



October 13, 2022

D.C. Education Research Collaborative
Urban Institute
500 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Executive Director Robinson and Advisory Committee,

The D.C. State Board of Education strongly supports independent research on the District's schools and education. Over the past few years, the State Board has amplified and led on work related to understanding teacher retention, ensuring culturally-inclusive social studies standards, engaging stakeholders on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), amplifying student voice and the effects of the COVID pandemic on them, and unpacking perceptions about the District's system of education governance. Much of this work has been grounded in quantitative and qualitative research—and, as the D.C. Education Research Collaborative begins to identify its initial work and 5-year research plan, we look forward to being a continued and engaged thought-partner.

The State Board participates in the D.C. Education Research Collaborative, both through its seat on the Advisory Committee, currently held by Ward 8 Representative Carlene Reid, and through previous opportunities like sharing input via the Collaborative's [brainstorm survey](#) and directly with members and staff of the Collaborative.

The State Board has been a strong advocate of early reading instruction based on the science-of-reading and strong instruction in content areas. In 2021, the State Board engaged directly with the Office of the State Superintendent to ensure that each approved D.C. Educator Preparation Provider and Subject-Area Program be held to uniform standards and prepare teachers to demonstrate competency in each of the five (5) components (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) of scientifically-based reading instruction.¹

Further, the Council of the District of Columbia, with strong support from the State Board, adopted *Bill 23-150, Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Disabilities Act of 2020*² aimed at preventing and addressing early reading difficulties, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, and providing support for professional development, early screening, and intervention in schools.

There are varying levels of effectiveness when considering the different approaches to early reading professional development, intervention, and other practices. These practices may or may not work education-based settings due to a number of factors—and research aimed at understanding what is working best and what could use better implementation is vital. **The State Board urges the D.C. Education Research Collaborative to include a focus on early reading instruction, and especially on the implementation of the Council of the District of Columbia Bill 23-150 into its work and 5-year research plan.**

¹ Title 5 of DCMR, Chapter 17, §1704.6 and 1706.7





Additionally, the State Board recently heard from a panel of experts at its September 21 Public Meeting on spending of Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) funds in D.C. and other states. The panelists shared examples of innovative ways that ESSER funds are being spent to improve equity and promote learning. The State Board convened this panel as it continues to explore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, associated recovery efforts, and successful and meaningful learning acceleration initiatives. **The State Board recognizes the need for more specific D.C.-based research in this area—and calls on the D.C. Education Research Collaborative to include a focus on evaluating COVID-19 recovery efforts and learning acceleration into its work and 5-year research plan.**

The D.C. State Board of Education looks forward to the work ahead of the D.C. Education Research Collaborative. We welcome continued and ongoing discussion about relevant issues and research areas that we feel would best serve the residents of the District of Columbia—and will remain in contact as pertinent education issues are shared with us.

In partnership,

The D.C. State Board of Education

