

Date: January 3, 2018

For ACTION: _____

For INFORMATION: X_____

Board Agenda: Yes _____
No X_____

FROM: Joseph Makolandra, Chief Human Resources Officer

THROUGH: Lois Berlin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent

TO: The Honorable Ramee Gentry, Chairman, and Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: **Hiring Process**

This memo is a follow-up to comments and questions raised at the School Board meeting held on December 14, 2017 pertaining to ACPS' hiring processes. Specifically, concerns were raised about ACPS losing quality teaching candidates due to delays in hiring. There is a perception that our process delays the hiring of quality candidates and it is this delay that causes ACPS to lose quality candidates to surrounding school divisions. The hiring process at ACPS is in alignment with best practices and is necessary to ensure an equitable process is completed. To address this perception, I have provided a summary of the key aspects of the application and hiring process in order to clarify where delays might occur.

Job Application

From the perspective of the applicant, the process begins when s/he completes an ACPS online application. Each applicant must complete an initial profile that can be used to apply for an unlimited number of licensed positions going forward. This initial profile consists of experience, qualifications, education, etc. It is important to note that after the profile is completed, an applicant is not considered for a position until he/she *applies* for a specific vacancy.

Posting of Vacancies

A vacancy posting is either for a specific vacancy or a pool vacancy. A specific vacancy is an opening caused by an employee's resignation, termination or retirement from a particular position. For example, when a third grade teacher resigns from John Adams Elementary School, Human Resources will post a third grade teaching position specifically for John Adams after three criteria are met:

1. Human Resources receives the resignation paperwork submitted by the incumbent who is leaving, and
2. the principal submits a requisition to HR to post the vacancy, and
3. the budget supports the filling of this position.

A specific vacancy can occur anytime during the school year. The notification provided by the employee determines how long ACPS has to fill the position. The time between the notification and the employee's last day of work can vary in length from 2 weeks for a resignation to 6 months prior to a retirement.

A pool vacancy is posted early in the spring for hard-to-fill areas such as Special Education, EL, Math, Science and Dual Language for the following school year. Pool vacancies provide an advantage over specific vacancies because they allow ACPS to begin receiving applications and to build a pool of applicants in hard-to-fill subject areas even though a specific vacancy has not been identified. The downside of pool positions for the candidate is a delay in feedback or in assignment to a specific school/positon. These positions remain open for the year, which consequently means that the applicant would potentially not receive a regret letter or a notification that the position was filled for quite a while. At the beginning of each recruiting season, we close these vacancies and create a new open vacancy for the new recruiting year.

Interview process

Principals schedule and conduct interviews and must complete reference checking on the selected candidate. There can sometimes be delays if references are difficult to contact. Following a satisfactory reference check, the principal submits a Request to Hire to Human Resources.

One component which affects timeliness and can delay consideration of external candidates is our licensed staff transfer process. In the early spring, the initial list of vacancies identified for the next school year are posted internally and limited to existing staff who may interview to transfer. Principals do not have to select internal candidates, but must interview them before interviewing and requesting hire of an external candidate. This may contribute to the perception by external candidates (especially those who have applied early for pool positions) that we are not moving quickly enough.

Request to Hire

Upon receipt of the Request to Hire in Human Resources, the Licensure Specialist in HR will review the candidate's credentials to determine whether s/he qualifies for a Virginia teaching license. In most cases, a determination can be made quickly and approval is given to the Employment Specialist to proceed with the offer. In cases where there is a question, the candidate would be contacted and asked to provide the necessary documentation to ascertain license eligibility. The process culminates with the offer made to the candidate.

Factors which contradict the perception that there are hiring delays:

1. Principals are extremely sensitive to losing quality candidates. They understand the inefficiency of spending too much time interviewing, only to lose candidates due to lapse of time. Frequently, they will ask HR to give priority to a hire because they know the candidate may be looking at other school divisions. They will also find ways to communicate their interest directly to the selected candidate, letting them know s/he will be contacted soon by Human Resources.
2. Employment Services has an internal goal of responding to every Request to Hire within 24 hours of receipt by contacting the selected candidate. The initial contact with the candidate is usually much sooner than 24 hours since HR understands the importance of making our interest and intent known to those candidates who have been selected for hire. We do not want to lose a candidate because Human Resources is not moving quickly enough.
3. Employment Services places a high priority on sharing the results of interviews which occur in the spring and at the ACPS job fair. The names of those candidates who have been interviewed and identified as Outstanding or Very Good are shared with the principals. This process allows administrators to concentrate their time and effort on the most promising applicants.

CONTACT PERSON: Joseph Makolandra, Chief Human Resources Officer

ATTACHMENT: none