

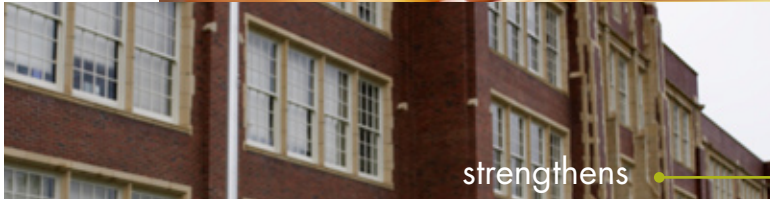
ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT 2000-2006



nurtures



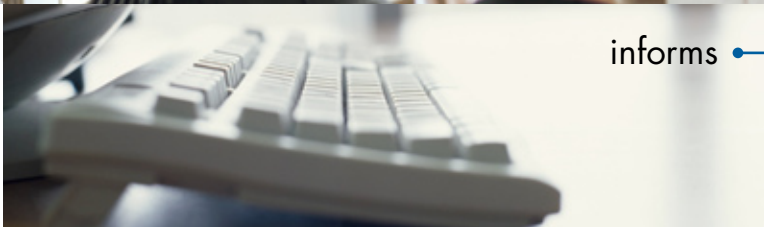
prepares



strengthens



invests



informs

DC **STATE EDUCATION OFFICE** ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

NURTURES

PREPARES

STRENGTHENS

INVESTS

INFORMS

TABLE OF **CONTENTS**

DC STATE EDUCATION OFFICE HISTORICAL TIMELINE :: **page 1**

WELCOME LETTER FROM DEBORAH GIST :: **page 4**

SEO AT A GLANCE :: **page 5**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS :: **page 7**

ABOUT **SEO** :: **page 9**

SEO PROGRAMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NUTRITION SERVICES :: **page 13**

EDUCATION PROGRAMS :: **page 17**

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS :: **page 19**

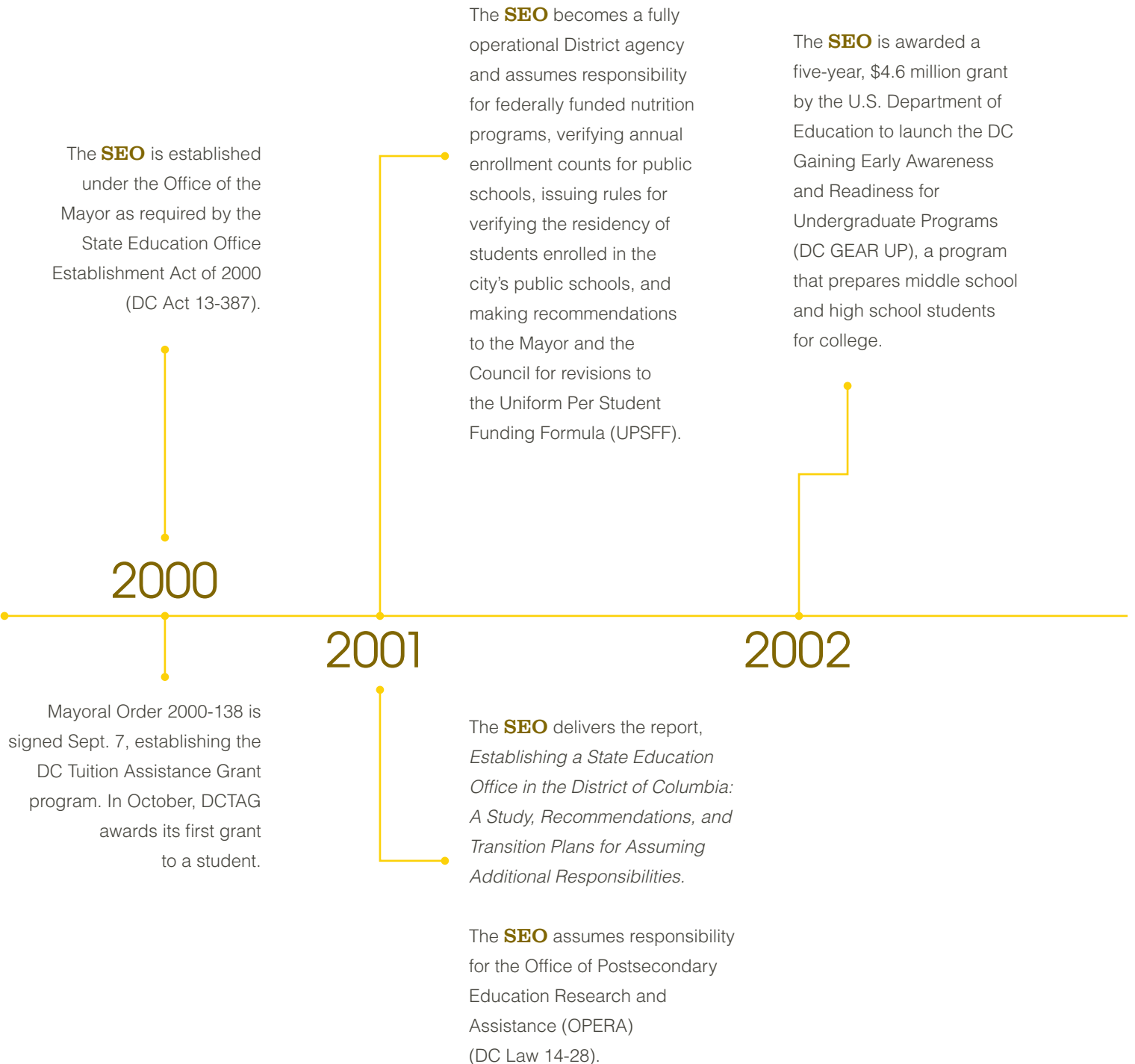
HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SERVICES :: **page 21**

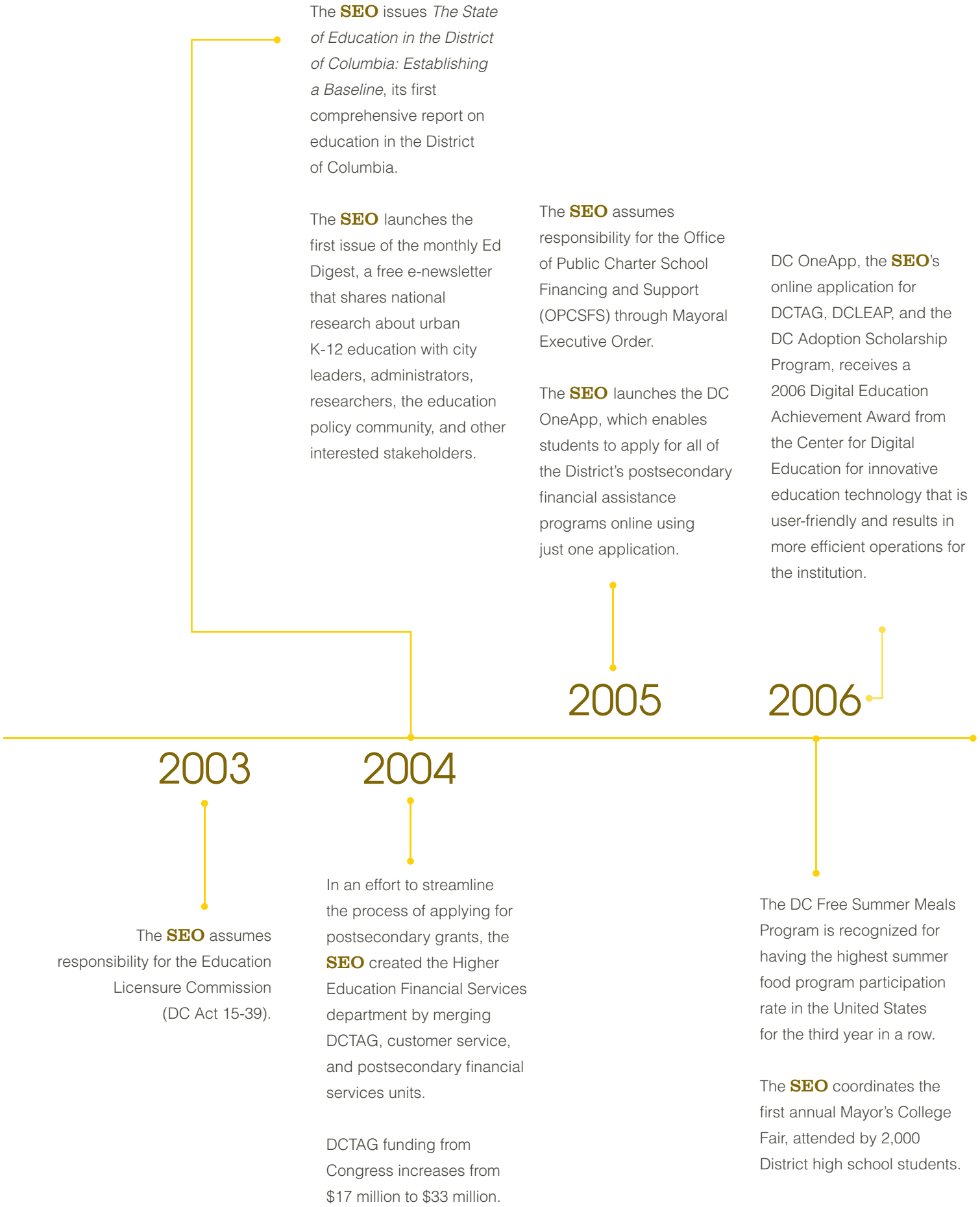
POLICY, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS :: **page 25**

FUTURE PLANS :: **page 31**

SEO STAFF :: **page 35**

DC STATE EDUCATION OFFICE HISTORICAL **TIMELINE**





The **SEO** issues *The State of Education in the District of Columbia: Establishing a Baseline*, its first comprehensive report on education in the District of Columbia.

The **SEO** launches the first issue of the monthly Ed Digest, a free e-newsletter that shares national research about urban K-12 education with city leaders, administrators, researchers, the education policy community, and other interested stakeholders.

The **SEO** assumes responsibility for the Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support (OPCSFS) through Mayoral Executive Order.

The **SEO** launches the DC OneApp, which enables students to apply for all of the District's postsecondary financial assistance programs online using just one application.

DC OneApp, the **SEO's** online application for DCTAG, DCLEAP, and the DC Adoption Scholarship Program, receives a 2006 Digital Education Achievement Award from the Center for Digital Education for innovative education technology that is user-friendly and results in more efficient operations for the institution.

2003

The **SEO** assumes responsibility for the Education Licensure Commission (DC Act 15-39).

2004

In an effort to streamline the process of applying for postsecondary grants, the **SEO** created the Higher Education Financial Services department by merging DCTAG, customer service, and postsecondary financial services units.

DCTAG funding from Congress increases from \$17 million to \$33 million.

2005

2006

The DC Free Summer Meals Program is recognized for having the highest summer food program participation rate in the United States for the third year in a row.

The **SEO** coordinates the first annual Mayor's College Fair, attended by 2,000 District high school students.





Dear Readers:

I am pleased to present this report on the accomplishments of the State Education Office (SEO). Created in 2000, the State Education Office has made significant strides in increasing its level of efficiency and accountability as it has performed its state-level education functions and provided services to District residents. The SEO has emerged as an agency poised to carry the District of Columbia forward as a national model of educational excellence.

One of the most exciting accomplishments of the State Education Office has been increasing college access for District residents. Every year, more students participate in our three postsecondary grant programs—the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG), the DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (DC LEAP), and the DC Adoption Scholarship. As a result, the number of District students pursuing higher education continues to rise. The federally funded DC GEAR UP program, managed by the SEO, works to increase college awareness and to provide support for District residents at the middle and high school level. DC GEAR UP also helps students navigate the complicated entry requirements for college admissions. With the program’s support, local students are now able to find the academic assistance and guidance they need to successfully enroll in and complete postsecondary programs.

The SEO has also been effective in providing free and nutritious meals to District residents who qualify for federal nutrition assistance. Designated as the most successful program in the country for feeding children under the federal Free Summer Meals program, the SEO’s Nutrition Services department is a model of success. By ensuring children receive nutritious meals, the SEO pledges its support to developing healthy eating habits for District students.

The agency is also considered the premier education policy research arm of the District of Columbia government. The SEO performs extensive analyses that lead to annual recommendations for the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula, the main funding mechanism of public schools in the District of Columbia. Additionally, the SEO launched several independent research projects on behalf of the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia and created the SEO Ed Digest, a monthly collection of scholarly articles and research on education policy that affect residents of the District of Columbia.

It is my hope that this accomplishments report will provide a more in-depth understanding of the work that the State Education Office performs on behalf of District residents every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Gist". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah A. Gist

State Education Officer

• **OUR MISSION.** The District of Columbia State Education Office promotes learning for District residents of all ages by providing access to educational information, resources, and services for a higher quality of life.

We provide access to information through policy analysis, research, and community outreach; resources such as postsecondary grants; and other educational support services that enable residents to make informed decisions regarding learning opportunities.

OUR VISION. The State Education Office is the agency that is leading the District of Columbia's transformation into a national model of educational excellence.

DC State Education Office (**SEO**)

AT A GLANCE



NURTURES

The Nutrition Services department ensures that children and families receive year-round access to well-balanced meals by providing federal reimbursements, training, and nutrition education to providers. Nutrition Services assists providers in maintaining a high level of compliance with U.S. Department of Agriculture rules and regulations so they can improve the overall health and learning potential of District residents who are at risk for hunger.

PREPARES

The Education Programs department promotes academic achievement and lifelong learning. Programs include DC GEAR UP, a college readiness program for middle and high school students and the Education Licensure Commission (ELC) that ensures private, postsecondary educational institutions offer sound programs to residents. These and other programs work together to inspire residents of all ages to pursue education.

STRENGTHENS

The Educational Facilities and Partnerships department works to ensure that educational facilities provide appropriate learning environments for the District's students. The department promotes better and more efficient use of educational facilities through models such as community schools, co-location, joint-use, and public-private partnerships.

INVESTS

The Higher Education Financial Services department administers the District's higher education financial aid through the DC Tuition Assistance Grant, DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership, and DC Adoption Scholarship programs. Together these programs have enabled increasing numbers of District residents to pursue postsecondary education.

INFORMS

The Policy, Research and Analysis department provides policymakers, residents, and parents with reliable and accurate information to make well-informed decisions about education. Various city agencies and individuals collect a wealth of data on our schools, students, and services. The SEO has been instrumental in capturing and reporting this information—often for the first time—to advance educational excellence.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NUTRITION SERVICES:

For three consecutive years, the SEO's Free Summer Meals Program has been recognized by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) for the highest summer meal participation rate in the United States. The District provided summer meals to 77% of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch at school, far exceeding the national average of 18%.



EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

In 2006, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) and the AT&T Foundation awarded DC GEAR UP a \$50,000 Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Education grant to support the DC GEAR UP / Georgetown Summer Academic Enrichment Program. This program focused its science curriculum on the study of genetics and included a trip to Latin America, where 40 DC GEAR UP students participated in lectures and scientific observations at universities in Panama and Costa Rica.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

Funding awarded to public charter schools for the purchase, construction, and renovation of school facilities has improved learning environments for 11,943 school children. To date, \$29 million has been distributed through the credit enhancement and direct loan programs.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SERVICES:

The SEO's postsecondary grant programs have been an important factor in increasing the percentage of District residents attending college. Since the inception of the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) program, the percentage of public school students entering college has doubled, from 30% in 1999 to 60% in 2005.

POLICY, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS:

This department plays a vital role in providing the objective data needed to revise and implement the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). Information developed by the Policy, Research and Analysis department have led to an increase in the amount of funding for DC public schools and the development of funding weights that accurately reflect the relative costs of critical program elements and student needs.



ABOUT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE EDUCATION OFFICE

The SEO supports existing education initiatives and launches new programs to boost the District's quality of education. By leveraging the resources of the federal government, public and private entities citywide, the SEO touches the lives of thousands of DC residents every year.

Through a wide range of initiatives, the SEO provides:

- Access to reliable information to help residents make informed decisions about educational opportunities.
- Programs, services, and other resources that ensure residents reach their full potential as lifelong learners.
- Efficient management practices in overseeing state-level programs and services.

HISTORY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In 2000, the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia approved legislation to establish the city's first State Education Office. The initial legislation required the SEO to manage the following state-level functions:

- Exercise authority for all federal child nutrition programs in the District.
- Verify fall enrollment counts for all public and public charter schools.
- Formulate and publish the rules for documenting and verifying District residency for public and public charter school students.
- Make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for periodic revisions to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF).



VISION

The District of Columbia State Education Office is the agency that is leading the District of Columbia's transformation into a national model of educational excellence.

This legislation required the SEO to assume full authority of these functions by 2001. In addition, it called on the SEO to conduct a study to evaluate the viability of assuming 10 additional state-level functions. Just nine months after it was established, the agency developed and presented its first report, *Establishing a State Education Office in the District of Columbia: A Study, Recommendations, and Transition Plans for Assuming Additional Responsibilities*. During this period, the SEO also defined its roles and responsibilities, developed plans to fulfill its mandated responsibilities, and became a fully operating District agency in September 2001.

With its staffing and infrastructure in place, the SEO began to actively pursue opportunities to address emerging educational needs. Today, the SEO is composed of programs that operate at all levels along the education continuum—from early childhood through postsecondary education. In addition, the SEO responds to the demand for objective data and analysis on education-related issues and develops strategies to combat problems facing the District of Columbia, such as low levels of adult literacy and low academic achievement among children and youth.

MISSION

The District of Columbia State Education Office promotes learning for District residents of all ages by providing access to educational information, resources, and services to support a higher quality of life.





MISSION AND FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

When the SEO was established, it consisted of a diverse group of programs and responsibilities. Today, the SEO operates under a cohesive mission and framework that addresses residents' educational needs at all levels. Through its wide range of programs the SEO:

- **Nurtures** by ensuring that children receive the nutrition they need in order to learn;
- **Prepares** District residents from preschool through postsecondary education to succeed in school and in life;
- **Strengthens** educational facilities to provide appropriate learning environments for District residents and become a resource for the entire community;
- **Invests** in District residents by expanding their ability to pursue and succeed in postsecondary education; and
- **Informs** by acting as the premier source for information about education-related issues in the District.

RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND SERVICE

The SEO has charted a course that will support the District's effort to reach higher expectations for education. Charged with critical tasks that impact the lives of all District residents, the SEO strives to be accountable, objective, collaborative, accessible, and efficient. This report describes the SEO's outstanding record of accomplishment over the last five years. As a young and enterprising agency, the SEO has used the past five years to create a solid foundation to address the District's increasingly diverse and complex education needs. As a result, the SEO has become a unique and vital education resource for the District of Columbia.

In July 2006, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) reported that DC's Free Summer Meals Program outperformed similar programs in all 50 states. Nationally an average of just 18% of children who receive a free or reduced-price lunch during the regular school year receive a free lunch during the summer. In 2005, the District fed 77% of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch at school.

NUTRITION SERVICES

Good nutrition is essential not only to overall health, but also to the learning potential of children and adults. In the District of Columbia, one out of 10 households has a limited ability to purchase or access nutritious foods, and one out of three District children is at risk of hunger. The SEO's Nutrition Services department ensures that children and families receive year-round access to well-balanced meals by providing federal reimbursements, training, and nutrition education to program providers.

With funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the DC government, the SEO provides cash reimbursements to schools, community organizations, and child and adult care facilities that serve nutritious meals and snacks to children and some disabled adults. The programs ensure that children eat to learn—and learn to eat well.

The SEO is responsible for maintaining compliance with federal guidelines in the operation of the following:

- After School Snack Programs
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Food Distribution Program
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Special Milk Program
- DC Free Summer Meals Program

Expanding the Summer Food Services Program

In response to the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force for Special Nutrition and Commodities Programs, the SEO has made the DC Free Summer Meals Program one of its highest priorities. The SEO's Nutrition Services department leveraged every opportunity to strengthen and expand the program.

The number of children participating grew by 86%, from 14,848 in 2002 to 27,575 in 2005, with meals served at over 376 Free Summer Meals locations.

To increase the number of residents accessing the Free Summer Meals Program, the SEO developed an aggressive marketing and community outreach campaign, using television, newspaper, video, radio, posters, flyers, and Metro advertising. The SEO partnered with eight other District agencies to conduct outreach. The campaign, called “DC Summer Fun,” included a pamphlet that was mailed to every household with children in DC public schools and 30-second public service announcements featuring the Mayor and R&B singer John Legend. The SEO also teamed with neighborhood organizations to coordinate activities with schools and enlisted community and nonprofit groups to disseminate program information to households citywide.

“Cheyenne is obsessive about learning and she is very particular about eating healthy food. I am very proud of Cheyenne and am grateful that she has access to healthy, nutritious food through the DC Free Summer Meals program that comes at no cost to me.”

—Ms. Carline Coote, mother of Cheyenne Coote


Improving the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The SEO’s Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reimburses child care centers, family child care homes, after school care, and homeless and domestic violence shelters for serving healthy meals and snacks to children, youth, and some disabled adults and individuals over age 60. The CACFP supports providers as they meet the nutritional needs for nearly 5,000 individuals each weekday.

The SEO initiated the CACFP Collaborative Partnership in February 2004 to improve this vital program and enhance its image in the community.



The SEO implemented an improved claims processing system that has significantly reduced the amount of time it takes for providers to be reimbursed for meals—previously it took 45 days, now it takes just 25.



Over the past three years, the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs have served over 30 million meals in the District of Columbia.

The partnership aimed to increase program participation, reduce paperwork, and streamline agency policy. Its members include the DC Department of Human Services, Early Care and Education Administration; DC Hunger Solutions/Food Research and Action Center; and the DC Department of Health, Licensing Office.

Through a needs assessment analysis and stakeholder surveys, the partnership identified gaps in service and the administrative challenges faced by providers. The partnership developed and implemented action plans that have improved service delivery and increased provider participation to 286 child and adult care homes and centers. The agencies involved in the partnership continue to make program improvements and increase provider participation.

"Reimbursements from the Child and Adult Care Food Program are desperately needed at my child care center. Most of our children are eligible to receive the meals at the free rate, and most are low income. The SEO staff provides a lot of local program support and monitoring and technical assistance, and in the past few years the program has become much more efficient."

—Marilyn Ricker, Director, Easter Seals Child Development Center

Helping Schools Meet the Nutritional Needs of Students

The SEO oversees nutrition programs for schools and child care facilities throughout the District. The National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Special Milk Program enable children to receive nutritious meals and milk during the school day. In addition, these programs promote learning readiness and healthy eating habits.

"Without the National School Lunch Program, about 60% of our children would not be able to afford a healthy and nutritious meal. The program definitely benefits the children at Paul Public Charter School!"

*—Tanya Burton, Director of Administrative Services,
Paul Public Charter School*



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The SEO promotes learning for District residents of all ages. It is the only DC agency that serves students from pre-K through postsecondary education, as well as adult learners. With agencies citywide engaged in creating greater opportunities for lifelong learning, the SEO is the hub for integrating their efforts and a catalyst for inspiring residents of all ages to pursue education.

Preparing Students for Higher Education

DC Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (DC GEAR UP) – DC GEAR UP is part of the SEO's long-term strategy to increase the number of students that are ready to succeed in college. The program operates using a cohort model and provides a full range of academic and support services to specific groups of middle and high school students. As students are promoted to the next grade level, they will continue to receive services to ensure academic success. Partners include local colleges and universities—Georgetown University, Howard University, Southeastern University, Trinity College, and the University of the District of Columbia. Through mentoring, tutoring, parental involvement, academic enrichment, and access to information about higher education, students who want to go to college begin building the foundation for making their dreams a reality.

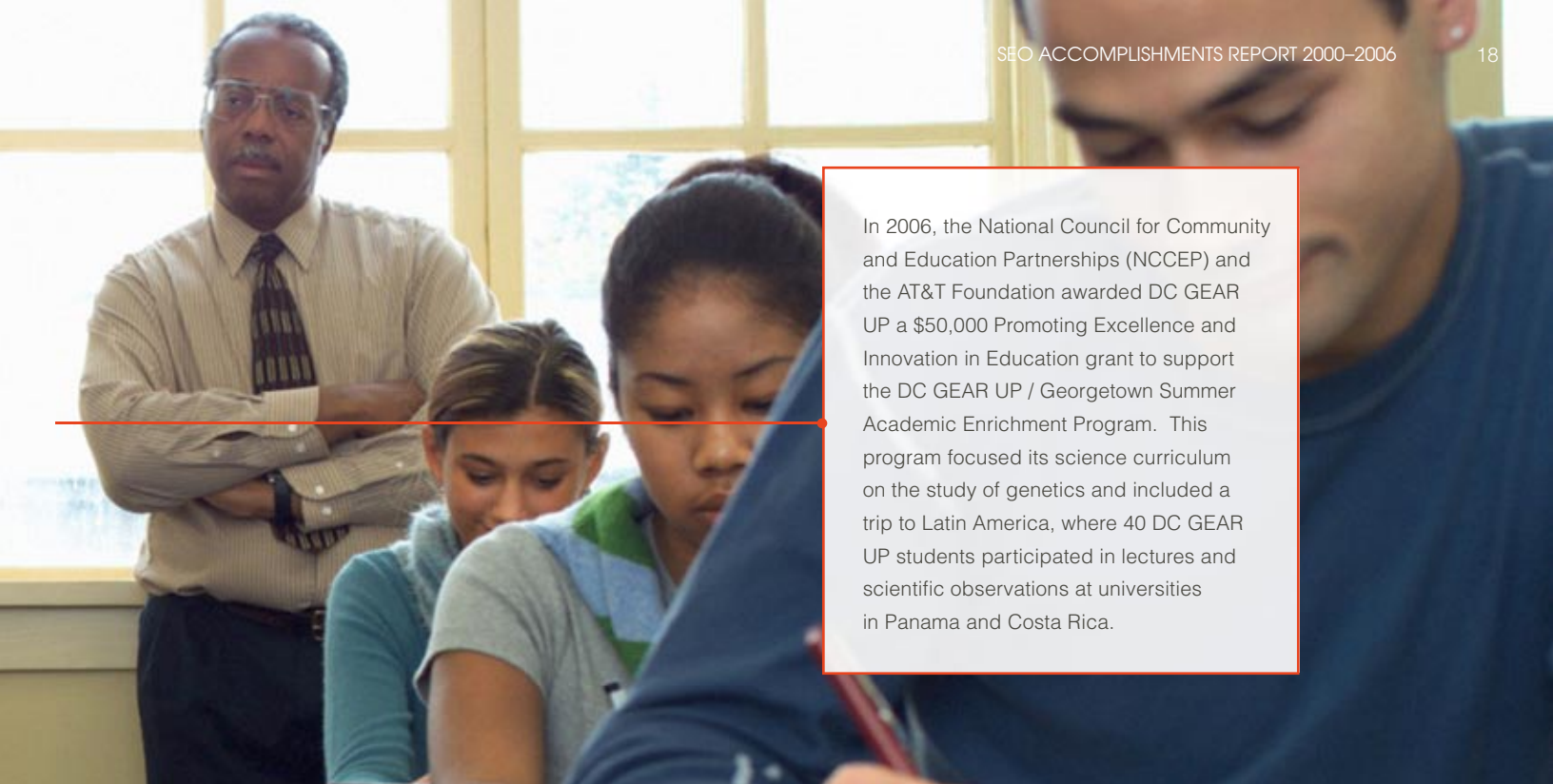
DC GEAR UP participants are also eligible to receive scholarships upon acceptance to an institution of higher learning.

Helping Students Succeed in College

In partnership with DC Public Schools, District of Columbia College Access Program, DC Education Compact, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the SEO commissioned a study to better understand the challenges District students face in getting to college. The study—*Double the Numbers for College Success: A Call to Action for the District of Columbia*—was released in October 2006 and included a five-year analysis of the college graduation rates of 9th grade students enrolled in DC public schools. The research found that only 9% of these students obtained a postsecondary degree within five years of enrolling in college, compared to 23% nationwide. Although these statistics paint a bleak picture, the report provides a foundation for moving forward to make significant improvements in the District's educational systems.

“DC GEAR UP has done so many things for me. This program has helped me with my attitude and how to get along with my teachers. It taught me how to have respect for myself and for people around me. Because of DC GEAR UP, I am an honor roll student. My grade point average is 3.5.”

—Marcus Robinson



In 2006, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) and the AT&T Foundation awarded DC GEAR UP a \$50,000 Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Education grant to support the DC GEAR UP / Georgetown Summer Academic Enrichment Program. This program focused its science curriculum on the study of genetics and included a trip to Latin America, where 40 DC GEAR UP students participated in lectures and scientific observations at universities in Panama and Costa Rica.

The SEO is prepared to develop and support efforts to ensure that more students succeed in and graduate from college.

Evaluating and Licensing Educational Programs

Education Licensure Commission – Through this commission, the SEO works to protect District residents' access to quality postsecondary educational programs by ensuring that private institutions operating in the District are valid and provide sound educational services to residents. The SEO and the commission establish standards, conduct site evaluations, investigate complaints, and maintain transcripts of closed schools.

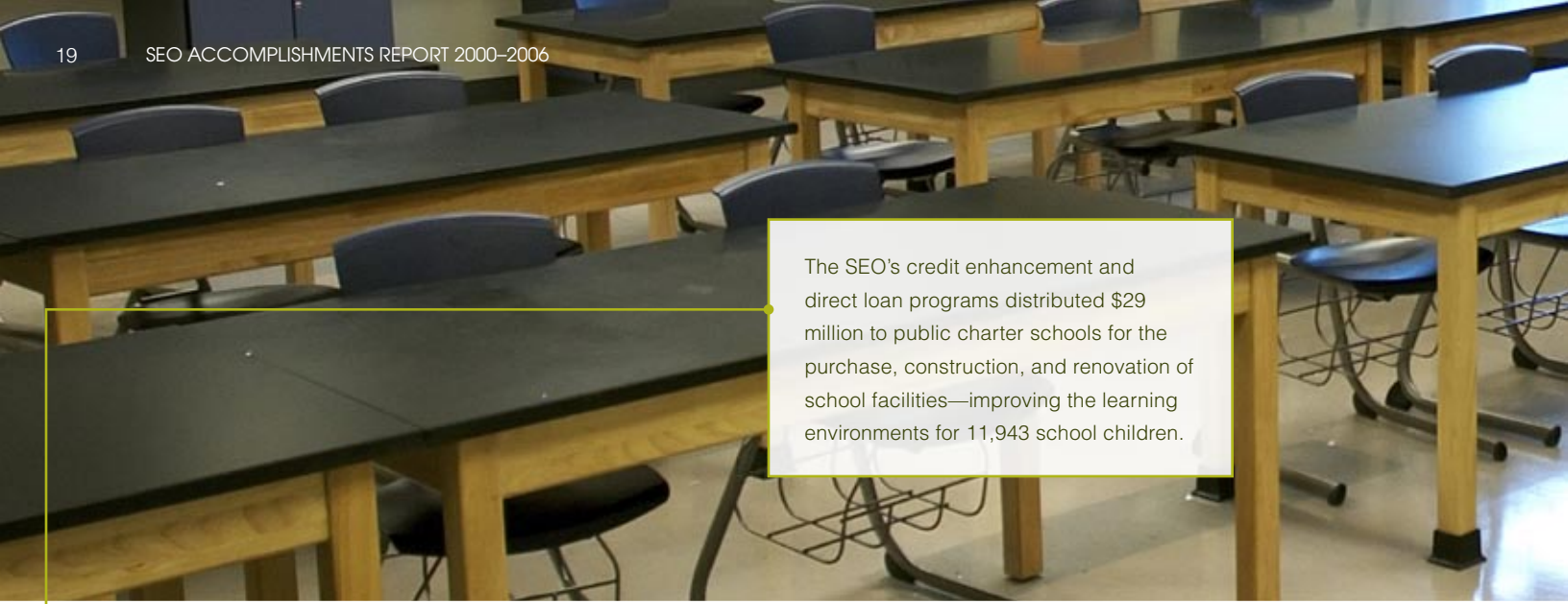
Serving Learners Through Education Programs

Learn and Serve America – A quality education includes opportunities for students to make a difference in their communities. Through this program, the SEO works with Serve DC, the District's lead agency for promoting service and volunteerism. This initiative provides direct and indirect support to schools, community groups, and higher education institutions to facilitate service-learning projects in the District.

State Higher Education Executive Office (SHEEO) – In collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia and other institutions, this office ensures that high quality postsecondary education is available to all District residents. The SHEEO works to develop and sustain a system of higher education by examining issues such as demographic shifts, the emerging global economy, and the need for a highly skilled workforce.

Teacher Quality Improvement Grant – The SEO administers a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that focuses on building the skills teachers need to improve the quality of instruction in mathematics and science so that children can achieve at higher levels. Subgrants for professional development activities are made to collaborative groups composed of university and college-level departments of education, public schools, and community agencies.

Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Program – Through a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, the SEO partners with correctional facilities and community colleges to provide youth offenders (ages 18–24) from the District with career training opportunities. By accessing this training, these youth are more likely to find and retain employment after their release, making recidivism less likely.



The SEO's credit enhancement and direct loan programs distributed \$29 million to public charter schools for the purchase, construction, and renovation of school facilities—improving the learning environments for 11,943 school children.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The SEO's Educational Facilities and Partnerships department works to ensure that educational facilities provide appropriate learning environments for District students. The department promotes better use of educational facilities through models such as community schools, co-location, joint use, and public-private partnerships. The department is composed of two main divisions: Public Charter School Financing and Support and Educational Partnerships.

Providing Public Charter School Financing and Support

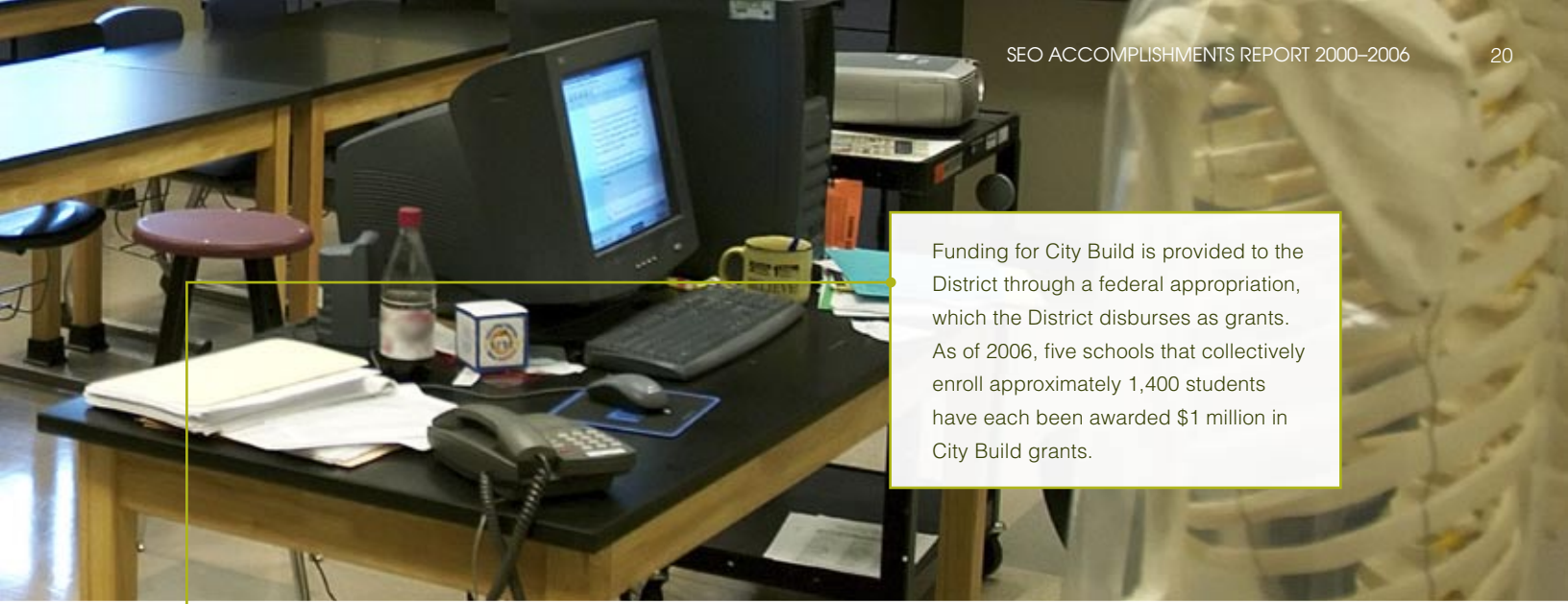
Congress established the Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support (OPCSFS) in 2000 to provide financing support and technical assistance to public charter schools seeking to renovate and/or acquire their facilities. Originally located in the government's Department of Insurance Securities and Banking, the OPCSFS was moved to the SEO to create a single point of contact within the government for public charter schools to obtain technical assistance, financing assistance, and guidance in determining where to locate school facilities. This has more fully integrated public charter schools into the District's educational policy and program agendas and helped them to develop partnerships that improve services for charter schools and the city as a whole.

Under the guidance of the SEO, the OPCSFS has adopted more effective and efficient procedures for providing direct loans and credit enhancements to public charter schools in the District. For example, the OPCSFS has strengthened its underwriting process to ensure more strategic lending practices. Additionally, the OPCSFS now performs a financial credit worthiness analysis as well as an academic quality/school governance assessment for each applicant school. The OPCSFS has also established a disbursement process that involves quality assurances while also creating the oversight required to ensure both the proper disbursement and collection of funds.

Supporting Educational Partnerships

The Educational Partnerships division creates partnerships between government agencies, DCPS, public charter schools, and nongovernmental organizations for the purposes of planning and improving service delivery. This division encompasses four primary activities: the City Build Initiative, community schools, public-private partnerships, and the Incubator Project.

City Build: The City Build Initiative is a joint education and neighborhood development initiative that promotes community revitalization with a particular emphasis on strengthening public charter schools.



Funding for City Build is provided to the District through a federal appropriation, which the District disburses as grants. As of 2006, five schools that collectively enroll approximately 1,400 students have each been awarded \$1 million in City Build grants.

The aim of City Build stretches beyond advancing excellence in academics to encouraging community development, promoting neighborhood revitalization, attracting and retaining residents, and creating partnerships between public charter schools and community organizations.

The philosophy of City Build is that improving education is integral to revitalizing neighborhoods and promoting urban development. Quality schools can contribute to and encourage economic development in a specific neighborhood by attracting and retaining residents, attracting business investment, and encouraging community collaboration. Schools seeking to be awarded a City Build grant must demonstrate the following:

- A location in a neighborhood where there is the potential for revitalization
- A plan to become a “Center of the Community” and engage local residents
- Support from community groups/organizations
- Academic quality

Schools receiving grants through the first City Build grant program include: Capital City, Thurgood Marshall Academy, Two Rivers, Tree of Life, and Washington Math Science and Technology.

Community Schools: The SEO is promoting the creation of community schools in the District. Community schools are open to students, families, and residents of the community before and after school and may provide programs such as family literacy, adult education, health and well-being, and continuing education. A key component of the community school model is partnership among the school, families, and various community agencies and organizations.

Public-Private Partnerships: Public-private partnerships establish relationships that incorporate the expertise of governmental agencies, private entities, public schools, and nongovernment organizations to provide exemplary educational services and opportunities to residents of the District.

Incubator Project: The Incubator Project gives newly established public charter schools the opportunity to operate in a facility that is designed to support educational services to students until they can establish the operating history needed to secure a permanent facility. Funding for the Incubator Project consists of a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education and a \$4 million Congressional appropriation.



HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SERVICES

As the cost of higher education continues to rise, paying for college is a significant obstacle for many DC residents. The SEO's Higher Education Financial Services (HEFS) department helps residents find a route to college and other postsecondary education programs.

Since the inception of the DCTAG program, the percentage of DCPS students attending college has doubled, from 30% in 1999 to 60% in 2005.

Facilitating Access to Financial Aid for Higher Education

DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program (DCTAG) – Created in 1999, DCTAG gives District residents the opportunity to attend public colleges and universities and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) anywhere in the country. Administered by the SEO since 2001, the program has provided assistance to 10,000 District residents.

Prior to the creation of DCTAG, high school graduates who wanted to attend a public institution outside of the District paid non-resident tuition rates. During the 1999–2000 academic year, dependent undergraduates from the District paid an average of \$7,890 per year in tuition—more than twice the national average, despite a poverty rate among the highest in the nation.

In its first year, DCTAG provided funding to 949 college-bound students. Five years later, that number had grown to 4,800.



DCTAG has dramatically expanded higher education options for DC residents. DCTAG participants attend highly regarded public institutions including the University of California – Berkeley, the University of Michigan, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Virginia; HBCUs with rich legacies of excellence, such as Florida A&M, Hampton University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College; and local jewels such as American University, Catholic University, Georgetown University, The George Washington University, Howard University, and Trinity College.

DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (DC LEAP) – DC LEAP offers need-based grants to District residents for education or training beyond the high school level. Under the SEO’s stewardship, total DC LEAP awards increased from \$570,000 for 635 students in 2000 to \$2.9 million for 2,200 students in 2005.

DC Adoption Scholarship – The SEO administers this program, which provides grants of up to \$10,000 per year to students who were adopted through DC’s Child and Family Services Agency after October 2001, and/or children who lost one or both parents in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

“My daughter graduated from Tennessee State University in August 2003. I owe special thanks to the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program for making this possible for my family. This program has definitely made a difference in our lives. My daughter is the first one in our family to graduate from college for many generations.”

— Tina Carter



DC OneApp received a 2006 Digital Education Achievement Award from the Center for Digital Education—the leading source for analysis on the use of technology in education—for cutting-edge, innovative education technology that is user-friendly and results in more efficient operations.

In the fall of 2006, the SEO partnered with the University of the District of Columbia to coordinate the first annual Mayor's College Fair, where more than 2,000 high school seniors from across the District were able to access information on private scholarships and meet representatives from over 60 colleges and universities.



Streamlining Application Processes

The SEO created DC OneApp when its staff found that financial assistance applicants were not applying for all of the grants for which they were eligible. This innovative web-based tool allows students to use a single application to seek support from all three SEO-administered financial aid programs. Now program staff can determine students' eligibility for DCTAG, DC LEAP, and the DC Adoption Scholarship Program at the same time. The implementation of DC OneApp also dramatically reduced the time it takes to process applications from 30 business days to just 10.

Increasing Postsecondary Retention and Graduation Rates

The SEO is committed to ensuring that students who are admitted to college graduate. HEFS is developing strategies to improve college retention rates for students participating in its financial assistance programs. These strategies include:

- Gathering information from colleges and universities about the retention programs available to students;
- Communicating with officials from participating colleges and universities, including regular calls and periodic site visits;
- Developing an appropriate mechanism to collect retention data, including annual surveys for students and college officials; and
- Creating new support systems through a student ambassador program and parent advisory panel.



Increasing Access to Information and Resources

The SEO works in partnership with nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, and schools to ensure that all residents who want to further their education learn about applying to college and financial assistance programs. To connect students with information about colleges and universities, the SEO hosts college fairs and financial aid workshops throughout the metropolitan area.



POLICY, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The District of Columbia's policymakers, education professionals, residents, and parents need accessible and reliable information to make well-informed decisions about education. Various city agencies and individuals collect a wealth of data and other information on our schools, students, and services. Yet verifying, presenting, and disseminating this information has been a longstanding challenge. The SEO has been instrumental in capturing and reporting this information—often for the first time—to advance educational excellence.



The department's work with revising and implementing the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula has provided the critical foundation for increases in the amount of funding for DC public schools and the development of funding weights that accurately reflect the relative costs of critical program elements and student needs.



SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL BUDGET PROCESS

The SEO gathers data and provides information that policymakers need to make important budgetary decisions for the District's public school system. All of the District's public schools, including those authorized by the chartering authorities, receive funding according to the number of students enrolled, costs at each grade level, and special needs of students. The SEO is responsible for recommending the level of funding per pupil and providing advice on revisions to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). To implement the UPSFF, DC law requires an audit to evaluate the accuracy of the fall student enrollment count for all public schools. SEO responsibilities in this area include:

Annual Public School Enrollment Audit – verifying enrollment numbers for all students enrolled in DC Public Schools and public charter schools, special needs students placed in private schools with the District's support, and students in foster care attending school in surrounding counties.

Student Residency Verification – developing rules for documenting and verifying DC residency for students.

Non-Resident Tuition Rules – developing tuition rates for non-resident students.

Uniform Per Student Funding Formula – convening a Technical Working Group (TWG) of representative public education stakeholders and conducting or commissioning background research to develop recommendations for revisions to the UPSFF.



In 2004, the SEO issued *The State of Education in the District of Columbia: Establishing a Baseline*, providing policymakers and stakeholders with a first-ever single source of comprehensive information on education in the District.

PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTING REPORTS

The SEO has created and circulated a wide range of reports on critical education-related issues. Recent published reports include: *District of Columbia State Advisory Panel on Special Education Annual Report* and *A Report on Public Charter School Funding: Fiscal Years 2001–2005*. In addition, the SEO publishes the results of the annual audit of DC students.

COMPILING COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION INFORMATION

DC Ed Digest

Since September 2004, the SEO has produced the monthly Ed Digest, a free online tool for sharing national research about urban education with city leaders, administrators, researchers, the education policy community, and other interested stakeholders. Distributed to over 1,200 subscribers, the digest provides access to diverse resources and opinions without reflecting an SEO endorsement. By providing information on best practices in other jurisdictions, the SEO can help policymakers explore and develop policy reforms. Recent editions of Ed Digest have addressed topics such as out-of-school time and extended-day programs, early childhood and preschool education, research on boys in education, public education finance, and virtual schools.

Education Resource Mailing

In February 2005, the SEO led the first-ever collaboration with DCPS, the Board of Education Charter Schools, the Public Charter School Board, DC ParentSmart, and the Washington Scholarship Fund to provide all DC parents with information on school options. The mailing was designed to help parents make educational choices for their children. In addition to a comprehensive list of schools, the mailing included information on the SEO's postsecondary financial assistance, and summer meals programs.

DC Education Center

The SEO created and designed the District's online Education Center, a gateway to information, publications, and services from pre-K through postsecondary education, including adult education. The Education Center encompasses DC School Search, which provides comprehensive and objective information on public, public charter, and private schools in the District.

INSPIRING ADULTS TO ACHIEVE

Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Initiative

The SEO is the central agency charged with combating the low literacy rates that impede the success of the District's communities and workforce. Approximately 37% of adults in the District are unable to read at a third-grade level. Low literacy hampers the ability of individuals to find jobs, be self-sufficient, and support the educational needs of their children. To effectively address the problem, the SEO has collaborated with the State Education Agency for Adult Education at the University of the District of Columbia and other public and private partners to improve the system that responds to the needs of adult learners. This strategy moves beyond providing literacy services and now includes GED preparation and basic skills education to help adults learn and ultimately improve their quality of life. In the 2004 calendar year, there was an 11% increase in the number of students who successfully completed the GED exam.

In 2004, several private organizations—including the Fannie Mae Foundation, Comcast Communications, and Verizon Washington—helped the State Education Office launch the Read Out Loud campaign to reach out to adult learners in the District. The campaign's goal is to publicize the wide range of adult literacy services in every ward of the city. Since then, Read Out Loud has become an annual event held every August that also helps literacy provider organizations recruit volunteers and adult learners.

In just three years more than 30 literacy providers have participated in the growth of the Lifelong Learning Initiative, and more than 7,000 DC residents have taken advantage of opportunities for direct instruction and online learning.





LEADING PUBLIC DIALOGUE

The SEO has created opportunities for groups of residents and decision makers to explore education issues in depth. In collaboration with other organizations such as the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Laboratory for Student Success, and the DC Education Compact, the SEO holds quarterly policy breakfast forums on timely issues of interest to the education policy community. These forums allow local public officials and representatives of education groups to engage in discussions with expert speakers, explore emerging education topics, and address cross-cutting policy issues. Topics covered have included engaging youth in high school reform, defining teacher quality and distributing highly qualified teachers, assessing how our schools measure up in an era of high expectations and accountability, models for funding our schools for student success, and reforming career and technical education.

FUTURE PLANS AND INITIATIVES

The SEO has made significant strides in its effort to improve the quality of life for District residents by increasing access to educational opportunities and resources. Over the last six years, the SEO:

- Established itself as a vital resource for compiling and disseminating comprehensive data and information about education in the District.
- Created and strengthened programs that address serious social problems in the District: illiteracy, hunger, and low academic achievement among youth are leading examples.
- Partnered with numerous local and federal agencies to improve programs and launch new initiatives.
- Maximized technology to streamline administrative processes and functions in various programs to gain operational efficiency and program effectiveness.

Education remains one of the highest priorities for District residents. They expect our system of public education to ensure that every child graduates from high school and is prepared for higher education, the workforce, and productive citizenship. This goal requires increased coordination by all education-related entities and continued investments in research, evaluation, and direct services.

The SEO has proven itself to be a viable and efficient agency with the capacity to create new initiatives and work with multiple partners to improve the education landscape in the District. To transform the District's educational system into a national model of excellence, the SEO is prepared to continue strengthening its programs and using its unique position to support and coordinate the District's education initiatives.



Below are some of our plans for each program area.

Nutrition Services

Applying Technology to Improve Nutrition Services – The nutrition programs managed by the SEO will become even more efficient with the implementation of a new online application system. This new technology enhancement will streamline the process for provider applications, claims, and payments. By reducing the amount of paperwork providers must submit, the SEO can increase the number of providers participating in the program and reach more individuals in need of nutrition services.

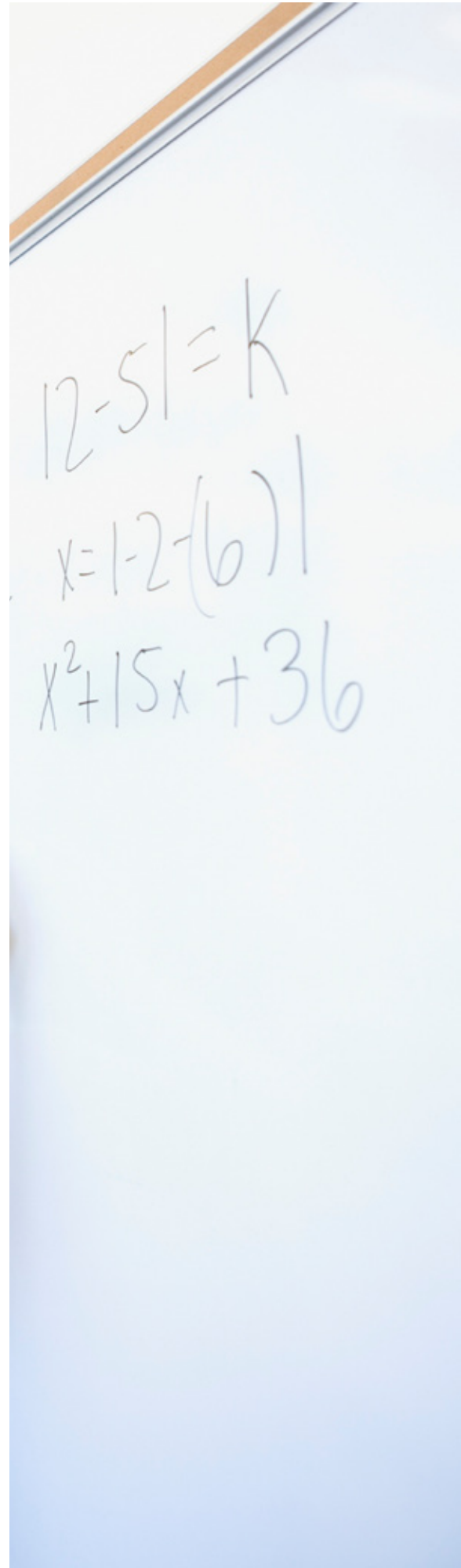
Education Programs

Expanding DC Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) – DC GEAR UP has enabled thousands of at-risk youth to receive the support they need to prepare for the academic rigor of college. The SEO will work to secure funding so that more youth in the District of Columbia benefit from DC GEAR UP.

Developing Early College High School Programs – As part of the effort to reduce the high school dropout rate and boost the number of students attending and graduating from college, the SEO is seeking to implement additional early college high school programs in the District. Funding for a pilot program will allow 200 high school students to earn up to 60 college credits while still in high school.

Educational Facilities and Partnerships

Examining School Facilities – The Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support is sponsoring two major studies to help DC's public charter schools to better serve students. One study will provide a detailed account of the types of facilities that house public charter schools; the cost of acquiring, leasing, constructing, or renovating a facility for a public charter school; and the costs associated with housing each school, including administration.





The other study will determine how public school options may attract families to the District or help retain DC residents by assessing how schools can enhance neighborhoods; the capacity and desire of residents to authorize the location of specific neighborhood-based public charter schools; and new policies to encourage connections between schools and communities.

Higher Education Financial Services

Expanding the DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (LEAP) – In an effort to help more District residents pursue postsecondary education, the SEO is proposing to increase the amount of funds available to students attending colleges and universities in the District.



Increasing DC LEAP's grant amount from \$1,500 to \$5,000 per year would provide greater support to students with demonstrated financial need to attend local colleges and universities.

Policy, Research and Analysis

Creating a Longitudinal Education Data Warehouse – The SEO is working with the District's education stakeholders and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to create an Education Data Warehouse. This web-based resource will provide timely, efficient, and consistent responses to educational inquiries from all education stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, students, local policymakers, and professional organizations. The warehouse will be a central resource for comprehensive, up-to-date data about academic achievement, student enrollment, demographics, and other essential information for all DC public and public charter schools. This centralized data will enable parents and other stakeholders to compare schools and make appropriate choices for their children.

Examining Out-of-School-Time Programs – Developing safe, educational, and engaging programs for youth before and after school is a top priority in the District. The SEO can play a leading role in evaluating the effectiveness of DC's out-of-school-time (OST) programs and making recommendations for improving these efforts.

Enhancing Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Programs – The SEO will continue to address the educational needs of adult learners in the District. Enhancements in this area will include strengthening the capacity of adult literacy organizations by offering a five-part professional development seminar and compiling data to demonstrate the need and demand for adult literacy services.

DC State Education Office Staff

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Deborah A. Gist, State Education Officer
 Robert Boik, Special Assistant
 Monica J. Brown, General Counsel
 Rehva Jones, Innovation, Planning & Performance Officer
 John A. Stokes, Director of Marketing and Communications

OPERATIONS

Jo Ann Smoak, Director
 Antonisha Felton
 Bachir Kabbara
 Christine Madison
 Mutinda Parris
 Ronald Pitts
 Diane Scroggins

NUTRITION SERVICES

Cynthia Bell, Director
 Rita Akers
 Rhoma Battle
 Diedre Bell
 Shymee Davis
 Renee Evans
 George Ferguson
 Wayne Gardiner
 Major Langford
 Sarah Lattner
 Francine Pruitt
 Cardell Saunders
 Isaac Shaw
 Lillie Tinsley

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL SERVICES

John B. Parham, Jr., Director
 Abay Awash
 Cliffie Bailey
 Sylvia Bailey-Charles
 Lizette Brown
 Kim Celay
 Zecketia Coleman
 Tanya Cunningham
 Emilia Del Arroyo
 Melanie Fleming
 Joan Grammont
 Laurencia Henderson
 Kenneth Howard
 Temple Huff
 Sylvia Mansfield
 Terrance McCreary
 Pamela Pinkett
 Kadidia Thiero
 Stephanie Thomas

POLICY, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Glenda Partee, Director
 Hom Raj Acharya
 Stephanie Cheng
 Alexandra King
 Dileep Rajan
 Melisa Rawles

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Eurmon Hervey, Director
 Barry Brinkley
 Toshia Dark-Berry
 Yuliana Del Arroyo
 Sheila Henderson
 Barrington Honesty
 Azalia Hunt
 Robin Jenkins
 Jennifer Mitchum
 Zita Rostas
 Leonard Russell
 Pamela Taylor
 Sheranda Vaughan
 Kristin Yochum

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

Kendrinna Rodriguez, Director
 Matthew Dunkle







District of Columbia Government

The Honorable The Honorable
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor-Elect

State Education Office

441 4th Street, NW Room 350 North
Washington, DC 20001

Tel. 202.727.6436

Fax. 202.727.2019

www.seo.dc.gov