



The District of Columbia State Education Plan

for Elementary and Secondary Education

An Overview

The District of Columbia (D.C.) State Education Plan helps students achieve socially and academically, increase graduation rates, close achievement gaps between students of all races and backgrounds, and prepare students for success in college and careers. It also allows school communities to develop programs that fit the unique needs of their specific students while providing parents the information they need to make informed decisions.

Why do we need a new D.C. State Education Plan?

Every new school year represents a turning point, but this year will be a critical moment of change for D.C. schools and our students. In recent years, we've taken concrete steps to improve the education each and every student receives, regardless of where the student attends school or how he or she is currently performing.

We believe that all D.C. residents should have access to an excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and future life opportunities. As part of this mission and to address these challenges, we have developed the D.C. State Education Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education that sets student achievement as our highest priority.

Throughout the 2012–2013 school year, we need everyone—students, parents, teachers, principals, and community leaders—to take part in making the implementation of the D.C. State Education Plan a success.

What's included in the new D.C. State Education Plan?

Within five years, we are committed to reducing the number of students who are not academically performing as expected by 50%. We also plan to reduce the number of students who do not graduate from high school by 10% each year.

The D.C. State Education Plan focuses on three key principles:

Preparing Students for College and Careers

Our goal is to prepare all students to graduate from high school ready for college and careers, and to be successful in today's global economy. The Common Core State Standards are new academic content standards that will raise expectations for what students should learn and be able to do in each grade. Our new assessments, supports, and interventions are designed to help LEAs and students master these higher standards.

Holding Schools and Educators Accountable

We are creating an education system that holds schools accountable for the academic achievement of each student, recognizes the accomplishments of excellent schools, and provides all schools with the support and resources needed to improve the quality of education. The D.C. State Education Plan will ensure that educators receive the support they need to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction that all students receive.

Ensuring Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness

It's critical to have excellent educators in every school providing high-quality instruction to all students. Research indicates that the best way to improve student achievement is to ensure there are effective teachers in every classroom and that there are school leaders that create climates that support teaching and learning. Teacher and Principal evaluation systems will help measure how well these educators are performing. This information will be used to ensure that we are providing training that supports our teacher and leader needs.

75 in 5

We aspire for **at least** 75% of students to be proficient in all subjects and to have a graduation rate of 75% within the next five years.

How was the D.C. State Education Plan developed?

OSSE began developing the D.C. State Education Plan as a part of the District's application for Race to the Top Grant funding. Using the flexibility offered to states at the beginning of 2012, OSSE began working with stakeholders to continue the critical work of developing strategies to meet the unique needs of our students.

More than 600 people—including teachers, school administrators, parents, political and business leaders, community-based organizations (CBO's), and other members of the community—reviewed the proposed plan and provided meaningful feedback during the 2011–2012 school year. As a result, the feedback and suggestions provided influenced the development of this D.C. State Education Plan.

OSSE is committed to strengthening this partnership with parents and the community through regular communication about the plan and achievements. In doing so, OSSE will continue to maintain an open door policy and to engage parents and other stakeholders in a positive and significant way to address the real-world challenges parents and their children experience every day.

Who will lead this work?

OSSE is the D.C. state education agency that receives counsel and guidance from the state board of education. OSSE is responsible for setting district wide policies, providing support to LEAs and ensuring federal accountability for all public education in the city.

OSSE will work together with schools, teachers, parents, and other community members to implement the D.C. State Education Plan to ensure that all students in the nation's capital receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in college, career, and their personal lives. The D.C. State Education Plan establishes annual benchmarks and monitoring that ensure progress is happening in every classroom in all eight Wards throughout D.C.

We are committed to listening to and partnering with parents so that together we can improve student achievement. This includes holding parent events throughout the year, discussing issues with parents one-on-one, face-to-face, and by phone. We will also continue this partnership by interacting through social media, community meetings, and offering printed information as appropriate.

How will the plan impact my child and his or her school?

- Students will receive an education that prepares them for success in college and a career.
- Students will learn more critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Parents will have access to school report cards so they can make informed decisions about school choices.
- Teachers will establish high expectations for students and challenge them to learn.
- Teachers will work hard to teach new standards and apply new instructional practices in the classroom.
- Schools will evaluate principals and teachers, provide them professional support, and promote excellence to ensure all students have access to effective instruction and leadership.
- Schools that performed below expectations will receive intensive support from OSSE.
- Reward schools will be recognized for their excellent performance.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

How can I support my child, the school, and our community?

- Talk to your child's teacher regularly about how your child is doing in class and what you can do to help him or her excel.
- Set high expectations and support those expectations by talking regularly to your child about the importance of education.
- Create an environment at home that encourages learning. Create a comfortable space for your child to read and do homework. Make time to be involved with the learning process at home.
- Get involved. Attend events at your child's school and in your community. OSSE will host events from time to time that will require your participation.
- Help get the word out. OSSE cannot do this alone. Help us improve education in our city by talking with friends and family about the new plan and asking others to get involved.
- Stay informed. Follow updates about the plan in newsletters and online through Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. OSSE is committed to providing you information about our progress.
- Tell us what is working and what needs to be improved. We are on this mission together, and we believe that communication goes both ways. As OSSE, schools, and the community implement the new D.C. State Education Plan, let us know when things are working well and when things need improvement.

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For more information on the D.C. State Education Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education, visit www.osse.dc.gov or call (202) 727-6436.