



Office of the  
State Superintendent  
of Education



# ANNUAL REPORT | 2020



## MISSION

As DC's state education agency, OSSE works urgently and purposefully, in partnership with education and related systems, to sustain, accelerate and deepen progress for DC students.

## VISION

DC will close the achievement gap and ensure people of all ages and backgrounds are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

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The following pillars form the foundation of our work as an agency.



### SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We set and maintain high standards for program quality and high expectations for learners to ensure our educational systems are driving toward excellence and equity.



### SHARE AND USE ACTIONABLE DATA

We collect and share reliable and actionable data to inform policy decisions, empower our partners to improve and build community understanding.



### BUILD ECOSYSTEM CAPACITY

We convene partners, provide targeted support and invest resources to improve quality, increase access and advance equity in education.



### CONTINUE COMMITMENT TO OUR TALENTED TEAM AND CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Our foundation is our team at OSSE. We build and sustain a culture rooted in our core values of Focus on Students, Organizational Excellence, Determination, Partnership and Teamwork and Collaboration.



### MAXIMIZE OSSE'S IMPACT

Above and beyond our focus on all students, we bring specific focus to two areas:

- **Early Childhood**, to ensure that DC's significant investments are leveraged to maximize impact on long-term outcomes in school and in life, and
- **Special Education**, to catalyze progress and dramatically shift the trajectory of growth for students with disabilities.

## INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER



Dear Colleagues,

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) responded to significant challenges in 2020 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, challenges that required swift action to continue providing a high level of critical services to students, families, schools, educators, child care providers and our partners throughout the District of Columbia.

A public health emergency imposed in mid-March forced schools, government agencies and others to close their doors and transition to internet platforms. While restrictions on large gatherings meant many in-person programs and services had to move to new formats, OSSE staff, guided by our agency mission and strategic plan, continued to provide high-level service and supports in ways we have never done before.

In addition to providing timely, thorough guidance and technical assistance throughout the public health emergency and recovery periods, Health and Wellness staff were instrumental in setting up food distribution sites across the District to ensure students continue to receive nutritious meals even when school is closed.

The Division of Early Learning worked closely with DC's early care and education community to ensure emergency responders and essential workers had access to child care, while directing much-needed financial resources and guidance to providers so child care facilities could remain in business.

Teaching and Learning helped educators adjust to online instruction by providing high-quality professional development to address students' academic and social-emotional needs in distance, in-person and hybrid learning environments.

Our Division of Systems and Supports, K-12, has provided clear and consistent guidance and support to schools and LEAs that serve students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness and those most at risk of academic failure.

Our Division of Data, Assessment and Research continues to provide high-quality and actionable data, including the launch of the 2020 DC School Report Card, and numerous data reports and analyses.

Our Division of Postsecondary and Career Education helped ensure that DC residents who were in college, working on finishing their high school education, or entering the workforce, could connect with resources such as DCTAG, GED services, career training and ReEngagement Center services.

With concerns for the students with disabilities that it serves, OSSE's Division of Student Transportation developed a Bus Safety Kit, complete with supplies of Personal Protective Equipment and sanitizers, to ensure the safety of students and OSSE DOT drivers and attendants on the way to and from school.

While we are proud of all we were able to accomplish under unprecedented circumstances, we are also deeply saddened by the tragic loss of OSSE staff members, family members, loved ones and those we serve as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They remain in our thoughts as we reflect on the past year and take on the challenges of 2021.

I want to thank every staff member, parent, student, educator, school leader, advocate and community member for your partnership, feedback and trust. We look forward to working with you and serving you as we embark on the third year of our strategic plan.

Sincerely,

**Shana Young**  
Interim State Superintendent of Education





## SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS

### CONTINUOUS EDUCATION AND RECOVERY PLANS

Public schools in the District of Columbia ended a tumultuous 2019-20 school year amid a public health emergency and uncertainty over whether conditions would support in-person learning, distance learning or a hybrid of both in the 2020-21 school year. To ensure students continued to learn and grow in the safest environments, OSSE developed a set of [guiding principles](#) to provide local education agencies (LEAs) and families with clear and consistent expectations for [continuous education](#) in the 2020-21 school year. The principles helped LEAs to develop, in partnership with families, effective and equitable continuous education plans, that strive to meet the needs of all students. These guiding principles also helped families to understand what to expect for their students and the two-way communication that schools should establish with them. While the guiding principles acknowledged certain legal obligations, they extended well beyond that. They set high expectations for LEAs, offering a target for excellence rather than a floor for compliance.



### NEW FUNDING TO IMPROVE LITERACY FOR STUDENTS

In September 2020, OSSE received a substantial federal grant to improve literacy among disadvantaged student groups by helping LEAs and early childhood educators throughout the District strengthen literacy development and instruction from birth through grade 12. Through the five-year, \$16 million [Comprehensive Literacy State Development \(CLSD\) grant](#), local organizations across the entire continuum – birth through grade 12, including child development programs, elementary, middle and high schools – will identify literacy strategies to best serve the unique needs of each organization. Through these generous grant funds, we have the opportunity to strengthen pre-literacy foundations for young children, deepen literacy instruction for K-12 and accelerate learning for those students furthest from opportunity.





## SPECIAL EDUCATION ROADMAP

Following the [October 2019 release of OSSE's seminal \*Students with Disabilities in the District of Columbia Landscape Analysis\*](#), which showed growing gaps in academic performance between students with disabilities and other student groups, OSSE doubled down on its strategic plan commitment to improving academic progress for these students and shared the agency's vision for a [Roadmap for Accelerating Outcomes for Students with Disabilities](#). Developed in collaboration with partners across the education space, including teachers, school leaders, families, advocacy organizations and colleagues at the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), DC Public Schools (DCPS) and the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), and released in October 2020, the roadmap outlines the strategic direction and core priorities for accelerating academic progress for students with disabilities across the District. OSSE recognizes this work will take citywide collaboration and we are committed to working in partnership with teachers, school leaders, families, advocacy organizations and colleagues at PCSB, DCPS and the DME to achieve this goal.

DC.gov Office of the State Superintendent of Education

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Guidance and Resources for COVID-19-related Closures and Recovery

## COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

OSSE is committed to helping child development facilities, local education agencies (LEAs), schools and families plan effectively for reopening and recovery after closures related to the coronavirus public health emergency. This page includes downloadable guidance, information and supports related to closures, reopening and recovery. This page is frequently updated – please check back as we continue to update information.

Educators, families and the public should find information about public health and safety at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

- HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE
- K-12 LEAs AND SCHOOLS
- CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
- HIGHER EDUCATION
- STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

### Health and Safety Guidance

COVID-19 Information Session

- Vaccine Information Session for School, Child Care and OSSE Division of Student Transportation Leaders
- Vaccine Information Session for School, Child Care and OSSE Division of Student Transportation Staff: Español
- District of Columbia COVID-19 Vaccine Information


K-12 Schools

## HEALTH AND SAFETY REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE

Throughout the public health emergency, OSSE remained committed to providing accurate and timely information to the DC education community to help child development facilities, LEAs, schools and families plan effectively for reopening and recovery after closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. From March through December 2020, OSSE provided critical policy updates, guidance and resources, publishing more than 1,000 documents and holding weekly technical assistance calls to help students, families, educators and our partners navigate a challenging school year in an evolving public health emergency. Topics included on OSSE's [Guidance and Resources for COVID-19-related Closures and Recovery webpage](#) range from educator licensure, grants, enrollment, assessment and attendance to planning for continuous education and virtual professional development, serving vulnerable student populations, meals guidance, information on child care subsidies, resources for higher education and more.




## SHARE AND USE ACTIONABLE DATA

Compare English Español

### Welcome to the DC School Report Card!

The DC School Report Card gives families a look into all public schools in the District of Columbia. Start here to learn more about how public schools in DC are preparing all students for success in the next grade, college, and careers.



Or




[Visit the map to find schools in DC](#)

[Learn more about the DC School Report Card](#)

[View DC Report](#)

#### Questions and Comments

DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
Email: [dcschoolreportcard@dc.gov](mailto:dcschoolreportcard@dc.gov)



#### Resources

[For Parents and Families](#)  
[For Educators](#)  
[Data and Technical Resources](#)  
[Resources for DC's Common Application and Lottery](#)

### DC SCHOOL REPORT CARD

In December, OSSE released the 2020 [DC School Report Card](#) that included the graduation rate and several other data points from the 2019-20 school year. Due to the cancellation of state-wide assessments in spring 2020 as a result of the public health emergency, student outcomes for English Language Arts and Math were not included in the 2020 DC School Report Card. However, school profiles were updated with other collected data points and updated contact information for each school.

The 2020 DC School Report Card continues to be a robust tool for educators, families, researchers and the community, offering a wealth of data points over time – such as four-and five-year graduation rates, college enrollment rates and teacher and health staff data – and offers families valuable information about their schools.


### Payne Elementary School

PROFILE | STAR FRAMEWORK | ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE | SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

[Back To Compare](#) | [School Report](#)

Given the impact of COVID-19, many metrics and STAR scores are unavailable for the 2020 report card.

School Profiles, Graduation Rates, College Enrollment Rates, and Educator and Health Staff have been updated with 2020 data. All other metrics display historical data from prior years as labeled. Click here for additional information about the Accountability and Assessment waiver and other [COVID-19 educational resources](#).



#### School Overview

**Grades Served**  
PK3 - Grade 5

**Title I Status**  
Yes


A Title I school is a school that receives federal funds to support students from low-income backgrounds in learning and achieving at high levels.

**Local Education Agency**  
[District of Columbia Public Schools](#)

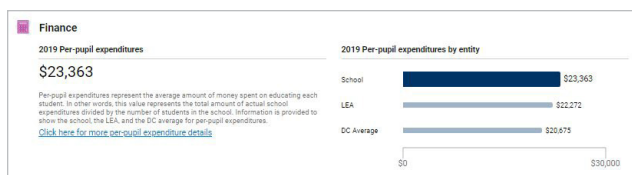
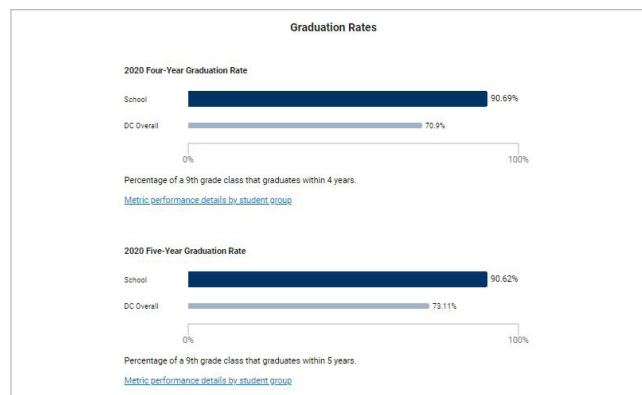
A local education agency (LEA) is an organization that operates publicly funded schools. In DC, our LEAs include DC Public Schools (DCPS) and more than 60 charter organizations.

**2019 Star Rating**  
★★★★☆

The School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework is DC's school accountability system. Each school receives a rating of 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest, based on its performance across multiple metrics. Not Applicable means the school did not meet the minimum population size to generate a score or was not in operation during the previous school year.



1445 C St, SE Washington, DC 20003  
[View on Google Maps](#)







## DC ALL-STAR SCHOOL TOUR

In February 2020, OSSE concluded visits to all 10 schools on the 2019 DC All-STAR School tour, with stops at four schools last year. They included: Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts, KIPP DC Promise Academy Public Charter School, DC Scholars Academy Public Charter School and Kimball Elementary School. During each visit, from November 2019 through February 2020, State Superintendent Hanseul Kang and members of OSSE leadership met with teachers and school leaders to find out what is working well at these schools, how they built a culturally responsive school environment, their approach to student discipline, how they are supporting students with disabilities, English learners and at-risk students, how they align instruction to the standards and how they retain quality staff. DC All-STAR School tours also included visits to classrooms to see students and educators in action.





## BUILD ECOSYSTEM CAPACITY

### EDUCATOR WELLNESS INSTITUTE: PROJECT AWARE

In September 2020, the Division of Health & Wellness (H&W) launched a pilot educator wellness champion institute. OSSE hosted 62 educators for the two-day virtual institute focused on individual and organizational approaches to educator wellness and advocacy, strategy and research-based wellness techniques to empower educators to implement programs within their schools. H&W is continuing this pilot with DC Project AWARE schools in the spring of 2021.



### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

The work of OSSE's Division of Teaching and Learning (TAL) regularly brings together diverse groups of teachers, school staff and school leaders from across the city to engage with state and national experts. In 2020, the TAL Professional Development (PD) Team hosted more than 200 professional learning sessions across a wide range of topics, including evidence-based instructional strategies for core academic content areas, high-leverage practices to improve outcomes for special populations and school culture and climate topics such as behavior support, social emotional learning, restorative practices and equity. Following the start of the public health emergency, the PD team quickly pivoted to a virtual teaching and learning model, which allowed TAL to continue its responsive and consistent service and delivery of professional learning and high-quality technical support to District LEAs and schools.



## REMOTE CAREER READY INTERNSHIPS FOR DC STUDENTS

An important component of DC's new career and technical education programming is work-based learning, the immersion of students in real-world, hands-on activities that promote student engagement and career awareness. Work-based learning takes many forms, including interacting with industry professionals through field trips, competitions and career-focused internships. While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented students from in-person internships during the summer of 2020, OSSE, in collaboration with DCPS, the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES) and select charter schools, transitioned from in-person to remote Career Ready internships. More than 800 Career and Technical Education students from across the District were placed in paid remote summer internships aligned to the careers they are interested in pursuing. The interns completed more than 110,000 hours of work at 47 different host employer sites. Many of these students supplemented their summer internship with six-week courses on digital literacy culminating in the opportunity to attain a credential in a relevant Microsoft Office application.

Feedback from students and employers was overwhelmingly positive and 100 percent of the host employers indicated that they would consider hosting interns again next summer.

Examples of internships include:

- Health science students interned at the Food & Drug Administration and received training on the drug development pathway (research, manufacturing, trials, regulation);
- Engineering students interned at Acquired Data Solutions and built telemetry systems alongside engineers using Python, RF electronics and data;
- Computer science students interned at Accenture and developed a mobile application for DCPS Study Abroad while supporting other digital media projects;
- Hospitality students interned at Destination DC and gained exposure to projects and professionals in marketing and communications, partnerships and alliances and other departments; and
- Select engineering, finance and information technology students worked in teams alongside students from St. Louis to create projects for Verizon and KPMG.





## MAXIMIZE OSSE'S IMPACT



### FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

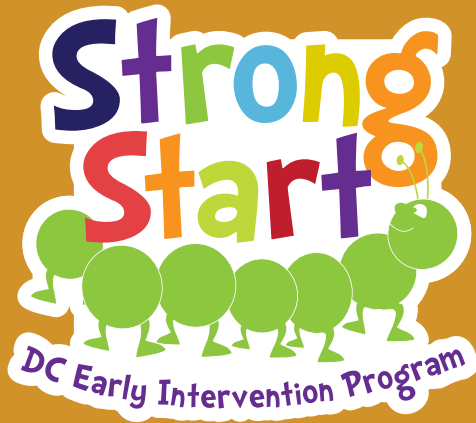
In September 2020, Mayor Muriel Bowser announced the DC Child Care Provider Relief Fund, which provided \$5 million in emergency operational funding to local child care facilities. As part of the District's COVID-19 recovery efforts, relief was granted to all licensed District child care providers to ensure a supply of child care for families as the public health emergency continues. Mayor Bowser, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and OSSE partnered to deliver this relief to child care providers. The Washington Area Community Investment Fund managed the disbursement of program funds.

Later in the year, OSSE partnered with the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) to make an additional \$2.8 million in emergency grants available to both subsidy

and non-subsidy child care providers. Distribution of the emergency grant funds prioritized child care providers serving children and families with low incomes, as well as underserved neighborhoods.

In December, Mayor Bowser announced a new Public Health Emergency Subsidy Rate, that increased the daily, per-child payment rate for open subsidized child care providers by 32.7 percent for three months beginning with payments for services delivered in December of 2020.

OSSE also made personal protective equipment (PPE) available to any child care facility in the District to help reduce the financial burden for providers and ensure the health and safety of staff, children and families.



## EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES VIA TELEHEALTH

The Strong Start program, which provides early intervention services and supports for DC's youngest learners, remained open during the public health emergency and continued to accept referrals. The program is serving more than 1,400 Strong Start children and families via telehealth during the public health emergency and is working to increase awareness of the program among DC families, while making the referral process more family-friendly.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE HUB

OSSE partnered with families, DC organizations and national experts to launch a new online [Special Education Resource Hub](#) before the start of the 2020-21 school year to help ensure families of students with disabilities feel equipped and empowered to support their child, in partnership with their child's school. The resource hub provides students and families with answers to common questions around what to expect this school year and information on how parents and family members can best support their students. Translated into multiple languages, the resource hub is **simple and accessible**, offering multiple pathways for finding answers.



## NEW FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In October 2020, the US Department of Education awarded the District a \$1.8 million grant to improve professional development for educators who provide early intervention, educational and transition services to children with disabilities. The three-year State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) grant, which may be extended for two additional years, will be used primarily to support LEAs to improve outcomes for all students, particularly those with disabilities and those furthest from opportunity, by building educator capacity to implement evidence-based, equitable and inclusive practices at the LEA, school and classroom levels to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.





## CONTINUE COMMITMENT TO OUR TALENTED TEAM AND CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

OSSE highly values its talented team and culture of excellence. Despite office closures and challenges associated with the public health emergency, OSSE maintained its commitment to supporting its team and fostering community throughout 2020. We remained connected through virtual all-staff meetings and increased the frequency of those meetings from quarterly to monthly; we continued to hold virtual gatherings to celebrate special occasions and learn from each other; and we maintained our close connections through Kudoboard messages, holiday photos and team chats.

OSSE administered the annual staff survey for the sixth time in 2020. We asked our staff many of the same questions as prior years but also included a special section related to COVID-19.



# 95%

of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that OSSE is moving in the right direction; up from **85% in 2016** when we first asked this question

**Staff continue to believe that OSSE is moving in the right direction as an agency**



**More than 90%** of survey takers agreed or strongly agreed that they have regular opportunities to engage and check in with their manager and colleagues while working remotely (93% and 91%, respectively).

**Responses to questions regarding agency's response to COVID-19 were positive**



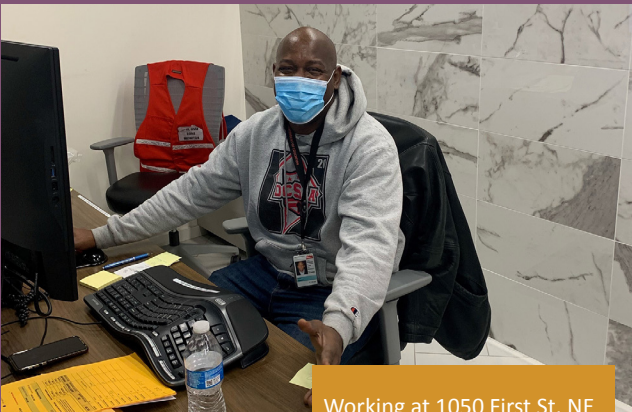
OSSE Staff at the Black History Month HBCU College Experience

OSSE Talent and HR responds to staff needs in a variety of ways. In 2020, OSSE offered improvements to professional development offerings, including the OSSE Mentoring Program, Communities of Practice and the launch of a coaching program. We also maintained our traditions of diversity, equity and inclusion by hosting Black History Month, Intersectionality and Native American Heritage Month events. In the coming year, we'll continue to build on survey data to strike the right balance in our new hybrid working posture. OSSE remains committed to performance and communication, with 100 percent of our staff participating in the year-end performance process. We will be a stronger agency in 2021 as we work together to learn, grow and achieve our strategic goals.

# STAYING CONNECTED



Virtual Meetings



Working at 1050 First St. NE



Holiday Event Calendar

## OSSE'S COVID-19 RESPONSE



### MEETING NUTRITIONAL NEEDS DURING COVID-19

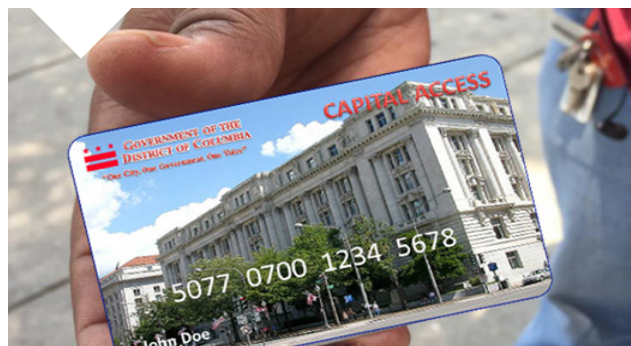
Understanding that thousands of students throughout the District rely on school meals for nutrition during the summer and throughout the school year, OSSE's Division of Health and Wellness moved swiftly from the onset of the public health emergency to set up meal sites across the city to support communities in meeting the nutritional needs of children amid the COVID-19 outbreak. More than 80 schools and other sites throughout the city offered free meals to all DC youth ages 18 and younger. Per updated USDA guidelines, all DC youth ages 18 and younger may receive free grab-and go meals at DCPS and DPR meal site locations through June 30, 2021. Youth are not required to be enrolled DCPS students to receive meals and may receive up to three breakfast and three lunch meals daily.

### DISTRIBUTION OF CARES ACT FUNDING

To help DC LEAs address the impacts of COVID-19 on elementary and secondary schools, OSSE applied for and received about \$42 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act-Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. Allowable uses for the funding are broad and include activities allowable under federal programs, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act, Carl D. Perkins Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), as well as additional costs prompted by COVID-19, such as sanitation supplies. OSSE also applied for and received \$5.8 million in CARES-Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding to support technology and the digital divide and mental health and safety in schools, and \$6 million in CARES-Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding to pay for six emergency child care sites throughout the District and to support all subsidized child care providers with continued payments through October of 2020.

### RELIEF FOR FAMILIES DURING VIRTUAL LEARNING

OSSE worked with the DC Department of Human Services during the public health emergency to provide new, temporary Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) federal food benefits for families who have one or more children, receive free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) at their school and are virtually attending a qualifying school. P-EBT benefits, valued at \$5.86 per child, per day or a total of \$29.30 per week, covered the cost of breakfast and lunch that children would have received at their school, for five days a week.





## EMERGENCY CHILD CARE FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

Given the urgent need for care in the early months of the public health emergency, OSSE partnered with licensed child care providers to offer emergency care for the children of essential government and health care workers, including essential support staff employed in the District through the Emergency Child Care Initiative. Families with a DC child care voucher continued to have their child care costs covered. OSSE also helped to alleviate part of the cost of care for families who do not typically qualify for child care assistance. Emergency child care was offered across six sites in the District, all following federal and District of Columbia Government health and safety guidance related to group size limits, cleaning protocols and daily health screenings for children and staff.

## INTERNET FOR ALL

In September 2020, Mayor Bowser launched the \$3.3 million Internet for All initiative to provide free internet access for up to 25,000 disconnected students and families with low income from DCPS and public charter schools. The funding, administered by OSSE, covered families eligible in the 2020-21 school year for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits and followed the Bowser Administration's efforts to deliver more than 16,000 technology devices to schools across all eight wards as a part of the Mayor's Empowered Learner's Initiative, a \$4.6 million investment.



## ReENGAGEMENT CENTER STAYS ENGAGED VIRTUALLY

While the public health emergency forced the closure of government buildings and offices throughout the District of Columbia, OSSE staff found ways to connect with those they serve. Staff in the DC ReEngagement Center stayed engaged with youth ages 16-24 who have dropped out of secondary school by phone and online services to help reconnect them to educational options and other critical services to support their attainment of a high school diploma or GED.

Re-Engagement Specialists updated Back-on-Track DC, an interactive website that links disconnected youth and adults to more than 35 educational programs across the city. They also hosted weekly "DC REC Live" virtual town hall sessions with disconnected youth to share common challenges and information about needed services.

## GED TESTING CENTER ADAPTS TO SAFELY SERVE CUSTOMERS

Following office closures in March, the GED Program Office reopened on July 29, 2020, marking the office's resumption of limited, in-person GED testing twice a week. The retrofitted GED office includes hand sanitizing stations, Plexiglas dividers at the service counter, in the admissions area and around the testing workstations, and the flooring has social distance and directional markers. The office accommodates a maximum of four examinees at once. GED office staff maintain a detailed regimen consisting of a log for the cleaning and sanitizing of high-contact touch points hourly and immediately after contact or use (e.g., chairs, lockers, keyboards, mouse, etc.) to ensure tester and staff safety.



**VIRTUAL**

**MY SCHOOL DC EdFEST 2020**

**Saturday, December 12**  
11AM - 2PM  
VIRTUAL EVENT

**JOIN US FOR DC'S PUBLIC SCHOOL FAIR - ONLINE!**

**Explore** 200+ DCPS and public charter schools (PK3 - Grade 12).

**Connect** directly with school representatives.

**Learn** about the public school lottery process.

**REGISTER FOR FREE**  
at [bit.ly/virtualedfest](https://bit.ly/virtualedfest)  
or scan here




☎ 202-888-6336  
✉ [info.myschooldc@dc.gov](mailto:info.myschooldc@dc.gov)

DC Department of Education | DC Department of Public Safety | DC Department of Health and Human Services | DC Department of Transportation | DC Department of the Environment | DC Department of Public Works | DC Department of Social Services | DC Department of Youth and Human Resources | DC Department of the Chief Financial Officer | DC Department of the Chief Information Officer | DC Department of the Chief Legal Officer | DC Department of the Chief of Staff | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of Planning and Policy | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of Community Engagement | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of Policy and Planning | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of the Chief of Staff | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of the Chief of Staff | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of the Chief of Staff | DC Department of the Mayor's Office of the Chief of Staff

## VIRTUAL EDFEST

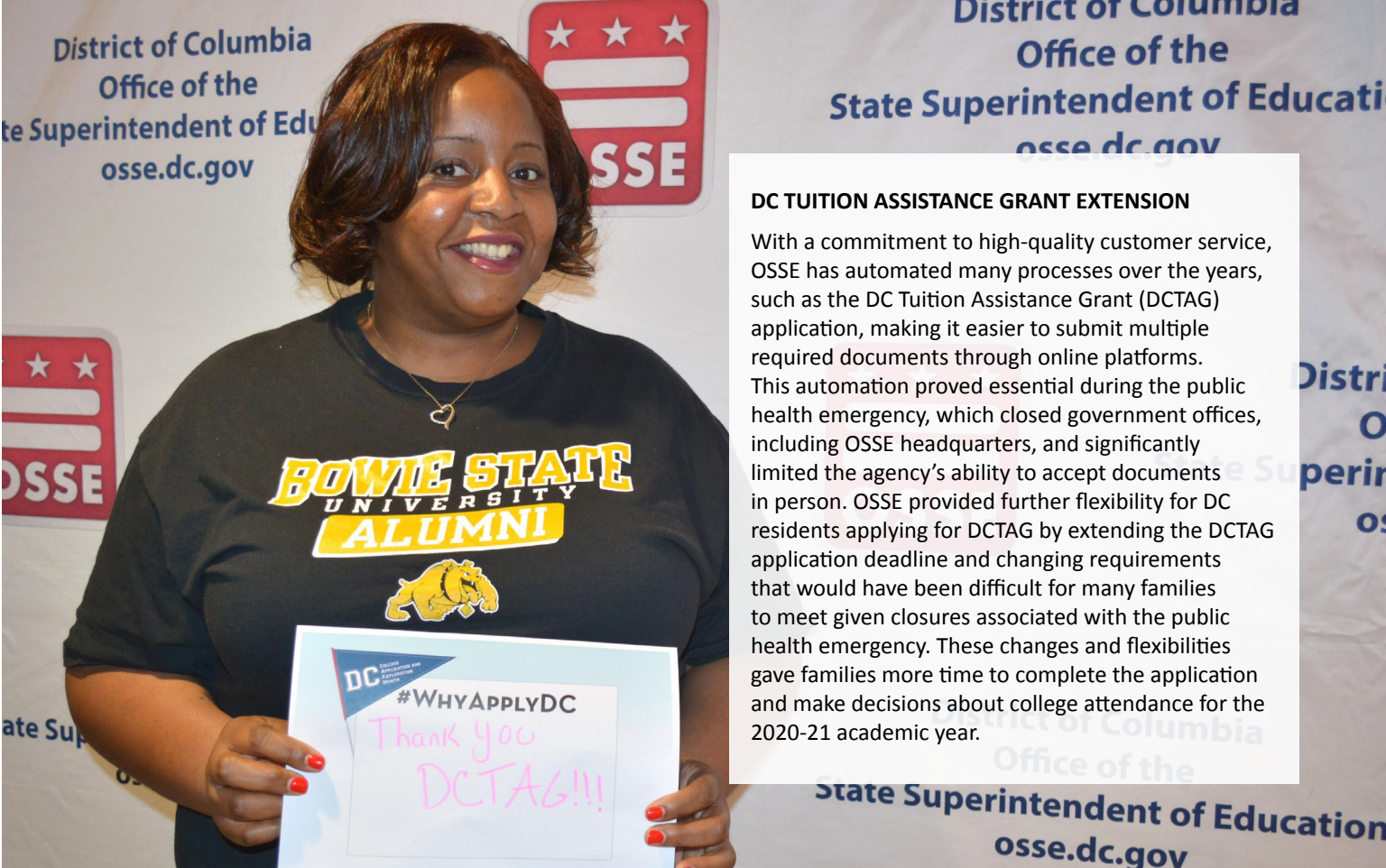
This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions prohibiting large-scale gatherings in the District of Columbia, My School DC hosted its first-ever Virtual EdFEST 2020, in early December. More than 2,000 people attended the online event. Students and families were able to register for free at MySchoolDC.org and use their computer or cellphone to browse schools, ask general questions through the chat feature and even connect live with exhibitors via 1:1 chat – either direct message or video chat, giving families direct access to teachers, school leaders and other school representatives who know their schools better than anyone else and can answer the important questions students and families have when searching for the right school. Anyone who registered also had access to the event site where they could access EdFEST materials for 30 days.

## GOING THE DISTANCE

The OSSE Division of Student Transportation (OSSE DOT) ramped up its focus on safety and collaboration in 2020. Newly branded District of Columbia Student Transportation buses rolled throughout the area, providing safe and reliable service for students. With concerns for the students with disabilities it transports, OSSE DOT developed and mailed a Bus Safety Kit to every eligible family to ensure the safety of students, OSSE DOT drivers and attendants on the way to and from school. In addition to directly serving students and families, OSSE DOT coordinated with other divisions and DC agencies on an array of projects including essential food and supply deliveries, supporting the DC Board of Elections to ensure District residents could exercise their voting rights, providing transportation for District hospital health care workers during the Metrorail evening shutdown and supporting DCPS in preparing classrooms for returning students.





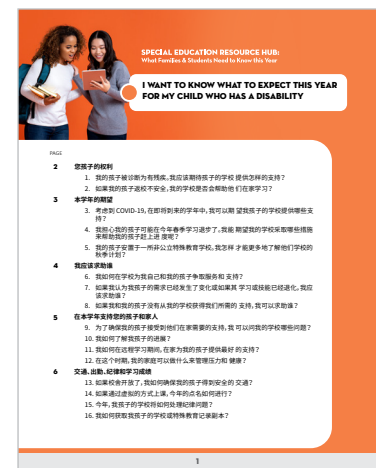


## DC TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT EXTENSION

With a commitment to high-quality customer service, OSSE has automated many processes over the years, such as the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) application, making it easier to submit multiple required documents through online platforms. This automation proved essential during the public health emergency, which closed government offices, including OSSE headquarters, and significantly limited the agency's ability to accept documents in person. OSSE provided further flexibility for DC residents applying for DCTAG by extending the DCTAG application deadline and changing requirements that would have been difficult for many families to meet given closures associated with the public health emergency. These changes and flexibilities gave families more time to complete the application and make decisions about college attendance for the 2020-21 academic year.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS REMAINED A TOP PRIORITY

Throughout the pandemic, OSSE remained focused on ensuring families throughout the District who speak languages other than English had access to vital documents and information. From the beginning of the public health emergency in March 2020 through December 2020, OSSE's Language Access Coordinator received nearly 200 requests for document translation services and translated 43,169 words of confidential case-specific documents, primarily in Spanish. After March 13, OSSE transitioned to Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) to replace in-person services and coordinated 248 Hours of VRI service on top of the 1,069 agency-wide calls serviced by regular telephonic interpretation services.



## CELEBRATING OUR TEACHERS:

### TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL AND PRINCIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2020, OSSE recruited principals and other senior school-based leaders to participate in the inaugural cohort of the Superintendent's Principal Advisory Council (PAC). Additionally, the second cohort of OSSE's Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) was established. Both councils include a diverse group of educators, representative of the educator workforce across the city, including public and public charter schools in the District. The TAC and PAC both work alongside OSSE leadership to share their insights, suggestions and feedback to help refine current policies and inform the development of new policies and resources at the state level.

### HONORING EXCELLENT DC EDUCATORS

Never has the critical role our teachers play in the lives of students been more evident than it was in 2020, as we collectively worked to meet student needs and accelerate student growth under challenging circumstances. The beginning of the 2020-21 school year, offered the perfect opportunity to spotlight and celebrate outstanding DC teachers through two annual awards. Ashley Kearney from Ron Brown College Preparatory High School and William Stafford from E.L. Haynes Public Charter School were selected for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) and Edward Donnellan from Gonzaga College High School was named 2020 DC History Teacher of the Year. These three teachers demonstrated excellence in their instruction and dedication to students and families throughout the District, and serve as role models for their colleagues. Congratulations, Ms. Kearney, Mr. Stafford and Mr. Donnellan, for these achievements and thank you for everything you've done and continue to do for our students.



Ashley Kearney



William Stafford



Edward Donnellan





## 2021 DC TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALIST

For the second time in three years, an outstanding District of Columbia educator has been selected as one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. The Council of Chief State School Officers named Alejandro Diasgranados, a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Aiton Elementary School, one of the top teachers in the country, an honor that puts him in the running for National Teacher of the Year. But before he received that much-deserved recognition, OSSE got a chance to celebrate Diasgranados as 2021 DC Teacher of the Year in a first-ever virtual, surprise announcement in October.

An annual tradition, the DC Teacher of the Year event typically involves a large-scale, school-wide assembly staged as a ruse in order to surprise the DC teacher recommended by students, families and colleagues and selected by OSSE as DC Teacher of the Year. A successful event – complete with speeches and testimonials, student performances, media coverage and the presentation of a giant check for \$7,500 – depends on an element of surprise, which requires a significant amount of “behind the scenes” work among OSSE staff, school and LEA personnel, students, the local media and family members or friends of the teacher being honored.

A challenge to coordinate in a traditional school year, the 2021 DC Teacher of the Year announcement proved difficult, but not impossible, to pull off during the public health emergency, thanks to the creativity and determination of OSSE staff. While restrictions prohibited large events like an in-person school-wide assembly, OSSE staff arranged an entirely virtual gathering and tracked down Diasgranados’ fiancée through some amazing detective work to arrange a hand-off of the giant check before the event so she could surprise him with it in their home to coincide with the announcement.


Despite the challenges that 2020 brought with it, it was very important that we continued annual traditions like the DC Teacher of the Year Award. Thank you to Mr. Diasgranados for being an outstanding example of the best DC has to offer. We wish him the best in the National Teacher of the Year Award competition and look forward to working with him throughout his tenure as 2021 DC Teacher of the Year.




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