

February 15, 2008

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-6400

Dear Dr. Briggs:

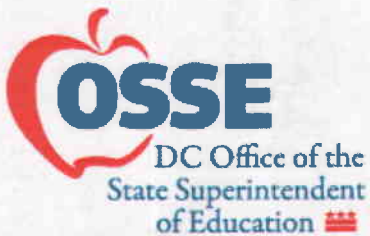
The District of Columbia is excited to submit for your review the enclosed DC Growth Model Proposal. A growth model will be particularly valuable in the District of Columbia where the majority of students historically have scored well below proficiency. This new approach will better demonstrate the progress that schools, districts, and the state are making toward the goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-2014. Over the past weeks, the District has received invaluable assistance from several experts in the area of growth and value-added models including three of the U.S. Department of Education's peer reviewers.

As you know, the District of Columbia implemented new standards-based assessments in reading and mathematics in 2005-2006. In November 2007, the state assessment system's classification was raised to "approval expected" pending final approval of the technical report for the state alternative assessment. On February 4, 2008, the District submitted the last requirements needed for full approval.

The District of Columbia has a long history of tracking students resulting from the District's ability to closely monitor enrollment and achievement data. Because of the District's size, on-site internal and external enrollment audits of all public schools have been conducted each October for the last six years. The audits physically track the enrollment of every student in DC's public schools. In addition, external observers monitor the state assessment administrations in every public school in the District each spring.

As a result, the District is uniquely able to ensure the accuracy of student achievement data across years. Additionally, longitudinal achievement data from the District were used in some of the earliest large-scale studies of growth and value-added studies including those by the New American Schools in 2002-2003. In the fiscal year 2008 budget, the District of Columbia invested \$3 million to create an integrated state-wide longitudinal data warehouse. Overall, this investment is \$19 million over five years in addition to a three year \$5.7 million grant from the US Department of Education. Appendix A of the proposal summarizes the state's implementation of a new unique student identifier (USI) system and statewide data warehouse.

Again, we are excited about the growth model proposal and we look forward to the formal feedback and to working closely with the U.S. Department of Education to continue to improve and refine the model. The District of Columbia remains committed to developing state-of-the-art systems to support high quality data-driven decision-making and improved student achievement.



If you have questions about these submissions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Bill Caritj in the OSSE's Division of Assessment and Data Reporting at 202-442-5562 or at bill.caritj@k12.dc.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gist", is written over the typed name.

Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent for Education

Attachments

cc: Victor Reinoso, Deputy Mayor for Education
Kimberly Statham, Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Cleopatra Figgures, Interim Deputy State Superintendent for Standards and Accountability
Susan Rigney, U.S. Department of Education
Patrick Rooney, U.S. Department of Education
William H. Caritj, Assistant Superintendent