



FCPS Audit Report: 21-1002 - Hiring and Onboarding Practices

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Office of Auditor General

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Executive Summary

Office of Auditor General (OAG) conducted a performance audit of Hiring and Onboarding Practices in accordance with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 audit plan approved by the Fairfax County School Board.

As one of the largest employers in the greater Washington D.C. area employing approximately 25,000 employees, the mission of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Department of Human Resources (HR) is to build, retain, and serve a world-class workforce committed to educational excellence. The HR offices facilitate hiring and onboarding practices for FCPS new hires and provide an integral part in supporting the HR mission. In addition, the Office of Professional Life and Family Engagement (OPLFE) offers a wide range of professional development and training opportunities for FCPS new hires such as an induction program for school-based personnel. Hiring managers at the school and department level also have a unique role in the onboarding of new hires for a successful beginning with FCPS.

The scope of this audit includes an evaluation of hiring and onboarding practices from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 to capture pre-COVID-19 operations and the current operations used during COVID-19. The objectives of the audit were to perform the following:

- To evaluate hiring policies and procedures of new employees and review for consistent adherence at schools and central offices.
- To ensure controls exist around employee verification and eligibility.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the onboarding process.
- To determine if current process ensures new hires and the respective schools or offices maintained necessary information and documentation.
- To benchmark hiring and onboarding procedures to identify any areas for improvement.

As a result of this audit, OAG identified one high risk finding, five moderate risk findings, and one observation. A summary of the findings and recommendations are provided below:

- **Finding 1 – Expansion of the Principal Pool to a Principal Pipeline:** OAG noted that HR and OPLFE lacks the necessary support and tracking systems to fully implement the Principal Pipeline Initiative. OAG recommends that HR and OPLFE be provided the support needed to fully implement the Principal Pipeline Initiative in order to provide a more effective method for addressing the needs of FCPS schools.
- **Finding 2 – Timely Updates to the Regulation:** OAG noted that nine out of 23 directives for the hiring and onboarding process were not reviewed or updated, as required. OAG recommends that HR facilitate the policy review, and update the regulations, as needed.
- **Finding 3 – HR Operational Efficiencies:** OAG noted that the current HR operating ratios for staffing are below industry averages and there are inconsistent hiring practices for schools and departments. OAG recommends that FCPS assess HR needs to ensure optimal operating efficiency and determine the need for enhancing the current recruitment team to ensure recruitment of the best qualified and diverse candidates. OAG also recommended that HR make necessary updates to the instructional hiring framework to ensure consistency in the hiring practices. HR has taken the necessary actions and OAG has since closed this recommendation.
- **Finding 4 – Consistency in the Hiring Process for Temporary Hourly Employees:** OAG noted there are inconsistencies with the recruitment and selection of temporary employees that may prevent HR from ensuring equity and diversity

when hiring temporary hourly employees. OAG recommends HR review the current practices for hiring of temporary hourly employees.

- **Finding 5 – Employee File Maintenance:** OAG noted that required hiring documentation was not maintained in the personnel files as required. OAG recommends that HR implement controls to ensure proper maintenance of documentation or assess the need for an electronic file maintenance system.
- **Finding 6 – Effective Onboarding Practices and Professional Development:** OAG noted issues that impact the effectiveness of proper onboarding of employees and alignment with the strategic plan, such as, no orientation for operational employees and no established or consistent onboarding practices required at the school and department level. OAG recommends that onboarding practices specifically related to professional development are assessed to include an orientation for operational staff, updates to introduce aspects of ethics, and provide guidance to assist with onboarding at school and department levels. We also recommend that HR implement a process to obtain feedback on hiring and onboarding practices.

The one observation recommends that FCPS consider exploring options for obtaining an appropriate human capital management system that provides resource planning and able to track and provide HR data to decision makers.

HR and OPLFE concur with all the findings and recommendations included in this report.

We appreciate the consultation, cooperation, and courtesies extended to our staff by HR and OPLFE during this audit.

Background, Scope and Objectives, and Methodology

Background

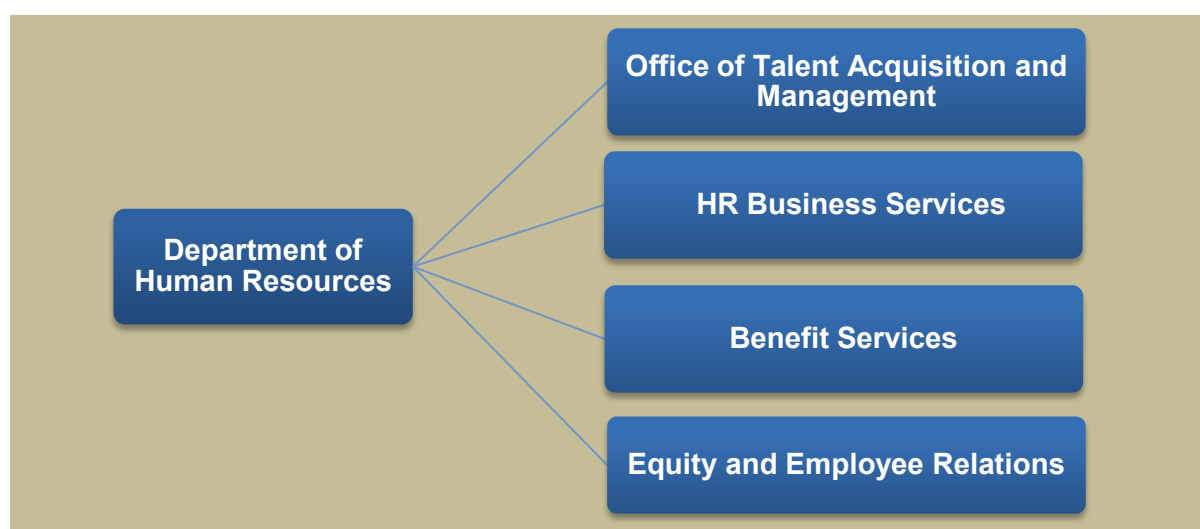
As one of the largest employers in the greater Washington D.C. area employing approximately 25,000 employees, the mission of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Department of Human Resources (HR) is to build, retain, and serve a world-class workforce committed to educational excellence. Examples of career opportunities available at FCPS are summarized below in **Table 1 FCPS Categories of Career Opportunities**:

Table 1 FCPS Categories of Career Opportunities

Categories	Description
Principal Pool	A principal pool is utilized to fill principal vacancies, to help increase and diversify FCPS' candidate pool, and to ensure greater transparency around how FCPS selects its school leaders.
Administrative	School-Based Educational Administrators, Assistant Principals, School Psychologist, Social Workers, and other School based and Central Administrative positions.
Instructional	Teachers, School Counselors, Librarians, Instructional Assistants, and Substitute teachers and assistants.
Operational and Support	Non-instructional School-Based and Central office staff including positions from the following departments and positions: Safety and Security, Facilities Management, Human Resources, Bus Drivers, Trades, Financial Services, and Information Technology.
Temporary Hourly	Temporary employees are hired on an as needed basis and may be hired to fill designated temporary assignments.

The following HR offices facilitate hiring and onboarding practices for FCPS new hires and provide an integral part in supporting the HR mission. **Figure 1 Department of Human Resources** below depicts the four offices within HR.

Figure 1 Department of Human Resources



Office of Talent Acquisition and Management

The Office of Talent Acquisition and Management (TAM) is responsible for the recruitment and hiring of a diverse workforce. Within TAM, there are three hiring teams including the administrative hiring team, the instructional hiring team, which is further broken down by secondary and elementary staffing, and the support hiring team. In addition to the hiring teams, the TAM office has a team responsible for hiring and maintaining a pool of substitute teachers, a recruitment team, and a licensure team to ensure employees maintain appropriate licensures.

Office of HR Business Services

The Office of HR Business Services (HRBS) is responsible for processing new hires, maintaining official personnel records, providing employment verification, administering FCPS onboarding program and the Employee Engagement Survey. HRBS is divided into three functions: HR Communications and Client Services, HR Technology, and Salary Services. HR Communications and Client Services' responsibility focuses on ensuring new hires go through an extensive background check and employment eligibility process. HR Technology administers and monitors onboarding to ensure successful completion by new hires.

Office of Benefit Services

The Office of Benefit Services (OBS) is responsible for the management of all employee insurance, savings programs that include medical, pharmacy, vision and dental programs; healthcare and dependent care flexible spending accounts; and 403(b) and 457(b) tax-deferred retirement savings programs. OBS' structure is separated into different sections to fulfil the office's area of responsibilities which include sections for Disability and Leave, Employee Insurance and Financial Benefits, Classification and Compensation, and Wellness Program. New hires complete enrollment in benefit programs during the second half of onboarding and must elect those benefits prior to the 30-day enrolment period deadline.

Office of Equity and Employee Relations

The Office of Equity and Employee Relations (EER) is responsible for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of staff and compliance with federal, state, and local laws, as well as FCPS policies and regulations affecting equal opportunity in education and employment.

Hiring Process: Recruitment, Selection, and Appointment

In general, the hiring process of new employees begins with recruitment efforts led by the recruitment team who work in coordination with the three hiring teams in TAM. Methods for recruitment may include job fairs, networking events and informational sessions. Job advertisements, including posting of all employment opportunities on the FCPS Careers Page, allow a world-wide audience to have access to the opportunities. FCPS administrative employment opportunities are posted to several job boards using scraping or spidering technology to post all employment opportunities from FCPS Careers page to their job boards. In addition, university-based career services platforms such as Handshake and Symplicity are used for teaching, administrative, and other targeted vacancies. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are also used as recruiting sources for teaching, substitute, school bus drivers, administrative and other targeted positions. As a result of COVID-19 and facility closures, recruitment efforts have shifted to have more of a virtual online interaction. The reopening of facilities has not impacted this shift.

To apply and be considered for an advertised vacancy, interested persons must apply as specified in the advertisement and an applicant must comply with published application procedures by the advertised deadline when applying for a position. Candidates must apply online by phone, tablet, or computer through the BrassRing application system/portal

Additionally, the recruitment, selection, and appointment processes may vary based on the category of the position. These processes are completed in the following FCPS regulations:

- Regulation 4150, *Administrative Staff – Promotions and Appointments*
- Regulation 4111, *Guidelines for Employment of Teacher-Scale Personnel*
- Regulation 4152, *Guidelines for the Employment of Unified-Scale (US) Personnel*
- Policy 4310, *Authorization for Employment – Temporary Personnel*
- Regulation 4310, *Authorization for Conditions of Employment*
- Regulation 4120, *Contracts—Teachers, Other Licensed Professionals, Transportation Personnel, Food and Nutrition Services Personnel, Athletic Coaching or Extra-Duty Assignments*
- Regulation 4311, *Substitute Personnel – Teacher and Instructional Assistants*
- Regulation 4314, *Employment of Teacher of Homebound Students*
- Regulation 4235, *Employment Actions and Records – Summer Employment*
- Regulation 4313, *Employment of Adult and Community Education*

Onboarding Process

HR has developed an onboarding process at the system level but into two parts. The first part of the onboarding system that allows newly hired or rehired employees the opportunity to review and complete relevant Human Resource, and Payroll processes. The second part of the onboarding system includes enrolment in employee benefit options. A flowchart of the onboarding process for a contracted employee is included in Appendix A of the report.

Besides a system-wide approach of onboarding new hires, training is another process in FCPS Onboarding program. FCPS Regulation 9001, *Professional Practice and Educational Planning – Professional Development Opportunities* requires professional development

programs, trainings, and activities be in alignment with the division's strategic goals and be based on the needs and interests of the employee in support of their job-related skills and knowledge, as well as supporting their career development.

The Office of Professional Life and Family Engagement (OPLFE) offers a wide range of professional development and training opportunities for FCPS new hires. In addition, hiring managers at the school and department level each have a unique role in the onboarding of new hires for a successful beginning with FCPS.

The following is offered by OPLFE for school-based employees:

Great Beginnings Teacher Induction Program

Great Beginnings is a comprehensive new teacher induction program with a unified mission of supporting new teachers that has quality mentoring practices, professional teaching standards, classroom-based teacher learning, commitment and support, and ongoing program assessment. The induction program curriculum is based on standards from New Teacher Center, teacher performance evaluation standards, and student performance data information. The teacher induction program varies based on the teacher's years of experience consisting of the following:

- The Great Beginnings (0-1 Year): The Next Generation Program consists of two parts: the week-long Summer Institute and After School Cohort Seminars. The week-long Summer Institute provides essential information and support to teachers preparing them for the first days of school and transitioning them to the Professional Learning Community of Fairfax County teachers. Teachers in the program also form collegial relationships with other beginning teachers while learning from one another. Additionally, the Summer Institute includes the HR Onboarding component.
- The Great Beginnings (More than 2 Years): Enriching the Experience Program is designed for experienced instructional employees who are new or returning to FCPS. The Great Beginnings: Enriching the Experience Program consists of two parts: the week-long Summer Institute and After School Cohort Seminars. Additionally, the Summer Institute includes the HR Onboarding component.
- The Great Beginnings (2nd Year at FCPS): Continuing the Journey Program is for second-year teachers who already had a first year in Fairfax County Public Schools. This program extends the induction for second-year elementary-level general education, middle, and high school teachers, art and music (General/Vocal), and special education teachers of the learning and emotionally disabled.
- The Great Beginnings (3rd Year at FCPS): Expanding Your Horizons Teacher Induction Program is designed for third-year elementary teachers. These teachers are invited to continue their professional collaboration and networking with colleagues, while expanding opportunities for dialogue and reflection about their practice and profession.

The Principal Induction Program

The Principal Induction Program (PIP) is designed to meet the immediate informational and leadership needs of new principals as well as experienced principals who are new to their schools. PIP provides a cohort setting where colleagues collaborate on topics such as:

- Finance
- Cultural Proficiency
- Communications
- Mission and Vision
- Human Resource Management

- Instructional Leadership

Each new principal is informed of his/her professional development responsibilities related to the PIP at the time of appointment and is included in the ongoing communication about the Principal Induction Program. Newly hired principals engage in the activities of the cohort at any point in the year hired, repeating missed topics the following year. Newly hired Principals will be notified of PIP dates at the time of appointment.

School Based Administrator Induction Program

The School-Based Administrator Induction Program (SBAIP) is designed to support new school administrators in their first year of service in the position. The induction programs are based on the national PSEL standards, as well as FCPS leader evaluation standards. There is collaboration with Region and Department leaders on data-based trends affecting new leaders.

During SBAIP, essential information about school leadership is presented to support the learning of new Assistant Principals, Directors of Student Services and Directors of Student Activities. Topics include:

- Managing Student Discipline
- Human Resources
- School Finance
- Communication and Community Relations
- Special Education

SBAIP members also participate in Fierce Conversations, a two-day course. Fierce transforms conversations to promote productivity, accountability, and develop leadership skills.

As new school-based administrators are appointed, candidates are informed of the expectations for participation in SBAIP, beginning attendance at the point in the program calendar which coincides with their appointment. Newly hired administrators will be notified of SBAIP dates at the time of appointment. If hired after September 1, new administrators have the opportunity to attend missed sessions of interest the following year.

Scope and Objectives

OAG conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), with the exception of peer review. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were to perform the following:

- To evaluate hiring policies and procedures of new employees and review for consistent adherence at schools and central offices.
- To ensure controls exist around employee verification and eligibility.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the onboarding process.
- To determine if current process ensures new hires and the respective schools or offices maintained necessary information and documentation.
- To benchmark hiring and onboarding procedures to identify any areas for improvement.

The scope of this audit includes an evaluation of hiring and onboarding practices from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 to capture pre-COVID-19 operations and the current operations used during COVID-19.

As required by GAGAS, OAG assessed whether internal control was significant to the audit objectives. OAG's assessment included the use of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission internal control framework. The framework includes five components: Control Environment; Risk Assessment; Control Activities; Information and Communication; and Monitoring; along with 17 related principles. OAG determined that all five components of internal control and the 17 related principles were significant to the audit objectives.

Methodology

To satisfy the audit objectives, the audit team performed the following:

- Reviewed applicable laws, rules, regulations, and FCPS policies, regulations, and standard operating procedures.
- Interviewed key personnel from HR to gain an understanding of pre and current COVID-19 operations and potential changes post-COVID-19 to hiring and onboarding operations.
- Performed an analysis on data for the recruitment and hiring of new hires during the scope period.
- Researched best and leading practices from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a professional organization.
- Compared FCPS stated hiring and onboarding practices against practices at benchmark school districts and those commonly used in other organizations.
- Examined hiring and onboarding documentation, including those maintained HR, central offices, and schools.

Sample Selection

Test of Design

OAG assessed the design of the controls related to the hiring processes such as applicant screening process, candidate selection, appointment, and retention requirements for positions. To test the design of these processes, the audit team used IDEA to select a random sample of six out of 1,316 job requisitions. The sample of six included job requisitions for three operational and three administrative positions to provide the audit team with an understanding of the controls implemented as well as the flow of information and documentation for each category of positions. In addition, OAG reviewed three teacher positions and three principal candidates from the pool of qualified applications and candidates maintained to assess the associated design of controls. OAG also selected a sample of newly hired contracted employees from these categories of positions to perform further tests of controls and operating effectiveness, which is detailed in the section below.

Test of Controls and Operating Effectiveness

OAG performed tests of controls and operating effectiveness related to the request to hire, employment verification and eligibility, and onboarding processes. OAG also performed test of controls to ensure adherence to retention requirements for personnel files and inspected documentation maintained in the screening, selection, and appointment processes for the

position associated with the new employees. The audit team used IDEA to randomly select a sample of 30 newly hired positions out of a total population of approximately 2,821 contracted and 1,649 temporary positions filled during the scope period. The audit team obtained the personnel files and other related hiring documentation for the sample selection which included 15 contracted and 15 temporary employees.

In addition, the audit team was able to collect feedback on the employee's experience with the hiring and onboarding process utilizing this sample which is detailed in the Audit Surveys section below.

Benchmarking and Audit Surveys

Benchmarking

OAG reached out to six school districts to solicit information related to hiring and onboarding practices. We received responses from three of the six school districts. A summary of their responses is listed below:

- Some components of the HR structure slightly differed from FCPS for two out of three school districts. In both school districts the professional learning component, similar to OPLFE, is under the HR departments while OPLFE is under the Chief Equity Office. In one of the two school districts, employee engagement and labor relations, similar to EER, is not under the purview of the HR assistant superintendent. The other school district has a HR structure similar to FCPS.
- All three school districts utilize employment pools for hiring principals. Some key differences are noted as follows:
 - One school district indicated that employment pools are also utilized for supportive services personnel, such as entry-level positions and building services and temporary employees. This school district also indicated that it follows the Principal Pipeline approach from the Wallace Foundation and have utilized school-based administrator pools to include principals as well as assistant principals.
 - One school district does not utilize pools for instructional positions and hiring is site-based.
 - One school district utilizes hiring pools for teaching positions rather than hiring for each individual school.
- The three school districts indicated the following related to ensuring equity in the hiring process:
 - One school district has built specific recruitment teams with dedicated recruiters and found that equity in hiring means being equitable systemwide. They are developing a training module for recognizing and interrupting unconscious bias in the hiring process, assessed equity in the pre-screening questions to determine a candidate's capacity and belief around equity, and conducting an antiracist audit systemwide.
 - One school district ensures that the equity is on the front end of the recruitment process and priority areas. Their goal is that the workforce reflects the large Latin American student and community population.
 - One school district avoids identifying candidates by race, gender, ethnicity and gender until the candidates interview to allow for non-discrimination.
- The school districts indicated that the HR systems used are not completely integrated and manual entry may be required at some points throughout the hiring process. One school district utilizes Lawson, an applicant tracking system, DocuWare to

electronically maintain personnel files, and an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Another school district utilizes Oracle for application tracking, and a custom-tailored human resource information system (HRIS) and supplements with Google services. The third school district uses WinOcular for recruiting and applications services.

- Onboarding practices are conducted at the three school districts. The onboarding practices at one school district is very similar to FCPS practices as there is an orientation style onboarding conducted for teachers like Great Beginnings, no orientation for operational employees, and additional onboarding may be conducted at the school level depending on the school. This school district indicated that its goal is to provide an orientation experience for operational employees as well that will last a year and provide a global understanding of the organization. Another school district provides online onboarding for all employees. This school district also provides an induction for school administrators, an assembly for teachers and an orientation for classified or operational employees.
- All three school districts indicated that changes were required in the hiring and onboarding processes due to COVID-19, such as implementation of electronic processes and virtual recruitment events and interviews.

Audit Surveys

OAG surveyed the same 30 employees as the audit sample. The audit surveys were used to solicit feedback on the employees' experience with the hiring and onboarding process. OAG was able to send audit surveys to 27 out of 30 employees as three employees were no longer employed. Out of the 27 audit surveys sent, OAG received a total of 12 responses consisting of eight contracted and four temporary employees. The responses are detailed in Appendix B and Appendix C of the report.

OAG also surveyed six departments with the highest number of employees hired during the audit period. The audit surveys for departments were used to obtain feedback on the current onboarding processes and determine if additional onboarding practices are implemented in their departments. All six departments responded to the audit survey. The responses from the departments are detailed in Appendix D of the report.

OAG is free from organizational impairments to independence in our reporting as defined by government auditing standards. OAG reports directly to the Fairfax County School Board through the Audit Committee. We report the results of our audits to the Audit Committee and the reports are made available to the public via the FCPS website.

Audit Findings, Recommendations, and Management's Responses

The finding(s) within this report has been attributed a risk rating in accordance with established risk criteria as defined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Risk Criteria

Type	Description
High	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controls are not in place or are inadequate.• Compliance with legislation and regulations or contractual obligations is inadequate.• Important issues are identified that could negatively impact the achievement of FCPS program/operational objectives.
Moderate	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controls are in place but are not sufficiently complied with.• Compliance with subject government regulations or FCPS policies and established procedures is inadequate, or FCPS policies and established procedures are inadequate.• Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.
Low	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controls are in place but the level of compliance varies.• Compliance with government regulations or FCPS policies and established procedures varies.• Issues identified are less significant but opportunities exist that could enhance FCPS operations.

OAG identified one high risk finding and five moderate risk findings. OAG also identified one observation which is detailed below.

Finding 1: Expansion of Principal Pool to a Principal Pipeline

Risk Rating: *Moderate – Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.*

Condition:

HR and OPLFE utilize aspects of the Principal Pipeline Initiative¹ (PPI) to structure the use of employment pools for the recruitment and selection of FCPS principals. However, several key aspects of the PPI including the tracking of principal talent to determine the best fit for schools and the use of employment pools for other school administrators such as, assistant principals or potential/aspiring school leaders have not been implemented. Additionally, the leader standards used to center equity while building capacity, guiding the work of school-based administrators, and serving as evaluation criteria are a driving force for all other Principal Pipeline work, including the FCPS employment pools. Efforts to revise current leader standards from 2008 will require human and financial resources.

Criteria:

The Wallace Foundation² fosters equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people. The Wallace Foundation concluded that principal pipelines could serve as a strategic lever for districts to promote school improvement. The foundation suggested that a comprehensive principal pipeline would be more effective than business-as usual approaches to the preparation and management of school leaders, and it launched the PPI in the summer of 2011 to test that hypothesis in six districts:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina
- Denver Public Schools, Colorado
- Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia
- Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida
- New York City Department of Education, New York
- Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland.

Principal pipeline activities are undertaken by a *district* and its partners to prepare, support, manage, and oversee the work of school leaders in order to ensure their effectiveness (Korach and Cosner, 2017). Principal pipelines comprise four key components: (1) leader standards that guide all pipeline activities, (2) preservice preparation opportunities for assistant principals (APs) and principals (including not only the preservice training itself but also recruitment and selection into these opportunities), (3) selective hiring and placement, and (4) on-the-job induction, evaluation, and support.

In addition, the pipeline must develop the capacity, culture, and infrastructure to sustain the work across components. Principal pipeline activities include activities that are referred to as principal talent management or human capital management.

^{1 2} The Principal Pipeline Initiative developed by the Wallace Foundation who invested efforts in six districts across the United States to develop principal pipelines through engagement in activities related to the preparation, hiring, development, evaluation, and support of school leaders.
(Susan M. Gates, 2019)

Cause:

Based on the current processes, other school-based administrators are hired by principals. HR does not have control over hiring administrative hires outside of principals. Currently HR lacks the necessary support and tracking systems to fully implement the Principal Pipeline Initiative.

Effect:

This may be a challenge for FCPS and not afford FCPS the opportunity to focus on the needs of each school and to match the best principal and assistant principal in order to meet the individual needs of the schools, community and FCPS as a whole.

Recommendation:

1. OAG recommends that HR and OPLFE are provided the necessary support needed to fully implement the Principal Pipeline Initiative in order to provide a more effective method for addressing the needs of FCPS schools.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

Staff from the Offices of Talent Acquisition and Management and Professional Learning and Family Engagement concur with the findings and recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General.

High-stakes accountability, multiple-measure teacher evaluation systems, heightened policy attention to educational equity, and other changes have altered expectations for what leaders need to know, how they spend their time, and the outcomes—both what and for whom— they pursue. (Grissom, Egalite, Lindsey (2021) How Principals Affect Students and Schools.)

As identified in a recent study published through the RAND corporation, “a *high-quality school leader affects dozens of teachers and hundreds or thousands of students. It is a pivotal role*”. (Gates, Baird Master, Chavez-Herrerlas (2019) Principal Pipelines, A Feasible, Affordable, and Effective way for Districts to Improve Schools). The principal pipelines consist of 6 domains: Leader Standards, Pre-Service Preparedness, Selective Hiring and Placement (Principal Pool), Principal Supervisors, Ongoing Evaluations and Support, and Leadership Tracking System. Each module is a necessary component to build a strong cadre of administrators that are successfully equipped with the needed skills and support to lead schools in the 21 century. The principal pool selection process was implemented in the fall of 2017. The pool process provides Fairfax County Public Schools an opportunity to build a pool of qualified and vetted candidates that are eligible to apply for current or future principal vacancies. The principal pool is an avenue to measure preparedness for the principalship. It is one domain of the full principal pipeline.

To implement the principal pool domain in the fall of 2017, an existing specialist position was reclassified and elevated to include the need for school-based experience. Additionally, an individual was employed on an hourly basis to assist with the on-going development of assessment tasks, matrices/rubrics, candidate care, and candidate communication. The principal pool process encompasses several steps for candidates. Each step application and essays, online assessment (data task), and onsite assessments (observation task, interview, and scenario task) require new materials and assessment documents to be developed for most

cycles. The development of authentic tasks that assess preparedness for the principalship aligned to the leadership standards requires a significant amount of time and resources from the administrative team and executive principals. The full principal pool selection process is facilitated twice a year. Changes in staffing were critical to ensure successful implementation and to ensure successful continuation of the pool process throughout the ongoing years.

Effective school leadership is a strong lever that impacts student achievement in a positive way second only to the classroom teacher. The next step in developing a strong principal pool is to develop and implement an assistant principal pool. Implementing an assistant principal pool would provide the school division with an earlier look at and development of a deep leadership bench. Like the principal pool candidates in the assistant principal pool would be provided with strategic professional development. Using the principal pool process as a framework to implement an assistant principal pool would result in a cadre of administrators that have the skills necessary to support the different and unique needs of FCPS 199 schools and centers.

Additionally, the development of an assistant principal pool would provide an avenue to further diversify the administrative talent pool.

Administrators of color bring a number of unique strengths: More frequent exposure to people of color in authoritative positions can replace stereotyping and unconscious biases with acceptance and trust; leaders of color have a distinct advantage when interacting with community members that share their racial or ethnic background; and finally, leaders of color can contribute nuance and perspective for academic programs targeting students of color. (Hansen and Quintero (2018) School leadership: An untapped opportunity to draw young people of color into teaching).

It is critically important that Fairfax County Public Schools continue to look for opportunities to further diversify the leadership of our schools. There is some evidence to support that the establishment of an assistant principal pool would be beneficial to further diversify administrative talent across the school division. Current demographic statistics for principal hires since implementation of the FCPS principal pool (2017-2020):

- 70% White
- 21% Black
- 4% Hispanic
- 4% Asian
- 1% Two or More races

compared to national statistics (2017-2018) which was

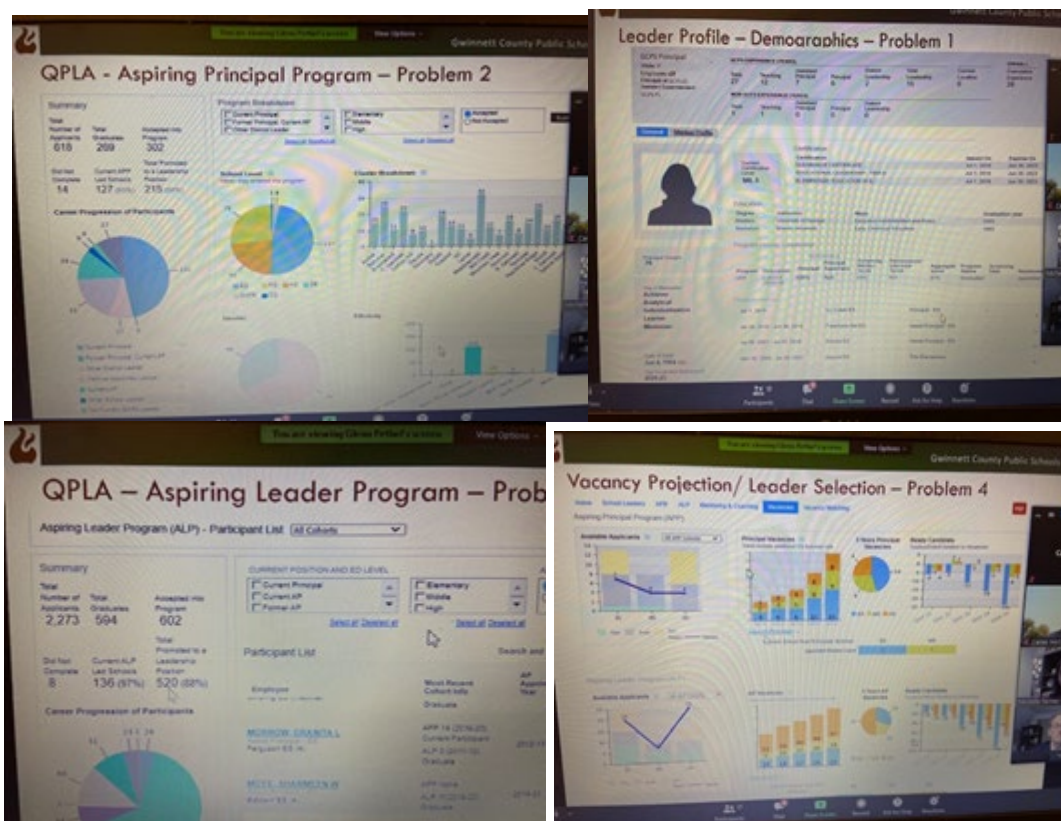
- 78% White
- 11% Black
- 9% Hispanic
- 1% Asian
- 1% Two or More Races
- 1% American Indian

(Source: [HTTPS://NCES.ED.GOV/Programs/COE/INDICATOR_CLS.ASP](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cls.asp)).

To fully implement an assistant principal pool process and support strategic professional development, additional staffing is needed, to include: two senior staffing specialists, a business operations technician, and an educational specialist

An essential domain of the principal pipeline is a leadership tracking system (LTS). A LTS can be a powerful tool to assist in the matching of a candidate's rich background and skills to the specific needs of a school. Currently through the principal pool selection process various pieces of data are collected. Currently data is housed in several different repositories. While region leaders have some access to these different repositories, the process of pulling together the data can take a significant amount of time. A leadership tracking system would address this issue by housing all relevant and critical data in one place. The LTS would allow region leaders to easily and quickly sort and filter based on a set of criteria to determine potential matches given a school's needs and characteristics. Additionally, an LTS would allow Human Resources and region leaders to engage in long range planning to prepare future leaders and plan better proactively for hard to fill administrative vacancies.

The screenshots below illustrate a Leadership Tracking System developed for Gwinnett County Public Schools:



Response: HR and OPLFE agree that with the finding. To expand the principal pool process into a principal pipeline that recruits, supports, and retains high quality principal candidates who will create and lead equitable school communities, the following steps will be taken:

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Update the current principal standards to align with Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) standards.	HR OPLFE	Work Team To Be Determined (TBD)	July 1, 2022
Identify funding for a leadership tracking system and draft a request for proposals (RFP)	HR OPLFE	Funding for leadership tracking system	Dependent on funding
Identify and develop professional development that prepares current and future leaders to meet the PSEL standards	OPLFE	Educational Specialist	July 1, 2022
Create an Assistant Principal Pool process aligned to leadership standards which compliments the Principal Pool process	HR	2 Senior Staffing Specialists 1 Business Operations Technician	Dependent on staffing; tentative timeline of July 1, 2022

Finding 2: Timely Updates to the Policies and Regulations

Risk Rating: *Moderate – Compliance with subject government regulations or FCPS policies and established procedures is inadequate, or FCPS policies and established procedures are inadequate.*

Condition:

During the audit we noted that nine out of the 23 directives identified as relevant to the hiring and onboarding process were not reviewed or updated within the last five years to include the following:

1. Policy 1450.6 *Nondiscrimination*
2. Policy 4130.3 *State Licensure Requirements—Educational Personnel*
3. Policy 4610.4 *Salary Guidelines*
4. Regulation 4111.3 *Guidelines for the Employment of Teacher-Scale Personnel*
5. Regulation 4112.2 *Elementary Classroom Teachers Job-Share Agreements*
6. Regulation 4113.3 *Guidelines for Selecting and Monitoring Driver Education Instructors*
7. Regulation 4118.4 *Underfill Appointment or Assignment (Unified Salary Scale)*
8. Regulation 4130.7 *Licensure Requirements—Educational Personnel*
9. Regulation 4314.8 *Employment of Teachers for Homebound Students*

Criteria:

Per Regulation 1102 *Procedures for Maintenance of Directives*: "By state mandate, policies must be reviewed by appropriate staff members at least every five years and updated as necessary. Regulations are reviewed and updated every five years or sooner. Notices with short-term effective dates (less than one year) are reviewed and reissued as necessary. The School Board Office will monitor review dates for directives and notify appropriate staff." Additionally, the office within the department of primary responsibility indicated on the directive will "Review and update directives as needed and in a timely manner."

Cause:

The policies and regulations have not been updated or reviewed as required.

Effect:

Because these directives have gone an extended period of time without being reviewed or updated, they do not properly reflect the current organizational structure, and may not reflect current operating procedures. As an example, five of the directives that are outdated have Employment Services listed as the primary office of responsibility. This office is not identified as being a part of the Department of Human Resources.

Recommendation:

2. HR should take the necessary steps to facilitate the policy review, and to update the regulations, as needed.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

HR staff concur with the findings and recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General.

The HR team will take action to expedite the review of the following policies and regulations:

- Regulation 4111.3 *Guidelines for the Employment of Teacher-Scale Personnel*
- Regulation 4112.2 *Elementary Classroom Teachers Job-Share Agreements*
- Regulation 4113.3 *Guidelines for Selecting and Monitoring Driver Education Instructors*
- Regulation 4118.4 *Underfill Appointment or Assignment (Unified Salary Scale)*
- Regulation 4314.8 *Employment of Teachers for Homebound Students*

The following regulations noted in audit have been updated and status indicated below:

- *Policy 4130.7 Licensure Requirements—Educational Personnel (routed for approval)*
- *Policy 1450.6 Nondiscrimination (pending with Governance Committee)*
- *Policy 4610.4 Salary Guidelines (routed for approval)*

Additionally, the team will work to continue following the directive maintenance guidance for updating regulations in a timely manner.

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Update outstanding regulations and submit for approval	HR		July 1, 2021

Finding 3: HR Operational Efficiencies

Risk Rating: *High – Important issues are identified that could negatively impact the achievement of FCPS program/operational objectives.*

Condition:

During the audit, OAG noted operational inefficiencies related to HR operating ratio, recruitment, and inconsistent hiring procedures. Specifically, the following was noted:

HR Operating Ratio

The needs for hiring and onboarding continue to increase each year however the available/current resources in HR remain constant or do not change with the needs. A trend analysis of the number of employees to HR personnel is provided below:

	Authorized Positions* in the Approved Budget				
	FY19	FY20	FY21	Increase	Increase (%)
School Based Employees	22,552.70	22,613.00	22,975.50	422.80	1.87%
Non-School Based Employees	<u>1,584.40</u>	<u>1,607.90</u>	<u>1,724.10</u>	<u>139.70</u>	<u>8.82%</u>
Total Employees **	24,137.10	24,220.90	24,699.60	562.50	10.69%
HR Personnel	103.50	109.50	114.50	11.00	10.63%
Ratio of HR to Authorized Positions	0.43	0.45	0.46		

* Traded and temporary positions are not reflected in the authorized positions.

** Includes HR positions

While the total employees increase is similar to the overall increase in HR personnel from FY 2019 to FY 2020, the ratio for HR personnel to support the positions only increased from 0.43 to 0.46 which remained under the benchmarking average of 2.6, as noted in the criteria below.

Recruitment

According to the FY20 Premier Workforce Report, FCPS participated in 77 total events during FY20. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency closure in March 2020, 33 recruitment events were cancelled, and additional university and consortium events for which registrations had not been finalized were no longer pursued. After March 2020, FCPS participated in 19 virtual job fairs due to COVID-19 related closures.

In addition, during the audit scope period there were approximately 1,316 requisitions with a recruitment team of three. This estimates that each recruiter is assigned recruitment responsibilities for approximately 439 job requisitions each which exceeds the recommended

average as noted in the SHRM article/report. It is important to note, the total number of requisitions does not reflect or equate to the actual number of positions that available for hire. Any position that are included in an employment pool, such as principals or teacher positions are represented under one job requisition. Also note, the recruiters only perform duties related to recruiting consisting of attending job fairs and making candidate connections for the related job requisitions and the recruitment team supports the operational, instructional, and administrative hiring teams. The hiring teams (operational, instructional and administrative) have primary responsibilities for the requisitions and the employment specialist on those hiring teams perform the hiring related tasks. Currently, there are a total of 18 employment specialists across the hiring teams which would calculate to approximately 101 job requisitions per employment specialist. Further review of TAM as a whole indicates approximately 30 job requisitions per TAM employee.

Inconsistent Hiring Procedures for Schools and Departments

Departments and schools are required to complete the request to hire and upload interview documents in the Online PDR for all operational and administrative positions, however this is an option and not a requirement for instructional positions (teachers and instructional assistants). Principals/program managers have the option to keep interview documentation for instructional personnel in a local file.

In addition, we noted that the submission of request to hire for hiring for temporary employee remains a manual process with the submission of the HR-8 Form. Other forms such as underfill still requires use of a manual form as well.

Criteria:

- According to a Customized Human Capital Benchmarking Report published by Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)³, from the sample of 1,401 organizations the average HR-to-employee ratio was 2.6 and the median was 1.58. This data was derived from the SHRM Customized Benchmarking Database, which contains organizational data from a random sample of SHRM members.
- National averages across all industries and employer sizes tend to fluctuate between 30 to 40 open requisitions per recruiter at any one time, according to the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM's) HR Knowledge Center. The median tends to fluctuate between 15 to 20 open requisitions per recruiter. These generalized findings, however, are more of an economic indicator than the basis for identifying an appropriate recruiter workload for each organization. The goal is to set an appropriate range of open requisitions per recruiter and budget for staffing based on that range. The dangers of not setting a suitable range that works for each organization are many, including increased time-to-fill, recruiter burnout and decreased candidate experience and quality of hire.

³ SHRM is a professional human resources membership association that promotes the role of HR as a profession and provides education, certification, and networking to its members, while lobbying Congress on issues pertinent to labor management.

- The SHRM 2017 Talent Acquisition Benchmarking Report provided the following data related to recruitment:

	Number of Respondents	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Average
Recruitment-expense-to- HR-expense ratio	198	0%	4%	19%	15%
Requisitions per recruiter (or HR FTE)	716	5	15	35	29
Requisitions per recruiter (organizations with dedicated recruiters)	349	10	25	54	54
Requisitions per recruiter (organizations without dedicated recruiters)	373	3	10	22	20

Cause:

- The HR operating ratio and the number of job requisitions to recruitment personnel is over the median averages as the increase in human resources has been continued to be focused on certain areas without ensuring the support also increases.
- TAM is in the process of updating the framework for the instructional hiring process to require the instructional hiring documents be submitted to through the Online PDR.

Effect:

- The current operating status of the HR department reduces the quality of customer service provided to FCPS employees and increased workloads for current HR staff.
- The number of job requisitions handled for each recruiter may not allow the recruiter to provide the necessary follow-up with interested candidates after recruitment events which may affect the quality of candidates that apply for these positions.

Recommendation:

3. OAG recommends that the HR resources and FCPS human resource needs are assessed to ensure optimal operating efficiency.
4. OAG recommends that FCPS consider determining the need for enhancing the current recruitment team that may include a targeted or focus based strategies to ensure the recruitment of the best qualified and diverse candidates.
5. OAG recommends that TAM continue to work to make the necessary updates to the instructional hiring framework to ensure consistency in the hiring process. OAG noted that HR has made the necessary updates and has closed this recommendation.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

Staff concurs with the finding and all three recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General.

Since FY07, FCPS has grown by over 2,700 staff, 25,000 students, opened eight new schools, added a new department and office, and re-organized and expanded existing offices and departments. Conversely, the staffing allocation for our Office of Talent Acquisition and Management decreased. However, the team continues to be expected to meet the recruitment, hiring, and retention of our growing school division.

Fiscal Year	Number of Full-Time Employees in TAM	Number of Positions in Operating Fund	Student Enrollment	Number of Schools
2007	51	21,980	164,295	198*
2022	46	24,699	189,837	199

*Seven new schools have opened since 2007. While the number appears to have only increased by one, seven Center-based programs were removed from the total school count when those programs were merged with the schools in which they were housed. Since 2007, the only school that has closed is Clifton Elementary.

Response to Recommendation 3:

To better meet the evolving needs of schools, offices and departments, TAM staff conducted a review of how existing resources are being utilized. As a result, the work of certain positions was realigned to improve impact. As an interim measure, four entry level (non-exempt) positions were traded out for two specialist level positions. Elevating these positions to specialist level allowed us to elevate the duties and responsibilities to better support our schools and offices. Funds were reallocated to support a position to support the division's needs focused on diversifying our workforce. Additionally, the request for hire process was moved online (Request to Hire/Online PDR) making it more readily accessible to hiring managers, less time intensive, and more user friendly.

Even with the reallocation of existing resources the TAM office faces challenges in meeting goals related to timely customer service, increased requests to provide intensive supports for office and department hiring needs (i.e. facilitating hiring processes), and other staffing-related supports. As the nation's 11th largest school system, it is critical that the TAM office is staffing at a level to effectively support the hiring needs of our schools, offices, and departments. Additional staffing is needed to increase efficiency and effectiveness, benefitting the entire school division.

Response to Recommendation 4:

The recruiting team, housed with the office of Talent Acquisitions & Management, is a three-member team. The recruitment team supports the recruiting needs for all positions within the school division. With the backdrop of a national teacher shortage and an FCPS focus on greater workforce diversity, the recruitment team continues to share the good news about FCPS and build relationships with potential applicants.

In addition to ensuring that FCPS is represented at traditional hiring events, the recruitment team facilitates the placement and processing of all student teachers and interns. This year FCPS hosted 346 interns and 318 student teachers. This work is critical to ensuring a robust pipeline of candidates are available to fill future teacher vacancies. Additionally, the team

organizes and executes all FCPS job fairs, to include events for instructional and operational needs.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-related budget reductions, a request for a position to support the establishment of a Call Me Mister program went unfunded. Call Me Mister is a program focused on recruiting men of color into the teaching profession, work directly aligned to Goal 3 of the FCPS Strategic Plan.

Response to Recommendation 5:

The FCPS Teacher & Instructional Assistant Selection Process (hiring framework) provides guidelines for schools as they interview and select candidates for instructional positions. Revisions to the framework include a requirement for all schools to submit complete hiring packets via an online request to hire platform. These revisions align hiring across all contracted positions and provide HR with access to critical interview data and documents. Additionally, the framework guides administrators actions to ensure they are providing an equitable, consistent hiring process that minimizes bias in the interview process.

In addition to continued advocacy for additional staff to support critical work in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a premier workforce, staff in the office of Talent Acquisition & Management will take the following action:

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Request additional staffing as part of the FY23 budget process	HR	TBD	January 1, 2022
Update teacher/instructional assistant hiring framework and communicate to hiring managers	HR		Completed

Finding 4: Consistency in the Hiring Process for Temporary Hourly Employees

Risk Rating: *Moderate – Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.*

Condition:

Based on the current hiring practices, there appear to be inconsistencies with the recruitment and selection of certain hourly temporary employees. Unlike the hiring processes related to regular contracted employees, the initial screening by HR and candidate interview standards are not required in the hiring of temporary employees. While some operational areas that rely on more hourly temporary employees such as, facilities, transportation, food services and instructional type hourly positions develop their own screening and selection processes, these processes and decisions are not monitoring by HR.

In addition, any other hourly positions created by schools and departments based on their needs and funding availability only requires a Request to Hire through a submission of an HR-8 form to HR then the hourly employee submits an application through the application software. It is important to note that further review revealed that hourly employees are subject to the same employee eligibility and reference check process established for regular contracted employees.

Criteria:

- FCPS Regulation, *Workforce Diversity 4920*, specifies that the Department of Human Resources shall ensure equal employment opportunity (EEO) throughout the school system. This includes the responsibility to recruit, hire, assign, transfer, promote, train, and maintain a diverse applicant pool for all job categories.
- FCPS Policy 4310, *Authorization for Employment—Temporary Personnel* indicates Temporary employees shall be subject to the same employment requirements that are required for regular Fairfax County Public Schools employees, including, but not limited to, Employment Eligibility Verification form I-9, fingerprinting, a name search of the Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry, and tuberculin testing.

Cause:

Departments and schools hire for temporary hourly positions based on availability of funding and on an as needed basis. These positions are not created as authorized positions in the FCPS budget and therefore are not recorded in the Online PDR. As such, HR does not monitor the selection and recruitment of most temporary hourly positions. In addition, these positions differ from regular contracted positions as they are at-will and may be terminated without advance notice due to misconduct, poor performance, lack of work or funds, completion of assignment(s), or for other reasons.

Effect:

The lack of oversight in the hiring of temporary hourly employees may increase the risk of the hiring of non-qualified employees. The lack of oversight also reduces our ability to ensure an equitable and diverse workforce.

Recommendation:

6. OAG recommends that the hiring process for temporary hourly employees should be more consistent with the hiring of regular contracted employees. This will ensure the process is equitable and proper consideration is given in the advertisement and hiring of the best qualified and diverse candidates.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

HR staff concurs with the findings and recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General. The Office Talent Acquisition and Management (TAM) and the Office of HR Business Services are currently working to develop an electronic request to hire form for hourly employees. By aligning the hourly request to hire process with the contracted request to hire process, TAM hiring teams can ensure that the request to hire process is consistent, that the record keeping process is in alignment, and that we are in compliance with record retention requirements.

Additionally, HR staff will collaborate with stakeholders to update hourly employee hiring practices to more closely align with the hiring practices used for filling contracted positions. The stakeholder group will give consideration to a number of factors, including the diverse and unique roles filled by hourly employees.

HR staff will take the following next steps:

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Create an online request to hire form for hourly hires	HR		July 1, 2021
Collaborate with a stakeholder group to gather input and update hiring practices for hourly employees	HR		November 15, 2021

Finding 5: Employee File Maintenance

Risk Rating: *Moderate – Controls are in place but are not sufficiently complied with.*

Condition:

During the audit, we noted that the personnel files of 10 out of 30 newly hired employees sampled did not maintain required documentation. Specifically, we noted that either a printout of the electronic request to hire, the offer form and/or the reference check documentation submitted electronically for contracted employees were not placed in six out of the 10 personnel files. In addition, the Request to Hire Form (HR-8) completed manually for temporary employees was not maintained for the remaining four out of 10 personnel files. While HR was able to locate the documents for the 10 employees, the hardcopy documents should be maintained in the personnel files as that is considered the official employee record.

Criteria:

FCPS Regulation 4220, *Maintenance and Disclosure of Personnel Information and Files* indicates that HR shall maintain an official personnel file for each employee. The regulation provides a listing of the contents that that should be maintained in the primary file for active employees.

Cause:

The HR-8 form for temporary employees are submitted manually to HR and not maintained electronically while the request to hire process for contracted employees is submitted electronically. It appears a hardcopy printout of the documentation submitted electronically for the contracted employees were not placed in the files as required.

Effect:

This may result in the loss of personnel documentation.

Recommendation:

7. OAG recommends that management should implement controls such as developing a personnel file checklist or assess the need for an electronic file maintenance system.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

HR staff concur with the findings and recommendation. The request to hire form (HR-8) for temporary hourly employees is transitioning to an online portal by the end of FY21 (6/30/2021). All documents will be housed in the hiring dashboard and this will alleviate the need for TAM to email documents for placement in the personnel file. HR staff will develop a checklist that can be used by staff in TAM and Business Services to monitor hiring documents. HR will also explore the possibility of including the checklist on the hiring dashboard application used to hand off documentation between workgroups involved with the hiring process. Additionally, HR will consider electronic document solutions as it develops technology and application modernization plans. Such activities continue to be subject to prioritization and resource allocation.

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Develop and implement a personnel file checklist	HR		July 1, 2021

Finding 6: Effective Onboarding Practices and Professional Development

Risk Rating: *Moderate* – Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.

Condition:

During the audit we noted some instances that may affect the effectiveness of the onboarding process. Specifically, we noted the following:

- The established strategic goals related to exceptional employees and welcoming culture may not be provided to all categories of employees when onboarded. During the audit we noted that there are mechanisms to provide a complete onboarding and orientation for most school based and instructional employees, however, these activities do not exist in the same capacity for non-school based operational and support employees.
- The Great Beginnings Induction and Mentor Program⁴, is optional and not requirement of instructional positions.
- Onboarding practices related to job specific professional development at the school and worksite level is not consistent and may vary.
- Lack of guidance and onboarding practices for the development of supervisor or manager positions that require other managerial duties such as employee evaluation and hiring.

Furthermore, we surveyed a sample of employees hired during our scope period and inquired about what would improve the onboarding experience. Examples of the responses are provided below:

- “More specific training at the school you are working in”
- “Specialized training more related to job duties”
- “It was hard because everything was virtual. I feel like some things were left for us to do on our own with no guidance.”
- “More information about benefits”

Criteria:

- FCPS Policy 4020, Orientation for Employees, indicates that orientations shall be provided for new employees to help them acquire information necessary for a successful beginning with Fairfax County Public Schools. Orientations shall be provided at the school or work site level in addition to information provided at the system level during onboarding.
- The Premier Workforce and Caring Culture strategies outlined in the FCPS Strategic Plan calls for recruiting, hiring, and retaining exceptional employees as well as ensuring all staff feel welcomed.

⁴ The Great Beginnings Induction and Mentor Program is a comprehensive new teacher induction program and a mentoring program to help teachers with specific school issues and provide support as teachers negotiate their first year with FCPS.

Cause:

- The Office of Professional Learning and Family Engagement (OPLFE) submitted a budget request to obtain the necessary resources to implement orientations for operational employees however it was not approved.
- Onboarding at the school and department level is not consistent as these practices are at the discretion of the program manager and not centrally monitored.
- The Great Beginning program in the summer is provided prior to some instructional employees signing the employment contract.
- The current onboarding practices implemented by HR are general and do not include measures for onboarding at various levels such as coordinator, supervisors, or managers.
- Expectation of consistent attendance/requirement of orientation and mentoring process

Effect:

The ineffective onboarding practices may hinder the success of newly hired employees which may affect employee retention.

Recommendation:

8. OAG recommends that HR and OPLFE consider implementing an orientation for operational employees that provide an opportunity to network, obtain a better understanding of the organization, and ask any questions related to employee benefits and human relations. This may also include a consideration for updating the onboarding workflow process to a more interactive format to increase the understanding, communication and information that are entailed in the various onboarding tasks.
9. OAG recommends that HR implement a process to collect feedback on the hiring and onboarding process and work to improve on matters that may enhance customer service.
10. OAG recommend that HR and OPLFE consider updating the onboarding process to provide for an orientation for both instruction and operational employees that may introduce aspects of ethics, conflicts in the organization and also provide an avenue to promote the awareness of OAG fraud, waste and abuse hotline.
11. OAG recommends HR consider providing guidance to assist with additional onboarding efforts at the school level and within departments and consider adding workflow or additional tasks based on position level especially, to provide those new employees with managerial tasks a level of expectation required for management positions.

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

The offices of Professional Learning and Family Engagement, Talent Acquisition & Management and Business Services concur with the findings and recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General.

The specific actions each office will be taking is included in each response.

Response to Recommendation 8 and 10:

OPLFE agrees there is a need to develop an orientation plan for new operational employees. A 2017 study completed by FCPS' Office of Strategic Research and Improvement (ORSI) found inequitable support and funding for professional development for operational employees. The study's recommendation is to equitably balance professional development for both instructional and operational staff in support of FCPS' strategic goals. Currently, onboarding and orientation for new instructional staff is supported by three positions and \$253,000 in division operating funds. (approximately \$1million in multiple grant sources) and no funding allocated to such programs for new operational employees. Therefore, OPLFE would request a *Specialist Position* to lead this work throughout the division and develop the orientation plan with a July 1, 2022 date of implementation. This plan should include:

- Collaborating with HR/TAM to develop employee orientation goals that serve to create a welcoming and inclusive experience for new employees and serve the longer-term retention goals of the division
- Directing each office to designate a current employee as their *Onboarding Lead*
- Providing department *Onboarding Leads* a tool kit to include common expectations thereby promoting consistency among departments
- Organizing opportunities to network across departments
- Assigning required professional development to develop an understanding of the instructional and operational work within the organization, as well as introducing aspects of ethics, conflicts in the organization and promote the awareness of OAG fraud, waste and abuse hotline

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Develop Operational Orientation	OPFLE	Specialist Position	July 1, 2022

Response to Recommendation 9 and 11:

As part of the budget reductions included in the FY15 Approved Budget, the in-person hiring orientation was eliminated and replaced with an online onboarding experience for additional operational efficiency. With this change, the FY15 Approved Budget also included the reductions of 1 orientation specialist and 2 client services positions that supported the in-person hiring orientations and related activities. The online onboarding application provides a task-oriented workflow and the client services team in the Office of Business Services provides direct support to employees and new hires with questions. Employees and new hires can call, email, or visit the Welcome Center for support. Information for how to contact or connect with HR for support is included in communications with new hire employees at different steps during the process.

As we onboard new employees it is critical that we better understand their first impressions and work as an office and department to improve those first impressions. HR will develop a pathway for gathering feedback from new hire employees to use in the continuous process improvement of recruitment, hiring, and onboarding activities.

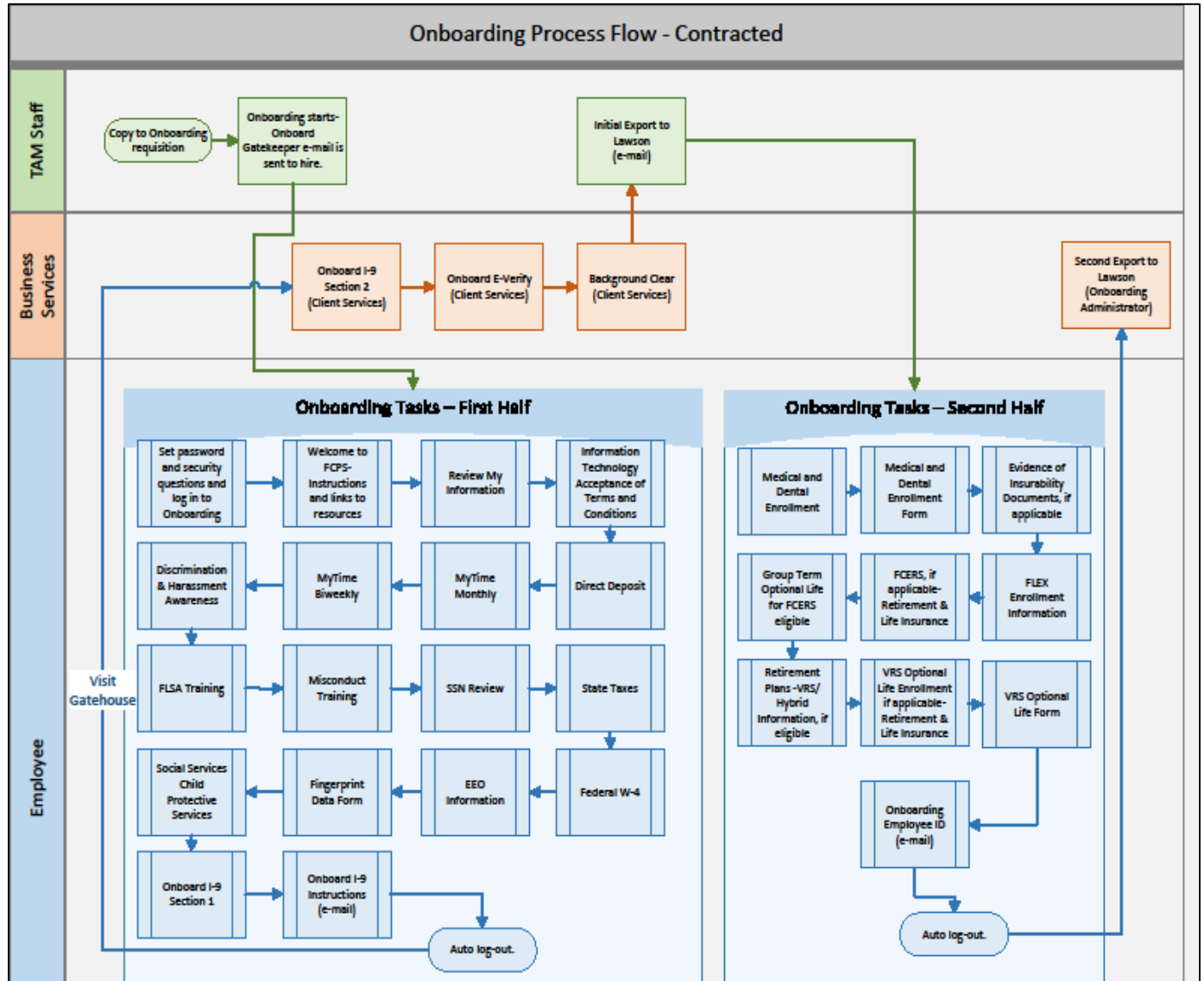
Onboarding at the school/office/department level is unique based on position and program needs. Ongoing conversations with identified groups (principal associations, departments, etc.) would elicit a deeper understanding of what gaps may exist within the school/department/office's onboarding process and outline potential next steps.

Action	Responsible Group	Additional Resources Needed	Timeline
Develop survey for new hires	HR	Tool to administer survey	July 1, 2022
Identify office/school supports needed for internal onboarding	HR	TBD based on focus groups feedback	July 1, 2022

Observation 1: Human Capital Management System

Based on our benchmarking efforts, we noted that organizations similar in size and/or neighboring organizations are currently using or exploring the opportunities to implement an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) or human resource management software. Currently, FCPS utilizes Lawson as the main human resource information system. We recommend that HR explore a comprehensive human capital software that will be able to provide for human resource planning, activities related to the hiring and onboarding processes as well as abilities to track and report human resource data that is important to decision makers.

Appendix A: Onboarding Process for Contracted Employees



Appendix B: Contracted Employees – Hiring Process Feedback

A total of 13 contracted employees from the sample were selected to participate in a survey on the hiring process. This survey was distributed via email and filled out using Google Forms. Of the 13 contracted employees contacted, we received a total of eight responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

1. What position did you interview for?

Administrative Assistant

Office Assistant

School Counselor

School Social Worker

Certified Teacher

SPED Teacher

Spanish Teacher

School Counselor (one year only)

2. Please provide any feedback related to the interview process.

It was easy and responsive. Communication was always efficient

It went well

No complaints. Enjoyed meeting everyone.

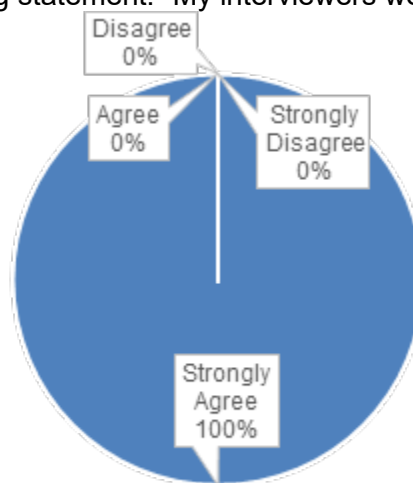
It was virtual. I thought the writing prompt was a little much but good practice.

I met with administrators virtually, and on the phone and found the process to be efficient.

Very quick at getting back to me

The process was straight forward. I contacted the Principal and was offered an interview. Afterwards HR called about an offer for the position.

3. Please rate the following statement: "My interviewers were well-prepared."



4. What do you think would make FCPS hiring process better?

More detailed explanation on benefit and tax deduction on paycheck stub

Hearing responses faster from HR on whether or not you have been selected, whether or not you have an interview and offering you the position. It took a month and a half for me and I was already an FCPS employee.

Encourage employers to keep to their word for when they are going to get back to candidates. The first school I applied to in the county, for which I did not get hired, said they would get back to me by a certain date and then did not. I was surprised that they did not keep their word.

A longer window for applicants to apply. I've notice posting only stay up for few days.

5. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with FCPS hiring process?

Clearer benefits and taxing information

No

Nope!

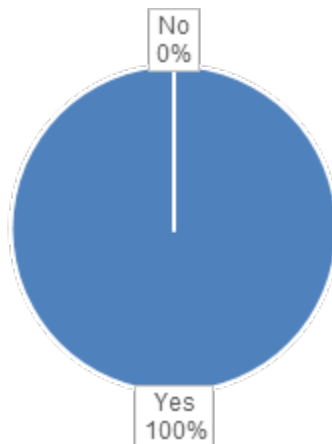
No everything was fine

I found out when I was offered the job in a timely matter. The questions that were asked in my interview were relevant to the subject I was going to be teaching. Finally, I appreciated that the team I was going to be apart of was apart of the interview process.

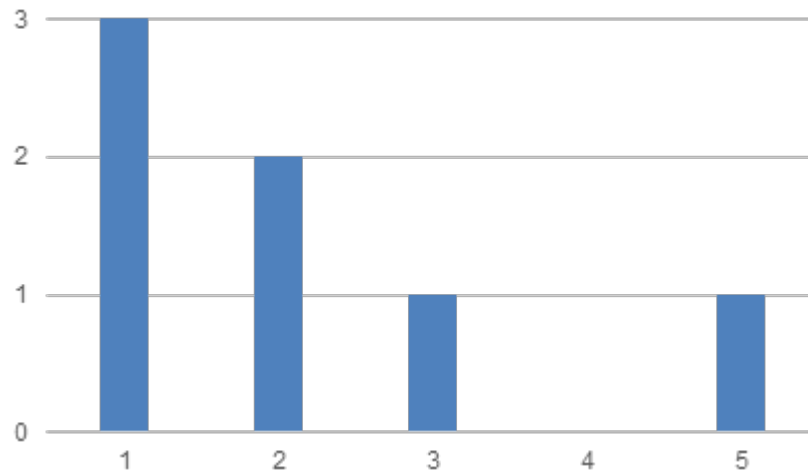
No

No

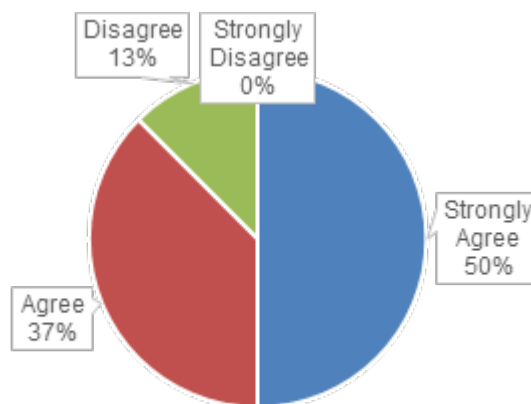
6. Was the information you received during the onboarding process helpful to complete tasks such as, payroll forms and benefits enrollment?



7. Rate the ease of completion of onboarding tasks through the use of the onboarding application (1 is easiest, 5 is most difficult).



8. Adequate training is available and/or was provided to me in order to perform the duties of my position the related to my position.



9. What would improve the FCPS onboarding experience?

More specific training at the school you are working in

Specialized training more related to job duties.

Nothing comes to mind

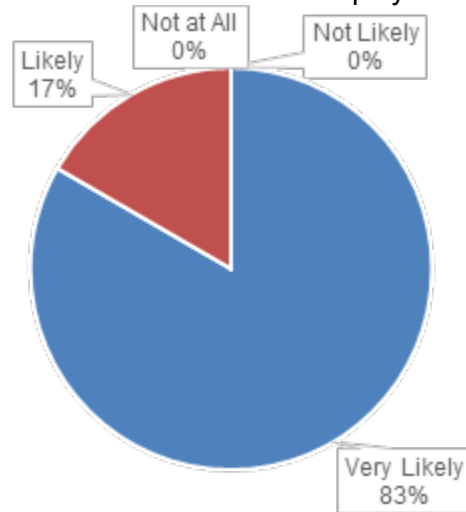
It was hard because everything was virtual. I feel like some things were left for us to do on our own with no guidance.

More information about benefits

10. What did you like about the FCPS onboarding experience?

That instructions of steps to take were clear and always clarified if needed
I was able to complete it quickly and virtually
Nothing specifically comes to mind
The trainings
The convenience, efficiency, and ease of the entire experience.
It was straightforward.

10. How likely are you to recommend FCPS as an employer?



Appendix C: Temporary Employees – Hiring Process Feedback

A total of 14 temporary hires from the sample were selected to participate in a survey on the hiring process. This survey was distributed via email and filled out using Google Forms. Of the 14 temporary employees contacted, we received a total of four responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

1. What position did you apply for?

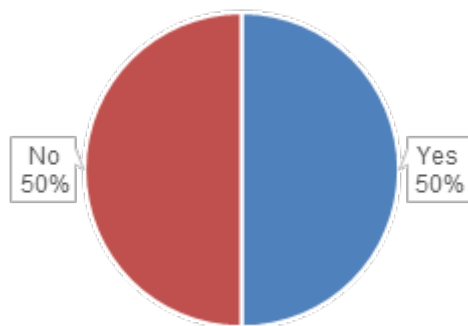
Classroom Monitor

ESOL Teacher

Cafeteria Hostess

Football Coach

2. Were you required to interview for the position?



3. What do you think would make FCPS hiring process better?

Uploading PDF files

I find it cumbersome that I have had to reapply for the same position year after year. I know I am .5 and that is why, but this is my 3rd year at the same place.

The process was good for me.

No issues with the process

4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with FCPS hiring process?

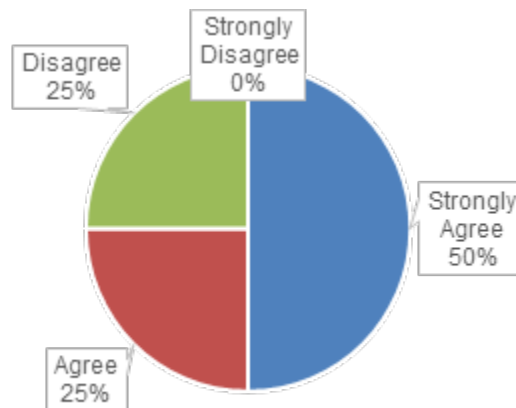
No

It is pretty smooth and well done overall.

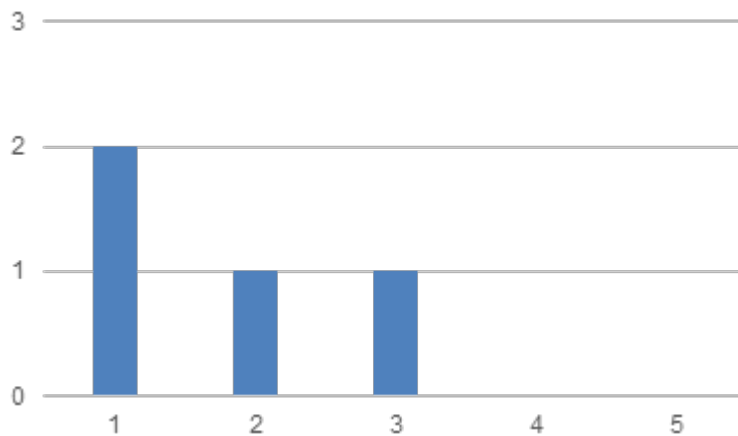
No.

Not at this time.

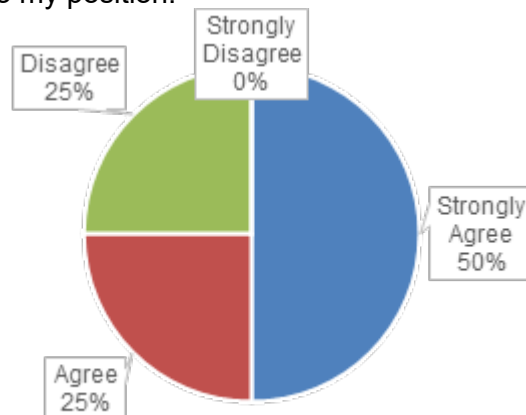
5. Was the information you received during the onboarding process helpful to complete tasks such as, payroll forms and benefits enrollment?



6. Rate the ease of completion of onboarding tasks through the use of the onboarding application (1 is easiest, 5 is most difficult).



7. Adequate training is available and/or was provided to me in order to perform the duties of my position the related to my position.



8. What would improve the FCPS onboarding experience?

Clear guidelines for covid procedures in regards to the grades I will be monitoring

Less repetition for returning employees

More actual training and not so much shadowing.

Nothing

9. What did you like about the FCPS onboarding experience?

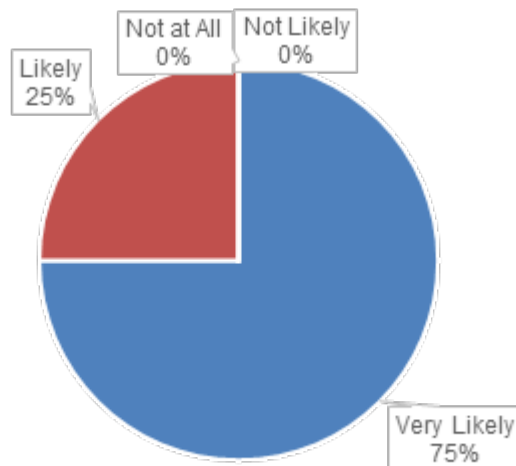
Quick hiring

Everything is clear and in one place.

The employees were excellent to work with.

In person tasks

11. How likely are you to recommend FCPS as an employer?



Appendix D: Onboarding Process Feedback – Departments

Six departments/offices within the division were selected to provide feedback on the onboarding process. This survey was distributed via email and filled out using Google Forms. All departments/offices selected were able to provide feedback. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

1. How has COVID-19 impacted hiring and onboarding in your department?

No one has shared particular concerns with the process.

Facilities began conducting virtual interviews due to COVID-19 safety protocols. All other processes and procedures remained the same.

No impact other than having to social distance for interviews

Delay in finalizing the hiring process.

Internal onboarding has been much more challenging and is done at the micro-level within teams, as opposed to the department or office level.

COVID-19 has made it difficult to get applicants through the training process. Class sizes were adjusted to provide the necessary social distance to safely train and evaluate the trainees. Some trainees had to pause their training due to not being able to get an appointment at DMV to take their test to get their Commercial Learners Permit (CLP) to be able to continue behind the wheel training. We have lost some applicants because they could not wait the 2 to 3 months to get the learners permit and the applicants have found alternate employment. The process to obtain a (CLP) usually takes 2 weeks.

2. Are additional onboarding procedures (outside of the HR Onboarding) conducted at the department level for new hires in your department?

Yes

Facilities provides orientation for all new employees that covers rules, regulation and policies related to the office.

Yes, we make all the contacts and provide for the following of covid protocols

Yes, traditionally all new IT employees participated in an IT Overview session and many are also assigned a mentor within IT.

Yes. New drivers are sent to the training center after onboarding to begin their CDL training. In order to proceed with the behind the wheel section of the training, an applicant must possess their Commercial Driver Permit (CLP).

3. If additional onboarding is conducted by your department, what would you recommend to other departments to assist them with onboarding in their departments?

Includes processes that cover both division topics and job specific

Other offices to consider providing new employee orientation to review their office rules, regulations and policies

Not much other than assign staff and set expectations

Because many IT employees come from private industry, the orientation to the FCPS culture and structure is very important. It often differs greatly from the structures they are accustomed to. We include them in presentations that we do for groups like Supporting the Mission to give them an opportunity to see the big picture in FCPS.

There is no additional recommendations to other departments to as our additional onboarding requirement is exclusive to the Office of Transportation.

4. Do you feel new hires are adequately prepared for their roles and responsibilities based on the current HR onboarding practices implemented division-wide for central office?

No

Depends on job and responsibilities.

Yes

Yes

I think they get a fair amount of compliance training, but I'm not sure that there's enough orientation to the organizational structure, workflows and culture.

Yes

5. What other topics/areas do you feel should be covered during the HR onboarding process for new hires?

Personally, I received no onboarding to processes that are division wide for my position, no list of topics to access and locations of information, no "how to", learned as people met with me or I attended meetings

HR should delegate more departmentally specific onboarding for new hires to the individual offices

New employee orientation for all

Same as above. Steep learning curve when you come from outside FCPS or outside of K12.

A thorough review of the expectations for the driver training program.

6. What do you feel would improve the onboarding experience for new hires? (You may select more than one)



7. Is there anything else you would like to add about your department's onboarding process for new hires or any suggestions/recommendations for the Department of HR?

The need to onboard staff to the breadth of the division is not efficient to the work of the Department.

No

No, but I think they do a great job and provide good customer service.

Maybe some of the key regulations K12 employees need to follow - i.e. dealing with vendors/procurement, dealing with student privacy, etc. Again, some of these are foreign to folks who come from private industry.

Streamlining the clearances for drug and alcohol testing and physicals.