



Government of the
District of Columbia
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor



The District of Columbia State-Level Education

Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2009 - 2013



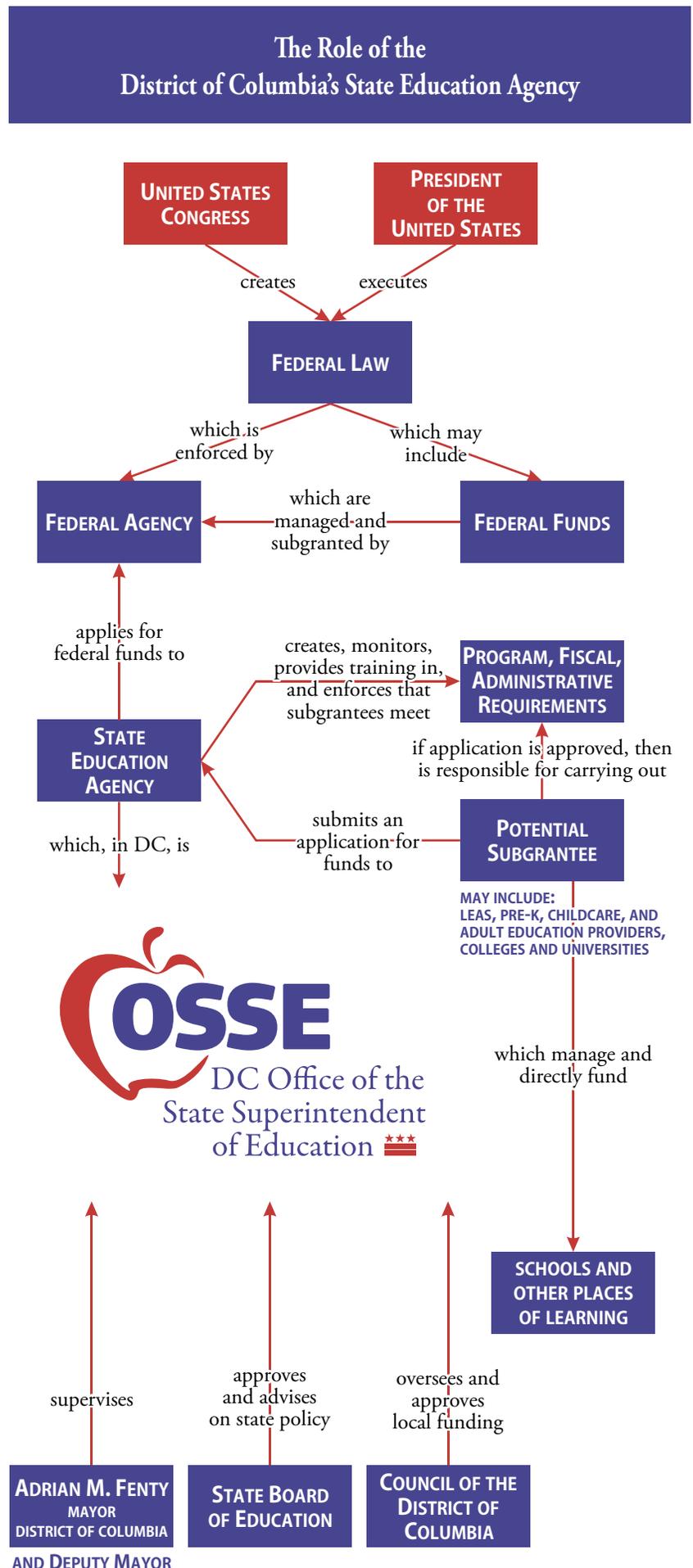
The Role of the District of Columbia's State Education Agency

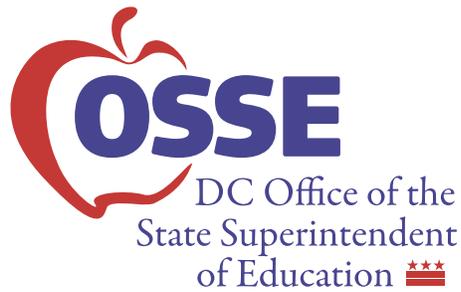
People often wonder why there is a need for a state-level education agency in a city like the District of Columbia. As a city-state, the District of Columbia operates in an education landscape comprised of one large Local Education Agency (LEA), which is DC Public Schools (DCPS), multiple public charter school LEAs, an array of early care and education providers, adult education providers, one public university, and many private colleges and universities. Within this landscape, many challenges must be addressed, including: low academic performance levels in most schools; large differences in achievement by student groups; unacceptably low literacy levels among residents; high levels of special education referrals and poor service delivery for students with special needs; a "high risk grantee" designation by the U.S. Department of Education for federal grants management; and limited ability to provide the training and tools necessary for residents to meet the demands of the regional and 21st century global economy. The state agency performs several vital functions that assist in rectifying these issues while increasing student achievement.

A state's greatest tool in the quest for educational excellence is the ability to set standards and guidelines in line with federal requirements and to hold all local education agencies accountable for performance and appropriate, legally-compliant use of funds by providing state-level supports, resources and, when appropriate, meaningful sanctions and interventions to ensure quality and compliance with law. The State Education Agency (SEA), which in DC is the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), is the traditional accountability mechanism based on federal requirements and national trends. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), in particular, has dramatically shifted the need for state-level oversight, accountability and coordination around the country. Specifically, NCLB requires states to focus on increased expectations for academic performance and accountability.

Prior to the passage of the District of Columbia's Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (D.C. Law 17-9), state-level education functions were performed by the DC Public Schools (DCPS), the Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) within the Department of Human Services, the State Education Agency (SEA) at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and the State Education Office (SEO). The Public Education Reform Act granted the Mayor, Adrian Fenty, governance over the District of Columbia public school system. The Reform Act also directed that the four disparate state education functions be brought under one entity – the OSSE. The OSSE was officially launched on October 1, 2007 to perform all state-level functions in the District of Columbia with the responsibility of meeting and exceeding all federal and local state-level expectations. The State Board of Education (SBOE) was established with members from the former DC Board of Education. The State Board of Education has policy approval and advisory authority over many important state-level education issues.

In order to provide an excellent education for all District of Columbia residents, the state must achieve its core responsibilities of setting standards aligned with school, college, and workforce readiness expectations; providing the resources and supports to assist LEAs and providers in achieving these objectives; providing accurate and reliable data to policymakers, our community, our LEAs, the federal government, and other stakeholders; and intervening when necessary to hold all LEAs and providers accountable for performance against the state standards.





A message from the State Superintendent of Education,
Deborah A. Gist

To all District of Columbia education stakeholders:

Thank you for taking the time to read, understand, and provide feedback on the District of Columbia State-Level Education Strategic Plan. This is a very exciting time for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), as well as for the bigger picture of education reform in the District of Columbia. We are hard at work on many initiatives, and this comprehensive plan will guide our work to ensure that all District residents receive an excellent education.

The five-year State-Level Education Strategic Plan will be used by the OSSE as an internal mechanism to measure and manage our performance, making certain that we are meeting our goals to help District students. By following this plan, we will ensure that all OSSE divisions—those involved in early learning, K-12, post-secondary, and adult education—are working together toward the same goals.

We developed this strategic plan through an intensive, collaborative process that spanned several months, which included a thorough review of legislated responsibilities, best practices, and challenges in the District. The plan has been distributed widely for feedback from government, industry, the higher education community, and early learning and K-12 experts and stakeholders.

During the comment period, we heard a desire to include into the plan greater emphasis on family and community engagement, interagency collaboration, and ensuring that students and families receive the requisite information in order to go to college. We worked diligently to include these and many other suggestions that we received into the plan in order to reflect the priorities and concerns of our partners and the community at large.

The advent of this plan both marks the beginning of a new trajectory for the OSSE and also reflects our enduring commitment to setting standards, providing resources, and ensuring accountability for the District's public schools. I would like to thank all of you again for your input to this strategic plan and for your continued support of the OSSE's work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gist". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent of Education

Since assuming state-level responsibilities in October 2007, the OSSE has gained substantial knowledge and insight into the current state of education in the District of Columbia and has identified the crucial issues that the state must address in order to close the large and unacceptable gaps in achievement, resources, and opportunities for DC students. All students must receive a high-quality early childhood education. All students must have access to a rigorous curriculum taught by highly effective and qualified educators who strongly believe in the potential of all students. All teachers and school leaders must receive the necessary resources, tools, and professional development to support their efforts. All students must graduate from high school prepared for college and careers in the 21st century economy. All adult residents must be equipped with the core academic skills necessary to be successful and productive citizens. All special education students and English language learners must receive the requisite services, in appropriate environments, to perform at high levels and to achieve their goals. All federal and local funds, in accordance with the law, must be strategically directed and used to support the students who need them most. All decisions must be made using accurate and current student demographic and performance data and with the best interests of learners at the forefront.

The five-year strategic plan that follows details the state-level strategy for ensuring that all District of Columbia residents will receive an excellent education to succeed in the 21st century.

Vision: All District of Columbia residents will receive an excellent education for success in the 21st century.

Mission: The Office of the State Superintendent of Education sets high expectations, provides resources and support, and exercises accountability to ensure that all residents receive an excellent education.

Core Beliefs:

*Modified from the core belief statements in the Master Education Plan developed by the former DC Board of Education, which is now the State Board of Education

We believe that all students can achieve at high levels.

We set high expectations for our students knowing they can and will meet them when adults work collaboratively and to the best of their ability to support them.

We believe that all students should receive an education that affords them the choice to attend college, pursue specialized training, or immediately begin a career that affords them a living wage.

Students must receive an education that permits them to achieve at high levels and to pursue any career path to which they might aspire because it's simply the right thing to do, and because those are the choices that their suburban and privately educated peers are granted. Research by the American Diploma Project, ACT, and others shows that high school graduates need basically the same skills, whether they go to college, a specialized training program or work. Those who want to attend college—and the large majority of high school students say they do—should be prepared to do so.

We believe that education has a profound impact on residents' lives and the community.

The quality and amount of education a person receives is the single most important factor in determining income, health, and life expectancy. A well-educated community leads to a more vital and prosperous community. Because of this reality, we hold ourselves and our fellow educators accountable for our students' academic growth and achievement.

We believe that education is a responsibility shared by families, students, educators, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), childcare, pre-k, and adult education providers, the State Education Agency, policy-makers, colleges and universities, communities, and businesses.

The best results come when all adults work together to promote student learning. We proactively seek out opportunities to partner with and gather insight and feedback from schools, LEAs, families, the community, and businesses when making decisions that impact our students' education.

We believe that all residents should be educated in a safe, healthy and educationally and culturally appropriate environment that reflects and respects the diversity of the District of Columbia.

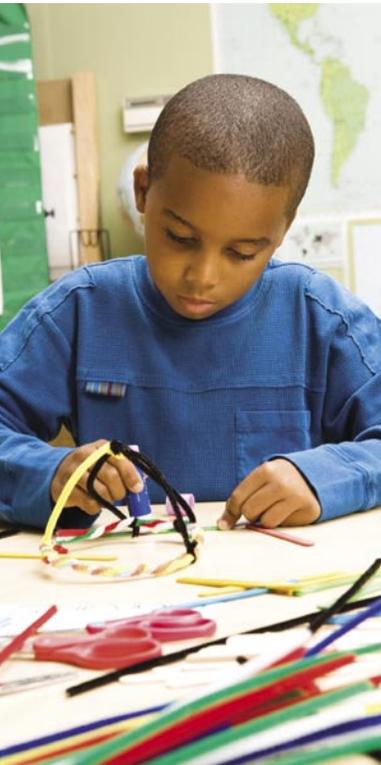
In order for students to succeed in the classroom, they must feel emotionally and physically secure and appropriately challenged. We are committed to accommodating all students' learning needs.



Goal A

All Children Ready

All District of Columbia children will be ready for school



Goal Measure Outcome	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of all DC students entering kindergarten prepared for school as measured by the school preparedness assessment			Establish Baseline	+2 percentage points over prior year	+2 percentage points over prior year	+2 percentage points over prior year

Objective 1

Early Learning

Provide eligible children from birth through kindergarten entrance with high-quality early learning programs

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of eligible children participating in state-funded early learning programs deemed school ready per the school preparedness assessment		Establish Baseline	+3 percentage points over prior year			
Percent of early learning programs meeting program standards		Establish Baseline	+4 percentage points over prior year			

A child's experiences and relationships during the first years of life profoundly impact his or her ability to grow up healthy and ready to learn (2). As the brain undergoes its most dramatic development, research indicates that at-risk children—those from low-income families which comprise approximately 48% of the District's infants and toddlers—benefit the most from quality early learning programs (3). Economic stress disproportionately impacts very young children and places them at greater risk than their middle-to high-income peers to have learning disabilities, behavior problems, mental retardation, and developmental delays (4). Research shows that participation in evidence-based early learning programs and services during the infant and toddler years leads to early competence in language and cognitive development, cooperation with adults, and the ability to initiate and to sustain positive exchanges with peers (5). Providing at-risk infants and toddlers with high-quality, effective services builds strong families and communities. In addition to laying the foundation for future academic success, economists have found that every dollar invested in early learning programs returns \$3.78 to \$17.07 in reduced crime, welfare dependency, and abuse and neglect while increasing educational performance and job training, leading to higher incomes and a better qualified and more productive workforce (6). The state has a vested interest in providing young children and their families with high-quality, affordable early learning programs and intervention services to develop children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive abilities.

Strategy 1.1 Align early learning program guidelines with pre-kindergarten standards and promote school preparedness

- Align infant and toddler guidelines with the pre-kindergarten learning standards
- Seek approval of guidelines from the State Board of Education
- Provide training and technical assistance to providers on guidelines

Strategy 1.2 Improve the quality of early learning programs via provider licensure, monitoring, support, and interventions, including termination of programs as necessary

- Develop and implement early learning standards that work in tandem with current licensure requirements to support overall quality improvement
- Improve program data collection efforts by designing and implementing a district-wide early learning management information system
- Provide training and technical assistance to child care providers to ensure they meet licensing requirements and terms and conditions of provider agreements
- Monitor providers to ensure the implementation of program standards and publicize the results to promote informed early learning decisions
- Provide technical assistance to current high performing providers to build their capacity to serve a greater number of eligible children
- Seek the involvement of parents, community residents, and local businesses in the design and implementation of early learning programs
- Establish procedures to ensure the timely referral of children with disabilities and the provision of necessary early intervention services
- Collaborate and coordinate with public and private entities to leverage resources to improve the availability and quality of services available to children and families

Strategy 1.3 Promote LEA and community group collaboration to improve early learning and family literacy programs

- Partner with LEAs and community-based organizations to provide cohesive literacy education for adults and their young children, including English language learners
- Provide technical assistance and disseminate research-based best practices to providers in order to improve program quality and effectiveness
- Create or identify links to materials that provide parents and families with information about how to support student learning and development at home
- Leverage Even Start and other funding in order to work with LEAs and community-based organizations to provide parenting and literacy education to teen mothers
- Monitor initiatives to ensure the promotion of interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
- Establish and implement supports and interventions to improve low-performing family literacy programs
- Expand, support, and promote high-performing programs
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs and other family literacy subgrantees on exploring and securing additional funding sources for family literacy programs

Goal A
All Children Ready
 All District of Columbia children will be ready for school

Objective 2
Effective Pre-Kindergarten Programs
 Improve the quality and accessibility of pre-kindergarten programs available to children from age 3 to kindergarten entrance and their families

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of children participating in state-funded pre-kindergarten programs who score proficient on the school preparedness assessment		Establish Baseline	+2 percentage points over prior year	+2 percentage points over prior year	+2 percentage points over prior year	+2 percentage points over prior year
Percent of children in DC receiving pre-kindergarten services from providers that meet or exceed program standards			Revise Program Standards; Establish Baseline	+3 percentage points over prior year	+3 percentage points over prior year	+3 percentage points over prior year

High-quality pre-kindergarten programs produce successful students and responsible adults. Research indicates that enrollment in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs improves children's school preparedness and cognitive development, making them more likely to enter school and then adulthood with the requisite skills, knowledge, and social competencies necessary to succeed. Additionally, studies such as the *High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*, released in 2005, demonstrate that every \$1 invested in high-quality pre-kindergarten specifically yields a public return of \$12.90 by reducing the need for criminal justice services, welfare, and remedial and special education and by increasing tax revenue due to higher earnings (6). The state understands the far-reaching benefits of closing the pre-kindergarten quality gap and will strive to ensure that all children have access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.

Strategy 2.1 Develop high-quality content and program standards for all pre-kindergarten programs

- Collaborate with the State Board of Education, local and national experts, providers, and the community to develop content and program standards that are aligned with standards for kindergarten through grade 3
- Establish high-quality content standards and program requirements that have been approved by the State Board of Education
- Provide technical assistance to providers on newly developed and revised program and content standards

Strategy 2.2 Develop and administer an assessment that reliably measures school preparedness and provider effectiveness

- Select a highly qualified independent evaluator to develop an assessment instrument for school preparedness and provider effectiveness
- Oversee the collection of baseline quality data to provide an assessment of a sample of current pre-kindergarten classroom quality and to develop benchmarks for ongoing quality assessment of the pre-kindergarten education system
- Ensure the approved independent evaluator administers the annual assessment of all pre-kindergarten programs in the District



Goal A

All Children Ready

All District of Columbia children will be ready for school

- Monitor the independent evaluator's compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement to ensure timely receipt of deliverables
- Administer school preparedness assessments to all incoming kindergarteners to determine school preparedness of all DC children, to improve the quality of programs, and to attract students to high-performing programs

Strategy 2.3 Ensure that providers meet pre-kindergarten program and content standards by providing technical assistance, monitoring, and interventions

- Establish and administer a five-year Pre-K Program Assistance Grant Fund to assist pre-kindergarten programs in meeting the required program and content standards
- Develop rigorous requirements for teacher quality
- Explore funding options to institute The Higher Education Incentive grant and scholarship programs to increase the number of pre-kindergarten teachers and assistant teachers with advanced learning credentials
- Develop and oversee a monitoring, assessment (including the developed assessment tool), and accountability process for all programs within the pre-kindergarten education system
- Institute a program improvement process for pre-kindergarten programs that fail to meet or exceed the state's high-quality content and program standards
- Develop and administer technical assistance and professional development programs for all pre-kindergarten teaching staff, principals, and administrators

Strategy 2.4 Expand students' access to and participation in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs

- Conduct an evaluation of all pre-kindergarten programs to establish existing capacity
- Develop a plan to expand pre-kindergarten programs each year to accommodate a minimum of 15% of the unserved children until pre-kindergarten programs are available to all eligible children seeking enrollment
- Expand the number of pre-kindergarten community-based organization providers to ensure that all students have access to high-quality early learning programs
- Develop a strategy to publicize the availability and quality of pre-kindergarten programs to families and other interested parties
- Provide technical assistance to current high performing providers to build their capacity to serve a greater number of students



Goal Measure Outcome	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of students graduating from high school within four years *The OSSE is in the process of adopting the National Governors Association's graduation rate calculation methodology	67%	Establish New Baseline*	+5 percentage points over prior year			
Percent of LEAs making progress under NCLB regulations	34%	45%	56%	67%	78%	89%

Objective 1

Rigorous Content for All

Ensure all students receive rigorous content and instruction

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of elementary students scoring proficient or above on DC-CAS English Language Arts Assessment	45.5%	60.53%	73.69%	73.69%	86.85%	86.85%
Percent of elementary students scoring proficient or above on DC-CAS Math Assessment	40.7%	55.21%	70.14%	70.14%	85.07%	85.07%
Percent of secondary students scoring proficient or above on DC-CAS English Language Arts Assessment	42.1%	57.69%	71.79%	71.79%	85.9%	85.9%
Percent of secondary students scoring proficient or above on DC-CAS Math Assessment	40.9%	55.41%	70.27%	70.27%	85.14%	85.14%
Percent of fourth-grade students scoring at or above proficient on the NAEP Reading Assessment	18% (2007 data)	26%		34%		42%
Percent of fourth-grade students scoring at or above proficient on the NAEP Math Assessment	17% (2007 data)	25%		33%		41%
Percent of eighth-grade students scoring at or above proficient on the NAEP Reading Assessment	13% (2007 data)	21%		29%		37%
Percent of eighth-grade students scoring at or above proficient on the NAEP Math Assessment	9% (2007 data)	17%		25%		33%

For all students to achieve their full potential, the state must set high academic expectations for student learning and hold LEAs and, where appropriate, schools accountable for student performance. In the 1990s, in an effort to ensure that all students received rigorous content and instruction, the U.S. Department of Education began funding states to develop voluntary standards, lists of what students should know and be able to do, to guide instruction in core content areas (7). Currently, as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), states are required to develop standards and to ensure that schools implement these standards by administering state assessments aligned to state standards and by providing supports and interventions to LEAs according to students' assessment performances. Additionally, the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 requires the state to establish graduation requirements, which the State Board must approve, and to hold LEAs accountable for ensuring that students meet them (8).

The state utilizes its role in setting standards and graduation requirements for all DC students to ensure a high school diploma signifies a student possesses the necessary skills to meet the employment demands of a global market. According to *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, a report by the National Center on Education and the Economy, students must be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, self-disciplined and well-organized, creative and innovative, good at both analysis and synthesis, and able to work quickly and adapt to labor changes in order to succeed in the current and future economy (9). Research by ACT, the American Diploma Project--a network of states working to bring value to the high school diploma by raising the rigor of high school standards, assessments, and curriculum and by aligning expectations with the demands of postsecondary education and work--and others show that high school graduates require basically the same skills, whether they go to college, a specialized training program, or work (10). While student achievement data suggests improvement, the majority of students in DC are not receiving a public education that prepares them to be regionally, nationally, or globally competitive. On the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the only assessments administered by all states that are often used to compare student achievement across state lines, DC had fewer proficient and advanced students than any of the 50 states, and the eleven urban cities measured by NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), on each of the 4th and 8th grade reading and math assessments.

Goal B

All Schools Ready

All District of Columbia students will receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life



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While the state recognizes the challenges in the current performance of our students and educators, as well as the reality of the educational achievement gaps in DC, it also recognizes that examples of high-performing educators and schools with high-poverty student populations do exist, both in DC and around the country. The state is committed to working relentlessly to ensure that all students, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, receive an education that permits them to achieve at high levels and to pursue any career path to which they might aspire.

Strategy 1.1 Review, revise, disseminate, and monitor the implementation of state content standards and graduation requirements to prepare students for success in the next grade level and for success in college and careers

- Create a cyclical review plan for state content standards
- Lead a District of Columbia effort to join the American Diploma Project
- Conduct a comprehensive study on the state of student performance in relation to college admissions requirements
- Benchmark DC state standards to those of higher performing international competitors
- Collaborate with business, industry, and higher education leaders, parents, students, and community members to develop a definition for college and workforce readiness and improve existing state content standards and graduation requirements to align with the readiness definition
- Conduct an external validation of revised standards
- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication and implementation plan for distribution of standards and graduation requirements to LEAs
- Provide training and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure comprehension of the standards
- Collect and analyze graduation rate and college admissions data to evaluate the effectiveness of current graduation requirements

Strategy 1.2 Develop and provide access to standards-related resources, trainings, and professional development opportunities

- Develop partnerships with content-area specialist organizations to provide resources and training for LEAs
- Provide support and technical assistance to LEA efforts to identify and select high-quality instructional materials aligned to state standards and to use research-based instructional practices
- Build a virtual professional development training component for educators to have access to additional training and to share best practices
- Redesign the OSSE website to serve as a technical assistance tool on state standards and graduation requirements for LEAs, educators, parents, and students
- Seek out federal grants and other funding sources to expand standards in core content areas and to support professional development opportunities

Strategy 1.3 Continue to ensure that all state assessments used for accountability or promotion are aligned to state content standards and graduation requirements

- Design and compose assessments to ensure accurate student performance measures for all students
- Implement end of course exams, gateway tests, and promotion policies aligned with student performance on state standards
- Provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on state standards
- Continue to conduct item development and workshops to ensure assessments are aligned to state content standards
- Pursue independent alignment studies through external evaluation
- Continue to measure adequate yearly progress to ensure that LEAs and schools meet state content standards
- Improve the disaggregation of DC-CAS data to provide additional, more detailed analyses regarding student performance in relation to state content standards

Strategy 1.4 Implement a growth model that accurately and reliably measures LEA, school, and student progress in order to determine Adequate Yearly Progress

- Collaborate with independent experts to develop a growth model
- Depending on the growth model chosen, update DC-CAS to include items that allow the growth analysis to be valid and reliable
- Develop reporting systems for the growth model
- Revise and submit application to the US Department of Education with the developed model

Strategy 1.5 Refine, explore, and implement methods to ensure that LEAs and schools have access to diagnostic and instructionally actionable assessment data

- Provide strategies to LEAs for the creation and usage of formative, classroom-based assessments
- Provide access to an item bank for LEA and school formative assessment creation
- Identify, recognize, and provide leadership opportunities to LEAs and schools successfully using data-driven decision making to improve student outcomes

Goal B

All Schools Ready

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Strategy 1.6 Explore, create, and implement a system of differentiated rewards for performance

- Identify, recognize, provide leadership opportunities, and/or increase flexibility to LEAs and schools that achieve the greatest gains in closing the achievement gap or exceed adequate yearly progress performance targets
- Invite highly qualified or distinguished educators to participate in teams to support schools

Strategy 1.7 Explore, create, and implement a system of differentiated supports and interventions that meets federal requirements and improves student performance for underperforming LEAs and, where appropriate, schools

- Strengthen our Statewide System of Support to provide LEAs and, where appropriate, schools in improvement with intensive and sustained support
- Conduct annual reviews of LEAs to determine performance, lay out levels of improvement, and institute corrective action as necessary
- Provide families and the public with LEA achievement data and information on the progress of low-performing LEAs toward improvement
- Monitor LEA efforts to notify parents of their options when schools have failed to make adequate yearly progress
- Support LEAs with development of their improvement plans
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs to distribute best practices and strategies for promoting safe and productive schools
- Monitor implementation of strategies and best practices by LEAs
- Create, implement, and monitor policies to ensure that LEAs and schools provide students with remediation needed to meet the state's content standards and graduation requirements

Objective 2

Family and Community Engagement

Ensure that students' families, policymakers, and the community have the necessary information and opportunities to be consumers of, supporters of, and participants in public education

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of parents who, based on state survey results, are satisfied with information received and opportunities offered to participate in their students' education		Establish Baseline	+5 percentage points over prior year			

Research indicates that active parent and community involvement in student's education leads to significant academic gains. Benefits for students include higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests, increased enrollment in challenging academic programs, more consistent attendance, enhanced social skills, and improved behavior at home and at school (11). The state's understanding of the powerful role parental involvement plays in student achievement, coupled with its responsibilities under federal law, compels the state to ensure parents receive the information needed to make informed choices and to actively participate in decision-making processes affecting students' education. In addition, the state provides parents with access to programs and resources, such as family literacy programs, Parent Resource Centers, and parental guides to state content standards, to support their efforts to enhance student learning at home. Finally, by providing additional information and resources to all community members, the state enables and encourages members of the community to more effectively and strategically support the education of DC students.

Strategy 2.1 Increase the quality of, amount of, and accessibility to information, research, and data on agency initiatives and best practices in public education provided to families, policymakers, LEAs, and the community

- Develop easy-to-read materials and disseminate research that provides information on state responsibilities, programs, and initiatives that meet the requirements of the Language Access Act
- Create, update, and make available parent guides to state learning content standards
- Plan and host open policy forums featuring local and national experts that inform parents, policymakers, and the community about important topics in public education
- Improve the quality of the OSSE website so that it serves as the city's best source of information related to public education

Strategy 2.2 Provide parents and the community with easy access to information to inform school choice decisions

- Make more prominent and accessible the required NCLB SEA, LEA, and school performance reports on the OSSE website
- Make student, school, and LEA performance data more accessible to parents and families by supplementing the required NCLB report cards with additional reports that are easier to understand



Goal B

All Schools Ready

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- Provide training to parents to help them understand, analyze, and use student achievement and report card data distributed by OSSE to LEAs
- Create or identify links to materials that provide parents and families with information about how to support student learning at home, based on their student's specific areas in need of improvement, and make the links accessible with the supplemental parent reports
- Hold events and provide information to parents regarding the variety of available school options
- Provide information on the OSSE website regarding school application materials and deadlines

Strategy 2.3 Ensure LEAs involve parents and families in the education of their children

- Create and distribute state policy and guidance for LEA parental involvement
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs on effective parental involvement policies to ensure performance in accordance with federal and local laws, statutes, regulations, and policies
- Make research-based best practices in parental involvement available to LEAs via technical assistance and the OSSE website
- Monitor LEAs to ensure they develop required parental involvement plans and policies and that they oversee the development of school-level policies and parent-school compacts on an annual basis

Objective 3

Educator Quality

Increase the number of effective educators in all public schools in the District of Columbia

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of core courses taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	57.8%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent of appropriately licensed teachers *DCPS only--current regulations do not apply to charter schools	85%	88%	91%	94%	97%	100%
Percent of appropriately licensed principals and assistant principals *DCPS only--current regulations do not apply to charter schools		Establish Baseline	+5 percentage points over prior year			

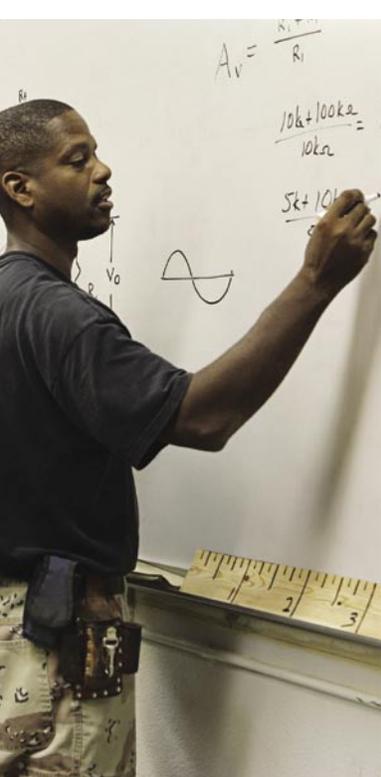
A wide body of evidence suggests that teacher quality is the single most influential determinant of student academic achievement and, specifically, that high quality teachers increase student academic achievement (12). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires states to establish minimum educator quality requirements, referred to as highly qualified teacher (HQT) status, and to ensure that educators meet those requirements. In addition to being highly qualified, which is the initial requirement for entering the classroom, educators must be highly effective to maximize student potential. The state is also responsible for creating requirements for other school-based personnel including school leaders of all levels. Research shows that effective teachers come from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and training programs (13). A recent study in Los Angeles indicated at-risk students taught by teachers in the top quartile of effectiveness advance, on average, approximately five percentile points each year relative to their peers, whereas those taught by teachers in the bottom quartile of effectiveness lose, on average, five percentile points relative to their peers (14). Moreover, these effects are cumulative. The same study suggested that if students were assigned to highly effective teachers for four consecutive years, the experience would be sufficient to close the average achievement gap (15). As a result, the state seeks to enable all highly qualified educators, regardless of background and training, to enter the classroom and commits to assisting LEAs in retaining effective educators.

Strategy 3.1 Eliminate barriers to educator licensure to allow individuals from various backgrounds who have demonstrated proficiency in their subject areas and have received state-approved training to become educators

- Revise licensure requirements for teachers and administrators
- Create an on-line resource to attract educators to public schools in the District of Columbia
- Create educator preparation program approval criteria to permit LEAs and non-profits to train teachers and administrators for licensure

Strategy 3.2 Explore the uses of content knowledge, student achievement, and general educator effectiveness in the educator licensure process

- Conduct best practice research in effective educator evaluation processes at an LEA level and establish state-level evaluation standards
- Create an effectiveness model for both teachers and administrators
- Define and establish state-level educator quality and evaluation standards
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs in the development of educator evaluations that incorporate student performance



Goal B

All Schools Ready

All District of Columbia students will receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life

Strategy 3.3 Provide strategies for the creation of an advancement path and for incentives for high performing educators to increase their retention

- Explore opportunities to obtain funds for high-performing educators to transfer to low-income schools
- Conduct a statewide survey of why educators currently leave public schools in the District of Columbia and disseminate results to LEAs
- Consider national and local best practices on teacher retention and develop state policies, as appropriate, to increase teacher retention

Strategy 3.4 Provide ongoing training and development to LEAs to promote professional growth, to increase educator effectiveness, and to support our teachers in the classroom

- Research National Staff Development Council to establish statewide professional development standards
- Seek additional funding sources and competitive grants to increase resources that the state can provide to LEAs toward improving educator quality
- Support the creation and implementation of new teacher mentoring programs
- Review national and local best practices on teacher support systems, including mentoring, collaboration and planning time, tools, and professional development, and develop state policies, as appropriate to support teachers

Strategy 3.5 Promote equitable distribution of highly effective teachers throughout LEAs

- Monitor data for continued compliance with equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers
- Monitor LEA school improvement planning processes to ensure adequate focus on programs that promote recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers
- Ensure that all personnel necessary in providing a free and appropriate education have the content knowledge and skills to serve students with disabilities

Objective 4

School Climate and Safety

Promote safe and positive learning environments for all students

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of schools with healthy school climates based on monitoring data and parent surveys conducted in coordination with LEAs		Establish Baseline	+5 percentage points over prior year			

School-based research and national survey data document students who feel connected to adults and peers at their school view their school as a safe and healthy place to learn. Students who have strong connections with both teachers and prosocial peers are more likely to resist the pull of gangs, drugs, and other negative influences that offer an alternative form of connection for alienated students (16). Not surprisingly, high rates of drug use and school and community violence negatively impact student achievement. Research indicates local violence reduces college attendance rates by as much as 51 percent and increases the rates at which high school students drop out (17). The federal initiative, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, promotes the creation of a safe and drug-free learning environment for all students by providing grants and assistance to state education agencies to aid in the prevention of violence, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use in and around schools. In addition, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act recognizes that federal, state, and local organizations must work in conjunction with parents and the local community to achieve a safe and drug-free learning environment for all students. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education, as the state education agency for the District of Columbia, oversees the distribution and appropriate use of funds associated with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and collaborates with LEAs and community organizations to promote student connectedness and to provide a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

Strategy 4.1 Develop and introduce expectations for school climate including attendance, safety, and measures of satisfaction

- Research school climate and safety accountability measures in other states to determine best practices
- Partner with stakeholders and experts in the field to set or revise state-level policies for Persistently Dangerous Schools, discipline, and school climate and distribute to LEAs
- Provide technical assistance to ensure the implementation of school climate improvement strategies such as Response to Intervention
- Provide support for Positive Behavior Support initiatives designed to reduce the amount of time students are removed from instructional time



Goal B

All Schools Ready

All District of Columbia students will receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life



Strategy 4.2 Explore options for accurately measuring state school climate standards through monitoring and reporting

- Work with a stakeholder group to create methods for measuring school climate, including a parent survey, for all LEAs to assess school safety and student learning environments
- Gather LEA climate and safety data and monitor the implementation of state climate and safety policies
- Collect data on school climate variables to determine the presence of disproportional suspension rates

Strategy 4.3 Pursue additional funding for the promotion of safe and drug-free schools

- Explore competitive and discretionary grants to provide programs and resources for safe and healthy schools
- Collaborate with local agencies, organizations, and private entities to acquire additional funds for the promotion of safe and healthy schools

Objective 5

Choice and Options

Meet the needs of a diverse student population by providing additional public education opportunities to students and their families and by providing resources to LEAs and students to create a range of education options

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number and percent of surveyed 12th grade CTE concentrators who were reported placed in postsecondary education or advanced training, military service, or employment, in the second quarter following graduation		Establish Baseline	+1 percentage point over prior year			
Percent of students participating in AP and accelerated learning programs who pass the AP exam with a score of 3 or above			Establish Baseline	+2 percentage points increase	+2 percentage points increase	+2 percentage points increase
Percent of public charter schools making Adequate Yearly Progress	27%	39%	51%	63%	75%	87%

School choice and additional education programs offer students and their families a range of options and can increase satisfaction with the public education system. The District of Columbia, arguably more than any other city or state in the country, offers students and their families with the most flexibility in selecting educational settings. Unlike many other states, students may transfer from one local education agency (LEA)—or school district—to another without being encumbered by a myriad of residency and tuition restrictions. Students may enroll in one of the many school options offered by DC’s largest LEA, DC Public Schools, or a public charter school. DC’s charter schools provide families of all income levels with another public school option. Currently, nearly 30 percent of DC’s public school students attend public charter schools (18). The state’s responsibilities stipulated by Title V Part B of the No Child Left Behind Act include supporting public charter schools through facilities and incentive grants to promote voluntary public school choice. Additionally, as with any public school, it is the state’s responsibility to ensure that charter schools provide students with a rigorous education aligned with state content standards through the administration of state assessments.

In high school, offering students and their families with educational choices becomes even more important. *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, a report by the National Center on Education and the Economy, found that in the last thirty years, the United States has continuously declined relative to other countries in the proportion of workers entering the workforce with the equivalent of a high school diploma. The report also finds that while “thirty years ago, the United States could lay claim to having 30 percent of the world’s population of college students. Today that proportion has fallen to 14 percent and is continuing to fall.” (19) In the District, the *Double the Numbers for College Success* report reveals that only 43 percent of DC students graduate from high school within five years. (20) Therefore the state’s challenge is twofold: the state must help support and encourage the creation of relevant, engaging options for high school students to motivate them to further their education, while challenging LEAs to provide high school students with an education that develops the requisite skills and knowledge for college and career success. The state will leverage its Carl D. Perkins and No Child Left Behind Act responsibilities to increase the number of education options available to secondary students.

Goal B

All Schools Ready

All District of Columbia students will receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life

Strategy 5.1 Support the continued development of a Career and Technical Education (CTE) system that is aligned with the workforce needs of our economy and ensures students are prepared for college and the workforce

- Provide technical assistance to subgrantees in CTE program standards
- Improve the quality and availability of data related to CTE participation and outcomes
- Monitor subgrantee compliance with program standards
- Maintain a system of supports and interventions for subgrantees failing to meet the state's program standards
- Create and implement a cyclical review plan for state approval of secondary and postsecondary CTE programs of study
- Create state CTE technical skill standards, assessments, and where necessary, certificates that are in line with industry standards
- Reestablish the State CTE survey in order to obtain placement data for CTE participants and completers
- Seek out funding partnerships to implement the US Department of Education's State Scholars Initiative
- Partner with other career training stakeholders in the District of Columbia, including the business community and the Office of Employment Services, to explore methods to ease the transition between high school, the work place, and postsecondary programs
- Target funding to CTE programs that reflect projected growth career clusters, strong wage opportunities, and potential for career advancement, and that create seamless transitions to post-secondary education for high school students

Strategy 5.2 Foster an environment that encourages LEAs to provide high school students with options that allow them to concurrently earn high school and college credits and gain early entry into postsecondary education

- Provide greater access to Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to low-income students by applying to the Advanced Placement Incentive program grant and paying all or a portion of eligible students' advanced placement test fees
- Craft state-level policies and/or supports and technical assistance that address the availability of AP Courses in LEAs and schools, the barriers that traditionally prevent students from taking AP courses, and/or the counseling and encouragement of students to enroll in AP courses
- Explore the demand for and feasibility of providing LEAs with a state-run virtual school option to provide students across LEAs with access to additional AP and other advanced coursework
- Create state-level guidance and/or supports and technical assistance related to Dual Enrollment programs, Early and Middle College programs, virtual schools, and other forms of accelerated learning and bridges to postsecondary education and training to encourage LEA participation
- Explore ways of leveraging the state's Education Licensure Commission responsibilities, the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula, and state level college finance grants to make dual enrollment and early and middle college more accessible

Strategy 5.3 Evaluate the current status of programs and provide technical assistance to reengage, remediate, and/or transition various disconnected youth populations

- Identify the characteristics of students who are undercredited and/or at risk of dropping out and the effectiveness of programs targeted toward those students
- Build capacity of and target resources to programs successfully supporting at-risk students
- Review and revise funding policies to consider the longer hours and more intensive services required of many alternative pathways as well as the reliance on wrap-around services from other agencies
- Review policies for financing the education of regular education students who have not received a high school diploma through the age of 21

Strategy 5.4 Finance and promote high-performing public charter school options

- Include performance as a measure for awarding competitive sources of funding for schools
- Target investments in new public charter school facilities
- Implement practices to ensure that credit enhancement and direct loans are managed effectively and efficiently

Strategy 5.5 Ensure that students who are homeschooled receive a thorough and regular education while granting maximum flexibility and freedom to parents and legal guardians to meet students' educational needs

- Require parents to annually file a Homeschooling Notification Form identifying each student being home schooled and verifying parent or legal guardian qualifications
- Establish a website that connects home schooling families, disseminates best practices, and provides links to resources and state-sponsored education events
- Develop and make public a portfolio review process to ensure that students receive thorough, regular homeschooling instruction consistent with homeschooling regulations



Goal B

All Schools Ready

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Objective 6 Out of School Time

Increase access to high quality out of school time programs for eligible students

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of students attending out of school time programs at least 70% of the time		Establish Baseline	+4 percentage points over prior year			
Percent of out of school time program participants demonstrating proficiency of state content standards			Establish Baseline	+3 percentage points over prior year	+3 percentage points over prior year	+3 percentage points over prior year
Percent of parents and students rating out of school time programs as satisfactory or better on satisfaction survey		Establish Baseline	+4 percentage points over prior year			

Afterschool programs provide safe, enriching, and positive environments for students. In a national study tracking a group of students from tenth to twelfth grade, students who spent no time in extracurricular activities were six times more likely to drop out of school by their senior year, three times more likely to be suspended in their sophomore or senior year, twice as likely to be arrested by senior year, and approximately 75% more likely to smoke cigarettes or use drugs as sophomores or seniors (21). In particular, out of school time programs benefit low-income participants. One study found that low-income third, fourth, and fifth graders who participated in afterschool programs had better work habits, coping skills, and relationships with peers than non-participants (22). As such, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires and financially supports states' endeavors to ensure students in low-performing, low-income schools receive additional out of school academic support. Realizing the impact of out of school time programs on student achievement, particularly that of low-income students, the state will work with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (CYITC) improve access to, participation in, and the quality of out of school time programs available to students.

Strategy 6.1 Ensure eligible students in low performing schools have access to supplemental academic tutoring and enrichment activities specifically designed to increase their academic achievement

- Ensure that LEAs identify students eligible for supplemental education services (SES) and provide parental notification letters informing parents of their service options
- Analyze potential causes of low SES participation rates and provide technical assistance to LEAs to ensure all students, particularly subgroups traditionally having low participation rates, are sufficiently informed and have access to their supplemental education services options
- Continue to update and revise the state's approved supplemental education services provider list based on providers' past performance
- Institute and publicly report standards and techniques for monitoring program quality and provider effectiveness
- Develop a comprehensive system to assess student outcomes and parent and student satisfaction to determine program effectiveness
- Provide technical assistance to current high-performing providers to increase their capacity to serve a greater number of eligible students
- Ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive appropriate educational services and accommodations

Strategy 6.2 Ensure students have access to a range of high-quality education, developmental, and recreational services during non-school hours that reinforce and complement the regular academic program

- Revise program standards where possible to ensure programs provide academic enrichment opportunities
- Provide training and technical assistance to providers to ensure implementation of revised program standards
- Establish, implement, and publish the results of a program quality rating system to monitor and to evaluate program effectiveness
- Ensure providers develop sustainability plans to provide high-quality services throughout the award period
- Develop a comprehensive system to assess student outcomes and parent and student satisfaction to determine program effectiveness
- Ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive appropriate educational services and accommodations

Strategy 6.3 Ensure eligible K-12 students and individuals with disabilities have access to before and after school care

- Establish criteria to evaluate the current programs for quality and effectiveness and to ensure that program services accommodate the unique needs of different subgroups
- Provide technical assistance to providers on evaluation criteria
- Develop a monitoring system to ensure before and after care programs meet evaluation criteria and contractual agreements
- Provide support and interventions to providers to improve program quality

Goal B

All Schools Ready

All District of Columbia students will receive an excellent education that prepares them for success in college, careers, and life



Objective 7

Student Health and Wellness

Improve health and wellness outcomes for all students

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of high school students who report any alcohol, cigarette, marijuana, or other illegal drug use on school property in the last 30 days	Aggregating Baseline Data	-1 percentage point from prior year				
Percent of students classified as overweight or obese based on BMI measures		Establish Baseline	Establish Baseline	-1 percentage point from prior year	-1 percentage point from prior year	-1 percentage point from prior year

Research indicates that proper nutrition and increased physical activity leads to higher academic achievement. Student participation in school breakfast programs, for example, improves academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning and leads to increased math and reading scores (23). Conversely, poor nutrition and health habits negatively impact students' academic potential. Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic in our country, especially within our local community, where the percentage of overweight children in the District of Columbia is almost double the national average (24). In addition to obesity, students engage in other health-risk behaviors, including alcohol and drug use and sexual activity, which negatively affect their health and, as a result, their academic achievement. By setting and maintaining health and physical education standards; administering, analyzing, and addressing the data gathered from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS); and providing resources to LEAs to ensure proper nutrition and physical education, the state will continue to partner with LEAs and other stakeholders in an effort to reduce the health and nutrition barriers students face in achieving academic success.

Strategy 7.1 Ensure that students receive the information needed to make healthy choices by setting and monitoring the implementation of the health and physical education content standards

- Review, revise, disseminate, and monitor the implementation of health and physical education state content standards
- Develop a comprehensive communication and implementation plan for distribution of standards to LEAs
- Provide training and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure comprehension of the standards

Strategy 7.2 Ensure that the bi-annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is properly employed to identify and track areas of high risk behavior and serve as a baseline for future state initiatives

- Develop and implement guidelines to guarantee proper administration of the YRBS in LEAs
- Increase the number of partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide programming and training to LEAs in areas identified as high risk by the YRBS
- Track changes in YRBS data to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of state programs
- Partner with other DC government agencies and local partners to design and execute HIV awareness training for LEA faculty and staff and to produce informative materials for distribution to families and community organizations

Strategy 7.3 Improve student performance on fitness and nutrition assessments by providing resources to LEAs to ensure that each child has access to daily physical activity and a healthy school lunch and breakfast

- Require the implementation of a local wellness policy including healthy food choices and daily physical activity for all schools
- Partner with the Department of Health to collect Body Mass Index data on all District of Columbia students
- Monitor LEA compliance with USDA and state meal pattern requirements for healthy meals and snacks
- Research and support the implementation of programs to eliminate trans and saturated fats in foods and to reduce the fat content for milk served in schools
- Partner with Alliance for a Healthier Generation and other health organizations to provide resources and training for increasing health and fitness levels
- Increase participation in the free breakfast program
- Collaborate with the Mayor's Commission on Food and Nutrition to receive guidance in developing on-going performance improvement in areas related to health and wellness

Goal C

All Residents Ready

All District of Columbia residents will be successful in the 21st century economy



Goal Measure Outcome	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of DC residents holding, at minimum, a GED® according to the annual US Census Bureau's American Community Survey	86.18%	87.18%	88.18%	89.18%	90.18%	91.18%

Objective 1

College Awareness, Access and Success

Ensure District students have the information and resources needed to succeed in college

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of DC high school graduates attending a four-year university		Determining Methodology	Establish Baseline	+7 percentage points increase	+7 percentage points increase	+8 percentage points increase
Percent of District residents receiving state scholarship grants graduating from colleges and universities within five years		Gathering Baseline Data	+1 percentage point over prior year	+1 percentage point over prior year	+1 percentage point over prior year	+5 percentage points over prior year
Percent of DC high school graduates who enroll in a four-year university and graduate within five years		Determining Methodology			Establish Baseline	+3 percentage points increase

With 1.1 million knowledge workers, the Greater Washington area boasts the most diverse and highly educated workforce of any metropolitan area in the United States, yet the local economy demands more (25). By 2010, two-thirds of all new jobs in the District of Columbia will require some form of postsecondary education (26). At the same time, the July 2008 Regional and State Employment and Unemployment report from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics shows a 1% increase in the District of Columbia's unemployment rate and a simultaneous increase of 16,000 available jobs from July 2007-July 2008, indicating a robust pool of available jobs, but few qualified local applicants (27).

A review of DC secondary education statistics indicates the city's current inability to adequately educate and prepare students to compete in the local market. According to the 2006 *Double the Numbers for College Success* report, of students who entered 9th grade in DCPS and DC Charter Schools in 2001 only:

- 43% graduated from high school in the District within five years
- 29% enrolled in postsecondary educational programs within 18 months of graduating high school

During that same time frame, for students who graduated from DCPS and DC Charter Schools in 2001, only 9% attained a postsecondary degree within five years of enrolling in college (28).

As a participant in the Double the Numbers coalition, the state committed to doubling the number of District of Columbia students who pursue and complete a postsecondary degree to increase the number of residents who can compete for jobs in their own city.

Strategy 1.1 Reduce financial barriers to higher education

- Explore additional funding sources in order to complement District of Columbia Tuition Assistance Grants (DCTAG) and DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (DCLEAP) grants to increase the number of residents receiving state scholarship funds
- Provide information on the OSSE website regarding additional financial aid and scholarship opportunities
- Conduct research on the financial needs and supports of DC students to attend college
- Conduct outreach to LEAs to improve the counseling that students receive regarding college admissions and financial aid processes

Strategy 1.2 Promote a college-going culture

- Create a college awareness campaign in partnership with LEAs, OSSE stakeholders, and community members to inform students of existing college and university options
- Create links for students and families to college-going information and resources on the OSSE website
- Organize an annual city-wide college fair

Goal C

All Residents Ready
All District of Columbia residents will be successful in the 21st century economy

Strategy 1.3 Improve college graduation rates by increasing the number of DC students attending colleges that have historically high retention and graduation rates.

- Publish aggregate retention and graduation statistics on the OSSE website for colleges that DCTAG and DCLEAP grantees have historically attended
- Encourage colleges with high retention and graduation rates to recruit DC students
- Conduct research to identify best practices of colleges with high retention and graduation rates of DC students
- Develop policies to support and encourage improved retention and graduation rates of DC students

Strategy 1.4 Ensure that quality postsecondary educational institutions are available to District of Columbia consumers through the licensure process and the monitoring of the Education Licensure Commission's standards

- Update the ELC licensure regulations to reflect postsecondary industry best practices and improve quality assurance
- Provide technical assistance to new and existing postsecondary institutions to ensure comprehension of all regulatory updates
- Implement a differentiated accountability system based on the new regulations
- Better advertise ELCs complaint line to postsecondary consumers
- Increase the amount of information provided to consumers related to the licensure status and program offerings of DC postsecondary institutions

Objective 2

Adult Literacy and Education

Expand access to high quality education for adult learners

Objective Measure	Performance Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of adult learners served by OSSE-funded community-based Adult and Family Education programs who were both pre- and post-tested, and received the requisite minimum 12 hours of instruction that advanced at minimum one functional literacy level	Data gathered in January of 2009; 2007 78.73%	85%	88%	91%	94%	97%
Percent of adult learners served by OSSE-funded GED® preparation programs both completing and passing the battery of GED® tests * A new version of the GED® test will be rolled out in FY2013	2008 data final in January of 2009	+5 percentage points	+8 percentage points	+8 percentage points	+8 percentage points	Establish Baseline
Percent of GED® battery of test completers passing the GED® exam * A new version of the GED® test will be rolled out in FY2013	2008 data gathered in January of 2009; 2007 62.5%	+5 percentage points	+8 percentage points	+8 percentage points	+8 percentage points	Establish Baseline

Of the 469,000 DC residents age 16 and older, an estimated 36 percent function at the lowest level of literacy (29). A June 2008 National Commission on Adult Literacy report indicates that educated and literate adults greatly benefit the communities in which they live – they are more likely to vote in elections, to participate in civic engagement, to become citizens, to have better health and healthcare, and to have lower incarceration rates (30). In 2007, nearly 80% of adult learners served by state-funded programs advanced at least one literacy level after completing a minimum twelve hours of instruction—proof that state-funded adult learning programs work (31). As the lead agency responsible for adult education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education has the unique opportunity to increase the number of local residents served to significantly improve the adult literacy rate in the District of Columbia.



Goal C

All Residents Ready

All District of Columbia residents will be successful in the 21st century economy

Strategy 2.1 Expand the adult education service delivery system to serve more learners with varying literacy levels and needs in the District of Columbia

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the target population, educational services, and fiscal requirements necessary to address adult illiteracy in the District of Columbia
- Expand access to underserved populations by strategically funding adult education programs in areas of high demand
- Enhance funding for adult education services through a coordinated funding stream to include federal, local, and private funds

Strategy 2.2 Improve the quality of adult education by setting provider and educator standards, providing resources and technical assistance to providers, and implementing a system of accountability

- Establish new provider and educator performance and accountability standards to ensure implementation of quality indicators and Equipped for the Future (EFF) learner standards
- Provide technical assistance to service providers on making connections between standards, instruction, and assessments to improve student outcomes
- Develop a measurable approach to guide the allocation of current and new funding to new and existing programs based on performance
- Explore community partnerships and opportunities to bridge the gap between GED[®] and postsecondary education as well as workforce certification and employment

Strategy 2.3 Lead the administration of the GED[®] tests and increase awareness of the rigorous nature of the tests and credential

- Continue to administer the GED[®] assessment per the test requirements
- Provide training and orientation to preparation programs on the new GED[®] assessment, which will be fully implemented in FY2013
- Plan and sponsor the annual GED[®] graduation ceremony
- Make efforts to better publicize the GED[®] credential in order to increase test participation and enhance the community's understanding of the rigorous nature of the credential



Critical Action Areas:

Areas that will receive elevated attention and direct involvement of the State Superintendent of Education

In addition to the core policy goals, three critical action areas will receive elevated attention and direct involvement from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. These areas include: special education, federal grants management, and the statewide longitudinal data warehouse. The state works to improve service delivery mechanisms and to remediate actions that have resulted in litigation and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) “high-risk” designation by the U.S. Department of Education to effectively serve students, families, LEAs, providers, and schools. In addressing both long term systems reform and short term improvements, there will be a clear and direct focus on providing high-quality services and oversight to all District LEAs for children with special needs. Additionally, the state will address its “high-risk grantee” designation by the US Department of Education to ensure continued access to all available funds and to maximize the use of federal resources to supplement state-level initiatives. Finally, the state will develop a statewide longitudinal data system that tracks student movement, pinpoints student and teacher performance, and assists policymakers in directing resources to critical areas of need base on reliable data. The data system will improve student achievement by making data an effective and efficient tool at the school and district level. Furthermore, the enhanced availability and use of data will also be crucial to addressing the challenges in the aforementioned critical action areas through improved reporting, transparency, and performance.

Critical Action Area 1 Special Education Reform

Create and support interventions that allow students with disabilities to receive an excellent education and life-skills training to become well-educated, independent, and productive members of our community

Strategy 1.1: Support the involvement of parents in special education decision-making processes

- Create a full-service Special Education Parent Center to provide parent trainings, to support parents in their role as decision makers, and to educate parents on their rights, protections, and responsibilities under IDEA
- Create a web-based, one-stop access point of information for parents, LEAs, schools, and community partners
- Ensure LEAs facilitate parent involvement initiatives as a means of improving services and academic outcomes for students with disabilities
- Facilitate opportunities for public comment when developing statewide policies and procedures
- Collaborate with the State Advisory Panel on Special Education to identify unmet educational needs, to receive guidance in developing rules and regulations proposed by the state, and to develop and implement policies concerning related services for children with disabilities

Strategy 1.2: Provide children with disabilities with access to early intervention services to promote their future success in school and in life

- Increase the number of eligible infants or toddlers who have an individualized family service plan and receive coordinated services in natural environments
- Provide monitoring and technical assistance to agencies, institutions, and organizations servicing infants and toddlers with disabilities
- Initiate a public awareness program focusing on early intervention
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development to ensure highly-effective providers
- Collaborate with the Interagency Coordinating Council to promote public awareness and community engagement activities, to identify supports for early intervention service programs, and to assist in the development and monitoring of legislation and policy

Strategy 1.3: Improve the state’s capacity to appropriately and effectively locate, identify, and refer children with disabilities

- Create and implement a tracking mechanism to monitor LEAs’ special education eligibility determination processes
- Conduct a comprehensive district-wide public awareness campaign to promote the state’s Child Find system
- Collaborate with governmental and community-based organizations to develop strategies to ensure the appropriate identification of children from birth to kindergarten entrance with special needs





Strategy 1.4: Establish responsibilities, policies, and procedures for public agencies to provide or to pay for services for students with disabilities

- Determine mechanisms for resolving interagency disputes regarding reimbursement and coordination of responsibility to provide a free and appropriate education for multiple-system involved students
- Develop policies and procedures to ensure timely and accurate Medicaid claims processing
- Determine rates for service providers
- Pursue funding to coordinate state and local education, social health, mental health, and other services in addressing the full range of student needs
- Adjust the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula to better serve students with disabilities in inclusive settings with their general education peers

Strategy 1.5: Develop adequate infrastructure and policies to support high-quality transportation services for students with disabilities

- Develop a comprehensive strategy to provide necessary business support services to the Department of Transportation
- Analyze currently available transportation services in coordination with the Transportation Administrator to determine most effective delivery of services
- Coordinate with Transportation Administrator and the Office of the Attorney General to define and to implement programmatic and infrastructure requirements necessary to comply with the requirements of the Petties orders to enable the agency to move toward exiting the litigation

Strategy 1.6: Provide quality transition services to students with disabilities

- Coordinate with internal and external stakeholders to analyze students and families' needs and service capacity during transitions from pre-school to kindergarten and from secondary to post-secondary
- Explore the option of creating a seamless service system for children between birth and kindergarten
- Collaborate with agencies to maximize available adult residential, social, and employment services for students ages 18-21
- Develop guidelines and indicators to monitor and to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of LEA transition services
- Provide training and technical assistance to providers in developing effective transition services and supports

Strategy 1.7: Sponsor and support innovative programs in LEAs to enhance the quality and number of programs available to students with disabilities

- Sponsor pilot projects that use the school-wide application model to improve the integration of special education students in the general education program
- Fund and support Full Service Schools to provide coordinated behavior management and behavioral health intervention and services to students
- Implement an Incentive Seats pilot to encourage students to return from nonpublic to public schools
- Fund and sponsor a new special education case management program to improve service delivery to children and young people with disabilities through partnerships with children, families and individualized education program (IEP) teams

Strategy 1.8: Promote a comprehensive integrated service delivery system to promote social and emotional skills among students with disabilities

- Establish policies requiring LEAs to employ Positive Behavioral Support programs to improve social and emotional outcomes for students with disabilities
- Identify funding mechanisms, including Medicaid, to support wraparound services
- Monitor LEAs to determine the effectiveness of behavior health programs and interagency collaboration
- Provide training and technical assistance to LEAs on behavioral health issues, intervention strategies, and how to access services available through other public agencies

Strategy 1.9: Enhance the functions of the current special education nonpublic unit

- Collaborate with DCPS to transition the budget for nonpublic special education tuition payments
- Develop and implement a nonpublic provider payment system that moves towards exiting the Petties orders
- Establish a new placement oversight unit responsible for approving and monitoring state- and LEA-level placements into nonpublic schools and between independent charter schools and other schools

Strategy 1.10: Establish and employ a Continuous Improvement Monitoring System to ensure accountability and to provide meaningful data, analysis, and technical assistance to LEAs

- Access technical assistance from the Data Accountability Center, an Office of Special Education Program-funded technical assistance provider, to improve the state's system of general supervision
- Build and support a new Statewide Special Education Data System to collect and to analyze data and to generate timely and accurate reports for OSEP and other federal reporting systems
- Develop and employ a continuous improvement monitoring system to ensure that all LEAs fulfill state and federal requirements
- Design and implement a systematic process to address the state's special condition status and to satisfy requirements for all IDEA Part B/Part C indicators
- Conduct a regular Qualitative Services Review (QSR) process to evaluate the provision of services to individual students by the District
- Implement a system to provide meaningful, research based feedback and technical assistance to LEAs to assist them in the development of their improvement plans

Strategy 1.11: Provide individuals and organizations with a responsive, high-quality state complaint process as an alternative to litigation

- Adopt written procedures for filing and resolving state complaints in accordance with IDEA requirements
- Create and implement a business process for the efficient and effective operation of the State Complaint Office
- Develop a communication strategy to inform parents and other relevant entities of the state complaint procedures
- Design procedures for the effective implementation of the state's final decisions, including technical assistance activities, negotiations, and corrective actions, to ensure public agencies achieve compliance

Strategy 1.12: Ensure fair, timely, and efficient resolution of special education due process disputes

- Collaborate with stakeholders to revise the current Standard Operating Procedures
- Establish and implement procedures to enable interested parties to resolve disputes through a mediation process
- Create guidelines and state policy on implementation of hearing officer determinations to ensure uniformity across all LEAs
- Utilize the Special Education Data System to monitor due process complaints, hearings, hearing officer decisions, and settlement agreements and their implementation
- Provide technical assistance and ongoing training to Student Hearing Officers
- Create and implement a comprehensive, research-based evaluation system for the performance of hearing officers

Strategy 1.13: Improve daily operations of the Student Hearing Office

- Establish efficient business processes and procedures for filing and maintaining case files
- Implement the new docketing system to guarantee accurate and timely delivery of data
- Determine processes and procedures to ensure regular communication between the Student Hearing Office and parties practicing before the Student Hearing Office
- Provide customer service training for Student Hearing Office staff to improve client relations



CAA 2 Federal Grants Management Reform

Critical Action Area 2

Federal Grants Management Reform

Reform processes and procedures related to the management of Federal Grants to ensure continued and increased access to federal resources and initiatives to improve education

Strategy 2.1: Ensure OSSE program priorities are prioritized in a manner consistent with federal requirements

- Routinely reevaluate academic and program priorities based on analysis of data, best practices, and scientifically based research
- Determine if any underlying processes or systems need to be re-tooled or refined in order to meet academic and program priorities in a manner consistent with federal requirements

Strategy 2.2: Implement SEA-level federal education programs consistent with federal requirements

- Determine the funding amounts reserved for SEA-level activities
- Consistent with planning process, determine how SEA-level funds will be spent in accordance with federal requirements and OSSE program priorities
- Use threshold systems (financial management, inventory/equipment, and procurement) to properly spend federal funds consistent with federal requirements
- Implement program activities consistent with information and requirements related to assessment and accountability system and evaluation requirements

Strategy 2.3: Satisfy federal requirements to develop applications through which subgrantees can apply for federal education programs; ensure that OSSE priorities are articulated to subgrantees

- Review existing application based on results of planning and monitoring processes and revise as necessary
- Determine which elements of the application can be “pre-populated” in an electronic application
- Provide appropriate technical assistance (such as application workshops) to potential subgrantees

Strategy 2.4: Satisfy federal requirements to review and approve subgrant applications consistent with federal program and fiscal requirements

- Provide internal technical assistance to OSSE staff members responsible for reviewing applications
- Assign subgrantees among OSSE program staff
- Review applications from their assigned subgrantees
- Provide technical assistance to subgrantees whose applications are not approvable
- Approve applications as appropriate

Strategy 2.5: Assist subgrantees to implement programs described in approved applications consistent with federal requirements and the OSSE’s priorities, and carry out any required SEA-level activities

- Develop technical assistance plans for assigned subgrantees based on reviews of prior audit/monitoring findings
- Update technical assistance plans throughout the year in order to be responsive to observations made during ongoing reviews of subgrantee program implementation
- Provide technical assistance to subgrantees in topics including:
 - Program issues – e.g. how to perform a needs assessment for various programs, what schoolwide requirements are and how to implement an effective schoolwide program, highly qualified teacher requirements, etc.
 - Fiscal and budget issues – e.g. allowable costs, expenditure report, time and effort requirements, financial management standards, procurement, inventory management
 - Statewide system of support staff to provide targeted interventions for schools in improvement, corrective action and restructuring

Strategy 2.6: Make payments to subgrantees on a timely basis in accordance with federal requirements and improve the coordination of financial management functions among D.C. agencies

- Provide assurance that costs charged to federal funds are allowable
- Establish budget and fiscal controls through the routine reconciliation of financial information
- Provide timely payments of federal funds to subgrantees
- Provide targeted interventions for high-risk subgrantees
- Establish control environment so that officials responsible for financial management understand compliance requirements and their roles/responsibilities
- Create and provide transparency in drawdown and payment process



Strategy 2.7: Assure subgrantees' compliance with applicable federal requirements and that performance goals are being achieved

- Ensure cycle-based monitoring includes risk factors as appropriate
- Review subgrantee activities through a variety of tools including desk reviews, onsite visits, etc. using standardized monitoring instruments
- Provide subgrantees with the results of the monitoring process, including proposed or mandatory corrective actions
- Ensure that subgrantees prepare corrective action plans to resolve noncompliance
- Review corrective actions to ensure appropriately carried out
- Institute sanctions as appropriate

Strategy 2.8: Ensure the production of accurate, reliable, and high-quality educational data

- Collect data through an interim collection tool aligned to federal reporting and accountability requirements
- Ensure data collection is transitioned to the statewide longitudinal education data warehouse
- Monitor data collection closely to ensure ongoing data quality
- Monitor data collection closely to ensure compliance with applicable privacy laws
- Manage data so that all reporting requirements are met

Strategy 2.9: Ensure OSSE manages and maintains documentation to efficiently manage federal programs and demonstrate compliance with federal requirements

- Determine major categories of documents (i.e. grant, procurement, forms, outside communications with various entities, internal communications, etc.)
- Define policies and procedures relevant to particular categories of documents
- Ensure policies and procedures are easily accessible to staff and provide training and technical support on appropriate document management and retention

Critical Action Area 3

State Longitudinal Education Data System

Build a statewide longitudinal data system to serve as a unified repository of data needed to improve education planning, management, reporting, instruction and evaluation

Strategy 3.1: Build and sustain the SLED technology within OSSE, LEAs, schools, and programs

- Establish unique student, teacher, and program identifiers across all agencies, LEAs, and schools, birth through 20 and beyond
- Establish data governance structures that will employ best practices for managing data across organizations, agencies, and schools
- Establish requirements for the databases and analysis systems used by OSSE, LEAs, schools, and providers
- Define and meet federal- and state-mandated reporting and compliance requirements
- Facilitate and support external and internal research using SLED data
- Evaluate implementation and system quality

Strategy 3.2: Provide data and methodologies for assessing and tracking student and school achievement, and for determining outcomes of LEA, school, and program education interventions

- Apply multiple measures to assist in the assessment and monitoring of student achievement and school effectiveness
- Promote the use of data-driven decision making to drive instructional planning in LEAs and schools
- Design transcript analysis and tracking systems to support college and career preparation
- Assess and report student and school achievement annually, using both NCLB and other accountability measures
- Develop monitoring procedures and reports that track student mobility within and across systems
- Assess student movement through the District's schools, into college and careers, and identify factors that contribute to successful movement through the District's educational institutions
- Collaborate with LEAs and schools to use the SLED data systems for self assessment and progress monitoring
- Create an on-line graduation planning tool that students and their families can use to track progress toward their postsecondary school goals

Strategy 3.3: Provide professional development and oversight to ensure effective use of the SLED data resources by educators, policy makers, parents, and community members

- Establish systematic procedures to both facilitate and monitor data use
- Implement systematic and continuous training for all end users
- Develop audit reports and procedures to monitor usage
- Evaluate the system's responsiveness to local, federal, community-wide, and stakeholder needs



Foundational Support

All OSSE Employees Ready

Provide reliable, timely, and satisfying services to OSSE employees that enables them to better serve District of Columbia residents



Objective 1

Transparency

Make clear to all internal OSSE customers the procedures and targeted timelines for requesting and receiving service from OSSE staff for all services available

- **Strategy 1.1:** Document in writing all processes related to internal service delivery from point of request for service to completion of service delivery. Include staff responsible and target timelines for completion for each step in the process
- **Strategy 1.2:** Disseminate all processes to customers
- **Strategy 1.3:** Provide training or one on one support to ensure that all relevant staff receive training on the processes for all support services

Objective 2

Data-Driven Improvement

Use data, including target to actual timeline comparisons and customer surveys, to improve performance and customer satisfaction

- **Strategy 2.1:** Create, use, and update tracking systems that will generate targeted vs. actual timeline-to-completion comparisons and make the progress of each request for service clear to the customer
- **Strategy 2.2:** Create a customer satisfaction survey that gauges customer satisfaction with each process for which the unit is responsible
- **Strategy 2.3:** Share data with leadership and customers
- **Strategy 2.4:** Analyze and use data in order to make improvements to processes and services offered, to improve employee performance, and to increase customer satisfaction

Objective 3

Human Capital

Promote the alignment of human capital management strategies with agency mission, goals, and objectives through analysis, planning, investment, measurement, and management of initiatives

- **Strategy 3.1:** Identify, verbalize, and inculcate staff in agency core values
- **Strategy 3.2:** Align recruitment strategies, selection, performance management plans, and promotion processes to the OSSE's core values and strategic plan
- **Strategy 3.3:** Develop a learning culture and opportunities for continuous development related to mission-critical competencies and measurable results

End Notes

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