2019 Annual Report

Teacher Attrition:
What you should know

Board Actions:
Find out what issues the State Board addressed this year

Your State Board:
Get to know your representative
About Us

The D.C. State Board of Education was created in 2007 through the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA). Despite its lack of statehood, the District of Columbia receives federal funds, and federal educational legislation treats us like a state. The State Board is not a school board. Our elected members do not have direct control over any school in the city. Like other State Boards, the District's State Board does not make day-to-day decisions for public schools.

The State Board has approval authority over many statewide regulations: including accountability frameworks, school report cards, attendance, residency, graduation requirements, and teacher preparation programs. State Board members engage with their community members to promote academic achievement & equity through policy leadership, engagement, support, advocacy, and oversight.
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January 15, 2020

Dear Residents of the District of Columbia,

We are pleased to bring you this annual report of your D.C. State Board of Education. With nine elected members—one from each ward and one at-large, plus two student representatives—the State Board works to bring an independent voice, informed by the views of District residents, to the education issues affecting our city.

We meet with, hear from, and learn from our constituents who raise crucial concerns about our schools. We elevate and increase understanding of these critically important issues by:

- Bringing the voices of community members and experts to our monthly public meetings, carried on the District Knowledge Network and streamed live online;
- Conveying these concerns to and engaging with the Council of the District of Columbia and our city’s education agencies;
- Engaging with students, educators and families inside our schools and across the community and working to make their voices a meaningful part of policy and decision-making;
- Raising issues in the media; and,
- Conducting independent research.

As a State Board, we are acutely aware that, among our at-risk students, just 21.36 percent are proficient in English Language Arts and 16.62 percent in math, according to our 2018–19 PARCC and MSAA scores. We are concerned with the quality of education for all students, but we are hyper-focused on issues that disproportionately affect our most vulnerable students and the schools they attend. Among the key issues we focused on this year were:

- The District’s high rate of teacher turnover, which is disproportionately high at schools with the most at-risk students, including submitting to the DC Council proposed legislation that would make turnover rates more transparent; and,
- Issues related to how the city’s STAR school rating system evaluates public schools, especially at the high school level.

We have begun work to better understand the breadth and rigor of the curriculum and instruction students across the city are exposed to, especially at the elementary level, where students get—or don’t—the strong start they need to succeed in later grades.
The State Board also began its review of the District’s statewide social studies standards, which have not been revised since 2006. We will be working with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education on this review, scheduled for completion by fall 2022. The State Board passed a resolution that commits to revised standards that are “culturally inclusive and anti-racist, impart important social studies content in the early grades, strengthen student knowledge of democratic principles and values, and promote civic engagement.”

The State Board is also the home for two important, independent offices that support families in their interactions with city schools.

- The Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education (p. 39), available to help families resolve concerns with their schools through mediation and conflict resolution; and,
- The Office of the Student Advocate (p. 40), which supports students, parents, and families in their advocacy, with resources such as one-on-one coaching, education, and trainings.

In 2019, we appointed a new Ombudsman for Public Education, Serena Hayes, and a new Chief Student Advocate, Dan Davis, to five-year terms. Families who need assistance can reach out to these offices at any time. The Ombudsman’s office can be contacted via email at education.ombudsman@dc.gov or by phone at 202-741-0886. The Student Advocate’s office can be reached via email at student.advocate@dc.gov or by phone at 202-741-4692.

The State Board’s independent voice has special importance in the District, where, unlike in most school districts, the leaders of all of the city’s education agencies—the D.C. Public Schools Chancellor, the State Superintendent of Education, and members of the Public Charter School Board—are named by and responsible to the mayor. The State Board is your agency and the representatives and staff are grateful for your support of our work.

We look forward to continuing our work in 2020—to illuminate with research, public testimony, advocacy and more the key issues that affect educational quality and equity—and to give all District residents the independent voice we deserve to achieve the education every young Washingtonian needs and deserves.

Sincerely,

Ruth Wattenberg  
President and Ward 3 Representative

Markus Batchelor  
Vice President and Ward 8 Representative
"Here we go. This is really the start of a new chapter!"

Dr. Emily Gasoi, Ward 1 Representative, at the 2019 Swearing-In Ceremony
There are nine elected representatives on the D.C. State Board of Education, each representing their respective wards, with one member representing the District at large, and two appointed student representatives.

State Board members’ terms are four years and are staggered in alignment with members of the Council of D.C. so no more than five board members are selected in any one election.
“We have heard testimony from teachers, professors, students, and community members about teacher turnover, science education, issues around judging the quality of schools, social studies curriculum, and much, much more. I’m always stuck by how much I learn from hearing from the huge diversity of folks in our community.”

Markus Batchelor, Vice President, Ward 8

“The best moments of my year have been inside so many of our amazing school communities, listening to and engaging our brilliant students, dedicated educators and amazing families. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to represent their voice. We are driving solutions up from the grassroots and our education system will become better for it.”

Ashley MacLeay, At-Large

“2019 was unlike anything I have ever experienced in education. I am really proud of the work we did on the Teacher Retention Committee, and we are looking forward to the teacher retention survey results and using that information to help our teachers.”

Dr. Emily Gasoi, Ward 1

“In my ward, I am proud to have helped to restart an active Ward 1 Education Council that helps to build community and continuity and encourage advocacy across Ward 1 schools. I am also proud to have successfully pushed to have a budget for interpretation services for State Board meetings and events in our wards.”

Jack Jacobson, Ward 2

“The District has a dynamic education system that serves an incredibly diverse and growing population of students. Every day I am humbled by the enthusiasm of our teachers and the successes of our students, and am proud of the role the State Board has played in focusing each and every decision we make on the children we serve. I can’t wait to see what 2020 brings.”

Dr. Frazier O’Leary, Ward 4

“Over the last year, my colleagues and I at the State Board have made it a priority to better understand the reasons why teachers decide to leave. The State Board was the first District agency to bring this issue forward based on the input we were getting from our constituents.”
Zachary Parker, Ward 5

"The most memorable experience for me this year has been hearing directly from students on my tour of Ward 5 high schools. The conversations I’m having and the insights I am gaining are unparalleled and have prompted me to take action to amplify the voices of our students—the State Board’s most important constituents."

Dr. Jessica Sutter, Ward 6

"I am very proud to have been able to kick off the Social Studies Standards work, and I am looking forward to continuing to review and revise them in the coming year. I am also looking forward to supporting safe passage efforts in Ward 6."

Karen Williams, Ward 7

"Completing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Task Force with Matthew Repka was one of the best experiences I had this year. I really look forward to continuing our great work in 2020."

Dayja Burton, Student Representative (SY 2019–20)

"I am most proud of leading conversations geared at improving student’s knowledge of post-secondary education and becoming qualified adults. As a high school senior, having the platform to express ideas on behalf of my peers is an amazing accomplishment for me."

Alex O’Sullivan, Student Representative (SY 2019–20)

"I applied to be a SY2019–20 student representative on the D.C. State Board of Education because I know the importance—now more than ever—of fulfilling my civic duty by actively engaging with my community, and serving with elected officials and driven high school students to provide voices for youth throughout the city is a great way to do so."

Marjourny Alicea, Student Representative (SY 2018–19)

"As a Student Representative, I am the connection between students in the District of Columbia and the policymakers for education. Not only has it given me the opportunity to be an advocate for students, but I am able to connect with my community as well."

Tatiana Robinson, Student Representative (SY 2017–18 and 2018–19)

"This role has helped me develop tremendously and has allowed me to discuss how my education is affected by decisions being made. I have become more passionate in being sure that student voices are heard. My peers put trust in me to be the voice of our education."
"One of the best parts of working at the State Board is the people. Every one of us has a passion for service that is inspiring. We are committed to the fight for equity in education across the District and I am glad to be a part of it."

John-Paul Hayworth, Executive Director
Our Staff

John-Paul Hayworth, Executive Director
“In 2020, I am looking forward to continuing our excellent work on behalf of District residents. We continue to grow and learn as an agency and are making remarkable strides for District students, teachers, families and communities.”

Rhoma Battle, Budget and Operations Specialist
“The most rewarding part of my work is having the opportunity to help children and families solve their problems with the schools, and also working with people with whom I genuinely respect, and get along.”

Alexander Jue, Policy Analyst
“The most memorable things I will take away from 2019 was engaging with stakeholders, community members, and advocates who all want to make the public education system in the District of Columbia the best that it can be. We all have different perspectives and ideas; however, the same end goal in mind.”

Lanita Logan, Staff Assistant (through August 2019)
“It was an exciting experience to participate on our “Selfie Tour” to promote and highlight the work of the State Board’s two student representatives and the Student Advisory Committee. Student voice is extremely important to the State Board and has been integral to our work since the State Board’s inception.”

Paul Negron, Public Affairs Specialist (through August 2019)
“As a staff member, I loved getting out into the community and visiting District public schools as often as possible. This helped keep my ears to the ground and helped to connect the education policies we were working on with the realities of children attending school. Whether it was Back-to-School events, school tours, education events, or student representative swearing-ins, I always felt honored I was able to capture these moments as they happened.”

Milayo Olufemi, Public Affairs Specialist
“One of the most memorable moments for me was speaking with the young men at Ron Brown College Preparatory High School. It was moving to hear how the young men spoke about how the school has changed their lives and their future ambitions. It was a perfect example of what is possible when students are placed in an environment to help them thrive. I am most proud of our engagement in the community; going out and reaching people who need information, advocacy, and resources to improve their lives is very special work.”

Caitlin Peng, Program Associate
“Working at the State Board has been a great learning experience and I look forward to continuing to foster community engagement and supporting the work of the State Board. I am most proud of my work supporting the State Board through compiling a wide variety of information on various topics into one-pagers, such as methods of measuring student growth.”

Matthew Repka, Policy Analyst
“The most rewarding part of my work is supporting the State Board’s public meetings, giving District residents a platform to express their most important priorities for public education. This year, I am most proud of delivering the final report of the ESSA Task Force alongside Ward 7 Representative Karen Williams to the State Board for adoption. It was a great group of really committed and thoughtful individuals, and I am grateful for the time and effort they put into the body.”

Sarah Arrington, Policy Fellow (Fall 2019)
“The most rewarding part of my work is knowing that I am contributing to the creation of a better education system for all DC students. I really enjoyed visiting Ron Brown College Preparatory High School. It was incredible to get to speak with the students and leadership about the work they’re doing. I look forward to learning more about the social studies standards that the State Board members are working hard to develop.”

Sara Gopalkrishna, Policy Fellow (Spring 2019)
“As a DCPS parent and a doctoral student of education policy, my time as a policy fellow at the State Board has been illuminating and fun. I have seen commitment of Board members to elevating the successes and addressing the challenges of public education. At the core, these leaders are motivated by the goal of equity within and among District public schools.”

Jordan Miller, Policy Fellow (Summer 2019)
“During my time as a fellow, I gained valuable insight into the education policy world. I had the opportunity to sit in on teacher retention committee meetings, which helped inform my senior thesis in the fall. One of my most memorable experiences was PARCC score day, where I got to watch Mayor Bowser give a presentation about student progress at Whittier Education Campus.”
In March 2019, the State Board approved Resolution SR19-5, “On Establishment of Priorities.” The resolution called for the State Board “to focus its research and public input efforts on” six priority items:

- Reviewing the STAR Framework and related issues
- Teacher and principal attrition in the District
- Well-rounded education & the use of statewide education standards
- Credit recovery and the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force recommendations
- Review and revision of state standards
- Serving as a voice for D.C. families on key educational issues

In 2019, State Board staff and members worked to advance the agency’s priorities in each of these six key issue areas.
1. The STAR Framework
The State Board is committed to working with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) on improvements to the District’s state accountability system, known as the School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework. As outlined in the District’s state Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, OSSE provides updates several times a year on the progress of reviewing and amending the STAR Framework, and any substantive changes must be approved by the State Board. In June, OSSE presented a plan for the incorporation of an academic growth measure in the STAR Framework at the high school level.

The State Board looks forward to building on this work in 2020, including completing the addition of the Access to Opportunities measure and continuing the development of a high school growth measure.

2. Teacher Attrition
The State Board has continued to prioritize the issue of teacher attrition in the District of Columbia since the release of its first report in October 2018—most importantly working to understand the reasons why teachers are leaving their classrooms, schools, and the profession entirely, and what can be done to help current teachers stay.

The State Board held five public meetings dedicated to better understanding the needs of teachers in the District’s public schools, why are teachers leaving, and the specific data practices that the District could adopt to help address teacher attrition. The State Board welcomed more than 25 public witnesses and panelists in 2019 to share their thoughts on teacher attrition.

The State Board released its second report on teacher attrition in October 2019, has begun the process of administering a cross-sector teacher exit survey to recently departed teachers (with results anticipated in early 2020), and has proposed legislation before the Council on the importance of teacher data collection. Read more on page 14.
3. Well-Rounded Education

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages states to expand their focus with respect to academic coursework—making a conscious effort to build accountability systems that are focused not only on English Language Arts (ELA) and math, but also on science, social studies, foreign languages, music, and arts. Under ESSA, states must work to provide all students with access to a “well-rounded education.”

The State Board is committed to ensuring that every District resident has exposure to rich instructional content that goes beyond ELA and math and includes many other subjects critical to overall student well-being and success. The State Board is currently developing a research plan to yield more insight into the extent to which District students in early grades are currently receiving grade-level instruction that corresponds to the state standards. Results of this research are expected in 2020.

4. Credit Recovery & the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force Recommendations

In 2018 the State Board worked with OSSE on new statewide regulations related to credit recovery. The State Board unanimously rejected the regulations proposed by OSSE in June 2018 due to a limited period of public involvement or examination. In 2019, the State Board attempted to re-engage with OSSE on new statewide regulations, as well as with DCPS and DC PCSB on LEA-specific initiatives and policies related to credit recovery.

The State Board has continued to encourage the Council Committee on Education to consider our High School Graduation recommendations—credit for mastered course content in world languages and math, reduction in community service hours, and creation of personalized learning plans. The State Board has submitted the recommendations to the Deputy Mayor of Education for review.
5. Review and Revision of Statewide Standards

Regular reviews and revisions of statewide education standards are important to ensuring that our students are prepared for future success in a changing world. Our statewide standards provide the framework for the District’s public schools to select curricula that best suit their students. In the District, statewide education standards are developed in a joint process between the State Board and OSSE. Many of our standards are nearly a decade old, including World Languages, adopted in 2008; Arts Education, adopted in 2008; Embedded Technology, adopted in 2009; and Social Studies, adopted in 2007.

This year, the State Board committed to developing a process by which the State Board would update our social studies standards. Only five states have social studies standards more outdated than the District, and at least fifteen states have undergone multiple standards revisions since the District’s were adopted in 2007. During the State Board’s November 2019 public meeting, the State Board welcomed a panel of social studies teachers and leaders to discuss the current state of the state’s social studies standards. The State Board anticipates the work of standards review and revision to be ongoing, with a particular focus on the social studies standards in 2020 and 2021.

6. A Voice for D.C. Families

As elected representatives, State Board members act as independent voices in public education in the District of Columbia. Over the past year, the State Board has heard testimony from hundreds of public witnesses about the education issues that are most critical to them. But for State Board members, engaging with the communities they serve goes beyond the regularly scheduled public meetings.

Over the past year, State Board members hosted town hall events in their communities, testified at public roundtables of the D.C. Council, and toured schools across the District, working to bring the voices of their constituents into the policymaking process.
"For 47 years, I was a teacher in the District of Columbia. I know firsthand the importance of having strong, effective, and trained teachers in our District’s public schools."

Dr. Frazier O'Leary, Ward 4 Representative
Teacher Attrition

What is teacher attrition?
Teacher and principal attrition—the rate at which educators and leaders leave their schools on a yearly basis to teach at or lead another school or exit the profession—is a persistent challenge for school districts nationwide. There is evidence that higher rates of attrition are associated with lower student achievement.

Moving Forward
The State Board looks forward to continuing its work on teacher attrition in 2020 and the results and findings of the forthcoming survey. The State Board anticipates these survey results and findings to be delivered in March 2020. The State Board may elect to further advise the appropriate government agencies based on the report's findings.
Data

The State Board’s two reports on teacher attrition have found that average annual teacher attrition at the school level in both District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and public charter schools is—and has consistently been—about 25 percent, though the DCPS rate has recently trended downward. The report also draws comparisons between the District and national averages (16 percent) and other large urban school districts (19 percent).

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January

The State Board adopts a memo summarizing key themes and most common recommendations on teacher attrition based on public forum and feedback received in 2018.

February–March

The State Board convenes three panels: students, leaders of area schools of education, and non-profit and national associations to discuss the effects of teacher attrition and the importance of teacher data to understand the issue.

March

The State Board votes on priorities, one of which is to “focus its research and public input efforts on the turnover of teachers in D.C. and retention efforts.”

July

The State Board convenes a panel of award-winning teachers to share insights from their classrooms, what makes an effective teacher, and how schools and systems can support educators in their practice.

September

The State Board works with District education agencies and stakeholders on the development of a draft survey to be administered to recently exited teachers.
This Year's Work

In 2019, the State Board prioritized further research in the area of understanding teacher attrition in the District. The goal of this work is to understand the reasons why teachers decide to depart the classroom, their schools, their educational sector (traditional public vs. public charter), and the profession entirely, and what can be done to help current teachers stay.

Dr. O'Leary providing government witness testimony before the Council on December 4.

Members of the public testifying before the State Board at the October 2019 public meeting on the effects of teacher attrition.

October
The State Board releases its second report on teacher and principal attrition in the District.

October 22
Ward 4 Representative and Chairperson of the State Board’s Teacher Retention Committee, Dr. Frazier O’Leary, attends a convening of area school districts to discuss teacher attrition and potential solutions and strategies.

October 25
At the request of the State Board, Chairman Phil Mendelson introduces the Statewide Educational Data Warehouse Amendment Act of 2019 (B23-0515). The bill requires OSSE to annually and publicly publish data on teacher attrition.

December 4
Dr. O’Leary provides government witness testimony at a Committee of the Whole & Education Public Oversight Hearing on “Teacher and Principal Turnover and Retention.”

December
The State Board begins administering its cross-sector teacher attrition survey to teachers who have left over the last two school years. The survey addresses the various hypotheses as to why teachers leave.
"It makes me proud that the State Board has used its independent voice to move the agenda towards the needs of our students."

Ruth Wattenberg, President and Ward 3 Representative
Following the passage of the District of Columbia’s state Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan in early 2017, the State Board of Education moved to create a stakeholder task force.

The Task Force would work in conjunction with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to carry out the provisions of the District’s plan. In June, the Task Force concluded its activities after two years of meetings and work with OSSE on the DC School Report Card.
What is ESSA?
The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in 2015 is the most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It required all states and the District of Columbia to develop state plans that detail how they will measure individual schools’ effectiveness at preparing students for academic and career success.

Provisions of the law place a specific emphasis on promoting educational equity, especially for students of color and underserved communities across the United States. This includes requirements that states develop systems to track school performance and ensure accountability, like mandating that local education agencies track and report their per-pupil spending and develop measures of school environment.

What is the State Board’s role in ESSA?
The D.C. State Board of Education voted to approve the District of Columbia’s state ESSA plan in March 2017, and it was accepted by the U.S. Department of Education in August 2017. At that time, the State Board announced it would convene an ESSA Task Force, comprised of education stakeholders and community members from across the District, that would meet monthly to discuss the District’s ongoing implementation of the federal law and its impact on the local education landscape.

In 2019, the ESSA Task Force met six times under chair Karen Williams, discussing issues related to equity in education and drafting a final report that contained observations and recommendations for the State Board on the implementation of ESSA in the District.
These recommendations were designed to guide the State Board as it continues to work in partnership with OSSE on fulfilling the obligations of the District’s state ESSA plan. The State Board adopted the report at its June 2019 public meeting. Detailed descriptions of the recommendations can be found in the final report available at sboe.dc.gov.

**Academic Equity**
- Support additional targeted research to ensure equitable outcomes
- Recognize that there is limited funding available to improve comprehensive support schools
- Develop a comprehensive citywide “equity action plan”

**School Resources and Funding Equity**
- Engage in activities that support a more standardized implementation of best school income and expense coding practices
- Identify high-leverage budget line items tied to equitable outcomes
- Publicly report additional budget data on the DC School Report Card

**Leading for Equity**
- Offer additional support to lower-rated schools not already eligible for support
- Promote partnerships with external organizations to build capacity and enhance the capabilities of school leadership
- Support rigorous research that identifies cost-effective policies and programs
- Provide additional targeted technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) and schools regarding creative uses of at-risk and other federal resources
"I’ve loved school since my first day of preschool when I walked in and never looked back to say goodbye to my mom. I’ve loved every school I’ve had the privilege to teach in."

Dr. Jessica Sutter, Ward 6 Representative
Section IV

Measuring School Quality

Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the District of Columbia measures school performance and characteristics through an accountability system known as the School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework.

Since December 2018, the STAR Framework has provided publicly accessible data on all D.C. public schools. Throughout 2019, the State Board heard from public witnesses on the impact of the STAR Framework in schools to date, and from education experts on how to ensure the accountability system is relevant and useful for students and families.
Since its March 2017 vote to approve the District of Columbia’s state ESSA plan, the State Board has maintained an interest in supporting the development, rollout, and ongoing improvement of the STAR Framework. To that end, the State Board in 2019 heard from many members of the community on ideas for improving the STAR Framework, with a specific focus on how the District of Columbia could best include a measure of academic growth in its high schools.

At present, the District of Columbia measures and reports academic growth in the STAR Framework for its elementary schools, and growth factors into those schools’ overall summative “star rating.” However, growth is not similarly measured in high school: differences in the required tests create challenges with establishing a valid set of measurements.
The State Board convened two expert panels on the subject of measuring school quality at the April and May public meetings. In April, professors of education and representatives from education nonprofit organizations testified about different ways to measure high school growth, including using Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate exams, PARCC-based measures, a proposed PSAT-to-SAT test progression, and value-added models. In May, representatives from District schools testified to their experiences with the STAR Framework and offered recommendations based on that experience.

In June 2019, representatives from OSSE attended the State Board’s working session to present a preliminary proposal on the incorporation of an academic growth measure at the high school level. The State Board looks forward to continuing to work with OSSE on the accountability system in the coming year.

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A slide from the OSSE presentation on a preliminary proposal to incorporate an academic growth measure at the high school level from the June working session.
"In the coming year, I look forward to gathering more data for the Student Advisory Committee report and producing tangible results that can be used to better education across District of Columbia Public Schools."

Dayja Burton, SY2019-20 Student Representative
Section V

Student Advisory Committee

Since 2015, the State Board’s Student Advisory Committee (SAC) has served to directly connect the elected representatives with the voices of District students.

Chaired by the State Board’s two Student Representatives, the SAC is comprised of sophomore, junior, and senior students attending a District high school. It meets at least once per month during the school year.

As a group, the SAC works to bring important issues related to the student experience before the State Board for their consideration and action.
In 2018–19, the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) focused their work on teacher attrition and equity across District schools, developing proposed solutions that would help schools keep more of their teachers.

SAC members also testified before the State Board at the June public meeting on teacher attrition and the use of long-term substitutes in classroom placements. The subcommittee focused on equity across schools examined differences in school course offerings, the availability of extracurricular activities, college tours and other programming, and teacher quality.

The Student Advisory Committee’s final report was adopted by the State Board in June 2019 and includes recommendations for the State Board on how to best address those issues.
The 2019–20 Student Advisory Committee first met in September 2019 and will continue to work through June 2020. In her introductory blog post, student representative Dayja Burton writes how she is committed to making decisions that "will have the interest of the students above all else" and explains that "this world should not be about doing things for personal gain—this world should be about making life better for all those to come."

SAC members have already met with State Board members to discuss issues that are important to them and to offer input on State Board priorities, including weighing in on a potential revision of the state social studies standards. At the November public meeting, student representative Alex O’Sullivan commented,

"The thing that’s very dangerous about the way our history textbooks teach is it would lead us to assume racism ended with the civil rights era — that systemic racism and the effects of systemic racism ended then."

"The thing that’s very dangerous about the way our history textbooks teach is it would lead us to assume racism ended with the civil rights era — that systemic racism and the effects of systemic racism ended then."

Student Representative Alex O’Sullivan and Ward 5 Representative Zachary Parker

Student Representative Dayja Burton speaking on student mental health supports at the National Press Club
"The conversations I'm having and the insights I'm gaining are unparalleled and have prompted me to take action to amplify the voices of our students—the State Board's most important constituents."

Zachary Parker, Ward 5 Representative
Members of the State Board actively engage in their respective communities and wards. They listen to their constituents concerns and thoughts, and they work to amplify the voices of all District residents by testifying in front of D.C. Council, writing op-eds and guest blogging, sharing insights on radio and podcast shows, attending community social gatherings, and much more.

The State Board is the District’s voice in public education.
Amplifying Community Voice


Vice President and Ward 8 Rep. Marcus Batchelor joins SY18-19 Student Representative Tatiana Robinson and SAC member Emma Quigg on the Kojo Nnamdi Show in June to discuss high teacher attrition and the impact of long-term substitutes.

In August, SY19-20 Student Representative Alex O’Sullivan & fellow SAC members discuss their role on the State Board during an EdTownhall podcast.


Today was a great day for Hillcrest Community Civic Association. #karenforwacbce

In June, Ward 7 Rep. Karen Williams recognizes the great work of Ward 7 schools with DCPS Chancellor Lewis Ferebee.
Amplifying Community Voice

A Wonk in the Political Arena

Jessica Sutter is a former teacher and policy scholar who was elected to the Washington, D.C. Board of Education last year. Jessica started her career as an educator at a Catholic school in Chicago before ultimately founding EdPro Consulting, where she advised clients like the D.C. Public Charter School Board and the School District of Philadelphia. Jessica will be writing about her experience as an elected member of the D.C. Board and what it’s like to be a policy wonk navigating the political arena.

I have a confession: I am an education policy wonk. A self-identified wonk...

And more recently, I became a policymaker, in November 2018, I was elected to serve as the Ward 6 representative on the D.C. State Board of Education (SBOE). I was sworn in this past January to serve a four-year term, helping approve state-level education policy for the District of Columbia. What does “state policy” look like in the not-yet-a-state jurisdiction I represent? The role of the SBOE is to approve policies that affect all public schools in D.C., including both DCPS and public charter schools. This responsibility includes state academic standards, state-level assessments, school closures, and even important issues such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and high school graduation and test scores for a policy wonk, right?

Ward 6 Rep. Jessica Sutter is a guest blogger and talks about her new policymaking role on the State Board.


At-Large Rep. Ashley MacLeay greets students, families, and community at the October Walk-to-School Day in Lincoln Park.

Frazier O’Leary: Mentoring teachers is vital to student success

As a student teacher at the now-defunct Garnet-Patterson Junior High School in the fall of 1970, my mentor, Mr. Copers, offered me invaluable advice, shared his expertise, and gave me the tools to what I was about to experience as a “real” teacher.

I started teaching on my own—right after Christmas break in January 1971!—and I was consumed with being a student-teacher, not a teacher. This experience made me realize that Mr. Copers’ mentorship was the only way to facilitate a successful classroom.

In October, President and Ward 3 Rep. Ruth Wattenberg testifies on dyslexia at a D.C. Council hearing. That same month she writes about PARCC results.

In August, Ward 5 Rep. Zachary Parker writes about the achievement of black and brown kids in the District.
In 2019, the D.C. State Board of Education (SBOE) passed 33 resolutions.

State Board resolutions (SR) ranged from approving the DC Science cut scores to establishing four committees: Teacher Retention, Well-Rounded Education, Social Studies Standards, and Research. Ceremonial resolutions (CR) recognized the contributions and achievements of individuals and organizations that make the District a better place.
January

SR19-1 "To Appoint Serena Hayes as Ombudsman for Public Education"
Appoints Serena Hayes to serve as the third Ombudsman for Public Education in the District’s history.

CR19-1 "Recognizing Maisha Riddlesprigger as DCPS 2019 Principal of the Year"
Honors Ketcham Elementary School’s principal for her accomplishments and service to DCPS.

CR19-2 "To Recognize National School Choice Week"
Recognizes the organizers of National School Choice Week.

February

SR19-2 "To Recognize the Importance of Mental Health Supports in Schools"
Recognizes the important work being done in the District to provide mental health supports in schools and calls for further investment in this key issue area.

SR19-3 "On the Transparency of School Funding Across the District"
Expresses that increasing budgeting transparency should be an important goal for the District of Columbia, and that accomplishing this goal will better ensure that public funds are more effectively used to improve outcomes for all students.

SR19-4 "On Appointment of Members"
Appoints members to internal committees: Administration & Budget, Student Advisory, and the ESSA Task Force.

CR19-3 "Recognizing Lakeisha Brown as DCPS 2019 Teacher of the Year"
Recognizes Lakeisha Brown, a kindergarten teacher at Lafayette Elementary School, for her accomplishments and service.

CR19-4 "Recognizing the Commitment and Advocacy Efforts of KAGRO-DC"
Recognizes the community engagement efforts of the Korean-American Grocers Association of Greater Washington.

CR19-5 "Recognizing the Activism of #OurLivesMatter"
Honors the D.C. youth-driven movement supported by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington.

March

SR19-5 "On Establishment of Priorities"
Resolves that the State Board will focus its research efforts on six items: reviewing the STAR Framework, teacher retention, well-rounded education, credit recovery, state standards revision, and serving as a voice for DC families on key educational issues.

CR19-6 "Recognizing Women’s History Month"
Recognizes the work of women in education, social work, social justice, health care, and other areas in the District of Columbia.

CR19-7 "Recognizing the Winners of the Seventh Annual District of Columbia State Athletic Association (DCSAA) Basketball Championship"
Recognizes Eastern High School, KIPP DC College Preparatory, St. John’s College High School, and Sidwell Friends School for their respective state basketball championship victories.

CR19-8 "Recognizing the Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action"
Honors the Black Lives Matter at School coalition and recognizes its work as important to the District’s students.
April
CR19-9 "Recognizing National Financial Literacy Month"
Celebrates National Financial Literacy Month; recognizes the importance of financial literacy.

May
CR19-10 "Recognizing the Public Safety Team from Anacostia High School"
Recognizes Anacostia High School Safety team for their victory at the 47th annual Georgetown Street Law Mock Trial Tournament.

June
CR19-11 "Celebrating Juneteenth Independence Day"
Recognizes and celebrates the significance of Juneteenth in the District of Columbia.
CR19-12 "To Honor Former Chief Student Advocate Faith Gibson Hubbard"
Honors the former Chief Student Advocate for her service to the District.
CR19-13 "Honoring Maya Garcia for Her Contributions to Public Education in the District of Columbia"
Honors the former OSSE Director of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics for her service to the District.
CR19-14 "Recognizing the 2018-19 Student Advisory Committee"
Honors the service and accomplishments of the State Board’s Student Advisory Committee and its outgoing Student Representatives, Tatiana Robinson and Marjouy Alicea.
CR19-15 "Recognizing the Every Student Succeeds Act Task Force"
Honors the ESSA Task Force and OSSE’s partnership over two years of community engagement on the accountability system and ESSA.
CR19-16 "Recognizing the Contributions of College Bound, Inc. to the District’s Students"
Honors Kenneth Ward, College Bound’s executive director, for the organization’s work with District students.
CR19-17 "On the 40th Anniversary of the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program"
Thanks the D.C. Department of Employment Services for its work to facilitate the MBSYEP.
CR19-18 "On the 40th Anniversary of the Marion Barry Youth Leadership Institute"
Thanks the D.C. Department of Employment Services for its work to facilitate the MBYLI.
July
SR19-6 "DC State Board of Education Fiscal Year 2021 Need for Appropriations Resolution"
Approves the agency's fiscal year 2021 Need for Appropriations and enhancements and requests that the Mayor include these estimates in her annual budget submission.
SR19-7 "On the Implementation of Working Group Proposals"
Directs the State Board to undertake work in four areas: teacher retention, research on state education standards, measuring school quality, and social studies.

September
SR19-9 "To Appoint Dan Davis as Chief Student Advocate"
Appoints Dan Davis as the Chief Student Advocate.
SR19-10 "On the Importance of Selective Service Registration"
Encourages the members of its Student Advisory Committee and Student Representatives to promote timely Selective Service registration.
SR19-11 "On the Establishment of Committees"
Establishes the Teacher Retention, Well-Rounded Education, Social Studies Standards, and Research committees.
CR19-19 "Celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month"
Recognizes and celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month and the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy.
CR19-20 "Recognizing ‘Peace Teacher’ Linda Ryden"
Honors Linda Ryden, Lafayette Elementary School’s “peace teacher,” for her service to students and families.

October
SR19-12 "To Approve DC Science Cut Scores"
Approves the performance level “cut scores” for the new DC Science assessment and Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment.

November
CR19-21 "Recognizing the Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy"
Honors the Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy for their work with District students in Wards 7 and 8.

December
CR19-22 "Recognizing the 2019 Dunbar High School Football Team"
Recognizes the Dunbar High School football team for winning the DCIAA championship, better known as the Turkey Bowl.
"The Office of the Ombudsman's commitment to serving families, and other stakeholders, has been unwavering. We continue to grow stronger in our ability to facilitate collaborative solutions between families and schools."

Serena Hayes, Ombudsman for Public Education

"We must acknowledge the expertise of families and continue to expand the decision-making tables to shift power back to students and parents."

Dan Davis, Chief Student Advocate
The State Board is the home to two important, independent offices that support families in their interactions with city schools: the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education and the Office of the Student Advocate. The following section features text from each office’s 2019 annual reports.

Families who need assistance can reach out to these offices at any time. The Ombudsman’s office can be contacted via email at education.ombudsman.dc.gov or by phone at 202-741-0886. The Student Advocate’s office can be reached via email at student.advocate.dc.gov or by phone at 202-741-4692.
What is an Ombudsman?
The word "ombudsman" is derived from a Swedish word meaning, "entrusted person" or "grievance representative." The word has come to denote a trusted agent who looks after the interests of a group.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education is an independent, neutral office that helps parents and students resolved school complaints individually and collectively, transforming problems into solutions that compel systemic progress for all public education in the District of Columbia.

Continued growth in caseload and calls to the office in SY 2018-19
The Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education continues to receive many requests for assistance compared to our overall case acceptance rate. Our office received 1,186 calls in SY 2018-19 and accepted 612 as cases. Compared to SY 2017-18, the number of cases opened increased by 34 percent.

Overview of Cases During SY 2018-19
In SY 2018-19, the Office received complaints from residents of all eight wards. Consistent with previous years, the Office received the most calls from residents of Wards 5, 7, and 8. Distinct from previous annual reports, this year the Office collected school ward location data. Although the Office received calls about schools located in Wards 5, 7, and 8 (Ward 6 was just shy of meeting the cutoff) most frequently, we received complaints from schools located in every ward.

Regarding school type: 65 percent of our cases involved traditional public schools; public charter schools consisted of 29 percent of our cases; and the remaining 6 percent of our cases involved non-public placements, private schools, selective schools and/or alternative schools.

The top case categories were bullying/student safety (27 percent), special education/disability (24 percent), and communication and engagement (21 percent). special education/disability was the second highest category, however, 46 percent of all our cases involved students with either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan.

Recommendations:
There are three recommendations provided in the Office’s annual report: They are as follows:

I. Create a citywide Response to Intervention (RtI) framework that:
   (a) establishes the catalysts, timetables, and responsibilities of schools; and
   (b) builds a database system to allow for RtI tracking and record keeping across schools and LEAs.

II. Set guidelines for how the Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) must be conducted.

III. Require schools to maintain a published list of the special education services that the school has accommodated on its campus within the previous three years.

Learn more on our website: educationombudsman.dc.gov
Who We Are
The word, "advocate" is synonymous with trust, champion, and support. When individuals are confronted with issues or challenges, they look to an advocate for support and guidance. Since 2015, our office has partnered with families to keep them informed, connected, and supported in their advocacy for a quality education for their child.

The Office of the Student Advocate is an independent office that provides guidance and resource supports to assist families in navigating the complex system of public education in the District of Columbia.

Executive Summary
In school year SY 2018-19, we expanded our portfolio and scope of supports and resources we offer to education stakeholders in all of the District’s eight wards. Our outreach efforts and partnerships have allowed us to increase our reach and impact for those foundational to a quality public education system—students and families. We prioritized our role as connectors and collaborators to amplify the voices of students and families in the DC education landscape. As a result, we were able to accomplish the following tasks during SY 2018-19:

- Answered our Request for Assistance (RFA) line, a “311” system for public education, live Monday-Friday from 9 am to 5 pm to address education-related questions and provide resources, referrals, and one-on-one coaching on all public education issues.
- Engaged with more than 6,750 individuals through outreach and engagement modes, beyond our RFA line. This engagement effort, focused on students, families, service providers, and government agencies and offices, allowed us to participate in 98 meetings and events citywide.
- Created and released the District of Columbia Student Discipline Guide in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education and the Every Student, Every Day Coalition. The guide, created for students, families, and school staff, explains rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018.
- Revamped our Safe Passage Toolkit, a compilation of resources focused on student safety and safe passage tips, tools, and curricula designed to support the needs of students, families, and educators.
- Established the Ward 8 Safe Passage/Student Safety Working Group to bring education, health and safety, and community leaders together to create solutions for students and families facing safety barriers getting to and from schools in Ward 8.
- Launched the “Safe Spot” initiative in collaboration with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. This initiative created two pilot routes with more than 20 local businesses and organizations agreeing to be “Safe Spots” in the Anacostia and Congress Heights communities of Ward 8. These “Safe Spots” will be a place of refuge for students who feel that their safety is in jeopardy.
- Developed our Race, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) Toolkit to provide school communities with a framework to create and sustain race, equity, and inclusion meetings and trainings within schools. This toolkit includes strategies for reaching out to families, neighbors, and community members to make schools more just and equitable spaces.
- Developed our Teacher Representation Toolkit as a supplement to the DC School Report Card. This toolkit provides information and questions for families to consider during the school selection process.

Learn more on our website: studentadvocate.dc.gov
YEAR IN REVIEW

55 meetings
11 Working Sessions
11 Public Meetings
10 SAC Meetings
6 ESSA Task Force Meetings
17 Committee Meetings

33 resolutions
11 State Resolutions
22 Ceremonial Resolutions
BY THE NUMBERS

133 testimonies
72 Public Comment Sign Ups
61 Panelists

Including:
47 Educators
32 Policy Experts
5 School Leaders
8 Students
41 Community Members
Appendix A

ESSA Task Force Members, 2017-19

Lannette Woodruff, Ward 4 Representative, D.C. State Board of Education | Task Force Chair (2017–18)
Karen Williams, Ward 7 Representative, D.C. State Board of Education | Task Force Chair (2018–19)
Josh Boots, Founder and Executive Director, EmpowerK12
Samantha Brown, Special Education and Reading Teacher, Calvin Coolidge High School
Tumeka Coleman, Teacher, Walker-Jones Education Campus (since September 2018)
Yolanda Corbett, Co-Chair, Parent Advocate Leaders Group
Allyson Criner Brown, Associate Director, Teaching for Change
Deborah Dantzler Williams, Head of School, Inspired Teaching Demonstration Public Charter School (through March 2019)
Hannah Dunn, Student, Woodrow Wilson High School
Ramona Edelin, Executive Director, D.C. Association of Chartered Public Schools (through July 2018)
Laura Fuchs, Board Member, Washington Teachers’ Union/Teacher, HD Woodson High School
Faith Gibson Hubbard, Chief Student Advocate, Office of the Student Advocate (through April 2019)
Julie Anne Green, Executive Director, New Futures (through November 2017)
Donald L. Hense, Chairman, Friendship Public Charter Schools (through July 2018)
Juliana Herman, Deputy Chief of Policy, D.C. Public Schools (through February 2019)
Anne Herr, Director of School Quality, FOCUS DC
Erica Hwang, Instructional Coach, DC Public Schools (through July 2018)
Jack Jacobson, Ward 2 Representative, D.C. State Board of Education
Erin Kupferberg, Senior Manager – School Quality, D.C. Public Charter School Board
Beverly Lucas, Director of Continuing Education, University of the District of Columbia Community College (since October 2018)
Maya Martin Cadogan, Executive Director, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education
Zachary Parker, Ward 5 Representative, D.C. State Board of Education (since March 2019)
Jacque Patterson, Chief Community Engagement and Growth Officer, KIPP DC
Amon Payne, Student, Columbia Heights Education Campus (through January 2018)
Richard Pohlman, Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School
Elizabeth V. Primas, ESSA Program Manager, National Newspaper Managers’ Association
Daniel Rodriguez, Student, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School
Alex Rose-Henig, Director of Academic Programs, BASIS DC Public Charter School
Sheila Strain Clark, Chief of Programs, Sasha Bruce Youthwork
Jhonna Turner, Parent Engagement Program Coordinator, Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs
Joe Weedon, former Ward 6 Representative, D.C. State Board of Education
Suzanne Wells, Founder, Ward 6 Public Schools Parent Association
Shana Young, Chief of Staff, OSSE
Appendix B

2019-20 Student Advisory Committee
Alex O’Sullivan, co-chair, BASIS DC PCS Class of 2022
Dayja Burton, co-chair, McKinley Technology HS Class of 2020
Abigail Quasbie, BASIS DC PCS Class of 2020
Adam Soliani, School Without Walls Class of 2021
Alyssa Richardson, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2022
Anna Brosowsky, DC International School Class of 2021
Ceon Dubose, Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering HS Class of 2020
Chau Nguyen, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2021
Chelsea Casarrubias, McKinley Technology HS Class of 2020
Gabriel Madson, DC International School Class of 2020
Giulio Iacoviello, School Without Walls Class of 2021
Hannah Dorosin, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2020
Imani Horton, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2020
Jackson Hall, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2021
Jalen Gross, IDEA PCS Class of 2021
Jeremiah McCollum, KIPP DC College Preparatory Class of 2021
Jesse Holmes, Thurgood Marshall Academy Class of 2020
Jessi Thompson-Brown, DC International School Class of 2021
Kaitlyn Towles, Anacostia High School Class of 2020
Lauren Hadley, DC International School Class of 2020
Londyn Napper, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2022
Lordes Weston, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2022
Maya Gray, Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2020
Mendel Socolovsky, School Without Walls HS Class of 2020
Micah Carter, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2020
Nadine Beckford, Calvin Coolidge HS Class of 2020
Reagan Allvin, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2022
Sanaa Sanderson, BASIS DC PCS Class of 2020
Shayla Dell, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2022
Tamia Murphy, Washington Leadership Academy Class of 2022
Vance Gootman, School Without Walls Class of 2022
Walker Price, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2021
Winston Wardlaw, DC International School Class of 2021
Zahir Hanson, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2022
Zakhiya Graham, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2022
Appendix C

2018–19 Student Advisory Committee
Marjory Alicea, co-chair, Capital City PCS Class of 2019
Tatiana Robinson, co-chair, Ballou HS Class of 2019
Aaliyah Dick, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2019
Aaron Spruill, Friendship Collegiate Academy HS Class of 2019
Akhayla Reynolds, McKinley Technology HS Class of 2019
Aleghzia Smith, Friendship Technology Preparatory HS Class of 2019
Anna Brosowsky, DC International School Class of 2021
Arnedja Evans, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2020
Ayodeji Okuleye, Washington Latin Public Charter School Class of 2019
Chandler Nutall, School Without Walls HS Class of 2019
Daniel Rodriguez, Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2019
Diana Shea, BASIS DC PCS Class of 2019
Emma Quigg, BASIS DC PCS Class of 2019
Hannah Dunn, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2019
Hannah Dorosin, Woodrow Wilson HS Class of 2020
Henry Addison Jr., Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2020
Imani Horton, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2019
Janae Chambers, Friendship Collegiate Academy HS Class of 2019
Jayna Brown, Duke Ellington School of the Arts Class of 2019
Jerome Foster II, Washington Leadership Academy Class of 2020
Joseph Soltani, Eastern HS Class of 2019
Kasai Rogers, DC International School Class of 2020
Kaya Myers, Thurgood Marshall Academy Class of 2019
Khiya Derricott, Washington Latin PCS Class of 2019
London Hart, SEED PCS Class of 2019
Maya Woods-Arthur, Washington Latin PCS Class of 2019
Maya Gray, Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2020
N'yana Martin, Thurgood Marshall Academy Class of 2019
Raquel Robinson, Friendship Technology Preparatory HS Class of 2021
Sifan Hunde, Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2019
Siraj Carter, Columbia Heights EC Class of 2020
Syamyia Beach, Ballou HS Class of 2019
Winston Wardlaw, DC International School Class of 2021
Zachary Crouch, Benjamin Banneker HS Class of 2019