

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Supervisors

From: Skye Duckett, Chief Human Resources Officer

Date: May 29, 2020

Subject: Follow Up to Superintendent's Staff Updates

The Superintendent recently hosted a live Town Hall event with important updates for the close of the school year and transition to summer break. The Superintendent also communicated important updates in her May 22nd memo to all employees. Please make sure to provide that memo to any of your employees, contractors, and volunteers who may not regularly access email. As a supervisor, you have further responsibilities regarding these updates. In addition to the information below, please make sure you have also read the previous supervisor memos posted at: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/coronavirus>.

Budget update

Overall, we had 848 responses to the budget survey - thank you! The vast majority of respondents were school-based staff and 83 were CLL/other.

For question #3 (the forced ranking question), SurveyMonkey automatically calculates a weighted average using reverse scoring, so "cut employee travel" was the most popular option, with a score of ~8.5 and 47% of people putting it as their first choice. Any reduction in pay through mandatory/voluntary furloughs or reduced paid days were the least popular.

We also asked some open-ended questions:

- *Please list any computer software/subscriptions that you feel overlap and could be streamlined/reduced:* Because of site-based autonomy, these responses were very school-specific, and we found very little overlap. This question may support eventually re-centralizing software.
- *Please list any district programs or services that you suggest cutting or reducing for one year or more:* Most responses aligned to those programs outside the traditional school day: after school, summer programming, etc. Also mentioned were SEL, professional development, employee travel, and district-funded field trips. An emphasis was placed on protecting jobs and salaries.
- *Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding budget reduction strategies for the 2020-2021 school year:* These responses were the most varied, with over 400 individual comments. Because of our autonomy and flexibility, there was very little cohesion around any specific categories. This supports our decision to push out a percentage reduction and allow schools and departments to make cuts based on their specific needs and priorities. However, the feedback will certainly help guide budget

conversations for next year. There were MANY great suggestions that we will continue to look into.

We will keep you posted as new information becomes available. For now, the Board will take action on the tentative budget proposal at the June 1st Board meeting. For more details on the proposed budget, you can view materials [here](#) or watch the May 21st Budget Commission meeting [here](#).

Finally, we need to remind you that we are still preparing for a very tight budget year. Individual department heads and principals should NOT purchase thermometers, personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks and gloves, or any other equipment or supplies in response to COVID-19. We are still working through reopening strategies and once there is alignment, we will centrally manage these purchases from funds earmarked for this purpose.

Transitioning to summer work schedule

Once the school year ends on May 27th, the number of personnel reporting to work in person will be significantly reduced due to the end of food distribution, student material distribution, school relocations, etc. However, many operations staff will continue to work in-person to maintain, clean, prepare, and secure our school buildings. Effective June 1st, all other departments/schools must limit the number of individuals coming to work in person every day. Employees may continue to report to work occasionally, only as needed and with prior supervisor approval. Central office will remain closed to the general public.

Hero pay will be limited to operations staff who (1) must work in person daily, and (2) are unable to avoid contact with the public and public areas or practice social distancing as recommended by the CDC. Hero pay will continue to equal time and a half for hours worked in person (regular hourly rate times 1.5, inclusive of base pay) for non-exempt staff and a \$250 per pay period stipend for exempt staff. Any other requests for positions to be considered for hero pay beyond June 1st should be emailed to sduckett@atlanta.k12.ga.us. If any of your direct reports believe they should be eligible for hero pay or if they have questions or concerns about their hero pay, we ask that you provide the first level of response. The payroll department is being overwhelmed with these calls.

Work calendars and pay scales

Work calendars and pay scales for 2020-2021 have been aligned to the tentative budget that will be presented to the Board on June 1st. They have been posted online in draft status. The pay scales represent a zero-cost step for next year since we are not providing pay increases. Employees' pay will remain at the 2019-2020 level for the 2020-2021 school year, except for job changes, promotions, etc. Final documents will be posted after the adoption of a final budget. Draft work schedules are posted at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/61539> and draft pay scales are posted at <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/47417>. While these are posted in draft format, we do not expect them to change much, if at all, for the final version.

Central positions hiring freeze reminder

On May 1, 2020, the District implemented a freeze on all new hires for central (non-school) positions that are not directly related to the COVID-19 emergency response. This freeze will

continue through at least June 30, 2020. Continued hiring is automatically allowed for school-facing operations positions, like custodians, bus drivers, and police officers. All other requests for hire will require a Chief Officer to submit a hiring freeze exception request, as follows:

- Positions to be posted on or after 5/1/20: Submit Hiring Freeze Exception (HFE) form to Human Resources (HR) prior to posting.
- Positions that were already posted, but for which a hiring recommendation has not been submitted to HR as of 4/30/20: Submit HFE form to HR prior to recommending for hire.
- Electronic signatures or email approvals are acceptable in place of a physical signature.

The process to request an exception is as follows:

- Download and fill out the [Hiring Freeze Exception \(HFE\) request form](#).
- Obtain the signature of the hiring supervisor.
- Obtain the signature of the hiring chief officer.
- Complete a cover sheet to the Superintendent for signature.
- Submit the cover sheet and the signed hiring freeze exception form to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) by Tuesday.
- CHRO will submit the hiring freeze exception form and cover sheet to the Superintendent on Wednesdays.
- Superintendent will review the documentation.
- Superintendent will approve or deny the request.
- Superintendent will return the form to the Chief HR Officer.
- HR will notify the supervisor of the decision.
- Supervisor will submit a job requisition (request to post.)
- Interviews and hiring process proceed as usual.

For the Hiring Freeze Exception (HFE) request form, supervisors will need to include:

- Justification as to why the position is COVID-related or legally mandated and the impact to the safety of staff and students if the position isn't filled;
- A rationale for why the work can't be done using existing resources, based on the current org chart; or
- An explanation for what the impact to the division/department is if the position isn't filled.

School-based hiring slowdown continues

Out of an abundance of caution, the District also began slowing down school-based hiring on May 1st due to budget uncertainty. These procedures will continue through at least June 30th. It is imperative that we avoid overstaffing schools before we have final revenue projections and more clear scenarios for the format for the start of school. School leaders should note the following:

- Hiring may continue as usual for instructional positions of teacher, assistant principal, instructional coach, counselor, and special education paraprofessionals.
- Hiring for all other school-based positions is paused until at least June 30th.
- Offers made to candidates by HR prior to May 1st will not be affected by the slowdown.

- Principals may request an exception by sending an email to their Associate Superintendent that includes justification as to why the position must be filled now and the impact on the safety of staff and students if the position isn't filled before June 30th. Also include how the position would be utilized in a fully virtual environment. If approved, the Associate Superintendent may forward the request to the Chief Human Resources Officer for final approval.

Internal promotions

School principals and central supervisors must also follow the processes outlined above if requesting to post for promotional opportunities open only to internal staff. Requests will be reviewed to ensure positions are eligible for internal posting.

Please note that this guidance may change on a daily basis. Check email frequently for updates, as well as the district's [health alerts page](#).

For any supervisor questions regarding employment matters, please contact Skye Duckett, Chief Human Resources Officer, at 404-802-2304 or sduckett@atlanta.k12.ga.us. For questions regarding COVID-19 or health matters, please contact Valencia Hildreth, Comprehensive Health Services Manager, at 404-802-2674 or Valencia.hildreth@atlanta.k12.ga.us.