

## ESSA: DC State Plan and Report Cards

### What is ESSA?

The goal of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, is to provide greater support to schools serving traditionally vulnerable or underserved students and to improve student outcomes in schools that consistently demonstrate low performance. To better understand how schools are performing, ESSA requires data on student achievement and graduation rates to be reported to the state through new accountability frameworks.

### What is DC's Accountability Framework?

In DC, parents currently must navigate between three different accountability tools – DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'s Learn DC website, and DCPS's School Profiles – just to compare school demographics and performance indicators. However, because there is no accountability framework that applies to both DCPS and public charter schools, there is no true “apples-to-apples” comparison of how schools in different sectors are performing academically. For example, DC PCSB's PMF uses a Tier rating system to communicate to parents how their PCS is performing based on five indicators. However, because the PMF only applies to public charter schools, a parent would not be able to use this tool to compare their PCS directly to a DCPS school, therefore obstructing his or her ability to easily or accurately make the best decision for their child or children.



(Right) [Graphic](http://www.dcpsb.org/performance-management-framework-pmf) from PCSB's website showing the PMF breakdown ([www.dcpsb.org/performance-management-framework-pmf](http://www.dcpsb.org/performance-management-framework-pmf))

To address this issue, the DC State Board of Education approved a new state education plan from OSSE in March of this year. The new plan will create:

- a single statewide accountability system that establishes ambitious long-term goals,
- measurements of progress toward meeting those goals,
- goals based on challenging state academic records and assessments, and
- a common accountability system that will apply to all charter and public schools.

### What is next for DC's new state plan?

Now that the state plan has been approved, DC's next step in this process will be to design a new **school report card** that reflects the **information that parents want, need, and should know** to make an informed decision about choosing a school for their child—something that is especially important in a city with robust school choice. Report cards are a valuable way to communicate not only the state's accountability system, but also other information that rounds out the picture of student and school success.

### Does the New State Plan Reflect the Input of All District Parents?

- In creating the state education plan, OSSE held and participated in 50 meetings with more than 100 organizations present. Yet, it was noted at a DC SBOE public meeting that not enough engagement occurred with diverse groups and important stakeholders like PAVE parents.
- To ensure that the new school report card reflects the values of DC families, it is **critical** that parents from both sectors – and every ward — are a part of the process and help inform what is included in new school report card.
- DC parents can still advocate for additional components to be included in the new school report card that are not currently measured in the accountability framework. In New York City, for example, the school report card includes family-centric metrics, such as school-to-community relations, trust, and collaborative teaching.

### How Does the New State Plan Measure Success?

- Unlike NCLB, ESSA focuses on other ways to measure the performance of a school instead of just raw test scores, including growth, school climate, attendance, or access to advanced coursework.
- However, critics of DC's new state plan believe that there is still too much emphasis on proficiency (measured by raw test scores), and not enough weight on other elements of a well-rounded education.

## Get Involved

### Stay Informed

- Read the DC State Education Plan on OSSE's website.
- Search for your school's report card on OSSE's [Learn DC site](#) and in DC PCSB's [Performance Management School Quality Reports](#).

### Participate

- Send us your interest in joining a focus group on school report cards hosted by PAVE.
- Email PAVE at [info@dcpave.org](mailto:info@dcpave.org) to receive updates from PAVE regarding the status of the new state plan.

### Become Empowered

- Visit PAVE's Community Events Calendar to see when the next DC SBOE public hearing will take place.
- Email PAVE's Director of Community Engagement and Organizing, Raven Willoughby, [raven.willoughby@dcpave.org](mailto:raven.willoughby@dcpave.org), to find out how you can get involved with PAVE.