

Jefferson County Public Schools
Best Practices Guide for Hiring - VERSION 2.0
Updated Fall 2020

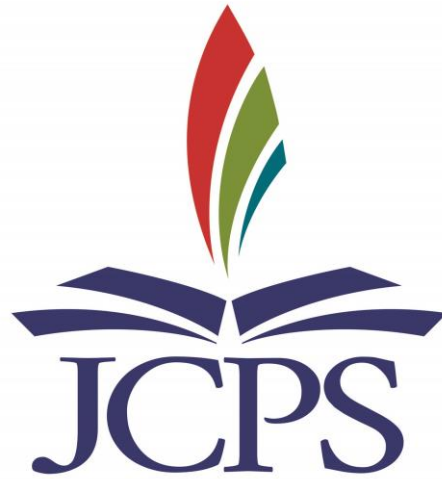


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Introduction

In June of 2018, the Human Resources department participated in an internal audit from Dean Dorton Allen Ford. There were several findings from the internal audit, including the need to develop best practices and standards related to the hiring process, to strengthen the guidance and support for hiring managers organizing interview teams and to increase the availability of HR staff during the interview process as needed. In response to the audit findings, a corrective action plan was developed to address identified issues. Jimmy Adams, Chief of Human Resources, established a committee to develop a Best Practices Guide for Hiring in December of 2018. This committee included the following individuals:

Nate Bordeaux, Certified Staffing Consultant, Chair
Ashley Duncan, Diversity Hiring Specialist
Dr. Aimee Green-Webb, Director of District Personnel
Kronski Jones, Human Resources Assistant
LaRae Whitely, Administrator Development Specialist
Kimberly Wilburn, Human Resources Assistant

Purpose of the Best Practices Guide for Hiring

This Best Practices Guide for Hiring is designed to provide hiring managers (Cost Center Heads) and interview teams with the federal, state and board policies that must inform the hiring process. In addition, the strategies are designed to guide teams through the hiring process in order to select the strongest staff member possible based on the identified needs of the school or department.

There are many important responsibilities of hiring managers, but one of the most important is to be effective at hiring new employees. It is vital for an organization to follow the law, and the importance of hiring strong employees goes much deeper than obeying the rules. When utilized correctly, the hiring process provides an opportunity to vet candidates for potential issues, allows a school/department to identify its most important needs, and increases the likelihood of selecting the candidate most likely to bring the skills and knowledge necessary to meet that need. Finally, the opportunity to hire a new employee provides the chance to strengthen the team, to meet the learning and basic needs of students, and to consider new ways to solve problems.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer Offering Equal Educational Opportunities

The Jefferson County Public School District shall not discriminate in recruitment or employment on the basis of age, color, disability, marital or parental status, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, genetic information, religion, or political affiliations or beliefs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The District shall promote equal opportunities through a vigorous affirmative action program as an integral part of personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, advancement, and treatment of employees of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Laws Enforced by the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)

(Please refer to the Appendix Section for more details)

- 1) **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**
- 2) **The Pregnancy Discrimination Act**
- 3) **The Equal Pay Act of 1963**
- 4) **The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)**
- 5) **Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**
- 6) **Sections 102 and 103 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991**
- 7) **Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
- 8) **The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)**

Commitment to Racial Equity

The Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE) approved its first racial equity policy on May 8, 2018, to address racial disparities and close the achievement gap. The policy has several strategies and directives, some of which will increase teacher and administrative diversity as well as ensure equity in all hiring processes. JCPS is committed to being a world-class school system that supports educational excellence regardless of race, color, national origin, age, religion, marital or parental status, political affiliations or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, genetic information, or disability. This also includes equitable academic programs and services that respond to the needs of a diverse student population and prepare all students for a changing workplace within the global economy.

Racial Equity Plan Initiatives Related to Diversifying the Educational Workforce:

- The Diversity Hiring Specialist provides support and guidance to hiring managers to ensure a fair, inclusive, and equitable hiring process for all.
- Attract and retain a diverse and high-quality staff through creative and innovative partnerships.
- Provide opportunities for career exploration and advancement starting in middle school and continuing throughout employees' careers.
- Support efforts of the schools to impact staff diversity through training and technical assistance.

JCPS Board Policies

The District’s hiring practices are legal, ethical and fair to all applicants. It is imperative that hiring managers follow the hiring policies of Jefferson County Public Schools to mitigate litigation. In addition to the board policies listed in the chart below, every school-based council has the responsibility of establishing consultation policies to assist the principal in staff selection when school-level certified vacancies occur.

JCPS Board Policies Related to the Hiring Process

Policy Number	JCPS Policy	Description
03.113	EEOC (Certified)	Addresses equal opportunities, nondiscrimination, district employment practices and reasonable accommodation related to certified personnel
03.212	EEOC (Classified)	Addresses equal opportunities, nondiscrimination, district employment practices and reasonable accommodation related to classified personnel
03.11	Hiring (Certified)	Applicants must be certified for the position they seek, pre-employment checks and criminal background / CAN / medical testing requirements are listed, guidelines for posting of vacancies are outlined, rules for relatives of the Superintendent, the school board and principals are specified, and guidelines for contracts, job descriptions and job changes are specified.
03.21	Hiring (Classified)	Pre-employment checks and criminal background/CAN/medical testing requirements for classified applicants are specified, requirement of a high school diploma / certificate of completion / GED is stated, guidelines for posting of vacancies are outlined, rules for relatives of the Superintendent, the school board and principals are specified, and guidelines for contracts, job sharing, job descriptions and job changes are specified.
03.15	Personnel Records (Certified)	Rules related to the one master file at Central Office for certified employees are specified, including the requirement that all material be job-related and the employee’s right to receive a copy or provide a written response to anything in the file. This policy also states that these

		records are not subject to public inspection and may not contain medical information about the employee
03.25	Personnel Records (Classified)	Rules related to the one master file at Central Office for classified employees are specified, including the requirement that all material be job-related and the employee's right to receive a copy or provide a written response to anything in the file. This policy also states that these records are not subject to public inspection and may not contain medical information about the employee
03.112	Certification & Records (Certified)	The school board sets the certification requirements for all grades / courses, all persons appointed to a certified position must hold the correct certificate, schools must notify parents when students have been taught for 4 consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not hold the correct certification and the school board must approve the certification requirements for new elective courses submitted by a principal
09.131	District Commitment to Racial Equity	The school board's commitment to remedying inequities and guarantee fair treatment and equitable access to quality education for all students. The policy includes directives for staffing and classroom diversity.
02.422	School Council Authority (SBDM)	Specifies cooperation between the school board and school councils, importance of staff members and parents being involved in decision-making process of schools, school council sets school policy that is consistent with Board policy and the school policies are implemented by the principal

JCBE Policies can be accessed using the following link: [Kentucky School Boards Association Policy Services System](#)

Screening Applicants (The Role of Human Resources)

Classified

1. Review application and resume to ensure they meet the minimum qualifications (minimum qualifications are listed on job description).
2. Check to make sure current employees aren't on New Hire Probation or facing disciplinary actions. If so, the employee may be ineligible to apply for the position.
3. If the applicant is a former employee, Human Resources will review the employee's personnel file to ensure they are eligible to return.
4. Check to see if the applicant has disclosed any legal information that might disqualify them per JCPS board policy. Human Resources will also request additional information from the applicant to determine their eligibility.
5. All applicants that meet the minimum qualifications are placed in a folder and sent to the Hiring Manager.

Certified Vacancies

1. Review application and resume to ensure they meet the minimum qualifications (minimum qualifications are listed on job description).
2. Check to make sure current teachers are only applying to a vacancy at an Accelerated Improvement School if the vacancy is occurring outside the transfer window.
3. If the applicant is a former employee, Human Resources will review the employee's personnel file to ensure they are eligible to return.
4. Check to see if the applicant has disclosed any legal information that might disqualify them per JCPS board policy or require more information from the applicant.
5. Check for the applicant's current status regarding teacher certification:
 - a. Certificate has not expired
 - b. Certificate matches the vacancy
 - c. Eligibility letter for alternative certification allows for a certificate if offered the position
 - d. Bachelor's degree and 2.5 GPA allows for emergency certificate if needed because of a lack of qualified candidates,
 - e. Out-of-state certificate that can transfer to Kentucky certification through state regulation
6. Check the transcript record to ensure a 2.5 GPA. It may be necessary to contact EPSB to make sure the applicant can be certified in Kentucky.
7. All applicants that meet the minimum qualifications are placed in a folder and sent to the Hiring Manager.

Certified and Classified Administrator

1. Review applications and resumes to ensure the candidates meet the minimum qualifications listed on the job description. Both the letter of interest and references are reviewed.
2. Check to see if the applicant has disclosed any legal information that might disqualify them per JCPS board policy or require more information from the applicant.
3. Check to see if the required number and recency of references are listed with one being their current supervisor.
4. Check for the candidate's current status regarding required certification (where applicable):
 - a. Certificate has not expired
 - b. Certificate matches the vacancy
 - c. Eligibility letter for alternative certification allows for a certificate if offered the position
 - d. Bachelor's degree and 2.5 GPA allows for emergency certificate if needed because of a lack of qualified candidates,
 - e. Out-of-state certificate that can transfer to Kentucky certification through state regulation
5. All applicants that meet the minimum qualifications are placed in a folder and sent to the Hiring Manager.

In addition to screening applicants, the Personnel Services department further verifies eligibility of the selected candidate prior to extending a job offer.

Attention to Workforce Diversity (Role of Human Resources)

In an effort to remain focused on the District's workforce diversity goals, Hiring Managers will receive a reminder to give purposeful attention to the diversity hiring needs of JCPS when they are notified that their candidates are ready for review. The notice also contains a demographic summary of their candidate pool. Further, each recommendation form contains an additional reminder by incorporating the acknowledgement by the Committee Chair that they followed Board Policies requiring the review of all candidates.

Confidentiality Guidelines

The revelation or use of any confidential applicant information, data, decisions, or any other information which is private or personal without prior authorization, is prohibited. Misuse, unauthorized access to, or mishandling of confidential information, particularly personnel information, is strictly prohibited and will subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The hiring manager should limit discussions with the applicants and/or candidates to their specific position vacancy. The entire committee must maintain the confidentiality of all applicant/candidate information before, during, and after the hiring process. All committee members must also disclose conflicts of interest prior to participating in the selection and interview process. The Committee Chair is responsible for removing committee members with a conflict of interest.

Hiring managers should distribute the *District Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest* form to the entire committee prior to beginning the selection and interview process. Forms are collected and stored in Human Resources.

Addressing Potential Bias

The applicant review and selection process relies on input by the interview committee to make critical hiring recommendations. Therefore, the input must be free from bias. Committee members are expected to be able to contribute in an objective manner. Contributions should be free from bias based on ethnicity, race, color, national origin, age, different abilities, religion, marital or parental status, political affiliations or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The interview committee chair should ask committee members if they have knowledge of any conflicts of interest prior to engaging in the interviews. If prior knowledge is shared, the hiring manager should remind the committee members that all input should be centered on the current vacancy for which the candidate is interviewing. In the event a committee member demonstrates the inability to remain impartial, they should be relieved of their interview committee duties. The committee members should be reminded that they are to maintain confidentiality regarding any information or input they were exposed to during their participation on the committee.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS (Role of Hiring Managers)

Preparing for the Hiring Process

It is best practice to conduct an annual review of school/department data during the budget and staffing season. This is an opportunity to identify school/department needs, strengths and opportunities for growth. Hiring decisions throughout the year should be reflective of the demographics at the time of the vacancy.

- a. School/department profile
- b. TELL Survey / Comprehensive School Survey
- c. Test scores/CSI/TSI status
- d. Student, teacher, staff, and administrative demographics – identify gaps in demographic representation, if any
- e. Vision 2020 (2.0) and Racial Equity Plan by department needs - how do the needs articulated in those documents connect to the vacancy and necessary skill set?
- f. Non-instructional student needs related to program support and special school needs
- g. Schedule a diversity hiring consultation meeting with the Diversity Hiring Specialist
- h. Solicit feedback from School Based Decision Making Council or Advisory team

Transfer Process Considerations:

Hiring Managers must be familiar with the contractual procedures that govern the transfer process related to each type of position that receives special consideration. However, the school / department priorities based on data should still guide the hiring process to the full extent possible while complying with transfer procedures.

Screening Applicants (Role of Hiring Managers):

Hiring Managers will screen eligible candidates based on the data and school needs listed above, as well as the following criteria:

- 1) Educational experience
 - a) Educational background
 - b) Special certifications
 - c) Program participation
 - d) Work history (Not education experience exclusively)
- 2) Position / Area expertise
 - a) Experience relative to the vacancy
 - b) Prior expertise in teaching strategies / special projects

Forming the Interview Committee

During this phase, identify the interview panel and find opportunities to infuse diversity. Establish a diverse committee relative to the goals of the district, school, and the vacancy. Certified and classified school staff, community members, and SBDM council members are all ideal committee members. It is recommended that schools review SBDM bylaws for hiring committee requirements. If diversity (e.g., race, color, national origin, age, religion, marital or parental status, political affiliations or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, genetic information, or disability) is not accessible engage the JCPS Diversity Hiring Specialist, the Assistant Superintendent, or Human Resources for recommendations.

Committee members must be present for all interviews. If, for any reason, the committee members cannot serve for each interview, please ask them to recuse themselves from the entire process or find a reasonable time to accommodate everyone's schedule.

Provide the committee with a summary of the steps taken in preparation for selecting a candidate for the vacancy. This includes the school's/department's needs based on the data. Document all committee members' names on the recommendation to hire.

Establishing Hiring/Interview Structure

A. Offer a reasonable timeline to candidates for interviews. Do not schedule interviews with less than 24 hours' notice. Consider accommodating for candidates that cannot appear for an interview in person by using technology that allows you to see and hear the candidate you are interviewing (Skype, Facetime, video conference, etc.). The candidate's inability to appear in person should not prevent them from being considered.

B. All candidates must be asked the same questions and have the same time allotment per interview.

C. Identify interview structure. Build reasonable time for discussion, breaks and preparation for the next candidate. Each school / department currently has the capacity to establish a unique interviewing structure based on the needs of the specific vacancy.

Conducting Interviews

Use a matrix or scoring tool for each candidate. Identify which candidate meets the needs of school outlined in the preparation for making a selection. Each phase of the hiring process can be managed from Applitrack. (Use Pipeline tool.)

When possible, allow the candidate to do most of the talking. Questions asked (especially during interview) should be open to allow for the candidate to share details of their experiences or ideas.

If the candidate asks any process questions during or after the interview, be careful not to divulge anything about the other candidates being considered. It is always advisable to anticipate a decision being made after some time has passed - if the candidate expects an answer the next day, it could be awkward if it takes a week before the decision is made.

Make sure that the interview questions are not related to personal information that could open the district to a violation of EEOC laws. While candidates can volunteer anything they choose to share, follow-ups about those areas are still unacceptable and against the law.

For additional support and clarity on bias, please contact the Diversity Hiring Specialist.

Reminder to Hiring Managers

DO NOT EXTEND A JOB OFFER OR INSINUATE A JOB OFFER.

DO NOT DISCUSS CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY OR PERSONNEL RECORDS WITH THE CANDIDATE. IF NECESSARY, REFER THE CANDIDATE TO THE HR SPECIALIST.

References Checks

Per JCBE Policy, applicants for all positions are required to list references on their application. Human Resources obtains permission from a candidate, through the application process, to contact former or current employees. References are asked to complete an online form that will be carefully reviewed as part of the screening process. People interpret and apply the rating scale differently. Some former supervisors and professional colleagues will not give a five (5) unless the candidate is perfect, whereas others see a five (5) as someone who accomplishes their assigned duties. Reference checks help confirm that candidates have been honest on their job application and during the interview process. Reference checks are also an opportunity to get a sense of a candidate's job performance and personal qualities. Although the references have completed a form in the online application system, it is best practice to have a conversation to clarify the information given. Remember when calling a reference to introduce yourself and explain why you are calling. Begin by describing the duties of the desired position and the requirements before you begin asking questions. Also, refer to the applicant by name where appropriate.

Sample Reference Check Questions

- How long have you known the (candidate) and in what capacity?
- Describe (candidate) overall work performance in the areas of skill, quality and contribution to your organization.
- What are (candidate) strengths and areas for development?
- What are some of (candidate) unique qualities?
- How would you compare the performance of (candidate) with that of others who have held the same position?
- Please describe overall work/performance of (candidate) in terms of attitude, dependability and trustworthiness.
- Is (candidate) someone you would rehire?
- Is there any additional information that you feel we should know in consideration of (candidate) for employment?

Remember: Questions that could solicit answers related to marital status, race, gender, number of children or health issues should never be asked.

Analyzing Feedback from reference checks:

- Do the dates of employment, job titles, and responsibilities shared by the references match the candidate's application and resume?
- Did the references verify they were prior supervisors?
- If the references identified areas for improvement, how could those impact the candidate's work performance, onboarding, or training if s/he is hired? Did more than one reference cite the same issues?
- Given the information obtained in the reference checking process, is this still the best qualified candidate?

Comprehensive / Holistic Decision Making

As the selection process nears an end, it is important to ensure that all decision making is well-informed and holistic. Throughout the process, the hiring manager and committee have reviewed the needs of the school/department, candidate qualifications, and candidate interview responses. All of these provide a wealth of information that should be considered prior to making a decision. The committee chair should ensure that all committee input is focused and related to the vacancy at hand. Unrelated input, or conversations that focus solely on one element of the selection process should be avoided.

The committee should be reminded that the final decision should reflect a comprehensive view of the candidate and how they can add value to the school/department. Examples of improper practice would be to solely focus on a single item on a resume, on one specific interview response, on the FIT score, or on one reference. It would also be improper to consider feedback from non-committee members or speaking of matters with which the committee member has no personal, professional or direct knowledge.

When the final decision is made, the hiring manager (or the authorized individual, such as an Assistant Superintendent in the absence of a principal), submits the recommendation to Human Resources. All elements of the recommendation must be completed prior to submission (e.g., information such as position title, candidates interviewed, committee members and chairperson, individual authorized to submit recommendation; interview tools/documents; and confidentiality assurances).

Upon receiving the personnel recommendation from the hiring manager, Human Resources will confirm the eligibility of the candidate for the vacant position and call the candidate to offer the position. Following acceptance of the position, Human Resources will process the paperwork to complete the hiring process.

Glossary

Applicant - Any individual looking at job opportunities, with minimal to significant interest in actually applying and accepting a new role

Bias - A prejudice towards or against a thing, person or group that an individual holds to be true. This includes unconscious bias, where the individual may not be aware of this thinking and how it influences decisions. Bias can affect hiring, so it's important to be aware of and use group hiring to minimize the impact on the selection process.

Candidate - Job seekers who have successfully applied for a job and meet the qualifications to proceed to pre-screening

Conflict of interest - A situation in which someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests that can make it difficult to fulfill his or her duties impartially. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical or improper act results from it. A conflict of interest can create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in the process.

Committee - A strategic approach to selection where several employees participate and give input. This group is usually a combination of the hiring manager, other employees, and parents (school level). The make-up of the hiring team will vary based on the role to be filled.

Diversity - The collective mixture of differences and similarities that include race, ethnicity, gender identity, individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences and behaviors. (SHRM)

Hiring Manager - The individual making the recommendation to hire. For JCPS, this includes principals, directors and department heads

Reference Check - A due-diligence process in which the hiring manager will call and interview references to glean further insights into the candidate's behavior and employment history. It's best to ask for 3-5 professional references that include a mix of past managers and colleagues.

Source: <https://www.alongside.com/blog/hiring-heres-50-recruiting-terms-you-need-to-know>

The following are external resources that you may find helpful in creating the optimal selection process. However, keep in mind that these are resources and they in no way replace the required recruitment and selection process of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Creating an Interview Committee:

[Selecting and Preparing a Search Committee \(University of Idaho\)](#)

[Building Your Bench: Who Should Be on Your Panel Interviewing Team? \(BrainWorks 8/16/2016\)](#)

[Screening / Interviewing Committee Guidelines \(Santa Rosa Junior College\)](#)

Interviewing:

[How to Conduct an Effective Job Interview \(Harvard Business Review 1/23/2015\)](#)

[Here's How to Structure Your Interview Process to Maximize the Chances You'll Make the Right Hire \(themuse\)](#)

Checking References:

[The Right Way to Check Someone's References \(Harvard Business Review 7/29/2016\)](#)

[The 10 Best Questions to Ask When Checking References \(Workbright\)](#)

Appendix

Equal Opportunity Laws

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - This law makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees' sincerely held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act - This law amended Title VII to make it illegal to discriminate against a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 - This law makes it illegal to pay different wages to men and women if they perform equal work in the same workplace. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) - This law protects people who are 40 or older from discrimination because of age. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) - This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the private sector and in state and local governments. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

Sections 102 and 103 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 - Among other things, this law amends Title VII and the ADA to permit jury trials and compensatory and punitive damage awards in intentional discrimination cases.

Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - This law makes it illegal to discriminate against a qualified person with a disability in the federal government. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) - Effective on November 21 of 2009, this law makes it illegal to discriminate against employees or applicants because of genetic information. Genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about any disease, disorder or condition of an individual's family members (i.e. an individual's family medical history). The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Source: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/index.cfm>

Hiring-Related Board Policies

To access JCBE policies related to hiring, click the following link:

[KSBA JCPS BOARD POLICY MANUAL](#)

Hiring-related policies can be found by selecting Chapter 3 - Personnel in the Chapter dropdown menu, then selecting either Hiring (Certified) or Hiring (Classified) in the Policy dropdown menu.