

Alternative School Accountability Framework Revisions

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.

Alternative schools serve students with unique needs and circumstances including students who are overage, involved with DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), expelled from their prior school, under court supervision, experiencing homelessness, or have a history of suspension. This document will summarize OSSE’s changes and share next steps.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR CHANGES INCLUDE:

Proactive approach to keeping students engaged

- Inclusion of a new measure, **academic persistence**, which rewards schools for keeping students enrolled and engaged
- This replaces the re-engagement measure, which reflected the students who had been previously disengaged who reenrolled in the academic year

Increased alignment with the District’s attendance goals

- Inclusion of both attendance growth and chronic absenteeism rates
- Previously, only one of these measures were included as part of a “better of” reporting

Better reward growth and completion

- Weights for both academic growth and secondary completion have been increased
- Completion rate will continue to report the percentage of students who complete school with any form of credential (e.g., diploma, National External Diploma Program (NEDP) certificate, Individual Education Plan (individualized education program (IEP) certificate of completion, GED[®]).

OUR PROPOSED SYSTEM IN DEPTH

METRIC NAME	ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE	K-12 / 6-12	HIGH SCHOOL
English Language Arts (ELA) Weighted Index	5	5	9
Math Weighted Index	5	5	9
Meeting/Exceeding ELA	2	2	3
Meeting/Exceeding Math	2	2	3
ELA Assessment – Median Growth Percentile (MGP)	20	15	N/A
Math Assessment – MGP	20	15	N/A
ACCESS Growth	8	6	9
Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)	N/A	15	20
Chronic Absenteeism	8	4	7
Attendance Growth	8	4	6
Academic Persistence	9	11	13
Completion: Either Secondary <i>or</i> 8 th – 9 th Transition	13	16	21
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	100	100	100

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The new alternative accountability framework will be implemented in 2026 based on 2024-2025 school year data. These scores will be reported on the [DC School Report Card](#) and align with the accountability score timeline that is used for traditional schools. Alternative schools will not be able to be designated as low performing until 2027.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

■ How does the proposed framework compare to the new [ASPIRE System](#) used by the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB)?

- Both the ASPIRE System and OSSE framework focus on school progress, achievement, and environment, but use different methods.
- OSSE must follow ESSA guidelines; the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) has more flexibility in assessment choices and graduation reporting.
- PCSB includes schools serving high-level special education students, which may not fit OSSE's criteria for alternative status.

■ Why not utilize the re-enrollment metric?

- The re-enrollment metric tracks students staying at the same school year-to-year, which typically reflects school climate.
- Students often transfer to an alternative school due to personal needs or better fit, not school climate.
- The new academic persistence metric includes transfers between schools in the numerator, recognizing continued engagement in the education system.

■ What feedback did we receive regarding academic persistence?

- Stakeholders were generally supportive of tracking academic persistence and expressed interest in understanding student movements post-disenrollment. This metric aligns with schools' priorities for supporting student engagement.
- Some stakeholders were worried that not capturing reengagement might affect motivation, suggesting a need to assess the impact of this change on reengagement rates.
- The academic persistence metric uses data already collected for mobility, avoiding extra calculation efforts.

■ What research supports the inclusion of the academic persistence metric?

- Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada include similar metrics in their alternative accountability plans.
- While academic persistence is not explicitly defined in academic research and literature, the concept of maintaining student engagement and avoiding penalties for transfers is largely supported.

■ What other metrics were considered? Why are they not in this proposal?

OSSE considered many metrics; there were a number of factors considered when making decisions about their inclusion.

- **Graduation Rate:** Changes were not considered due to ESSA alignment concerns and limited local support. The existing completion metric meets ESSA requirements and reflects alternative school graduates.
- **School Climate:** There was no consensus on what to include, especially regarding climate survey data.
- **Attendance:** Modifications to reporting are being explored that could further emphasize growth; this could be revisited in future modifications to the framework.
- **Career Readiness:** Work is ongoing at OSSE related to data collection and the establishment of possible business rules.
- **Credit Progression:** Data is currently insufficient, but tracking earned credits could be explored.

MORE INFORMATION

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