



OFFICE OF THE STATE
SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

REQUEST FOR EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) WAIVER

April 2026



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April 30, 2026

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

This letter serves as a formal request for a waiver for Washington, DC's state education agency (SEA), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), from specific statutory and regulatory requirements pursuant to Section 8401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), of statewide accountability and school identification requirements for the 2026-27 school year, as student-level growth data will not be available because of an update to the design of the statewide assessments. Specifically, OSSE is requesting a temporary one-year waiver for the 2026-27 school year from the following statutory requirements in ESSA:

- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(C) to meaningfully differentiate, on an annual basis, all public schools;
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(D) and Section 1111(d)(2)(C) to identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement; and
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(IV) to include the system for meaningful differentiation for all public schools on the annual state report card.

Washington, DC has the most robust system of school choice in the country. OSSE undergirds this system by making accurate and actionable school performance data available to all stakeholders, including families, who use this data to choose schools that will best serve their needs. We also have a deep history and commitment to local engagement. This temporary waiver request reflects our commitment to school choice and engagement. Our request is not a retreat away from the important work of measuring school quality and holding ourselves and our systems accountable for ensuring that every student in the District of Columbia is attending an excellent school that is preparing them to excel at college, in their career, and in their community. Rather, this temporary waiver is an acknowledgement that when measuring school quality, the measuring stick we use matters.

The District’s measuring stick—its accountability formulas outlined in its ESSA State Plan—are the result of years of research and community input. And, only if our measuring stick is consistent over time can the District of Columbia do more to hold itself and systems accountable. Given the District of Columbia’s transition to a new statewide assessment in the 2026-27 school year, OSSE can only truly do this by pausing statewide accountability scores and school designations temporarily for one year with this waiver—and then resuming calculation of these scores and school designations following the 2027-28 school year when growth scores can be calculated with two years of the District’s new statewide assessments.

The District is requesting this temporary waiver because it believes in the importance of accountability and the power of high-quality and actionable data—and to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data that empowers them to make school enrollment choices. OSSE heard this same rationale and feedback from stakeholders during the public comment period held for this temporary waiver—every comment we received was in support. In addition, the most frequently raised themes were:

- Student growth is an essential component of DC’s accountability system;
- The temporary waiver request preserves stability, fairness, and continuity; and
- The temporary waiver request prevents destabilizing, one-year methodological shifts.

The following sections represent the District of Columbia’s formal waiver request submission. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your commitment to holding high expectations for all schools.

Please contact Kelley Scholl, Assistant Superintendent of Data, Assessment & Research, (Kelley.Scholl@dc.gov) if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.

State Superintendent

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Executive Summary

The District of Columbia serves approximately 100,000 public school students, of which 48 percent are enrolled in public charter schools and 52 percent are enrolled in traditional public school system. Informed by engagement with, and support from, the charter and traditional public school local educational agencies (LEA) in the jurisdiction, the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) seeks the U.S. Secretary of Education's consideration of a temporary one-year waiver request from specific statutory and regulatory requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), on statewide accountability and school identification. The waiver is needed for a period of one-year as the District transitions to a new statewide assessment to ensure that the student growth metrics used in its accountability system are valid and consistent measures of student performance and school quality.

OSSE requests a temporary one-year waiver for the 2026-27 school year from the following ESSA requirements:

- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(C) to meaningfully differentiate, on an annual basis, all public schools;
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(D) and Section 1111(d)(2)(C) to identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement; and
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(IV) to include the system for meaningful differentiation for all public schools on the annual state report card.

Approval of this temporary waiver request by the U.S. Department of Education will grant the District of Columbia local authority to:

- Ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data that empowers them to make school enrollment choices;
- Protect the long-term comparability and validity of its statewide accountability system;
- Provide schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) continuity within the District of Columbia's current accountability system;
- Uphold local commitments made in the District of Columbia's [Amended ESSA State Plan](#) to schools and LEA leaders, as well as local stakeholders, on the importance of student growth as a measure that more accurately reflects a school's impact;
- Ensure school designations and improvement activities for schools designated in the 2023-24 school year continue as planned on the current three-year cycle; and
- Ensure school designations and improvement activities for the next cohort of designated schools does not impede the District of Columbia's school improvement progression towards more rigorous interventions.

Background

Updating the District of Columbia's Statewide English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Statewide Assessments

The District of Columbia is deeply committed to high quality statewide assessments that produce valid, reliable, and comparable results for families, teachers, and other education stakeholders. OSSE uses the results of these assessments to inform educational investments, policies, and programming. The District of Columbia's general statewide assessment system includes assessments in ELA, math, and science. Together, these assessments create a comprehensive system that provides important information to schools, LEAs, and local stakeholders on students' progress and proficiency relative to the District of Columbia's state educational standards.

Over the past two years, OSSE has solicited feedback from LEA stakeholders via surveys and focus groups on the future of the District of Columbia's assessment system. OSSE has heard what is working and what changes would make the statewide assessments more meaningful for educators and students. In response to this feedback and the changing national assessment landscape, the District of Columbia has joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) to update the design and content of the District of Columbia's ELA and math assessments. These updated assessments will launch in the 2026-27 school year, with the first administration in spring 2027.

Ensuring the Accuracy and Intention of the District of Columbia's School Accountability Scores

Pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(C), the District of Columbia is federally required to calculate a school accountability score that measures a school's performance relative to all public schools in the District. These accountability scores are used for OSSE's school designation process (pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(D) and Section 1111(d)(2)(C)) and displayed on the annual state report card (pursuant to Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(IV)), known as the DC School Report Card. As required by the Department, the [DC School Report Card](#) reports a multitude of data on the District of Columbia's public schools—with only a subset of those metrics used to calculate a school's accountability score.

After an extensive local engagement process in the spring of 2022, the District of Columbia updated and amended its ESSA State Plan. Under the District of Columbia's [Amended ESSA State Plan](#), the school accountability score increased the weight and emphasis on student growth to represent 50 percent of an elementary or middle school's accountability score, as well as ensured the inclusion of a student growth metric for high schools.

These student growth metrics are a key indicator of school quality and a metric that the District of Columbia State Board of Education, families, LEA and school leaders, and policymakers advocated for extensively during the ESSA State Plan amendment process. Student growth measures provide a more comprehensive indicator of school quality than proficiency rates alone because they capture how much students learn over time, rather than reflecting performance at a single point that is heavily influenced by students' prior academic experiences. By showing

whether students are making meaningful academic progress year over year, growth data offers actionable information for educators, families, and local policymakers that proficiency levels alone cannot provide. For these reasons, growth is widely recognized as a critical component of school accountability systems designed to support continuous improvement and more accurately reflect school effectiveness. Accordingly, the District of Columbia has placed a significant emphasis on these student growth metrics in its accountability system.

The student growth metrics that are part of the District of Columbia’s overall school accountability score measure growth in student performance on statewide assessments from year to year. The metrics compare ELA and math assessment data from the accountability year and the previous school year. Student growth metrics require at least two years of data for each student. The District of Columbia’s accountability system includes both a Median Growth Percentile that measures a school’s median student growth in comparison to other schools, as well as a Growth to Proficiency metric that measures whether a student has made sufficient growth towards proficiency on assessments for ELA and math.

With the first administration of the District of Columbia’s updated ELA and math assessments in the 2026-27 school year, OSSE will be unable to calculate student growth metrics due to the absence of comparable ELA and math assessment data from the previous 2025-26 school year. While statewide assessments in 2025-26 and 2026-27 will measure mastery of the same ELA and math standards, they will do so using different test blueprints, question types, and accessibility features; this means that any changes in student performance cannot be solely attributable to the student’s actual mastery of the standards. The absence of growth metrics means that the District of Columbia’s accountability system would not include 50 out of 100 points in its elementary and middle school framework, and 12.5 out of 100 points in its high school framework. Reporting on either inaccurate growth measures or no growth measures at all would result in presenting misleading information to the public on the performance of the District of Columbia’s public schools.

[Implementing the District of Columbia’s New School Improvement Framework](#)

In September 2024, OSSE launched a new school improvement framework, which lays out an updated theory of change for school improvement efforts in the District of Columbia. Under this new framework, OSSE supports its designated lowest performing five percent of schools (pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(D)) by providing: clear expectations, access to Section 1003 funding, planning, supports, aligned resources, and strong partnerships, so that schools implement strong improvement plans focused on accelerating learning outcomes for all students.

This new framework is grounded in five key domains that represent national best practices related to school improvement, adapted for the unique local context of the District of Columbia: (1) transformational leadership, (2) talent development, (3) instructional excellence, (4) strong school climate, and (5) organizational health. The framework is centered on student outcomes and a guiding principle of continuous improvement—and is the framework through which the

District of Columbia meets the federal requirements (pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(D)) to designate the lowest performing five percent of schools for improvement and additional support.

In December 2024, OSSE designated its first cohort of school improvement schools under its new framework. These schools entered a three-year designation cycle that runs through the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 school years. OSSE is next scheduled to make designations in the 2026-27 school year—the same year that the District will launch its updated ELA and math assessments. Making determinations about whether schools should enter or exit designation status without an accurate measure of student growth is not aligned with OSSE and the Department’s goal of accelerating student achievement.

Rationale for Temporary Waiver Request

OSSE values the use of comparable accountability score data and recognizes how important these comparable data are to families, LEA leaders, District of Columbia educators, and local stakeholders. The District of Columbia’s statewide assessment systems provide critical information on academic performance across the city—and provides the foundation for calculating the two student growth metrics in the District of Columbia’s accountability system.

The District of Columbia has been using an assessment designed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) in ELA and math since 2015. In school year 2026-27 the District will update its ELA and math assessment to a Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)-designed assessment. OSSE will not be able to calculate valid and reliable measures of student growth due to changes in test blueprints, question types, and accessibility features in the first year of the new assessment administration.

Since October 2025, OSSE has been engaging locally in a process with LEA leaders and the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB), the sole authorizer of all charter schools in the District, to explore new options for the District of Columbia’s accountability system. However, the other options that the District of Columbia has explored do not produce outcomes in the best interests of the District of Columbia’s schools, LEAs, and local communities.

For example, OSSE considered moving school improvement designations forward by one year from December 2027 to December 2026. This option would use data from the current 2025-26 school year to calculate comparable school accountability scores (inclusive of growth metrics). However, after engaging with LEAs and schools, OSSE is concerned of the disruption to our educational ecosystem that would be caused by informing LEAs and schools more than halfway through the current 2025-26 school year, and just as many are starting to administer state assessments¹, that they could be designated for school improvement based on student achievement this 2025-26 school year. Additionally, moving designations forward by one year is disruptive and would fail to honor the District of Columbia’s commitments to currently

¹ The statewide assessment window for the 2025-26 school year is April 6 – May 22, 2026.

designated schools who are in the middle of a three-year school improvement cycle that started in the 2023-24 school year. OSSE has repeatedly heard from schools in improvement status that they appreciate OSSE's full commitment to implementing its new school improvement framework, which includes monitoring of each school in improvement status three times per year. OSSE is excited to continue implementing this framework and believes that providing currently-designated schools with two years of supports, rather than the promised three, would undercut the strong relationships OSSE is building with schools designated for the most significant improvements and—ultimately—disrupt their efforts to accelerate student learning.

No other tool can take the place of the District of Columbia's accountability system as designed and approved in the District's Amended ESSA State Plan. For that reason, protecting the long-term comparability and validity of the statewide accountability system, as well as correctly identifying the schools that require the most support for families, are top priorities in the District of Columbia. The approval of this temporary one-year waiver for the 2026-27 school year provides the District of Columbia as much continuity as possible with its current accountability system, as well as stability for its school improvement process and those schools that have been identified.

U.S. Department of Education Waiver Request Components

A. Identify and describe the Federal programs affected by the requested waiver.

The temporary waiver request will affect Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Part A, Improving the Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies, Subpart I, Basic Program Requirements.

B. Describe which Federal statutory or regulatory requirements are to be waived.

The District of Columbia is seeking a temporary one-year waiver for the 2026-27 school year of the following statutory requirements:

- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(C) to meaningfully differentiate, on an annual basis, all public schools;
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(c)(4)(D) and Section 1111(d)(2)(C) to identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement; and
- Statewide requirements in Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(IV) to include the system for meaningful differentiation for all public schools on the annual state report card.

C. Describe how the waiving of such requirements will advance student academic achievement.

OSSE is committed to working with LEAs, schools, and the community to advance student academic achievement. OSSE believes it is essential to accurately measure and report on student mastery of academic standards and is deeply committed to its statewide testing program. There will be no lapse in the administration and reporting of a statewide assessment in the District of Columbia with the change in statewide assessments. OSSE is transitioning to updated ELA and math assessments because the content, test design, and instructional tools provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will improve OSSE's ability to measure student achievement and to support educators in using assessments to accelerate academic achievement.

With OSSE's new school improvement framework, OSSE has built capacity and momentum around school improvement. OSSE has a strong team of school improvement specialists and leaders to drive the District of Columbia's understanding of the causes of school underperformance, develop and support schools and LEAs in identifying strategies for addressing these causes, and helping schools take the necessary steps towards exiting their designation status. The District of Columbia has created the necessary foundation for its next steps towards implementing more rigorous interventions for persistently low-performing schools; and the 2026-27 school year was slated to be a key opportunity for the District of Columbia to continue to work with schools re-designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) towards more rigorous interventions. However, without growth metrics included in the 2026-27 accountability scores, the bottom five percent of schools (as measured by the accountability scores) would likely be significantly different than those currently designated and those who would be designated if the accountability score included growth metrics. This would create instability in the District of Columbia's accountability system and undermine public confidence in school accountability.

Without this temporary waiver for the 2026-27 school year, OSSE believes that the District of Columbia's school improvement activities and process would be significantly impeded—and the trajectory of persistently underperforming schools would be disrupted, resulting in less accountability for these schools.

D. Describe the methods the State educational agency, local education agency, school, or Indian tribe will use to monitor and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the plan.

In the absence of calculating school accountability scores and making school improvement designations for the 2026-27 school year, OSSE will ensure the continued monitoring and regular evaluation of currently identified schools by:

- Requiring a one-year extension (to conclude at the end of the 2027-28 school year) to schools currently identified for comprehensive, targeted, or additional targeted support and improvement. Schools designated as Comprehensive Support and Improvement – Low Graduation Rate (CSI-Grad) that no longer have graduation rates below 67 percent would be able to exit their status at the end of the 2026-27 school year.
- Requiring these schools to submit a one-year addendum to their previously approved school improvement plan to ensure that they see a continuation of school improvement activities, support, and Section 1003 funding from OSSE during the 2027-28 school year.
- Providing regular on-site and virtual support, monitoring, and technical assistance to LEAs and schools currently identified to ensure that they have the support and guidance to move towards exiting school improvement status after the 2027-28 school year.
- Ensuring that the District of Columbia’s annual state report card, known as the [DC School Report Card](#), continues to be published with annual data related to state, LEA, and school performance on all metrics (except student growth) described in the District’s Amended ESSA State Plan. OSSE is committed to maintaining its high level of data transparency and reporting standards, as required under Section 1111(h).
- Communicating with LEAs, schools, and local stakeholders that the District of Columbia will resume the calculation of school accountability scores with student achievement and growth data from the 2027-28 school year, as well as make associated school designations based off of those scores for a new three-year designation cycle.
- Consistent with current practice, OSSE will release student achievement results from the new statewide assessment to families, schools, and the public in the first year of test administration.

E. Describe how schools will continue to provide assistance to the same populations served by programs for which waivers are requested and, if the waiver relates to the provisions of subsections (b) or (h) of section 1111, describe how the State educational agency, local educational agency, school, or Indian tribe will maintain or improve transparency in reporting to parents and the public on student achievement and school performance, including the achievement of the subgroups of students identified in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi).

The methods outlined in Section E will be applied to all schools uniformly regardless of the population they serve.

OSSE is committed to maintaining a high level of data transparency and reporting standards on the District of Columbia’s annual state report card, known as the [DC School Report Card](#). The DC School Report Card will be published with historical and annual data from the 2026-27 school

year pursuant to the District’s Amended ESSA State Plan on all approved metrics (except those related to student growth (i.e., Median Growth Percentile and Growth to Proficiency) for the 2026-27 school year).

Pursuant to Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(V), for the 2026-27 school year, OSSE will continue to name all public schools currently identified for comprehensive support and improvement or implementing targeted support and improvement plans (as outlined above related to the one-year extension). For the 2027-28 school year, the DC School Report Card will return to full and complete reporting requirements under Section 1111(h).

Additionally, OSSE will continue to ensure that students and families in the District of Columbia have robust access to its annual common application and public-school choice lottery system, known as [My School DC](#). Through this public-school choice process, OSSE hosts an annual public-school fair, known as [EdFEST](#), that gives attendees the opportunity to learn about the variety of schools available in the District of Columbia.

Note: OSSE is not seeking a waiver related to Section 1111(b) regarding challenging academic standards and academic assessments.

F. Public comment (only information directly related to the waiver request).

Section 8401(b)(3)(A) requires OSSE to: (1) provide the public and any interested local education agency in the State with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment and provide input on the request to the extent that the request impacts the local educational agency; (2) submit the comment and input to the Secretary, with a description of how the State addressed the comments and input; and (3) provide notice and a reasonable time to comment to the public and local educational agencies in the manner in which the applying agency customarily provides similar notice and opportunity to comment to the public.

OSSE solicited public input on our waiver request from March 3, 2026, through March 31, 2026. The draft waiver was posted on [OSSE’s website](#) on March 3, 2026, and the public was invited to share feedback through email, mail, or hand delivery. Stakeholders were notified of the opportunity to participate in the public comment window through weekly newsletters, the March 13, 2026 DC Register (the District’s public bulletin for all government action), and multiple meetings with LEA leaders and staff. meeting with LEA leaders.

OSSE received 25 formal public comment letters, respondents included: 1) 31 LEAs, accounting for 80 percent or over 85,000 public-school students in the District across both public charter schools and DC Public Schools (DCPS)); 2) the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), DC’s sole charter authorizing entity; and 3) the DC Charter School Alliance, a charter school advocacy group. All 25 of the public comment letters were supportive of OSSE’s temporary waiver request. . All public comment letters have been attached to this request for the Department’s review.

A brief summary of the public comment received is below:

- Commenters consistently argue that **student growth is an essential component of the District of Columbia’s accountability system** that local stakeholders advocated for during the initial ESSA State Plan process, and that *“producing accountability scores without including student growth would limit the system’s ability to accurately reflect student progress.”*
- Commenters emphasize that the temporary waiver **preserves stability, fairness, and continuity during the assessment transition**, ensuring that *“families and communities continue to have access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data.”*
- Commenters highlight that the temporary waiver will **prevent destabilizing, one-year methodological shifts** during the transition to new statewide assessments, noting the *“negative impact on the integrity of the system as a valid and consistent measure”* while growth data is unavailable.

Appendix: Public Comment Letters

Consistent with 20 U.S.C. § 7861 ("[Waivers of statutory and regulatory requirements](#)"), OSSE made its [ESSA Accountability Waiver](#) request public for notice and comment from March 3 – March 31, 2026; the public comment period was 29 days. Comments could be emailed to OSSE.ESSA@dc.gov with the subject line “ESSA Waiver Public Comment” or by mail or hand delivery to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Attn: Alexander Jue re: ESSA Waiver Public Comment, 1050 First St. NE, Third Floor, Washington, DC 20002.

Below is a list of the 46 organizations that submitted or signed onto a public comment letter. The list is followed by copies of the 25 public comment letters.

	Organization	Name(s)	Date Submitted	Indication of Support
1	DC Prep PCS	Cassie Pergament, Chief Program Officer Maura Englender, Chief Schools Officer Laura Maestas, Chief Executive Officer	Sunday, March 8, 2026	Supportive
2	Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS	Linda McKay, Founder and Executive Director	Monday, March 16, 2026	Supportive
3	Global Citizens PCS	Natalie Smith, Founder and CEO	Monday, March 23, 2026	Supportive
4	Capital City PCS	Laina Cox, Head of School	Wednesday, March 25, 2026	Supportive
5	Achievement Prep PCS	Sarah Lewis, Executive Director	Wednesday, March 25, 2026	Supportive
6	DC International School	Michael Rosskamm, Executive Director	Thursday, March 26, 2026	Supportive
7	Sojourner Truth Montessori PCS	Justin Lessek, Teacher and Executive Director	Friday, March 27, 2026	Supportive
8	Thurgood Marshall Academy PCHS	Raymond Weeden, Executive Director	Sunday, March 29, 2026	Supportive
9	Ingenuity Prep PCS	Will Stoetzer, CEO	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
10	Cesar Chavez PCS for Public Policy	Sanjay K. Mitchell, Executive Director	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
11	Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS	Shalini Shybut, Executive Director	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
12	AppleTree Early Learning PCS	Jack McCarthy, Board Chair	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
13	Center City PCS	Russ Williams, President and CEO	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
14	Lee Montessori PCS	Simon Rodberg, Executive Director	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
15	EdTrust (+ 12 undersigned organizations) - All4Ed - Center for Strong Public Schools - DC Public Education Fund - Education Forward DC - ElectED DC - EmpowerK12 - Federal City Council - National Center for Learning Disabilities	Nicholas Munyan-Penney, Assistant Director of P 12 Policy	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive

	- National Parents Union - PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) - Thurgood Marshall Academy PCHS - UnidosUS			
16	IDEA PCS	Brian Rahaman, CEO	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
17	Paul PCS	Tracy White, CEO	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
18	Washington Leadership Academy	Eric Collazo, Executive Director	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
19	DC Charter School Alliance	Anne Herr, Senior Director of School Development and Accountability	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
20	KIPP DC PCS	Dora Taylor-Lowe, Chief External Affairs Officer	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
21	Kingsman Academy PCS	Kennesha Kelly, Co-founder and Executive Director	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
22	Richard Wright PCS	Marco Clark, Founder and CEO	Monday, March 30, 2026	Supportive
23	Adult-serving public charter schools - YouthBuild DC PCS - Carlos Rosario School - The Family Place PCS - The Next Step PCS - Goodwill Excel Center Adult Charter School - Briya PCS - See Forever Foundation & Maya Angelou PCS - LAYC Career Academy - Community College Preparatory Adult PCS - Academy of Hope Adult PCS	Claire Libert, Head of School, YouthBuild DC PCS Allison R. Kokkoros, CEO, Carlos Rosario School Haley Wiggins, Executive Director, The Family Place PCS Vivian Robledo, Executive Director, The Next Step PCS Catherine Meloy, President and CEO, Goodwill Excel Center Adult Charter School Christie McKay, Executive Director, Briya PCS Clarisse Mendoza Davis, CEO, See Forever Foundation & Maya Angelou PCS Nicole Hanrahan, Co-Founder & Executive Director, LAYC Career Academy Gerald Konohia, CEO, Community College Preparatory Adult PCS Tiffany Godbout, Interim CEO/Chief Operating Officer, Academy of Hope Adult PCS	Tuesday, March 31, 2026	Supportive
24	DC Public Schools	Lewis Ferebee, Chancellor	Tuesday, March 31, 2026	Supportive
25	DC Public Charter School Board	Michelle Walker-Davis, Executive Director	Tuesday, March 31, 2026	Supportive

March 8, 2026

Dear OSSE Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the District's one-year ESSA accountability waiver request as DC transitions to a new statewide assessment.

DC Prep strongly supports OSSE's request for a one-year waiver from calculating accountability scores and making school improvement designations in 2027. During a transition to a new assessment, maintaining the integrity and credibility of the accountability system is critical. Producing accountability scores without including student growth would limit the system's ability to accurately reflect student progress and school performance.

We appreciate OSSE's thoughtful approach to ensuring that the accountability system remains a valid and consistent measure of student outcomes during this transition. Allowing time for the new assessment to generate reliable growth data will better position the District to make fair and meaningful accountability determinations in future years.

Thank you for your leadership and transparency in engaging stakeholders throughout this process. We appreciate the opportunity to share our support for this waiver request.

In partnership,

Cassie Pergament, Chief Program Officer
Maura Englender, Chief Schools Officer
Laura Maestas, Chief Executive Officer

Cassie Pergament

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March 16, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy Public Charter School, I am writing to express our support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver of certain requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the calculation of accountability scores and school designations for 2027.

As the District prepares to transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts and mathematics during the 2026–27 school year, several key components of the current accountability framework—particularly student growth measures—will not be available for that year. Without these measures, accountability ratings would rely primarily on proficiency results from the CAPE assessment, which could create an incomplete picture of school performance and limit the comparability of results with prior years.

Because student growth has been an essential element of the District's accountability system, the temporary absence of this metric during the transition year presents a challenge for maintaining a balanced and reliable evaluation of school performance. We agree with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's rationale that a temporary waiver is necessary to preserve the integrity and consistency of the accountability framework while the District transitions to the new assessments.

Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) World School serving students from PreK3 through middle school in the Brookland community of Washington, DC. Our mission is to provide a rigorous, inquiry-based education that prepares students to be thoughtful, knowledgeable, and internationally minded learners who are ready to succeed in college, career, and life.

For our school and others across the District, the proposed waiver would help ensure continuity in the accountability system during this transition period. It would allow schools to remain focused on sustained improvement rather than adjusting to a temporary shift in methodology that could alter how school performance is interpreted.

In addition, the waiver would help ensure that the group of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support in the next cycle is determined using a framework consistent with prior years. This continuity is essential for maintaining fairness in the identification process and ensuring that improvement efforts remain focused on the schools most in need of support.

The waiver would also maintain stable expectations for schools that are currently working to exit improvement status, preventing the introduction of new or inconsistent criteria during the transition to the new assessments.

Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS strongly supports this one-year waiver request and appreciates OSSE's thoughtful approach to maintaining a fair, transparent, and reliable accountability system. Ensuring that families and communities continue to have access to accurate and meaningful information about school performance is essential, and this waiver will help preserve that commitment during the assessment transition.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Linda McKay

Linda McKay, Ed.D.
Founder and Executive Director
Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS



March 23, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Global Citizens Public Charter School, I am writing to express our strong support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver of select *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* requirements from the U.S. Department of Education to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in the 2026–27 school year will make it infeasible to calculate certain metrics that are central to the statewide accountability system. Proceeding without this waiver would undermine the integrity of the system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It would also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement efforts and create uncertainty for schools identified for support in 2024.

We believe that student growth remains a critical indicator of school quality. This waiver will help ensure that DC's accountability system continues to reflect a shared and stable understanding of school performance during this transition period.

Global Citizens Public Charter School fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for pursuing this waiver.

Global Citizens Public Charter School is a dual language school serving students east of the Anacostia River, with a focus on Spanish and Mandarin immersion, social justice, and whole child wellness. We are committed to providing equitable access to high-quality, globally focused education and to ensuring that all students develop the academic and social-emotional skills needed to thrive.

We also recognize the direct relevance of this waiver for our community:

- The waiver would allow our school to maintain focus on established accountability metrics, avoiding a destabilizing shift in how underperforming schools are identified and supported.



- It would ensure continuity in the identification of schools for improvement, rather than introducing a fundamentally different set of schools based on new and untested metrics.
- It would enable OSSE to remain focused on supporting the schools most in need, rather than redirecting efforts based on inconsistent data.
- It would prevent changes to exit criteria for schools currently designated for improvement under ESSA.

For these reasons, Global Citizens Public Charter School fully supports this one-year waiver request, as well as OSSE’s thoughtful and inclusive approach to ensuring that families and communities continue to have access to accurate, timely, and consistent information about school performance. Maintaining a stable and transparent accountability system is essential to upholding the commitments made to DC students and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Natalie Smith", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Natalie Smith
Founder + CEO | Head of School

March 25, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Achievement Prep, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Achievement Prep fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver. Achievement Prep is a public charter school in Washington, D.C., serving over 400 Pre-K3 through 7th grade scholars in Ward 8—primarily Black and Brown students from historically underserved communities—and is dedicated to preparing them for academic excellence, leadership, and lifelong success. Granting a one-year ESSA accountability waiver would allow Achievement Prep to continue building on the stable, state-aligned metrics in place since 2022, avoiding disruptive methodological shifts that could divert focus from instruction, student growth, and the sustained progress our scholars and educators are working to achieve.

Achievement Prep fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE’s thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Lewis
Executive Director
Achievement Prep | Network Office
908 Wahler Place SE
Washington, DC 20032
(W) (202) 562-1307





March 25, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Capital City PCS, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality. This waiver would allow our school to maintain our focus on the accountability metrics that have been part of the state system since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and potentially requiring schools to adjust their instructional strategies.

We fully agree with OSSE's rationale for the waiver. We are an EL Education school serving over 1,000 students in PK3-12th grade. Our mission is to *"enable a diverse group of students to meet high expectations, develop critical thinking and creativity, achieve a deep understanding of complex subjects, and foster a love of learning, community, and character."* We use our EL Education to provide a rigorous, joyful, and inclusive education that prepares students for college and future success.

Capital City PCS fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate,



timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leina N. Cox'.

Leina N. Cox

Head of School, Capital City Public Charter School



District of Columbia International School

March 26, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of DC International School, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

DC International School fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

DC International School is the only IB-for-all, advanced language public school in the District of Columbia. We serve a diverse student body of over 1,650 middle and high school students at the Parks on Walter Reed. DCI realizes its mission of creating global citizens through advanced language learning, student agency, and the International Baccalaureate curriculum.



District of Columbia
International School

The waiver would allow our school to maintain our focus on the accountability metrics that have been part of the state system since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and potentially requiring schools to adjust their instructional strategies.

DC International School fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE’s thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Michael Roskamm
Executive Director
DC International School

March 27, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Sojourner Truth Public Charter School, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Sojourner Truth PCS fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Our mission at Truth is to prepare students to transform the world. As the District's one and only public Montessori middle and high school, we are passionate about the education of the whole student. We put just as much attention on personal development - task management, emotional wellness, self-monitoring - as we do on traditional academic development. We have a rigorous, college prep curriculum, but want to make sure that our students graduate ready to succeed not just in college but in life.

We believe that each student's identity, perspectives, voice, and choice matter. We celebrate the uniqueness of each and every individual at Truth, and our curriculum gives students the opportunity to explore personal interests while engaging in projects that extend beyond the classroom and affect the real D.C. community.

The waiver would allow our school to maintain our focus on the accountability metrics that have been part of the state system since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and potentially requiring schools to adjust their instructional strategies.

Sojourner Truth PCS fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Lessek', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Justin Lessek,
Teacher and Executive Director



Public Charter High School

March 29, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA), I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026–27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics integral to the statewide accountability system. This will negatively impact the integrity of the system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for schools currently identified for support.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality, particularly for schools like TMA that intentionally serve students entering high school at varying academic levels and accelerate their progress through extended instructional time and targeted supports. The waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system continues to reflect a shared and meaningful understanding of school quality.

Thurgood Marshall Academy fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School is an open-enrollment, law-themed high school serving students in Ward 8. Our mission is to prepare students to succeed in college and to actively engage in our democratic society. We are committed to accelerating student growth, building strong instructional culture, and ensuring that all students—regardless of starting point—have access to rigorous academic and civic opportunities.

The waiver would allow our school to maintain focus on the accountability metrics that have guided instruction and improvement since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in how school performance is measured during an assessment transition. It would also ensure continuity for

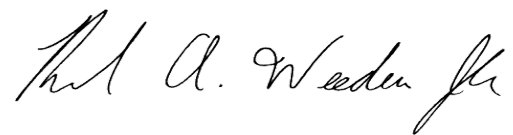
schools currently identified for improvement, allowing them to stay focused on sustained progress rather than adjusting to a new and temporary system.

Additionally, the waiver supports a fair and stable accountability landscape across the city, ensuring that designations remain consistent and that OSSE can continue to prioritize support for the schools most in need.

Thurgood Marshall Academy fully supports this one-year waiver request—and OSSE’s thoughtful commitment to ensuring that families and communities continue to have access to clear, consistent, and meaningful information about school performance.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Yours in Partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond A. Weeden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "W".

Raymond A. Weeden
Executive Director
rweeden@tmapchs.org

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School, I am writing to express strong support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver from certain requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for the 2026–27 school year.

We agree with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) rationale for this waiver and believe it represents a thoughtful and necessary step to preserve the long-term validity, stability, and credibility of DC's accountability and school improvement system.

DC's ESSA State Plan, amended in 2022 following a thorough and inclusive stakeholder engagement process, reflects a deliberate commitment to a more comprehensive and meaningful approach to school accountability. Central to this framework is the inclusion of student growth measures, which provide a more complete and accurate picture of school performance than proficiency rates alone.

The transition to a new statewide assessment in the 2026–27 school year presents a significant and unavoidable challenge. Without the ability to calculate growth measures during this transition year, the integrity of the accountability framework would be fundamentally altered. Year-over-year comparisons would not be valid, and the resulting school ratings could misrepresent performance, potentially undermining stakeholder confidence in the system.

Public accountability for education outcomes remains essential. At the same time, accountability systems must be stable, transparent, and trusted to serve their intended purpose. Proceeding with school designations in a year where key components of the framework cannot be calculated risks creating confusion and diminishing confidence among families, educators, and the broader community.

Granting this waiver would help ensure continuity and coherence in DC's accountability system while maintaining OSSE's commitment to providing families with clear, timely, and actionable information about school performance. Most importantly, it would reinforce the District's ability to uphold high standards for schools while ensuring that those standards are applied fairly and meaningfully.

We appreciate OSSE's continued leadership and its commitment to balancing rigor with responsibility during this transition. Ensuring the long-term strength of DC's accountability system is in the best interest of students, families, educators, and communities across the District.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

Jack McCarthy

Board Chair, AppleTree Early Learning PCS

--



APPLETREE

Jack McCarthy

AppleTree Founder | Senior Advisor

AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation

o: (202) 813-3550 | **m:** (508) 294-6099 | **f:** (202) 488-3991



Center City Public Charter Schools

Character, Excellence, Service

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

Center City PCS strongly supports the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

We agree with OSSE's rationale for the waiver and believe it is the best way to ensure the long-term validity and stability of DC's accountability and school improvement work.

We appreciate OSSE for its thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,

Russ Williams
President & CEO



March 30, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are integral to the statewide accountability system. This will undermine the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for schools identified for support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality. Therefore, Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy's mission is to prepare students for success in competitive colleges and to empower them to use public policy to build a more just, free, and equal world. Founded in 1998 by Irasema Salcido in a grocery store basement with just 60 students, the school began with a vision to provide DC youth a high-quality education centered on civic engagement and social impact. From the start, Chavez Schools focused on equipping students to pursue higher education and address issues within their communities.

CHAVEZ SCHOOLS

3701 Hayes Street NE
Washington, DC 20019
P (202) 398-2230

CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY STARTS WITH US.



Today, 28 years later, the network offers a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, a distinctive public policy program, and strong support services. Located in the Parkside community of Northeast D.C., Chavez serves 76% of students designated as At-Risk, 10% Multi-Language Learners, and 20% designated as receiving Special Education services.

- The waiver would allow our school to maintain our focus on the accountability metrics that have been part of the state system since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and potentially requiring schools to adjust their instructional strategies.
- The waiver would ensure that the set of schools designated for improvement in the next cycle is not fundamentally different from the set of schools that were designated in previous cycles.

Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE’s thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Sanjay Mitchell

Mr. Sanjay K. Mitchell,
Executive Director
Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy

CHAVEZ SCHOOLS

3701 Hayes Street NE
Washington, DC 20019
P (202) 398-2230

CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY STARTS WITH US.

March 30, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of the DC Charter School Alliance, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

The DC Charter School Alliance serves as the unifying voice for the District of Columbia's 66 public charter schools, driving strategic advocacy and promoting collective action to champion policies that advance a thriving high-quality education system for our diverse community of learners.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate several metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will undermine the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

The DC Charter School Alliance was deeply engaged in the stakeholder engagement process that led to the creation of DC's current ESSA accountability system and believe the resulting framework is a solid one. We strongly believe student growth is a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality. We fully agree with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

The waiver would avoid a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and ensure continuity and consistency in the common understanding of accountability scores. It is very difficult to get the public (including families) to understand the process by which schools are evaluated, and even more difficult when the underlying factors in that evaluation change in unpredictable ways. It is critical to maintain public confidence in this framework.

The DC Charter School Alliance fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to

accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer public comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Herr".

Anne Herr

Senior Director of School Development and Accountability

DC Charter School Alliance

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Attn: ESSA Waiver Public Comment

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

We, the undersigned education and civil rights advocacy organizations, write to offer comments on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) proposed ESEA waiver request. At a time when many states are pursuing politically motivated waivers that risk undermining essential federal equity guardrails, we believe that OSSE's proposed temporary pause of its state accountability system represents a strategic use of the ESEA waiver authority that will serve District of Columbia (DC) students by providing stability in school ratings and identification for support while transitioning to a new assessment system.

First, OSSE's decision to transition to Smarter Balanced assessments demonstrates DC's commitment to high quality assessments aligned with rigorous academic standards, while also providing schools with aligned interim assessments and educator support. Despite the resulting disruption to longitudinal and growth data, this switch is also a clear response to stakeholder feedback to adopt a new assessment system that will better support data informed decision making.

In response, OSSE has developed a clear waiver request to address temporary data gaps, particularly calculating academic progress. As OSSE states in its request — reflecting the views of DC stakeholders — measuring growth is essential for providing families and policymakers with data about how students are progressing in their learning over time. Including growth in state accountability systems alongside achievement also provides a fairer measure of school quality by giving schools credit for the progress students make from year to year, particularly when schools have large numbers of students that are starting the year far below grade level. This information can be used to determine where to target resources and supports to ensure students are making adequate progress towards proficiency against academic standards.

Given the focus on growth in DC's accountability system, OSSE's decision to request waiving school ratings and identification for a single year shows a strong commitment to maintaining a stable and reliable signal of school quality across DCPS and DC charter schools. In particular we believe that this waiver represents a thoughtful approach because it:

1. **Limits the pause to a single year.** While ESSA Section 8401(d)(1) allows states to apply for waivers for up to four years, OSSE has proposed pausing their accountability system for only one year to enable growth to be accurately calculated using their new assessment. This will ensure that students in schools that need additional supports are promptly identified following this transition year.

2. **Prioritizes stability and predictability.** Given the substantial weight of growth in DC's accountability system, calculating school ratings (and using those ratings to identify schools) without growth data would likely be confusing and disruptive — especially for school leaders. Ratings could change dramatically from previous years when growth was included, so pausing them will both reduce possible swings in scores and allow educators and school leaders to adjust to the new assessment system during the transition year.
3. **Maintains school improvement supports.** OSSE makes clear that pausing ratings will not mean pausing meaningful supports for schools. Instead, state staff will continue to support its current cohort of identified schools via its renewed school improvement framework, with a focus on those schools that have not yet met state exit criteria. The waiver will also ensure that currently identified schools receive ongoing financial support via Section 1003 school improvement funds.
4. **Maintains a commitment to transparency.** During the waiver period, OSSE will continue to report all data (other than growth, which can't be calculated) on the DC School Report Card site and will share state assessment results with parents during the pause year—which should happen before the start of the following school year. This continued reporting will ensure school leaders and families have access to essential data needed to identify and support student needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on OSSE's proposed ESEA waiver. We believe this waiver will enable DC students and educators with a smooth transition to a new, rigorous assessment system, while maintaining public transparency and essential supports to low-performing schools. We welcome the opportunity to engage further with OSSE about this waiver request and the transition to Smarter Balanced.

Sincerely,
All4Ed
Center for Strong Public Schools
DC Public Education Fund
Education Forward DC
EdTrust
ElectED DC
EmpowerK12
Federal City Council
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Parents Union
PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education)
Thurgood Marshall Academy PCHS
UnidosUS

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

I am writing on behalf of **IDEA Public Charter School** to express our support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver from select Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements, specifically those related to calculating accountability scores and issuing school designations in 2027.

We believe the rationale outlined by OSSE is sound and that this approach will help preserve the integrity and continuity of the District's accountability system over time. In our view, the waiver provides a thoughtful path forward that balances flexibility with a continued commitment to meaningful, high-quality school performance data.

We also appreciate OSSE's efforts to ensure that families and communities continue to receive clear, timely, and reliable information about school performance, while maintaining an accountability framework aligned to the District's priorities and commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.

Sincerely,

Brian Rahaman, CEO

IDEA Public Charter School

March 30, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Ingenuity Prep Public Charter School, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026–27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Ingenuity Prep fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Ingenuity Prep is a public charter school serving students in Ward 8, committed to preparing all students to succeed in college and beyond through rigorous academics, strong character development, and a focus on equity. We serve a diverse student population and are deeply invested in ensuring that accountability systems accurately reflect student growth and school performance.

The waiver would allow our school to maintain focus on consistent accountability metrics that have guided instructional improvement since 2022, avoiding disruption caused by a temporary shift in methodology. It would also ensure continuity in how schools are

identified for support, preserving alignment between past and future improvement efforts and maintaining clarity for educators and families.

Ingenuity Prep fully supports this one-year waiver request—and OSSE’s thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensuring that families and communities continue to have access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system grounded in upholding locally made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Will Stoetzer

CEO, Ingenuity Prep PCS

Will Stoetzer

He/Him/His

CEO & Co-Founder

4600 Livingston Rd. SE, Washington, D.C.

P: (202) 562-0391 | **C:** (202) 491-3279

E: wstoetzer@ingenuityprep.org



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March 30, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dr. Mitchell,

On behalf of Kingsman Academy Public Charter School, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Kingsman Academy fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Kingsman Academy provides an alternative middle and high school education to students who are at risk of dropping out of school, including students who are over-age and under-credited, have a history of trauma, or have faced behavioral or attendance challenges. Our mission is to provide a therapeutic and individualized academic environment that meets students where they are.

The impact of this waiver is particularly significant for our community:

- **Prioritizing Growth over Proficiency:** For a school serving high populations of students with gaps in their prior education, year-over-year growth is the most authentic measure of our impact. Losing growth metrics due to the assessment



transition would result in an incomplete and potentially misleading representation of our students' achievements.

- **Stability for Specialized Support:** The waiver ensures that the identification of schools for support remains consistent. This allows Kingsman to maintain its focus on intensive, specialized instructional strategies without the distraction of shifting accountability methodologies during a sensitive testing transition.

Kingsman Academy fully supports this one-year waiver request and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Kelly", is positioned above the typed name.

Kennesha Kelly
Co-founder and Executive Director
Kingsman Academy Public Charter School
1375 E Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

KIPP DC

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 30, 2026

Dr. Antoinette S. Mitchell
State Superintendent of Education
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

On behalf of KIPP DC, we wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

For 25 years, KIPP DC has been grounded in a commitment to excellence, equity, justice, and the belief that all students have the right to rigorous, relevant, and joyful learning experiences. That mission is only possible when accountability systems accurately reflect the progress our students make despite their zip code or socioeconomic status. That is why we write in strong support of this waiver.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our shared understanding of school quality.

KIPP DC advocated strongly for the inclusion of these measures during the development of the District of Columbia's current amended [ESSA State Plan](#) and fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026–27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

KIPP DC serves more than 7,000 students across the District, the vast majority of whom are from historically underserved and marginalized communities, including a significant number of students designated as “at-risk” and students with disabilities. Approximately 72% of our students live in Wards 7 and 8, communities that have too often been left behind by systems that failed to see or measure their potential.

KIPP DC Public Schools

1255 Union St NE, Suite 900 Washington, DC 20002

Tel: 202.265.5477 | www.kippdc.org

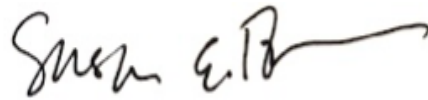
For our students, disruptions to assessment continuity are not abstract policy concerns. They directly affect how schools are supported, how resources are allocated, and whether the remarkable growth our students achieve is accurately recognized.

Granting this waiver is a commitment to getting accountability right, so that students who need the most support are not rendered invisible by a system in transition.

Sincerely,



Shannon T. Hodge, Chief Executive Officer



Susan Toth, Superintendent

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Lee Montessori Public Charter Schools, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Lee Montessori PCS fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Our mission is to combine Montessori with anti-bias, anti-racist practices to create a more just and equitable world. We currently serve 578 students, and growing, in Wards 5 and 8. As part of our mission, we aim to be true to Montessori principles and approaches and help all students achieve at the highest levels, eliminating opportunity gaps. Standardized testing and growth metrics are an important part of this mission -- both for accountability and for organizational learning. But these metrics have to be accurate. As we focus on academic improvement, the waiver will help make sure that we are focused on the right data to help our program and our students.

Similarly, the waiver will allow DC's Office of the State Superintendent of Education to focus on the schools most in need of support and improvement strategies, instead of shifting its focus to a different set of schools determined by a different set of metrics.

Lee Montessori PCS fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a

statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Simon Rodberg (he/him/his)

Executive Director

Lee Montessori Public Charter Schools

<https://leemontessori.org/>

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

Mundo Verde Bilingual Public Charter School strongly supports the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027. We agree with OSSE's rationale for the waiver, and believe it is the best way to ensure the long-term validity and stability of DC's accountability and school improvement work. We appreciate OSSE for its thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,

Shalini Shybut (she/hers/ella)

Executive Director/Directora Ejecutiva

c. 203.376.1862



J.F. Cook Campus

30 P Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Telephone: (202)750-7060
8967

Fax: (202) 905-0002

www.mundoverdepcs.org

Calle Ocho Campus

4401 8th Street NE
Washington, DC 20017

Telephone: (202)803-

March 30, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Paul Public Charter Schools, I am writing to express our strong support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements related to the calculation of accountability scores and school designations in 2027.

As DC transitions to new statewide assessments in English language arts and math in the 2026–27 school year, it is clear that key components of the current accountability framework will not be measurable in a way that maintains the integrity, consistency, and reliability of the system. Proceeding without a waiver would risk producing results that are not comparable to prior years and could ultimately undermine confidence in the accountability system as a meaningful measure of school quality and student performance.

At Paul, we serve a diverse population of middle and high school scholars and are deeply committed to ensuring that every student experiences rigorous instruction, strong academic growth, and the development of the skills necessary to thrive beyond graduation. Our work is anchored in clear goals, aligned systems, and a commitment to continuous improvement, all of which depend on stable and reliable measures of performance.

The proposed waiver would allow us to maintain continuity in how we measure progress and identify areas for improvement, rather than introducing a disruption that could shift focus away from the students and schools most in need of support. It also ensures that schools currently engaged in improvement efforts are evaluated against consistent expectations, rather than a changing set of metrics that may not accurately reflect their progress.

We firmly believe that student growth remains a critical indicator of school quality, and we appreciate OSSE's commitment to preserving a system that reflects both performance and progress. This waiver represents a thoughtful and responsible approach to navigating a complex transition while maintaining alignment with the District's long-standing commitments to accountability and transparency.

Paul Public Charter Schools fully supports this one-year waiver request and appreciates OSSE's continued efforts to ensure that families, educators, and communities have access to accurate, meaningful, and consistent information about school performance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and for your continued leadership in service of DC's students.

With gratitude,

--

Dr. Tracy White

Chief Executive Officer | Paul PCS

e: twhite@paulcharter.org **p:** (202) 291 7499

a: 5800 Eighth Street NW, Washington DC 20011

w: www.paulcharter.org

Opening the door to unlimited potential. **DONATE TODAY**





Richard Wright Public Charter Schools

March 30, 2026

Dr. Antoinette S. Mitchell
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Richard Wright Public Charter Schools, I wish to express our strong support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026–27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It also risks disrupting the continuity of DC's school improvement process and creating uncertainty for schools identified for support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality, and that this waiver ensures that DC's accountability system continues to reflect a consistent and meaningful understanding of school performance.

Richard Wright Public Charter Schools fully agrees with the rationale presented by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education for this waiver.

Richard Wright Public Charter Schools is a high-performing educational organization committed to preparing students—primarily from historically underserved communities—for academic success, leadership, and lifelong achievement. We serve a diverse population of students and families in Washington, DC, with a focus on excellence, equity, and postsecondary readiness.

The proposed waiver is essential to maintaining stability and fairness within the accountability system and will directly benefit our organization and the students we serve.



Richard Wright Public Charter Schools

- The waiver allows us to maintain focus on established accountability metrics, avoiding disruption to instructional planning and school improvement strategies.
- It ensures continuity in identifying schools for support, preventing inconsistencies that could arise from shifting metrics.
- It enables OSSE to concentrate resources on schools most in need of sustained improvement rather than redefining need based on incomplete or incomparable data.
- It prevents changes to exit criteria for schools currently engaged in improvement efforts, preserving fairness and clarity.

Richard Wright Public Charter Schools fully supports this one-year waiver request—and OSSE’s continued commitment to ensuring that families and communities have access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data grounded in locally developed priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marco Clark

Founder and CEO

Richard Wright Public Charter Schools



Washington Leadership Academy
3015 4th Street Northeast
Washington, DC 20017
(240) 580 - 3371

March 30, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of Washington Leadership Academy Public Charter School, I wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and create uncertainty for those schools that were identified for school support in 2024.

We believe student growth remains a critical measure of school quality and that the waiver ensures that DC's statewide accountability system will continue to assess our common understanding of school quality.

Washington Leadership Academy Public Charter fully agrees with OSSE's rationale for the waiver.

Washington Leadership Academy Public Charter School's mission is to prepare *our* kids to thrive in the world and change it for the better. Our graduates are college ready, have career ready tech skills, and lead positive change in their communities and the world. We serve a student population that is identified as over 55% at risk, but know that despite these numbers, 100% of them are students who will make a positive change in our world.

- The waiver would allow our school to maintain our focus on the accountability metrics that have been part of the state system since 2022, avoiding a destabilizing shift in the methodology for identifying underperforming schools and potentially requiring schools to adjust their instructional strategies.



Washington Leadership Academy
3015 4th Street Northeast
Washington, DC 20017
(240) 580 - 3371

Washington Leadership Academy Public Charter School fully supports this one-year waiver request – and OSSE’s thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Eric Collazo
Executive Director
Washington Leadership Academy PCS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Collazo". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

March 31, 2026

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

DC's adult-serving public charter schools wish to express our support for the District of Columbia's one-year waiver of certain Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school improvement designations in 2027.

Although DC's adult charter schools do not administer the statewide assessment and are not subject to the state accountability system under ESSA, we believe important principles about public accountability are at stake here and we fully support OSSE's rationale.

DC's transition to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in the 2026-27 school year will make it impossible to calculate certain metrics that are an integral part of the statewide accountability system. This will have a negative impact on the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality. It will also disrupt the continuity of DC's school improvement process and undermine public confidence in the framework.

We fully support this one-year waiver request – and OSSE's thoughtful and engaging commitment to ensure that families and their communities continue to have robust access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your solicitation for public comment.

Sincerely,

Claire Libert, Head of School
YouthBuild DC Public Charter School

Allison R. Kokkoros, CEO
Carlos Rosario School

Haley Wiggins, Executive Director
The Family Place Public Charter School

Vivian Robledo, Executive Director
The Next Step Public Charter School

Catherine Meloy, President and CEO
Goodwill Excel Center Adult Charter School

Christie McKay, Executive Director
Briya Public Charter School

Clarisse Mendoza Davis, CEO
See Forever Foundation & Maya Angelou Public Charter Schools

Nicole Hanrahan, Co-Founder &
Executive Director
LAYC Career Academy

Gerald Konohia, CEO
Community College Preparatory Adult
PCS

Tiffany Godbout, Interim CEO/Chief
Operating Officer
Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter
School



District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20015

Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Attn: Alexander Jue re: ESSA Waiver Public Comment
1050 First St. NE, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Director Jue:

DC Public Schools (DCPS) supports the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) request for a one-year waiver from calculating accountability scores and issuing school designations. Student growth is a critical indicator of school quality and a core component of OSSE's accountability system. Because the transition to a new state assessment will prevent the calculation of a reliable measure of student growth between the current and new assessments until 2027, we support this limited waiver. Granting the waiver will help preserve the integrity of the District's accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of school quality.

Sincerely,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.
Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools



Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis
Executive Director

March 31, 2026

Antoinette S. Mitchell, Ph.D.
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Mitchell,

On behalf of the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB), I am pleased to express our support for the District of Columbia's request for a one-year waiver of select Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements from the US Department of Education (USED) to calculate accountability scores and make school designations in 2027.

As the District transitions to new statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math in school year 2026–27, we agree with OSSE that a one-year waiver is both necessary and responsible. It will maintain the integrity of the statewide accountability system as a valid and consistent measure of student performance and school quality, while also providing stability for schools currently engaged in improvement efforts.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) believes this waiver also ensures that student growth measures remain a critical measure of school quality—as advocated by DC PCSB and numerous other local stakeholders during the development of the District of Columbia's current amended [ESSA State Plan](#). DC PCSB fully agrees with OSSE's rationale.

As the sole authorizer of public charter schools in Washington, DC, DC PCSB provides oversight to 66 independent nonprofit organizations serving nearly half of the city's public school students. As we mark the 30th anniversary of DC public charter schools, a milestone that reflects both growth and impact of the sector, our role requires us to make clear, fair, and evidence-based decisions about school quality. We rely on the statewide accountability system to inform and calibrate key components of ASPIRE, our academic accountability system.

Given this close alignment, DC PCSB is planning to pause the use of statewide assessment measures within ASPIRE for high-stakes decisions in school year 2026–27. Approval of OSSE’s waiver request will ensure continued coherence between the District’s statewide accountability approach and our authorizing practices. Just as important, it will give schools the necessary time to adjust to the new assessments without introducing instability or unintended consequences into accountability determinations.

We also appreciate that OSSE’s proposal maintains a focus on student growth as a central measure of school quality, reflecting priorities elevated by DC PCSB and other partners during the development of the District’s amended ESSA State Plan.

DC PCSB fully supports this one-year waiver request and commends OSSE for its thoughtful approach and commitment to ensure families and their communities continue to have access to accurate, timely, and consistent school performance data, as well as a statewide accountability system that is grounded in upholding locally-made commitments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Walker-Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michelle Walker-Davis, Ed.D.
DC Public Charter School Board