

FROM INSIGHT TO IMPACT:

A JOURNEY OF PROCESS REENGINEERING
FOR HR SERVICE EXCELLENCE



AASPA Human Capital Leadership Summit 2024



Presenter: Nicole Lawson, MBA, pHCLE



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Human Resources
Division



PROJECT HR R.I.S.E.
RESTORING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EXCELLENCE




PRESENTER

Nicole Lawson, MBA, pHCLE


Experience

- Chief Human Resources Officer - 2 years
- Executive Director of Talent Management - 10 years
- HR Practitioner - 11 years


Education and Certification

- MBA - Human Resources Management
- BBA - Human Resources Management
- Professional in Human Resources Certification (PHR) 
- Change Management Certification (Prosci-CMC) 
- Professional Human Capital Leaders in Education Certification (pHCLE) 
- Proud Product of Atlanta Public Schools (1996)

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ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

2024-2025

APS BY THE NUMBERS

Students (Projected)

Total Enrollment:
49,575

Neighborhood,
Partner, Alternative:
39,685

Charter:
9,890

Number of Schools

2 Single-Gender
Schools

4
Programs

59
Neighborhood
Schools

5 Partner
Schools

2 Alternative
Schools

19
Charter
Schools

Diversity²

1.1%
Asian

70.7%
Black

8.2%
Hispanic

0.3%
Indian

3.4%
Multi

0.1%
Pacific

16.1%
White

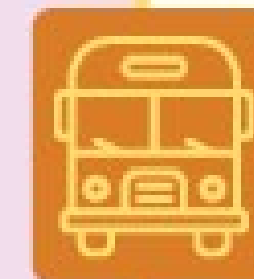
Graduates



2,908 Graduates³

\$228,947,153
in scholarships offered

Bus Routes¹



295 Bus routes

28,750 Students transported

21,215 Miles per day

Free & Reduced Lunch



68.98%

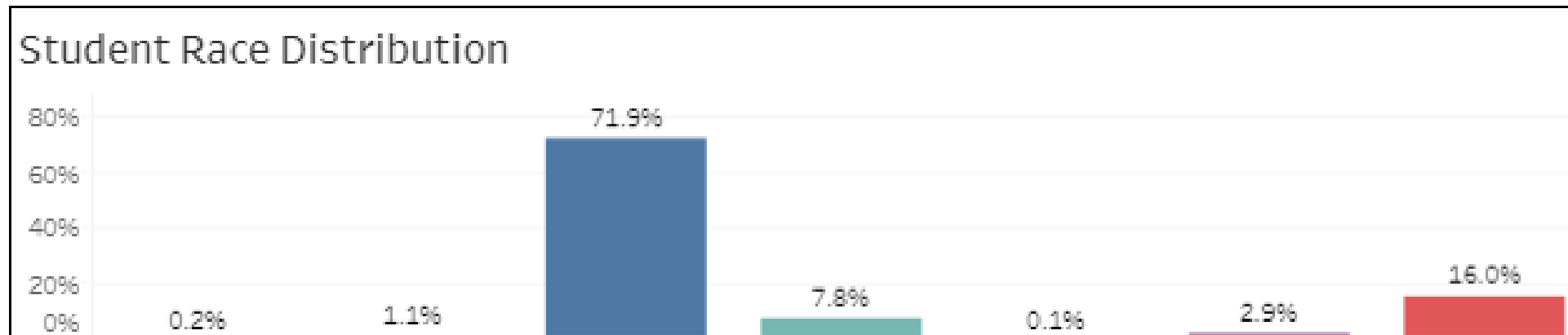
4,263 Total Teachers

3,109 Neighborhood School
Teachers

1,154 Charter (937) +
Partner (217) School
Teachers



Employee Demographics Dashboard Student, Teacher, and Leader Race Comparison



Filters

Cluster

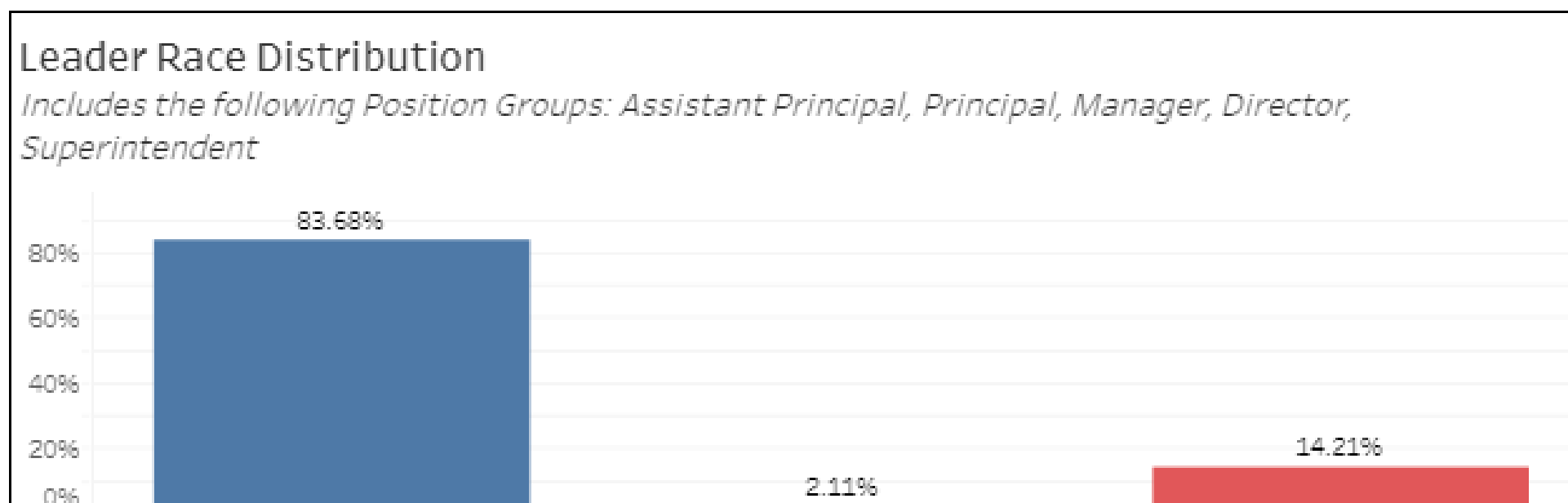
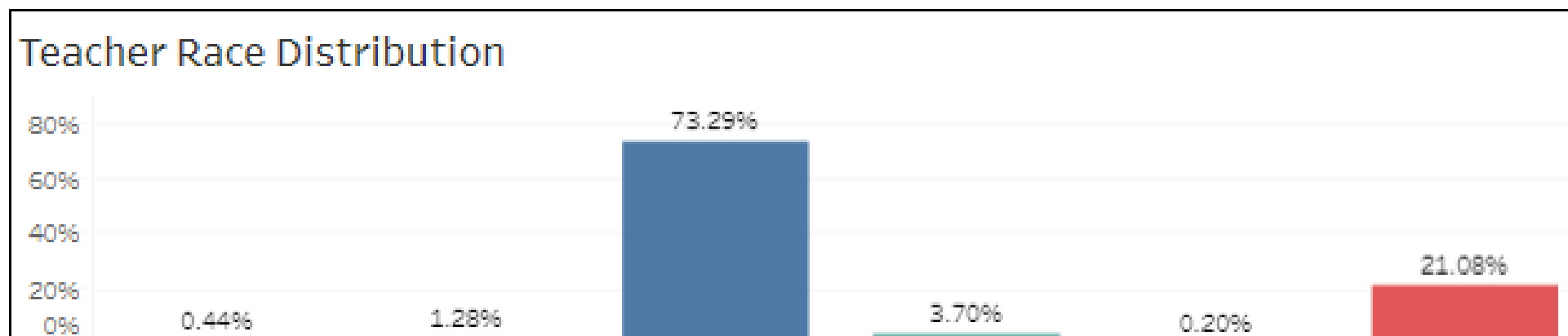
(All)

School

(All)

Race/Ethnicity

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic or Latino
- Pacific Islander
- Two or More
- White



At APS, our
employee
demographics
mirror our student
demographics

FY'25 HR Bright Spots



Human Resources
Division



Staffing Success

- **100% of teacher vacancies** were filled on Day One! (644 teachers)
- **Fully staff our Nutrition Department** which transitioned from an outsourced model (400+ staff members)
- **New Employee Orientation Success**



Process and System Updates

- Re-engineered the **hiring process and new service model for HR Support**
- Implemented a **new professional growth and learning system**
- Enhanced **EAP offerings for employees**
- New e-form for **Employee Relations Incidents**



Compensation and Policy Updates

- **\$58.9 million** in compensation upgrades. (11% increase for teachers)
- **Dress code modernization** : Jeans and Sneaker acceptance
- **CROWN Act**: prohibits discrimination based on hair texture or style for employment



Achievements

- Recipient of the **2023 C. S. Robinson Innovation Award** by AASPA
- **High Employee Retention** Certificate for 80% or more of staff (District Recognition)
- **High Employee Engagement** ranked top 10 for Gallup Engagement Scores (District Recognition)

HCLE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



Process Management

- Process Mapping Tools
- Identify Key Performance Indicators
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Leverage Technology
- Support Employees through the Change Process



Talent Acquisition

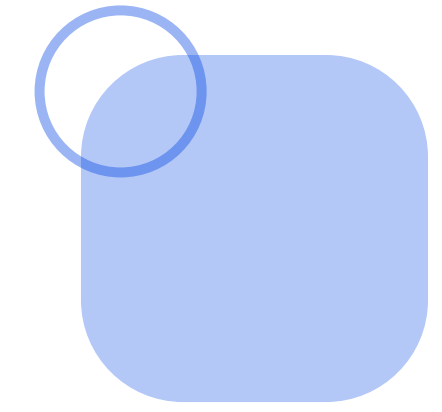
- Legally compliant hiring process
- Evaluate applicants and monitor for bias
- Extend employment offers and onboard
- Provide a positive hiring experience for candidates and hiring managers



Experience Management

- Solicit feedback to identify customer expectations and experiences
- Provide exceptional service
- Implement inclusive and equitable policies and practices
- Manage relationships with partners

AGENDA



01

About Atlanta Public Schools

02

HCLE Alignment: Why Process Mapping Matters

03

APS Journey: HR R.I.S.E.

04

Process Improvement Culture

05

Lessons Learned and Outcomes





PONDER ON THIS

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT
YOUR HR PROCESSES

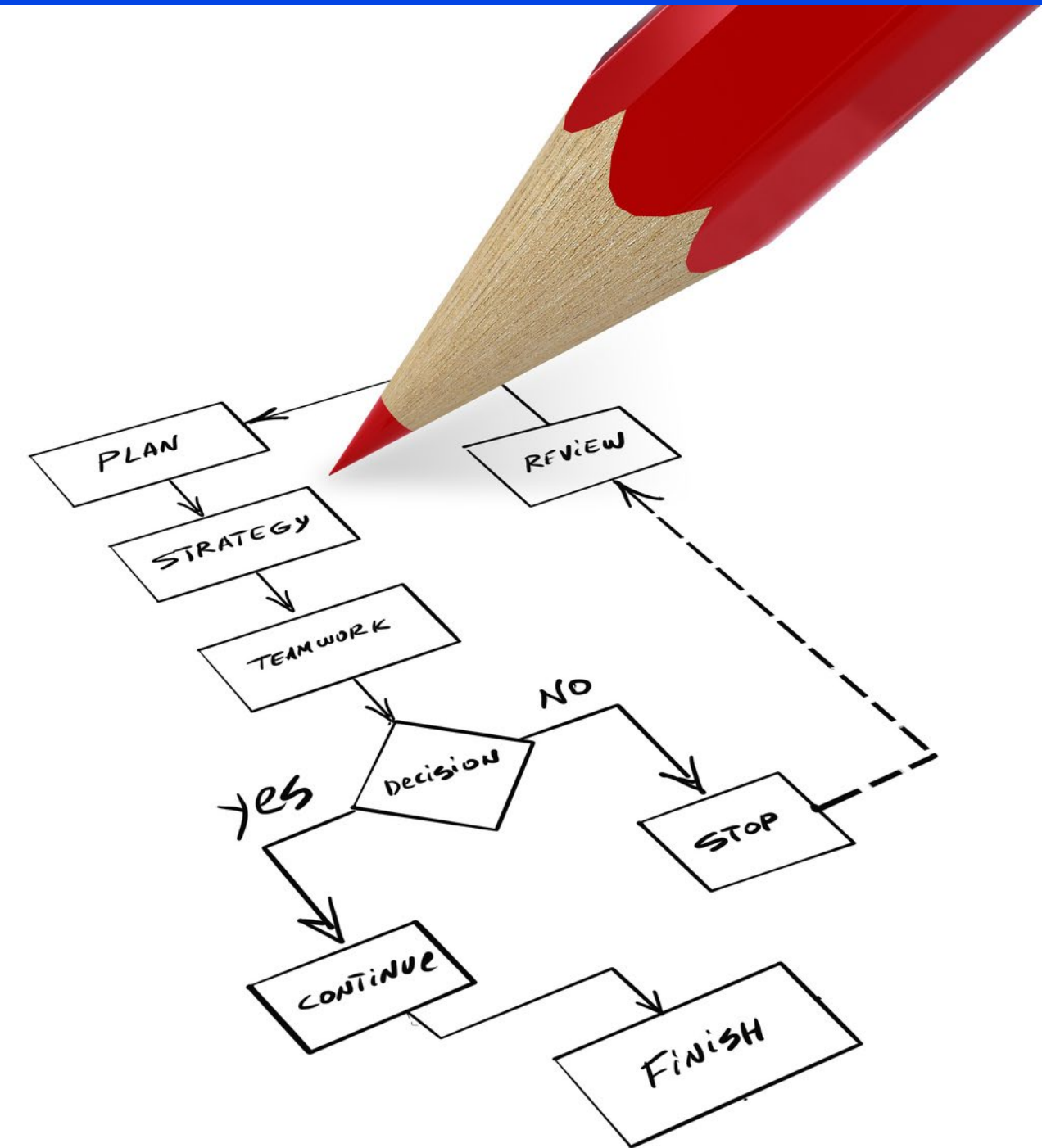
WHAT'S ONE ROUTINE
TASK OR CHALLENGE
THAT FEELS MORE
COMPLICATED THAN IT
SHOULD BE?

WHAT IS PROCESS MAPPING?

Process mapping is a visual representation of the steps involved in a process from start to finish. It helps outline how a specific task or workflow is carried out within an organization.

The main purpose is to make the process clear and understandable by mapping out each step, decision point, and role involved.

This can be done through various tools such as flowcharts, diagrams, or software specifically designed for process mapping.



HCLE STANDARD: PROCESS MAPPING

Process Management:

Continuously define, measure, analyze, and improve the way work is accomplished to enhance student, employee, and organizational outcomes.



Why Process Mapping Matters? Top 4 Key Benefits

- **Drives Excellence:** Process mapping in driving excellence and strategic alignment in HR practices, as emphasized by the AASPA HCLE Standard.
- **Supports Standardization:** Ensures consistency in HR procedures for effective and replicable practices.
- **Identifies Bottlenecks:** Helps uncover inefficiencies and process gaps, allowing for targeted improvements
- **Drives Accountability:** Establishes clear ownership for each part of the process

APS JOURNEY: PROJECT HR R.I.S.E.

REDESIGNING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EXCELLENCE

Problem Statement

Project HR RISE addresses the critical challenges impacting the effectiveness and satisfaction within HR processes:

- Decreased principal satisfaction with the hiring process,
- audit findings
- Decline in candidate job offer acceptances, and
- Frustration among HR staff due to inefficiency gaps and ambiguity

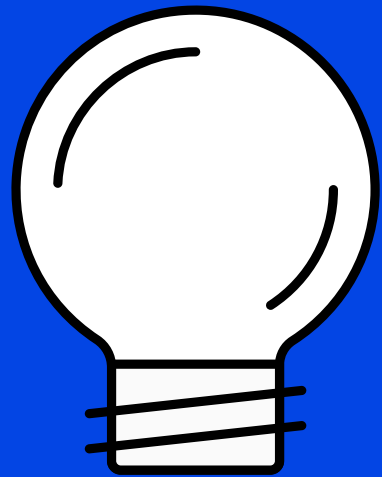


PROJECT HR R.I.S.E.

Objectives

- **Enhance Hiring Process Efficiency** : Stream line and optimize the hiring process to improve principal satisfaction and reduce candidate offer declines.
- **Address Operational Gaps and Improve Compliance** : Implement solutions to resolve findings from audits and align HR practices with district standards and priorities.
- **Increase HR Staff Engagement and Effectiveness:** Introduce updated tools and processes to alleviate staff frustration and enhance overall service delivery and responsiveness.

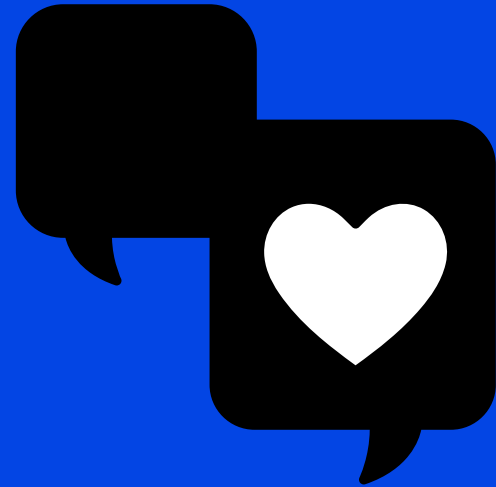
Theory of Action



If

We redesign the hiring process to:

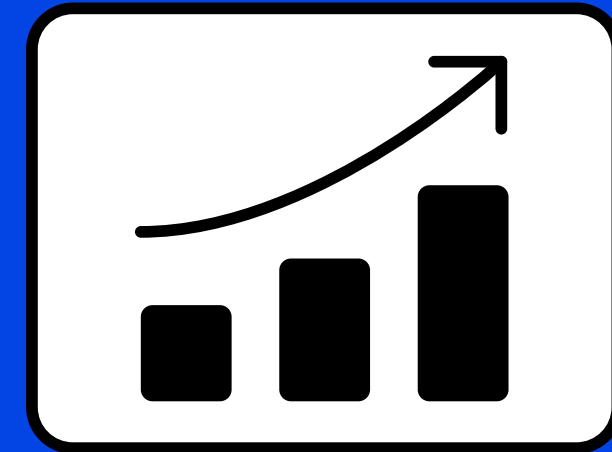
- **Simplify** the hiring and onboarding process
- Create a **one-stop shop** HR Support Structure
- Launch a **compensation support** center to manage complex issues



Then

The HR Team will:

- **Reduce** the **time-to-fill metric** after a recommendation for hire is submitted to HR
- Reduce **ambiguity waste** among the internal HR teams



To

Improve the new hire and hiring manager experience:

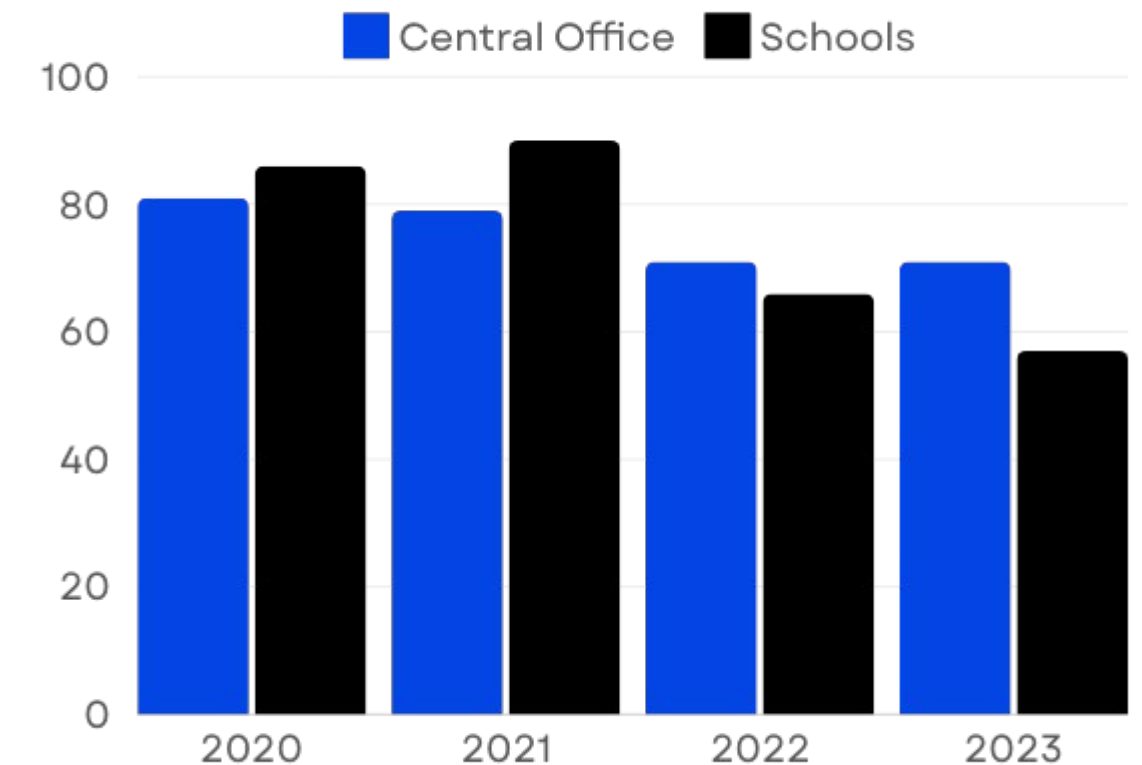
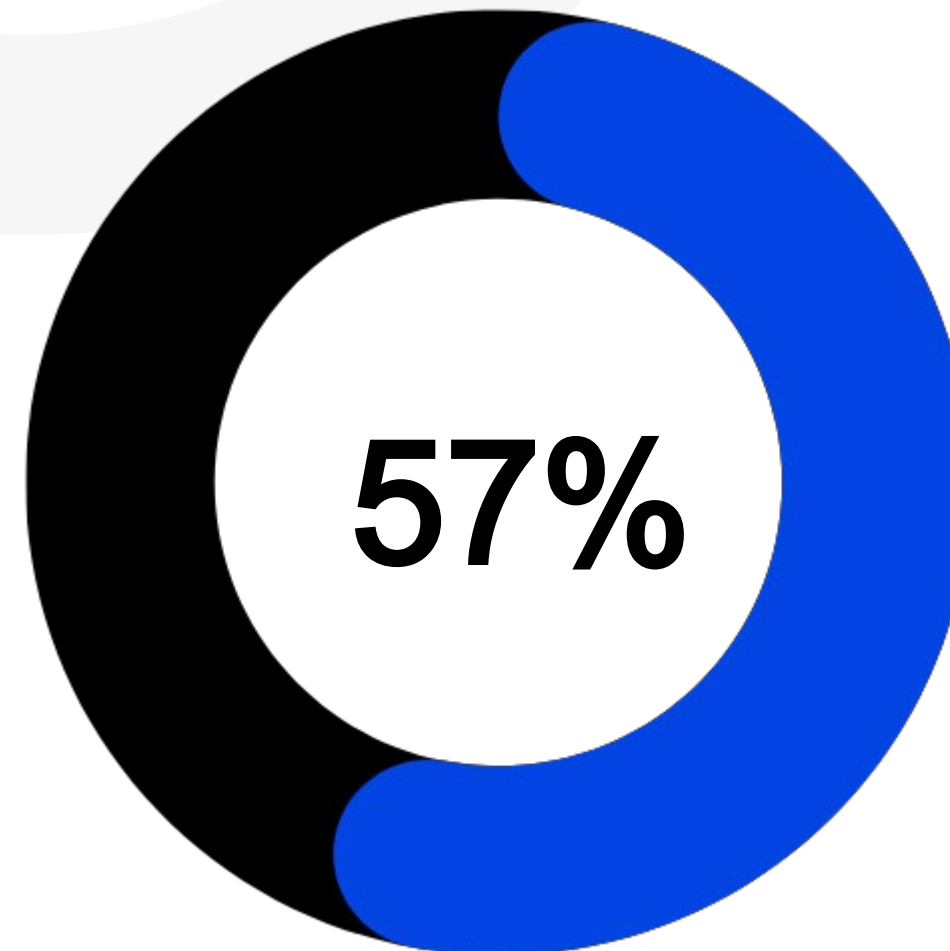
- Implement a more **streamlined and efficient hiring process** for Atlanta Public Schools that will enhance APS' ability to attract and retain top-tier talent.

INSIGHT

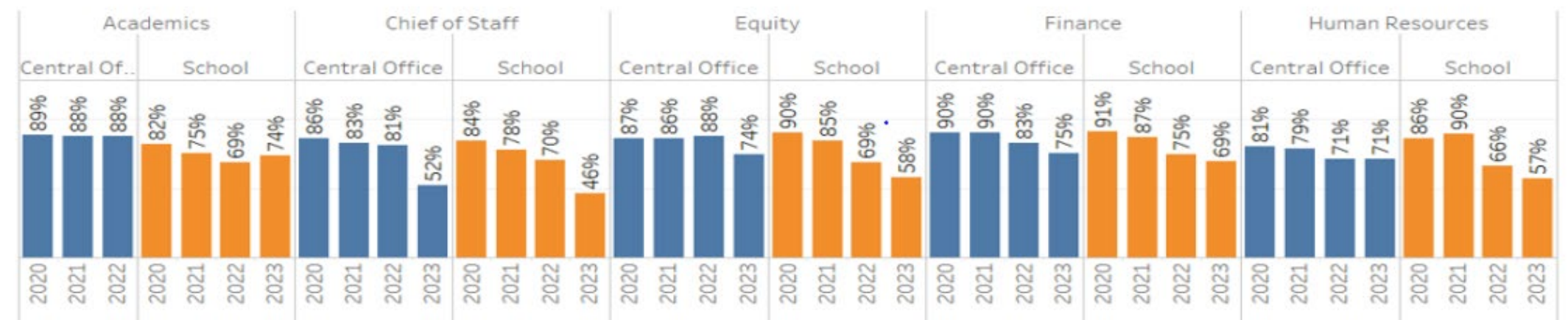
2023 Principal Satisfaction Rating

Factors for Consideration

- Decreased principal satisfaction - the hiring process
- Audit Findings
- Declination in candidate job offers
- Frustrated HR staff
- District prioritization



How effective are services provided by [division]? Chart reflects percent of respondents who rated each division as Effective or Very Effective.





District Prioritization

The Atlanta Public Schools 2020 -2025 Strategic Plan district priority number 3 is “**Equipping and Empowering Leaders and Staff**” and the Strategic Framework outlines attracting, rewarding, recognizing and retaining top performers as a strategic priority



Supporting Research

Harvard Business Review surveyed 800 senior business leaders, more than 95% of them told us that hiring and retaining talent was one of their top three priorities as they strive to deliver on their strategies. **40 Ideas to Shake Up Your Hiring Process**



Continuous Improvement / Operational Excellence

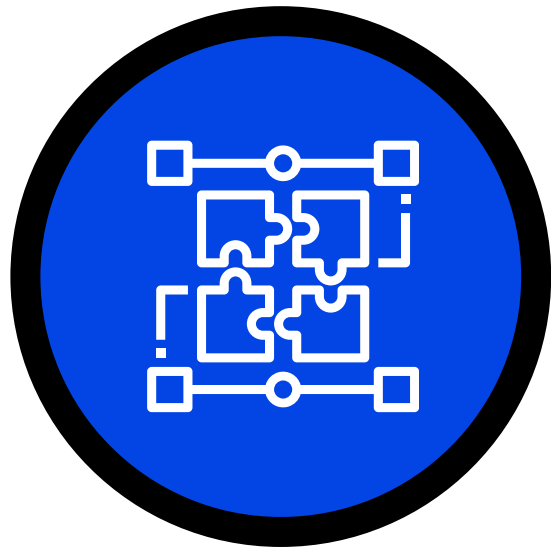
Addressing the problems in the HR New Hire and Compensation Process is crucial for improving overall **organizational effectiveness**, attracting and retaining talent, and fostering a positive workplace culture at Atlanta Public Schools.



Internal Context and Championing

Streamlining the hiring and compensation processes will yield a positive and enhance new hire and employee experience.

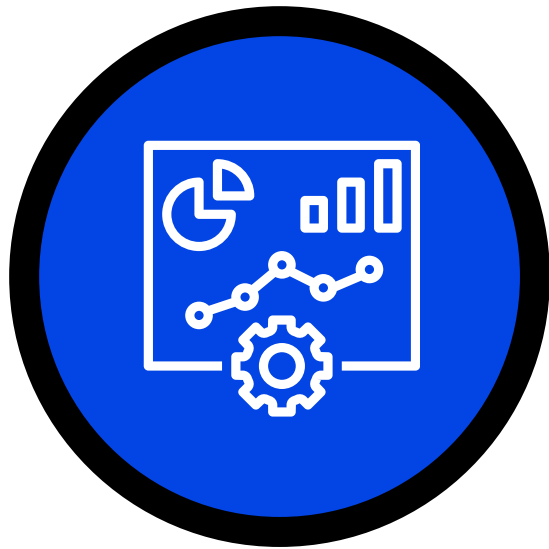




Hiring and Onboarding Process redesign

Define, map, and implement new hiring and onboarding processes.

Pro tip: Leverage external expertise, if possible, for lead process mapping efforts.



Office Design: Proximity to Greatness

Based on a Harvard Business Review, *Workplace Design: The Good, the Bad, and the Productive*, strategic **spatial management** can increase productivity by 15% if high-performing workers are in close proximity to other high performers.



*Conversely, a toxic worker can decrease the productivity of others by 30% when in close proximity.



Organizational Structure

We had to be intentional about tackling work team silos and signals of divisiveness. We needed to address accountability gaps due to the lack of proximity and interaction between team members.

Bringing teams together in a hub can help bridge these gaps by **increasing interaction and fostering a stronger sense of accountability**.



HR Support: One Stop Shop

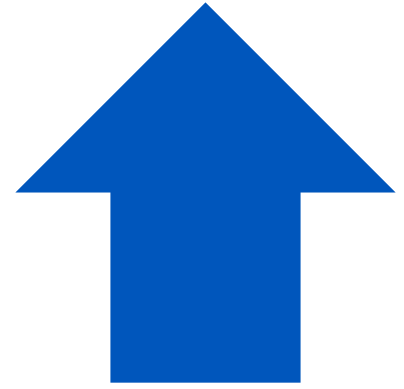
Implementing a **one - stop shop** for HR support enhances:

- operational effectiveness,
- improves the employee experience, and
- aligns with strategic business goals by **delivering streamlined, reliable, and accessible HR services.**



Compensation Center of Expertise

The availability of comprehensive HR support enables **specialized HR teams** to concentrate on high-value activities, such as compensation and total rewards.



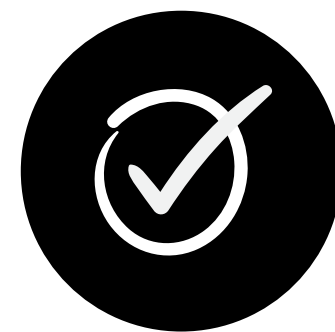
Process Improvement Scope



Process Name: APS Hiring Process

Process Start: HR receives a recommendation from the Hiring Manager

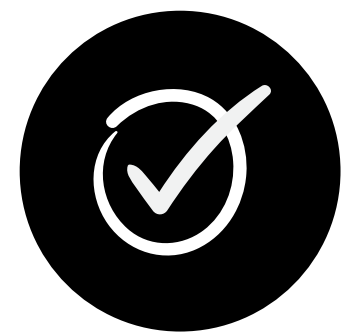
Process End: Onboarding has taken place



Define Scope



Define what's
out of scope



Team Inclusion



*Hired a consultant, STB Consulting, to lead the team through process mapping



Nicole Lawson - CHRO

Executive Sponsorship

- Chief HR Officer
- Executive Director of Talent Management

Role: An effective executive sponsor provides stability, support, and a clear direction for the project team, increasing the likelihood of successful project outcomes.

- Visionary
- Budget
- District Alignment
- Planning Team



Felecia Lester - Executive Director



Dr. Nardiann Mighty
Staffing Director

Subject Matter Experts

- Staffing Director
- Staffing Specialist
- Records Management Specialist

Role: SMEs bring expertise in their respective fields, offering insights that guide technical, functional, and strategic decisions within the project.



Fallon Sanders
Staffing Specialist

Project Support

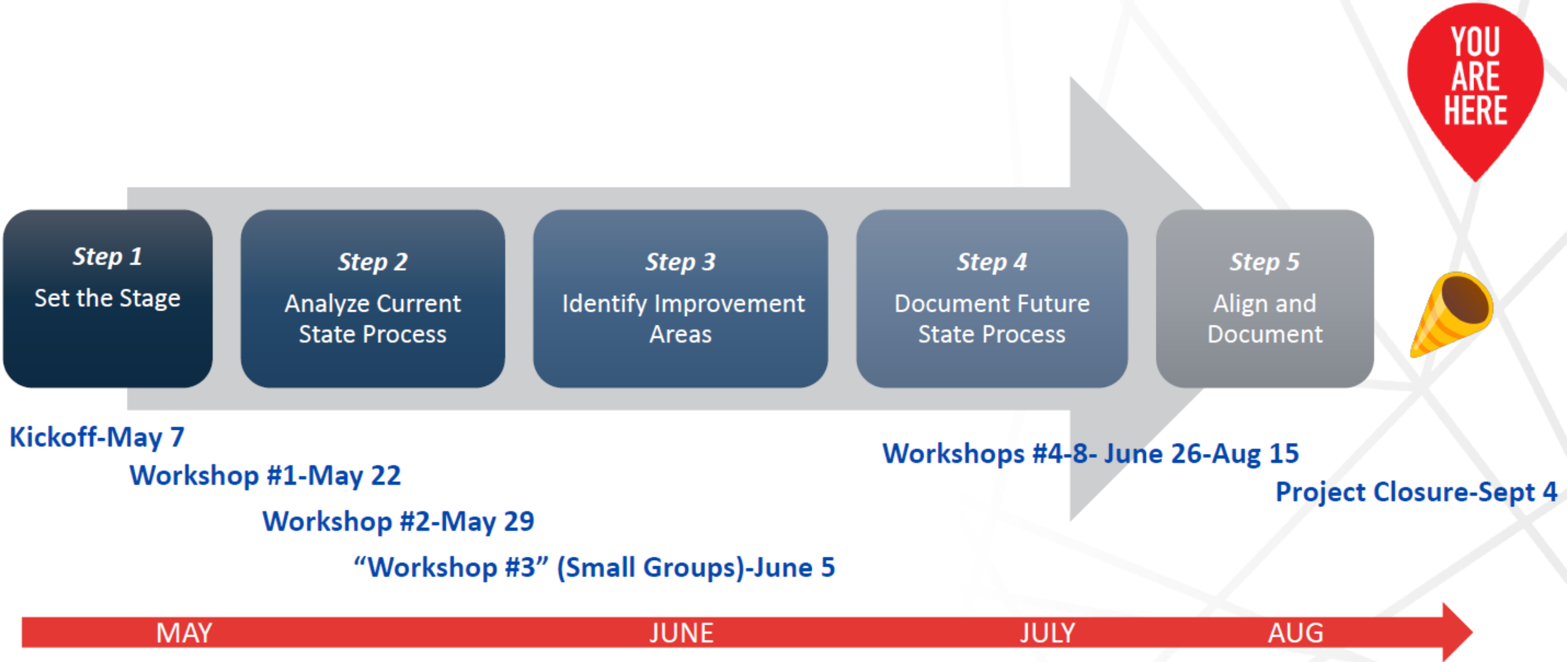
- HR Coordinator
- Project Manager
- Business Analyst
- Consultants - STB Consulting

Role: The implementation team is responsible for carrying out day-to-day project activities, managing resources, and meeting deadlines to maintain project momentum.

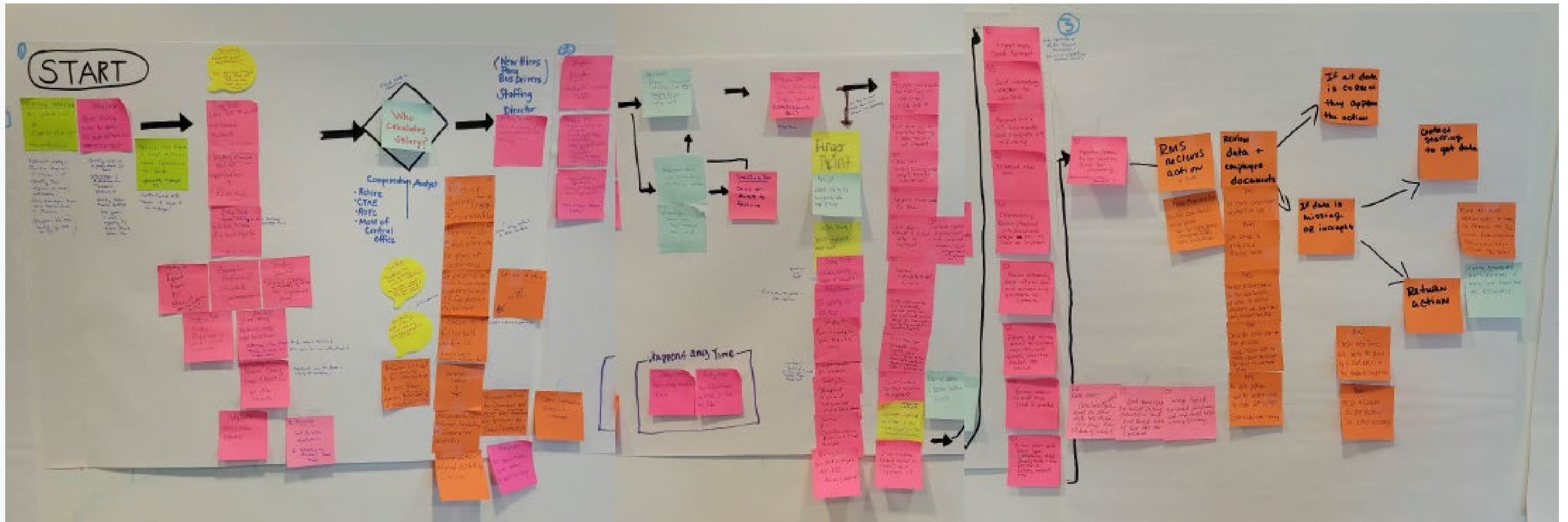


Marlene Parker
HR Coordinator

APS HR R.I.S.E Process Improvement – Our Journey



Where we began...

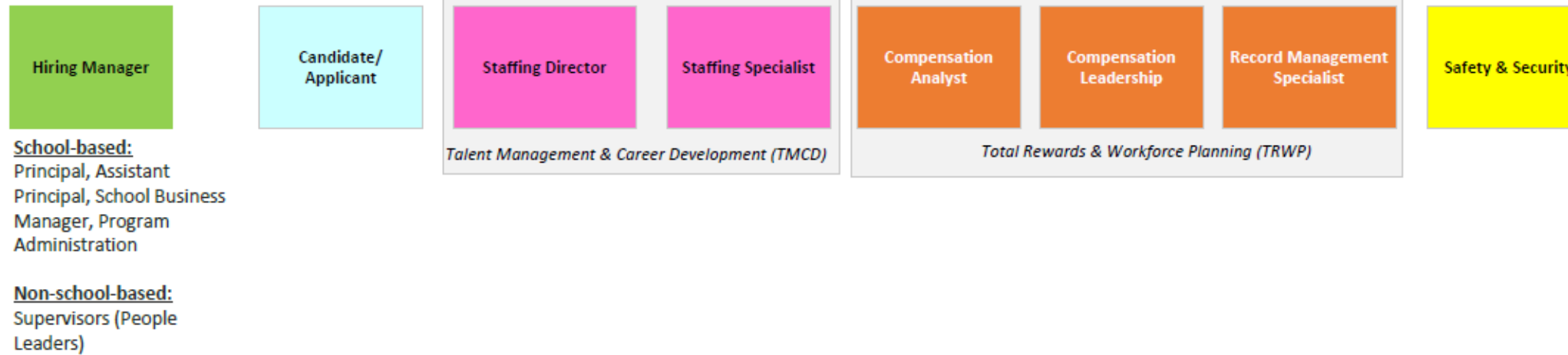




PROCESS: APS Hiring Process Current State

7/25/2024

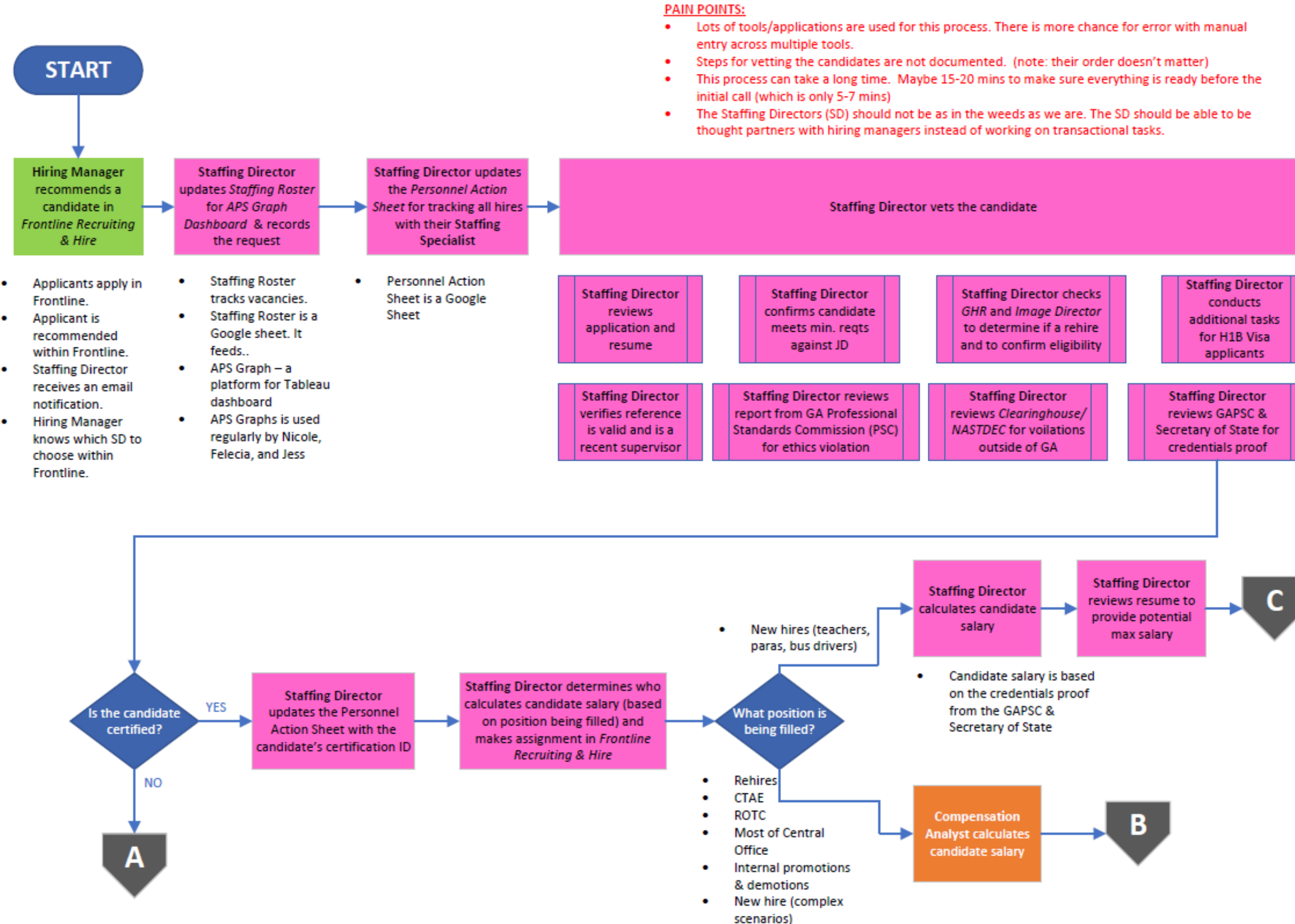
Roles:



Tools:

- *Frontline Recruiting & Hire*: used to initiate hires
- *Staffing Roster*: a Google sheet used to track vacancies. It feeds APS Graph Dashboard
- *APS Graph Dashboard*: a platform for Tableau dashboard; used regularly by CHRO, ED of Talent Management & Career Development (TMCD), and the HR Data Strategist
- *Personnel Action Sheet*: a Google sheet used by Staffing Directors and their Staffing Specialist to track all hires
- *Global HR (GHR)*: the system of record for all employees
- *Image Director*: a third party vendor system which grabs the Applicant Documents from Atlanta Public Schools SecureFileTransferProtocol site known as APSMoveITCentral, and scans these into documents and loads them in their system and makes these available for APS HR staff using the employee number as the identifier.
- *GA Professional Standards Commission (PSC)*: a website hosted by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (<https://www.gapsc.org/portal>)
- *Clearinghouse/NASTDEC*: external tool consulted to check for applicant violations outside of Georgia
- *Frontline Central*: houses personnel folders
- *Email*: APS internal email; used for communications during some of these steps
- *Teams*: APS internal messaging platform; used for communications during some of these steps
- *E-verify*: an Internet-based system that compares information entered by an employer from an employee's Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, to records available to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to confirm employment eligibility (e-verify.gov)
- *S3/Lawson*: an ERP(Enterprise Resource Planning) product of Infor LLC. At APS, Lawson S3 is used for handling Finance(i.e. Payroll, Benefits, Accounting, Budget, General Ledger, etc.) and also for various other departmental needs that are non-HR.

We identified lots of pain points



DEFINING FUTURE STATE: APPLY IMPROVEMENT TECHNIQUE



Eliminate Bureaucracy

Streamline decision -making by removing unnecessary approvals and redundant steps that slow down processes.



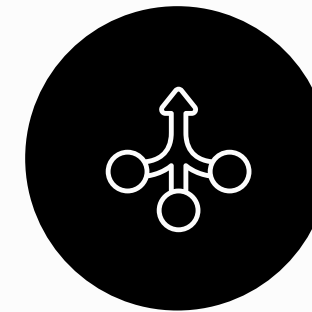
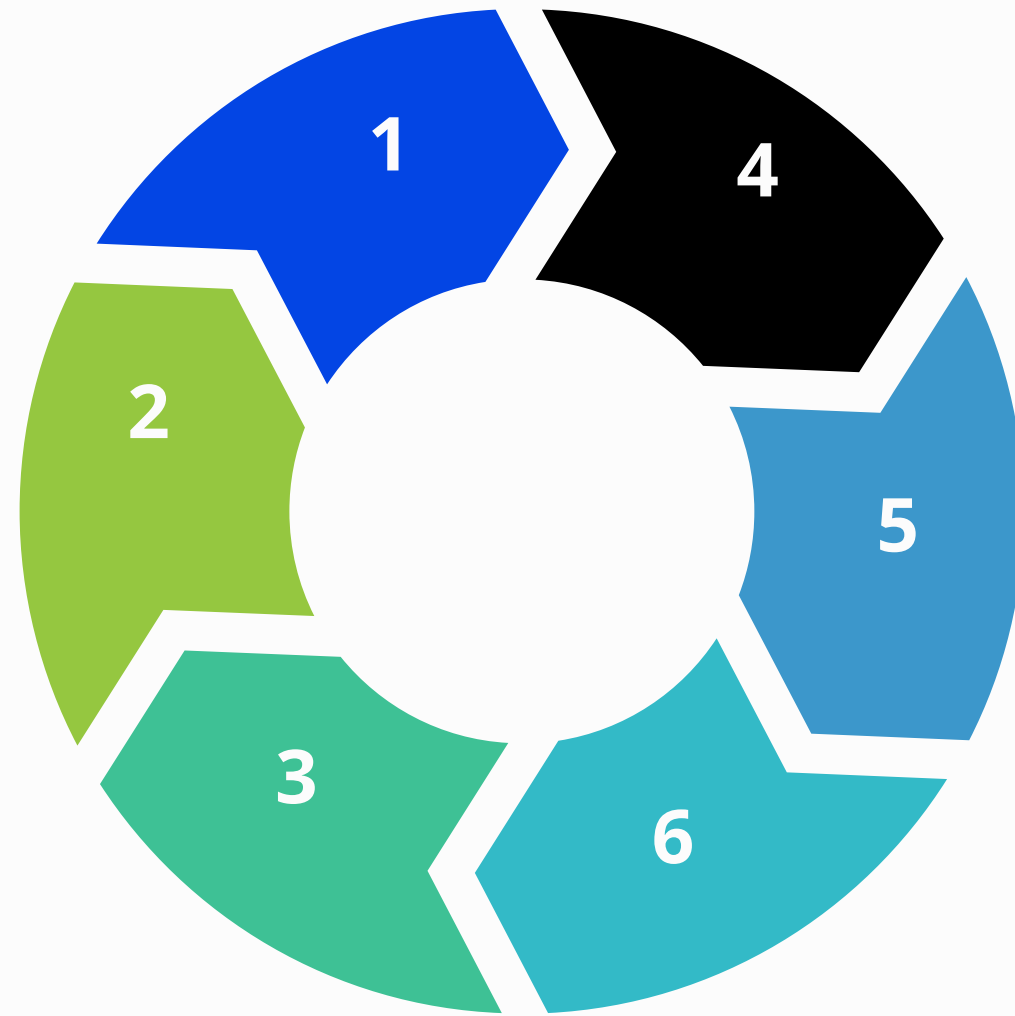
Assess Value Add

Evaluate each step of the process to determine if it contributes meaningful value to the overall outcome.



Eliminate Duplication

Identify and remove duplicate tasks or roles to enhance efficiency and reduce resource waste.



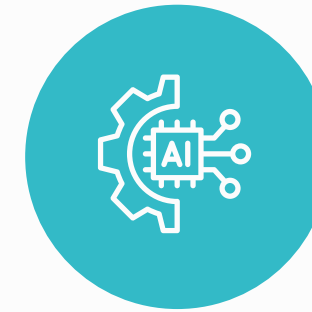
Simplification

Break down complex procedures into simpler, more manageable steps to improve clarity and execution.



Reduce Cycle Time

Shorten the time it takes to complete tasks by eliminating delays and optimizing workflows.



Automate

Implement technology to perform repetitive tasks, allowing teams to focus on higher-value activities.

Take Note of Pain Points along the way



Current State Pain Points Addressed in Future State ✓

Current State Process Step	Pain Point Description	Addressed in the Future State Process?
Verification process by Staffing Director	If a candidate disagrees with the experience "credits" , additional information has to be provided to compensation for "verification". There is a big delay here. Sometimes this issue is a result of the resume not being accurately updated. (This situation is an exception to the norm.)	Mostly. With the Frontline communication in the beginning and the conversation by the Strategic HR Director, we should have less of this. We can't be responsible for candidates who are not honest. The overall time for this "issue" resolution should be shortened in the new process.
Staffing Director check of candidate background report vs background guidelines	The Background Check Guidelines need to be updated. There have been multiple conversations that haven't been translated into the guidebook. Also, there are multiple versions of the guidebook going around with conflicting information.	Yes. Guidelines have been updated and version control language has been added.
Staffing Specialist contacts candidate (via phone or email) if the requested documents are not received (payroll docs, G4, W4, medical, etc.)	Staffing Specialist (SS) must wait until applicant returns docs before the process can continue. This could range from immediately to weeks. SS has to keep checking Frontline for document status. (A deadline cannot be given within Frontline)	Yes. HR Partner is contacting the applicant via phone or email instead of waiting. (see page 7 of future state). Will update that this communication should take place after 48 hrs.
Record Management Specialist (RMS) reviews data and employee documents	It's not always clear where to find documents today. Sometimes in Image Director, sometimes in Frontline. It takes time. If applicant did not add their documents to Frontline, then the SS has to upload the document into Image Director.	Yes. An SOP will be created and the Records Analyst team will be trained. In the future, Frontline will be the repository for docs, not in two systems.
Record Management Specialist (RMS) reviews data and employee documents in Image Director AND/OR Frontline	Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities for RMS. Ideally the record is pushed back to SS when data is incorrect or missing. Instead, RMS usually asks SS for the missing information and RMS handles. RMS responsibility is supposed to be quality control and verification of data. They *should* be able to review and send it back. RMS ends up fixing things quite often though, should	Yes. Being resolved with this process.

Current State Pain Points NOT Addressed in Future State ✗

Current State Process Step	Pain Point Description	Addressed in the Future State Process?
Staffing Specialist sends contract to new employee	A workaround is required for rehire contracts. Manual contracts have to be created for rehires instead of the system generating the contract.	No. This will remain a pain point and can be addressed at a later time.
Staffing Specialist schedules new employee orientation/onboarding	Orientation scheduling. Candidate is contacted via email. Onboarding is conducted in Zoom. Would be nice if SS can streamline this process to flow through Frontline Central so that a notification and link can be provided and automatically create a timeslot on calendar. In addition, it would be nice for all SS to have a view of all onboarding sessions being scheduled for efficiency.	N/A. Onboarding is shifting from virtual to in-person. Onboarding will be further fleshed out in late August.
Records Manager reviews data and employee documents in Image Director AND/OR Frontline	We're not currently tracking tenure eligibility well.	No. This is still an outstanding pain point to be resolved. (as of 8/7)

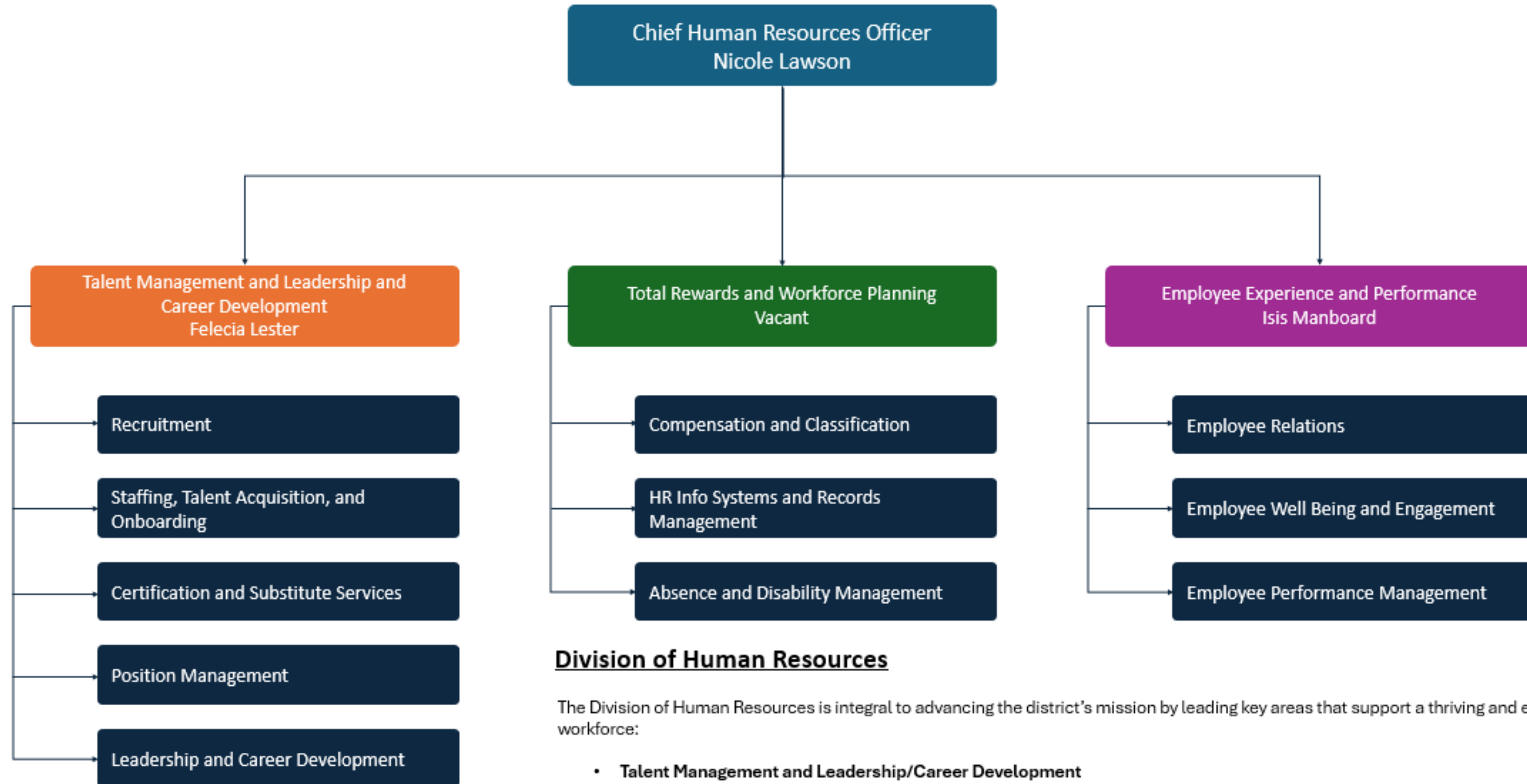
Creating One Stop

Shop Hubs



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Human Resources
Division



Division of Human Resources

The Division of Human Resources is integral to advancing the district’s mission by leading key areas that support a thriving and engaged workforce:

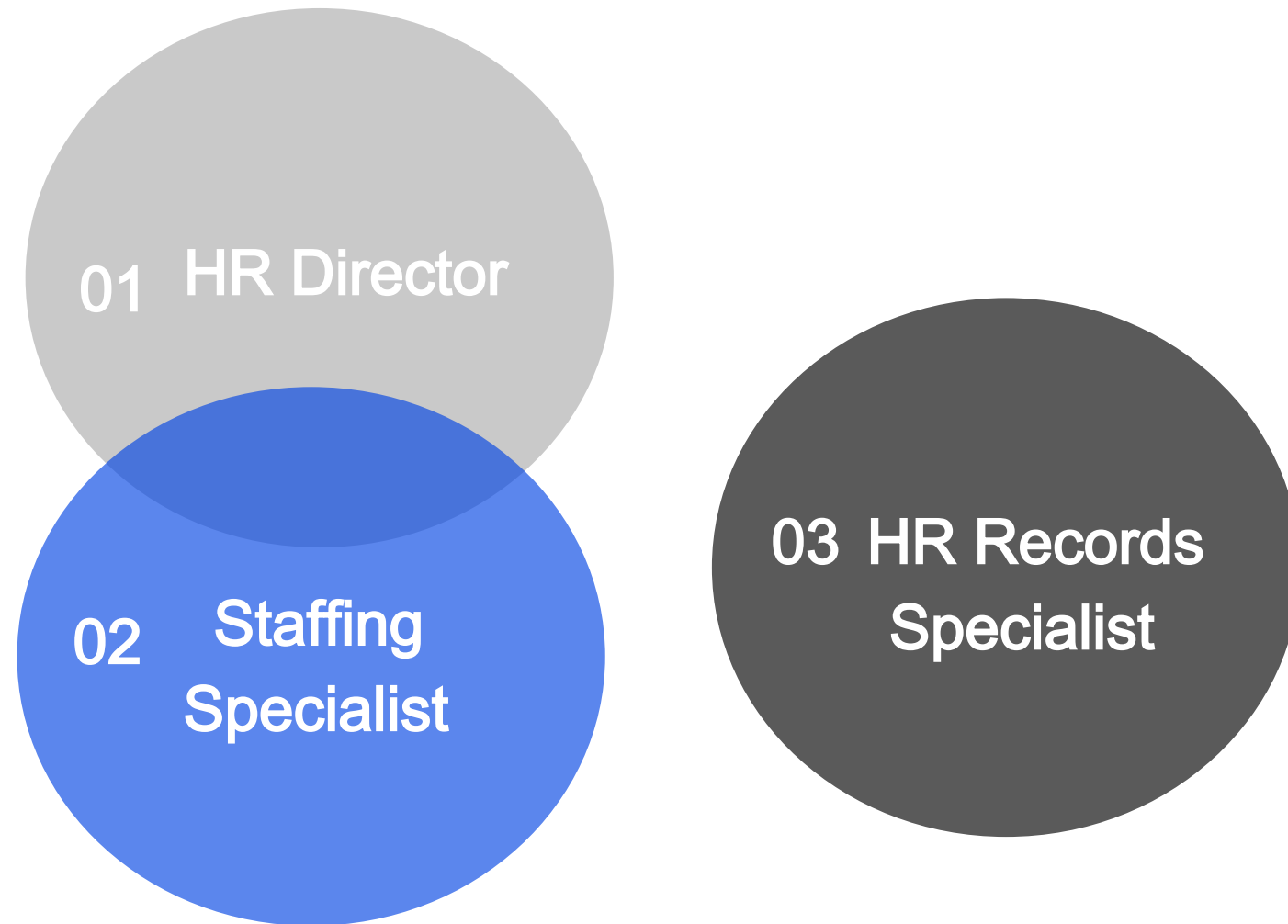
- Talent Management and Leadership/Career Development
- Employee Experience & Performance
- Total Rewards & Workforce Planning

Each team within the division is committed to delivering people-centered solutions that develop and sustain a vibrant workforce dedicated to student success. By ensuring that staff feel valued, supported, and equipped for excellence, Human Resources plays a vital role in cultivating a positive, high-performing district culture.

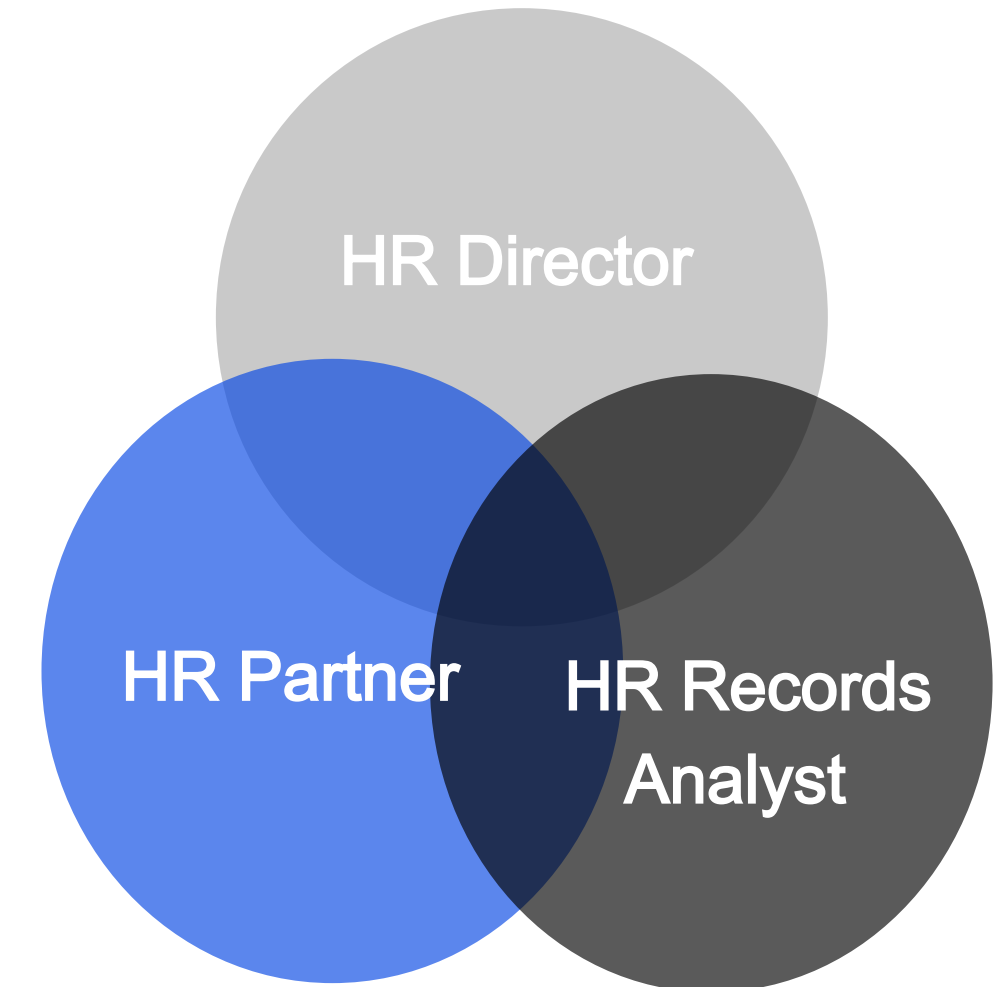


HR Support Function - One Stop Shop Structure

Old Structure



New Structure



01

HR Director - Serves as the Lead of the HR Support team and primary contact for Hiring Managers and serves as HR Staffing Consultant.

02

HR Partner - Serves as primary contact for applicants and employees for onboarding, transfers, calculates offers, and separations.

03

HR Records Analyst - Responsible for HRIS data entry accuracy, initial certification, record compliance, and records generation.

What changes are you **most excited about**?

Collaboration

- No more silos / breaking down barriers
- Cross functioning
- Records Analyst joining the Hub
- Relationship building

Process efficiencies

- Turnaround time
- No compensation hold up
- Assisting our team members to succeed with all of our streamlined efforts
- Process improvement
- Increased productivity and gained efficiencies

Professional Growth

- Ownership and Accountability
- Growth opportunities



What changes are you **most concerned about**?

Will new silos be created?

- Silo of hubs
- The possibility of new bottlenecks

Learning something new and getting comfortable with new tasks and ways of working?

- Blended calculations
- Knowledge sharing and transfer
- Variance with compensation calculations
- Releasing old practices and embracing new practices

Continuing the Process

- Handling the outstanding pain points
- Standard Operating Procedure maintenance protocol



Project HR RISE: Process Improvement Outcomes

- ✓ **Reduction in the time to complete the hiring and onboarding process**
- ✓ **Offer more compelling wages during the onboarding phase of hiring**
- ✓ **Reduce the number of hand-offs within the hiring and onboarding process**
- ✓ **Define and implement a newly redesigned hiring and onboarding to address stakeholder feedback**



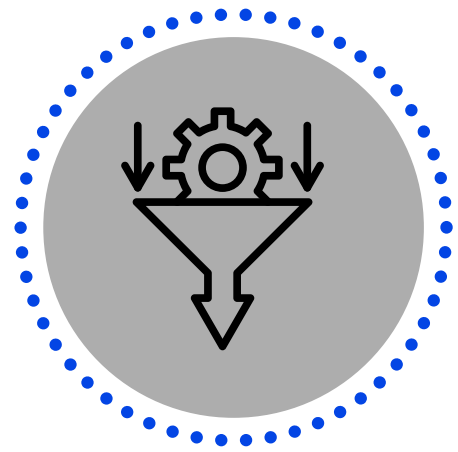
READY TO GET STARTED WITH YOUR JOURNEY?



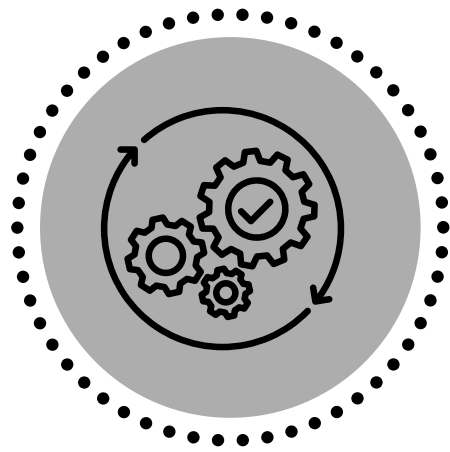
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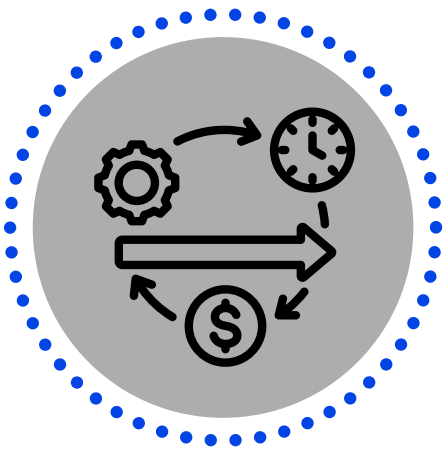
4 Quick Tips to Jump - Start Your Process Mapping Journey!



Identify a Problem and Clearly Define the Scope



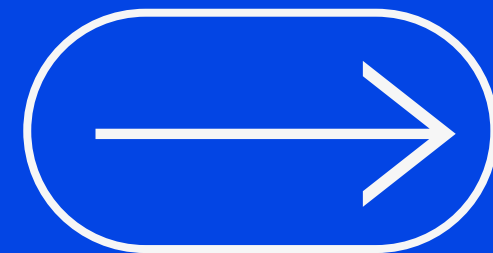
Keep it Simple - Start with low tech tools



Identify Key Contributors



Prioritize quick wins



Benefits of Process Improvement for HR Leaders in the K - 12 space

Can these strategies be utilized in both small and large districts? YES!

- Increased efficiency with limited resources
- Improved employee experience
- Time savings for strategic work
- Reduces errors and compliance risks
- Enhanced decision making
- Better Recruitment and Retention
- Cost Savings
- Empowered and engaged HR Teams
- Improved Stakeholder Perception
- Scalability for Future Growth

Still Skeptical?

- Lean into your data to gain insights and identify potential quick wins
- Capture your return on investment or your journey
- Make it a team effort! Collaboration is KEY

As HR Leaders

- Model the Behavior
- Create a Safe Space for Process Improvement Champs!



5 Suggested Quick Starters

Streamline Onboarding

- Standardize and digitize forms to reduce paperwork.
- Create an onboarding checklist for HR staff, principals, and new hires.
- Automate reminders for required training and document submissions.

Simplifying Leave Requests and Approvals

- Move leave request forms online.
- Implement a centralized calendar for tracking leave balances and approvals.
- Develop an FAQ or guide to common leave policies (e.g., FMLA, sick days).

Standardizing Employee Verification Requests

- Create a standardized form or template for verification requests.
- Designate a single point of contact or email for submissions.
- Use a tracking sheet to monitor and prioritize responses.

Simplifying Exit Interviews

- Develop a standardized exit interview template.
- Offer online or phone options for completing interviews.
- Automate reminders for scheduling interviews before an employee's last day.

Tracking Certification and Credential Renewals

- Create a database or spreadsheet to track renewal deadlines.
- Automate email reminders 90, 60, and 30 days before expiration.
- Share links to renewal resources directly in reminders.



RESULTS



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What are our customers saying?

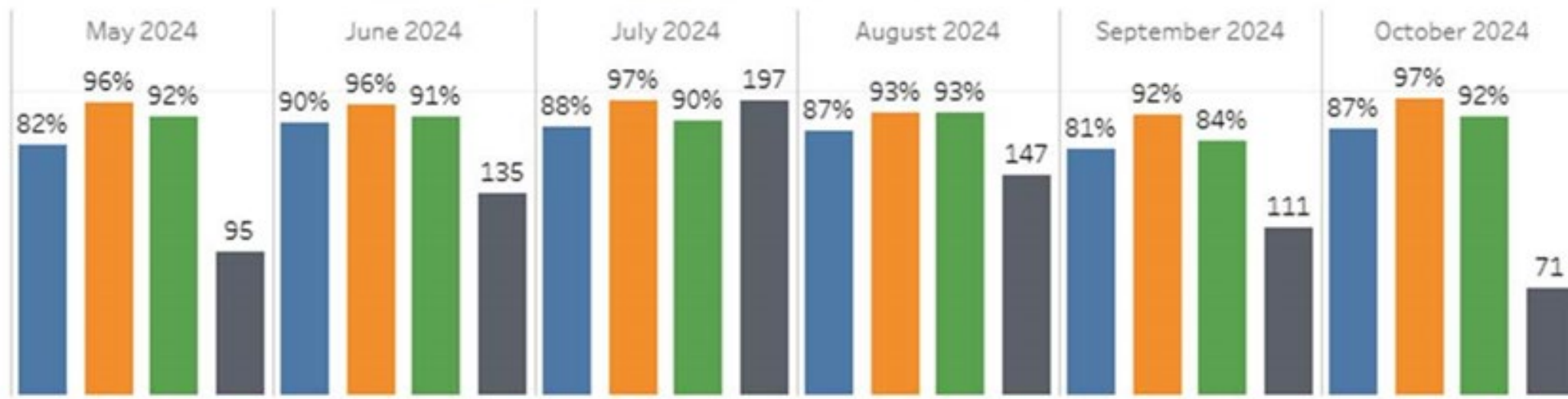
This Dashboard explores HR Customer Service Survey results.

Bar colors reflect ranking by HR Department: **First Place** | **Second** | **Third** | **Fourth**



HR Customer Experience (HRCX) Percent Satisfied With:

Problem Resolution | **Professionalism** | **Responsiveness**



Strategic Update:

Implemented formative metrics to measure the employee experience by adding a customer service survey to each HR team member's email address signature

TESTIMONIALS



Silas went above and beyond to render an issue that I was having with compensation. His customer service was superb and I am truly grateful to have encountered an individual that showed compassion and assisted me with such kindness.



Felicia Freeland is a ROCKSTAR.. She's always quick to respond and easily accessible. I can't leave out Monica Seda- She's awesome too.



Fallon Sanders was an amazing breath to interact with during my experience of trying to sign my contract. This experience was a breeze and was extremely stress -free.



I would like to shoutout Dr. Mighty and Ms. Sanders...You ladies rock and I truly enjoyed my experience interacting with you both. It's been extremely professional throughout the entire process.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

Eliminate Ambiguity Waste

Ambiguity waste : an area where significant confusion and wasted effort could occur if proper expectations are not clear to all members of an organization .

*Tristan Boutros and Jennifer Cardella
The Basics of Process Improvement*

Trust the Process

Embracing process mapping means understanding that each step brings clarity, alignment, and improvement. It's not just about efficiency—it's about empowering our teams and achieving excellence together.

Bring in the Experts

Leveraging the knowledge and insights of experts accelerates our progress and deepens our understanding. Utilize effective project management strategies to *“build the boat”!*

Change Management

Effective change management is about guiding people through transformation with empathy and purpose. Utilize effective Change Management Strategies to *“move the boat forward”!*

Thank You

For Your Attention

Questions?



Survey Feedback



Let's stay Connected!



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