



Staff Clearance Update: November 1, 2019

Overview

All DC Public Schools (DCPS) employees pass a robust [clearance process](#) including fingerprinting and an FBI background check prior to receiving an offer letter and reporting to work. DCPS employees are then required to renew their clearance every two years per [DC Municipal Regulations](#). The District is unique in this stringent biannual renewal requirement, which serves as evidence of the city's commitment to school staffing standards. However, a [review of the clearance status](#) of all DCPS employees and partners in summer 2019 found that DCPS staff members and DCPS partners were not consistently in compliance.

Our Commitment

To remedy this situation, employees who work most directly with students were prioritized for the start of the school year, and DCPS set clear goals for 100 percent compliance before November 1, 2019.

- By the first day of school, 100 percent of DCPS afterschool staff and outside providers will have an active clearance.
 - Goal Status: For before and afterschool programming beginning on the first day of school, all DCPS afterschool staff and outside providers had an active clearance.
- By the end of September, 100 percent of DCPS school staff members will have an active clearance.
 - Goal status: As of October 1, 2019, 98 percent of all DCPS school-based staff members had an active clearance.
 - Goal Status: As of November 1, 2019, 99 percent of all DCPS school-based staff members* have an active clearance, with less than 1% noncompliant.**
- By the end of October, 100 percent of DCPS central office staff will have an active clearance.
 - Goal Status: As of November 1, 2019, 99 percent of all central office staff members have an active clearance, with less than 1% noncompliant.**

Summary Update

Since this effort began in summer 2019, the district has directed additional financial and personnel resources to accelerate fingerprinting and background check completion for all employees with expired clearances. A strong partnership with the DC Department of Human Resources (DCHR), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) allowed the district to obtain supplementary fingerprint scanners, increase capacity, and process more employees faster. Additional highlights of our efforts include the following:

- DCPS has launched staff training in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center, anchored in their framework for addressing adult sexual misconduct in school settings.
- DCPS has launched its implementation of mandatory lessons from the Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs) curriculum in all schools.
- DCPS has held two meetings of the Student Safety Taskforce, led by Deputy Chancellor Amy Maisterra and comprised of families and community members. Meetings have focused on exploring the 3Rs curriculum and review and feedback on key policies and procedures.

* School-based staff members are defined as employees in permanent positions who are actively serving our schools. These numbers exclude substitutes and staff members who are on extended leave.

** Employees complete the clearance process year-round, and clearances expire daily. Employees may experience unexpected illness or absence, resulting in some employees reporting shortly after their clearance expiration date. These factors, coupled with the size of our work force, result in a rate which may be slightly below 100% on any given day. Staff who do not comply with renewal requirements face progressive consequences up to and including termination.

- To ensure ongoing compliance with clearance requirements moving forward, DCPS has established a system of automatic alerts to notify staff members within 60 days of clearance expiration to renew their background checks.

As a district, the safety of our students is paramount, and we are committed to upholding a high bar of excellence for clearance standards going forward. We will continue to monitor and strengthen systems to ensure that every student is learning in a safe and supportive environment.