

MEMORANDUM

To: All APS Staff

From: Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent

Date: March 19, 2021

Subject: Pay Raise and Bonuses, Vaccination Registration, Third Party Usage of APS Facilities, and Other Updates

Before I provide my weekly update, I want to pause to reflect upon the recent shootings that occurred across Atlanta on Tuesday that killed eight people, including six who were of Asian descent and seven of whom were women. Although the motive for this incident is still under investigation, what I know as an educator is that we need to spend more time as a community on some of the critical work beyond academics, such as social emotional learning, wraparound supports, and equity.

As I have mentioned in our [cluster conversations](#) and will continue to discuss, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) added two simple but essential words to our mission: equity and life. We have spent much of our recent conversations focused on equity, but I want to emphasize the addition of the word “life,” in that we graduate all students ready for college, career, and LIFE.

I encourage you to read [my blog](#) to see my full statement on this topic and for resources to help our students and staff process these difficult issues.

Pay Raise and Bonus Updates

You may have heard about Governor Kemp’s recent \$1,000 “retention bonus” proposal for certain school-based employees. We don’t have all of the details yet, but I wanted to update you on what we know so far.

First, APS plans to continue its track record of going above and beyond by supplementing the \$1,000 “retention bonus” from the state and providing the stipend to ALL full-time employees, regardless of job title, and extending a \$500 stipend to all part-time, hourly, and permanent substitute employees. Everyone in the district has played a critical role in our Return+Learn efforts, so we want to show appreciation far beyond what is required. These one-time payments will appear in eligible employees’ April 30th paycheck.

Next, while the District at the start of the school year provided staff on pay grades 111 to 115 with raises to ensure that all full-time employees made a living wage (at least \$15 an hour), the vast majority of our whole employee group did not receive a step increase or cost of living increase this year. Therefore, we are recommending an end-of-year 2% increase to all pay scales starting April 16, 2021, to take a bold step to ensure that base pay increases are guaranteed for the remainder of this school year and continue into next school year, in addition to the one-time

payments. You will see this adjustment in your May 15th or May 28th paycheck, depending on your employment status. For example, mid-year hires and mid-year transfers require manual calculation and would see their increase on May 28th.

Additional compensation proposals for the 21-22 school year remain in discussion, including step raises, hourly pay raises, and converting more hourly special education paraprofessionals to full-time with benefits. I encourage you to follow the live-streamed budget commission meetings on the third Thursday of each month and regular Board meetings on the first Monday of each month on the Board's [Facebook page](#). But I want everyone to know that this is one area in which APS continues to prioritize the emotional, physical, and financial well-being of staff. So not only did we avoid furlough days and layoffs, we have found ways to increase our minimum wage to \$15 per hour, increase pay for permanent substitutes, and provide well-being sessions and services.

Vaccination Registration

This week, we began registration for the mega-vaccination event that begins Wednesday, March 24, at Mercedes Benz Stadium. By now, all employees who indicated an interest in those vaccinations have received an email with instructions and links to complete the registration process.

This opportunity for thousands of APS employees to receive COVID-19 vaccinations moves us much, much closer to a healthier and safer school community.

As part of this partnership with the Fulton County Board of Health, we have secured up to 8,000 allocations of the Pfizer vaccine. The vaccination will be delivered in two doses with the first dose to be administered beginning on Wednesday, March 24 (for school-based staff); Friday, March 26 (for district office/operations staff); and Saturday, March 27 (for all staff). Please note that the Fulton County Board of Health has changed the dates for the second dose. That dose will now be administered on Wednesday, April 14, Thursday, April 15, and Sunday, April 18.

Our employees will be among the first in Fulton County to get this round of vaccinations. We are so grateful to the Fulton County Board of Health for their partnership. I also want to remind everyone else who wishes to get the vaccine to register at myvaccinegeorgia.com.

I also want to encourage more of our community to take advantage of the drive-up and walk-up COVID testing services at Douglass High School, 225 Hamilton E. Holmes Ave. 30318. This site is not only a testing site but also a medical research site for a possible over-the-counter test that is being developed nationally. We need more participation to help in the research!

Third-Party Use of APS Facilities

As staff, I want you to be aware of our current policy on third-party use of APS facilities. As part of our response to the pandemic, we restricted the public's use of our buildings and grounds. We will continue to restrict interior usage and rentals of facilities through the start of next school year in August 2021. However, APS partners playing a role in the administration of summer school activities will be permitted use.

I am pleased that we will resume exterior partner and community usage and rentals of APS properties, beginning Monday, March 29. This includes our parking lots, playfields, playgrounds and stadiums. Our partners and community members using those facilities must observe protocols and guidelines as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Telework Reminders

As communicated in January, we understand that unexpected circumstances may require telework for some. For anyone who did not submit a telework request by the January 4th deadline, the online form remains open on an ongoing basis for new personal health situations that may arise, like positive COVID testing or newly-diagnosed personal health conditions. For more information about that process or to apply, visit <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/teleworking>.

While the District will not require individuals who were approved for a telework arrangement to come back to work in a face-to-face environment if they are vaccinated, we realize that some employees may choose to. In this case, an employee should send an email to their supervisor or Employee Relations at OffEmpRelations@atlanta.k12.ga.us requesting to cancel their telework arrangement and provide the date they would like to return to work. Supervisors should forward any requests they receive to their assigned Employee Relations Specialist. Employees will receive a confirmation email with an approved return date from Employee Relations once their request to cancel has been processed.

Thanks as always for your service and dedication! Please stay healthy and be well.

Yours in Service,

Lisa Herring