



December 1, 2010

GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES ON ANNUAL REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION

Section 1111(h)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, requires each state to produce an annual report card including a variety of specific data points on proficiency, participation in assessments, graduation rates, teacher qualifications, and LEAs making AYP. Additionally, section 1111(h)(2) requires LEAs to prepare and disseminate an annual LEA report card including specific required information regarding both LEA and school-level performance. Under the law, the LEA is also required to make the information “widely available through public means.”

Report cards are crucial to the goal of accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act because they put important data in the hands of parents and the public. Giving stakeholders access to information helps them better contribute to the continued improvement of public education. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is providing this guidance document to fully inform LEAs in the District of Columbia of the responsibilities regarding the distribution of report cards.

Non-regulatory guidance released in 2003 by the U.S. Department of Education clarifies that “posting report cards on the Internet alone is not a sufficient means for disseminating State and district report cards.” That guidance goes on to require that LEAs must disseminate LEA and school report cards to all schools served by the LEA, all parents of students attending these schools, and the community. LEAs may use their regular method of communicating with parents to meet the dissemination requirement so long as it provides information to all parents.

OSSE has chosen to take ownership for producing annual LEA and school report cards in addition to the state report cards. However, LEAs will continue to have some responsibility for distribution of the report cards.

For more information, please refer to the USDE guidance document available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/reportcardsguidance.doc>.

1. When are the report cards produced?

Beginning with report cards issued based on assessments administered in the 2009-2010 school year, OSSE will produce report cards in the fall of each year for the previous school year. Thus, in fall 2010, report cards will be produced from the 2009-2010 school year. These report cards will be published by late December 2010.

2. Who produces the report cards?

OSSE will produce state, LEA, and school report cards each year. OSSE will take appropriate steps to make the state, LEA, and school report cards publicly available both online and through public libraries. OSSE is currently producing report cards through a

partnership with Great Schools, which will also make report cards available on their website, <http://www.greatschools.org>.

OSSE will provide PDF versions of all applicable LEA and school report cards to each LEA. ***Printing of report cards for posting and distribution will be the responsibility of the LEA.***

3. How must report cards be distributed?

LEAs in the District of Columbia are responsible for meeting the federal requirements associated with report card distribution specified in section 1111 (h)(2)(E) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. LEAs are required to provide the information in the report cards to all schools served by the LEA and all parents of students attending those schools.

At a minimum, OSSE requires LEAs to:

- Provide copies of school and LEA report cards to all schools in the LEA (e.g., each school should receive a copy of that school's report card and the LEA report card).
- Utilize previously established methods of communication to provide parents with access to the report cards (e.g., LEA newsletter, parent mailing, etc.).
- Have copies available in the LEA central office.
- Require schools to publicly post the school and LEA report card in a visible place in the school building.
- Require schools to use previously established methods of communication to provide parents with access to the report cards (e.g., school newsletter, parent mailing, parent conferences, etc.).
- To the extent practical, provide report cards in a language that parents can understand.

LEAs are encouraged to use multiple methods of distribution. Federal guidelines consider simply posting report cards on a Web site is insufficient; OSSE, therefore, requires the posting of report cards in school buildings in addition to other methods of distribution an LEA may elect to use.

OSSE will make the state report card available both online and in hard copy through the DC Public Libraries.

4. How can an LEA pay for costs associated with distributing report cards?

An LEA may use Title I, Part A administrative funds to disseminate report cards as long as it aligns with their approved application and there is no violation of the supplement, not supplant requirement. In the Consolidated Application, through which LEAs apply for Title I, Part A funds, each LEA has the option to reserve a portion of its Title I, Part A funds for costs associated with administering the grant program; this can include costs associated with distributing report cards. An LEA is only limited from doing this if it paid for these costs with local funds in previous years and cannot overcome a presumption of supplanting.

5. How will OSSE support LEAs in distributing report cards?

OSSE will provide LEAs with fully produced and compliant report cards for the LEA and for each school within the LEA.

6. How will OSSE monitor report card distribution in LEAs?

OSSE monitors report card distribution by LEAs as part of its Consolidated Elementary and Secondary Education on-site monitoring protocol. This is included within Indicator 1 (“Compliance with Academic Content Standards, Academic Achievement Standards and Assessments”) of the monitoring tool. LEAs will be required to provide evidence that they disseminate information to parents on how the LEA and all campuses/schools are performing.

Please direct all questions on report cards to OSSE’s Office of Assessment and Accountability at osse.assessment@dc.gov or (202) 741-5311.
