

2015-16

# Employee Handbook

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



## Welcome

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year with Atlanta Public Schools!

Thank you in advance for your service and dedication to Atlanta's children and Atlanta Public Schools as we open a new chapter in 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. So while 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 2015-16

### Required *Online Ethics Training for All Employees*

By December 11, 2015, *all* employees will again be required to complete the annual online training on ethics and professional standards at APS. **Training must be completed by Friday, December 11, 2015, as a condition of employment.** Check your APS e-mail 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.

### Employee Assistance Program

[Fei Behavioral Health](#), APS' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, promotes staff well-being via resources that resolve personal concerns having an effect on one's health, family life, or job performance. The resources include three (3) free counseling sessions to address issues such as, spousal and other relationship issues; managing change; coping with the loss of a family member or friend; parenting during the teen years; and alcohol and drug dependency. Other fei services include child care locators; college scholarship listings; debt counseling; and legal services referrals. These resources can be accessed 24/7 via phone at 800-638-3327 and online at [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com) with the username aps. For further details about this program please call Sonya Hunte, Employee Engagement Coordinator at 404-802-2370.

### Strategic Plan 2015-2020

In December 2014, the Atlanta Board of Education approved [a five-year strategic plan for APS](#). The guiding principles of the strategic plan are the Four E's:

- EXCELLENCE...*In Everything We Do*
- EQUITY...*In The Distribution Of District Resources*
- ETHICS...*To Protect Our Integrity*
- ENGAGEMENT...*With Our Community*

The strategic plan also includes our updated District mission, vision, and strategic goals.

## **Mission**

With a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career.

## **Vision**

A high-performing school district where students love to learn, educators inspire, families engage and the community trusts the system.

## **Strategic Goals**

- **Academic Program** – Our students will be well-rounded individuals who possess the necessary academic skills and knowledge and are excited about learning.
  - **Talent Management** – We will retain an energized and inspired team of employees who are capable of advancing ever-increasing levels of achievement for students of all backgrounds.
  - **Systems and Resources** – We will improve efficiency (productivity, cost, etc.) while also making decisions (including resource allocations) that are grounded in a strategic academic direction and data.
- Culture** – We will build trust with the community and we will have engaged stakeholders (employees, students, parents, community members, partners, etc.) who are invested in the mission and vision and who support the creation of student-centered learning communities.

## **Policy News**

**The APS Policy Manual has moved!** Go to <http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/policy> to access the new manual in the BoardDocs management system. [Click on this link to access online training on policy in APS and the new manual.](#) Adobe FlashPlayer 9+ is required.

The following are selected policy updates for the 2015-2016 school year:

[Board Policy GAD: Professional Learning](#) - The Atlanta Board of Education recognizes that Atlanta Public Schools' employees are the district's most valued assets and believes that developing their capacity is critical to our mission as a learning organization. Because all employees are responsible for the academic success of our students, the superintendent shall provide a professional learning program for the continuous improvement of the professional, personal, and technical talents of the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) workforce.

To support the professional growth of all employees, each regular, full time staff member shall complete professional learning each year according to a learning plan which is aligned to the employee's performance goals, school or departmental areas of focus, and/or future goals and aspirations that benefit the district. Such training may include approved courses required for professional certification.

[Board Policy IHA: Grading Systems](#) - In support of student success, the Atlanta Board of Education recognizes that providing effective feedback is a powerful strategy to improve student learning and educational outcomes. To this end, the superintendent shall implement and maintain a student evaluation system that is consistent and designed to support the success of each individual student in a rigorous instructional program.

The purpose of academic grades in the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) is to provide timely feedback to students, parents and teachers about how each student is progressing toward mastering standards. Academic grades in APS shall reflect student mastery of academic standards and shall not include behavioral factors. The superintendent shall also establish a separate evaluation of students' work ethic to communicate about students' progress toward non-academic goals such as conduct and attendance. The board authorizes the superintendent to issue administrative regulations to implement this policy to ensure a consistent district-wide system of student evaluation.

Administrative Regulations [IHA-R\(1\)](#), [IHA-R\(2\)](#), and [IHA-R\(3\)](#) provide more detail regarding grading expectations, earning credit through subject area competency, and end-of-course testing.

[Board Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention](#) - In support of student success, the Atlanta Board of Education recognizes that the progression of students from one grade level to the next should be continuous and that students have a right to on-grade-level instruction. The decision to promote or retain a student shall be made using a variety of assessments of a student's mastery of academic standards and readiness for the next grade including state-approved assessments. Retention should be used only after students have been supported through early diagnosis and intervention, the Response to Intervention (RTI) process, and the Student Support Team (SST). The superintendent shall develop and implement uniform procedures for the promotion and retention of students in accordance with state law, State Board of Education rules, and local expectations.

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## Introduction

### About This Handbook

The *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* is designed to communicate the Atlanta Public Schools' (APS) major policies and procedures. The most current version of the *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* can be found in PDF format in the [myAPS Employee Resource Center](#). 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 <http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=211> for the online policy manual.
- Contact the Office of Employee Relations at (404) 802-2345 or Rebecca Kaye, Policy & Governance Advisor, at [rkaye@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:rkaye@atlantapublicschools.us) or (404) 802-2897.

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 commonly 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 Board of Education, Atlanta Board of Education or Atlanta Public Schools, the law, rule, policy or regulation is the controlling authority.

### Mission

With a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college and career.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

Total enrollment in the 2014-2015 school year was 51,145 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in traditional and charter schools. APS will operate 95 schools in 2015-2016. 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:

- Deputy Superintendent
- Chief Accountability and Information Officer
- Chief Academic Officer
- Chief Schools Officer
- Chief Operations Officer
- General Counsel
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Human Resources Officer

The superintendent and senior leadership team are located in the 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: | <a href="#">Leslie Grant</a>      | District 6:      | <a href="#">Eshé Collins</a>          |
| District 2: | <a href="#">Byron Amos</a>        | At-large Seat 7: | <a href="#">Courtney English</a>      |
| District 3: | <a href="#">Matt Westmoreland</a> | At-large Seat 8: | <a href="#">Cynthia Briscoe Brown</a> |
| District 4: | <a href="#">Nancy Meister</a>     | At-large Seat 9: | <a href="#">Jason Esteves</a>         |
| District 5: | <a href="#">Steven Lee</a>        |                  |                                       |

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 located in the Center for Learning and Leadership at 130 Trinity Ave SW, Atlanta, GA 30303. The monthly legislative meetings of the Board are televised 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. You are responsible for understanding APS' ethical standards and applying them in daily activities. You 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 your 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.

### 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 ethics officer in the Law Department at **(404) 802-2832**. 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 policy [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.

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 property and in District vehicles. APS discourages using tobacco 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, 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, including harassment, based on a person'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 legally protected status. Acts of discrimination or harassment committed by any APS employee 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 an 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.

**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:

- 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 offenses to the Office of Employee Relations at 404-802-2345. Employee Relations will thoroughly investigate each complaint and take or recommend appropriate disciplinary or corrective action for sexual harassment incidences. Retaliation against a complainant for reporting a sexual harassment incident is prohibited.

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

## 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](#).

## 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 problems that may arise.

Taking the proper, most effective steps to find a solution can help to maintain morale, enhance job performance, and improve our service to students.

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?

"Complaint" or "grievance" means any claim of an alleged violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of the board's statutes, policies, rules, regulations or written agreement with which the Board and/or APS must comply.

It also includes claims of alleged unlawful discrimination and unfair, unreasonable or abusive treatment.

### Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance

Consider informally discussing any problem with your immediate supervisor before filing a formal grievance. *Do not delay*—grievances must be filed within 10 days of the incident.

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 discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under [GAAA, Equal Opportunity Employment](#). Such claims shall include allegations of hostile work environment.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct under [policy GAEB, Harassment](#).
- Allegations of retaliation or violations of whistle blower 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.
- A photo ID;
- A medical checklist (HR provides this form);
- Appropriate certificates/licenses; and
- A signed loyalty oath, pledged once during your career before a notary public, as Georgia law requires. Human Resources provides this form during onboarding.

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](http://www.gapsc.com) or **(404) 232-2500**.

### E-mail

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

For details, please contact Client Support at [clientsupport@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:clientsupport@atlantapublicschools.us) or **(404) 802-1000**.

## Working at APS

### Work Year

All regular, full-time APS employees work either 190 days, 191 days, 200 days, 220 days or annual duty (242 days). The official, contractual academic year (or work year) and payroll schedule for each of these schedules is as follows:

## **190 Days, 191 Days, 200 Days and 220 Days**

The required working dates for each work year is defined on the [board-approved school calendar](#). The salary for each of these work years is prorated over 12 months. The first pay period is July 1-15 for year round school employees with the first paycheck deposited on or before July 31. For traditional school employees, the first pay period is August 1-15. The first paycheck is deposited on or before August 31.

## **Annual Duty (242 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.

## **Workday Schedules & Punctuality**

The *minimum* on-premises workday for all fulltime employees is 7.5 hours. The 7.5-hour workday for teachers and paraprofessionals includes 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.

Whatever your job is, please be on time and ready to work when you arrive. Being on time is critical to the safety and success of students and for the smooth operations of the school system.

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](#).

## **Records Management/Retention**

Each employee is responsible for maintaining, managing, and producing public records related to his/her work according to state and federal laws and APS policy. Records may be maintained electronically or in hard copy. When no longer needed, you also 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  |
|---|---|
| E-mail  | 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** or [openrecords@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:openrecords@atlantapublicschools.us) *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; so 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 in order 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 is involved in litigation, 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 any records, even if those records would not be required to be maintained under the district's records retention schedule. "Records" means all paper and electronic files including Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, Power Point presentations, memoranda, letters, emails, charts, handwritten notes, notebooks, meeting notes, logs and agendas, appointment books, telephone note pads 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), smart phone or any other external hard drive, USB drive, thumb drive, flash drive, memory stick, DVD, CD or floppy disc. 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 instructional and administrative support. *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](#).

## Unauthorized Tape Recordings

Conversations and communications generally should be free and open among employees. So you and/or anyone acting on your behalf may only use audio or video to record or reproduce any

conversation among employees while on APS premises and/or while conducting APS business if you get the expressed, written consent of everyone 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. Anyone who unlawfully brings weapons to school or school functions shall be subject to prosecution under the provisions of the law. APS employees who violate this policy are also subject to disciplinary action.

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 work space.

- 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 services in the building.
- Refrain from disposing of any food items in the 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 supervisor or Alvah Hardy, executive director of facilities at [ahardy@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:ahardy@atlantapublicschools.us) or (404) 802-3730.

## Pay & Benefits

### Pay Dates

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

### Paid Holidays

As a benefit of employment, all employees of APS receive holiday pay. 190-day, 191-day, 200-day and 220-day employees receive 11 paid holidays each year. Annual duty (242-day) employees receive 12 paid holidays per year. The paid holidays are as follows:

- Independence Day (annual duty only)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (2)
- Winter holidays (3)
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- Spring holidays (2)
- Memorial Day

### 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 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 age 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 Center for Learning and Leadership deck and any voluntary contribution you choose to make to the APS Employee Consolidated Giving Campaign.

### Salary Level

Employees will be placed on the appropriate Board approved salary scheduled based on their years of relevant and verified experience and degree level where applicable. Please refer to the [APS Human Resources Compensation Webpage](#) for information about salary schedules, job pay grades, and compensation guidelines.

### Summer Salary

The pay for full-time employees on 190, 191, 200 and 220 day schedules who are present for the full contract year is prorated in 24 installments throughout the year including the summer months.

Summer pay will also be prorated for 190, 191, 200 and 220 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.

For details, please refer to [policy GARD Employee Hiring and Compensation](#).

## Enrollment of Your Children in APS

All regular, full-time employees may enroll their children in APS tuition-free as a benefit of your employment. All enrollments of APS employees' children in APS schools must be processed through the [Office of Student Relations](#) 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, 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, you must apply for a transfer to a school with space available through the [School Choice Transfer Process](#).

Contact the [Office of Student Relations](#) at [placements@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:placements@atlantapublicschools.us) or **(404) 802-2204** 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:

- [Atlanta Teachers Federal Credit Union](#) – 261 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd., NW Atlanta, GA 30314 **(404) 525-3218**, <http://www.atlantateachersfcu.com/>
- [Fulton County Teacher's Credit Union](#) – 3604 Atlanta Avenue, Hapeville, GA 30354, **(404) 768-4980**, <http://www.ftcu.com/index.html>
- [Pinnacle Credit Union](#) – 536 North Ave., NE Atlanta, GA 30308 **(404) 888-1648**, <http://www.pinnaclecu.org/>

## 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 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.* Watch your APS e-mail in October for instructions on how to enroll and for dates and times when the Employee Benefits department will be able to provide you with assistance 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.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com); username: **aps**
- Toll-free number: **1-800-638-3327**
- 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**.

## 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 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 get hurt on the job, you must report the injury immediately to your immediate supervisor.

The department head will file a detailed injury report. Risk Management must receive this report within 48 hours of your injury. Your personnel file will contain a copy of the full report.

If the State Workers' Compensation Act covers your injury, you are eligible for income benefits if the injury causes you to miss seven 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 refer to "Ending Employment with APS" on page 26 for more information.

## 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 in [regulation GARH-R \(1\) Leaves and Absences: Sick Leave](#).

You may use sick leave when you miss work due to

1. Personal illness
2. Pregnancy and maternity 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 in 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. Your supervisor may ask for a doctor's note upon your return from leave. *Failure to follow your worksite's reporting procedures may result in unexcused, unpaid absences and discipline, up to losing your job.* Calling in sick excessively or without proper cause may also result in discipline, up to losing your job. 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, you may qualify for federal Family and Medical Leave Act leave for extended absences of up to 12 weeks for personal illness/injury, the birth or adoption of a child (both mothers and fathers qualify), or to care for a sick spouse, parent or child. For absences that exceed 5 (five) consecutive days, you must apply for Family and Medical Leave Act leave. You must use your accrued sick leave for the duration of your FMLA absence until it

is exhausted. 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 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

If you go on unpaid leave during the school year, your salary for the remainder of the year will be 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.* Your HR Information Specialist 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 Employee Benefits/Leave department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2365** or **(404) 802-2330**.

## Maternity, Paternity & Child Adoption Leave

Please refer to "Sick Leave/Family and Medical Leave Act" on pages 21-22.

## Personal Leave

You may use up to three days of your accumulated sick leave to be absent from duties for personal reasons each year. You must have accumulated sick leave to be paid for personal days.

For planned absences, you must complete and submit the [Advanced Leave Request Form](#) to your principal or department head as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave coincides with a critical work day, your supervisor may deny the leave. 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 (242-day) employees and employees who worked a 220-day assignment before May 13, 1986, and continue to do so without interruptions 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 your annual leave at any time during the year if your supervisor and division or department head approves it. You must complete and submit the [Advanced Leave Request Form](#) to your principal or department head as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave request coincides with a critical work day, your supervisor may deny the leave.

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."

## Bereavement Leave

If an immediate family member or a relative who lives with you dies, the superintendent may grant

a leave of absence for as many as three workdays with full pay. The immediate family includes your husband, wife, father, mother, grandparent, son, daughter, brother, sister and these relatives-in-law. The superintendent also may grant up to a one-day leave for the death of a relative not in the immediate family. If you wish to be absent for more than the allowed bereavement leave, you must request personal or annual leave.

To request bereavement leave, you must complete and submit the [Advanced Leave Request Form](#) to your principal or department head as soon as possible along with written documentation stating your relationship with the deceased as well as a copy of the program for the funeral/memorial service, the dated obituary or other evidence of the death in your family.

For more information, see [regulation GARH-R\(4\) Leaves and Absences: Bereavement Leave](#) or contact the Employee Benefits/Leave department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2300**.

## 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 Employee Benefits Department with an explanation of the manner in which the study will enhance the employee's work with the district.
- Provide proof of enrollment from the accredited postsecondary institution.
- Provide proof of successful completion for each term the employee is 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 unpaid leave during the school year, your salary for the remainder of the year will be 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.* Your HR Information Specialist 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 Employee Benefits/Leave 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 the 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 Employee Benefits/Leave department at least two 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 Employee Benefits/Leave 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 the [Advanced Leave Request Form](#) to your principal or department head 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 apply 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 Representatives

Employees may act as representatives of other employees in the grievance process if permission is granted by the supervisor. An employee may be absent with 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 any one week. An employee representative may be granted permission for an additional absence in a given week without pay. If permission is denied, the supervisor must state the reasons 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 Director of Disbursements 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 performances and places their evaluations in their personnel files. 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.

### 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. If you return to APS within five years of leaving, the system could credit or "bridge" your service to help determine your salary. You also could be eligible for appointment consideration.
- 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.

### Change in Personal Status

To keep your file current and to ensure seamless, accurate delivery of critical employment information, promptly report the following changes in your personal status via the [e-APS employee portal](#) under "Employee Self Service," *as well as* provide documentation in writing to the indicated division/department:

- Human Resources: Your new name, address, phone number, marital status, insurance policy and/or beneficiary information
- Payroll: Your new marital status and/or number of dependents for income tax purposes

### 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 about how APS creates plans for reductions in force when necessary, please refer to [policy GAKA Reduction in Force](#).

## Separation Process

If you separate from APS employment, you must follow the formal separation process or risk having your final paycheck delayed. Your official separation request must be tendered the [e-APS employee portal](#) under “Employee Self Service.” The steps in this process may vary, depending on your reason for leaving. The steps include, but are not limited to the following:

- An exit questionnaire
- The return of all APS property
- Repayment of any monies owed to APS

## 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. You must retain evidence of your leave balance in case any dispute arises. Similarly, if you leave the district and eventually retire from the Teacher Retirement System, 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 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 and phone numbers, transcripts, medical forms and evaluations.

Only *you* may view your entire file, unless a court order or other legal mandates require otherwise. The law does protect certain information, including pre-employment information, letters of recommendation and medical records. Therefore these items are not available for viewing. You may view your file at the Human Resource Services office by appointment only. A representative(s) may review your file with you if desired.

For details or to schedule an appointment, please contact your [regional or division contact in Human Resources](#). For information about the Georgia Open Records Act, contact Open Records at [openrecords@atlantapublicschools.us](mailto:openrecords@atlantapublicschools.us) or **(404) 802-2811**.

## Employment Verification

The Office of Human Resource verifies that you are employed. The Human Resource Information Management Unit requires at least three workdays to fulfill your request. If you want employment verification, please contact your [regional or division contact in Human Resources](#) or fax a written request on company letterhead with your signature to **404-802-1306**.

If a company is not requesting this information, but you need it for other reasons, submit a request using the appropriate form from Human Resource Services.

If you want this unit to verify any other information, you must submit a written request or an appropriately executed release, specifying that some other organization will receive this written information.

## 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) 802-2300**.

### Resignation

If you resign from your position, your resignation is accepted at the time you tender it to your supervisor. Upon your departure, APS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave. See [policy GAO Employee Resignation](#).

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.  
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