

October 31, 2022

Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Silverman,

In response to your information request regarding DCPS' Employee Services team, please find below DCPS' answers to your inquiries.

1. **(a) Who is the current head of DCPS Human Resources? Where does the individual appear on the organizational chart? Is this position currently filled by an interim or permanent director?**
 - Currently, the Employee Services team is being led by an interim Deputy Chief, Ms. Anita Berry, with the support of Resource Strategy Officer, Sharon Gaskins. Ms. Berry reports directly to Ms. Gaskins, who reports to the Deputy Chancellor of Innovation and Improvement, Dr. Amy Maisterra.**(b) Please provide the most recent organizational chart for the division of DCPS that houses HR, including supervisors up to the Chancellor.**
 - Please see [DCPS Organization Chart](#)
2. **(a) Please confirm that the position Deputy Chief, Employee Services, has been posted since February and please explain why the position has not yet been filled. (b) What is the status of the hiring process? When does DCPS intend to hire a permanent replacement?**
 - Yes, the position of Employee Services has been vacant since February 2022. DCPS has been engaged in a robust recruitment process but has not yet filled this position. Therefore, we are moving forward to engage a national recruitment firm to help us identify and select a top-tier candidate for the position. We are also working to ensure that the position is classified in a manner which will attract candidates with the specific skills and experience required for this critical role. We are excited about the next stage of our recruitment efforts and believe these steps will help ensure that we fill the position as soon as possible.
3. **How many FTEs were budgeted within the human resources office for each of fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023? How many employees total currently work in DCPS HR, as of Oct. 1, 2022? Of the employees on-board as of October 1st, how many were hired or transferred to HR since January 1, 2022?**
 - The following are the budgeted FTE counts for the Employee Services team from FY21-FY23:
 - a. FY21: 34
 - b. FY22: 37
 - c. FY23: 36
 - As of October 1, 2022, 26 employees worked for the Employee Services team. After October 1st, an additional 2 employees joined the team, making for a total of 28 current employees. This number represents the number of staff "in seat". Of these employees, nine were hired after January 1, 2022.

We also brought on four full-time, contracted staff to support the team during this time period.

Last, we trained and detailed six staff from other teams to support the core functions of the Employee Services team during the peak of the hiring season, in both full-time and part time roles as needed.

4. Please provide a list of all DCPS human resources staff as of October 1, 2022, and their duties (e.g., processing leave requests, answering general inquiries, processing retirement applications).

Name	Role
Barge, Nadia	Front desk, ID Badging Services, Clearance processing
Berry, Anita	Interim Deputy Chief, Employee Services
Blakney, Vastine	ID Badging Services, Clearance processing
Braxton, Kimberly D	HR Processing and Records Management
Browner, Robyn	Compensation, Classification and Retirement
Burks, Rosetta	School Staffing
Chinnala, Mounika	HR Systems Development
Delgado Veliz, Juan	Substitutes
Flores, Karen	Benefits (including Leave processing)
Gliss, Sandra	ID Badging Services, Clearance processing
Gloor, Brian	Employee Communications and Training
Goode, James	HR Processing and Records Management
Green, LaVelle	Compensation, Classification and Retirement
Greene, Mary	Retirement
Hampton, Karen	ID Badging Services, Clearance processing
Jeffries, Charelle	School Staffing
Johnson, Christine	Benefits (including Leave processing)
Mitchell, Samantha	School and Central Office Staffing <i>Note: Joined after Oct. 1, 2022</i>
Scott, Kyia	Benefits (including Leave processing)
Settles, Katrina	Position Management and Processing
Simms, Shay	HR Records Processing
Smith, Maria	ID Badging Services, Clearance processing
Stewart, Andrea	Central Office Staffing
Stoutamire, Charron	Onboarding & Offboarding
Tanner, Yara	HR Processing and Records Management
Watterson, Douglas	School Staffing
Yalamanchili, Brahmani	HR Systems Development
Zemui, Rodhas	Compensation, Classification and Retirement <i>Note: Joined after Oct. 1, 2022</i>

5. (a) Does DCPS maintain a tracking system (I.e., case management system) for employee inquiries to the human resources office?
- (b) If so, how are inquiries or requests categorized (I.e., payroll, leave issues, retirement applications, etc.)?
- (c) Does this system track the completion or resolution, as well as timing of completion or resolution, of inquiries/issues?
- During the height of the School Year 2022-23 hiring season and school re-opening, our team implemented a tracker that was used to monitor all outstanding employee issues across the issues of payroll, leave, benefits, retirement, and other compensation matters (e.g., special payment requests). The tracker is populated daily and reflects urgent items across these workstreams. The

team meets daily to review the tracker, close out issues that have been addressed, and problem-solve matters that involve other partner agencies, including DC Human Resources, OFCO-Payroll and the DC Retirement Board. This routine has been critically important to addressing and resolving individual matters as efficiently as possible, ideally within a 48-hour timeframe.

6. **Please provide a copy of the standard operating procedure(s) utilized by the human resources office to receive, address and resolve employee inquiries, including leave requests, retirement applications, and the like.**
 - For the foreseeable future, the team will continue to use the protocol above to address issues as urgently as possible, with the goal of closing each within a 48-hour timeframe.
7. **Overall, what factors are contributing to this year's surge in complaints alleging the problems in DCPS HR enumerated in the opening paragraph of this letter?**
 - We have experienced several pandemic-related challenges that have impacted our HR services. As was the case nationally, DCPS experienced an increase in vacancies and a reduced candidate pool to fill them during the SY 2022-23 hiring season. As a result, DCPS implemented an extended recruitment and hiring timeline, which while necessary, created truncated processing time for new employees who were starting while concurrently being entered into our systems.
 - Additionally, this year brought with it an increase in the number of resignations. This year, we saw 193 individuals submit DINRs to resign (Declaration of Intent to Not Return, the process DCPS uses to identify vacancies early) compared to 158 in the previous year. Similarly, this year we had 551 people resign after the DINR window, compared to 422 in the previous year. In some cases, individuals were resigning just days before the beginning of the school year, resulting in unexpected vacancies for schools and increased processing times, both to process those individuals out and onboard new individuals as quickly as possible. These heightened trends co-existed with increased rates of leave requests we have seen since the onset of the pandemic. We also experienced heightened central office HR vacancies and transitions, with several departures occurring just as the hiring season was launched.
 - Last, we continued to navigate complex background clearance requirements. While we streamlined the Child Protection Registry (CPR) check process with CFSA as much as possible, the highly individualized and manual review required for these checks remains challenging, a challenge exacerbated in periods when there is a high volume of candidates. We believe that the CPR check does not provide additional information useful for hiring within a Local Education Agency context, while creating a significant administrative burden that negatively impacts operations. We look forward to discussing this challenge further at the upcoming hearing on [Bill 24-989](#), the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act, on November 2, 2022.
 - We have worked to mitigate these challenges throughout the hiring season using multiple strategies, several of which are outlined in our response below.
8. **Please outline the steps DCPS is taking to reduce the backlog in HR requests, such as leave requests.**
 - In addition to the daily problem-solving and tracking routines outlined above, we have taken the following steps to address areas of challenge:
 - a. Detailed additional staff to support our HR functions, and augmented the team with contracted support, as noted above
 - b. Partnered closely with sister agencies (i.e., CFSA, DCHR, DISB, OCFO) to support coordination and streamline processes as much as feasible

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- c. Worked with CFSA to help design a new CPR application database and link our clearance database directly to CFSA's new system
 - d. Enhanced our candidate tracking system to increase visibility related to application status for candidates, HR staff, and school leaders
 - e. Streamlined our document collection to support a swifter onboarding process
 - f. Realigned workstreams and personnel to improve efficiency and enhance the employee experience under the Benefits and Compensation umbrella (prior to January 2022, all benefits and compensation workstreams were supported by four employees, with several vacancies needing to be filled. Since that time, we have brought on detailed and short-term contracted staff to address existing backlogs while we recruited and onboarded permanent staff with the appropriate skillset. Since October 2022, we have also reorganized the team to include two managers to support these diverse workstreams. There is now one team dedicated to Benefits (including Leave) and one team dedicated to Retirement, Compensation and Classification).

We are continuing to evaluate and enhance our work in the following key areas, supported by a Principal Advisory Group:

- Data systems
- Policies and procedures
- Training and support
- Strategic resource allocation (personnel and non-personal services)
- Website and related on-line resources

Thank you for your inquiry, and we look forward to sharing more about our work in this area moving forward.

Sincerely,



Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.
Chancellor, DC Public Schools