

# Teacher Equity Plan

*Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
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## What is Teacher Equity and Why Does it Matter?

Teacher equity means ensuring that students in schools with large concentrations of low-income and minority students have the same access to effective teachers as students in all other schools. This is a federal requirement of Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It's also critically important since research finds that among all school factors, teachers have the greatest impact on student learning.

## The District of Columbia's Approach to Ensuring Teacher Equity

In the District of Columbia, the best way to ensure that low-income and minority students are taught by effective teachers is to improve teacher effectiveness throughout the District. This is true because the majority of students in DC public and public charter schools are African-American or Hispanic and come from low-income households. About 76,753 students were enrolled in public schools in the District of Columbia in the 2011-12 school year. Of these students, 72% of students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 87% are African American or Hispanic. Moreover, there are 58 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or school districts in DC and only one is large enough to have sufficient numbers of schools serving both high and low-poverty students for teacher equity strategies to be feasible. Therefore, DC's approach to ensuring teacher equity is to increase teacher effectiveness throughout DC.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) theory of action with respect to increasing teacher and leader effectiveness is that by providing exemplary guidance, technical assistance, and support for innovative programs, OSSE will assist LEAs in improving the quality of their educators and thereby improve student achievement and learning. Therefore, OSSE's role is to develop policies that allow for local flexibility, provide guidance about program requirements, disseminate and support innovative and promising practices and programs, and ensure effective monitoring by LEAs and the charter authorizer.

OSSE's policies, guidance and technical assistance focus on the following areas: improving the quality of teacher and leader evaluation systems; supporting programs and policies that improve teacher training and professional development; providing targeted professional development in particular areas of need; and collecting and analyzing data. These activities fit OSSE's unique role and leverage the work that LEAs are already doing.

**OSSE will provide exemplary guidance, technical assistance, and support for innovative programs to assist LEAs in improving educator quality.**

OSSE began work on these activities with the implementation of DC's Race to the Top (RTTT) grant, awarded in August of 2010. Of OSSE's 58 LEAs, 30 are participating in RTTT. RTTT LEAs comprise about

57 percent of the District’s LEAs, and these LEAs enroll approximately 90 percent of the District’s students. Increasing teacher and leader effectiveness was a primary goal of DC’s successful RTTT application because OSSE understands that effective teachers and leaders are the foundation of a high-performing educational system. OSSE has continued this work through DC’s successful request for flexibility from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements. The U.S. Department of Education awarded OSSE an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver in July 2013.

In addition, as part of the District of Columbia’s “Raising the Expectations Education Outcomes Omnibus Act of 2012,” OSSE will implement the “Highly Effective Teacher Incentive Act of 2012” – a pilot program to encourage highly-effective teachers to teach in high-need schools for at least three years.

### Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems

In its successful RTTT application, OSSE required every LEA to develop a rigorous teacher and leader evaluation system that incorporates student outcomes, includes multiple measures of performance, provides teachers with timely and constructive feedback, and informs human capital decisions. These systems are intended to provide teachers and leaders with clear expectations, create a common vision of effective instruction for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, offer meaningful feedback about how to improve practice, and inform teacher and leader professional development needs.

**The ESEA Flexibility Waiver expands the implementation of rigorous teacher and leader evaluation**

RTTT staff worked with the Human Capital Task Force to develop teacher and leader evaluation system requirements with the goal of improving instructional practice in RTTT-participating schools. The Human Capital Task Force consists of representatives from RTTT schools and LEAs that work on human capital issues. Members of the Task Force also reviewed RTTT LEAs’ evaluation plans to ensure they met rigorous requirements.

RTTT teacher and leader evaluation systems also incorporate student growth and outcomes so that educators are being evaluated based on their ability to help students achieve. RTTT charter LEAs chose to adopt the same value-added model for measuring a teacher’s contribution to student achievement that DCPS uses in its IMPACT evaluation system. OSSE has managed the implementation of the value-added model for RTTT charter LEAs for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. These results provide an objective measure of teacher performance for LEAs to use in their evaluation systems.

The ESEA Flexibility Waiver expands the implementation of rigorous teacher and leader evaluation systems throughout DC, since it applies to all LEAs that receive federal funds. One of the requirements of ESEA Flexibility is to implement rigorous evaluation systems that meet federal requirements. OSSE

has modified the RTTT requirements to address the new requirements of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. DCPS will ensure that their evaluation system meets the requirements of OSSE’s modified guidelines. Charter RTTT LEAs will amend their systems to incorporate the elements of Principle 3 that are not currently part of their RTTT-compliant teacher and principal evaluation systems, but will not be required to comply with the statewide guidelines developed by OSSE based on guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

While there is considerable overlap between RTTT and Principle 3, Principle 3 includes the following four additional elements:

- Including student achievement or growth measures for all teacher and leader evaluations;
- Requiring that LEAs use valid measures;
- Including teachers and principals in reviewing and revising evaluation systems; and
- Providing training to teachers, evaluators, and other school staff on evaluation systems, including working towards inter-rater reliability.

To support LEAs in designing and implementing evaluation systems, OSSE is providing technical assistance sessions to LEAs that address particular topics of interest, such as the components of effective evaluation systems, how to conduct observations and provide useful feedback, and how to ensure inter-rater reliability. OSSE has also developed a web page that contains information about teacher and principal evaluation requirements and policies, information about best practices, and presentation materials that LEAs and schools may use in their communications with teachers and principals. The web page is located on the Learn DC web site ([www.learnDC.org](http://www.learnDC.org)), DC’s Common Core State Standards web site.

OSSE is also supporting LEAs in their design of new evaluation systems by adopting voluntary professional standards for teachers and school leaders and for professional development. These standards are intended to provide guidance to LEAs in developing or modifying their learning frameworks, instructional and leadership rubrics, and evaluation systems. OSSE reviewed standards from other states and worked with a group of DC teachers and leaders to develop the final standards. The standards were released for public comment, and a webinar was held for LEA leaders on the draft standards. The final standards are located on OSSE’s website at the following location: <http://osse.dc.gov/page/teacher-and-leader-evaluation>.

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## **Teacher Recruitment and Training Programs**

### ***Charter School Teacher Pipelines Grants***

The DC OSSE’s Charter School Teacher Pipelines Grant (Pipelines) supports the development or expansion of teacher residency programs that recruit, train, evaluate, and place highly effective teachers in both traditional and public charter schools serving high proportions of low-income students in DC.

This is a competitive grant that is part of the RTTT grant program. OSSE currently supports three Pipelines programs:

- UTC/Charter School Collaborative Teacher Pipeline: led by Cesar Chavez Public Charter School working with the Urban Teacher Center and nine other Local Education Agencies
- Capital Teaching Residency: a partnership between KIPP DC and E.L. Haynes Public Charter Schools working with The New Teacher Project and five other LEAs
- Capital City Public Charter School: a partnership between the Center for Inspired Teaching, Capital City Public Charter School, and four other Local Education Agencies.

All of these programs train teacher residents who work with an experienced mentor teacher for a year. The programs give teachers opportunities to teach small groups for part of the day before they take on their own classrooms. The programs also have a rigorous recruitment and selection process for both teacher residents and mentor teachers, and provide professional development and coursework to residents to prepare them to be effective when they take on their own classrooms after their year of training.

### ***Highly-Effective Teacher Incentive Program***

Title III of the “Raising the Expectations for Education Outcomes Omnibus Act of 2012” establishes a pilot program to incentivize teachers rated as highly effective as measured by IMPACT or another approved evaluation instrument to move to a high-need school within the District of Columbia. This incentive program will take effect during the 2013-2014 school year and anticipates selection and placement of twenty highly-effective teachers--five teachers in four high-need schools. Teachers will be placed in the late spring of 2013 and will begin their placements in August of 2013. Teachers will have the opportunity to receive a variety of incentives to participate, including a \$10,000 bonus, \$5,000 in tuition assistance or student loan reimbursement, and access to homebuyer assistance.

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Highly-effective teachers are those who have been rated highly effective on IMPACT or, in the case of charters, an agreed upon evaluation system. Teachers will be selected through an application and interview process, and will be evaluated according to several core competencies such as the ability to do the following: collaborate effectively with colleagues and administrators, critically reflect on and learn from challenges, and set goals and clearly communicate a concrete vision of expected outcomes.

For traditional public schools, high-need schools are defined as those with proficiency rates at or below 40% in both reading and math, a minimum of 200 students, and at least 75% of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. For charter schools, high-need schools are defined as those that have been categorized as Tier II schools on the Public Charter School Board’s Performance Management Framework, have a 75% poverty rate or greater, have been in operation for five years or more, and have at least 200 students. OSSE is in the process of selecting schools for participation and anticipates selecting two charter schools and two traditional public schools.

### ***Teacher Preparation***

The Teacher Preparation Program Profile (formerly Scorecard) is a part of the RTTT program that is intended to evaluate teacher preparation programs in DC using a number of performance indicators, including evaluation data, which will measure new teachers' impact on student achievement. Once the profiles are operational, LEAs will have better information to use in determining where to recruit new teachers and can recruit teachers from higher performing programs.

### ***Revision of Licensure Requirements***

OSSE's Educator Licensure and Accreditation unit also plans to incorporate components of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in its elementary, English, and mathematics licensure requirements as the unit revamps its state accreditation and licensure requirements in coordination with the signing of a renewed state partnership agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly NCATE). OSSE anticipates completing this work by the end of SY 2013-14. These new requirements will help to ensure that new teachers have the capacity to teach to the CCSS.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

As mentioned earlier, as part of DC's RTTT commitments, OSSE has implemented a value-added model to measure teacher effectiveness which has enabled OSSE to analyze the distribution of effective teachers. OSSE contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to look at the relationship between value-added results and poverty and to identify high-poverty schools that have a large proportion of ineffective teachers. These schools had to develop teacher improvement plans that included a variety of high-impact strategies for implementation in the 2012-13 school year.

The DC OSSE also asked Mathematica Policy Research to look at the relationship between poverty and teacher effectiveness as measured by the value-added results. The preliminary analysis found a small gap in teacher effectiveness in mathematics and no gap in English/Language Arts, indicating that teacher effectiveness may not vary much for low-income and higher income students in DC. Finally, OSSE will also look at the relationship between teacher effectiveness, based on the entire evaluation rating, and poverty. This analysis will be suggestive only, because every LEA has a different evaluation system and therefore it is hard to aggregate evaluation results in an analysis.

### **Professional Development**

OSSE will continue to provide high-quality professional development offerings to teachers and principals throughout the city to improve instruction for ELL and special education students and help educators effectively implement the CCSS. OSSE's Training and Technical Assistance Unit offers a variety of professional learning experiences for special and general educators that focus on the following areas:

- Compliance with federal and local requirements for special education and related services;
- Effective pedagogy and rigorous curriculum, including alignment to the CCSS;
- Implementation of differentiated instruction and behavioral support; and
- Appropriate use of accommodations, modifications, and assistive technologies.

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OSSE will also continue to provide targeted professional development for teachers of ELL students. Specifically, these sessions will focus on English Language Development standards, language-based intervention and support during content instruction and assessment, and the effective use of assessment results to increase student achievement.

### ***Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness***

Finally, another competitive grant that is part of RTTT, the Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness grant focuses on developing professional learning communities that work together to address an educational challenge. These communities improve the effectiveness of participating teachers by providing common professional development and sharing promising practices. Participating teachers are then able to share what they have learned with other teachers in their schools. In May of 2011, a grant was awarded to a consortium of LEAs led by E. L. Haynes Public Charter School, a high-performing local charter school, to develop an online library of video lessons aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This professional learning community engages in a lesson study process to develop high quality lessons and unit plans aligned to the CCSS.

In the summer of 2012, a second grant was awarded to a consortium of LEAs lead by Cesar Chavez Public Policy Charter Schools. Their professional learning community focuses on developing school leaders through site-based coaching, providing common core aligned professional development, providing training to special education teachers to support students in meeting the CCSS, and developing a resource portal of high quality unit plans, lessons, and other materials that are aligned to the CCSS.

In addition, there are several ways OSSE will support the efforts of LEAs and schools to implement the CCSS and to infuse the CCSS into classroom teaching. For example, the DC OSSE will provide professional development to LEAs and schools on the instructional shifts within the CCSS, methods of assessing the quality and complexity of texts, and helping students respond to text-based questions and write evidence-based responses.

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OSSE will also continue to provide professional development on the state assessments, which have been aligned to the CCSS. These professional development sessions focus on the alignment between the assessments and the CCSS and will help educators understand and interpret the results of these assessments.

### **Conclusion**

OSSE is engaged in a variety of activities to improve teacher effectiveness that take advantage of the city's unique context. Through its work under Race to the Top, the ESEA Waiver, and the Highly Effective Teacher Incentive program, OSSE is providing exemplary standards, guidance, technical assistance, and support for innovative programs so that LEAs can improve the effectiveness of existing educators and recruit and train highly-effective teachers for high-needs schools. These activities work together to ensure that all students in high-needs schools have access to effective teachers.