

Dear OSSE Team and Stakeholders,

It's the first week of school!

I apologize for not sending out my weekly email last week, so please enjoy this super-sized Updates & Reminders!

In the News

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Last week, we kicked off our Media Blitz week. I appeared on WUSA Channel 9 where I had an opportunity to discuss the vision of our office and the role that we have in the educational growth of our District's learners. If you have not already done so, be sure to read last week's edition of the Washington Informer and the Afro Newspaper from Wednesday and Thursday. I had the pleasure of meeting with the editorial staff from both of these paper and look forward to their profile of our office. I also had the chance to appear on News Channel 8 with Bruce DePuyt on Friday, WJLA "Capitol Sunday" with Leon Harris and WPGC 95.5 FM on Saturday morning, and Heaven 1580 AM on Sunday morning.

The blitz continues this week with WAMU's Kojo Nnamdi, the Examiner, (possibly) WKYS Community Affairs, and an online chat where teachers, students, and parents can ask me questions about the transition.

Town Hall Meetings

The mayor continued the School Transition Listening Series last week. A meeting was held in Ward 3 last Wednesday, August 22nd at Murch Elementary and Ward 1 on Thursday, August 23rd at Tubman Elementary. This week's Listening Series will take place at Shaw Junior High School (925 Rhode Island Ave NW) on Wednesday, August 29th at 6:30pm. These Town Hall Meetings are open to the public and I would encourage you to attend.

Sprucing Up

Last Saturday, August 25th was DCPS's 3rd Annual Beautification Day Project. I helped kick things off with the Mayor at the Patricia R Harris Education Center before heading over to Ludlow-Taylor Elementary. I hope everyone had the opportunity to participate in this important effort to get the schools ready for a new and exciting school year!

Achievement Scores

As I'm sure you know (some of you very well!), DC recently released the achievement scores for District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the public charter schools. While the scores showed modest growth, there is still significant work to be done. I will work closely with Chancellor Michelle Rhee and the Executive Director of the Public Charter School Board, Josephine Baker to increase improvement. A listing of schools and scores can be located at <http://webb.k12.dc.us/NCLB/index.asp#>

Transition News

I appreciate that you have continued managing your responsibilities for state functions during this time of transition. Understanding that this period of transition may be an anxious time for you, we continue to work to alleviate those feelings of anxiety through regular communication as well as by engaging you in the transition efforts of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

This transition period, while difficult, is also an exciting opportunity to build a model state education agency. As I have mentioned before, I will be depending on you to bring your expertise and knowledge of your organization to the table during the transition period to ensure that the structure of the new OSSE is one that is effective and efficient.

This morning, the proposed OSSE transition plan was posted to our website. On Thursday, August 30th, there will be the **Mayor's Public Roundtable Discussion** on the transition plan. The discussion will begin at 5:30pm and be held at Burrville Elementary School, 801 Division Avenue, NE. I strongly encourage you to attend this event.

This Wednesday, August 29th, I will meet with UDC/SEA staff and on **Tuesday, September 4th, I will spend the day at DCPS to specifically inform you of the proposed personnel transitions that will occur on the proposed transfer date of October 1.** Official actions, however, will not be taken until Mayor Adrian Fenty approves the transition plan.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunity that lies ahead and confident that together we will create an entity that will be laser focused on increasing student achievement in the District of Columbia. I strongly believe that the work we are undertaking is going to make a dramatic difference for the students of the District of Columbia. I look forward to working with you to make that happen. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 727-3471 should you have questions about this process. You can always send us an email at: OSSETransition@dc.gov.

Response to Suggestion Box Questions

Two of the most frequently asked questions received last week were:

Q) What should I say when people ask why our organization no longer exists?

A) We have combined multiple State Education Agency (SEA) functions representing pre-K through 12 and adult education under the broad name of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). However, we will still perform all of the SEA responsibilities that were previously scattered throughout various agencies throughout the District of Columbia, so I would encourage you to emphasize that the functions of your organization exists and coupled with the functions of the other organizations makes us all stronger and more effective.

Q) Will employees work at the location they are currently at or will we be at a new location where all OSSE employees will be located?

A) We are actively looking for short and long term locations that will accommodate all of the OSSE staff.

I am glad that many of you have placed questions in the suggestion boxes -- please keep them coming! I hope everyone has a productive first week of school! Be sure to take advantage of the upcoming three day weekend and enjoy!

Deborah

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