



D I S T R I C T O F C O L U M B I A

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

*Building a Model State Education Agency for
the People of the District of Columbia*

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education
September 10, 2007**

**Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent of Education**

September 10, 2007

The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania, Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Fenty:

In accordance with the *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007* (D.C. Law 17-9), attached please find the plan for transition of state-level education functions to the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE).

The plan identifies the authority, responsibilities, timelines, benchmarks, and estimated costs of carrying out each transferred function. Critical to the transition plan is the OSSE's mission of becoming a high-performing and transparent agency, which sets proactive policies, exercises vigilant oversight and directs resources so that all District of Columbia residents receive an excellent education. Finally, the plan provides a brief discussion of core policy themes and critical action areas the OSSE will undertake in the months ahead.

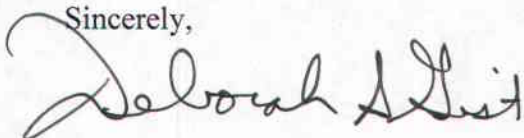
The plan discusses a three-phased transfer of authority for many of the state functions beginning October 1, 2007; however, the work of the reorganization and alignment of functions will continue into fiscal year 2008. During this time, we will detail our actions with respect to the core policy themes and critical action areas, as well as determine how the work of the OSSE will interface with and provide added value to the services provided by other government agencies.

The plan is the reflection of the input, thoughts and research of a range of education stakeholders, including representatives of the consolidated agencies, the District of Columbia State Board of Education, the Public Charter School Board, the Washington Teachers Union, as well as educators, parents and residents who participated in a public roundtable discussion. In addition, we received numerous thoughtful comments on the plan via e-mail and other communiqués.

The OSSE looks forward to working with you, the Council of the District of Columbia, our local education agencies and the people of the District of Columbia as we implement the activities outlined in the transition plan and build a strong education agency supportive of improved educational outcomes for our residents.

If you need further clarification on the transition plan, I am available to answer your questions.

Sincerely,



Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent of Education

cc: Victor Reinoso

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District of Columbia’s public education landscape has shifted dramatically in the last decade. The landscape is comprised of one large LEA, multiple public charter school LEAs, an array of early care and education providers, adult education providers, one public university, and many private colleges and universities. Within this landscape, many challenges must be addressed, including: low academic performance levels in most schools; large differences in achievement by student groups; unacceptably low literacy levels among residents; high levels of special education referrals and poor service delivery for students with special needs; a “high risk grantee” designation by the U.S. Department of Education for federal grants; and limited ability to provide the training and tools necessary for residents to meet the demands of the regional and global creative economy.

The *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007* (D.C. Law 17-9) (*The Education Reform Act*) dramatically altered the educational governance structure in the District of Columbia. It consolidated state-level education functions that were previously performed by the DC Public Schools (DCPS), the Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) within the Department of Human Services, the State Education Agency (SEA) at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and the State Education Office (SEO) into one agency, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). This action will lead to coordinated service delivery of state-level functions and robust systems of accountability designed to enhance student achievement.

This transition plan, a requirement of the *Education Reform Act*, details the policy responsibilities and core themes that will be the central focus of the OSSE as we address the chronic education problems prevalent in the District. These policy themes are derived from three fundamental responsibilities of the state. These responsibilities include:

- Setting high quality standards by which all education programs at all levels are held accountable;
- Providing the resources and supports to meet the standards; and
- Providing accountability through oversight and intervention to ensure program quality.

In addition, this plan describes the transfer of authority, reorganization, and alignment phases that will take place as state-level education functions are consolidated into the OSSE. This plan will also detail how the transfer of state-level authority will be implemented from the human resources, management and information technology perspectives.

The Role of the State in Education Policy

The ability to hold all local education agencies accountable for performance by providing state-level supports, resources and, when appropriate, interventions to ensure quality is perhaps the greatest tool at the state’s disposal. It is the tool that ensures all children have

access to quality schools and educational programs. The state is the traditional accountability mechanism based on federal requirements and national trends. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), in particular, has dramatically shifted the need for state-level oversight, accountability and coordination around the country. Specifically, this law has resulted in a standards-based reform movement focused on increased expectations for academic performance. The OSSE seeks to meet and exceed these federal expectations. We will do this, in part, by building upon the body of work that has previously informed education reform in the District of Columbia including: the Mayor's 100-day agenda initiative, the Comprehensive Early Care and Education Action Plan, the DCPS Master Education Plan, the Double the Numbers for College Success Initiative and numerous studies and recommendations on special education released by the State Advisory Panel on Special Education and other entities.

Areas of State-Level Responsibility

The OSSE will be an engine for policy change in the District of Columbia. We seek to dramatically enhance student achievement by ensuring high quality standards for all educational programs and by providing the resources and supports necessary to achieve gains in academic performance. The OSSE will also hold all LEAs accountable for performance objectives, inform policy action, and provide strong systems of support so that all District residents receive an excellent education and are prepared for success in the 21st century. The requirements of federal and District law provide the OSSE with the policy framework necessary to achieve this vision. Consistent with the responsibilities of state education agencies under federal law and national expectations, we will further the adoption of quality academic performance standards that are aligned with college and workforce readiness expectations. We will also develop comprehensive assessments that are aligned with the standards. We will implement innovative systems of support and intervention for low-performing schools and school districts; provide consistent oversight to ensure quality service delivery and compliance with federal and state law; develop quality data systems that inform our own policies and form the basis of reports to the federal government and the public; and provide a range of quality school choice options.

Core Policy Themes and Critical Action Areas

We will focus initially on four core policy themes. We have selected these themes because of their compelling and compounding education and economic value, as well as the magnitude of the problems requiring a strategic response. Our core policy themes include:

- ***Early childhood education.*** We know that investments in high-quality early childhood education have benefits for the individual encompassing preparation for learning in school, subsequent success in the elementary grades and extending to high school graduation and workforce success.
- ***Educator quality.*** It is necessary to develop high standards as well as systems of support and intervention. Educator quality at all education stages, from early

childhood education through postsecondary and adult education, is central to how well standards, curricula and programs of study are implemented, and a critical factor affecting student achievement.

- ***Preparation for postsecondary education and the workforce.*** Strategic efforts aimed at ensuring that all of our learners, whether youth or adult, are prepared for further learning, postsecondary education and the workforce will provide benefits for the District’s residents and economy. The needs of our regional economy require that employees have postsecondary education to ensure economic sufficiency and future success.
- ***Early, family and adult literacy.*** Early literacy has a significant impact on academic success over time while family literacy has impacts for the adult learner as well as the educational environment for children. Improvements in adult literacy, such as acquiring a high school equivalency credential, enhance the overall quality of life for the individual, the family and the community.

State Board of Education

To address the core policy themes, the OSSE will work closely with the State Board of Education in its efforts to improve educational outcomes in the District. The State Board of Education will play a substantial role in approving the state standards in core content areas as well as the state accountability plan that will define the state-level layer of accountability - two central state-level responsibilities. In addition, the State Board of Education will help shape the policy direction of the OSSE through its policy recommendation role. In this regard, the State Board will call upon outside experts and policymakers to develop policy recommendations for the State Superintendent of Education. These policy recommendations will assist in shaping and adding context to the core policy themes identified above.

Critical Action Areas

In addition to the core policy themes, three critical action areas will receive elevated attention and direct involvement of the State Superintendent of Education. These areas include:

- Special education – to completely reengineer special education to improve service delivery mechanisms and remediate actions that have resulted in litigation¹ and IDEA “high-risk” designation by the U.S. Department of Education;

¹ Petties, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al. (Civil Action No. 95-0148 (PLF)). & Blackman, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al. (Civil Action No. 97-1629 (PLF) consolidated with Civil Action No. 97-2402 (PLF)).

- Federal grants management reform - to address the U.S. Department of Education's "high-risk grantee" designation to ensure continued access to all available federal funds; and
- Statewide longitudinal data warehouse – to improve student achievement by making data an effective and efficient tool at the school and district level and enable the targeting of resources as a tool to inform policy makers about the results of investments in specific programming. The enhanced availability and use of data will also be crucial to addressing the challenges described above through improved reporting, transparency and performance.

Transition Phases

Given the critical action areas that require immediate attention, the transfer of authority of most state-education functions will occur on October 1, 2007, the beginning of fiscal year 2008. The transition phases will occur in the following manner:

- ***Transfer of Authority.*** The OSSE will assume operational authority for most state education functions on October 1, 2007. During this phase, the following offices will be transferred, at least in part, from DCPS to the OSSE: the Office of Compliance, Federal Grants, SEA Special Education, SEA Credentialing, the Board of Education, Human Resources, Workforce and Professional Development, Resource Allocation, Student Residency, State Enforcement Investigative Division, Office of Accountability, Office of Testing and Research, Chief Academic Officer, Standards and Curriculum, State Office of Career and Technical Education, Bilingual Education - English Language Learners, and Information Technology. The transfer of authority for the SEA at UDC including that Office of Adult and Family Education and GED Testing also will occur on October 1, 2007. The transfer of authority for the ECEA within the Department of Human Services will occur in January 2008.
- ***Reorganization.*** This process has begun and will continue through early – mid 2008. During this phase, the OSSE will engage in equalizing pay scales among all personnel, altering organization and reporting structures, and moving budgets to realize efficiencies within the new organizational design.
- ***Alignment.*** This phase focuses on continuing to create a high performance culture. During this phase, the OSSE will implement policies and procedures based on best practices and will consistently monitor and measure performance against strategic goals and objectives. Initial implementation of this phase will occur in 2008.

Budget

Following the October 1st transfer of authority, the OSSE will have a total budget of \$331,151,425 with 364.5 Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs). Of the total budget, \$319,375,160 and 353.5 FTEs will support the costs of administering all OSSE functions;

\$8,776,265 and 11.0 FTEs will support our transition costs; and \$3,000,000 will be dedicated to supports and interventions under NCLB. To estimate the transition costs, a number of one-time cost factors also were included: adjustments to salary and employee benefits, legal fees, and moving costs.

These costs are supported by the State Education Activity Fund, which contains \$30,557,000 and was established to support the implementation of this transition. Of the total OSSE budget, \$25,832,688 will be allocated from the State Education Activity Fund leaving a balance of \$4,744,312 now available to be allocated to other needs and priorities.

Transfer Implementation

As the transfer of authority takes place, careful attention will be given to human resources, budget, information technology, communication and organizational management. In this work the following principles will guide our efforts:

- Ensuring that individuals with appropriate skills and training are well matched for the work to be done;
- Ensuring appropriate resources, performance and budget accountability;
- Planning for systems data migration to ensure continuity of service; and
- Establishing a new organizational culture of communication and management through training and practice.

This transition plan was developed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in collaboration with multiple DC education stakeholders, including but not limited to the State Board of Education, the Washington Teachers Union, and the DC Public Charter School Board. The plan contains feedback obtained from the Mayor of the District of Columbia's public roundtable held on August 30, 2007 at Burrville Elementary School in Ward 7. The plan describes our detailed vision and mission, our responsibilities under federal and state law, our policy priorities and details on how the transition will be accomplished. Each of these actions will be mission-driven and strategically managed so that the OSSE becomes a high performing state education agency that fully prepares District residents for success in the 21st century.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION, ROLE AND VISION

1.1 Background and Introduction

While there are examples of excellence, our public education system is failing to provide quality public education to many of the city's learners. Our challenge encompasses the need for better alignment of early care and education, community-based programs and schools in addressing the needs of our youngest learners. It encompasses the need for better alignment points for older learners, including transition from secondary to postsecondary learning.

We are a city-state with multiple local education agencies (LEAs)² and education delivery systems (early childhood, pre-K through 12, postsecondary education and adult education) that must tackle extensive low performance among students in the majority of our schools. We also must address the needs of residents who function at low literacy levels and ensure that all of our learners are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Successfully meeting and overcoming these challenges will require that we develop, attract and retain a cadre of highly qualified educators, including early childhood providers, teachers, principals and adult educators.

In addition to these issues, we must address critical action areas. One key is remedying the major dysfunctions in our system of special education that have failed to serve students well and within the least restrictive environment and that have resulted in costly class action litigation and court rulings against the District of Columbia. We must develop policies and processes that ensure compliance with local and federal law and that encompass the vision of a more effective, responsive system of special education in the District. We must also dramatically improve time and quality of service delivery to students and families and we must change the culture in the District to value and provide for inclusion.

Another critical action is to eliminate the systemic problems that have resulted in the District's "high-risk grantee" designation with respect to compliance with federal program requirements. This designation jeopardizes access to future grants on which we rely for the provision of many services, especially to our neediest children, youth and adults. Finally, if we are to understand and measure our progress and take appropriate course corrections in addressing these challenges, we must establish a statewide longitudinal data system that is accurate, accessible and useful to state and local policymakers, educators and the public.

Among the first steps to improving the District's systems of public schools and programs is establishing a governance structure that supports accountability and a coherent education policy agenda. On June 12, 2007, the *District of Columbia Public Education*

² Because the District of Columbia has a thriving and growing system of charter schools, each its own local education agency (LEA), our small geographical area is representative of 61 LEAs, including the largest, the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) System.

Reform Amendment Act 2007 (or *Education Reform Act*) became effective, granting the Mayor governance over the District of Columbia public school system. This law also allows for disparate state education functions to be brought under one entity – the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), formerly the State Education Office (SEO). Pursuant to approval of this transition plan, the OSSE will receive operational authority for:

- “All functions of a state education agency (SEA) . . . including grant-making, oversight and state education functions for standards, assessments, and federal accountability requirements for elementary and secondary education.”³
- The supervision of adult education and adult literacy, including the authority to apply for federal funds provided in the *Adult Education Act*, establish fee rates for all adult education courses, and grant waivers of applicable fees.⁴
- All state functions related to the responsibilities of the Early Care and Education Administration and the Early Intervention Program.⁵

The *Education Reform Act* presents an opportunity to provide a comprehensive, statewide approach to public education in the District of Columbia that also is informed by best practices, national trends and District of Columbia needs. Years of effort have culminated in bringing state-level education functions spread throughout various agencies of government into a single agency clearly charged with overseeing state and District-wide education functions. The District’s move to merge and integrate state-level education functions comes at a time of new expectations for public systems both locally and nationally –expectations which will ultimately affect the purpose and structure of the new agency.

Under the specifications of the *Education Reform Act*, the Office of the State Superintendent is required to submit a transition plan to the Mayor of the District of Columbia by September 10, 2007, or 90 days from the effective date of the law (June 12, 2007). According to the law, the transition of state-level education functions must begin to be implemented within 30 days of approval of the transition plan by the Mayor. Prior to completion and submission of the plan, the Mayor is required to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the plan. This opportunity , in the form of a Roundtable Discussion, was held on Thursday, August 30, 2007, at Burrville Elementary School.

The law further stipulates that the transition plan shall:

- Identify the authority and responsibility of each party at each stage in the transition process;

³ Council of the District of Columbia, *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, Internet, <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf> , Accessed 17 July 2007, p. 7.

⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

⁵ Ibid, p. 7.

- Specify timelines, dates and benchmarks for completion of the transfer;
- Provide an estimate of the cost to the OSSE of carrying out each transferred function; and
- Identify any factors with potential for disrupting services to students and recommend steps to prevent any possible disruption.

To address these requirements, this transition plan is organized into the following sections, focusing on the:

- Vision and mission of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the role of the state in education policy as determined by federal and local law, and the corresponding expectations of the OSSE as a result of these requirements (Section 1);
- Core policy themes including early childhood education, educator quality, postsecondary education and workforce preparation, and literacy as well as critical action areas including special education, the federal grant reform to address the “high-risk grantee” designation and audit findings, and the development of a longitudinal data warehouse (Section 2);
- Transition objectives and guiding principles (Section 3);
- Transfer and reorganization of authority, stakeholder engagement, scope of functions that are transferring, transition schedule and benchmarks, personnel and budget transfer summary. (Section 4)
- Implementation of the transfer of authority (Section 5)
- Conclusions and next steps (Section 6)

1.2 Vision and Mission of the OSSE

In this charged environment of national, federal and local expectations, the OSSE must become an engine of policy change. As such, we must move from a total compliance mindset to embrace a mission of dramatically improving student achievement through informed policy action. We must become an effective and efficient organization capable of setting expectations for success, ensuring access to key resources, monitoring and reporting performance, promoting support and interventions to schools and local education agencies, and putting policy levers in place to ensure that dramatic improvements in student achievement occur. We must put in place organizational structures that mirror these core policy roles with the supporting capacity.

It is our vision that: *all District residents receive an excellent education for success in the 21st century.* To meet this vision, we will become a high-performing, transparent agency, setting proactive policies, exercising vigilant oversight and directing resources so that all

District residents receive an excellent education and are fully prepared for success in postsecondary learning and employment in the creative economy.

We will establish an organization capable of realizing this vision. We will ensure accountability of all local education agencies (DCPS and the public charter schools) and programs, enforce standards and quality, provide equal resources to all public schools and educational programs, and establish a comprehensive, cohesive framework for public education based on a strong policy foundation. Outcomes include:

- Students who are ready to learn with access to appropriate and coordinated support services;
- Parent/guardian friendly schools;
- Well-designed communication that ensures well-informed education consumers;
- One pre-K through adult SEA where policy priorities and resources are aligned;
- Effective state-level oversight and support to local education agencies and education programs that result in improved student achievement;
- Efficient, effective and transparent federal grant administration and monitoring supports that maximize the purposes of the grant;
- A proactive approach to leverage federal grants that supports state policy and maximizes opportunities for LEAs;
- Best practices embedded in state-level requirements and policy; and
- Openness and pragmatic innovation for compliance, management and monitoring of federal and state responsibilities.

The new organization will be informed by best practice design and business processes. To this end, the OSSE is committed to acquiring and retaining talented, motivated and mission-driven staff, and through its organizational structure and policies, develop their capacities further. Our commitment to attracting, hiring, developing, and retaining quality employees from diverse backgrounds and ensuring that they perform at high levels will be achieved through policies, programs and practices, such as:

- A learning culture and opportunities for continuous development related to mission critical competencies;
- A quality work environment;
- Respect and support for healthy work-life balance; and
- Clear, meaningful performance management and advancement.

1.3 The Role and Expectations of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education

The basic role and functions of the OSSE are drawn from traditional state department of education functions and federally mandated state education agency requirements. Typically these involve providing state-level leadership in teacher licensing, district accreditation, school nutrition, special education and early childhood education; administering and distributing funds for federal and state education programs; administering the state's adult education efforts; overseeing school finance and audits of the distribution of education funds; providing consultation services on education issues to administrators and educators throughout the state; developing new educational policies; serving as a link between school districts and state and federal legislators; and accumulating, evaluating and making public education data available to policymakers and the public.

As we design and structure a new organization, we are guided by the Mayor's vision for the District of Columbia to secure its place as a world-class city – a vision, which cannot be realized without a world-class system of education. We are also guided by the expectations and responsibilities of recent federal and state laws, national trends and expanded expectations for public education, the realities of local student and school performance, and existing policy commitments. These factors directly influence our mission, vision and our short- and long-term policy goals.

1.2.1. Federal Laws

Numerous federal laws and programs influence the policies pursued in a state and serve as important points of leverage for key state and local priorities.⁶ A successful and high functioning state education agency artfully uses all applicable federal laws and requirements to supplement its own programs and policies to expand the quality of education services available to the local education agencies and learners in the state.

Two federal laws that are immediately critical to the development of the OSSE functions and priorities are the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA).

NCLB has increased expectations and highlighted the need for accountability in U.S. public education, with significantly increased responsibilities for state education

⁶ For example, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 2006 provides an increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students, strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improves state and local accountability. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, as amended, supports a range of state activities designed to improve the quality of local literacy programs, including professional development for practitioners, technology assistance, development and dissemination of curricula, in addition to monitoring and evaluation of local grants.

agencies. State education agencies must adopt academic standards, develop assessments aligned with the standards, and create systems that hold students, teachers, schools, and education leaders accountable for higher performance.

While continuing their traditional responsibility for compliance and monitoring of federal programs and funds, state education agencies also must develop greater capacity for oversight and accountability for results. As such, they have become critical players in school improvement, providing technical assistance, guiding and funding local districts to support and sustain increases in student academic achievement, classroom teaching improvements, and the alignment of professional development to the state's academic goals. Currently, 75% of the District's schools are either in need of improvement or in the planning stage for restructuring based on the adequate yearly progress (AYP) determination phases under the *No Child Left Behind Act*.⁷ In many cases, states have developed curriculum frameworks to further ensure alignments for learning at the district and school levels. Based on ratings defined through state accountability systems, schools and districts may receive rewards, sanctions, assistance, or a combination of these actions. States also monitor the effectiveness of state- or regional-level assistance to schools through a variety of methods. Germane to classroom improvements are efforts to strengthen the quality of the teaching force and ensure equitable distribution of quality teachers across schools and districts.

Whereas school districts are expected to improve continuously failing schools or close them, states are ultimately responsible for the success of their systems of public education. This role will become more significant as schools and local education districts fail to meet critical Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets and face requirements for corrective action and restructuring. State education agencies are required to support LEAs to achieve uniformly high quality public education state-wide. In line with the accountability provisions of NCLB, SEAs also are required to provide support when LEAs fail to meet critical performance objectives. There is also a greater focus on analysis of school and student-level data and reporting to identify and address "achievement gaps" among groups of students based on economic status, ethnicity, disability and English proficiency; and to inform parents and the community about school performance.

IDEA requires a more targeted set of expectations for SEAs. IDEA is heavily focused on the civil rights of children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Central to the purpose of IDEA is that children with disabilities receive benefit from their public education, including the provision of accommodations and appropriate services that ensure access to the school/district's curriculum and participation in a range of available education experiences and outcomes that are available to non-disabled children. State education agency responsibilities are heavily focused on compliance, monitoring and reporting requirements necessary to ensure a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. As with NCLB requirements, informed and committed state leadership – including the development and implementation of policies and procedures – is necessary

⁷ This percentage is based on the 2006-07 DC Comprehensive Assessment System scoring data.

to ensure that the highest level of education and services are accessible for children and youth with disabilities and that their achievement is in line with our expectations of the non-disabled.

The state education agency has responsibility to ensure that Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for identified students are maintained. Appropriate policies and procedures must be in place for identifying, locating and evaluating all children with disabilities (in need of early intervention or special education services) that reside in the state. States also must provide procedures for resolving complaints, disseminate policies to parents and other interested individuals, maintain complaint records, conduct independent on-site investigations, and ensure due process procedures. Because students with disabilities must receive appropriate services, states must undertake the critical work of developing interagency agreements and creating mechanisms for Medicaid retrieval. As with NCLB, there is a state role for providing technical assistance and training activities for teachers and other service personnel; maintaining standards of qualifications; establishing performance goals; collecting data; and reporting on student performance, suspension and expulsion rates.

The OSSE will embrace the above responsibilities, with great expectations for world-class outcomes for all District students.

1.2.2. Local Education Priorities, Needs and Policy Commitments

The need for improvements in our education delivery systems becomes more critical as we realize that the national expectation can no longer be characterized as “no child left behind,” but rather, “every child a graduate, prepared for postsecondary education, work and citizenship in the 21st century.”⁸ This expectation sets a new bar for coordinated and collaborative action between the state education agency and our local education agencies to increase the rigor of our schools, including appropriate interventions at our lowest-performing schools; provide better information to allow teachers to track the progress of students; provide better information to develop a college-going culture among our students and their families; provide better supports and transitions from secondary to postsecondary education for students; provide resources and incentives for high-quality career and technical education as well as alternative pathways to postsecondary endeavors for our youth; and finally, develop the policies that make these possibilities reality.

In developing the plan for and during the implementation phases, the OSSE will be guided by and leverage local policies and initiatives already in place, including the Mayor’s Education Reform Plan and 100-day agenda, the Comprehensive Early Care and Education Action Plan developed by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the D.C. Public Schools’ Master Education Plan, the Double the Numbers for College

⁸ The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization Policy Statement*, October 16, 2006, Internet, http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/ESEA_Policy_Stmnt.pdf Accessed 13 August 2007.

Success Initiative, and numerous studies and recommendations on special education released by the State Advisory Panel on Special Education and other entities. There is also work in progress that will help inform our efforts, such as the forthcoming report of the Mayor's Adult Literacy Council, which is focused on recommendations and policies for a high-quality system of adult literacy and education in the District of Columbia.

This is a time of new leadership in the District of Columbia. Mayor Adrian Fenty has made education reform the top priority of his administration. To support this focus, Mayor Fenty appointed a Deputy Mayor for Education and a Chancellor for the District of Columbia Public Schools, and consolidated all state-level education functions in a State Superintendent of Education. The Mayor has made accountability, transparency, and data-driven decision-making key tenets of his Administration's approach to improving educational outcomes for District citizens. The Mayor's earliest priorities that directly impact the OSSE include:

- Providing voluntary, quality early childhood education to all three- and four-year olds in a variety of settings;
- Accelerating the implementation of a unified student tracking and data sharing system;
- Exploring incentives or rewards for high-quality principals and teachers;
- Supporting a comprehensive, citywide strategy for out-of-school time programs;
- Working collaboratively to support the citywide goal of “doubling the numbers” of DC high school students graduating from college;
- Reviewing current investments in Career and Technical Education (CTE);
- Developing a strategy for supporting and enhancing adult education;
- Introducing legislation to improve public school accountability;
- Strengthening special education services; and
- Increasing parent and community involvement in education.

The *Double the Numbers for College Success Initiative* represents a public-private partnership to support the goal adopted by the District of Columbia to multiply the numbers of students from the District of Columbia Public Schools and District of Columbia public charter schools who graduate from high school and attend and succeed in college. The partnership is implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding dated March 22, 2007 reflecting the public commitments of the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, the leadership of the District of Columbia Public Schools, State Education Office (now the OSSE), DC Charter School Board, DC-College Success Foundation, DC-College Access Program, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The DCPS *Master Education Plan*⁹ is a comprehensive agenda for raising student achievement and developing a high quality, high performing school system. The plan was developed by DCPS senior staff in collaboration with the Board of Education (now the State Board of Education) and members of the community. Parts of the plan bear directly on the state role in providing leadership for the development of consistent, cohesive and challenging academic core curricula; developing new learning standards; delineating higher graduation requirements; providing strategies for serving more special education students in their neighborhood schools; supporting intensive professional development to meet the needs of diverse students, including English language learners and other students with special needs; strengthening certification and mentoring programs, and creating partnerships for expanding alternative certification programs and alternative certification instruments; and creating partnerships to offer stronger and expanded early childhood programs and phasing in a requirement that all new programs are nationally certified to the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards.

⁹ The District of Columbia Public Schools, *Master Education Plan: Creating Great Schools for All Students*, February 2006.

2.0 CORE POLICY THEMES AND CRITICAL ACTION AREAS

The requirements of federal and District law, including the *Education Reform Amendment Act*, provide the OSSE with a broad range of policy authority over early childhood and K-12 education as well as postsecondary and workforce preparation. Consistent with the responsibilities of state education agencies under federal law, the OSSE will be responsible for:

- Setting state academic standards that are rigorous and aligned with college and workforce readiness and holding schools accountable to these measures;
- Developing and implementing comprehensive state assessments that are aligned with the state academic standards and college and workforce expectations;
- Implementing a robust system of accountability including a strong system of supports and interventions focused on raising student achievement;
- Developing graduation requirements that ensure students have the tools they need to meet the demands of the 21st century;
- Developing a reliable data system with the capacity to provide required reports to the federal government, track student progress and success, and evaluate schools and programs;
- Proving a range of quality school choice alternatives to ensure that students have appropriate options;
- Ensuring that educators at all levels are of the highest caliber;
- Ensuring broad community input to support improved education for our learners;
- Ensuring equal access by students with special needs to quality school options, academic offerings, and extracurricular activities; and
- Ensuring alignment of resources for seamless entry from early childhood education to K-12, adult and higher education, and the workforce.

These responsibilities are central to our mission and will be in the forefront of the OSSE's policy focus as a high performing state education agency that enhances student achievement. Within these areas of policy responsibility, we will focus initially on four core policy themes. We have selected these themes because of their compelling and compounding education and economic value, as well as the magnitude of the problems requiring a strategic response. These areas of priority include: 1) early childhood education; 2) educator quality; 3) preparation for postsecondary education and the workforce; and 4) early, family and adult literacy.

2.1 Core Policy Themes

Following is a brief discussion of the core policy themes, including preliminary analysis of the current status and areas for greater focus. In acknowledging these core policy

themes, we also recognize the need to develop the capacity to support them. This will require establishing strong accountability measures; richer and more appropriate assessments; improved coordination across levels of education and among agencies; high quality technical assistance and professional development; implementation of standards and supports for quality program evaluation and assessment; leveraging of partnerships; provision (or better alignment) of adequate resources; and improvements in the use of federal funds.

2.1.1 Early Childhood Education

State support for child care and early education programs stems from the research and indications that early intervention and education provide young children with the skills to prepare them for success in school and life. Quality early childhood programs are a proven foundation to ensure K-12 educational success, in particular, for children most at risk¹⁰ for school failure.¹¹ High-quality early childhood programs have also been shown to produce broad, long-term societal benefits, including increased employment and associated tax revenue, reduced crime, and reduced dependency on social welfare systems.¹²

The District of Columbia stands as a national leader in the field of early childhood education with all-day pre-K and kindergarten classes. Yet there is work to ensure that our services are of the highest quality, and that programs are consistently accessible to those who desire them.

Early childhood education has been managed primarily between two entities in the District of Columbia – the Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) and the public schools. In its new role as the SEA, the OSSE will ensure coordination of policies and services between the previously separate child care and early education systems, including high-quality early care settings; early intervention for at-risk children; pre-school and pre-Kindergarten programs, early literacy, and partnerships among schools, communities and service providers. This coordination will serve to improve state-level efficiency, families’ access to services and information, and outcomes for the District’s young children. Our coordination and support for these high-quality early childhood options will be one strategy to address overall student achievement, as evidence shows that children are far better prepared for public school when they enter kindergarten after attending a pre-K program that has goals and expectations closely aligned with their elementary schools compared to a pre-K program with less structure.¹³

¹⁰ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 53.7% of children under the age of 19 in the District of Columbia live at or below the poverty rate.

¹¹ Lee, Valerie E., & David Burkam, *Inequality at the Starting Gate, Executive Summary*, Economic Policy Institute, Research for Broadly Shared Prosperity, November 25, 2002, Internet, http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_starting_gate, Accessed 13 August 2007.

¹² Friedman, Dana E., *The New Economics of Preschool: New findings, methods and strategies for increasing economic investments in early care and education*, October 2004, Internet, <http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/handouts/FriedmanArticle.doc>, Accessed 13 August 2007.

¹³ “Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success”. A Joint Position Statement of The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The National Association of

We will support the continued, standards-based provision of early care for children from birth to school age. In 2005, the District established Early Learning Standards for children entering Kindergarten. The standards apply to all children, including ELLs and students with disabilities. We will ensure that these standards are aligned with the pre-K-12 learning standards and expectations to ease the transition from one program to another.

We will look to practices in other states, such as strategies to build an education infrastructure to support coordinated child care and early education programs, including the consolidation of locations, streamlining of administrative and budget procedures, clarifying funding and program standards; creating resource efficiency; and facilitating the scaling up of high-quality programs.¹⁴ Additionally, a recent report offers several compelling recommendations for early childhood programs in the District, including the need to:

- “Establish strong accountability measures to drive continuous quality improvements across all programs serving young children;
- Expand access to pre-Kindergarten to all three-and four-year olds and work toward eventual expansion to infants and toddlers;”¹⁵
- Ensure adequate public resources to sustain quality programs and services, including accreditation of all early childhood facilities; and
- Make the incorporation of community-based early care and education programs into school facilities a priority.¹⁶

Other priorities for the OSSE include coordinating the efforts of multiple agencies in providing a wide array of services and supporting the quality and stability of the pre-K workforce. The OSSE will set high standards for early childhood teachers and administrators and ensure the resources, professional development and technical assistance to support their development in our child care settings and school-based early childhood programs. Finally, we are committed to providing high levels of parent information and engagement in the education of their children.

We recognize the challenges with developing such a comprehensive vision for school readiness and early childhood. The *Roadmap to School Readiness* developed by the

Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE), Approved November 19, 2002, Internet, http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/early_learning_standards.asp, Accessed 13 August 2007.

¹⁴ Groginsky, Scott, National Conference of State Legislatures, *Child Care and Early Education Coordination in the States – A Statutory Overview*, April 2002, Internet, <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/coordsum.pdf>, Accessed 13 August 2007.

¹⁵ National Economic Development and Law Center, *Ensuring a Vibrant City: The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in the District of Columbia*, Internet, http://www.nedlc.org/Publications/PDF_childcare/DC%20ECE%20EIR%20Full%20Report.pdf, Accessed 12 August 2007, p. 39.

¹⁶ Ibid.

previous administration, and complemented by work undertaken by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, also recognized these challenges. We are confident, however, that a comprehensive early childhood initiative coordinated under one state agency and in cooperation with the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD) will positively impact program, planning, development and implementation, as well as more effective resource identification and allocation for young children and their families in the District of Columbia.

2.1.2. Educator Quality

The K-12 standards-based reform movement has been centered on enhancing expectations and measuring progress against these goals. As a result, many states have raised graduation requirements, implemented challenging academic curriculum and ensured alignment of these policy areas with comprehensive state assessments as well as college and workforce readiness expectations. The standards-based reform model suggests that increased student achievement is a result of increased expectations. Within this context, states have a great deal of latitude to provide specific policy focus on gains in achievement. The OSSE will focus its efforts on enhancing educator quality in the District of Columbia.

Educator quality has long been recognized as the most powerful school-based factor in student learning. However, the need for quality educators presents a great challenge to districts and states, particularly urban school systems such as the District of Columbia. Research shows that nearly one in five new teachers leave the profession in their first three years, and further, more than 30% leave within five years. Also, on average, low-income and minority children have lower-quality teachers who are more likely to be uncertified, to have performed poorly on college and licensure exams, and to be teaching outside their field.¹⁷

Given our new administration's uncompromising expectations for education reform, the need to ensure a level of competence among teachers, counselors, and administrators in District public schools is paramount. Added to this priority are the requirements of NCLB, which establish the expectation that all children must be taught by "highly qualified" teachers. To the goal of a robust and stable cadre of educators distributed across all our schools and publicly funded programs, our policy guidance should reflect our concern for how educators are selected, prepared, assigned and developed professionally.

Best practices in other states include the provision of incentives for teacher candidates in shortage areas and underperforming schools, the establishment of alternate routes to teaching, and enhanced professional development training. For years, the District has benefited from successful partnerships with national programs such as Teach For America, DC Teaching Fellows, and New Leaders for New Schools. Central to these

¹⁷ Levin, Jessica & Meredith Quinn, The New Teacher Project, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*, 2003, Internet, <http://www.tntp.org/files/MissedOpportunities.pdf>, Accessed 13 August 2007.

programs' approaches is a view of quality teachers and principals as critical levers for improved outcomes for schools and students, which our office embraces and will seek to develop further.

We will consider schools of education as central players in ensuring educator quality. The OSSE has experience with our local institutions of higher education through our administration of the Education Licensure Commission. As the State Higher Education Executive Office (SHEEO) for the District of Columbia, we will leverage these relationships to build partnerships and agreements with local universities, the University of the District of Columbia in particular, to support the preparation and building of educators' skills and knowledge.

Focused on dramatically improving outcomes for all learners in the District, the OSSE will establish clear, high standards and accountability, provide adequate resources, encourage the establishment of multiple avenues of entry for high-quality educators, and ensure effective infrastructure to produce the quality teaching that our children need in order to realize academic and personal success.

2.1.3. Preparation for Postsecondary Education and the Workforce

Over the last five years, the District of Columbia has experienced significant economic revitalization with the creation of more than 270,000 new jobs in the region.¹⁸ During this period, the District of Columbia has become economically innovative and exceptionally open to creativity and diversity. Research suggests that as these trends continue, the District of Columbia will attract talent from around the nation and the world.¹⁹ To prepare the city's residents to compete with incoming talent, education policymakers have the responsibility to drive high educational standards. The standards-based reform movement has provided states with the ability to intervene and provide support to school districts lacking adequate resources to address college and workforce preparation challenges.

One of the major drivers of success in the 21st century labor market is the ability to obtain postsecondary education credentials. Research performed for the DC Chamber of Commerce is indicative of this need and suggests that in 2005, 75% of the new jobs created in the District of Columbia required at least some postsecondary education.²⁰ A report released in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Education suggests that of the fastest growing jobs in the U.S. economy, 90% of them will require some form of postsecondary educational attainment.²¹ The ability to prepare residents for the demands of the labor

¹⁸ Greater Washington Initiative, Internet, http://www.greaterwashington.org/pdf/RR_2006.pdf, Accessed 8 August 2007, pp. 1-2

¹⁹ Florida, Richard, *The Economic Geography of Talent*, Internet, http://creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/5%20The_Economic_Geography_of_Talent.pdf, Accessed 8 August 2007, p. 1

²⁰ Fuller, Stephen S., Ph.D., *The District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce State of the Business Report 2006*, D.C. Chamber of Commerce, February 2006.

²¹ US Department of Education, Internet, <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>, Accessed 8 August 2007.

market is contingent upon their success in high quality secondary education, postsecondary access and degree completion. This notion is a challenging one in the District of Columbia. An estimated 29% of District residents enroll in institutions of postsecondary education upon high school graduation, but only 9% graduate within five years of enrolling.²² It is important to note that it is not only necessary to focus on postsecondary access and success to address the needs of the labor market, but also to focus on drop-out prevention and recovery methods to maximize the number of residents who can benefit from postsecondary education.

As the lone agency in the District of Columbia with jurisdiction over the full range of the education spectrum, (i.e. early childhood education through postsecondary and adult education), we have a unique opportunity to provide the policy direction necessary to help residents prepare for and meet the demands of postsecondary admission and the labor market. The agency views this opportunity as one of our core areas of responsibility and obligations. To meet this challenge, we must focus on two key areas: 1) increasing the number of students who graduate from institutions of postsecondary education within five years of enrolling from 9% to 18% by 2012;²³ and 2) focusing our resources on secondary and postsecondary reforms, including the development of innovative uses of federal and state career and technical education funds to ensure that career preparation programs are reflective of the trends in the regional economy and supportive of student achievement. These focus areas are essential to ensuring that residents are prepared for careers where future employment will not be constrained by labor market fluctuations.

Our office will collaborate with the Public Charter School Board, DCPS, the Double the Numbers Initiative, local postsecondary institutions as well as with the Department of Employment Services, to support meaningful high school reform and bring greater alignment between expectations and requirements for high school graduation and entry to postsecondary education and the workforce. We will support the development, expansion and quality of secondary/postsecondary linkage programs that combine secondary and postsecondary learning and provide students with seamless entry into institutions of postsecondary education (such as 2 + 2 Tech Prep career preparation models, Early College and dual enrollment). We also will explore and support the development and expansion of career pathway models for adult learners through our literacy improvement efforts. Two additional efforts will be central to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to realize these goals: 1) making certain that the state accountability system includes strong interventions to turn around low-performing high schools; and 2) availing more effective alternative programs to reduce drop-out rates and to reach students who previously dropped out of the system.

²² Kernan-Schloss, Adam & Bill Potapchuk, *Double the Numbers for College Success, A Call to Action for the District of Columbia*, SEO, DCPS, DC CAP, and the Bridgespan Group in coordination with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, October 2006, p. 4.

²³ The OSSE, as well as a number of education entities in the District, committed to this goal as a result of the “Double the Numbers” effort.

We will seek to forge partnerships with the business community, the Department of Employment Services, as well as with local apprenticeship programs, colleges and universities to foster improved cooperation and private sector investment necessary to ensure successful service delivery of career preparation programs and work-based learning opportunities for students. We will also implement innovative programs such as the “Virtual High School” concept in order to infuse new models of learning into our educational landscape.

In our role as a leader and an advocate for all District learners, the OSSE will explore and encourage the role of higher and postsecondary education, particularly with the University of the District of Columbia, in the preparation of productive workers and citizens. We will provide and leverage information on unmet and under-met local training and employment preparation for use in designing new programs of instruction and service to vital stakeholder groups living and working in the city. Because these efforts will be governed and funded by the District, we will emphasize the need for the current and future role of the University of the District of Columbia within the District's economy.

As part of our reform efforts, we are committed to maximizing the federal and District investments in our postsecondary tuition assistance programs for traditional and nontraditional students so that residents are not inhibited by finances to access postsecondary learning environments. We will also continue to focus on postsecondary and college retention efforts that are designed to assist residents in obtaining the maximum benefits from the programs in which they are enrolled.

Underpinning these efforts will be a focus on the development of policies that support and sustain high quality postsecondary and workforce preparation in the District of Columbia.

2.1.4. Literacy

Literacy is the foundation of learning and achievement for all residents. This core policy theme represents what is commonly referred to as a cycle where success at each developmental stage impacts success at the next stage (i.e., early literacy leads to child and adolescent literacy, which is the foundation for adult and family literacy).

The task of improving literacy levels and impacting the literacy cycle is foremost because the problem is so pervasive:

- Many of our children live in poverty – a factor tied to lower levels of reading proficiency than their counterparts above the poverty threshold whose mothers have higher levels of education.²⁴
- The District of Columbia continues to lag behind other large cities in 4th and 8th grade reading achievement results on the National Assessment of Education

²⁴ Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, *Commissioner's Statement*, Internet <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/statement/s4.asp>, Accessed 13 August 2007.

Progress.²⁵ Between 2002 and 2005, the percent of 4th grade students performing at proficient reading levels ranged between 10% and 11%, and approximately the same percentages for 8th graders. Nationally, approximately 30% of 4th and 8th graders performed at proficient levels.

- The District has unacceptably low student graduation rates. The Education Week national database reports graduation rates in the District of Columbia as low as 59%, with most other school systems in the region in the 60%, 70% and low 80% range.²⁶
- Many of our adults have limited education preparation. The U.S. Bureau of Census 2005 American Community Survey estimated that over 24,000 Washington, DC residents 25 and older did not complete ninth grade, and nearly another 37,000 have not earned a high school diploma—a total of 61,000 adult residents of the District whose basic skills are far below the level needed to get and keep jobs leading to self sufficiency.²⁷ This figure does not include those under the age of twenty five. These data do not indicate DC residents' literacy levels, although this group is more likely to have lower literacy levels than people with higher levels of education.

The Administration is committed to turning these realities around through a number of school and community based, supplemental and intervention approaches for residents of all ages. We will work closely with the LEAs to support their efforts, including implementation of literacy-related strategies in the Master Education Plan; a focus on early and family literacy and the needs of English Language Learners and residents with limited proficiency. We will address the challenges of adolescent and adult literacy, and support the Double the Numbers Initiative for college prep and remedial literacy across the grades. We will incorporate the forthcoming work of the Mayor's Adult Literacy Council and recommendations.

As a comprehensive agency spanning the full literacy cycle, we will use a team structure to ensure that our policy work in setting standards, developing and implementing comprehensive assessments, developing and implementing a statewide data system and ensuring high caliber educators is coherent, consistent and aligned to support the heavy work that must be done.

2.2 State Board of Education

²⁵ National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP), 2005 Trial Urban District Results, Internet, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc/tuda_reading_mathematics_2005/t0005.asp?tab_id=tab1&subtab_id=Tab_1&printver=#chart, Accessed 13 August 2007.

²⁶ Daniel de Vise, *The Washington Post*, "New Figures Show High Dropout Rate," May 10, 2007, Internet, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/09/AR2007050902411_pf.html, Accessed 13 August 2007.

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey, *DC Selected Characteristics in the United States: 2005*, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US11&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_DP2&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-lang=en&-sse=on, Accessed 13 August 2007.

To address the core policy themes, the OSSE will work closely with the State Board of Education in its efforts to improve educational outcomes in the District. The State Board of Education will play a substantial role in the following functions:

- state academic standards, ensuring that the standards recommended by the State Superintendent of Education: specify what children are expected to know and be able to do; contain coherent and rigorous content; encourage the teaching of advanced skills; and are updated on a regular basis;
- high school graduation requirements;
- standards for high school equivalence credentials;
- a state definition of “adequate yearly progress” that will be applied consistently to all local education agencies; standards for “highly qualified teachers,” and “proficiency” that ensures an accurate measure of student achievement;
- standards for accreditation and certification of teacher preparation programs of colleges and universities;
- the state accountability plan for the District of Columbia developed by the chief state school officer, pursuant to the NCLB Act, ensuring that: the plan includes a single statewide accountability system that will ensure all local education agencies make adequate yearly progress; and the statewide accountability system included in the plan is based on academic standards, academic assessments, a standardized system of accountability across all local education agencies, and a system of sanctions and rewards that will be used to hold local education agencies accountable for student achievement;
- state policies for parental involvement;
- state policies for supplemental education service providers operating in the District to ensure that providers have a demonstrated record of effectiveness and offer services that promote challenging academic achievement standards and that improve student achievement;
- The rules for residency verification;
- The list of charter school accreditation organizations;
- The categories and format of the annual report card, pursuant to NCLB Act;
- The list of private placement accreditation organizations, pursuant to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for Public Schools and Public Charter Schools and *Tax Conformity Clarification Amendment Act of 1998*;

- State rules for enforcing school attendance requirements; and
- State standards for home schooling.²⁸

In addition, the State Board of Education will help shape the policy direction of the OSSE through its policy recommendation role. In this regard, the State Board will call upon outside experts and policymakers to develop policy recommendations for the State Superintendent of Education. These policy recommendations will assist in shaping and adding context to the core policy themes identified above. The State Board of Education will also play a significant role in the OSSE’s strategy for enhanced public engagement.

2.3 Critical Action Areas

Beyond the broad policy themes that have been identified above, there are specific challenges in the District of Columbia that must be addressed immediately and will be a direct focus of the OSSE. We have identified three critical action areas that will receive elevated attention in the months ahead. These critical action areas include:

- Special education – to completely reengineer special education to improve service delivery mechanisms and remediate actions that have resulted in litigation²⁹ and IDEA “high-risk” designation by the U.S. Department of Education;
- Federal grants management reform - to address the U.S. Department of Education’s “high-risk grantee” designation to ensure continued access to all available federal funds; and
- Statewide longitudinal data warehouse – to improve student achievement by making data an effective and efficient tool at the school and district level and enable the targeting of resources as a tool to inform policy makers about the results of investments in specific programming. The enhanced availability and use of data will also be crucial to addressing the challenges described above through improved reporting, transparency and performance.

2.3.1. Special Education Reform

In the District of Columbia, the special education system faces challenges with services not being adequately provided to families. The U.S. Department of Education has designated the city a “high-risk grantee” due to failure to identify and correct non-compliance with the requirements of Part B of IDEA, specifically in providing timely initial evaluations and reevaluations; implementing due process hearing decisions in a

²⁸ Council of the District of Columbia, *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, Internet, <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf> , Accessed 17 July 2007.

²⁹ *Petties, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.* (Civil Action No. 95-0148 (PLF)). & *Blackman, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.* (Civil Action No. 97-1629 (PLF) consolidated with Civil Action No. 97-2402 (PLF)).

timely manner; and ensuring placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Other areas of non-compliance dealt with monitoring to ensure compliance with the requirements of IDEA Part C relating to the early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. When special education SEA functions transfer from DCPS, the OSSE will assume responsibility for meeting the District's legal obligations and ensuring compliance with the Blackman-Jones (timely due process hearing decisions and timely service delivery) and Petties (timely payments to private providers and reforms in the DCPS transportation system for special needs students) consent orders.

In addition to remedying these areas of noncompliance, under the direct involvement of the State Superintendent of Education and in collaboration with the Chancellor of DCPS and the charter schools leadership, we will completely reengineer special education responsibilities and service delivery mechanisms while continuing to improve the quality and timeliness of current services to children.

In addressing both long term systems reform and short term improvements, there will be a clear and direct focus on providing high-quality services and oversight to all District LEAs for children with special needs. Central to this focus will be: 1) the establishment of appropriate state special education functions³⁰ with the development of policies and processes that ensure the requirements of local and federal law; and 2) implementation of the OSSE vision of a more effective, innovative and responsive system of special education in the District. The state must seriously execute its responsibilities for program development, administration and oversight; resource allocation and management; training and support; and overall assessment and continuous improvement.

³⁰ Based primarily on the requirements of IDEA, we have identified the following state special education functions, to be assumed by the OSSE:

- General State Supervision* (establish performance goals and indicators for the provision of special education services overall, which includes standards for access to instructional materials; ensure the transition of children from Part C of IDEA to Part B; administer and monitor Child Find; develop appropriate statewide assessments);
- Fiscal Management* (budget and fiscal monitoring, which includes rate-setting and collaboration with the federal grants department to oversee the distribution of federal IDEA funding; Medicaid recovery);
- Oversight* (monitor district LEAs for Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE); manage the collection, analysis, enforcement and reporting of statewide special education data, with particular attention paid to the State Performance Plan (SPP) and the Annual Performance Report (APR);
- Support Services* (provide technical assistance and training to LEAs to develop personnel and LEA capacity; administer the State Improvement Grant);
- Due Process* (under Due Process, provide procedures and guidance for resolving complaints and hearing appeals; ensure the dissemination of policies and procedures to parents, maintain complaint records; provide support for dispute resolution; and
- Other oversight and management* (conduct oversight of non-public assistance, includes placement, payment and the monitoring of service provisions; conduct State Monitoring and Enforcement (Compliance); oversight of the Petties v. District of Columbia et al court decree, Blackman-Jones Consent Decree and the USDOE Corrective Action Plan (CAP); and support for the State Advisory Panel on Special Education)

Our work during the transition will initially focus on evaluating the state's current capacity to execute its responsibilities; examining the effectiveness of this implementation; highlighting lessons learned and incorporating "best practices" from other states; and ultimately, recommending a high-quality framework for the OSSE's assumption of SEA responsibilities. These core processes lie at the heart of our transition efforts, and specifically, are an integral part of our vision for high performing state-level special education services and programs.

In addition, we will continue our work to determine appropriate levels of funding for students with special needs through the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula and other mechanisms as needed.

2.3.2. Federal Grants Management Reform

In April 2006, the District of Columbia was designated as a "high-risk grantee" by the U.S. Department of Education for all federal funds. As a result of this designation, the U.S. Department of Education required the District of Columbia to create, submit and implement corrective action plans. In June 2007, the Department indicated concern that the rate of implementation of the corrective actions was not sufficiently aggressive to allow the District to reach its goals and achieve compliance with legal requirements of the Department's grant program. Failure to comply with this requirement could ultimately result in the loss of federal funding for educational purposes in the District of Columbia. Meeting this requirement and the other federal grant conditions and requirements is one of our top priorities.

The designation of "high-risk grantee" is based on repeat findings of systemic problems relating to finance and accounting systems, internal control systems and procedures sufficient to satisfy the accountability requirements in administering grants issued by the Department, including the administrative requirements for financial management, procurement, internal controls, and other matters pertaining to proper grants management. Other areas of noncompliance relate to highly qualified teacher requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; high proportions of LEAs and schools not meeting the state's goals for adequate yearly progress; and lack of timely sub-grant application review, approval or release of federal grant funds to LEAs.

In the months ahead, we will work aggressively and in close coordination with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Public Charter School Board to ensure that significant progress is met with regard to the items identified as requiring improvement by the U.S. Department of Education. It is the ultimate goal of the OSSE to not only have the "high-risk" designation removed but to become a model for maximizing the use of federal resources to supplement state-level initiatives.

2.3.3. Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data Warehouse Development

State education agencies around the country are developing longitudinal data warehouse systems that track student movement, pinpoint student and teacher performance, and assist policymakers in directing resources to critical areas of need based on reliable data. Work on a statewide longitudinal data warehouse with these capabilities and the capacity to link to other children and youth service agencies is already well underway in the District.

In particular, we have focused efforts on implementing a data system that incorporates each of the ten essential elements identified by the Data Quality Campaign, a major national resource that assists states in the development of data systems. This includes developing the capacity to collect and manipulate data elements and monitor the following: student-level enrollment, demographic and program information; the ability to match individual test records from year to year to measure academic growth; information on untested students; a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; student-level transcript information; student-level college readiness test scores; student-level graduation and dropout data; the ability to match student records between preK-12 and higher education systems; and a state data audit system.

With the development of the statewide longitudinal education data warehouse, the state will be able to answer questions, such as:

- Which schools produce the strongest academic growth for their students?
- What is the state's graduation rate?
- What high school performance indicators are the best predictors of students' success in postsecondary education or the workplace?
- What percentage of high school graduates take remedial courses in college?
- Which teacher preparation programs produce the strongest teachers?³¹
- Which of our children are receiving services from other human service agencies?

We are working in coordination with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer and key education stakeholders on developing a longitudinal data system that is capable of tracking statewide student information over multiple years in multiple schools and education institutions. Further development in this area will require the standardization of information contained in many different brands and structures of student information systems located in various LEAs in the District of Columbia. In addition, this statewide data system will need to be populated with information extracted from stovepipe enterprise systems into a single comprehensive relational database.

The data system will become the main repository of historical data on public education student data in the District of Columbia. Once built, the statewide longitudinal data

³¹ The Data Quality Campaign, *Measuring What Matters: Creating a Longitudinal Data System to Improve Student Achievement*, Update 2006, Internet, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Publications-Measuring_What_Matters.pdf, Accessed 13 August 2007.

warehouse will enable the sharing of critical information spanning early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and adult literacy education between systems that track student learning, school and classroom performance. In addition, the warehouse will ultimately link to other youth and adult serving systems to provide a comprehensive picture of the learners within the District of Columbia. This information will assist in meeting educational needs through better planning, implementation, program evaluation, and stakeholder empowerment.

Components of the data warehouse will be rolled out for SY 2008-09. Research is also underway to determine the requirements of a special education data system, a subcomponent of the data warehouse.

3.0 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The legal and policy environment previously described creates an opportunity for the OSSE to strengthen the District's education system. To address these specific concerns and other service delivery considerations, the State Superintendent of Education plans to assume complete functional authority of the District's state level education functions by the beginning of fiscal year 2008. We have developed a three phase approach to establishing the new OSSE:

- ***Transfer of Authority.*** In this first phase of transformation, staff from all integrating agencies will continue to report through their current organizational structure. To mitigate the risk of any service disruption, the transfer of functions, departments, and offices will be carried out sequentially beginning October 1, 2007, assuming the Mayor's approval of the OSSE Transition Plan.
- ***Reorganization.*** The second phase of our transformation is by far the most complex. This process will equalize pay scales among all personnel into one agency pay scale, alter organizational and reporting structures, and move budgets to realize efficiencies within the new organizational design. During this phase, we will work to ensure uninterrupted service delivery and high-quality customer service to District residents. Reorganization encompasses an intense evaluation of the transferred functions and interim structure and a redesign of operational processes and service delivery. We have already started the planning process of this phase and expect to solidify and complete the reorganization and streamlining activities by Spring 2008.
- ***Alignment.*** The third and final phase of the transformation of the OSSE is long-term and focused on building sustainable high performance into the organization. The OSSE will monitor and evaluate its operational performance and educational outcomes following final implementation of the reorganization. Based on these findings, education and management best practices, federal and state legislation, and District priorities, we will design and implement continuous improvements to our operations and services.

To prepare for the transition, the OSSE staff analyzed state education functions and developed this Transition Plan in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBOE), DCPS, UDC, ECEA personnel and education stakeholders. Once authority has been transferred, we will identify high priority areas needing either operational improvement or action to increase compliance. Consolidating responsibility for the decision making processes, budgets, and personnel of state education activities will facilitate the District's goal of providing excellent education opportunities for all residents.

Following is an overview of the objectives and approaches we used to develop this Transition Plan.

3.1 Guiding Principles of Transition

As we design process improvements in the second phase of reorganization, we will develop explicit performance metrics that drive continuous improvement in educational services and outcomes and consistently measure progress against these objectives. These operational improvements and, ultimately, enhanced student outcomes, will result directly from activities built from a set of guiding principles:

- **Leadership** - We are committed to lead the OSSE toward achieving high performance. Leading change in state level education activities also means committing to strong management, educational best practices and high standards of accountability.
- **Stakeholder Responsiveness** - We are committed to inclusiveness and responsiveness to our employees and education stakeholders. The District has a wide range of education stakeholders, including but not limited to, local education agencies, teachers, parents, students, the State Board of Education, school administrators and staff, government agencies and community activists.
- **Communication and Information** - We are committed to transparency and communication with staff and stakeholders, as well as providing access to accurate, timely and understandable information. We will create the statewide longitudinal education data warehouse as a cornerstone of our educational knowledge management capabilities.
- **OSSE's Staff** - We are committed to staffing the OSSE with skilled, experienced and well trained individuals. Our ability to retain the skills and experience of key state level education staff is critical to providing seamless services through the transfer of authority and reorganization phases. Ultimately, staff will be organized into cross functional teams, and trained in educational and management best practices. Through these efforts we hope to achieve a culture that supports high performance.
- **Operations** - We are committed to providing educational services and oversight based on best education and management practices and consistent with current legal requirements. We will consolidate functions for efficiency, streamline processes, identify and manage risks, leverage technology, comply with grant requirements, and enhance budget and financial management activities.
- **Educational Outcomes** - We are committed, based on activities resulting from the above principles, to measuring performance and demonstrating progress in our core policy areas. Rigorous performance management and reporting will inform the public as to our progress toward the vision that all District residents receive an excellent education for success in the 21st century.

By creating a structure and culture that reflect these principles, we will pursue the following outcomes throughout the transformation:

- **We will function at a high level to enhance student achievement.** Our overarching goal is to enhance student achievement to better prepare students for

postsecondary learning, citizenship, and the workforce. We expect that the long-term functionality of the OSSE will result in improved successes in academic outcomes.

- ***We will work in cross-agency teams to enhance service delivery.*** A key component of high performing organizations is teamwork and a reduced reliance on working within confined functional areas. One of our goals is to create a culture whereby employees solve problems across functional areas and naturally create teams to deliver better service.
- ***We will align people, processes and technology to optimize performance.*** Best practices from other state education agencies indicate the need for implementation of a statewide longitudinal education data warehouse. This will increase efficiency, accountability and performance and provide reliable data to policy makers for informed policy action. We will also implement a performance measurement tool, developed internally, known as EdStat to constantly measure the agencies progress against performance and strategic objectives.

Based on these guiding principles we designed a process to evaluate the District's current state-level education functions and specified an approach to transfer these functions into the OSSE beginning October 1, 2007.

3.2 Steps Taken for the Transfer of Authority

Since June 2007, the State Superintendent convened the OSSE's leadership and transition teams and charged them with determining how best to effect the transition of state-level education functions efficiently with minimal disruption of services to constituents, staff, educators, or administrators.

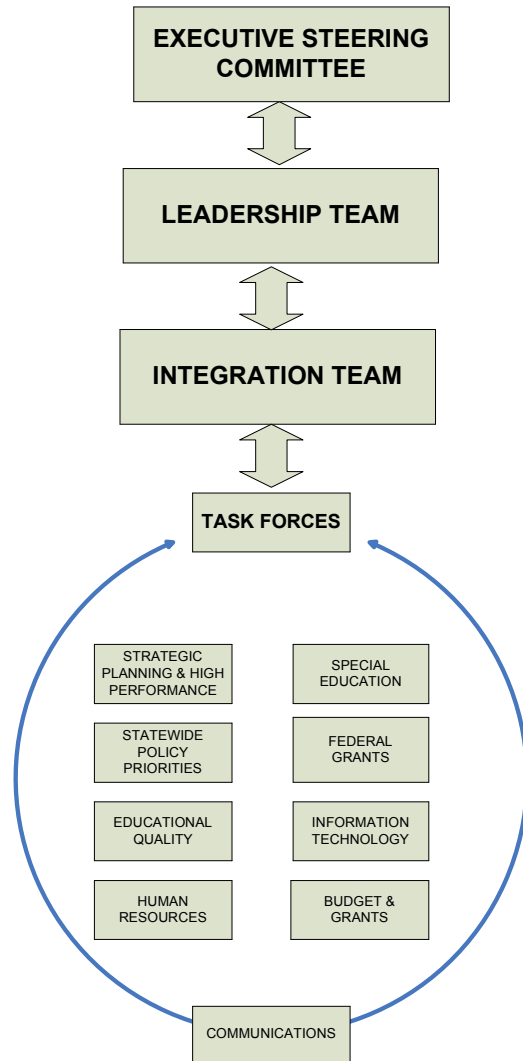
To accomplish this objective, the transition effort was composed of a team structure that includes the:

- ***Management Executive Steering Committee***, which consists of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the Chancellor of DCPS, the Director of Human Resources, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of the Office of Property Management, the Attorney General, the Chief Technology Officer, the Director of the Department of Human Services, and the President of the University of the District of Columbia;
- ***Stakeholder Steering Committee***, made up of the State Board of Education President, the Executive Director of the Public Charter School Board, and the President of the Washington Teachers Union;
- ***Leadership Team***, which consists of the OSSE's senior staff and representatives from the SEA at UDC, the ECEA and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education;

- **Integration Team**, which consists of subject matter experts among the OSSE’s staff, and the OSSE’s transition team; and
- **Transition Task Forces**, which consist of staff from all incoming agencies, educational experts and stakeholders to collect information, raise issues, identify risks and develop plans to improve service.

The process through which the Task Forces worked to facilitate the transfer of authority relied on many active participants. Their roles began with defining state education functions in DCPS, UDC and the ECEA. The Task Forces identified budgets, personnel and authorities associated with agency functions, and they engaged stakeholders in understanding how to design an effective transition process. A main part of this design process was defining the scope of activities needed to transfer authority for the incoming state-level functions.

Task Forces identified the legal, regulatory, contractual and logistical issues related to the transition, identifying risks for potential disruptions of services related to the transfer of authority. Each Task Force also contributed to the transition plan, communicated with stakeholders, helped the State Superintendent respond to public comment, and incorporated suggestions into the transition plan.



3.3 Scope of Transition Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement

The process of transferring authority for functions from DCPS, UDC and ECEA to the OSSE is complex. The diversity of systems, administrations, and control mechanisms in these various functions require a careful integration process. The Task Forces have focused on making sure that there is understanding of all potential challenges as well as the possible improvements in services of administration that can be made as a result of the transfer. Internal stakeholder involvement has been a focus of this activity, particularly for those individuals directly affected by the transition. Task Forces addressed five specific areas:

- ***Potential Efficiencies and Improvements.*** We addressed how the integration of state education functions could improve coordination, service delivery and cost management.
- ***Issues, Constraints and Requirements.*** We addressed what conditions affect the transfer of authority and subsequent operation of program and operational cycles. We also identified events, contractual requirements, and other one-time and recurring constraints that might compromise the effectiveness of the transfer of authority.
- ***Risk Factors.*** We addressed risks that could affect a smooth transfer of authority. Risks or impacts include potential service disruptions, critical one-time costs, restrictions on budget authority, complex budget transfer regulations and dates, budget availability risks and associated programmatic impact, and legal issues. Of particular concern was making sure staff transfers can be made in time for the first pay period and making sure education services are not disrupted.
- ***Transition Implementation.*** We addressed what management personnel and skills are necessary to operate a fully functional and responsive state agency. This is a complicated process, but we are putting communications and management relationships in place to ensure a seamless transfer of operations and service delivery.

During the short period available for transition analysis and stakeholder engagement, many stakeholders, including the OSSE staff and education experts, defined the state-level education functions, people, processes and systems to be transferred to the OSSE starting on October 1, 2007. The next section describes the constraints that exist in these legacy agencies and the basis on which the Office of the Superintendent of Education made decisions about specific transfer activities and risk mitigation strategies.

4.0 TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY IMPACTS

This section describes the findings of the OSSE's Task Forces regarding state education functions. It details the legislative requirements for this Transition Plan, the state education functions and responsibilities that transfer to the OSSE on October 1, and the budgetary and personnel impacts that will result from the transfer.

4.1 Legislative Requirements for the Transition Plan

As previously noted, Section 302 of the *District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007* specifies that OSSE must:

- “Consult with the Board of Education, the District of Columbia Public Schools, the Public Charter School Board, the Washington Teachers Union, and relevant District and federal agencies, leading up to the submission of the transition plan;
- Identify the authority and responsibility of each party at each stage in the transition process;
- Specify timelines, dates, and benchmarks for completion of the transfer of authority, responsibility, budget, and employees;
- Provide an estimate of the cost of carrying out each transferred function; and
- Identify any factors with potential for disrupting services to students and recommend steps to prevent any possible disruption.”³²

We have complied with the *Education Reform Act* requirements as follows.

4.2 Consultation with Stakeholders

Frequent communication with stakeholders is central to the OSSE's effective integration and transition into a high-performing state education agency. Following the enactment of the *Education Reform Act*, we developed a communications plan to both inform and solicit input from internal and external stakeholders. As a result of this plan, communication efforts have been ongoing throughout the summer with a wide variety of stakeholders including policy makers, community advocates, school advocates and with the individuals who will become a part of the agency upon the transfer of authority.

As a result of the *Education Reform Act*, meetings have been held with the District of Columbia State Board of Education, the Public Charter School Board and the Washington Teachers Union to discuss the ongoing transition efforts of the OSSE as required by the *Education Reform Act*. In addition, the OSSE has extensively engaged personnel from the incoming agencies by extending invitations to participate on transition

³² Council of the District of Columbia, *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, Internet, <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf>, Accessed 17 July 2007.

task forces and in the development of the organizational design to all employees. The State Superintendent has also held an open house for the public on the new organizational design and has been actively involved in Mayor Fenty's Town Hall series meetings that have been located throughout each ward in the District.

Additionally, the Mayor, in conjunction with the OSSE, held a roundtable discussion with over 130 parents, activists, and stakeholders at a Burrville Elementary School on August 30, 2007. At this gathering, the OSSE collected over 200 pages of ideas, comments, and general feedback to review.

Moreover, the OSSE's website contains a link for constituents to provide input on the transition effort, and the State Superintendent has provided weekly transition updates on the OSSE's website. To ensure that the transition effort is being communicated effectively, the OSSE has also engaged in a full media blitz specifically designed to relay important information about the transition to the public.

4.3 Authorities and Responsibilities

The state education functions of the following agencies will be transferred to the OSSE on October 1st:

- DCPS State Education Agency (all state education functions except Transportation and Non-Public Tuition); and
- UDC State Education Agency for Adult and Family Education and GED testing.

As a result of this transfer, the OSSE has developed a new organizational design depicted in Chart 1. However, a select number of functions will be transferred to the OSSE after the October 1st transfer, due to the need for further planning. (These additional functions are not included in Chart 1, because we are still collaborating with internal and external stakeholders on the best way to incorporate them into the organization.)

The state education functions that will not transfer to the OSSE on October 1st, but will be analyzed to determine the scope and process for transfer, are the following:

- DCPS Transportation
- DCPS Non-Public Tuition
- DHS Early Care and Education Administration

In order to determine which components of these three agencies (DCPS SEA, UDC SEA, and ECEA) qualify as state-level education functions, the OSSE employed several different approaches.³³ Our criteria included an evaluation of local law, federal law,

³³ The process of distinguishing between state and local functions was complicated by two factors. First, in some cases, there is no one model for deciding whether a function is state or local because the function is performed at the state level in some jurisdictions and the local level in other jurisdictions. Second, there

federal grant requirements and the practices of successful state education agencies across the country. Typically, state-level education functions focus on areas that require state-wide coordination related to policy, monitoring, regulatory oversight, or resource allocation.

Through a collaborative process involving key stakeholders, the OSSE examined the District's unique requirements and how they impact state and local responsibilities. Accordingly, determinations were made about which functions are state-level and will be transferred over to the OSSE. Chart 2 illustrates the state education services planned for transfer to the OSSE (both on October 1 and later), their date of transfer, and the state responsibilities associated with each function.

are programs within DCPS in which the same employees perform both state and local functions, making it difficult to isolate and distinguish the state function.

Organization Design

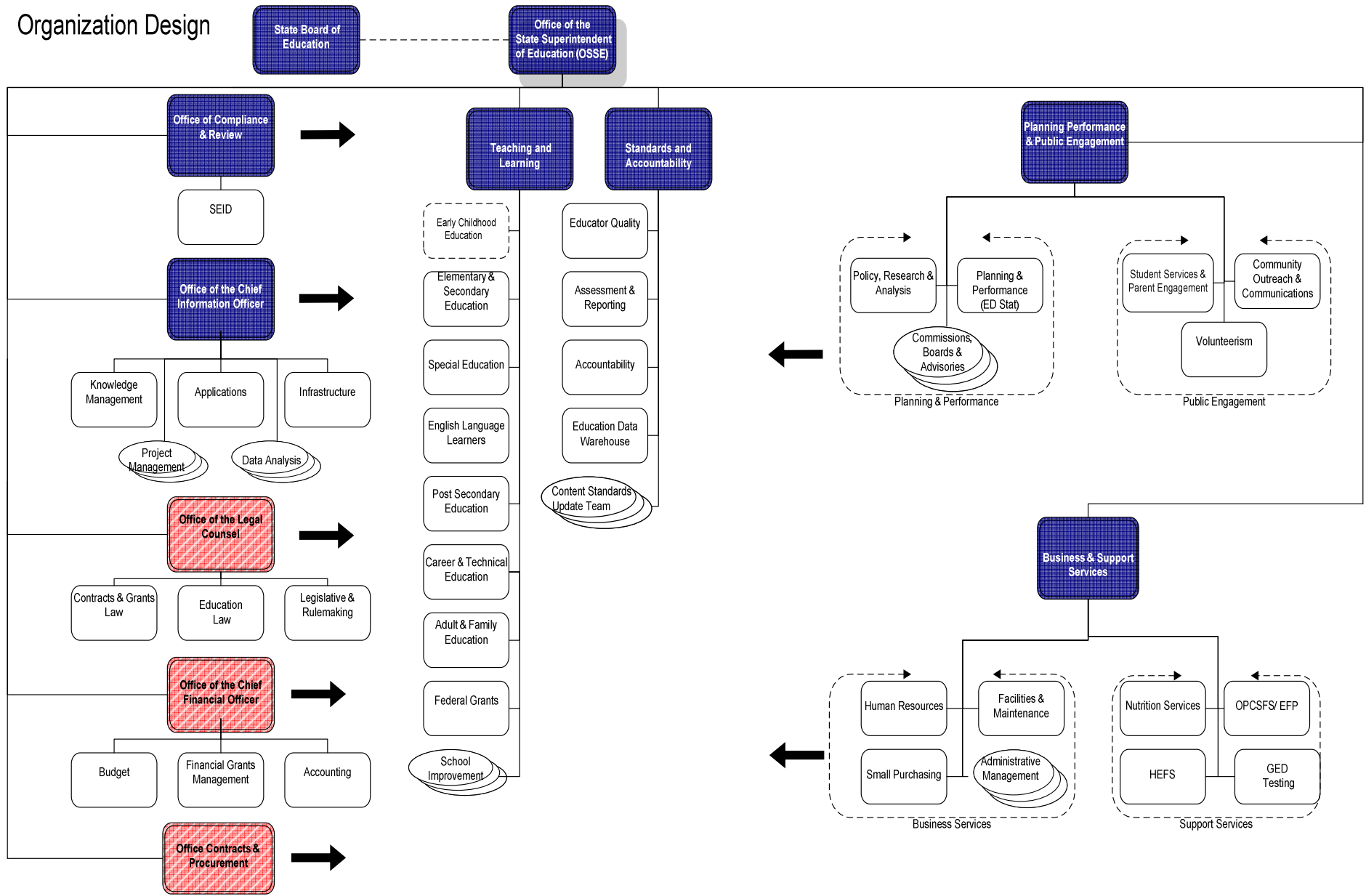


Table 1. State Education Functions Transferring to the OSSE (starting October 1)

Incoming Service	Portion To Be Transferred	State Responsibilities
District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)		
SEA Credentialing	Complete Transfer	Ensure that classrooms are taught by highly qualified teachers in compliance with the NCLB requirements and perform district accreditation
Board of Education	Partial Transfer	Support new responsibilities of the State Board of Education with regard to their approval authority established in Section 403 of the <i>Education Reform Act</i>
Human Resources	Partial Transfer	Support the HR needs of our new organization
Resource Allocation	Partial Transfer	Support the needs of our new organization
Office of Accountability, Testing & Research	Partial Transfer	Meet federal accountability requirements for elementary and secondary education, conduct standardized testing, best practice policy research, and benchmarking
Chief Academic Officer	Partial Transfer	Provide academic services related to our state-level role
Standards & Curriculum	Partial Transfer	Develop standards and communicating standards to LEAs
State Office of Career & Technical Education	Complete Transfer	Oversee and manage the state Office of Career and Technical Education which is currently at DCPS
Accountability, Testing & Research	Partial Transfer	Conduct testing
Bilingual Education - English Language Learners	Partial Transfer	Ensure monitoring and compliance with respect to English language learner federal and state requirements
Information Technology	Partial Transfer	Develop state-wide education data resources and support the IT needs of the organization
DSTV	Complete Transfer	Broadcast school board meetings and other school events, put on educational programs for the community and provide public service programming (Functions will be coordinated w/ OCTT)
Compliance	Partial Transfer	Monitor and audit our departments to ensure compliance with federal laws and federal grants and state requirements
Federal Grants	Complete Transfer	Monitor programmatic and fiscal processes and oversee the administration of all state-level federal grants

Table 2. Continued - State Education Functions Transferring to the OSSE (starting October 1)

Incoming Service	Portion To Be Transferred	State Responsibilities
District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) – Special Education Services		
Special Education	Partial Transfer	Monitor special education programmatic and fiscal processes, oversight over the special education and state improvement grants, and the administration of special education data management
State Enforcement Investigative Division (SEID)	Complete Transfer	Dispute resolution and monitoring and oversight to ensure compliance with the Blackman-Jones Consent Decree.
Transportation	No Transfer October 1 - complete transfer at a later date	Ensure equal access to education for all learners by providing IEP supported transportation services to children with special needs.
Non-Public Tuition	No Transfer October 1 - complete transfer at a later date	Ensure free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment by monitoring and approving non-public tuition payments for children with special needs; oversight and processing of related services, such as Medicaid.
Department of Human Services (DHS)		
Early Childhood and Education Administration	No Transfer October 1 Transfer is under evaluation by a work group	Planning, programming, and allocation of resources for young children and their families; coordinate and support the previously separate ECEA and DCPS early childhood education programs.
University of the District of Columbia (UDC)		
State Education Agency of Adult and Family Education	Complete Transfer	Supervision of adult literacy, establishing fee rates for all adult education courses, granting waivers of applicable fees, and GED testing.
GED Testing Center	Complete Transfer	Conduct testing; establish and enforce standards.

It is important to note that some of the services are being transferred to the OSSE in their entirety, because they are a complete state-level responsibility (listed in Chart 2 as a “complete transfer”). However, most services have both state and local components, and only the state component of those services will be transferred to the OSSE (listed in Chart 2 as a “partial transfer”).

The following paragraphs provide more detail about the functions being transferred after October 1st (ECEA, Transportation, and Non-Public Tuition). They articulate the rationale for why these functions are state-level and why their transfer will occur at a later date.

ECEA. We have identified early care and education as one of our four core policy themes because of its critical importance in determining future academic success for children in the District of Columbia. Not only is early care and education of the utmost importance for children from birth to age five, but early education leaves lasting impressions upon children that will impact lifetime trajectories. These issues should be informed and protected by state policy.

Although there is much to admire about the quality of the District’s early education services in comparison to such services offered in states across the nation, there is still much room for improvement. For example, challenges with early care services in the District include, “government fragmentation in the management and delivery of services, limited or no transparency of information regarding the nature of services provided or their outcomes, and inadequate accountability across systems.”³⁴

The *Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, which transferred the Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the OSSE, allows the OSSE to begin addressing this fragmentation, lack of transparency of services and insufficient accountability. Title III, Section 304(b) states that “[a]ll positions, personnel, property, records, and unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations, and other funds available ... to the Department of Human Services that support functions related to the responsibilities of the Early Care and Education Administration and the Early Intervention Program ... are transferred to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.”³⁵

Shifting the early care and education functions to the OSSE will allow for a more coordinated approach to early education programs. Upon ECEA’s transfer to the OSSE in January 2008, the public pre-K through adult and higher education state service continuum will be solidified for greater quality and more efficient service delivery. As the District’s state education agency, the OSSE will regularly consult with the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development, the Interagency Coordinating

³⁴ “Fenty Education e-Transition Early Care and Education Work Group Recommendations,” December 28, 2006.

³⁵ Council of the District of Columbia, *Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf>, Internet, Accessed July 17, 2007.

Council and other key stakeholders to provide a more effective platform to conduct planning, programming, and allocating resources for young children and their families.

Because of the importance and life long effects of early care and education, the OSSE has taken steps to convene a working study group of ECEA staff to determine how best to proceed with the integration of appropriate early care and education functions within our office and develop the “seamless and coherent early childhood education delivery system from before birth to age five”³⁶ that the Mayor seeks for the District’s early care services.

During this process we will also work with the Department of Human Services to consider the best structure for providing early care services to working families through ECEA’s child care subsidy program.

Transportation and Non-Public Tuition. In many states, special education transportation and non-public tuition are local education agency responsibilities, or are shared responsibilities with the state. Due to the District’s small geographic size and unique historical structure, these functions were supported by the city government and implemented through DCPS. Because of the extreme costs and sensitive compliance issues associated with these functions in the District of Columbia, and also because we plan a complete restructuring of special education, more time should be devoted to planning and understanding optimum structures, policies and procedures.

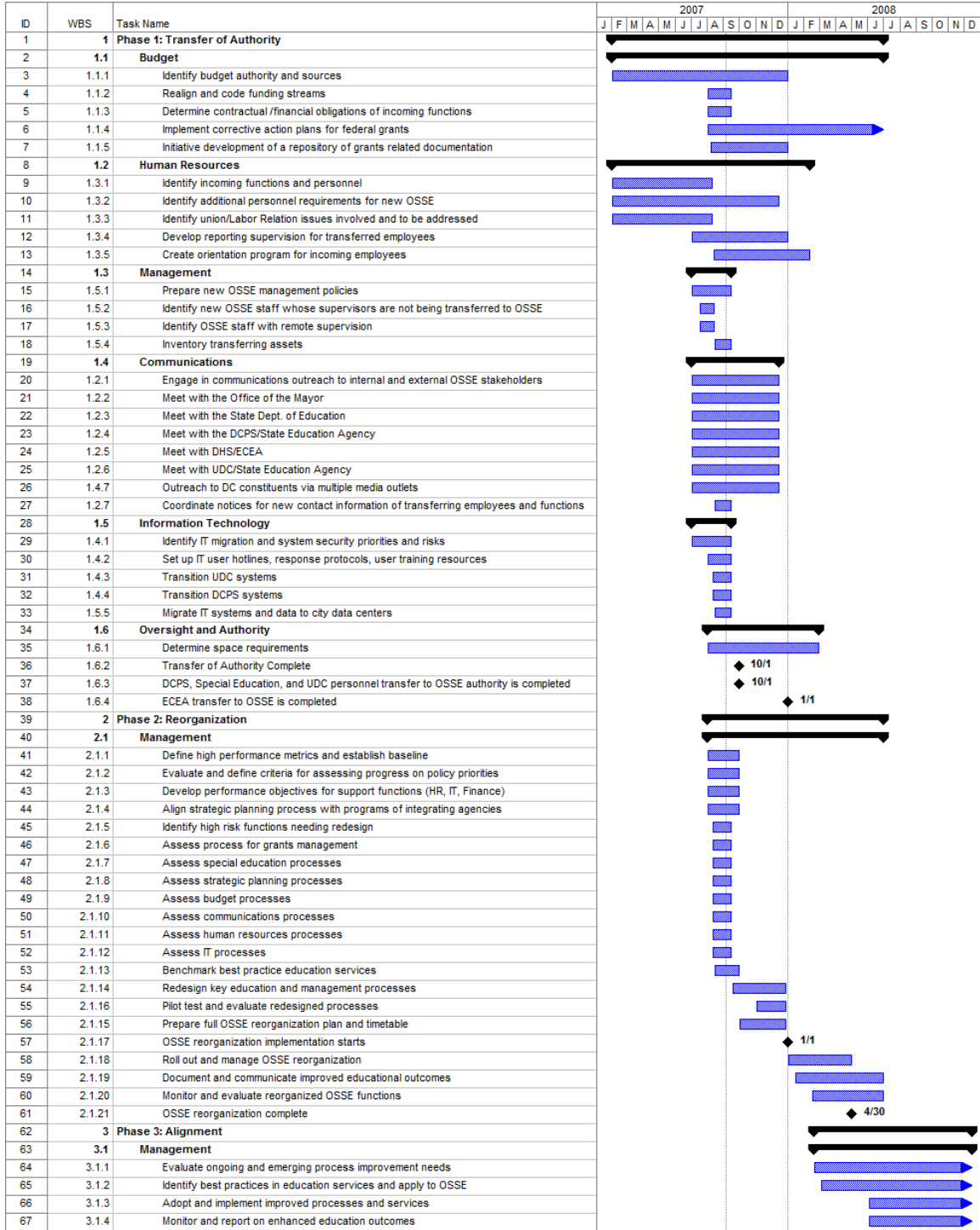
Therefore, the OSSE and DCPS have agreed to delay the movement of both functions from the LEA to the OSSE for FY 2008. The State Superintendent and the Chancellor have committed to working together on a complete restructuring of education in the District of Columbia. That restructuring will include a deep analysis of the way we provide transportation and non-public tuition services to students in the District. We will consult with the District's court-appointed monitors and administrators of transportation and non-public school tuition to understand their current and optimal functioning and what it will take to introduce these functions into our state structures. With due diligence and a comprehensive analysis of all critical special education service components, a stable and sustainable structure of special education services will be created for children of the District of Columbia.

4.4 Schedule and Benchmarks

We will prepare for the transfer of authority scheduled to begin October 1st. In addition to these activities, we will plan for additional organizational change efforts. Key activities and milestones are summarized in Figure 2 below:

³⁶ Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, *DC Great Start: A Comprehensive Early Care and Education Action Plan for the District of Columbia*, Executive Summary-Draft.

Figure 1. Timeline for the Three Phases of the OSSE Transformation



4.5 Estimated Cost and Personnel

Following the October 1st transfer of authority, the OSSE will have a total budget of \$331,151,425 with 364.5 Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs). These totals are a result of the consolidation of functions currently performed by DCPS and the SEA at UDC into the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

This transition plan represents a rational differentiation of state and local functions, with the objective of establishing a high performing state education agency. It is possible that after operating under this structure, we may discover that some functions currently performed at the local level would be better performed at the state level, and vice versa. We commit to monitoring the implementation of this plan to ensure the establishment of an optimal organization.

4.5.1 Budget Summary

Of the total budget of \$331,151,425 and 364.5 FTEs, \$319,375,160 and 353.5 FTEs will support the costs of administering all OSSE functions; \$8,776,265 and 11.0 FTEs will support our transition costs; and \$3,000,000 will be dedicated to school supports and interventions under NCLB.

Table 2. Summary of OSSE by Originating Agency

Budget Category	Budget	FTEs
Cost of Managing Existing Functions		
D.C. Public Schools (funding and responsibility to OSSE)	184,934,768	145.0
Legacy State Education Office	111,094,012	85.5
D.C. Public Schools (responsibility but not funding to OSSE)	5,973,223	47.0
University of the District of Columbia	3,157,615	7.0
State Capacity Not Transferred from Other Agencies	6,679,553	28.0
Internal Reallocation of State Resources	6,132,342	28.0
Additional management costs for larger agency	1,403,647	13.0
Total, Cost of Managing Existing Functions	319,375,160	353.5
Transition Costs	8,776,265	11.0
NCLB Supports and Interventions	3,000,000	-
TOTAL	331,151,425	364.5

To estimate transition costs, we took into consideration one-time costs including: adjustments to salary and employee benefits, legal fees, and moving costs. The cost represents our best estimation based on data currently available, but unforeseen circumstances may affect this estimate in the future. We have identified risks that could impact costs including unforeseen legal mandates or services previously understated at

the originating agencies. Following the transfer of authority, we anticipate greater visibility into operations and cost drivers that may improve cost estimates.

4.5.2 State Education Activity Fund

The State Education Activity Fund was established to support the implementation of this transition. This fund includes \$30,557,000 in resources split between \$26,577,000 for ongoing and \$4,000,000 for one-time resources needs. The proposed expenditures from this fund required for this transition total \$25,832,688, leaving a balance of \$4,744,312 available to be allocated to other needs and priorities.

Table 3. Allocation of State Education Activity Fund

	Ongoing	One-Time	Total
State Education Activity Fund	\$26,577,000	\$4,000,000	\$30,577,000
Proposed Expenditures			
Agency Establishment Costs:			
<i>Formula-Funded DCPS Resources</i>	5,973,223	-	5,973,223
<i>State Capacity Not Transferred</i>	6,679,553	-	6,679,553
<i>New OSSE Establishment Costs</i>	1,403,647	-	1,403,647
Total, Agency Establishment Costs	14,056,423	-	14,056,423
<i>Transition Costs</i>	2,170,000	6,606,265	8,776,265
<i>NCLB Supports and Interventions</i>	3,000,000	-	3,000,000
<i>Total, Proposed Expenditures</i>	\$19,226,423	\$6,606,265	\$25,832,688
BALANCE			\$4,744,312

4.5.3 Budget by Fund

Table 4. Budget by Fund for OSSE by Source

Budget Category	General Fund		Federal		Total
	Local	Special	Grant	Payment	
Cost of Managing Existing Functions					
Legacy State Education Office	20,130,557	10,322,432	32,541,022	48,100,000	111,094,012
D.C. Public Schools (funding and responsibility to OSSE)	12,100,976	150,000	172,683,793	-	184,934,768
D.C. Public Schools (responsibility but not funding to OSSE)	5,973,223	-	-	-	5,973,223
University of the District of Columbia	1,407,214	65,074	1,685,327	-	3,157,615
State Capacity Not Transferred from Other Agencies	6,679,553	-	-	-	6,679,553
Internal Reallocation of State Resources	6,132,342	-	-	-	6,132,342
Additional management costs for larger agency	1,403,647	-	-	-	1,403,647
Total, Cost of Managing Existing Functions	53,827,511	10,537,506	206,910,142	48,100,000	319,375,160
NCLB Supports and Interventions	3,000,000	-	-	-	3,000,000
Transition Costs	8,776,265	-	-	-	8,776,265
TOTAL	65,603,776	10,537,506	206,910,142	48,100,000	331,151,425

Table 5. FTEs by Fund for OSSE by Source

Originating Agency	General Fund		Federal		Total
	Local	Special	Grant	Payment	
Cost of Managing Existing Functions					
Legacy State Education Office	43.3	4.0	23.3	15.0	85.5
D.C. Public Schools (funding and responsibility to OSSE)	68.0	-	77.0	-	145.0
D.C. Public Schools (responsibility but not funding to OSSE)	47.0	-	-	-	47.0
University of the District of Columbia	7.0	-	-	-	7.0
State Capacity Not Transferred from Other Agencies	28.0	-	-	-	28.0
Internal Reallocation of State Resources	28.0	-	-	-	28.0
Additional management costs for larger agency	13.0	-	-	-	13.0
Total, Cost of Managing Existing Functions	234.3	4.0	100.3	15.0	353.5
NCLB Supports and Interventions	-	-	-	-	-
Transition Costs	11.0	-	-	-	11.0
TOTAL	245.3	4.0	100.3	15.0	364.5

General Fund

Local Funds. The proposed budget is \$62,603,776 and includes 245.3 FTEs funded by local funds. Of this amount, \$53,827,511 reflects the funding necessary to manage existing functions while \$3,000,000 is for supports and interventions required by No Child Left Behind and \$8,776,265 for transition costs. Resources transferred into the OSSE include \$20,130,557 and 43.3 FTEs from the legacy State Education Office, \$18,074,199 and 115.0 FTEs from DCPS, and \$1,407,214 and 7 FTEs from UDC for adult education functions.

Special Purpose Revenue Funds. The proposed budget is \$10,537,506 and includes four FTEs funded by special purpose revenue funds. This total reflects \$10,322,422 from the legacy SEO, \$150,000 from DCPS and \$65,074 from UDC.

Federal Fund

Federal Grants. The proposed budget is \$206,910,142 and includes 100.3 FTEs funded by federal grants. Resources transferred from other agencies include \$32,541,022 and 23.3 FTEs from the legacy SEO, \$172,683,793 and 77.0 FTEs from DCPS and \$1,685,327 from UDC for adult education functions.³⁷

Federal Payments. The proposed budget is \$48,100,000 and includes 15 FTEs funded by federal payments, all from the legacy SEO.

4.5.4 Budget for Transferred DCPS Functions

Our budget will include funds and FTEs for state functions previously provided by DCPS, including gross funds of \$190,907,992 along with 192.0 FTEs. This includes all functions we are receiving from DCPS. Funding for these functions will come from DCPS and the State Education Activity Fund. In many cases, the associated programs included both state and local functions. In these cases, funding and FTEs were distributed between the office and DCPS based on an analysis of the workload and time distribution of the individual employee and in some cases the nature of the work performed by individual employees.

Table 6. DCPS Breakdown

Program	Budget		FTEs	
	Local	Federal	Local	Federal
Career and Technical Education	-	7,967,085	-	5.0
Accountability, Testing and Research	2,659,716	6,429,445	6.0	4.0
Blackman-Jones Litigation	5,000,000	-	18.0	-
Board of Education	136,000	-	9.0	-
Chief Financial Officer	-	1,248,574	-	6.0
Fixed Costs	147,000	-	-	-
HR & Educator Licensing and Accreditation	-	1,050,000	-	-
Information Technology Division	706,126	-	10.0	-
Grants	-	116,431,058	-	3.0
New Youth Services Center	-	93,750	-	-
Oak Hill/New Intake Center	-	413,294	-	-
Office for Civil Rights and Multicultural Affairs	110,260	-	1.0	-
Office of Bilingual Education	207,593	1,145,277	2.0	-
Office of Federal Grants - SEA	-	5,171,157	-	39.0
Office of the Chief Academic Officer	461,774	900,000	3.0	-
Resource Allocation & Management	88,970	-	1.0	-
SEA Credentialing	669,570	1,285,060	8.0	-
Special Education - DC Jail	500,000	-	-	-
Special Education - SEA	2,406,885	20,885,548	35.0	20.0
Standards and Curriculum	-	4,923,076	-	-
State Enforcement & Investigation Division (SEID)	1,426,000	-	13.0	-
Student Residency	2,768,091	-	2.0	-
Summer School	168,880	-	2.0	-
Transitory Services	-	1,240,469	-	-
Accountability	367,334	-	2.0	-
Workforce and Professional Development	-	3,500,000	-	-
TOTAL	17,824,199	172,683,793	112.0	77.0

³⁷ The total amount of federal grants includes a projected carryover amount from unspent prior year grant awards. This carryover will not appear in the OSSE's budget until the completion of the annual financial audit, which will be completed in early 2008.

4.6 Risks of Service Disruption and Mitigation Strategies

Three types of risk could affect the transition: 1) known; (2) unknown; and (3) uncontrollable events. The OSSE transition team has focused on identifying known risks in order to minimize any disruptions to critical operations, student services and programs. This report will focus on the risks associated with the budget, human resources, legal, federal grants, programs, and communications. The OSSE transition team has engaged key personnel from the four integrating agencies and other relevant stakeholders to develop a comprehensive picture of potential issues and actions to mitigate the known risks.

After the transfer of authority, we may identify that certain circumstances may be beyond our control. We are committed to monitoring the implementation of this plan so that we create a highly functional office that is reflective of best practices.

5.0 TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY IMPLEMENTATION

This section details the planned transfer of state educational functions to the OSSE from existing District education agencies. We describe below the key transfer of authority activities and the associated risks with regard to:

- Human Resources;
- Budget;
- Information Technology;
- Communications; and
- Management.

5.1 Transfer of Authority: Human Resources

Separate from the program improvements that will be implemented throughout the transition process, the transfer of authority of state education functions will have limited immediate impact on the overall functions on the day-to-day activities of personnel transferred to the OSSE. On October 1st, the OSSE's human resources (HR) department will become responsible for all personnel-related issues ranging from compensation to employee orientation for the transferring employees.

5.1.1 Human Resources Transfer Activities

We have identified organizational and personnel requirements necessary to carry out the transfer of authority. To implement a smooth transition, the OSSE's human resources department is working on processes to execute personnel transfer actions. The following is a discussion of the implications of the transfer of authority and the long-term organizational and personnel issues that are being considered during the reorganization efforts.

Personnel Transfer. During the review and analysis of which state functions will move from the integrated agencies, we identified employees assigned to the agencies being transferred, and assessed the amount of time each spent on state activities. We also identified and analyzed best practices in other high performing state education agencies as they relate to personnel tasks and assignments that are similar in nature. The OSSE's task forces made up of employees from each transferring agency worked to develop personnel recommendations related to best practices. They also recommended fiscal and budgetary targets and operational efficiencies in high performing state organizations with similar functions for similar populations.

To increase the effectiveness of the transition of new staff, the HR team will develop orientation packages to ensure transferees have a clear understanding of salaries, HR procedures, retirement and health benefits.

Compensation. The transfer of personnel will have no immediate impact on employee salaries. There are, however, significant disparities between the pay systems and benefit packages of the integrating organizations. There are notable variations in the benefits offered to employees, including the degree of services, deductible amounts, and provider selection. We will continue to review and analyze the affected departments to ensure a fair and objective plan to address the compensation disparity. We will also explore and determine a standard benefits package for all OSSE employees.

Payroll Administration. The top HR priority is to ensure a smooth and timely transfer of payroll and benefits to the OSSE's HR department. In the near-term, payroll data for all transferring personnel will remain in their current payroll system. For example, all DCPS personnel will remain in the CAPPs system and UDC personnel will remain in the PeopleSoft system. The appropriate personnel funding streams will be adjusted by creating a new organizational code in each of the respective payroll systems so that the transferring employees' paychecks will be paid from the OSSE's budget starting October 1st. After the transfer of authority, all salaries and pay days will remain the same.

In January 2008, all transferred employees will be migrated into a consolidated payroll system. This delayed integration creates two operational efficiencies. First, OSSE HR will benefit from DCHR's current plan and schedule to transition all city employee data to one payroll system (PeopleSoft) in October 2007. Second, this migration will coincide with DC HR's open enrollment period scheduled for January 2008. At this point, any disparities employees have experienced as a result of remaining in the various systems will be addressed.

Benefits. The transfer of authority involves different types of employee benefits packages. Currently, there is significant variation in the degree of services, deductible amounts, and provider selection among the different packages. We will continue to work with the affected HR departments and stakeholders to develop a fair and objective plan to normalize pay disparity and standardize the benefits packages amongst OSSE employees.

Union / Labor Relations. Some of the state functions transferring to the OSSE will encompass collective bargaining units and/or unionized employees. The OSSE will maintain compliance with the indicated labor agreements and further engage labor leadership as appropriate in addressing human resources issues.

5.1.2 Mitigation of Potential Challenges

The HR task force identified several potential risks with the transfer of authority. The main risks are described below.

Avoiding Disruption of HR Functions - The timely transfer of personnel and payroll information presents significant risks. Because the District of Columbia's Human Resources (DCHR) Department lacks an automated HR system (i.e. personnel records are all paper-based), obtaining the necessary information to respond accordingly before October 1 will be difficult. To address this concern, we are establishing an organizational

code within the current DCPS CAPPS system that will redirect transferred employees funding attributes to the OSSE.

Outside Agency Capacity - The addition of new functions may overwhelm some of the OSSE's current external support services (i.e. OCP, OAG, and the OCFO). For example, there is a risk that the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) may not have the capacity to handle all incoming DCPS and UDC procurements. Since DCPS procurements were previously addressed outside of OCP, this transfer will constitute a significant influx of new procurements. It may be necessary to bring in special expertise to handle new procurement areas or to enhance OCP staffing.

Therefore, we have planned for new staff and need to recruit and hire new staff. To carry out this recruiting and hiring process, position descriptions are being classified and posted.

Organizational Culture - Other potential risks may arise from integrating different employee cultures into one new organization. As such, it is recognized that morale issues may arise as transferred employees work side-by-side with non-transferred employees. To mitigate this risk, the OSSE will ensure that extensive communication and moral building activities occur in order to create a cohesive culture.

Upon the completion of the transfer authority, we will begin to evaluate the appropriate staffing levels necessary to establish a high performing agency. We will continue to research and assess best practices from other high performing agencies.

5.2 Transfer of Authority: Budget

During the transfer of operational authority phase of the transition, budget data will be transferred from the incoming programs to the OSSE with the current budget structure intact. This will provide for a smooth transition by allowing us to clearly track the budget as it transfers from the agency of origin to the OSSE and to more easily conduct validation exercises to ensure that all data are transferred smoothly. It will also allow the OSSE to more easily report on the transferred funding and compare current year data to the prior year.

5.2.1 Budget Risks and Mitigation

Transfer of Budget Authority - A key transition task will be to correctly identify all individuals from the integrating agencies and to ensure that the correct budget authorization for their program and department is transferred to the OSSE in a timely and accurate manner. These budget authorizations must be re-mapped to the new approval structure.

DCPS Contracts - The OSSE will work diligently with the Office of Contracting and Procurement to ensure the successful transfer of the DCPS contracts and procurement agreements currently in place or requiring execution in the immediate timeframe. Proper

steps will be taken to ensure that the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) will accept and honor all the contracts and procurement agreements of DCPS. However, lag times associated with the Procurement Automated Support System (PASS) may create delays in renegotiating contracts.

Oversight of Federal Grants - Inadequate state level oversight of federal grant funding is at the core of the District's "high-risk grantee" designation. Without adequate oversight and adherence to the federal grant requirements the District of Columbia will continue to be designated a "high risk grantee." The risks associated with continued non-compliance are extremely serious and can have wide-reaching impacts. The U.S. Department of Education could discontinue one or more grants, allow the state to receive grant funding on a reimbursement basis only, or require the state to contract with a third party to assist in financial management. For this reason, the transition must be carried out with careful attention to grant compliance issues.

In order to address these issues of non-compliance, we may need to fill vacancies and coordinate our reorganization to meet the conditions and requirements of each grant. Funding will be required for employee training, process improvement, creation of a federal grant documentation repository and executive-level involvement necessary to change the culture to one that is collaborative, communicative, organized, effective and efficient.

The initial steps will include the following: establishing clear lines of authority and generating, documenting, communicating and implementing policies and procedures that monitor and support compliance with the federal and state requirements, as well as corrective action plans.

5.3 Transfer of Authority: Information Technology

The changeover of IT processes will not occur on October 1st. It will be a sustained effort carried out over a series of weeks and based on careful assessments of the IT systems and assets residing at the integrating agencies. The objective of this integration is to increase productivity through the implementation of IT solutions. Additional goals include providing more robust and real-time data, maintaining accurate and secure data management systems, and ensuring guaranteed support levels that will comply with local, state and federal guidelines.

5.3.1 Information Technology Transfer Activities

After the October 1st transfer of authority, important IT initiatives will be undertaken to support the post-transition efforts in order to achieve operational efficiencies. Key initiatives include the following:

- Collocate all enterprise system hardware in certified, secure environments with system redundancies, and data back-ups;

- Consolidate the number of systems, applications, and vendors of IT through careful cost-benefit analysis;
- Improve efficiency in OSSE-wide operations by creating standardized work process applications for work requests and procurements;
- Implement widespread improvements to plans to comply with legislative and operational requirements; and
- Maintain an accurate inventory of all IT assets.

Post-transition, our IT approach will involve conducting a full inventory audit of the existing functions that would be merged together in terms of FTEs, hardware, and software. Prior to and following the October 1st transfer, we will execute the following activities:

- Identify all state level education functions with IT support functions;
- Identify the systems for integration, and their respective sites;
- Conduct an inventory of IT assets (equipment, data center, licenses, software applications, phones);
- Identify migration and system security priorities and risks;
- Prepare communication/phone directories, information;
- Provide pre-move orientation /training;
- Set up IT user hotlines, help desk, response protocols, user training resources;
- Install hardware and applications for users; and
- Migrate systems and data to city data centers.

5.3.2 Information Technology Risks and Mitigation

Information technology systems migration and integration risks exist for both operations of the OSSE as well as service delivery to LEAs and grants management. Several systems will be transferred to the OSSE that will require physical movement to the city data centers. Systems dealing with OSSE employees will also need to be migrated and tested. There are three main areas of IT risk that we will address:

Mitigating Service Disruptions. In order to avoid disruptions, systems and data migration will be scheduled to occur over a weekend. Risks include a period of poor connectivity and potential difficulty with vendor renegotiations.

Monitoring and Report for Federal Grants. In the long-term, the IT system changes will contribute to District-wide efforts at improved federal grants management, thereby mitigating the risks of continued non-compliance. The implementation of the statewide longitudinal data warehouse will allow the District to develop a state-of-the-art eGrants system, modeled after other higher performing state systems.

Compliance with Federal Education Recordkeeping. We will assume responsibility for record keeping and maintaining all information system and software licensing for all systems transferred to us. Therefore, it is critical that all OSSE IT systems comply with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, the federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect, correct and control release of student education records. Due to the sensitive nature of some education-related data, all personnel must sign a confidentiality agreement upon transfer.

5.4 Transfer of Authority: Communication

A critical element of the transition effort will involve frequent and well-targeted communication with all education stakeholders. Accordingly, the OSSE transition communications task force conducted an assessment to evaluate goals, objectives, audiences, internal and external strategies, and messages.

5.4.2 Communication Transfer Activities

We recognize that both internal and external strategies are necessary to effectively integrate and transition into a high-performing state education agency. We understand that we have the responsibility to engage and inform all stakeholders of the many structural and functional changes that will inevitably affect employees and thousands of children and parents. As such, we have developed a communications plan to reach target audiences by developing key communication strategies including theme-specific messages and communication tools.

In addition to the communications plan, we have embarked on a rigorous campaign to use the media as a vehicle to educate and inform all stakeholders of present and future intentions. The agency's media efforts will include: media pitching (interviews), press releases, media advisories, photo opportunities, news conferences/briefings, media kits, appearances on broadcast media, and proactive media relations (i.e., phone calls, tip sheets, op-ed pieces).

5.5 Transfer of Authority: Management

In addition to a smooth transition of personnel and budget, the new state agency will need to ensure that the appropriate processes and procedures are in place to lead and manage the organization. This guidance will be particularly important as we continue to evolve toward a high performing state agency.

5.5.1 Management Transfer Activities

Integration Planning. In planning the transfer of authority, the OSSE will work with department leaders to understand and integrate key functions in the new organization.

Specifically, we will schedule meetings with department heads to discuss processes, procedures, and systems that are critical to delivering services to District residents.

Process Integration. Once an understanding of department processes and procedures has been established, we will work with departments on integration of processes. In the preliminary integration effort, the focus will be on functional and cross functional integration of departments and processes.

Interagency Coordination. Several factors will determine the timing or sequencing of various functions. These will be discussed and decided with full coordinating discussions involving DCPS, DHS, UDC, DCHR and any other appropriate governmental unit. An initial view of determining factors includes:

- Budget and programmatic cycles;
- Key events within the unit;
- The existence or lack of any related contracts or agreements;
- Capacity to house, support or manage any unit;
- Availability of funds; and
- Regulations or laws.

Orientation and Training. To ease the integration of new staff, we will prepare an orientation program. Preparation includes the development of a coherent communication plan and key messages. We will also organize events to help mobilize both existing and new staff around the overall goal of ensuring exceptional education services for DC residents. As part of the orientation program, we will assess and provide the training necessary for modified processes or new reporting relationships over time.

A training needs assessment will be conducted to ensure that incoming and existing staff are given the opportunity to develop skills necessary for them to contribute to the roles they will be asked to perform.

Transfer Evaluation. During the course of planning and implementing the transition, we will continuously evaluate the feasibility of our efforts. Among the key considerations are budget; systems and technology; office space and logistics; HR requirements, processes, and guidelines; external requirements; and other risks. By identifying and assessing these considerations, we will mitigate transition risks. As necessary, we will alter our course to achieve efficiencies in operations.

Staffing. Upon the completion of the transfer of authority, we will continue evaluating the appropriate staffing levels necessary to establish a high performing agency. Task forces will continue to research and assess best practices from other high performing agencies.

Setting Expectations. One of our highest priorities is ensuring the transition process is transparent to District residents and other key stakeholders. This priority will be realized by effectively managing the potential for service delays. Our work includes collection and analysis of current strategic plans and performance measures from each of the consolidated entities. Performance measures in key areas that directly impact services to students will be elevated for continuous evaluation and follow up. The development of an agency dashboard and the institutionalization of the EdStat process are the primary management tools we will employ to minimize potential service disruptions.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The District of Columbia's integration of state level education functions under a single entity will ensure improvements in the delivery of quality education for our residents. Establishing and clarifying roles and responsibilities, funding, and functions apart from those of local education agencies will create greater transparency and accountability for continued improvement of our educational services.

Our public education systems have lagged behind other state systems for far too long. With the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), states are now charged with greater roles in providing quality education for their citizens. As the state education agency of the nation's capital, we should not only meet NCLB's expectations, but surpass the legislation's requirements and serve as a national model.

By focusing on four policy priorities (Early Care and Education, Educator Quality, Postsecondary and Workforce Preparation, and Literacy) we will work diligently to address all associated issues to establish ourselves as a high performing state agency. In addition to giving close attention to these important policy priorities, we have also begun to act on three critical areas that warrant immediate and long term attention during and after the transition. These areas include our special education services, federal grants management, and development of a statewide educational data warehouse.

Through the priorities and strategies outlined in this document, we are taking the steps necessary to facilitate our impending transition. Although we will assume authority of most state level education functions on October 1, 2007, we intend to conduct more research and analyses to fulfill the complete integration of the agencies, which includes the legacy State Education Office, and the state functions of the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Adult and Family Education of the University of the District of Columbia. In addition, we will continue our research of best practices to develop an appropriate and effective transition plan that is exclusively designed for the Early Care and Education Administration and the nonpublic tuition and transportation functions that will transfer to the OSSE at a later date.

The upcoming shift in reporting authority is simply an initial step of a three-phase process that will result in a full organizational transformation in 2008. Beginning October 1, we will assume responsibility for a budget of \$331,151,425 and 364.5 full time staff positions, including 192 from DCPS, 7 from Adult and Family Education, 85.5 from Legacy SEO, as well as some new positions. The actual number of FTEs from Early Care and Education Administration will be determined by January 2008. Although the transfer of authority for these FTEs will occur at the onset of the new fiscal year, the complete transition - including the Reorganization and Alignment phases - will occur over the next six to eight months. During this time, the office will implement the Transition Plan, carefully study how we conduct business, and adopt best practices to begin establishing our office as a more efficient state agency.

To date, we have explored potential efficiencies, issues, restraints, requirements, program and operational cycles, early opportunities for change, and potential service disruptions and risks that must be addressed as the transition occurs. We will continue to gather ideas and information that should inform and strengthen the agency's leadership, service, and policymaking from the Task Forces that consist of occupationally diverse staff members from the integrating state agencies. Additionally, this collaborative approach to setting goals has or will involve continued interaction and advisement from the Mayor, an executive steering committee, the State Board of Education, and the Council of the District of Columbia to ensure our full organizational transformation.

By setting high standards and emphasizing accountability, transparency, and data-driven decision-making for local education agencies, we will establish ourselves as a high-performing state agency that works to ensure all District residents receive the excellent education they deserve through clearly defined outcomes. To sustain our goal of creating policy that not only supports, but drives high quality education, we will continuously review organizational functions and realign them as necessary.

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