



# Analysis of Attendance and Graduation Outcomes at Public High Schools in the District of Columbia

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January 29, 2018



# Background and Scope

- Dec. 1, 2017: Mayor directed OSSE to conduct an independent analysis of student-level attendance and graduation outcomes at public high schools in the District of Columbia.
- OSSE used three methods to complete its review:
  1. Citywide Attendance and Graduation Analysis: analysis of all public high schools, conducted by OSSE staff
  2. PCSB Oversight Review: review of PCSB's oversight procedures for public charter high schools, conducted by OSSE staff
  3. DCPS review: An investigation of DCPS, including Ballou High School, conducted by outside firm, Alvarez & Marsal. Interim report was delivered on Jan. 12.
- Urgency in timeline, to best make changes that would positively impact currently enrolled students and their educational outcomes.



# A&M: DCPS-Wide Findings

- Alvarez & Marsal's examination yielded the following system-wide findings about DCPS high schools:
  - Credit recovery used at most high schools in contradiction to DCPS policy.
  - Attendance policies rarely followed across DCPS high schools.
  - Lack of support and oversight from DCPS Central Office on most policy violations.
  - Most DCPS high schools exhibited a culture of passing and graduating students.
- Policy violations were seen in a total of 937 of 2,758 graduating students' records from DCPS in 2016-17 and were found in nearly all schools.
- A&M's report also includes school-specific summaries of data, findings and observations, and recommendations for each DCPS high school.



# A&M: Other Findings and Observations

- Alvarez & Marsal heard reports of potential changes to attendance records to improve reported attendance.
  - They analyzed data on the total number of period-level attendance record changes from absent to present for 2016-17 graduates.
  - They found one outlier school, Dunbar High School, where more than 4,000 changes were made to attendance records of 118 graduates.



# A&M Recommendations

- Improve DCPS Central Office oversight and enhance accountability at high schools
- Provide additional support to improve the consistency and accountability of credit recovery at DCPS high schools
- Improve policies and procedures governing attendance, grading, credit recovery, and graduation certification
- Enhance systems and supports to improve consistency and accountability