**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**
**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF**
# EDUCATION

## FAQs for Educators

The DC School Report Card gives DC families a look into all public schools in the District. Built in partnership with parents and families, this tool is a step toward a more transparent, equitable educational system into the District of Columbia, helping us put students at the center of critical decision-making. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), DC's state education agency, led the development of the DC School Report Card as part of federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

You can find the DC School Report Card at DCSchoolReportCard.org.

# Developing the DC School Report Card

### Why did OSSE develop the new DC School Report Card?

We frequently hear from families and community members that they are looking for accessible and transparent information about all public schools in the District of Columbia, both DC Public Schools and public charter schools. For the first time, the DC School Report Card provides that information. DC, along with all other states, is required to create annual school report cards under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). OSSE worked with school leaders, families, advocates, content experts, and members of the community to design a DC School Report Card that meets the federal requirements and also provides families with transparent, accessible information they want to know about our public schools. We know that this information can be a powerful tool for advocating for your school and understanding more about how your school is doing.

### How was the DC School Report Card developed?

Historically, school report cards have not been built in partnership with the people who will use them most: parents and families. This time, OSSE made sure we were working with the community to create a tool that allowed transparent access to data.

Since development began in 2017, we have heard more than 4,000 responses from parents and families, school leaders, and community members to determine what data to include in the DC School Report Card, and how to make the report card as user-friendly as possible. We remain committed to serving the needs of students and families, to ultimately provide them with easy access to easy-to-understand data that both addresses their needs and also meets the federal requirements mandated by ESSA.

# Accessing the DC School Report Card

### How many people are using the DC School Report Card?

A lot! In the first year, 60,000 different people used the DC School Report Card. In DC, demand is high for comparable school information. We were excited to see that users generally spend more than three minutes accessing multiple pages, which means that users are digging into the data. We use our website analytics to make annual improvements to the DC School Report Card.

## What information will I find on the DC School Report Card?

Parents and families, along with the broader DC community, expressed a desire for both academic and non-academic information, which is why each school's DC School Report Card includes over 150 data elements about the school such as information about parent and family engagement, extracurricular activities, teacher experience, attendance, safety and discipline, school program offerings, and more. In the chart below you can see which information is included in each section of the report card website. The DC School Report Card also includes the School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework, a system that includes multiple types of data and information for all groups of students in a school, and results in a 1 to 5 star rating for each school. This rating helps celebrate successes among schools, allows educators and policymakers focus resources on schools that need the most help to improve, and informs families and the community about how DC's public schools are doing.

| School Profile | STAR Framework | Academic Information | School Environment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shows basic information about the school, such as:<br><br>• Grades served<br>• School hours<br>• Principal name<br>• Message from the School<br>• STAR Rating<br>• Parent organization<br>• School demographics<br>• Programs and activities | Details of the School Transparency and Reporting Framework:<br><br>• The STAR Framework shares information about the performance of public schools in the District in multiple areas and highlights the performance of student groups in the school. | Detailed look at academic performance:<br><br>• Students at level 3+ and 4+ on PARCC<br>• Student growth on PARCC (ES/MS)<br>• SAT performance<br>• Participation and performance on AP and IB exams<br>• Graduation rate<br>• English proficiency for English learners | Factors that contribute to school environment:<br><br>• Daily attendance<br>• Chronic absenteeism<br>• Safety and discipline<br>• Re-enrollment<br>• Teacher experience level<br>• Health Staffing information |

The site also allows you to explore public schools in the District using an interactive mapping feature and search tool. You can search for schools with specific programs or attributes, sort by location, and compare side-by-side up to three schools of your choosing.

## Is the website available in languages other than English?

The DC School Report Card website is fully translated in Spanish. For speakers of other languages, including Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean and Vietnamese, OSSE provides a translated step-by-step user guide to guide families through the website. Visit our website at osse.dc.gov/dcschoolreportcard to view all of our translated materials.

## Some families at my school don't have regular access to a computer or internet. How else can they use the DC School Report Card?

The DC School Report Card website works on smartphones and includes all of the functional elements of the desktop site. In addition, each school has a printable, one-page profile that includes key information

about the school. These profiles are available in Spanish. OSSE works with partner organizations that serve families to ensure that there are places where families without internet or computer access can access the report card.

## Using the DC School Report Card

### How can teachers, principals and other educators use the DC School Report Card?

While the primary audience for the DC School Report Card is families, the report card is valuable for educators. The report card provides comparable information for all public schools, so teachers and school leaders can highlight what is working well at their school, or seek out other schools to learn from in particular areas of instruction, such as elementary mathematics, or education of students with disabilities. Educators can use the information in the School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework and the report card to inform their thinking and planning, and share what is working at their schools.

### Does the information on the DC School Report Card reflect the current school year, or the past school year?

The DC School Report Card is released annually based on what happened at schools in the prior school year. One important exception to this is the information included on the school profile, which reflects the current 2019-20 school year, including the address and website for the school, before and after care, parent organization information, principal name, and programs and extra-curricular activities at the school.

### What's new on the DC School Report Card this year?

OSSE is committed to improving the DC School Report Card in response to the needs of families. In response to the feedback we heard in 2018, we've made a number of changes. For one, we improved the overall display and navigation. We organize metrics by student group so a user can see, for example, students with disabilities are performing on all metrics in the STAR Framework. In the past, users would have to click on individual metrics. We also added:

- Additional explainer videos embedded into the site
- Trend data to compare 2018 and 2019 performance data
- School leader years of experience
- College enrollment metrics
- Restorative Justice and School Garden as program offerings
- DC Science Assessment results (available in December 2019)
- School Finance data (available in Spring 2020)

To make the DC School Report Card easier to use in conversations with educators, we developed a Discussion Guide. This discussion guide will help you understand the key metrics in the DC School Report Card, why they are important for families to know, and some questions to ask as you are exploring schools in the District or learning more about your school.

### How can I see how a school is serving a specific group of students?

One of the strengths of the STAR Framework is understanding how well a school is serving a specific group of students, such as African-American students or students who are at-risk. To learn more about this for your school, click on the "STAR Framework" tab on a school's report card page to pull up an overview of the school's performance with every student group with more than ten students in the school. By clicking on each student group, you can see how the school performed on each of the applicable metrics this year and last year. The STAR Framework measures how each student group is performing compared to similar students in DC. To explore even deeper, you can click on the "How are schools calculated for these metrics?" link.

## Understanding the STAR Framework

### What is the STAR Framework?

The School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework is the accountability framework for public schools in the District of Columbia that uses common measures to show school performance for all students. It is comprised of a range of data points from multiple data sources and gives families, community members, and educators a way to understand school performance on an apples-to-apples basis for all public schools, both DCPS and charter.

The STAR Framework uses multiple sources of data to measure school performance in the following areas:

- Academic Achievement: How students are performing on DC's state assessment for mathematics and English language arts, called the PARCC assessment, and SAT for high school students.
- Academic Growth: The STAR Framework includes two measures of academic growth on PARCC.
- English Language Proficiency: Growth of students who are English learners on the ACCESS for ELs assessment.
- Graduation Rate: The percentage of students graduating in four years and in five years
- School Environment: Multiple metrics, including how the school is reducing chronic absenteeism, re-enrollment in the same school from one year to the next, participation and performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests, and graduation from high school over any number of years.

Each school receives a STAR Rating (ranging from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest). This rating allows educators and policymakers to celebrate areas of strong progress and performance, focus resources on schools and student groups within schools that need it the most, and help families clearly understand the performance of schools across the District.

### How does the STAR Framework work?

The STAR Framework measures school outcomes across multiple areas, including both how a school is performing and how the school is growing and improving. Using academic and non-academic measures, schools earn points based on how well they are doing with their students as compared to all students across the city. Schools also earn points based on how well they serve students in the following student groups, by comparing these students' performance with students across the city within the same specific student groups:

- Students with Disabilities
- Students who are at-risk, defined as students who receive TANF or SNAP benefits, are under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), who are certified as homeless by their school, or who are over-age and under-credited in high school
- English Learners
- Each Racial/Ethnic group

These points are combined to form the STAR Rating. Each school receives a STAR Rating ranging from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest.

## Will all schools get a STAR Rating?

One of the exciting parts of the STAR Rating is that it is available for both DC Public Schools and public charter schools, unlike previous systems. However, some schools do not receive a STAR Rating because of their grade configuration. For example, schools that serve only pre-K students don't have enough data points that apply to the age ranges they serve to receive a rating on the STAR Framework. Schools serving adult students that provide high school equivalency credentials such as the GED will not receive a STAR Rating. Schools that are new also will not receive a STAR Rating. Each public school in the District will have a profile on the DC School Report Card website even if it does not have a STAR Rating.

## How much of the STAR Rating is based on test scores?

The STAR Framework takes into account that different types of schools need different types of measures to accurately capture school performance. For example, the high school framework, which includes graduation and other high school-only measures, is different than the elementary school framework, and therefore has a different percentage of points placed on PARCC and other assessments. For middle and elementary schools, 40 percent of the points in the STAR Rating are based on student growth in mathematics and English language arts (ELA), or how the school is helping students to improve. In addition, 30 percent of the points are from achievement on the PARCC, or how many students are approaching or on track for college and career readiness. In high school, academic achievement on DC's state assessment in math and ELA, and the SAT are 40 percent of the points.

However, education isn't all about test scores, so the STAR Framework also includes other measures, including school environment, the growth in English proficiency for English learner students, graduation rate, and access to rigorous and challenging coursework.

## What do the STAR Ratings mean?

The STAR Rating for a school provides an overall view of how that school is doing with all students across multiple data points. It serves as a starting point, giving families and communities a clear look into multiple elements of school performance without needing to review multiple websites.

Because the STAR Framework includes multiple types of data, two schools may get the same rating but have different reasons for getting there – for example, one school may have earned a 3-star rating due to strong growth on the PARCC, but lower student PARCC performance and attendance, and another school with the same overall 3-star rating may have strong PARCC performance overall but not see the same outcomes for students with disabilities or English learners as other students.

Families who want to go beyond the STAR Rating itself can use the STAR Framework section of the DC School Report Card for each school to understand more about how the STAR Rating is calculated. We encourage you to go beyond the rating itself, both to understand the details of the data and metrics included, and to learn more about aspects of the school not captured in the STAR Framework or on the DC School Report Card.

## I noticed that OSSE included two measures of growth in the STAR Framework. What does the Median Growth Percentile tell me about the growth at a school, and how is it different from Growth to Proficiency?

The two growth metrics included in the STAR Framework measure different types of growth. Median Growth Percentile is a relative measure, and shows which school schools in DC are doing a better job helping students to grow on state assessments, relative to others. Growth to Proficiency is an absolute growth measure, showing whether a school is helping students to reach proficiency on state assessments.

More specifically, Median Growth Percentile shows how much students in a particular school have grown relative to students who took PARCC across the country and who were academically similar to them in a prior year. If a school has helped a student grow more than students who scored similarly in the prior year, they will have a high Median Growth Percentile.

Growth to Proficiency, on the other hand, measures how much progress students are making towards meeting expectations on PARCC, a level 4. Strong performance on Growth to Proficiency means that students have made the progress they need to make in order to reach a level 4 or above within five years.

## Why didn't OSSE include a growth measure for high schools?

The STAR Framework and DC School Report Cards for elementary and middle schools include two growth measures that assess how students have progressed on PARCC. To understand why this isn't currently possible for high schools, it helps to know more about PARCC.

In DC, the PARCC assessment is given to students in grades 3-8, and once in high school, as federally required. In DC, students take the Geometry and English II PARCC assessments. Unlike in grades 3-8, these assessments are tied to a high school course, which students take at different times. For example, some students take Geometry in grade 9, most take it in grade 10, but some may also take it in grade 11 or 12. Therefore, students take different pathways between the eighth grade test and the one they take in high school. Further, DC is a small state, with not many students, meaning the number of individual data points related to testing is even more limited than it might be in a larger state.

These data limitations means that OSSE is not currently able to calculate a growth measure that is statistically valid and reliable. However, OSSE believes that growth is important for high schools, and is committed to continuing to explore ways to define and include high school growth metrics in the future.

## Why did our school's STAR Rating change from 2018 to 2019?

Because the STAR Framework includes multiple measures of a school's performance, a school's STAR rating can change for a number of reasons. For example, improved performance on student growth metrics can lead to an increase in the school's overall STAR Rating, whereas drops in attendance can

lead to a decrease in the school's overall STAR Rating. We encourage you to look at the "STAR Framework" tab on the school page to see how performance on each metrics has changed between the 2018 and 2019 DC School Report Card. We also encourage educators to discuss the STAR Framework. To help you do that, we created a discussion guide with key questions about each section of the report card.

### What led to the biggest changes in STAR Ratings this year in the city overall?

STAR Ratings across the city were stable between 2018 and 2019; 56% of schools retained their overall STAR Rating. Because the STAR Framework measures school performance across a number of different metrics, there are many potential reasons why an individual school's STAR rating could change. Broadly speaking, however, student growth was the biggest driver of change in STAR Ratings for elementary and middle schools. During the development of the STAR Framework, we heard many requests to prioritize student growth metrics and Academic Growth is 40% of the school's overall STAR Rating. For high schools, the biggest driver of change in 2019 was Graduation Rate, which is 11% of the overall STAR Rating.

OSSE is committed to providing robust analysis of our accountability system. For in-depth analysis, we encourage you to read our annual STAR Framework Brief.

### I work in a school that serves a population of students who have alternative educational needs. How are these types of schools included in the STAR Framework?

Providing different types of school options to meet the needs of young people is important, and OSSE wanted to make sure that the STAR Framework accounted for this special role. OSSE worked closely with the group of schools designated as "alternative" to devise a framework that met the unique needs of those schools and their students. OSSE believes that this system should ensure that alternative schools are held to a comparable level of rigorous standards as the traditional system.

Alternative schools include schools that serve students who have dropped out and are returning to school, or had difficulties in traditional school settings, may serve students who are older than the traditional high school student, or are schools specifically serving students with disabilities or other groups of students with special educational needs.

The STAR Framework for this group of schools reflects some of the same areas as the traditional STAR Framework, including academic achievement and growth, English language proficiency, and chronic absenteeism measures. However, the alternative STAR Framework also includes measures around secondary completion for students with disabilities receiving a high school completion certificate, successful 8th to 9th grade promotion for middle schools, how well the school re-engages students who have dropped out, and five-year graduation rate.

### What is chronic absenteeism? How is related to daily attendance?

Research backs up what educators and families know to be common sense: students must be in school to learn. If students miss more than 10 percent of their instructional time, they are considered "chronically absent," and are at a greater risk of not being well-prepared to advance to the next grade, and ultimately to continue to college and meaningful career pathways. The report card includes two measures that address chronic absenteeism: the percentage of students at the school who are not

chronically absent (in other words, who attend at least 90 percent of the time), and the school's growth in reducing chronic absenteeism. On the STAR Framework, the school receives points for the stronger of these two measures.

Average daily attendance (sometimes called in-seat attendance) is not the same as chronic absenteeism. While chronic absenteeism looks at each student's attendance, average daily attendance averages all of the students in the school over the entire school year. It is possible for a school to have high daily attendance, and still have an issue with chronic absenteeism or vice versa. Both types of attendance measures are important to consider.

### Does the STAR Framework mean that some schools will close? What about charter schools?
OSSE believes that by sharing information about school performance and investing resources, we can work with schools, educators, and communities to improve the quality of education across our city.

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires that all states, including DC, identify the schools that need the most help and support, which OSSE has defined as the bottom 5 percent of schools on the STAR Framework. For these schools, OSSE is investing $11 million over three years to support school improvement, approximately $1 million per school. Schools must write plans for how they will work to improve, and must involve families at the school and the community in the development of those plans. If after three years (with an optional additional year for schools who are showing some improvement), the identified schools have not made meaningful improvement, OSSE will ask for community input on a plan to help the school. School closure is not named in either the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, or in the plan for school improvement that OSSE submitted to the US Department of Education.

DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) is the charter school authorizer for all public charter schools in the District, and makes decisions about reviewing, renewing and revoking charters for public charter schools, and DC's ESSA plan does not change PCSB's oversight role or authority.

## Understanding Teacher, School Leader, and Health Staff Data

### What does the teacher experience level included on the DC School Report Card mean? Why do you only show the percentage of teachers certified and in-field at certain schools?
OSSE heard from families that they wanted more information about the teachers working in their child's school. Based on this feedback, OSSE was able to add years of teacher experience, which reports the percentages of teachers at the school who have been teaching for 1 year or less, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, or more than 10 years. While this is not a measure of how long those teachers have been at that particular school (often called teacher retention), it does give families a look into the experience level and length of the professional career of the school's teachers.

While research has shown that how many years a teacher has been in the classroom matters – especially for teachers at the beginning of their careers – families should always consider the interactions and experiences they have had with their child's teacher.

In the District of Columbia, teachers at public charter schools are not required to be certified or in-field in order to teach per DC Code. The DC School Report Card therefore only provides this information for DC Public Schools.

## Why does the total percentage of school leader experience not total 100%?

OSSE collected data on number of school leaders and their years of experience for the first time from schools and LEAs during the 2018-19 school year. School leaders include more than just the principal or head of school. The full definition is: "Staff members who the LEA reported as the school leader, either in their federal role (for federal reporting) or LEA-given title. School leaders are staff members whose activities are concerned with directing and managing the operation of a particular school. Principals, assistant principals, and persons who supervise school operations, assign duties to staff members, supervise and maintain the records of the school, and coordinate school instructional activities with those of the education agency, including department chairpersons."

In some cases, schools and LEAs provided years of experience for only some of the school leaders and in other cases, years of experience was not reported to OSSE for any of the school leaders. The graph represents the years of experience provided by the school/LEA out of the total number of school leaders. If years of experience was not provided for all school leaders, the sum of the percentages will not equal 100%.

This is a new item on the DC School Report Card in 2019 and over sixty percent of the school leaders in DC, as reported to OSSE and verified by LEAs, do not have a number of years of experience. We have highlighted this with LEAs and school leaders as well and hope that more schools and LEAs will provide this information during the data collection for the 2020 report card.

## Why does my school not have any information for teacher years of experience?

OSSE collects data on number of teachers and their years of experience as required for federal reporting. We report federally the number of inexperienced teachers, meaning those with less than one full year of experience, but in response to requests from families to provide more information about teacher experience we request that schools provide the actual years of experience for teacher and school leader. The graph represents the years of experience provided by the school/LEA out of the total number of teachers at the school. If years of experience was not provided for all teaching staff, the sum of the percentages will not equal 100%.

## Will OSSE consider adding teacher retention to the DC School Report Card?

OSSE has heard significant interest in having more information about teacher retention, teacher tenure, and other teacher information. To date, OSSE has not collected detailed information at the individual teacher level that can be included on the report card for all public schools. OSSE is considering ways to meet the community's interest in more information about teachers, while balancing the burden of collecting and verifying additional data on school staff.

## How does OSSE collect the data on the health staff at each school?

This information comes from the Healthy Schools Act School Health Profiles. These Profiles are completed annually by each public school in the District. The information included on the DC School Report Card is from the prior school year (so, for the report cards released in 2019, the information is from the 2018-19 school year).

In DC, there are several health staffing initiatives managed by city government, with decisions about where to assign staff made by those agencies, not the schools themselves. For example, the DC Department of Health administers the school health services program, which provides school nurses, where the Department of Behavioral Health provides mental health services in a number of schools. Schools themselves may also choose to hire additional health staffing. All of these staff are reflected on the DC School Report Card.

## School Improvement

### What are the school improvement designations, and what does it mean for my school if it's labeled Comprehensive or Targeted Support?

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires DC, along with all other states, to identify the bottom 5 percent of schools on the STAR Framework for comprehensive support (called Comprehensive Support 1). OSSE must also identify high schools where both the four and five year graduation rates are lower than 67 percent (or Comprehensive Support 2).

Targeted Support schools, on the other hand, are those schools that have a gap between two groups of students, where one specific group is performing below the level of the students in Comprehensive Support 1 schools.

For schools identified in the bottom 5 percent in 2018, OSSE is investing $11 million over three years to support school improvement, approximately $1 million per school. To receive funding, schools were required to write plans for how they will work to improve, and must involve families at the school and the community in the development of those plans. School plans are available on OSSE's Investment in Schools webpage.

### What do schools who are identified as Comprehensive Support have to do?

Each school identified for Comprehensive Support in 2018 was eligible for an Investing in Schools grant from OSSE – up to $1 million per school over three years. To receive the grant funding, the school was required to complete a grant application that includes a plan for school improvement.

Starting in the 2018-19 school year, OSSE began streamlining the process of creating school plans. The same plan template can be used to meet federal requirements for having a designation as a Comprehensive Support school, Title I Part A schoolwide, and Investment in Schools grant funding. OSSE wants to ensure that schools and LEAs are planning to make changes that get to the core of school operations, while still allowing for school flexibility and autonomy. School improvement plans will also have to address three key areas – People, Instruction, and Structure – known to help schools improve, so they can work to improve the areas that led to the school's initial designation.

Unlike previous school improvement grants, OSSE's Investment in Schools strategy is to focus larger amounts of funding ($1 million per school over three years) in a smaller number of schools. By focusing resources and providing LEAs and schools time and flexibility, OSSE is supporting implementation of meaningful multi-year strategies that maximize the impact of the school improvement funds.

How is OSSE going to help school leaders and educators in communicating about the DC School Report Card and STAR Framework to their families and communities?

One of our biggest goals is to ensure that families and communities know about the new website and how to use it. In building the DC School Report Card, we heard the voices of over 4,000 family members, educators and community members, and we've continued to gather feedback and make changes that are reflected in the 2019 report card. We will continue to engage with ANCs, parent teacher associations, ward-based education councils, advocates, and other groups to make sure we spread the word.

We have put together a toolkit of resources for families, including a new Discussion Guide to help parents discuss the DC School Report Card with educators.

We have also put together materials specifically for school leaders and educators, including this Frequently Asked Questions document, a template letter for families about the DC School Report Card, and a template PowerPoint deck for school leaders to use with families.

You can find all of our up-to-date materials on our website at osse.dc.gov/dcschoolreportcard.

## Contact Us

When will the new DC School Report Card be available?

The DC School Report Card will launch in late November or early December every year at DCSchoolReportCard.org. Get the most up-to-date information by visiting our website and signing up for email alerts. You can also email DCSchoolReportCard@dc.gov.

How do I suggest additions to the DC School Report Card, or provide other feedback?

We would love to hear from you. If you have questions or suggestions, please email us at DCSchoolReportCard@dc.gov. We want to continue to make the DC School Report Card better and more useful for families, educators, and the community, and will consider feedback for improvements in future years.

Where can I get more information?

To learn more about the DC School Report Card, visit: osse.dc.gov/dcschoolreportcard.
Want to sign up for updates or still have questions? Email us at DCSchoolReportCard@dc.gov.