



Division of Human Resources
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Aurora Public Schools Principal and Assistant Principal Hiring Process

Primary features of the New APS principal and assistant principal hiring process include:

- Increasing efficiency and applicant quality measures.
- Establishing a pool of candidates through principal and assistant principal screening interviews; candidates selected for the pool are determined to be ready for a principal or assistant principal position in the Aurora Public Schools.
- Integrating a school committee component to the district process, including classroom observations.

The pool process consists of six phases.

PHASE 1 – APPLICATION PAPER SCREENING

Beginning in December, postings for general principal and assistant principal pools will be advertised on the APS Web site as well as on relevant state Web sites and on appropriate internet sites. Candidates who are interested in principal and/or assistant principal positions in APS must first apply to be accepted into the pool. Candidates will be expected to complete an online application that is specifically for licensed administrator and professional/technical positions. Only candidates who are accepted into the pool will be eligible to apply for specific principal and assistant principal vacancies.

Postings for the principal and assistant principal pools will include the dates that the application and supporting documentation are due. Initial screenings will be conducted by teams consisting of administrators from the Division of Instruction and Human Resources. Candidates who are selected will move forward to Phase 2 in the Pool Process.

PHASE 2 - INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

In advance of the individual interview, applicants will be asked to provide a written response to a specific question(s). Successful candidates from Phase 2 will move forward to Phase 3 in the Pool Process.

PHASE 3 - GROUP INTERVIEW

In Phase 3 of the Pool Process, applicants will participate in a group interview and group activities with other candidates.

Following Phase 3, successful applicants will be placed in the appropriate pool (Assistant Principal or Principal). A letter will be sent to applicants informing them of their acceptance into the pool.

If, at any time throughout the process, a candidate will not be progressing to the next phase, they will be contacted by the Division of Human Resources or the Division of Instruction.

If an applicant is not accepted into the pool, they are ineligible for reconsideration until the next hiring season.

****PHASES 1-3 WILL BE REPEATED EVERY SIX WEEKS******

WHEN A SCHOOL VACANCY OPENS

Specific assistant principal and principal vacancies will not be posted on the website. Instead, candidates in the appropriate pool will receive an e-mail notification from the Office of Licensed Employment informing them of a specific vacancy.

All pool candidates will be considered for each appropriate vacancy but each candidate may express an interest in a specific vacancy by sending a letter of interest to the Office of Licensed Employment in Human Resources for the specific school vacancy.

Current APS employees who are interested in promoting to a principal or assistant principal position or are interested in a lateral position must apply to be in the pools.

- Current APS employees who are interested in promoting to a principal or assistant principal position will also need to complete a licensed administrator and professional/technical application.
- Current APS principals or assistant principals interested in a lateral move, need to complete an online application. In addition to the application, current principals or assistant principals interested in a lateral position must also submit a current resume, three current letters of recommendation, and a letter of interest specific to that job.

PHASES 4–6 - SITE BASED SCREENING OF POOL CANDIDATES AND SUPERINTENDENT’S SELECTION

Note: The following applies to principal vacancies. The process for assistant principals is similar, but facilitated by the principal and the principal determines the selected candidate.

1. As specific school vacancies are made known, a director or coordinator from Human Resources will facilitate phase four of the principal hiring process for schools. This will include conducting an all staff meeting (attendance voluntary) to describe the hiring process and the opportunities for staff to participate.
2. HR will help staff generate a list of attributes that they desire in a principal. These characteristics will then be used to select candidates from the pool for interviews, to develop the interview questions, and to evaluate each candidate’s interview.
3. HR will solicit volunteers from school staff to serve on the interview committee.
4. HR will facilitate the selection of representatives for the interview committee. The committee size is limited and participants are expected to represent the ideas of their stakeholder group. The committee is comprised of:
 - 2 staff members - HR will facilitate the school’s instructional leadership team’s selection of interview committee participants from a list of staff volunteers. The staff members may or may not be members of the leadership team and may be either licensed or classified employees. To eliminate possible bias, if an incumbent assistant principal applies for principal, other assistant principals in the building will be excluded from serving on the interview team.
 - 1 parent from the school accountability or PTO/PTA/PTSAC committee
 - 1 principal from the same level (e.g. if the vacancy is for a middle school principal, a current middle school principal will be on the committee)
 - 1 administrator from the Division of Equity and Engagement or ELA department
 - 1 Director of Student Achievement
 - 1 Director or Coordinator of Human Resources
 - Chief Academic Officer (optional)
5. HR will work with the staff representatives on the interview team to write interview questions. There is a core list of district approved and required questions that will be asked of every applicant. Other questions address the school’s unique needs.
6. Directors/Coordinators from HR and the Division of Instruction will review the pool of candidates and recommend several for possible interviews.

7. HR will facilitate a meeting with the staff representatives and the school's director of student achievement to review the recommended applications and to finalize who will be interviewed.
8. HR will schedule and facilitate the first round of interviews. Interviews will consist of a one hour written component and a one hour verbal component. In no priority order, the interview committee will recommend no more than two finalists to the superintendent for consideration.
9. Following the committee interview but prior to the interview with the Superintendent, finalists will be asked to participate in an Instructional and Leadership Walkthrough (**PHASE 5**) at an APS school.
10. The finalists will be interviewed by the superintendent (**PHASE 6**), the deputy superintendent, the chief academic officer, the chief personnel officer, and the director of student achievement. Based on the finalist interview, a review of the interview committee's input, and the candidate's fit for the school, the superintendent will select the new principal. If neither finalist is deemed satisfactory by the superintendent, he will either ask the committee for another finalist or repost the position.
11. The superintendent forwards his recommendation to HR who will conduct a thorough background check. If references and other aspects of the background check are satisfactory, the chief personnel officer will formally offer the job.

Aurora Public Schools 2011-12 Principal and Assistant Principal Hiring Timeline

November 18, 2011 – Candidate Pool Opens for 2011 - 12

The candidate pool process will be advertised in the HR News and on APS, Colorado Association of School Executives, and other Web sites as appropriate. Invitations to apply will be sent to current APS assistant principals, deans of students, administrative support teachers on special assignment and members of the 2011-12 Leadership Cohort. APS principals will be asked to share information about the pool process with APS employees aspiring to principal and assistant principal positions.

December 9, 2011 – First Round - Application Deadline

Deadline for candidates to complete a licensed administrative/professional technical application and submit a current resume, a letter of interest, and three letters of recommendation.

February 10, 2012 - Second Round - Application Deadline

March 30, 2012 - Third Round - Application Deadline

May 18, 2012 - Fourth Round - Application Deadline

December, 2011 thru June, 2012 – Ongoing Application Review and Pool Selection

Completed applications will be screened every six weeks by HR and Division of Instruction administrators. Successful candidates will be contacted for subsequent phases in the Pool Process if applicable.

HR will either authorize the candidate for the pool or notify the candidate that he/she was not selected for the pool.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

From an Applicant's Point of View

Q1: What does it mean if I'm in the pool, or on the other hand, what does it mean if I don't get in the pool?

A1: Candidates selected for the pools are deemed to meet selection criteria and be ready for a principal or assistant principal position in the right school. Readiness is a key factor. Candidates with great potential may not make the pool if it is deemed that they need more time developing skills and experiences that will make them ready for the job.

Q2: What are the application deadlines?

A2: Applications are due by the following hiring cycles for consideration for each cycle. Round 1 due by December 9, 2011, round 2 due by February 10, 2012, round 3 due by March 30, 2012 and round 4 due by May 18, 2012.

Q3: What if I do not get called for an interview?

A3: This may mean you did not make it past the paper screening or background check.

Q4: How do I know if I am selected for the pool?

A4: You will be notified in writing via letter.

Q5: How do I know if I am not selected for the pool?

A5: You will be notified by phone call or letter.

Q6: How long can I remain in the pool?

A6: Candidates will remain in the pool until you indicate you no longer wish to remain in the pool.

Q7: How often is the pool refreshed?

A7: A hiring round occurs every 6 weeks at which time the applications are reviewed and new applicants are encouraged to apply. Existing members of the pool will also receive a status update every 6 weeks to ensure accurate information and a viable pool of candidates.

Q8: What are the criteria for getting into the pool?

A8: The criteria include school and/or district leadership experiences; success educating children in an urban school setting who may be second language learners, from poverty, or at-risk; instructional and education reform understandings; success developing and nurturing professional relationships; organizational leadership and management skills; professional recommendations; appropriate CDE licensure,.

Q9: If I don't get in the pool this year, may I reapply next year?

A9: Yes, especially if the feedback you receive centers on readiness.

Q10: Am I at an advantage or disadvantage if I apply in time for the first round of the application process? What if I wait to apply later in the year?

A10: One benefit of the pool process is that it allows the hiring steps to move much more quickly. Because application reviews and screening interviews occur every 6 weeks after the first application deadline you may miss particular school vacancies if you delay your application. Also, early pool applicants get more exposure to schools and directors as openings at schools are advertised only to the candidates already in the pool. We recommend applicants apply to the pool as soon as possible.

Q11: It's important to me to have a good fit at the school where I work. What if I'm in the pool and selected for an interview, but it's not a school where I believe I'm a good fit? If I decline the interview, will that hurt my chances for interviews at other schools?

A11: No. We understand the importance of fit as well. It is even possible that a good candidate will be selected for interviews at one school but not another on the premise of fit.

Q12: What if I'm interested in a particular school, but don't know by the first application deadline if that school will be vacant for 2012-13. Should I apply anyway, or just wait?

A12: It is your choice. You can always apply early in order to participate in the first round of the application process, or you can apply at any subsequent round (every 6 weeks). Again, the process moves quickly once a vacancy is known, and there is increased exposure for those who apply and get into the pool early.

Q13: What is the likelihood that APS will hire an out of district candidate?

A13: APS is equally interested in both in district and out of district candidates. A healthy balance is our goal.

Q14: Does APS hire first time principals?

A14: Yes. Schools have different needs. Sometimes a smaller school or a school with a stable staff is a good environment for a new principal.

Q15: Can I get in the pool if I don't have my CDE principal license yet, but I'm in a license program?

A15: You must have passed the Principal PLACE exam before you will be considered for the pool. If you have passed the test but do not finish your license program until June, you will need to submit a letter from your university adviser verifying that you will be eligible for your license in June. If you will not finish your program until after June, you will not be considered for this year's pool.

From a School Employee's or Parent's Point of View

Q1: Why is the interview committee membership limited as it is?

A1: For the candidate's sake, APS tries to keep the size of the interview team reasonable. Interview committee members are expected to represent their stakeholder group and not just their individual opinions. To ensure that their voice is heard, we encourage stakeholders to share their ideas with their representative.

Q2: What can I expect when the finalists are at our school doing classroom walkthroughs?

A2: You can go about your business in the usual fashion. The finalist may walk into your classroom with the superintendent and/or the chief academic officer just to look around. There shouldn't be any disruption, and they will not be in your classroom long.

Q3: Why can't the school decide who will be the next principal instead of the superintendent?

A3: The superintendent is ultimately responsible for the district's and school's success. To enable the superintendent to meet this measure of accountability, it is necessary that he retain the authority to select the school leader.

Q4: What are the criteria for getting into the pool?

A4: The criteria include school and/or district leadership experiences; success educating children in an urban school setting who may be second language learners, from poverty, or at risk; instructional and education reform understandings; success developing and nurturing professional relationships; organizational leadership and management skills; professional recommendations; appropriate CDE licensure,.

Q5: What is the likelihood that APS will hire an out of district candidate?

A5: APS is equally interested in both in district and out of district candidates. A healthy balance is our goal.

Q6: Does APS hire first time principals?

A6: Yes. Schools have different needs. Sometimes a smaller school or a school with a stable staff is a good environment for a new principal.

Q7: Will the new principal and leaving principal have any time to work together for transition purposes?

A7: Opportunities for transition vary depending on whether the new principal is from within the district or not. In cases where new principals are from APS, they often find the means and time to transition with the leaving principal. If the new principal is from another district or outside of the Denver area, transition will more likely occur via email.