District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Non-Resident Student Review and Findings: 2025-26 School Year

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I. Executive Summary

District laws and regulations require that District residents have the first right to attend District schools. If there is space remaining, then non-resident families can attend if they pay tuition. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) serves a critical function in residency verification, the collection of non-resident tuition, and the investigation of suspected non-residency. OSSE focuses on keeping our schools open and accessible to DC residents first and foremost. DC Official Code § 38-301 *et seq*. establishes a residency verification process for students attending a public or public charter school in the District of Columbia ("District"). Verification of residency prioritizes District residents in accessing schooling in the District and safeguards taxpayer dollars.

The purpose of this report is to provide the status of residency investigations and the levying and collection of retroactive tuition pursuant to DC Official Code § 38-312.03. This report also describes the processes and systems in place that provide the basis for an investigation. Additionally, the report provides updates on the amount of tuition collected from non-resident students.

For the 2025-26 school year, OSSE initiated investigations for 163 cases – 99 of which were closed following an investigation in which students were determined to be District residents or non-residents. As of Aug. 10, 2026, 64 cases remain open. Investigations always include communication with the family regarding the allegation or a proposed resolution from the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) if the non-residency finding was appealed.

Additionally, for the 2025-26 school year, 36 non-resident students enrolled into District public or public charter schools, signed tuition agreements, and were assessed tuition totaling $661,037.59. As of Aug. 10, 2026, OSSE has collected $630,030.59. Non-resident students who do not complete their 2025-26 school year tuition payments by July 15 are excluded from attending a District public or public charter school for the 2025-26 school year. The remaining outstanding balance is referred to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Central Collections Unit for further collection attempts. All students enrolled with a tuition agreement for the 2025-26 school year made the required payment on or before July 15, 2026.

II. Background

OSSE is responsible for ensuring that public and public charter schools in the District of Columbia are accessible to District residents first. These responsibilities include enforcing residency requirements and investigating a student's residency status. Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 38-308 and 5A DCMR § 5000 *et seq.*, students must establish and annually verify residency in the District in order to attend a District of Columbia Public School (DCPS), a District public charter school, or any other school providing educational services funded by the District tuition-free. In order to qualify for a free public education, students must establish bona fide residency in the District of Columbia. A person is a bona fide resident if the individual can demonstrate compliance with all three of the following requirements:

(1) Demonstrate that they are parent, guardian, custodian or otherwise eligible to enroll the student. If anyone other than the parent is enrolling the student, establish that they are the valid guardian, custodian, or other primary caregiver, as set forth in 5A DCMR § 5000 *et seq.* and specifically defined in 5A DCMR § 5099, with proper documentation, such as a custody order, or an "other" primary caregiver form;

(2) Establish a physical presence in the District, defined as the "actual occupation and inhabitance of a place of abode with the intent to dwell for a continuous period of time" in 5A DCMR § 5099; and

(3) Submit valid and proper documentation that establishes bona fide residency as set forth in 5A DCMR § 5004.

If a seat in a school is made available to a non-resident student, the non-resident is required to make payment arrangements for the non-resident tuition owed for the school year. Non-residents enter into tuition agreements with OSSE at the start of the year. Tuition is either paid in full or on a payment schedule over the course of the school year, with all outstanding balances due no later than July 15.

OSSE may issue a finding that a student is a non-resident of the District of Columbia based on the information gathered from an investigation or the annual enrollment audit, during which residency verification documents are reviewed. A non-residency determination does not become a final agency decision until families are notified and provided an opportunity for administrative review to challenge the determination before the OAH. If administrative review is requested, the identified student may remain enrolled at the school until OAH issues a final administrative decision.

III. Process and Systems

OSSE identifies non-residents primarily through two processes—the annual enrollment audit and the residency tip program.

(A) Enrollment Audit

OSSE is required to collect and verify student enrollment counts and residency status, pursuant to DC Official Code § 38-1804.02, to evaluate the accuracy of the student enrollment count for all publicly funded schools or community-based organizations (CBO), as well as for students enrolled in "nonpublic schools" or those special education students whose tuition for enrollment in other schools is paid for by the District of Columbia.

The enrollment audit includes a residency verification component to ensure that all enrolled students are either residents or tuition-paying non-residents. Annually, schools are required to verify student residency in the District by obtaining a signed DC Residency Verification Form (DCRV) and determining whether the supporting documentation submitted by families to demonstrate residency in the District sufficiently meets the requirements set forth in the law, regulations, and OSSE policy. Additionally, OSSE requires schools to maintain residency supporting documentation for all enrolled students.

During the audit, auditors conducted a virtual documentation review of all 67 local education agencies (LEAs) including a review of: (1) 100 percent of enrolled students' DCRVs; and (2) an inspection and assessment of residency supporting documentation for a 20 percent sample of the student population at each school whose residency was not verified through direct data exchanges between OSSE and other government agencies. If a school's sample failed to show adequate supporting residency documentation, auditors conduct a 100 percent review of the supporting residency documentation for students in the population group (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten to 12th grade, or adult) that had not been previously verified. In the 2025-26 school year, 116 public and public charter schools examined by OSSE underwent at least one full scope review of their student body's residency information for at least one population

group within the student body.[1] For more detail on the 2025-26 school year enrollment audit data and more detail on the audit process, refer to OSSE's Audit and Verification of Student Enrollment for the 2025-26 School Year report, dated January 2026.

Auditors flag supporting residency documentation that complies with statutory requirements but may have been altered or illegitimate. These cases are referred to OSSE non-resident investigators for follow up and further inspection.

(B) Residency Tip Program

OER also oversees the residency tip program. A tip may be submitted in several ways: the OSSE tip hotline, both online and via telephone at (202) 719-6500; partner agencies investigating individuals for other matters (e.g., Medicaid fraud); and other sources such as letter mail, email, or in-person communications with OER.

(C) Investigations

An investigation of non-residency can be initiated by any person submitting a tip. Upon receiving a tip, OSSE assigns a case number and reviews it for sufficiency of information provided. For example, some tips come in without sufficient information to conduct an investigation (e.g., providing a first name but no last name). If there is sufficient information to proceed, the case will be assigned to an investigator. In addition, investigation referrals can also come from the enrollment audit as described above.

OSSE investigations may include up to five phases:

(I) Case creation and review;
(II) Electronic investigation and collection of available and relevant documents;
(III) Interviews with the family and submission of additional documentation by the family;
(IV) Field investigations and home visits; and
(V) Final review.

During phases I and II, OSSE investigators will request enrollment and residency documents from the school and review available information from various electronic databases. After these actions are taken, OSSE makes a determination as to whether or not to move forward based on the information it has collected. The investigator evaluates the evidence and ascertains the following in making a determination of non-residency:

1. Confirm that the enrolling person was eligible to enroll the student and that the enrolling person is a DC resident; or
2. If the enrolling person was not eligible to enroll the student, or they were not a DC resident, confirm that no persons eligible to enroll the student are DC residents; and
3. Confirm that the eligible enrolling persons that are DC residents were DC residents for the entirety of the school year being investigated.

If an eligible enrolling person was a DC resident during the school year being investigated, OSSE will determine the student is a District resident and close the case. If eligibility or residency cannot be confirmed, OSSE moves to phase III and reaches out to the family involved in the case to request the family provide specific additional documentation or explanation through an interview. This phase provides the

[1] This does not include reviews of nonpublic schools or community-based organizations serving District students, as OSSE reviews 100 percent of District students enrolled in these settings.

family the opportunity to provide additional information that may not have been available at the school level or through electronic investigation. If the information is sufficient, OSSE will determine the student is a District resident and close the case.

In instances when sufficient documentation cannot be gathered from the school, electronic investigation, or the family, OSSE moves to phase IV and may request a home visit or conduct fieldwork. If eligibility and residency are still not confirmed, OSSE notifies the parent/guardian, adult student, or other primary caregiver in writing of the finding of non-residency and the administrative review process. The parent/guardian, adult student, or other primary caregiver may request a hearing with the OAH.

IV. Status of Investigations for 2025-26 School Year

For the 2025-26 school year, OSSE investigated, or is continuing to investigate, 163 cases of alleged non-residency. Cases focus on the enrolling person and can include, within a single case, multiple students who are siblings and attend multiple LEAs. Of the 163 cases that were investigated over the course of the 2025-26 school year, a total of 233 students were identified. The referrals for each student came from a variety of sources including: audit referrals, referrals from schools or partner agencies, and all other referrals were from a tip from the community. Tip referrals almost always involve cases where the supporting residency documentation submitted at the time of enrollment was complete but may not represent the person's true residence according to information provided by the person submitting the tip. Audit referrals involve cases where supporting residency documentation was found to be complete but flagged by auditors as potentially altered or illegitimate. LEAs are not funded for students with incomplete supporting residency documentation. Of the 163 cases, 64 remain open, and 99 are closed.

Pursuant D.C. Official Code § 38-312.03, reporting of non-resident investigations is required by each LEA. In the table below, a single case involving related students is counted at each attending LEA and can be counted as both a DCPS case and a public charter school case if the students are attending schools in both sectors. Table 1 reflects the sum of the individual students investigated in each LEA. Therefore, while there were 163 cases over the course of the 2025-26 school year, Table 1 includes 233 students, as there were several cases where one case included at least two students at more than one LEA. The cases in Table 1 include all grades from pre-K 3 to adult. As displayed in Table 1, the status of the investigation could be one of the following:

- **Closed:** Cases with completed investigations. Cases are closed after they are either withdrawn or a determination is made that the persons in question were duplicates, residents, or non-residents.
- **Open:** Cases that OSSE is currently investigating or are going through the appeals process. Appealed cases occur after OSSE has issued a Notice of Finding. When appealed, these cases are referred to OAH. These cases will continue through the OAH administrative process for formal mediation and a hearing.
- **Duplicate:** These cases involved tip submissions on the same student within the same school year. Duplicate cases are removed from investigation.
- **Non-resident:** These are cases where OSSE issued a Notice of Finding of Non-Residency and it was either uncontested, the persons conceded, or, if appealed, OAH decided through a formal hearing that the persons were non-residents.
- **Resident:** These cases were investigated, and the student was determined to be eligible to attend as a resident.
- **Withdrawn:** These cases involve students enrolled for very short periods of time who withdrew before an investigation could be conducted.
- **Total:** The sum of the total open and closed cases.

Table 1: School Year 2025-26 Student Count Resulting from Tip and Enrollment Audit Referrals by LEA*

LEA	Open	Closed	Total	Closed (Duplicate)	Closed (Non-resident	Closed (Resident)	Closed (Withdrawn)
Achievement Preparatory Academy PCS	3	0	3	0	0	0	0
AppleTree Early Learning PCS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Capital City PCS	5	1	6	1	0	0	0
Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Cedar Tree Academy PCS	2	3	5	1	0	2	0
Center City PCS	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
Cesar Chavez PCS for Public Policy	0	4	4	0	0	1	3
DC Prep PCS	0	3	3	1	0	2	0
Digital Pioneers Academy PCS	1	1	2	0	0	0	1
District of Columbia International School	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
District of Columbia Public Schools	56	79	135	20	2	42	15
E.L. Haynes PCS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
Friendship PCS	4	5	9	1	0	4	0
Global Citizens PCS	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
Howard University Middle School PCS	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
KIPP DC PCS	5	15	20	3	1	11	0
Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
Monument Academy PCS	1	1	2	0	0	0	1
Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS	3	2	5	1	0	1	0
Paul PCS	2	8	10	3	0	4	1
Perry Street Preparatory PCS	0	3	3	1	0	2	0
Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
St. Coletta Special Education PCS	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
The Children's Guild DC PCS	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
The SEED PCS of Washington DC	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Two Rivers PCS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
DCPS Subtotal	**56**	**79**	**135**	**20**	**2**	**42**	**15**
PCSB Subtotal	**34**	**60**	**94**	**15**	**1**	**36**	**8**
Unknown/Student Not Found	**0**	**4**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**
Grand Total	**90**	**143**	**233**	**35**	**3**	**78**	**27**

*As of Aug. 10, 2026

V. Non-Resident Tuition Collection

Non-residents must pay tuition to attend public or public charter schools in the District of Columbia. Table 2 below shows the data pertaining to assessed tuition amounts because of a non-residency investigation. As of Aug. 19, 2026, OSSE imposed retroactive tuition charges on 10 students because of non-residency investigations concluded during the 2025-26 school year. The tuition charges totaled $165,890.44 and were referred to the OCFO Central Collections Unit for collection. Current active cases from the 2025-26 school year may result in additional retroactive tuition charges in the future. Retroactive tuition assessed differs by LEA because tuition is assessed based on individualized student attributes, and it is pro-rated to reflect the total number of days the student was enrolled while determined to be a non-resident.

Table 2: SY 25-26 Non-Resident Tuition Assessed from Non-Residency Investigation

LEA	Number of Students	Total Tuition Assessed
District of Columbia Public Schools	**4**	**$74,032.97**
KIPP DC PCS	1	$19,635.94
Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS	2	$12,268.00
Richard Wright PCS	2	$36,564.53
Perry Street Prep PCS	1	$23,389.00
Total	10	**$165,890.44**

Table 3 below shows data pertaining to the collection of tuition for non-residents under tuition agreements. Because of their non-resident status, 36 students were assessed tuition in the 2025-26 school year. The total amount of tuition assessed was $661,037.01 for 36 students. Two students withdrew after the start of school. The tuition for the students that withdrew was prorated to reflect the total days enrolled. The final tuition payment in the amount of $5,165.28 was not made for one student who graduated. As a result, the total tuition received reflects a deduction of the withdrawal credit of $25,841.14 and the unpaid balance of $5,165.28. As of Aug. 29, 2026, OSSE collected $630,030.59, resulting in an outstanding balance of $5,165.28. Families who do not pay in full cannot enroll their student for the following school year, and the remaining balance is referred to the OCFO Central Collections Unit for collection.

Table 3: SY 25-26 Non-Resident Tuition Assessed, Collected, Outstanding Balance

LEA	Number of Students	Total Tuition Assessed	Total Tuition Received	Balance Owed (as of Aug. 19, 2026)
DC Prep PCS	1	$41,525.00	$41,525.00	$-
District of Columbia Public Schools	33	$574,158.60*	$543,152.18	$5165.28
KIPP DC PCS	1	$23,441.00	$23,441.00	$-
SELA PCS	1	$21,912.41	$21,912.41	$-
Total	**36**	**$661,037.01****	**$630,030.59**	$5,165.28

*Subsequently reduced to $548,317.46 due to two students withdrawing from DCPS
**Subsequently reduced to $635,195.87 due to two students withdrawing from DCPS

VI. Conclusion

OSSE remains committed to ensuring District schools remain accessible first and foremost to District of Columbia residents. We will continue to take steps to improve our practice, and look forward to working with schools, families, and the community to further improve our residency efforts.