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July 11, 2016

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
The Honorable David Grosso, Chairman, Committee on Education
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Letter Report: Status of PERAA Recommendations

Dear Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Grosso:

I write to share with you the enclosed status update on the recommendations made by the National Research Council of the National Academies in their 2015 report, "An Evaluation of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia: Reform in a Changing Landscape."

The responses were provided by Deputy Mayor Jennifer Niles and include information provided by her office as well as the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

As you know, the Office of the D.C. Auditor monitors the compliance of District government agencies with recommendations made in audits and program evaluations conducted by this office and we publish an annual report detailing the status of our recommendations. We are publishing this compliance report separately because the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 mandated an independent evaluation of public education in the District of Columbia by the National Academies. We were pleased to serve as a fiscal agent for that evaluation and are, similarly, pleased to be able to provide this update to you and your colleagues.

We extend our thanks to Deputy Mayor Niles and her team for drafting this response on the recommendations.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks very much.

Sincerely yours,



Kathleen Patterson
District of Columbia Auditor

cc: Councilmembers
Deputy Mayor Niles

**Status of Recommendation of the National Research Council of the National Academies included in
 “An Evaluation of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia: Reform in a Changing Landscape”
 September 2015**

Recommendation 1: The District of Columbia should have a comprehensive data warehouse that makes basic information about the school system available in one place. That information should be readily accessible online to parents, the community, and researchers. That information should include data on the school system as a whole and at more detailed levels. Building such a warehouse will take time, but it can begin with the data collection efforts already in place. An optimal data warehouse would have the following characteristics:

	Responsible Official/Agency	Status
a) The data warehouse integrates and tracks data that are relevant to schooling and students across DCPS and the charter schools and eventually across the education, justice, and human service agencies.	OSSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OSSE’s SLED data warehouse, in combination with other collection and warehousing systems, collects data relevant to schooling and students across DCPS and charter schools. OSSE also has partnerships with justice and human service agencies that are designed to share specific data with the intention of ensuring efficient, accurate and high quality services to students and families by OSSE, DCPS and charter LEAs. ▪ DME is working to improve the capacity of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) team and data infrastructure to provide accurate, transparent, and accessible data to stakeholders. The Mayor’s FY17 budget includes \$1.1M in data systems development and \$11.9M in District capital funds for data systems infrastructure over the next 5 years. ▪ With support from the DME, OSSE will build out the infrastructure for collection, reporting, and analysis of critical public education data, from early childhood to adult education. OSSE will also enhance source data systems and make improvements to the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLED) to make it more comprehensive in scope.
b) The data warehouse provides data about learning conditions in all public schools, DCPS and the charters, and their students covering students with particular	OSSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OSSE’s data systems provide data about learning conditions in DCPS and charter schools, including student subgroups. OSSE collects and shares data on discipline/safety and attendance and partners with LEAs and partners to provide student data to support research on outcomes of academic supports for learning.

<p>needs, including those with disabilities, English-language learners, and students in poverty; school climate, including discipline, attendance, safety, and facilities; and academic supports for learning.</p>		
<p>c) The data warehouse provides data about outcomes for all public school students, in DCPS and the charters, covering graduation rates, performance on tests including college entrance exams, attendance and truancy, course-taking and completion, college enrollment and progression, and career outcomes.</p>	<p>OSSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OSSE’s data systems collect and provide information about these issues, and OSSE has several partnerships with LEAs and non-LEA partnerships and collaboratives to provide data on real-time student performance as well as data used to evaluate various interventions and programs.
<p>d) The data warehouse is usable and accessible to researchers, educators, parents, and the public. The format is structured to allow ready access to data and analysis in ways that can be customized to the needs of different users, including parents and other non-specialists.</p>	<p>OSSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While the data warehouse is not directly publicly available, OSSE’s data systems have various information that is accessible to researchers, educators, parents and the public. A significant effort is underway to increase the number and frequency of available authoritative data sets available to the public, as well as improved availability of data tools to educators. This is being examined in coordination with an intensive evaluation of data security and privacy, to ensure that data systems are designed to be sustainable, accessible and secure into the future. ▪ We will work to ensure that the OSSE process for responding to

		external requests for data is robust, including an equitable and thorough review process. This includes increasing the staffing capacity to respond to and manage outside data requests. OSSE partners with diverse researchers on matters of statewide analysis that contribute to the broader bank of public knowledge on matters across the educational spectrum.
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Recommendation 2: The District of Columbia should establish institutional arrangements that will support ongoing independent evaluation of its education system. Whatever structure is developed, three conditions should be met:		
	Responsible Official/Agency	Status
a) The evaluation entity should have sufficient resources to collect and analyze primary data, including at the school level, without being entirely dependent on district-generated test and administrative data.	DME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given that collection, storage, and sharing educational data is fundamental to all improvement efforts throughout the city, the DME is focused on supporting the OSSE to fully develop this capacity and expertise. Ensuring the success of OSSE in this regard is one of the DME’s top priorities. With this well underway over the next year, the DME will tackle how the city supports ongoing, independent evaluation beyond the open data sets and resources to research requests available ▪ OSSE has an appropriately rigorous process for approving research requests for data that includes review based on strategic alignment, capacity to fulfill requests, statewide scale of impact of research findings, quality of research proposal, data security and privacy, and other considerations.
b) Evaluations should be conducted by experts with the qualifications needed for specific tasks. Ideally, the structure will allow the city to benefit	DME	See above

<p>from the expertise of external researchers and practitioners who specialize in teaching and learning, curriculum, testing and measurement, and finance and policy.</p>		
<p>c) All products produced by the entity should undergo rigorous peer review.</p>	<p>DME</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The primary objective of the District of Columbia for its public schools should be to address the serious and persistent disparities in learning opportunities and academic progress across student groups and wards by attending to the following:</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Responsible Official/Agency Status</p>		
<p>a) Centralized, systemwide monitoring and oversight of all public schools and their students, with particular attention to high need student groups;</p>	<p>OSSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are several measures in place to provide centralized, system-wide monitoring and oversight of all public schools. This includes the statewide accountability and school reporting system, which previously operated under the federal ESEA law, and which is now being reviewed and updated under the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This system provides ratings to schools based on proficiency overall and in subgroups, and prescribes specific actions for low performing schools, including various interventions http://www.learndc.org/schoolprofiles ▪ Secondly, OSSE also hosts the DC Equity Reports, publicly accessible reports, designed for public use, which report on various outcomes at the school level, including academic performance, attendance, and discipline, highlighting subgroup performance. http://osse.dc.gov/equity-reports
<p>b) Fair distribution of educational resources</p>	<p>DME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additionally, DME is working to implement a new Local Education Agency (LEA) payment system that will ensure

across schools and wards;		consistency in the methods used to fund DCPS and public charter schools equitably by reconciling with actual enrollment and automating payment of Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) funds to increase accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness.
c) Ongoing assessment of how well strategies for improving teacher quality are meeting their goals;	OSSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, in response to the US Department of Education request, published the DC report “An Excellent Teacher for Every Child: District of Columbia Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators”
d) More effective collaboration among public agencies and with the private sector to encourage cross-sector problem solving for the city’s schools;	DME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DME is also leading the Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force (CSCTF) which has five specific goals which are 1.Improve the experience of parents and families understanding and navigating their public school options. 2. Develop methods for information sharing with the public and across public school sectors. 3. Develop a framework for coordinating processes on school openings, closings, and facilities planning. 4. Promote enrollment stability. 5. Identify educational challenges that need to be addressed through cross-sector collaboration. .
e) Accessible, useful, and transparent data about D.C. public schools, including charters, that are tailored to the diverse groups with a stake in the system; and	DME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC has a wide selection of public education data available online that include both public and public charter schools. OSSE maintains an online tool called Learn DC which offers a wealth of information about each public school and public charter school in DC, from test scores and graduation rates to program offerings, enrollment trends and more. OSSE also publishes frequently requested datasets on their website. DME will continue to work to publish reports that provide extensive data on the current educational landscape. Fact sheets on DC elementary, middle, and high schools and the underlying Excel data are publically available on the DME

		website.
f) Measures to strengthen public trust in education in a diverse, highly mobile city.	OSSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OSSE, the agency in which much of this work is centered, has recently published a new strategic plan which reinforces its commitment to the efforts described in the PERAA report. This plan has four pillars: High Quality & Actionable Data, Quality & Equity Focus, Responsive & Consistent Service, and Top Notch Talent. http://osse.dc.gov/page/osse-strategic-plan-2015-18