

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Employees

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: December 18, 2020

Subject: Holiday Break, Childcare Options, Performance Evaluations, and other Reminders

Team, we made it! The holidays have arrived! But they come upon us this year with mixed emotions – joy with sorrow, togetherness amid isolation, and hope with tinges of concern.

The holidays will be tough for the Herring family this year. As you may know, my father – the Rev. Wallace B. Herring, Sr. – passed in the days before the break. The loss of this compassionate man with unwavering faith has brought unbearable sadness upon my family and our friends.

This man with his love, kindness, and grace greatly informed the person I would become. That's why, amid my grief, I hold onto so many blessings about my father. One of the most recent memories that stands out was when he gave the invocation when I officially became superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools this July. I embrace and cherish that moment and remain ever thankful to have that memory and thousands more.

In these moments, I sometimes feel alone in my heartache and grief and your messages of comfort and condolences have meant so much. It helped remind me that I'm hardly the only one feeling sorrow, isolation, and concern. Amid pandemic and protest, so many of us have lost loved ones and friends, experienced injury and harm, and felt alone and forgotten.

That's why we need to bind together as a school district and as a community – more than ever – to not only get through the holiday break – but create momentum and motivation for a new year. As I wrote to you earlier, a new year may have its own challenges – reopening our schools and buildings among them – but it also brings new hope. Thus, we shall rise up and overcome.

In that spirit, let me provide a few important updates and reminders.

Childcare and School Enrollment Options

I am thrilled that among our many efforts, we are planning to provide child care services at some of our schools from January 19, 2021, through February 2, 2021. These child care programs will be available for staff's children from Pre-K through 8th grade. Our existing after-school care vendors will provide this service. Locations and costs will be determined soon.

REMINDER: If you are experiencing a financial hardship related to childcare that impacts your ability to return to work, APS may be able to help support you with a one-time financial stipend. Please contact Rachel Sprecher (rsprecher@atlanta.k12.ga.us) for more details.

I also want to remind you that our employees have the option to enroll their child(ren) at their school worksite (if age appropriate) or at another APS school with available space. Please contact Cory Edwards, director of the Department of Student Assignment and Records at ceedwards@atlanta.k12.ga.us or 404.802.2232 for further details.

Virtual Early Release Day – January 5

Atlanta Public Schools will observe an early release for students in traditional schools on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, to allow time for staff and eligible high school students to vote in the upcoming runoff election. Students will follow a half-day dismissal schedule for virtual instruction as follows:

- Elementary – 11:30 a.m.
- Middle – 12:30 p.m.
- High – 12:00 p.m.

After-school activities, including targeted intervention programs, will continue as scheduled. Remember, students return on January 5 and have two weeks of virtual instruction remaining in the first semester. The second semester begins on January 19.

I should note that the day remains a full workday for all APS teachers and staff.

Holiday Work Schedule

As we move into the break, not all employees are on the same holiday work schedule. The following summarizes the various work calendars for the holiday break:

- 201, 202 and 211 day staff do not work the weeks of December 21 and December 28,
- 252 and 231 day staff work Monday, December 21, and do not work the remainder of that week,
- 252 and 231 day staff do not work the week of December 28,
- 261 day staff do not work on Thursday, December 24; Friday, December 25; Thursday, December 31; and Friday, January 1, 2021, and
- All employees return to work on Monday, January 4, 2021, which is a professional learning/in-service day.

The work calendars for APS employees are available on the district website [here](#).

Holiday Travel Guidance

I also want to encourage everyone to take care of themselves during the break, especially if you're planning to travel. It is recommended that you avoid any unnecessary personal travel outside of the state where possible. If travel is absolutely required, please take the following precautions:

- Check for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel.

- Check the [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found on the [CDC website](#).
- Notify your supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if you become sick while traveling or on a temporary assignment. Follow your health insurance provider's guidance for obtaining medical care if you are outside the United States and are sick or contact an overseas medical assistance company to assist with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.
- Email HRFrontDesk@atlanta.k12.ga.us for any questions regarding personal travel.

Second Semester Employee Performance Evaluations

As you may have heard through many meetings where this has been discussed over the past few months, such as principal meetings, expanded cabinet, and focus groups, the District recently received guidance from the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) about updates to the state-mandated employee appraisals for the remainder of the school year. In APS, these are TKES (teachers), LKES (leaders), CKES (counselors), and SLEI (media specialists). As a result, we will resume performance appraisals with modifications for the second semester for all employee groups, including EPAT (employees not on state appraisals). Employees will receive updates from their supervisor after the break. More information is available on the [Human Resources SharePoint site](#) (login may be required).

Thank You and Happy Holidays!

And so the holiday break begins. I hope that each and every single one of you finds ways to rest and enjoy the blessings of the season. You certainly have deserved this break after all of the hard work amid one of the most difficult semesters that any of us has worked through. I cannot thank you enough.

Please take extra care to cherish moments with your family and friends and to take care of yourself. We need everyone to take the next couple of weeks to get refreshed and refocused so we can take on the next challenging stages of the school year and continue on our mission to graduate every student ready for college, career, and life!

I remain blessed and grateful for every single one of you. Happy Holidays!

Yours in Service,

Dr. Lisa Herring