



Equity Statement for SR22-14, On Approval of Amendments to the District of Columbia’s Community Service High School Graduation Requirement

The D.C. State Board of Education supports the Office of the State Superintendent’s (OSSE) proposed changes to Section 2203, Chapter 22 of Title 5-A of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) to adjust the community service graduation requirement.

The Council of the District of Columbia suspended the community service graduation requirement for graduating students in 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, many community service opportunities were closed or limited because of the pandemic. As a result, current high school students—particularly seniors—have not had sufficient time or opportunity to accrue 100 hours of community service, as currently mandated for graduation by 5-A DCMR § 2203. It would be inequitable to impose all 100 hours of community service on the graduating class of 2023. By staggering the community service hours requirement by graduating class, OSSE’s emergency and proposed regulation will make the community service graduation requirement more equitable across classes in light of the pandemic.

In addition, even though many other jurisdictions do not have a community service graduation requirement, the District’s current community service graduation requirement makes no accommodation for transfer students. This oversight has a particularly inequitable impact on children of military families, as military members are frequently transferred to new locations. By providing flexibility for students transferring to District local education agencies (LEAs) from outside of District LEAs, OSSE’s emergency and proposed regulation will make the community service graduation requirement more equitable.

Finally, as illuminated through OSSE’s engagement with the D.C. State Board of Education, LEAs currently have different standards for what constitutes acceptable community service to meet the graduation requirement. By providing a clear, broad definition for community service, OSSE’s emergency and proposed regulation will equalize community services expectations across District LEAs.

