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DC KIDS COUNT REPORT REAFFIRMS MAYOR GRAY'S INVESTMENT IN PRE-K EDUCATION

Report will help city leaders' work towards increasing third grade reading and math test scores

(Washington, D.C.) – Mayor Vincent C. Gray, State Superintendent of Education Hosanna Mahaley Jones and DC Action for Children Executive Director HyeSook Chung today released a joint statement on the DC Kids Count Policy Brief. The DC Action for Children's policy brief points to the benefits of the Mayor's Pre-K legislation and investments in Pre-K programs where Pre-K participation leads to higher proficiency levels in 3rd grade.

"As a national leader in achieving universal Pre-K, the District must build on this momentum and ensure that our children are ready to succeed," said Mayor Vincent C. Gray. "We know from research that investments in early childhood development pay huge dividends in closing and preventing achievement gaps. Reports from community partners like DC Action for Children help us further the conversation amongst local stakeholders about the importance of continuing our investment in early childhood programs."

The DC Kids Count research found "that every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood programs yields a \$2-3 increase in per-capita earnings in the long term." This report augments the Mayor's call to action in his "One City Action Plan" to increase the percentage of early childhood development programs that meet high quality standards and increase school-readiness rates for kindergarten-aged children.

"This summer, OSSE's analysis of the DC CAS 2012 results showed that Pre-K participants have significantly higher proficiency levels than those who do not participate," stated State Superintendent Hosanna Mahaley Jones. "The data strongly indicates that if more students participate in high-quality Pre-K programs, we will see substantial growth in our state proficiency rate for 3rd graders. OSSE is committed to supporting our Local Education Agency (LEA) leaders' aggressive plans to increase student achievement and their laser-like focus on the success of their students."

"We are optimistic that the city's recent investments in Pre-K will continue to help improve proficiency scores moving forward," said DC Action for Children Executive Director HyeSook Chung. "But we remain concerned about how the lack of community assets, like high-quality early care, in some neighborhoods will hold too many DC children back."

While third grade proficiency levels have significant room for improvement, data shows that student proficiency increases over time. For example, students who were in third grade in 2007 increased in proficiency by 23 percentage points in Mathematics to 57% and increased 12 percentage points in Reading to 48% by the 8th grade.

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