisor and/or manager is authorized to follow progressive disciplinary action as deemed appropriate based on job classification and/or job type.
- The manager and/or supervisor must also consider if an employee discloses that the refusal is based upon a qualified disability that prevents the individual from wearing a face mask. If this circumstance occurs, then the manager and/or supervisor will notify an Absence Management representative to engage in the interactive process pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act for a qualified individual with a disability to determine if an accommodation is required in support of the employee's inability to wear a mask and determine what, if any, workplace accommodation would allow the employee to work with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Records Management/Retention

Each employee is responsible for maintaining, managing, and producing public records related to the employee’s work according to state and federal laws and APS policy. Records may be maintained electronically or in hard copy. When no longer needed, you must destroy records in an appropriate manner—records containing sensitive information must be shredded, and we encourage recycling whenever possible. Records destruction must be logged, and these logs must be maintained according to the retention schedule.

Retention Schedule

APS generally follows the rules designated by the Georgia Secretary of State for the retention and destruction of records. In a few instances, APS retains records for longer than the state required period. For example, APS retains leave status records of separated employees through retirement to ensure that former employees receive full benefits from the Teachers’ Retirement System. See the table below for some common records in APS.

Type of Record	Retention Period
Email	Retention period is determined based on the <i>content</i> , not the format of records. Many emails need only be maintained for the useful life of the information contained, but if the email documents a decision or other type of record that must be retained, it must be kept according to the schedule.
General correspondence	5 years
Visitors logs and sign-in sheets	2 years
Accident reports (student or visitor)	5 years
Class rolls	3 years
Teacher lesson plans	2 years
Employee work schedules, time records and leave records	3 years
Daily/monthly activity reports	2 years
Publications (newsletters, handbooks, brochures, etc.)	Permanent
Travel authorizations and reimbursements	3 years
Records documenting the destruction of records	7 years

See the [APS Retention Schedule](#) for full details about what must be retained and for how long.

Open Records

The Georgia Open Records Act requires that most public records be subject to inspection by the public upon request. In general, we must produce all available records within a three-day time frame. If you receive a request from a member of the public, contact [Open Records](#) at **(404) 802-2811** *immediately*. If you receive a request for records from the Open Records office, follow all instructions and produce all records by the deadline. The Open Records office will determine if portions of the records should not be released and communicate with the requester on behalf of the district.

Subpoenas

A subpoena is an enforceable court order requiring a person to appear at a certain time and place to provide testimony in court or by deposition. Some subpoenas require the production of records and other tangible things. *If you fail to comply with a proper subpoena, you could be held in contempt of court: if you receive a subpoena, you should make it a top priority.* If you receive a subpoena related to APS business (e.g., students, personnel, etc.), you should immediately inform your building or worksite administrator and work with the administrator to determine (1) what information is being sought by the subpoena, (2) whether any student/family or employee privacy rights are at issue, and (3) the type and duration of leave that may be required to comply with the subpoena. Contact the Legal Department at **(404) 802-2801** with questions.

Legal Holds

When APS receives a notice from certain governmental agencies (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office for Civil Rights) and when it involves a litigation matter, we are required to preserve records associated with the matter until final disposition. If this applies to you, you will receive a notice from the Office of the General Counsel detailing the records that must be preserved. If you receive this notice, it is important that you not destroy or delete and that you prevent the inadvertent destruction or deletion of any records, even if those records would not be required to be maintained under the district's record retention schedule.

"Records" means all paper and electronic files including Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, memoranda, letters, emails, charts, handwritten notes, notebooks, meeting notes, logs and agendas, appointment books, telephone notepads and logs, notes of conversations, existing drafts, files inherited from other employees, archives, calendars, file folders and jackets in which documents are contained, information contained in a mobile phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), smartphone or any other external hard drive, USB drive, thumb drive, flash drive, memory stick, DVD or CD. When in doubt, preserve and direct all questions to **the Legal Department at (404) 802-2801**.

Electronic Media Usage

Any electronic activity conducted via the APS network or using APS computers—including the APS e-mail account—is subject to inspection and monitoring. There should not be any expectation of privacy. Electronic systems should primarily be used for instruction and to administer the business of the district. **Limited** personal use is permitted. Use of APS Internet and technology resources is a privilege that may be revoked at any time. If you violate the national, state, local and system provisions about the use of electronic resources, you will lose access to the electronic network and/or face disciplinary actions.

Examples of inappropriate use include accessing or sending offensive materials or messages, including sexually explicit, defamatory, abusive, obscene, or profane images/messages; racial or ethnic slurs; or threats. Other examples include messages or images promoting illegal activities such as controlled substances, partisan political activities, or sectarian religion.

For details, please refer to [policy IFBG Internet Acceptable Use](#).

Social Media Usage

Social media is a useful tool for effectively communicating with stakeholders about the work of the district. “Social Media” is defined as all social media activities by district employees, including but not limited to the use of blogs, forums, social networking sites and any other web-based communications on publicly available sites. Social media activities related to the work of the district are encouraged to take place in a classroom or district office setting so long as such activities do not detract from the employee’s effectiveness or other job duties.

The use of social media, even off duty and off premises, must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee’s performance of duties. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in any social media activities, district related as well as non-district related. Furthermore, any social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities, and any other applicable laws and regulations.

Any communication which is unprofessional or prohibited in any other form is also unprofessional or prohibited on social media. Employees should be mindful that any social media post, even from an employee’s personal, non-district account, may be interpreted as being made on behalf of the district.

For details, please refer to [Board Policy GAGCA Employee Ethics –Social Media](#).

Unauthorized Tape Recordings

Conversations and communications generally should be free and open among employees. You and/or anyone acting on your behalf may only use audio or video to record or reproduce any conversations among employees while on APS premises and/or while conducting APS business if you have expressed written consent of all parties engaged in the conversation or communication. APS may record public presentations, board meetings, hearings, grievances, procurement activities and official investigations.

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of your employment. For details, please refer to [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#).

Infectious Diseases

If you have a medical condition that poses a substantial health or safety threat to your school or workplace, you must leave the premises until your attendance on duty no longer poses such a threat. APS relies upon public health and medical experts’ advice to determine when to require your removal and permit your return to work.

For details, please refer to [policy GARA Employee Health Examinations](#).

Weapons

The Board shall act forcefully to control anyone who brings weapons of any kind to school or school-sponsored activities, while traveling on a school bus or any other APS vehicle, at school bus stops, in any APS facility, or in any school safety zone. Anyone who unlawfully brings weapons to school or school sponsored functions shall be subject to prosecution under the provisions of state and federal laws. APS employees who violate this policy are also subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-Free Workplace](#).

Care of Your APS Work Environment

Please follow these guidelines from the Facilities Services department to help maintain the cleanliness and safety of your workspace.

- Refrain from dragging furniture and file cabinets across floors. Please request assistance or use dollies.
- Please use only wall mounting tape and tabs to affix materials to the walls. Avoid using masking, packing or duct tape, staples, and glue in direct contact with all wall surfaces.
- Windows in classrooms should only be opened in emergency situations.
- Exterior doors should never be propped or left open.
- Breakfast in the classroom: ensure that all debris is placed in the appropriate container and placed in the hallway after breakfast. Custodians will not enter the classroom once the school day has begun to discard breakfast trash.
- Refrain from storing food items and/or food containers in desks and closets. This reduces the need for pest control services in the building.
- Refrain from disposing of any food items in classroom sinks.
- Recycling: separate all debris from paper and cardboard and place in the appropriate containers. Break down all empty boxes and place them in the designated recycle areas.

If you have questions, please contact your immediate supervisor.

Arrests and Convictions

Any APS employee who is arrested for any offense must report the arrest to their immediate supervisor and the Office of Employee Relations, within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day, whichever is sooner. This self-disclosure is required and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination based on the nature of the offense.

An APS employee must report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to pre-trial diversion intervention program, or entering a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation (driving under the influence (DUI) is not minor and must be reported).

Failure to appropriately report any arrest or conviction will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Pay & Benefits

Pay Dates

All APS employees are paid on the 15th and the last day of each month. If the 15th or the last day of the month falls on a weekend, employees are paid on the Friday prior to the weekend.

Paid Holidays

As a benefit of employment, all full-time employees of APS receive holiday pay. Employees on a 201-day, 202-day, 211-day, or 231-day schedule receive eleven (11) paid holidays each year. Annual duty (252 and 261-day) employees receive (13) paid holidays for the 2021-2022 school year. Duty (work) days and paid holidays are provided annually on the work schedule posted on the [APS Human Resources Compensation Webpage](#).

Direct Deposit

All payroll checks are directly deposited into employees' bank accounts. APS does not issue paper checks or pay stubs. Payment information is delivered electronically through the [e-APS employee portal](#) under "Employee Self Service." Log in using your Employee (Lawson) ID number and your APS password.

Payroll Deductions

The Payroll Department must deduct the following items from your paycheck:

- Federal and state income taxes.
- Medicare tax of 1.45 percent of your earnings if APS hired you after March 31, 1986, or if you work part time (daily or hourly); and
- Pension contributions, depending upon your employment status.

Other deductions that have been approved by the Board may be taken directly from your paycheck, such as a parking fee for employees with assigned spaces in the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership deck and any voluntary contributions you choose to make to the APS Employee Consolidated Giving Campaign.

Salary Level

Employees will be placed on the appropriate salary schedule based on their years of creditable and verified experience and degree level where applicable. Please refer to the [APS Human Resources Compensation Web Page](#) for information about salary schedules, job descriptions, and compensation guidelines.

Summer Salary

The pay for full-time employees on 201, 202, 211, and 231 day schedules who are present for the full work year is divided into 24 installments paid throughout the year including the summer months. Summer pay will be prorated for 201, 202, 211, and 231 day employees who are present for at least one-quarter of the school year if they are:

- Employed after the beginning of the regular school year.
- Separated from the school system after the regular school year ends; or
- Absent from duty without pay during any part of the required period of employment.

Enrollment of Employees' Children in APS

All regular, full-time employees may enroll their children in APS tuition-free as an employment benefit. All enrollment of APS employees' children in APS schools must be processed through the [Office of Student Assignment & Records](#) *unless* you are a bona fide resident of the city of Atlanta *and* you are enrolling your child in your zoned school.

School-based employees with children in grades and programs available at their schools may apply for a work site transfer (for their children), regardless of available transfer spaces at your school. For a transfer to any other school besides your work site and for all transfers for employees who are not based at a single school/site campus, you must apply for a transfer to a school with space available through the. Contact [Office of Student Assignment & Records](#) at ceedwards@apsk12.org or 404-802-2233 for details.

Credit Unions

Credit unions are members-only, not-for-profit financial institutions that use their earnings to pay dividends to their members and to offer them lower loan rates, higher savings rates, and fewer service fees than for-profit banks. As an APS employee, you are eligible to join these credit unions:

- [Family First Credit Union](#) – 3604 Atlanta Avenue, Hapeville, GA 30354 **(404) 768-4980**,
- [Pinnacle Credit Union](#) – 536 North Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30308 **(404) 888-1648**,
- [Credit Union of Atlanta](#) – 245 Pryor St SW, Atlanta, GA 30303 **(404) 671-4020**
- [Georgia United Credit Union](#) – 400 Whitehall St SW, Atlanta, GA 30303 **(770) 476-6400**

Supplemental Retirement Savings

APS encourages employees to save for retirement. We provide a variety of options for 403(b) savings accounts and IRAs through the Lincoln Financial Group. For details, please contact the Employee Benefits department [via the Web site](#) or by calling **(404) 802-2393** or **(404) 802-2344**.

Annual Benefits Open Enrollment

Each employee must re-enroll in the flexible benefits program annually. *You will lose your benefits for the following calendar year if you fail to complete open enrollment every year.* Please monitor your APS email account in October of each year for instructions on how to enroll. The Employee Benefits department will assist with open enrollment.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAP's confidential assessment and referral services address personal and workplace challenges, such as substance abuse, financial concerns, family or childcare issues, and workplace conflict. If you are having personal problems that affect your job performance, well-being, or overall productivity, EAP can help. Please note that APS does *not* receive information regarding individual employee use of EAP—your privacy is protected!

- EAP counselors are available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year for assessment and referral.
- Website access at www.deeroakseap.com; login & password: **aps**

- Toll-free number: **1-888-993-7650**
- Legal services: one telephonic consultation/or 30-minute in person legal consultation per legal matter
- Financial services: one telephonic consultation per financial matter

For details, please see [the EAP section of the Web site](#) or contact the Employee Engagement Coordinator At **(404) 802-2370**.

Medical Flex Plan

If you work full time, you can pay for certain employee health plan benefits on a tax-free basis. This is called the Flexible Benefit Plan or Flex Plan. APS announces open enrollment for the Flex Plan each school year. Your participation with Flex Plan is voluntary. The plan lets you reduce your taxable income by the amount of premiums you pay for certain benefits such as:

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance

If you have a tax-deferred supplemental retirement plan, your maximum payroll deduction for your tax-deferred retirement savings may be reduced. Please contact your Lincoln Financial Group representative for details.

For details, please contact the Employee Benefits department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2300**.

Insurance and Fringe Benefit Choices

APS currently provides various insurance options, including health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, dependent life insurance, vision care insurance, disability insurance, additional voluntary disability insurance, supplemental plans, dependent daycare accounts and medical spending accounts.

Workers' Compensation

If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury immediately to your immediate supervisor.

The supervisor will file a detailed injury report. Risk Management must receive this report within forty-eight (48) hours of the injury.

If the State Workers' Compensation Act covers your injury, you are eligible for income benefits if the injury causes you to miss seven (7) workdays. You can use your earned sick days or annual leave during your seven-day absence.

Whenever workers' compensation income benefits are payable, the amount will meet the state workers' compensation guidelines.

For details, please refer to [policy EGAA Workers' Compensation](#) and [regulation EGAA-R \(1\) Workers' Compensation: On-the-job Injuries](#).

Retirement


Please reference "Ending Employment with APS" on page 31 for more information.

COVID-19 Employee Guidance

Return from Domestic and International Travel


CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

International Travel RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS	CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)	
	Not Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
Get tested 1-3 days before traveling out of the US	✓	
Mandatory test required before flying to US	✓	✓
Get tested 3-5 days after travel	✓	✓
Self-quarantine after travel for 7 days with a negative test or 10 days without test	✓	
Self-monitor for symptoms	✓	✓
Wear a mask and take other precautions during travel	✓	✓

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
CS323515-A 04/02/2021

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Domestic Travel RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS	CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)	
	Not Vaccinated	Fully Vaccinated
Get tested 1-3 days before travel	✓	
Get tested 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine for 7 days. Self-quarantine for 10 days if you don't get tested.	✓	
Self-monitor for symptoms	✓	✓
Wear a mask and take other precautions during travel	✓	✓

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
CS323515-A 04/02/2021

For more details on travel guidance, please reference the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Quarantine Guidance

Quarantine requirements and recommendations vary by situation and are based on individual case investigation findings by APS Health Services and further guidance from the local board of health.

Case investigation must be completed to determine close contact and quarantine recommendations. During the contact investigation, the following will occur, identifying close contact and determining who

has been vaccinated. Individuals who have been vaccinated and are asymptomatic do not have to quarantine. If a vaccinated individual has been exposed, they are required to monitor their health for symptoms and if they observe symptoms, they must isolate and consult their medical provider for additional guidance.

In the event that a staff member is required to quarantine and is sent home by Atlanta Public Schools due to a positive case at work, the quarantine period is seven (7) calendar days if the employee tests on day five (5) and does not have symptoms, or ten (10) calendar days if they do not test. In both scenarios above, an employee must continue to monitor their health for symptoms for a full fourteen (14) calendar days. If the employee observes any symptoms, they are required to isolate and consult their medical provider for additional guidance.

A principal or supervisor is authorized to send an employee home on the day of the incident. A school nurse or the APS Health Services department will lead and conduct the contact investigation to determine the need, if any, to quarantine one or more employees for seven (7) to ten (10) days. In some cases, with repeated exposures, quarantine may exceed this time frame based on individual exposure findings. **NOTE: Sick/personal leave will be used until Health Services officially sends an employee home after contact investigation is completed.**

Employees are required to strictly follow the health guidance in this document, including wearing a mask and physically distancing from others. Individuals who are positively diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate according to CDC guidance. In the event an employee is sent home by the District's health services department after contact tracing of a positive case at a work site, their options are:

For all occurrences of exposure to individuals with COVID-19 in the workplace:

- Employees **who meet the definition of close contact and are fully vaccinated** are not required to quarantine following an exposure unless symptoms are present. Therefore, if symptoms are present, quarantining is required.
- Employees **who meet the definition of close contact and are NOT vaccinated** must quarantine according to CDC guidelines.

Important Information to Note:

Individuals may be able to shorten quarantine if the conditions below apply, however, they must continue to monitor for symptoms for fourteen (14) days:

- After day ten (10) without testing
- After day seven (7) after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day five (5) or later)

What is Close Contact?

Close Contact through Proximity and Duration of Exposure: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from two (2) days before they have any

symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, two (2) days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

- **Exception:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition **excludes students** who were within **3 to 6 feet of an infected student** (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where
 - both students were engaged in **consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks; and**
 - other **K–12 school prevention strategies** (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the **K–12 school setting**.

NOTE: The exception above does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Reporting Requirements

All employees or their supervisor are required to immediately report positive COVID-19 tests or exposure using this link: <http://tinyAPS.com/?CovidStaffForm>.

For questions, contact CovidReports@atlanta.k12.ga.us.

Leaves of Absence

Sick Leave/ Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

All full-time employees earn sick leave. Details about the amount of leave you currently have accrued can be found in the [e-APS employee portal](#) in the “Personal Information” section under “Employee Self Service.” Information about the amount of time you accrue each pay period and the total amount you can accrue is found on the [Absence Management website](#).

You may use sick leave when you miss work due to:

1. Personal illness, including COVID-19 positive test or exposure
2. Pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave
3. Adoption of a child or placement of a foster child
4. Incapacity because of bodily injury
5. Exposure to contagious disease that might endanger the health of others
6. Illness or death in the immediate family that necessitates your supervision and care. Immediate family includes your spouse, father, mother, brother, sister, child, or any other relative who lives with you.
7. Medical or dental appointments when it is not possible to arrange such appointments during non-working hours
8. Absences that are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act

[\[See GARH-R \(3\) Leaves and Absences: Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)\]](#)

You must inform your supervisor as soon as possible when you know that you need to be absent for one of the above reasons. In situations of 3 or more consecutive sick leave absences, a doctor’s note or bereavement related documents will be required upon your return from leave. Sick leave for COVID-19 may require documentation of a positive test. For absences that exceed four (4) consecutive days, you must apply for Family and Medical Leave. *Failure to follow your worksite’s reporting procedures may result in unexcused, unpaid absences and discipline, up to and including termination.* Calling in sick

excessively or without proper cause may also result in discipline, up to and including termination.

See [regulation GARH-R \(2\) Progressive Discipline for Absenteeism and Tardiness](#) for details.

If you have been employed by the district for at least a year and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours in the preceding year, you may qualify for the federal Family and Medical Leave Act for extended absences of up to 12 weeks for personal illness/injury, the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care (both mothers and fathers qualify), or to care for a sick spouse, parent, or child. For leaves in the first year of a child's life, in cases where both parents are APS employees, the parents may use a total of twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave combined.

Accrued sick leave must be used for the duration of your Family and Medical Leave. If you experience unpaid leave during the school year for 20 days or more, your salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days you will work until the end of the school year. *This means that your salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before your leave began.* The Compensation Team will notify you of the change once you return to active duty.

For details about FMLA, see [regulation GARH-R \(3\) Leaves and Absences: Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2365** or **(404) 802-2330**.

Timeshare Sick Leave Bank

The Timeshare Sick Leave Bank allows eligible employees to donate two (2) days of sick leave to the bank. This sick leave can be withdrawn by any member of the sick leave bank if they experience a catastrophic illness or injury and have exhausted all other accrued sick leave. A member of the sick leave bank must have the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Application completed by their physician then submitted to Absence Management. To receive a copy of the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Application, the employee should contact the Absence Management Office to request an application. Once Absence Management receives the withdrawal application, the Sick Leave Bank Committee will meet and review the application. The committee will then vote to either approve or deny the withdrawal request.

To be eligible to receive sick leave from the Timeshare Sick Leave Bank the following eligibility criteria must be met:

- The employee must be a member of the bank.
- Must have exhausted all accrued leave.
- Cannot be receiving any benefits from worker's compensation and/or short- and long-term disability.
- Their illness/injury must qualify as catastrophic. "Catastrophic" defined for the Timeshare Sick Leave Bank, is a mental or physical illness or injury which results in the inability to engage in any substantial gainful employment as confirmed by a medical professional, which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 weeks or result in death.

A member may request a maximum of thirty (30) days of leave per fiscal year and a lifetime maximum of sixty (60) days.

Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for PPL qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:

- The employee is classified as full-time by the district and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and the employee has six (6) continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether the employee is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have also worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.

A qualifying life event means:

- a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee.
- b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
- c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
- d. The rolling twelve (12) month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
- e. PPL may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than seven and a half hours per day. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is four (4) hours in a workday.
- f. Any unused PPL that remains twelve (12) months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
- g. Unused PPL shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.

The maximum amount of PPL that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling twelve (12) month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.

PPL under state law shall run concurrently with any other leave provided under federal law. Parents who work for the district are entitled equally to parental leave. Shared parental leave is not required under state law, and as such, PPL shall be equally available for all eligible employees.

Legal Reference: O.C.G.A. § 45-20-17

Workplace Accommodations

When an employee with a qualified disability requests an accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or cause a direct threat to workplace safety, the individual and the district will engage in the interactive accommodation process to determine what, if any, accommodations may be provided.

The employee should contact the Office of Employee Relations to request the appropriate forms to complete. Please see regulation [GARA-R \(2\) Employee Health Examinations – Reasonable Accommodations](#).

Personal Leave

In July of every school year, up to three days of your accumulated sick leave will be transferred into your personal leave accrual. You must have more than 3 (three) days of accumulated sick leave on June 30 to be able to transfer sick leave into personal leave. You may use this leave to be absent from duties for

personal reasons, including COVID-19 positive test or exposure. There is a 3 (three) day maximum accrual/usage of personal leave each school year.

For planned absences, you must complete and submit your time off request through Kronos to your Principal or supervisor as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave coincides with a critical work day, your supervisor may deny the leave request. For unplanned emergencies, such as car trouble or a burst pipe at home, you must inform your supervisor as soon as possible when you know that you need to be tardy or absent. Your supervisor may ask for documentation of your emergency upon your return. *Failure to follow your worksite's reporting procedures may result in unexcused, unpaid absences and discipline, up to losing your job.*

Please see [regulation GARH-R \(9\) Leaves and Absences: Personal and Annual Leave](#) for details.

Annual Leave/Vacation

Annual duty (252/261-day) employees and employees who worked a 231-day assignment before May 13, 1986, and continue to do so without interruption, are eligible to accrue annual leave up to 30 days. School-based employees may have restricted times when annual leave will be approved due to school schedules.

Non-school-based employees may use annual leave at any time during the year if your supervisor and division or department head approves it. You must complete and submit your time off request through Kronos to your principal or supervisor as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave request coincides with a critical workday, your supervisor may deny the leave request. Information about the amount of annual leave you accrue each pay period can be found in [regulation GARH-R \(9\) Leaves and Absences: Personal and Annual Leave](#). Details about the amount of leave you currently have accrued can be found in the [e-APS employee portal](#) in the "Personal Information" section under "Employee Self Service." Upon your separation from APS employment, APS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave.

See [policy GAO Employee Resignation](#). APS will also pay you for your accumulated leave when you change from a position earning annual leave to a position ineligible to earn or use annual leave.

Bereavement Leave

If an immediate family member or a relative who lives with you dies, your principal or Supervisor may authorize the use of sick leave for a maximum of 3 sick leave days per bereavement episode. The immediate family includes your husband, wife, father, mother, grandparent, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild, and these relatives-in-law. If you wish to be absent for more than the allowed sick leave, you must request personal or annual leave.

To request sick leave for bereavement, you must submit your time off request through Kronos to your principal or Supervisor for approval and follow normal leave protocol. Written bereavement documentation is necessary, as prescribed by sick leave regulation, when the absence is three (3) or more consecutive workdays. Documentation is provided to your Supervisor.

For more information, see [regulation GARH-R \(4\) Leaves and Absences: Bereavement Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2365** or **(404) 802-2330**.

Educational Leave

To take an unpaid leave of absence for work-related or other study, you must meet the following conditions:

- Be a regular, full-time employee with at least three years of continuous service.
- Request the leave in writing to the Absence Management team with an explanation of the manner in which the study will enhance your work with the district.
- Provide proof of enrollment from the accredited postsecondary institution.
- Provide proof of successful completion for each term you are on approved educational leave.

When you return from educational leave, the Superintendent may assign you to a similar, but not necessarily identical, position and status as your previously held position if a position is available. *Reemployment is not guaranteed if no similar position is available.*

If you go on an unpaid leave during the school year for 20 days or more, your salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days you will work until the end of the school year. *This means that your salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before your leave began.* The HR Compensation team will notify you of the change once you return to active duty.

For more information, see [regulation GARH-R \(8\) Leaves and Absences: Educational Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2365** or **(404) 802-2330**.

Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave

Employees ordered to annual tours of duty for the reserves or National Guard during their work year are granted paid leaves up to 18 days per year. Longer military leaves without pay are granted any time the service of an employee is required by the U.S. Armed Forces for an extended period. Upon satisfactory completion of the military service, the employee will be restored to a similar position and status as the previously held position, if the employee applies to return within 90 days of being relieved from duty. Proper evidence of official orders must be presented to the Absence Management team at least two (2) weeks in advance of the requested leave.

Government service leave allows you to serve up to 12 months at one time, without loss of status, in the governments of the city of Atlanta, the state of Georgia or the federal government. When you return from government service leave, the Superintendent may assign you to a similar, but not necessarily identical, position and status as your previously held position.

For employees who have been with APS for at least three years, unpaid leaves of one semester or one year may be granted to qualify and campaign for a public office.

For details, see [regulation GARH-R \(5\) Leaves and Absences: Government and Military Service Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2365** or **(404) 802-2330**.

Jury Duty

APS encourages all employees to serve when called for jury duty. APS will not excuse employees from jury duty under normal circumstances. You must complete and submit your time off request through Kronos to your principal or Supervisor as soon as possible.

When you are summoned for jury duty, APS will—

- Pay your regular salary for the days served. You lose no pay due to jury duty.
- Consider your jury duty pay as payment for extra expenses incurred.

If the court subpoenas you as a witness for personal reasons, you must use your personal or annual leave and you must request through Kronos to your Supervisor for approved leave for the day(s) involved. If the subpoena is related to official APS business; you may be granted administrative leave to appear before the court.

For details, please refer to [regulation GARH-R \(6\) Leaves and Absences: Jury Duty/Legal Leave](#).

Leave for Employee Peer Advisory Representatives

Employees may act as Peer Advisory representatives of other employees during the grievance process. An employee may be absent with regular pay for the purpose of processing grievances and attending grievance meetings and formal disciplinary hearings for himself/herself and/or for others for a maximum of four hours in a one-week period. An employee representative may be granted permission for an additional absence in the same week without pay. If permission is denied, the supervisor must state the legitimate business reason in writing to the employee. An employee representative who misses work without first obtaining permission will not be paid for the absence.

For details, see [policy GAE Complaints and Grievances](#).

Disputes Regarding Leave Balances

An employee who believes his/her leave balances contain an error must submit a written request for review to the Payroll Office. Requests must be made within one calendar year of the pay period(s) in question. The Executive Director of Payroll, Benefits, and Risk Management or his/her designee shall issue all final determinations regarding corrections. Contact Payroll at **(404) 802-2209**.

Your Personnel Records

Annual Evaluation

APS annually evaluates all employees' job performance. Your supervisor should also share your annual evaluation with you. Your evaluation is considered confidential under Georgia state statute and will not be released without appropriate approval or legal authority.

Teacher Evaluation Appeals

There may be occasions when a teacher believes that they have grounds to appeal against an academic decision. Tenured teachers may appeal summative performance ratings of "Unsatisfactory" or "Ineffective" contained in personnel evaluations conducted. This policy shall not apply to procedural deficiencies on the part of the school district in conducting an evaluation pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210. In accordance with state law, tenured teachers at the Atlanta Independent School System that are evaluated by state-mandated evaluation tool, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System shall have the right to appeal summative performance ratings of "Unsatisfactory" or "Ineffective".

Within five (5) business days after the summative evaluation conference, a teacher shall provide a **written**

notice of appeal to the responsible evaluator detailing the evaluation record and their statement of appeal.

Level One: The principal as the responsible evaluator shall respond in writing within ten (10) business days after the receipt of appeal.

Level Two: If the teacher is dissatisfied with the principal's response, a review may be filed with the Office Employee Relations, Executive Director, who will then assign the review to a TKES (Teacher Keys Evaluation System) certified and trained administrator in the central office within ten (10) business days from the date the summative evaluation conference was held with the principal with respect to the TAPS (Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards) observation or TKES/LKES evaluation summary report.

A written response shall be provided to the teacher within ten (10) business days after receipt by the designated administrator.

Learning Management Systems

MyPLC, also known as My Professional Learning Center, is the district's learning management system.

It is a web-based system that maintains the performance evaluation (based on role) and professional learning/training history of every full-time APS and charter school employee.

During the onboarding process, a unique profile is created within MyPLC for each employee, using the employee ID number and network password to gain access to the system.

- MyPLC also provides access to view and register for available professional learning opportunities, including online training such as the annual Mandatory Ethics course, Health Requirements courses and SafeSchools courses. Expectations of use of MyPLC are outlined in the APS Board Policy: Professional Learning Opportunities - Professional Learning Program, GAD-R (1) <http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/aps/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=AJYRFM6D278B>
- Access a flyer about MyPLC: <http://tiny.cc/myplc-1pager2122>
- Access the MyPLC portal: <https://atlanta.truenorthlogic.com>

Change in Job Status

Your job status can change for many reasons: a promotion, probation, transfer, demotion, reassignment, or re-employment. General information about each status follows:

- Promotions/Probations – Most promotions require a six-month probationary period when you are a new or re-employed employee. It can be longer if the superintendent grants your supervisor's request.
- Transfers – You may voluntarily or involuntarily transfer within a department, among different departments, to another location or to a new work shift. However, the transfer must be in APS' best interest and with approval from your supervisor and other authorities.
- Reassignments – When you switch to a similar job and pay as your previous position, this is a reassignment. This change can result with approval from the division head and other authorities.
- Re-employment – If you voluntarily left your job and are in good standing, you are eligible for re-employment in a similar position. However, you must meet certain job requirements and be on probation. Your salary will be based on verified prior work experience.
- Demotions – You may voluntarily take a lower ranking position. However, you must request it in writing, there must be a vacancy, you must meet the job's minimum qualifications and the proper authorities must grant approval. Employees will be placed on their newly assigned

salary scale at the appropriate step based on verified experience, with an annual salary that does not exceed the maximum amount on the scale.

Change in Personal Status

To keep your file current and to ensure seamless, accurate delivery of critical employment information, promptly report changes in your personal status via [e-APS \(Global HR\)](#) under “(Internal Use).”

Reduction in Force

Declining student enrollment, program changes or fiscal demands can force the Atlanta Board of Education to eliminate jobs, reduce your work year and salary, and/or reduce the number of employees. For more details on how APS creates plans for reductions in force, when necessary, please refer to [policy GAKA Reduction in Force](#).

Records to Retain after Separation

Upon separation, you should retain a record of your final leave balance. If you leave the district for another employer and return to APS at a later date, your accrued sick leave may be reinstated. Similarly, if you leave the district and eventually retire from the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia, your sick leave accrued with APS may be applied toward your retirement benefits. You must retain evidence of your leave balance in case any dispute arises.

Confidentiality and Access to Personnel Records

Human Resources and your local worksite maintain both publicly available and confidential files about each employee. Some information about your employment with APS is subject to release to the public if requested under the Georgia Open Records Act, such as your application for employment, salary information and disciplinary records. Confidential information is not released, such as social security numbers, home addresses, phone numbers, transcripts, medical forms, and evaluations.

Only *you* may view your entire file unless a court order or other legal mandate requires. The law protects certain information, including pre-employment information, letters of recommendations and medical records. Therefore, these items are not available for review.

You may request a copy of your personnel file by sending an e-mail to productionofdocuments@atlanta.k12.ga.us. *In the subject line, please include your employee number and current department/campus.*

For information about the Georgia Open Records Act, contact Open Records [via the Website](#) or at **(404) 802-2811**.

Visit <http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/Page/48967> for more details.

Employment Verification

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) Human Resources Department will use **The Work Number** to provide employment verifications for mortgage lenders, banks, apartment complexes, and others who may need proof of your employment or income. The service is easy to use and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week both online and by phone.

APS' Employer Code is 17322.

If you are requesting verification of Prior Years of Experience with Atlanta Public Schools or completion of a Student Loan Forgiveness Form, submit your request via email to experienceverifications@atlanta.k12.ga.us. Requests will be returned to the requestor within 3-5 business days.

All experience verifications will provide information as of the date it is prepared. If you are requesting an experience verification form before your last day of work at Atlanta Public Schools, please know that APS will not provide a future end date based on your planned resignation. Most school districts require an employment end date, and we will not be able to report your employment end date until after that date has occurred and you have officially separated. Please wait until after your last day of employment to request your experience verification.

When submitting your request for prior years of service or Student Loan Forgiveness Form to the experience verification email address experienceverifications@atlanta.k12.ga.us, please provide the following:

1. Attach the electronic form (verification or loan forgiveness) to your email.
2. On the subject line of the email please include:
 - Your first name
 - Your last name
 - The last school, location, or site you reported to work
3. In the body of the email please include:
 - Approximate dates you were employed with APS
 - Your former last names, if applicable
 - Your employee identification number (Lawson number), if known
 - The last 4 digits of your social security number
 - An email address or mailing address to send the requested information
 - A contact phone number where we can reach you
 - Any additional information that may help us in completing your request (additional instructions, email or mailing addresses, additional school, or work site information, etc.)

Ending Employment with APS

Retirement

The [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\) of Georgia](#) and the city of Atlanta provide retirement plans for all employees. If you are a certified employee who retires from your position, APS will—

- Pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave.
- Pay you for your accumulated, unused sick leave.

For details, please call the Employee Benefits department at **(404) 802-2400**.

Resignation

The Atlanta Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to accept, on behalf of the Board, resignation from employment by any employee. The Board shall be notified of the action no later than the regular legislative meeting in the month after the resignation has been tendered and accepted in writing. Written resignations shall be tendered as soon as possible prior

to the proposed effective date. Failure to provide adequate notice of separation or resignation may constitute ineligibility for rehire with APS. Resignation requests submitted with less than two weeks' notice are considered to be inadequate notice and may constitute ineligibility for rehire. Additionally, contracted employees may be subject to eligibility for rehire and Professional Standards Commission sanctions in cases of breach of contract. Contracted employees may seek approval for resignation requests during a contract period for medical reasons, promotion, or spouse relocation for employment. For annual-duty employees, upon your departure, APS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave. See [policy GAO Employee Resignation](#).

The District also reserves the right to designate employees as ineligible for rehire, based on resignation in lieu of termination, termination for cause, or other extenuating circumstances. Employees are expected to physically work on their last day unless prior approval from HR is provided. After employees give notice, they must continue to follow the district's leave policy, and the last day of work must be a workday (i.e., last day of work cannot be a weekend, paid holiday, non-workday for less than annual employees).

Separation Process

If you separate from APS employment, you should follow the formal separation process or risk having your final paycheck delayed. Emailed resignations to Human Resources may also be accepted in certain circumstances. Your official separation request must be tendered through the [e-APS employee portal](#) under "Employee Self Service." The steps in this process may vary, depending on your reason for resignation. The steps include, but are not limited to the following:

- An online or option for an in-person exit survey with the Office of Employee Relations.
- The return of all APS property and equipment.
- Repayment of all monies owed to APS.

Separation Steps

Go to <http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us>, then:

1. Quick Links: "Employee." Click at the top right side of the page.
2. Click e-APS and login, if necessary.
3. Click on the globe icon, which displays "Lawson" when hovered over.
4. Click on Menu on the left-hand side of the screen
5. Click on Bookmarks.
6. Go to "Employee Self Service" in the drop-down menu.
7. Select Employee Separation (a new tab/window will open).
8. Follow the on-screen instructions.

Atlanta Public Schools is **educating**
today's students for tomorrow's world.
We are **committed to ensuring** that
all students graduate from our schools
ready for success in college and life.



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Human Resource Services
130 Trinity Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
404.802.2300

www.atlantapublicschools.us