

Alternative School Accountability Framework At A Glance

SEPTEMBER 2024

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) annually calculates the performance of public schools. The accountability system used to calculate performance is defined in the District of Columbia's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan and contains provisions for alternative schools to use a modified framework.

In 2024, the alternative school accountability framework underwent review and subsequent modifications based on research and community-leader feedback. These changes will first be implemented in 2025 with data from the 2024-2025 school year.

WHAT'S IN THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK?

Some schools in the District of Columbia are designed to provide programs to serve populations with unique educational needs. The statewide accountability framework (approved by the DC State Board of Education [SBOE] in 2022 and the US Department of Education [USED] in 2023) allows for certain schools, including alternative schools, to be scored under a modified accountability framework. This modified alternative school accountability framework is uniquely designed to match the goals and missions of alternative schools.

- The modifications to the alternative school accountability framework are indicated with an asterisk below (*).
- The alternative school accountability framework uses data to measure performance in the following areas and metrics (point values for each area can be found in the table on page 2):

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Measures student performance on DC CAPE and MSAA and how many students are approaching, reaching, and exceeding proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

State Assessment Proficiency - Students meeting or exceeding expectations in both ELA and Math on the statewide assessment.

State Assessment Weighted Index - An index score for student performance across all levels of statewide assessment with heavier weight placed on higher levels of proficiency.

ACADEMIC GROWTH

Measures student progress on statewide assessments.

Median Growth Percentile (elementary and middle school grades) - Median growth of the school's students compared to other students who took the statewide assessment at other schools.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Attendance is reported through two indicators:

1. **Chronic Absenteeism** - Percentage of students who miss 10 percent or more of the school year. **AND***
2. **Attendance Growth** - Improvement in student level attendance rates from year to year.

Academic Persistence* - Percentage of students who remain academically engaged from one year to the next. This includes students who transfer from one school to another. Additional details on the next page.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

ACCESS Growth - Progress of English learners in learning to speak, listen, read, and write in the English language.

GRADUATION RATE

Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (high school grades) - Percentage of students who graduate with a diploma within five years of entering high school.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Tracks student progress with coursework toward the goal of completing secondary education

Eighth to Ninth Grade Promotion (middle school grades) - The percentage of students who were promoted from eighth to ninth grade.

OR

Secondary Completion (high school grades) - The number of students who complete school with a credential – regular high school diploma, National External Diploma Program (NEDP) certificate, Individualized Education Program (IEP) Certificate of Completion, or GED® – divided by the number of students expected to receive a credential in their terminal year of secondary school.

HOW THE FRAMEWORK WORKS

In the development of the alternative school accountability framework, OSSE recognized the importance of measuring multiple areas of school performance. The alternative school accountability framework weights metrics differently than the grade-band frameworks for traditional schools within the traditional state accountability framework, such that it is based on the unique goals and mission of an alternative school. A table of those weights within the alternative school accountability framework is listed below.

Alternative School Type	Academic Achievement	Academic Growth	School Environment	English Language Proficiency	Graduation Rate	Educational Progress
K-12 or 6-12	14	30	19	6	15	16
Elementary and Middle	14	40	25	8	N/A	13
High School	24	N/A	26	9	20	21

HOW CALCULATED

The alternative school accountability framework differs from the traditional state accountability framework in how performance benchmarks are set. For metrics that both alternative and traditional schools share—such as Median Growth Percentile (MGP), proficiency, chronic absenteeism, five-year graduation rate, English language proficiency growth, and attendance growth—an alternative school’s performance is compared to all schools in the District serving similar grade bands. For example, an alternative school serving grades 6–12 will have benchmarks based on metric scores from all middle and high schools in DC.

For alternative-specific metrics— 8th-to-9th grade transition, weighted index, secondary completion, and academic persistence— performance is compared only among alternative schools in the District, provided the metric applies to the grade levels served (e.g., secondary completion applies only to high school grades). Schools earn points based on these comparisons, and overall metric scores are proportionately weighted by student groups.

The proportional weighting of the Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged and Economically Disadvantaged with Disabilities within the alternative school accountability framework also allows the performance and growth of the students served by alternative schools to be compared against the performance and growth of these same student groups across the city.

WHAT CHANGED AND WHY?

OSSE conducted engagement sessions with local alternative school leaders and reviewed best practices surrounding alternative accountability in alignment with ESSA requirements. In response to information gathered, the decisions made include:

- Point reallocation and an increase of total possible points to 100
- Changes to the way attendance is reported
 - Attendance reporting was changed from a “best-of” reporting to capturing both attendance growth and chronic absenteeism to better align with ESSA requirements.
- Introduction of the academic persistence indicator
 - Previously the re-engagement measure reported students who were previously disengaged who re-engaged in the academic year – in essence reporting the re-engagement of “drop-out” students – a priority for many alternative schools.
 - The new academic persistence recognizes the efforts of keeping students engaged and preventing dis-engagements.

For more information, please visit osse.dc.gov/essa and/or contact DCSchoolReportCard@dc.gov.