DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015–18

Hanseul Kang
State Superintendent
of Education

December 2015

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Community Members,

Providing our students and families with an excellent education is a fundamental part of building pathways to the middle class in the District of Columbia. I am fortunate to lead the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), which works with child care providers, DC Public Schools, public charter schools, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and education partners to ensure success for all our residents, from birth to adulthood.

In my time as state superintendent, many have asked me, "What is OSSE's role? How can it improve education in the District?" I am pleased to share a document that provides some answers: a strategic plan that commits OSSE to excellence in analyzing education data to inform practice and policy, upholding quality and equity of programs, serving our customers more effectively, and attracting and retaining top-notch talent for our agency.

This plan would not have been possible without input and feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders. We held dozens of candid conversations with educators, advocates, and policymakers about OSSE's strengths and challenges. We also gathered input from hundreds of dedicated staff members who work at OSSE. We heard valuable feedback about the many ways in which we could and should improve in our work. But, above all, people affirmed the critical role that a highly effective state education agency could play in DC's education landscape. We are grateful for your feedback and engagement, and look forward to working closely together to build a better future for all of our residents.

Sincerely,

Hanseul Kang

ABOUT OSSE

The Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA) of 2007 spread responsibility for schools in DC across multiple organizations and established OSSE as the DC's state education agency.

Governance for public education in the District of Columbia is more diffuse than in other states

- Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)
- LEAs, CBOs, and Providers (DCPS, public charter LEAs)
- **Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)**
- Public Charter School Board (PCSB)
- State Board of Education (SBOE)

As the state education agency (SEA) in the District, many of OSSE's responsibilities track those of other SEAs

- Oversight of federal and state regulations
- Data reporting and analytics
- Assessment administration
- LEA support and monitoring
- Grants management
- Early childhood education*

Unlike most state education agencies, OSSE directly engages with families in many important ways.

DC Tuition Assistance Grant
$30M to DC students annually

Summer Meals
1M meals served to children and youth

State Athletics
13,000 students from 47 schools

ReEngagement Center
600 disengaged youth

Special Education Transportation
23,000 miles transporting 3,000 students

*At OSSE, early childhood education encompasses birth to 5 services; in most other states, birth to 3 services are managed by a health and human services agency rather than the SEA

Public schools in DC are on the rise, but we have much more work to do to ensure a quality education for all students

MORE FAMILIES CHOOSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Since 2007, enrollment in public schools in the District has increased by more than 13,000 students

STRONG GAINS ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

From 2003 to 2015, DC's scores grew faster than the rest of the country in all grades and subjects on the National Assessment of Educational Progress

STEADY PROGRESS ON GRADUATION RATES

Since the 2011-12 school year, DC's graduation rate has increased from 56% to 65%

By 2020, 76% of jobs in the District will require postsecondary education, but we are not currently preparing enough of our students for these opportunities

We believe OSSE can play a unique role in **sustaining, accelerating, and deepening** the progress being made in DC education by successfully carrying out four key priorities

HIGH-QUALITY & ACTIONABLE **DATA**

OSSE will provide **high-quality data and analysis** that will empower Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and providers to meet the needs of all learners and allow education partners to make informed policy decisions

QUALITY & EQUITY FOCUS

OSSE will work with our education partners to set **high expectations for program quality** and align incentives to accelerate achievement for those learners most in need

RESPONSIVE & CONSISTENT **SERVICE**

OSSE will provide **responsive, consistent, and considerate customer service** to free up LEAs, CBOs, and providers and allow them to focus on instruction and support for students

TOP-NOTCH **TALENT**

OSSE will attract, develop, and retain **top-notch talent** to build a highly effective state education agency that makes a meaningful contribution to DC education

HIGH-QUALITY & ACTIONABLE DATA

STRATEGIES

1 LEAD EFFORTS TO COLLECT AND ANALYZE EDUCATION DATA ACROSS THE DISTRICT

- Convene stakeholders to develop recommendations that address gaps in data collection and analysis, and to discuss new ways to partner on data sharing
- Create and publish privacy, confidentiality, and data sharing policies that protect data while still allowing for collection, analysis, and reporting
- In conjunction with our partners, align and consolidate existing parent and community data portals

2 DEVELOP INFORMATIVE ANALYSES AND REPORTS TO HIGHLIGHT PROMISING PRACTICES

- Work with partners to develop a research agenda that includes evaluations of OSSE-led interventions as well as District-wide education initiatives and projects
- Advance the research and evaluation agenda through strategic partnerships with research institutions and major partners
- Conduct relevant and actionable research and evaluation studies

3 PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY, RELIABLE, INTEGRATED, AND SECURE DATA SYSTEMS

- Develop a technology plan for creating intuitive, accessible, comprehensive, and dynamic data systems
- Establish a portal linked to all OSSE data systems to provide secured access with a single login
- Align data systems to national standards like CEDS and Ed-Fi to support cross-state exchange of information and tools
- Ensure development and identification of authoritative data sets

HIGH-QUALITY & ACTIONABLE DATA

STRATEGIES

4 ENSURE PRACTITIONERS AND FAMILIES HAVE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND ACTIONABLE DATA

- Survey stakeholders to determine what data are most useful, identify gaps, and fill them
- Provide data back to LEAs, programs, and partners in an easy-to-use format
- Create a training program and support stakeholder use of OSSE data systems
- Lead smooth transition to PARCC, including family-friendly score reports, professional development for LEAs on interpreting results, and timely transmission of data

5 IMPROVE DATA LITERACY AND COORDINATION ACROSS OSSE DIVISIONS

- Eliminate redundant data requests across OSSE divisions
- Create an easily accessible warehouse of commonly requested data points
- Publicize business rules to provide transparency into calculations
- Publish clear data protection standards and provide training for internal staff on how to implement them

HIGH-QUALITY & ACTIONABLE DATA

IMPACT

FOR OUR FAMILIES

- User-friendly access to data about their student and school
- Complete and highly relevant data to help families choose the best education option for their student
- Confidence that their student's information remains private and protected

FOR OUR EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Clear understanding of OSSE's role in city-wide data analysis
- Simplified, transparent, and secure access to relevant data
- Improved decision making and coordination as the result of sound data and actionable analysis

FOR LEAs, CBOs, AND PROVIDERS

- Clear understanding of the data OSSE collects, timely notice of reporting deadlines, and an understanding of how data collected will be used
- Streamlined systems for submitting and accessing data
- Actionable data to better understand strengths and areas for improvement

HOW WE'LL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

DECREASE IN RESPONSE TIME TO DATA REQUESTS

INCREASE IN USAGE OF, AND SATISFACTION WITH, OSSE DATA SYSTEMS

QUALITY & EQUITY FOCUS

STRATEGIES

1 WORK WITH PARTNERS TO PUT FORTH A VISION FOR PROGRAM QUALITY IN AREAS OF NEED

- For each area of oversight or monitoring, revisit quality and equity expectations and accountability plans
- Work with partners to collectively set quality and equity expectations
- Ensure all expectations are based on evidence and evaluated regularly for effectiveness
- Where standards do not exist, look to other SEAs, partners, or consortia that have a track record in setting high standards and achieving outcomes for all students

2 OFFER SUPPORT AND COORDINATE SERVICES WITH OTHER CITY AGENCIES

- Identify the technical assistance and professional development support that LEAs, partners, and providers need to meet quality expectations
- Evaluate the impact of professional development or technical assistance provided
- Coordinate supports for schools and providers from other city agencies

3 ALIGN GRANTS AND INCENTIVES WITH EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAM QUALITY

- Review all available incentives for increasing program quality, including discretionary funds and service partnerships with other city agencies
- Implement a risk-based monitoring framework to reduce administrative burden for high performing sub-grantees and target intervention to struggling sub-grantees
- Redesign monitoring activities across programs to focus on quality as well as compliance

4 IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE PROMISING PRACTICES AMONG LEAs AND PROGRAMS LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY

- Identify LEAs, programs, or providers demonstrating best practices linked to program quality, equity, and learner outcomes
- Bring together networks of LEAs, partners, and providers to facilitate the exchange of proven and promising practices to advance strategic areas of improvement

QUALITY & EQUITY FOCUS

IMPACT

FOR OUR FAMILIES

- Consistent information about program quality across sectors
- Confidence that their child's school or provider is being supported to provide high-quality programming

FOR LEAs, CBOs, AND PROVIDERS

- A vision for quality that reflects LEA, CBO, and provider input
- Aligned incentives and differentiated supports to better serve students most in need
- Productive communities of practice to collaborate and problem solve with each other
- Public recognition and celebration of programs that are achieving outstanding results for DC learners

FOR OUR EDUCATION PARTNERS

- A vision for quality that reflects education partner input
- Information about how to better support high-quality programs across the District

HOW WE'LL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

INCREASE IN KEY ACADEMIC INDICATORS

INCREASE IN SATISFACTION WITH OSSE SUPPORT IN PRIORITY ACADEMIC AREAS

STRATEGIES

1 DEVELOP A COMMON VISION FOR HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION

- Create a cross-functional team charged with finding ways to improve customer service agency-wide
- Develop, publicize, and embrace a shared set of values for constituent communications
- Develop core values that capture our collective aspiration for how we will operate as an agency

2 REDUCE RESPONSE TIME TO REQUESTS, WHILE MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS FOR ACCURACY

- Identify current processes that need to be improved upon to achieve quicker response times
- Determine best way to track email, telephone, or social media requests and fulfillment; determine gaps
- Pilot new models for responding to requests beyond individual communication with OSSE staff

3 SUPPORT OSSE STAFF TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Model exemplary communications through templates, improved processes, trainings, and staff meetings
- Refine the communications review process to ensure consistency of messaging and maximize clarity for LEAs and partners
- Establish cross-divisional working groups to tackle key issues and ensure coordinated approaches

4 ENSURE DECISION-MAKING IS TRANSPARENT AND INFORMED BY STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

- Establish written internal guidelines on timeliness of notices sent to LEAs and programs
- Create a public directory of contacts for all divisions and programs and update regularly
- Ensure that major changes are shared within OSSE, so that staff are positioned to support success and help stakeholders with questions

RESPONSIVE & CONSISTENT **SERVICE**

IMPACT

FOR ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- Better information on how to navigate OSSE and get help when needed
- Clear communications and greater transparency about decisions
- Accurate and timely responses to all inquiries
- Stronger coordination across city agencies and internal OSSE divisions to reduce burden and provide improved support
- More time for LEAs, CBOs, and providers to devote to instruction

HOW WE'LL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

DECREASE IN RESPONSE TIME TO REQUESTS

INCREASE IN SATISFACTION WITH OSSE PROVIDED SERVICES

STRATEGIES

1 ACCELERATE AND STREAMLINE HUMAN RESOURCES PROCESSES

- Identify and implement ways to speed up the hiring of new employees by streamlining intra-agency processes
- Improve the performance management process and ensure consistent supervision and evaluations of all employees
- Develop a common onboarding process for all employees

2 IMPROVE INTERNAL WORKPLACE CULTURE SO THAT ALL EMPLOYEES FEEL VALUED AND SUPPORTED

- Regularly conduct an employee satisfaction survey and actively respond to results
- Develop cross-divisional working groups to resolve major workplace issues
- Redesign and streamline internal communications vehicles
- Increase quality and engagement of quarterly "all-hands" meetings
- Meaningfully celebrate the successes of individuals and teams

3 EMPOWER STAFF THROUGH TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Build internal capacity for employees to make decisions on critical issues without delay or unnecessary escalation
- Invest in more innovative, high-quality, and relevant development for current and aspiring managers
- Charge and support managers throughout the agency with leading the development of their teams

4 UNDERSTAND THE DIVERSE CONTEXTS, STRENGTHS, AND NEEDS OF THE LEAs, CBOs, AND PROVIDERS WE SERVE

- Recruit staff with expertise working in LEAs, CBOs, and providers
- Set aside time during the school year for staff to learn from, visit, or volunteer in schools
- Provide content-specific development to employees so they can better support our stakeholders

TOP-NOTCH
TALENT

IMPACT

FOR OUR STAFF

- Greater knowledge about, and connection to, work happening across divisions of the agency
- Empowerment to make important decisions that serve our partners and students even more effectively
- A consistent performance management process and culture of honest feedback that effectively rewards our top performers and supports and develops others
- An appropriate level of resources and support for the work our staff does, in alignment with our strategic priorities
- Our staff view OSSE as a great place to work

FOR ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- Smarter, more coordinated interactions that reflect a deep understanding of LEA, CBO, and provider needs and constraints
- Better cross-sector coordination and collaboration to facilitate our collective work on behalf of all students

HOW WE'LL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

DECREASE IN VOLUNTARY EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

DECREASE IN TIME TO HIRE NEW EMPLOYEES

INCREASE IN EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL WORKPLACE CONDITIONS AND CULTURE

Easy Book
0-1 fingers
The 5 Finger Rule
Challenging
4 fingers
Too Hard
5+ fingers
Center City PCS

We view this plan as a living document and will hold ourselves accountable to continuous improvement and regular reporting to the DC education community

- Work with the Deputy Mayor for Education to align our efforts in support of District priority goals
- Align priorities of OSSE divisions to the strategic plan
- Introduce the plan to our partners and stakeholders across the District

- Ensure that the Superintendent has visited every LEA in the District to collect ongoing feedback
- Provide a public update on our progress
- Refine and adjust the plan as needed

- Continue to seek public and stakeholder feedback on the plan's effectiveness
- Provide a public update on our progress
- Refine and adjust the plan as needed

The development of this plan would not have been possible without the inspiration and support of our staff, numerous LEAs, CBOs, providers, and education partners

LEAs, CBOs, AND PROVIDERS

- AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School
- Bright Beginnings
- District of Columbia Public Schools
- District of Columbia International School
- Kennedy-Krieger Institute
- Lee Montessori Public Charter School
- Next Step Public Charter School
- Sunshine Learning Center
- The Children's Guild
- Numerous individuals at LEAs who responded to our anonymous survey

OSSE STAFF AND ADVISORY GROUP

- Deborah Alston
- Gilvina Cephas
- Lisa Devlin
- Carmela Edmunds
- Alicia Gadsden
- Jessie Harteis
- Carole Lee
- Tonia Lovelace
- Bonnie O'Keefe
- Tracy Richard
- Richard Rowley
- Andrew Sabatelli
- Amber Schlick
- Brandon Wallace
- Michael Williams
- Individuals who participated in interviews, focus groups, and provided written feedback

DC EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Beatriz Otero, Former Deputy Mayor, Health and Human Services
- Children's Law Center
- Children's National Medical Center
- College Success Foundation
- Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
- Deputy Mayor for Education
- Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity
- DC College Access Program
- DC Council, Education Committee
- DC Public Libraries
- DC Special Education Cooperative
- District of Columbia Association of Chartered Public Schools
- District of Columbia Association for Special Education
- Executive Office of the Mayor
- FOCUS
- Martha's Table
- Public Charter School Board
- Raise DC
- State Board of Education

NATIONAL EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Rhode Island Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Education

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