

BOARD BRIEF

Date: March 22, 2019

For ACTION _____

For INFORMATION X

Board Agenda: Yes ___

No X

FROM: Betty E. Hobbs, Ed.D., Acting Chief Human Resources Officer

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Department of Human Resources Staff

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Recruiting and Retaining Highly Qualified Teachers

BACKGROUND: ACPS Strategic Plan, Goal 3, An Exemplary Staff states, “ACPS will recruit, develop, support and retain a staff that meets the needs of every student.” It further states that ACPS will hire the best employees possible and create an environment that motivates, competitively compensates, and retains them. Recommendation 9 in the Gibson Audit states, “Implement practices to proactively identify and address the root cause of employee turnover and use this data to inform recruitment and retention strategies.”

We find ourselves in a highly competitive environment when recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. As we compete with neighboring jurisdictions, we must attract the best and brightest teachers to be committed to ACPS and our diverse student population. We need teachers who:

- are successful;
- have the potential to become, or are “superstars”;
- can utilize resources;
- are visionaries;
- have integrity; and
- have passion for students.

Since 2006, our practice has been to pay new teachers for a maximum experience credit of 12 years, regardless of years of experience, with special education teachers receiving an additional step after years of experience are calculated. The step experience conversion guidelines have not been adjusted as we compete to hire highly qualified teachers. Districts that ACPS competes with to hire teachers have higher caps (Arlington 16 years, Fairfax 15 years, Loudoun 15 years, Prince William 15+ years).

ACPS salary placement guidelines are in the ACPS Salary Schedule (page 4) and in the Compensation and Benefits Section on the ACPS website under salary placement guidelines.

Of the 281 new teachers hired for the 2018-19 school year, from February 2018 through January 2019, fifty-five (55) or about 20% were hired at step 12 even though they had 13 or more years of teaching experience.

Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policies and Board Initiatives, researched the policies to see if the School Board is required to approve salary placement guidelines. Policy GBCA states, "The Alexandria City School Board shall annually establish and approve a salary schedule for all employees." The policy does not state that the School Board shall approve salary placement guidelines.

The ACPS FY 2020 Proposed Budget (page 52) states, "All adjustments to ACPS salary scales are subject to School Board approval and are generally part of the normal budget development process for the subsequent fiscal year." This does not state that salary placement guidelines should be included.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Change step experience hiring guidelines to indicate that ACPS will provide the maximum credit for teacher experience for up to 16 years with teachers receiving an additional step as needed to recruit and hire teachers who have additional training in critical shortage areas such as special education, dual language, and mathematics. This will allow us to be more competitive with the surrounding jurisdictions.
- Remove the step experience conversion guidelines from the ACPS Salary Schedule and retain the guidelines, with adjustment as needed, in the Compensation and Benefits Section on the ACPS website.

IMPACT

- The ACPS Salary Schedule, with the ranges of salaries for placement, was accounted for in the budget development process and approved by the School Board during the adoption of the budget.

RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends School Board review.

ATTACHMENTS

- 190322_Chart Showing Cap on Years for Experience for Licensed Employees
- 190322_Policy GCBA Staff Salary Schedules
- 190322_Page 52 of the ACPS FY 2020 Proposed Budget
- 190322_Step/Experience Credit Guidelines on page 4 of the FY 2019 Teachers Salary Scale

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