

Office of the Ombudsman

Annual Report
2021 – 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Message from the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman is pleased to provide the office's third annual report to the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) community.

In 2019, the School Board established the role of Ombudsman for PWCS. The first Ombudsman was selected in August of 2019 and held the position until July of 2021. In January of 2022, I was selected as the newest PWCS Ombudsman. During these past months, I have worked on establishing relationships with staff and the community and was excited to provide conflict resolution services in person as well as to continue to take advantage of the flexibility remote services provides.

An organizational Ombudsman is a confidential and informal resource who assists individuals at all levels by resolving conflict; facilitating communication; and helping the organization work for change. Their purpose is to foster fairness, equity, and respect for all. The Standards of Practice (informality, independence, impartiality, and confidentiality) provide an Ombudsman with a unique vantage point of the organization. Sole practitioner Ombudsman offices, such as this one, generally serve a small percentage of visitors. For the 2021-2022 school year, the Ombudsman saw 194 visitors. While this is not a statistical representation of the PWCS population, the issues raised do provide the Ombudsman the ability to make systemic observations and serve as an "early warning" channel to the organization regarding issues in need of further examination.

Because of the informal nature of an Ombudsman's office, no formal recommendations should be attributed to the Ombudsman or this report. When data is shared, it must be done in ways that protect the confidentiality provisions of the Ombudsman standards of practice; therefore, if providing data would also reveal identifying information, the Ombudsman will always err on the side of protecting confidentiality.

While it is unrealistic to eliminate all unproductive conflict, I work with visitors to identify the key issues regarding the conflict, assist in managing the conflict once it occurs, and try to prevent it as much as possible. Unresolved conflict can be devastating for all involved. Thus, addressing a conflict as quickly as possible ensures PWCS is focused on achieving its mission and not on the conflict.

I am thankful for this opportunity to serve the PWCS community as their newest Ombudsman. I would also like to thank the School Board, the Superintendent, PWCS staff, and the community for welcoming me. I look forward to our continued partnership in the 2022-2023 school year.

Best regards,
Monique "Mo" Bookstein
PWCS Ombudsman

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Office Overview

The PWCS Office of the Ombudsman operates in accordance with the International Ombuds Association (IOA) Code of Ethics. The IOA is dedicated to excellence in Organizational Ombuds¹ practice. The Code of Ethics provides Practice Principles and Core Values that are the foundation for the IOA Standards of Practice.



The people who visit the Ombudsman’s office may do so for many reasons. They may be looking for a particular result or want to discuss the situation before deciding on a course of action. The Ombudsman’s office seeks to empower those who contact the office to resolve issues on their own if possible. Depending on the situation, the Ombudsman’s office may utilize different methods/techniques to help the visitor². Some of the common methods/techniques used include:

- Listening and helping the visitor to identify the underlying causes;
- Act as a neutral sounding board;
- Providing information and exploring options available to visitors;
- Facilitating discussions between parties to resolve issues, as requested and as appropriate;
- Collecting data on emerging trends and patterns while safeguarding anonymity;
- Utilize data to bring systemic and organizational concerns to the attention of the School Board and the Division Superintendent.

While the Ombudsman’s office can assist most individuals, there are some actions the Ombudsman **CANNOT** take, such as:

- Be an advocate for the visitor or PWCS;
- Conduct formal investigations;
- Enforce laws or regulations;
- Provide legal advice or representation;
- Serve as official notice to the organization;
- Make or change policy or administrative decisions.

The Ombudsman’s office staff is composed of Ombudsman, Mo Bookstein and Ombuds Specialist, Rosamaria Manzines.

¹ The term “Ombuds” includes all applicable nomenclature in use for an organizational ombudsperson.

² The term “visitor” is generally accepted to describe those who engage the services of the Ombudsman.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

IOA Core Values

The Ombuds role requires Ombuds to conduct themselves as professionals. The following Core Values are essential to the work of the Ombuds:

- Act with honesty and integrity;
- Promote fairness and support fair process;
- Remain non-judgmental, with empathy and respect for individual differences;
- Promote dignity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging;
- Communicate accurate understanding through active listening;
- Promote individual empowerment, self-determination, and collaborative problem solving; and
- Endeavor to be an accessible, trusted, and respected informal resource.

Fundamental Principles

Confidentiality

All communications with those seeking assistance are held in strict confidence and are not disclosed unless given permission to do so to the extent permissible by law³. The exception is where the Ombudsman believes there is a risk of serious harm. The PWCS Ombudsman is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect as well as allegations of sexual harassment pursuant to Title IX.

Impartiality/Neutrality

The Ombudsman, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial.

Independence

The Office of the Ombudsman is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization. The PWCS Office of the Ombudsman reports to the School Board and Division Superintendent.

Informality

The Office of the Ombudsman is an informal resource, [and] does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

³ The Office of the Ombudsman is not affiliated with any compliance function and does NOT serve as an agent of notice.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Working with the Ombudsman

When an individual or group of people reaches out to the office, the following steps below are worked through either in the initial meeting or over the course of several meetings. For examples of visitor feedback, see Appendix C.

Initial Conversation

Set up a time to meet privately and confidentially either in person, virtually, or over the phone.

Clarify Roles

Review the standards of practice and answer any questions about the office, role, and how the office works.

Understand the Situation

Listen and ask questions to understand the situation from the visitor's perspective, not to decide who is right or wrong.

Analysis

Work with the visitor to look at the issue in a different way by thinking about other parties, issues, relationships, and causation.

Explore Options

Identify potential options which may help to address the situation.

Next Steps

As the visitor determines their way forward, the office may be involved as long as it is within the scope of the office.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Data Review

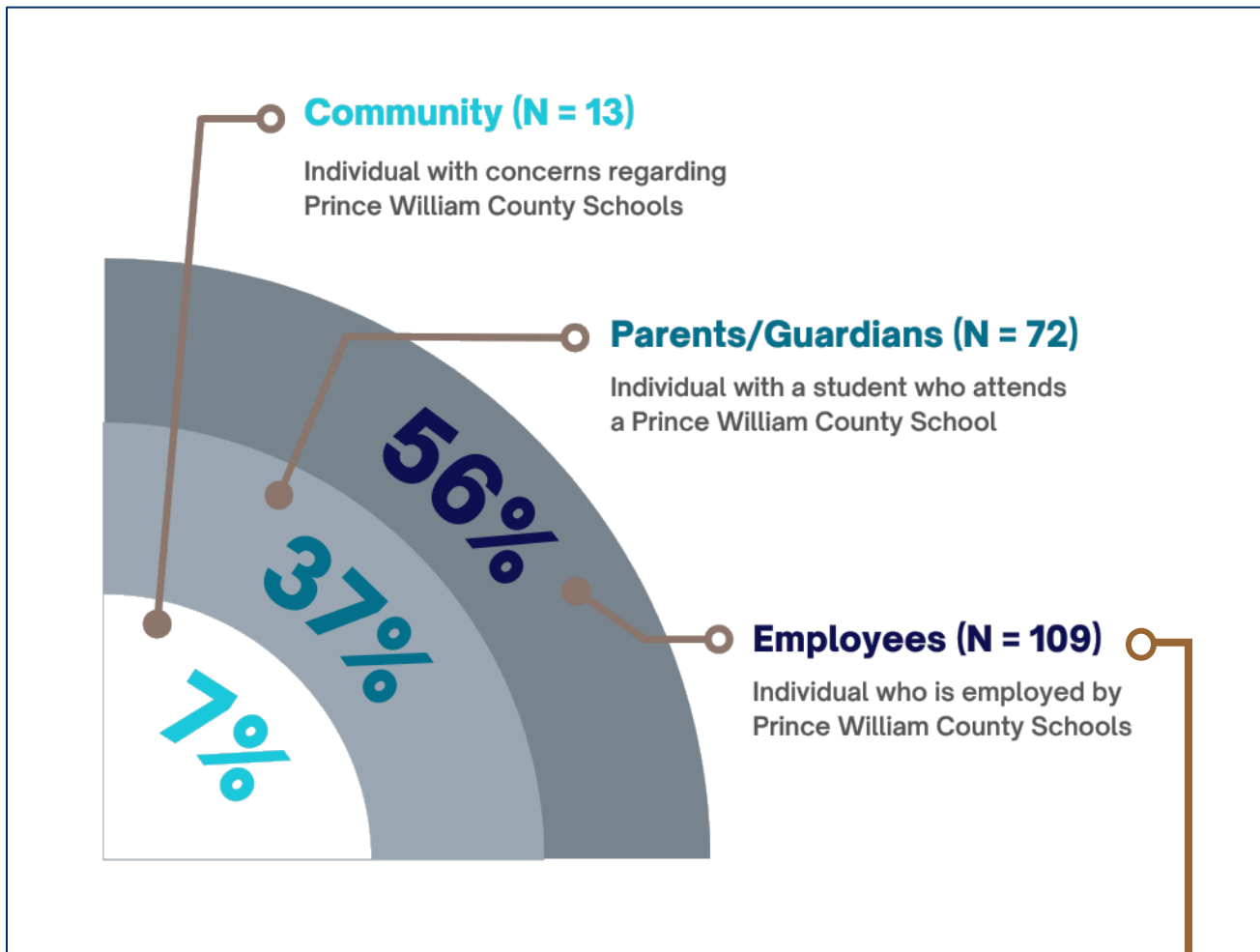
The Office of the Ombudsman continues to provide parents, students, employees, and members of the school community with assistance in resolving school-related concerns, conflicts, and issues. A single “case” is defined by the individual who is experiencing the conflict.



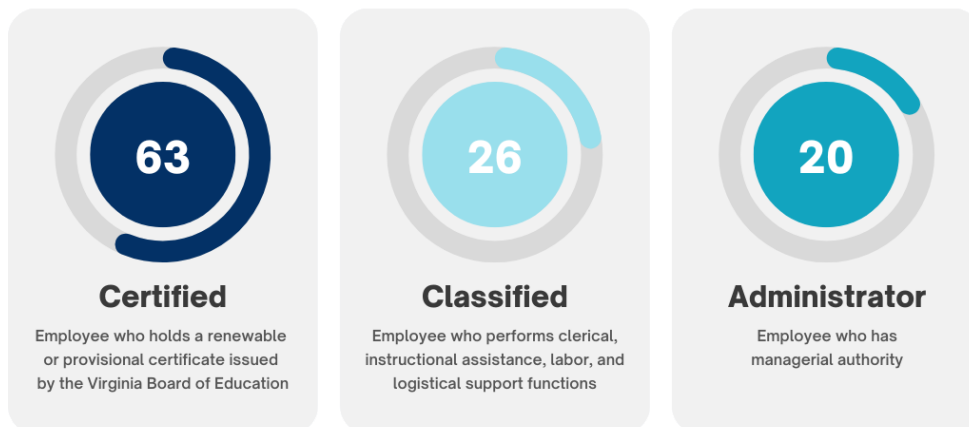
ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Visitor Demographics



Classification of Employee Visitors



ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Uniform Reporting Categories Descriptions

Below are the IOA Uniform Reporting Categories. This is a list of categories developed by the IOA and used by Ombudsmen around the world to anonymously classify the types of issues brought to their offices and identify trends in requests for services. A more detailed explanation of each category and sub-category can be found under Appendix A.

- 1. Compensation & Benefits**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.
- 2. Evaluative Relationships**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)
- 3. Peer and Colleague Relationships**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)
- 4. Career Progression and Development**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)
- 5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.
- 6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.
- 7. Services/Administrative Issues**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.
- 8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.
- 9. Values, Ethics, and Standards**
Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Uniform Reporting Categories Data

Visitors often express concerns related to more than one category. Within each category there are numerous subcategories. For a more detailed explanation of this data, see Appendix B.

Specific Issue Category	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022
1. Compensation & Benefits	7	10	7
2. Evaluative Relationships	211	360	248
3. Peer and Colleague Relationships	16	53	51
4. Career Progression and Development	26	15	25
5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance	41	46	17
6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment	14	84	31
7. Services/Administrative Issues	93	52	133
8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related	38	25	56
9. Values, Ethics, and Standards	10	34	22

Top Categories 2021 - 2022



42%

Evaluative Relationships



23%

Services/Administrative Issues



9%

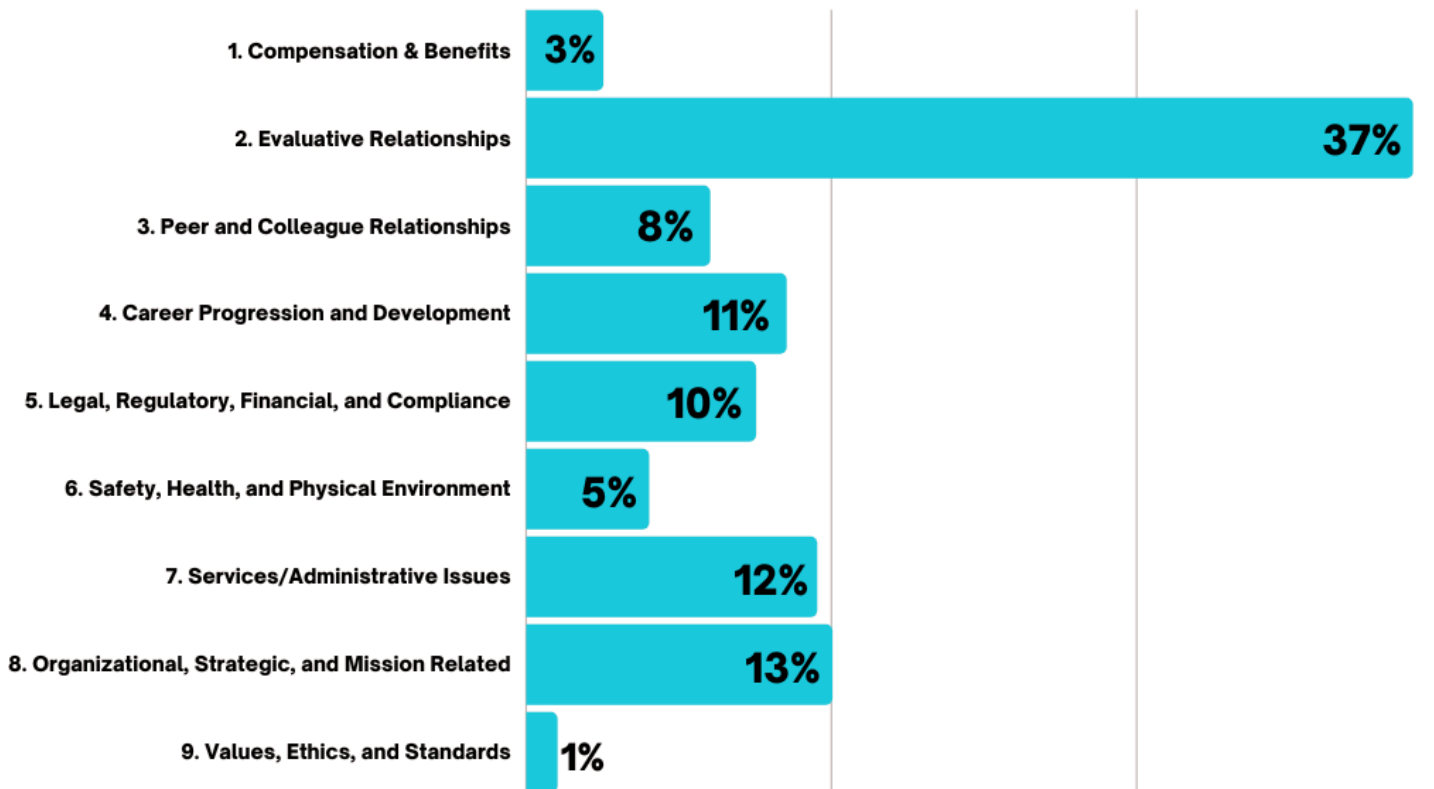
Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Concerns Expressed by Employee Visitors

Category 2 Evaluative Relationships is the highest category of concerns expressed by Employee visitors. For a more detailed explanation of this data, see Appendix B.



Most Often Expressed Sub-Category

2.b Respect/Treatment

Demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.

2.h Retaliation

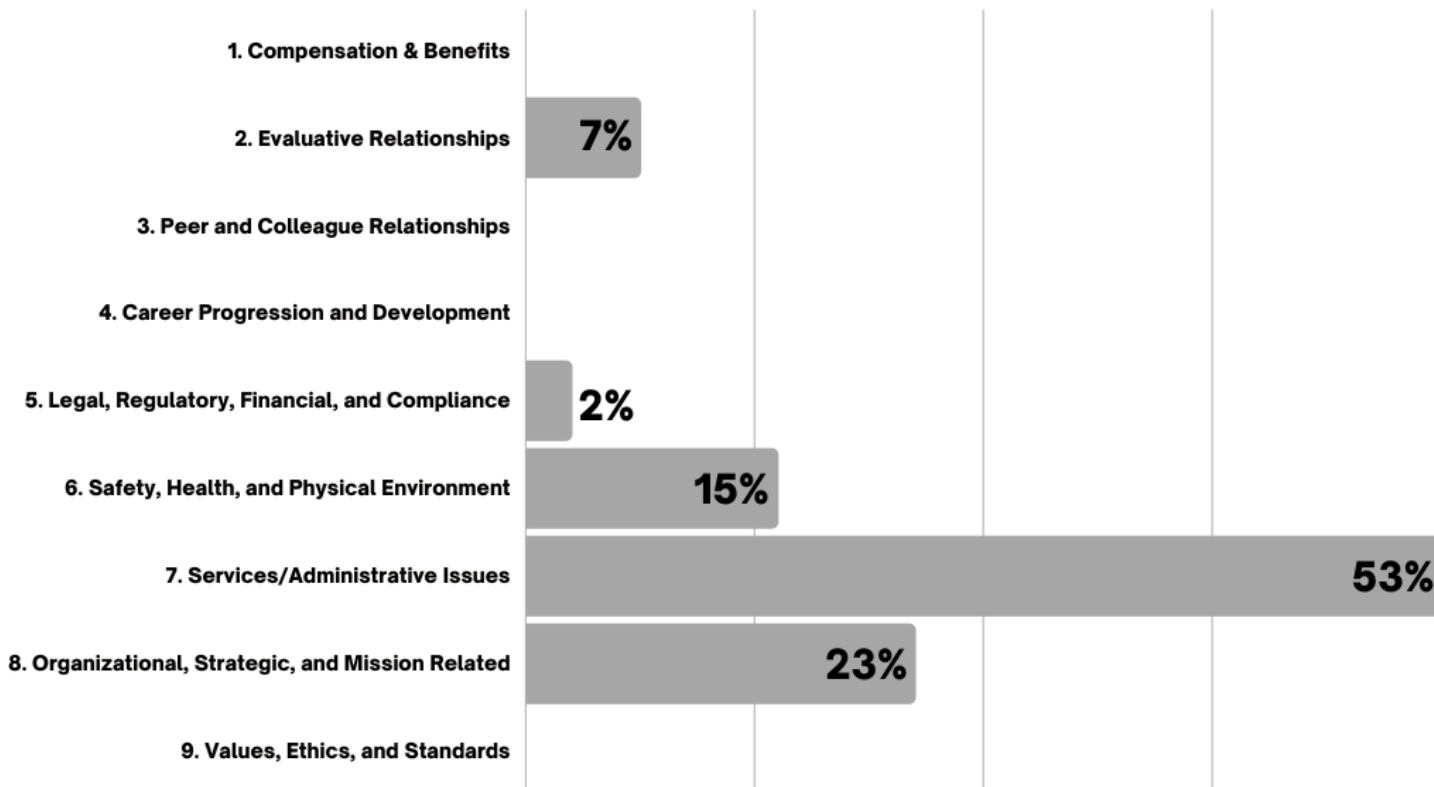
Punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Concerns Expressed by Parent/Guardian Visitors

Category 7 Services/Administrative Issues is the highest category of concerns expressed by Parent/Guardian visitors. For a more detailed explanation of this data, see Appendix B.



Most Often Expressed Sub-Category

7.c Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules

Impact, of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services

7.d Behavior of Service Provider(s)

How an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with constituent, customer, or client

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Concerns Expressed by Community Visitors

Category 9 *Values, Ethics, and Standards* is the highest category of concerns expressed by Community visitors. For a more detailed explanation of this data, see Appendix B.



Most Often Expressed Sub-Category

9.b Values and Culture

Questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization

9.d Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8

Fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revisions

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Systemic Observations

An important aspect of any Ombudsman's office is to assist the organization by identifying systemic concerns. Conflict can serve as an opportunity for an organization to learn and grow. Because of the variety of concerns raised to the Ombudsman's office, four predominant themes were identified for each of the following groups: (1) *Employees* and (2) *Parents/Guardians and Community*. These systemic concerns should not be considered definitive or a complete characterization of PWCS but rather a starting point for further discussion.

Employees

Work Climate and Culture

Employee visitors reported feeling stressed, anxious, and wanting to leave PWCS. These visitors described working in a toxic type of environment. Some employees believed raising these concerns would subject them to retaliation. In addition, the lack of employee professionalism unaddressed by leaders was also conveyed. Finally, several employees who contacted the office indicated their request to bring a silent witness was often met with perceived hostility.

Communication

Employee visitors spoke of a communication breakdown between employee and supervisor. Some employees perceived communication from their supervisor as limited and unclear, which they believed caused unnecessary conflicts and tension.

Performance Evaluations

Employee visitors reported concerns regarding minor behaviors being addressed through a letter of reprimand instead of an informal discussion between employee and supervisor. Some employees perceived these actions could lead to their removal through the Professional Performance Process. In addition, the use of the Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) process was another concern. Some employees believed the PIP process is used as a punitive measure instead of one for improvement.

Policies/Regulations

As new policies/regulations are enacted, some employee visitors reported disparate interpretations and applications of the policy/regulations across PWCS.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Systemic Observations (continued)

Parents/Guardians and Community

Navigating PWCS Processes Effectively

A common theme among some parent/guardian visitors was their difficulty in understanding and navigating school processes, such as the disciplinary process, Special Education services, and the transfer process. Several parents/guardians reported feeling ineffective in advocating for their child because a clear explanation of these processes was not provided and/or explained by the school.

School/Parent Relationship

Parent/Guardian visitors expressed feeling their concerns were not adequately heard or addressed in a timely manner by administrators. Some parents/guardians also noted feeling uncomfortable addressing matters with administrators because of their perception that the administrator was not sufficiently engaged in the matter.

English Learner's Needs

Parent/Guardian visitors believed if they do not specifically request interpreter services then assumptions are made by staff that they fully understand the process. Some parents/guardians expressed concerns regarding times when they consented to services and discovered the services were not consistent with what they understood them to be. They also felt their lack of understanding caused them to be left out.

Engagement with School Board

A number of community members expressed concerns regarding their ability to comment during the citizen time period at the School Board meetings. The community members perceived the process is not equitable when the same individuals are allowed to address the School Board during these meetings.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Moving Forward

Helping to identify issues, manage conflict once it occurs, and prevent it whenever possible is a goal of the Ombudsman's office. Left unaddressed, conflict can have a devastating impact on an organization. Some of the results of unresolved conflict include strained relationships, stress, frustration, anxiety, loss of productivity, absenteeism, employee turnover, grievances, and litigation. While the Ombudsman's office cannot provide formal recommendations, suggestions for reducing conflict and addressing the systemic concerns are presented.

Employees

Work Climate and Culture

Although, there is no single way to approach conflict, there are times when avoiding a conflict may create a more difficult workplace for everyone. One idea to promote productive approaches to conflict may be for administrators to consider how best to address problematic behaviors in a timely fashion. Doing so reduces or even eliminates the negative effect the behavior can have on morale. Administrators could also consider consulting with the Ombudsman's office to discuss ways to approach a workplace conflict. Administrators may also want to consider the benefits behind an employee's decision to invite a silent witness to a meeting. For example, when an employee brings a silent witness, this enables the engaged parties the opportunity to focus on the communication process and not on documenting the meeting. Since some employees mentioned feeling stressed by their environment, employees could consult the Employee Assistance Program for additional resources.

Communication

How effectively an organization communicates is key to its overall success. However, when communication breaks down, it can often lead to conflict. Improving communication between administrators and employees benefits both parties as well as the organization's climate and morale. One way to improve communication may be for administrators to clearly state expectations to employees. When possible, checking back in with the other party for clarity ensures the communication was properly received. Keeping staff informed on relevant issues as much as possible could ensure gaps are not filled in with inaccurate information. Administrators could help employees understand they are part of a bigger picture by expressing their needs/intentions when asking questions or requesting information from the employee.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Moving Forward (continued)

Performance Evaluations

Feedback is essential for professional growth. While the giving and receiving of feedback can be challenging, it is a necessary aspect of a successful workplace. The performance process seeks to create a positive working environment where self-reflection and professional growth are desired by all. When it comes to areas of growth and/or the PIP process, employees could ask clarifying questions of their administrator to gain a better understanding on how to achieve this growth. At the same time, administrators could work with the employee continuously to provide support.

Policies/Regulations

When new policies/regulations are enacted, the policyholder could confirm the policy/regulation is being applied as it was intended. Following up in this manner may well lead to organizational coherence.

Parents/Guardians and Community

Navigating PWCS Processes Effectively

To help navigate processes more effectively, schools could ensure the parents/guardians are provided with instructions/handouts regarding the process and given detailed information on what to expect throughout. Doing so could help to eliminate any misunderstandings and/or missed opportunities.

School/Parent Relationship

A successful relationship between the school and the parents/guardians is a valuable one. Addressing concerns in a timely manner can help minimize any conflict between parties. To ease parents/guardians apprehensions regarding not being heard, administrators could follow-up to ensure the issue was resolved.

English Learner's Needs

Assumptions are often made unconsciously. However, incorrect assumptions can contribute to a situation not being properly addressed. While there may be reasons why parents/guardians do not request an interpreter, ensuring they are aware of the translation services available within PWCS at the onset may well help mitigate misunderstandings.

Engagement with School Board

When people perceive situations differently, conflict can result. While a first-come first served process for requesting to speak at the School Board meeting may be fair, the perception of some community members is that it is not. Therefore, the School Board could address this concern with an evaluation of the sign-up/selection process.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Outreach

In January of 2022, a new Ombudsman was appointed to PWCS. To acclimate herself with the Division, the Ombudsman attended introductory meetings with:

- Superintendent;
- Executive Cabinet;
- Associate Superintendents; and
- Directors of each office.

To increase awareness and understanding of the office, the Ombudsman also spoke before the following entities:

- CTE Advisory Council;
- Gifted Education Advisory Committee;
- Safe Schools Advisory Council;
- Superintendent’s Advisory Council on Equity;
- Superintendent’s Teaching Assistant Advisory Council;
- Superintendent’s Advisory Council on Instruction;
- Prince William Education Association membership meeting; and
- Chairs of the Prince William Chapter of the Virginia Education Association.

Starting in June of 2022, the Ombudsman began meeting with every principal at the elementary, middle, and high school level. These meetings serve as an opportunity to provide information about the office and to learn about the school, staff, and community they serve.

Professional Development

Since January, the Ombudsman attended the following training:

- Ombuds Institute’s Field Guide course;
- IOA’s course on “Disrupting Conflict Before it Starts”;
- IOA’s course on “Utilizing a Case Management Lens”;
- IOA’s course on “The Artful Ombuds: Elevating Concerns While Masking Identities”;
- PWCS’ Mentoring of New School-Based Administrators; and
- The Ombudsman and Ombuds Specialist attended the IOA Annual Conference.

This year, Ombuds Specialist, Rosamaria Manzines, began to pursue Cornell University’s certificate program in conflict resolution.

The Ombudsman was also an active participant in the IOA, United States Ombudsman Association, and the Association for Conflict Resolution.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Contact Information

To learn about the PWCS Office of the Ombudsman and how the office can support you, please visit our [website](#).

Due to the confidential nature of the office, visitors are seen by appointment either in-person, virtually, or over the phone. Please contact the office in one of the following ways to schedule an appointment:

Email: ombuds@pwcs.edu

Phone: 703-791-8587

The Ombudsman's office is located at: Independent Hill Complex
14800 Joplin Road, T 50-01
Manassas, VA 20112

Feel free to contact the office anytime to:

- Address a workplace conflict or school-related concern
- Ask questions involving PWCS policies, regulations, and/or practices
- Discuss a potential systemic concern
- Schedule training on a conflict-related topic

Conclusion

When delivering PWCS' Strategic Plan, Superintendent Dr. McDade noted, "We must be open, honest, and build trust with our students, families, educators, and community by providing them with important and timely information, transparent communication, and by leveraging their voices to continuously improve as a school division." Raising issues and addressing conflicts, creates a community where everyone can flourish. The Ombudsman's office seeks to serve as a resource for the PWCS community when navigating such conflicts. I again want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as the newest PWCS Ombudsman and I look forward to supporting all who reach out.

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Appendix A INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION Uniform Reporting Categories

VERSION 2
October 2007

1. Compensation & Benefits

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.

- 1.a **Compensation** (rate of pay, salary amount, job salary classification/level)
- 1.b **Payroll** (administration of pay, check wrong or delayed)
- 1.c **Benefits** (decisions related to medical, dental, life, vacation/sick leave, education, worker's compensation insurance, etc.)
- 1.d **Retirement, Pension** (eligibility, calculation of amount, retirement pension benefits)
- 1.e **Other** (any other employee compensation or benefit not described by the above sub-categories)

2. Evaluative Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)

- 2.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 2.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 2.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 2.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 2.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 2.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 2.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 2.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 2.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 2.j **Assignments/Schedules** (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)
- 2.k **Feedback** (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)
- 2.l **Consultation** (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)

2.m Performance Appraisal/Grading

(job/academic performance in formal or informal evaluation)

- 2.n **Departmental Climate** (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility.)
- 2.o **Supervisory Effectiveness** (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)
- 2.p **Insubordination** (refusal to do what is asked)
- 2.q **Discipline** (appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, or options for responding)
- 2.r **Equity of Treatment** (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)
- 2.s **Other** (any other evaluative relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)

- 3.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 3.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 3.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 3.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 3.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 3.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 3.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 3.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 3.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 3.j **Other** (any peer or colleague relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

4. Career Progression and Development

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)

- 4.a **Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes** (recruitment and selection processes, facilitation of job applications, short-listing and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment and selection)
- 4.b **Job Classification and Description** (changes or disagreements over requirements of assignment, appropriate tasks)
- 4.c **Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment** (notice, selection and special dislocation rights/benefits, removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks)
- 4.d **Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity** (security of position or contract, provision of secure contractual categories)
- 4.e **Career Progression** (promotion, reappointment, or tenure)
- 4.f **Rotation and Duration of Assignment** (non-completion or over-extension of assignments in specific settings/countries, lack of access or involuntary transfer to specific roles/assignments, requests for transfer to other places/duties/roles)
- 4.g **Resignation** (concerns about whether or how to voluntarily terminate employment or how such a decision might be communicated appropriately)
- 4.h **Termination/Non-Renewal** (end of contract, non-renewal of contract, disputed permanent separation from organization)
- 4.i **Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff** (loss of competitive advantages associated with re-hiring retired staff, favoritism)
- 4.j **Position Elimination** (elimination or abolition of an individual's position)
- 4.k **Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring** (classroom, on-the-job, and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities)
- 4.l **Other** (any other issues linked to recruitment, assignment, job security or separation not described by the above sub-categories)

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.

- 5.a **Criminal Activity** (threats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud)
- 5.b **Business and Financial Practices** (inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities or equipment)
- 5.c **Harassment** (unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment)
- 5.d **Discrimination** (different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of, for example, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, etc.[being part of an Equal Employment Opportunity protected category – applies in the U.S.])
- 5.e **Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation** (extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials including questions on policies, etc. for people with disabilities)
- 5.f **Accessibility** (removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.)
- 5.g **Intellectual Property Rights** (e.g., copyright and patent infringement)
- 5.h **Privacy and Security of Information** (release or access to individual or organizational private or confidential information)
- 5.i **Property Damage** (personal property damage, liabilities)
- 5.j **Other** (any other legal, financial and compliance issue not described by the above sub-categories)

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

- 6.a **Safety** (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)
- 6.b **Physical Working/Living Conditions** (temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc)
- 6.c **Ergonomics** (proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning)
- 6.d **Cleanliness** (sanitary conditions and facilities to prevent the spread of disease)
- 6.e **Security** (adequate lighting in parking lots, metal detectors, guards, limited access to building by outsiders, anti-terrorists measures (not for classifying "compromise of classified or top secret" information)

Ombudsman Annual Report
Submitted August 31, 2022

- 6.f **Telework/Flexplace** (ability to work from home or other location because of business or personal need, e.g., in case of man-made or natural emergency)
- 6.g **Safety Equipment** (access to/use of safety equipment as well as access to or use of safety equipment, e.g., fire extinguisher)
- 6.h **Environmental Policies** (policies not being followed, being unfair ineffective, cumbersome)
- 6.i **Work Related Stress and Work–Life Balance** (Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g. divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured)
- 6.j **Other** (any safety, health, or physical environment issue not described by the above sub-categories)

7. Services/Administrative Issues

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

- 7.a **Quality of Services** (how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.)
- 7.b **Responsiveness/Timeliness** (time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided)
- 7.c **Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules** (impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services, e.g., exceptions to policy deadlines or limits, refund requests, appeals of library or parking fines, application for financial aid, etc.)
- 7.d **Behavior of Service Provider(s)** (how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient)
- 7.e **Other** (any services or administrative issue not described by the above sub-categories)

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.

- 8.a **Strategic and Mission-Related/ Strategic and Technical Management** (principles, decisions and actions related to where and how the organization is moving)
- 8.b **Leadership and Management** (quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations)

- 8.c **Use of Positional Power/Authority** (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)
- 8.d **Communication** (content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)
- 8.e **Restructuring and Relocation** (issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, off shoring, outsourcing)
- 8.f **Organizational Climate** (issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning)
- 8.g **Change Management** (making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change)
- 8.h **Priority Setting and/or Funding** (disputes about setting organizational/departmental priorities and/or allocation of funding within programs)
- 8.i **Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results** (scientific disputes about the conduct, outcomes and interpretation of studies and resulting data for policy)
- 8.j **Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory** (disputes about which department/organization should be doing what/taking the lead)
- 8.k **Other** (any organizational issue not described by the above sub-categories)

9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

- 9.a **Standards of Conduct** (fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Codes of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest)
- 9.b **Values and Culture** (questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization)
- 9.c **Scientific Conduct/Integrity** (scientific or research misconduct or misdemeanors, e.g., authorship; falsification of results)
- 9.d **Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8** (fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revision, e.g., appropriate dress, use of internet or cell phones)
- 9.e **Other** (Other policy, procedure, ethics or standards issues not described in the above sub-categories)

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Appendix B – Data Tables

		2019	2020	2021
1	COMPENSATION & BENEFITS			
1.a	Compensation	3	5	2
1.b	Payroll	0	1	1
1.c	Benefits	3	1	3
1.d	Retirement, Pension	1	0	1
1.e	Other	0	3	0
2	EVALUATIVE RELATIONSHIPS			
2.a	Priorities, Values, Beliefs	2	1	0
2.b	Respect/Treatment	36	50	44
2.c	Trust/Integrity	27	36	27
2.d	Reputation	8	5	12
2.e	Communication	17	47	29
2.f	Bullying, Mobbing	15	5	7
2.g	Diversity-Related	4	27	10
2.h	Retaliation	32	72	31
2.i	Physical Violence	0	1	1
2.j	Assignments/Schedules	8	24	18
2.k	Feedback	0	0	7
2.l	Consultation	4	6	1
2.m	Performance Appraisal/Grading	2	11	9
2.n	Departmental Climate	24	22	17
2.o	Supervisory Effectiveness	22	22	17
2.p	Insubordination	0	1	0
2.q	Discipline	4	7	7
2.r	Equity of Treatment	6	21	11
2.s	Other	0	2	0
3	PEER AND COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIPS			
3.a	Priorities, Values, Beliefs	0	0	2
3.b	Respect/Treatment	6	13	11
3.c	Trust/Integrity	2	10	9
3.d	Reputation	1	3	2
3.e	Communication	5	7	12
3.f	Bullying, Mobbing	1	5	7
3.g	Diversity-Related	0	9	0
3.h	Retaliation	0	6	7
3.i	Physical Violence	0	0	1
3.j	Other	1	0	0

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

		2019	2020	2021
4	CAREER PROGRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT			
4.a	Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes	15	3	5
4.b	Job Classification and Description	1	3	1
4.c	Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment	1	3	2
4.d	Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity	0	0	3
4.e	Career Progression	3	1	6
4.f	Rotation and Duration of Assignment	0	4	1
4.g	Resignation	0	1	2
4.h	Termination/Non-Renewal	1	0	3
4.i	Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff	1	0	1
4.j	Position Elimination	0	0	0
4.k	Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring	4	0	1
4.l	Other	0	0	0
5	LEGAL, REGULATORY, FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE			
5.a	Criminal Activity	0	0	1
5.b	Business and Financial Practices	6	0	1
5.c	Harassment	2	1	1
5.d	Discrimination	22	17	7
5.e	Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation	5	24	5
5.f	Accessibility	0	0	0
5.g	Intellectual Property Rights	0	0	0
5.h	Privacy and Security of Information	3	0	0
5.i	Property Damage	0	0	0
5.j	Other	3	4	2
6	SAFETY, HEALTH, AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT			
6.a	Safety	7	44	13
6.b	Physical Working/Living Conditions	1	4	2
6.c	Ergonomics	0	0	3
6.d	Cleanliness	0	0	0
6.e	Security	2	0	1
6.f	Telework/Flexplace	0	35	7
6.g	Safety Equipment	0	0	0
6.h	Environmental Policies	0	1	0
6.i	Work-Related Stress and Work-Life Balance	4	0	5
6.j	Other	0	0	0

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

		2019	2020	2021
7	SERVICES/ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES			
7.a	Quality of Services	8	8	27
7.b	Responsiveness/Timeliness	15	10	18
7.c	Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules	20	10	43
7.d	Behavior of Service Provider(s)	33	11	29
7.e	Other	0	3	0
7.f	Athletics	7	9	6
7.g	Fear of Retaliation Against Student	10	1	10
8	ORGANIZATIONAL, STRATEGIC, AND MISSION RELATED			
8.a	Strategic and Mission-Related/Strategic and Technical Management	3	1	1
8.b	Leadership and Management	16	15	17
8.c	Use of Positional Power/Authority	11	6	15
8.d	Communication	3	1	8
8.e	Restructuring and Relocation	0	0	0
8.f	Organizational Climate	0	0	12
8.g	Change Management	0	0	2
8.h	Priority Setting and/or Funding	0	2	0
8.i	Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results	0	0	0
8.j	Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory	0	0	1
8.k	Other	5	0	0
9	VALUES, ETHICS, AND STANDARDS			
9.a	Standards of Conduct	2	2	1
9.b	Values and Culture	6	27	11
9.c	Scientific Conduct/Integrity	0	0	0
9.d	Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8	1	1	10
9.e	Other	1	4	0

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2021 – June 2022

Appendix C

Visitor

FEEDBACK

Supportive

"As a leader in PWCS, I found the Ombudsman very helpful in helping me navigate a conflict between my employees effectively."

Listens

"I felt like the Ombudsman truly cared about my concerns, was not judgmental, and offered good suggestions for my next steps."

Educate

"Many staff members are unaware of this office. Please advertise more."

Resource

"She made me feel that my concerns were actually being heard and taken seriously. Something employees haven't had in years!"

Helps

"I did not get the resolution to my concern but it seems like she did everything she could to assist me."

Skilled

"The Ombudsman is very professional, caring and respectful and is not just doing her job for a paycheck."