

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Staff

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: April 16, 2021

Subject: Recap of Raises and Bonuses, Month of Recognitions and Thanks, Vaccination Updates, Cluster Assignment Shift, Farewell to Bill Caritj, and Other Updates

Thanks to the best team in public education, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) returned strong from Spring Break and is prepared to close the 2020-21 school year with a robust mix of in-person and virtual teaching and learning.

As I wrote to you earlier, Monday's Atlanta Board of Education meeting provided great news in that members unanimously approved key adjustments to the district's FY2021 operating budget that included \$2.8 million for 2% salary increases and a \$7.2 million retention bonus grant.

My message and [these FAQs](#) provide more details, but APS will go beyond positions on Governor Kemp's eligibility list by providing one-time \$1,000 payments to all full-time staff and \$500 to all part-time (hourly) staff and permanent substitutes. These bonuses will appear in your paychecks on April 30, 2021. In addition, we have moved forward with part of a compensation package originally proposed for next fiscal year, which is a 2% across-the-board increase to all of the pay scales. Most eligible employees will start seeing these increases appear on paychecks starting on May 15, 2021.

Again, the Board and I cannot thank you enough for the astonishing levels of engagement and work we have seen over the past year.

National Recognition

Because of this amazing team, it is no surprise to me that APS has been selected as a 2021 Don Clifton Strengths-Based Culture Award Winner. APS is the first school district ever to receive the award in Gallup history and will be honored alongside four large Fortune 500 companies for its commitment to a strengths-based culture, which focuses on individual gifts, talents and strengths -- starting with all employees.

Don Clifton's legacy is built on his mission to study "what's right with people." In this spirit, Gallup created the Don Clifton Strengths-Based Culture Award. This award recognizes organizations with workplace cultures that put the strengths of leaders, managers and employees at the core of how they work every day.

Thank you to our entire team for your commitment to creating a mission-minded culture that prepares every APS student for college, career, and life.

Month Full of Recognitions

In that spirit of thanks and recognition, April provides numerous opportunities to offer gratitude and pay tribute to many areas of public education.

April marks the 36th recognition of School Library Month as designated by the American Association of School Librarians. The month recognizes the contributions of our school-based media centers in providing the materials and resources for teachers and students that encourage growth and knowledge. Michael Rawls of Morningside Elementary has been selected as our Media Specialist of the Year and will represent the district at the regional level competition sponsored by the Georgia Library Media Association and the Georgia Association of Instructional Technology.

Although these moments passed over the break, I hope we all take a moment to celebrate our paraprofessionals for Paraprofessional Appreciation Day (April 7) and assistant principals for National Assistant Principals Week (April 5–9). We cannot do this work without any of you!

This week also served as the Week of the Young Child, the 50th year that the National Association for the Education of Young Children has sponsored this celebration. We are always striving to do more in this area, especially preparing our youngest scholars for lifelong learning.

Health Updates

As a reminder, this week was virtual work for most employees. Starting Monday, April 19th, work schedules return to what they were before spring break. Employees who traveled were asked to quarantine for seven days and test three to five days after return. Employees who are designated to work in person and are not able to report due to their self-quarantine for travel will need to follow their regular workplace absence reporting procedures for sick and/or personal leave. Please refer to previous [employee and supervisor memos](#) for additional travel and quarantine guidance.

This week, we completed our mass vaccination event at Mercedes-Benz Stadium with the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Again, I want to thank everyone who participated in this event, and I especially want to thank all APS staff who volunteered and worked diligently on our planning committee. Your efforts helped make our events a great success!

As a reminder, in accordance with the decision to pause Johnson & Johnson vaccinations issued by the Georgia Department of Public Health under the guidance of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), our staff vaccination event planned for Wednesday, April 21, in partnership with Walgreens has been cancelled. Several other vaccination options remain available across our community, including state-sponsored vaccination sites available at <https://myvaccinegeorgia.com/>. Remember, “Don’t Wait! Vaccinate!”

To date, nearly 2,500 staff members have indicated they have received the COVID-19 vaccine. This information helps us keep our schools safe, so if you haven’t already, please complete this

short [survey](#). Please be assured that APS respects your privacy and will not disclose your individual responses and your responses will not impact your employment status with APS.

Division of Schools Cluster Assignment Shifts to K12 Structure

I want you to be aware that as a part of a re-organization of the Division of Schools, the current school cluster assignment will shift to the K12 structure effective July 1, 2021. Essentially, this means that high schools have been divided among all clusters and will no longer exist as the Office of High Schools. Additionally, all units within the Office of High Schools have been re-assigned to other departments. Stay tuned for more details about this shift from the Division of Schools.

Thank you, Bill Caritj

I want to let you know that Bill Caritj, Chief Accountability and Information Technology Officer, has announced his retirement. For nearly seven years, Mr. Caritj has played a crucial role in helping this district regain its standing and reputation toward its vision to become a high-performing school district. He and his team have certainly laid much groundwork in enabling our students' love of learning, our teachers' inspiration, our families' engagement, and our community's renewed trust in the school system.

During my tenure, I have seen his team's outstanding work in providing technology to every young scholar during this pandemic. This has involved the distribution of tens of thousands of computers and devices which was an essential component of providing quality teaching and learning throughout the challenges.

Mr. Caritj will be with us until the end of April, and I hope you will all join me in thanking him for his service to Atlanta Public Schools, congratulate him on a remarkable career in public education, and send him best wishes as he embarks on his next great endeavor.

Starting May 1, the three departments that currently report to the Chief Accountability & Information Officer will be temporarily reassigned under the supervision of other chief officers. The Information Technology Department led by Olufemi Aina will report to Larry Hoskins, Chief Operations Officer. The Data and Information Group led by Michael Lamont will report to Anita Williams, Chief of Schools. The Instructional Technology Department led by Aleigha Henderson-Rosser will report to Yolonda Brown, Chief Academic Officer.

In-Person Instruction on Last Day of School - Wednesday, May 26

On a final note, we will move to a face-to-face instructional day on Wednesday, May 26. This is the last day of school for this school year.

Thanks as always for your service and dedication! We only have a month and a half left in the school year, so please keep engaged, stay healthy, and be well.

Yours in Service,

Lisa Herring