ANNUAL REPORT
2023

OFFICE OF THE
STUDENT
ADVOCATE

The Office of the Student Advocate continued to amplify the voices of students and families in School Year (SY) 2022-23. We supported our Student and Parent champions by sharing our platforms to highlight their experience and expertise. They co-led trainings, co-facilitated workshops and co-hosted panels with us. We strengthened our outreach with external partners from government agencies, community based organizations, and school leaders to ensure families are connected to the resources they need. As a result, we were able to accomplish the following during SY 2022-23:

- Received over 700 unduplicated requests for assistance (RFA) via our live answered hotline, addressing education-related questions and providing resources, referrals, and one-on-one coaching on all public education issues.

- Engaged directly with more than 3,500 education stakeholders through our direct outreach methods beyond our RFA line. We focused our outreach towards students, families, service providers, and government agencies. We participated in over 100 events citywide. We engaged with more than 5,250 unique users virtually via social media and online resources.

- Expanded social media-based resources like our interactive "Need Help" informational series and "15 with the Team" video series. Replicating our video series "15 with the Team" into "15 con el Equipo," a culturally competent Spanish language version of the series that tackle similar topics for parents in public education but via the lenses of newcomers and multilingual families.

- Hosted four Multigenerational Community Conversations throughout the city to hear directly from grandfamilies about their unique needs and challenges due to their family dynamic. Provided support and resources to over 90 grandfamilies struggling with navigating the public education system.

- Hosted the second annual Student Summit: Voice to Power co-facilitated by student leaders from MIKVA and The Boys and Girls Club. The Student Summit created space for DC youth leaders to engage in conversations about effective leadership and equipping them with the tools needed to enhance their advocacy efforts.

- Connected city wide discussions related to Student Safety with the experiences of students traveling to and from school by speaking with more than 350 students and family members via focus groups and surveys.

- Launched El Navegador, an online resource guide for families of students who receive English language services. The online guide hosts resources for enrollment, federal and local education rights, language assessments, and more.

We are grateful for the opportunity to continue serving families, and we welcome your partnership in making it all possible.

OFFICE OF THE
STUDENT
ADVOCATE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF STUDENT ADVOCATE

To: District of Columbia State Board of Education

It is an honor to share with you our Annual Report for the Office of the Student Advocate for School Year 2022-23.

As we continue to grow as a city, welcoming more residents, becoming more diverse, we must ensure that we are preparing our students for a world different than today. This past school year, many families were anxious about how that preparation is helping their students and urgently sought fixes, answers, and solutions. Our office understood the concerns from families, and responded with the urgency they needed to have clarity about what success for their student looks like and how they can partner with their school to ensure it. Since launching in 2015, our office is a lever for equity helping students and families who need assistance navigating the public education landscape for a solution to their students' needs. This past year we supported more students and families than we ever had before.

Our goal is to ensure that students and families are informed, connected, and equipped to be their own best advocates. In school year 2022-23, we focused our work on elevating the voices of students and families as experts, a dynamic often overlooked or sidelined in the work to obtain educational equity. This focus is evident through:

- Our increased outreach and strategic engagement efforts with student-led organizations and family-led service providers;
- The creation of more opportunities for students and families to share their experiences with other student and families via in-person workshops, social media ready resources and online trainings;
- Our commitment to being engaged in relevant policy discussions and processes with students and families to remove systemic barriers that affect them.

No matter the evolution that the District undergoes, we must anchor students and families' needs/voices first. Our partnerships with students and families must be robust. We need to rely on the expertise they bring to the school building and encourage them to be true learning partners in our classrooms.

We will continue to champion meaningful parent and student engagement and the vital role it plays in co-designing a system committed to the success of all students in the District. We look forward to working closely with the Board to best support students and families in the coming school year.

Dan Davis
Chief Student Advocate

OFFICE OF THE
STUDENT
ADVOCATE

WHAT WE DO

The educational landscape in the District continues to grow with more than 220 schools and over 60 local education agencies serving north of 90,000 students. Figuring out the correct path for families requires knowledge, access and guidance. Our office partners with families to keep them informed, connected, and supported in their pursuit of a high quality education for their students. The Office of the Student Advocate (OSA) is an independent office, housed in the District of Columbia State Board of Education (SBOE), that provides guidance and resource support to assist families in navigating the complex public education system in the District of Columbia. The work of our office focuses on strengthening student, family and community voice in public education and supporting the needs of families in seven distinct ways:

FIRST, by providing outreach to students, parents and guardians regarding public education in the District of Columbia;

SECOND, by supporting the education and achievement of all public school students and their families in interactions with school personnel through support and advocacy;

THIRD, by assisting in the facilitation of the school enrollment process for current students and prospective families;

FOURTH, by operating a public education hotline to answer questions and provide information regarding relevant public education resources and agency/organizational referrals;

FIFTH, by offering support to families prior to the mediation process and conflict resolution proceedings held by the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education;

SIXTH, by tracking trends and inquiries presented to the office and their referral or resolution;

And **SEVENTH**, by recommending policy changes, staff trainings, and strategies to improve the efficient and equitable delivery of public education services.

STAFF

Dan Davis, *Chief Student Advocate*

Phillip Copeland, *Student Advocate*

Renatta Landrau, *Student Advocate*

Natalie Powell, *Student Advocate*

Valeria Popolizio Torres, *Program Associate*

Elena Rowe, *Fellow*

Lara Santana, *Fellow*

Utieyin Ekwejunor-Etchie, *Fellow*

Gavin *Mikva Fellow*

Blake *Mikva Summer Fellow*

Zamiya *Mikva Summer Fellow*

SECTION II

CORE PRINCIPLES

## MOVING TOWARDS EQUITY: EMBRACING STUDENT AND FAMILY VOICE

Equity can only be achieved when barriers to fair treatment, access, and opportunities are identified and removed. As a city, we have taken steps towards creating more equitable access for families to a quality public education. Unfortunately, our city's intentions still fall short of ensuring that every student is given the necessary resources to thrive.

Our office works to ensure that all families receive equitable educational opportunities by committing to support meaningful student and family engagement. Our focus on family engagement is rooted in the belief that families, students, and community members are powerful. The conditions necessary for positive change, growth, and success among students increase substantially when students and families partner with teachers, school leaders, and other decision-makers.

When student voices are centered within a school's community, there is often improved student engagement [1]. When student voice is centered within a school building, students reportedly feel more "respected and engaged in the classroom" [2]. When students feel respected in school, they are more likely to participate within their classes and build more meaningful relationships with their teachers [3]. By creating environments that nurture and amplify student voices, teachers and students build relationships that allow them to learn from one another. When student voice transcends classroom curriculum into matters of school climate and policies, they gain critical consciousness and positive social emotional and academic outcomes [4].

Families are more likely to engage in their school communities when their students are leading organizations, supports, and events [5]. By increasing their own capacity, students are also increasing the capacity of adults (families, educators, administrators) to be engaged. All students and families in the District should be embraced as learning partners by their school's teachers and leadership teams. The family is the ultimate source of knowledge regarding the needs of their children regardless of their housing status, community, citizenship, language, or income. We know that when families are empowered as leaders, they play a significant role in shaping policy. Their lived experiences and commitment to the success of their children, other children, and their community are irreplaceable and essential to build solutions for our shared challenges.

Student voice has the power of improving school culture, family engagement, and reform efforts. In our work, we observed that when students have an authentic opportunity to participate in the policy making process, their engagement continues to increase. Practitioners must be cautious of tokenizing and co-opting student voices from tokenizing and co-opting student voices. We have also witnessed once active students who became disengaged when they endured a repetitive cycle of discussions with key stakeholders with minimal outcomes [6]. We believe that the sharing of power between students, families, schools, and communities must be relational. The framework that our office embraces recognizes the importance of students and families in relation to their schools and communities. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that families and schools are able to effectively communicate and co-design educational spaces with each other to ensure equity.
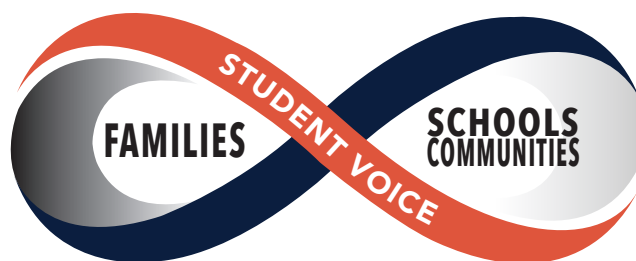
REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

The Office of the Student Advocate operates a public education hotline, or the Request for Assistance (RFA) line, which is answered live Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. The RFA line supports our ability to work directly with students, parents, families, and community members to answer public education related questions and inquiries. We consider our RFA line to be a "311 system" for public education through which we provide relevant resources, information, and appropriate agency or organization referrals to meet the specific needs of the caller. In addition to resources and referrals, the RFA line allows our office to provide one-on-one coaching to families on a variety of public education issues.

ONLINE EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

One statutory provision for our office is the creation and operation of Public Education Resource Centers (PERCs) to advise students, parents, and families on all matters regarding public education. Our Education & Community Resource Guide serves as a way for our small staff to fill the void of multiple ward based centralized public education information and resource centers. The online Education & Community Resource Guide is a publicly available citywide initiative of its kind and is a continuously evolving resource that currently highlights more than 400 resource listings, organized into more than 20 categories. This resource guide provides students, parents, families, and communities across all eight wards with a roadmap to getting started in navigating the public education landscape in DC. This guide aims to highlight organizations and government agencies in the sphere of public education that provide critical services to residents across DC. This guide not only assists our office in fulfilling our mission, but also provides access to a wealth of resources, agencies, and organizations that directly impact education and educational attainment. Along with providing information, this guide serves to acknowledge the work that is already being done by government agencies, offices, and community-based organizations while connecting families to those vital resources in one centralized location

INFORMATION & ADVOCACY RESOURCES AND TOOLS

In an effort to streamline information that helps parents better understand the public education system, policies, and procedures; we have developed various resource supports available on our website, accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our online resources include:

- Advocacy & Parent Leadership Toolkit
- Attendance & Truancy Resources
- Behavioral & Mental Health Resources
- Building a Safe Learning Pod
- Bullying Resource
- Dyslexia Guidebook for Parents

The online Education & Community Resource Guide is a publicly available citywide initiative highlighting more than 400 resource listings

- DC Public Education Governance Structure
- Effective Communication Toolkit
- Enrollment Resources
- Graduation Requirements
- Homeless Children and Youth Resources
- Parent Leadership Toolkit: Parent Organization Resources
- Right to Know Ask Sheets
- Safe Passage
- Special Education & School Supports
- Student Discipline
- Student Leadership
- Testing & Assessments
- Virtual Learning Support Guide

TRAININGS AND EVENTS

The information gleaned from our RFAs and community outreach allows us to further develop additional resources and trainings to better support families around specific topic areas. We use our trainings as a forum to provide families with access to information on relevant topics; as an opportunity to share tools and skills for effective advocacy; to foster partnerships and collaborative efforts with schools, District agencies, and community-based organizations who work with families; and to bring resources directly to families and communities. Through these efforts, our office is able to promote equitable outcomes by eliminating the barriers to information and entry that families often face. Our trainings include:

- Behavioral Health in the DC Education System
- Bullying & Harassment Panel Discussion
- Student Support Mental Health Series
- Know Your Rights: Special Education Series
- Student Safety Focus Group Discussions
- No Shots, No Schools
- Parent Empowerment Workshop Series: Understanding Education Governance & School Budgets
- Youth Advocacy Workshop Series: Advocating for Change
- Multigenerational Caregiver Conversations

Providing families with access to information on relevant topics; as an opportunity to share tools and skills for effective advocacy; to foster partnerships and collaborative efforts with schools, District agencies, and community-based organizations who work with families; and to bring resources directly to families and communities.

OVERVIEW

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE: A FOUR YEAR COMPARISON

Data collection is a critical piece of our work. Our Request for Assistance (RFA) hotline is not only a resource for families, but it is also a great tool for assessing the needs of families served by traditional public and charter schools in the District. We collect and house information from the hotline across 13 broad educational (primary) topic areas and 39 specific educational concerns (secondary) subtopic areas. We can correlate this information with the demographic information provided about students and their families (e.g. race, ethnicity, grade, residency, ward and school type). This information informs the way our office pursues educational equity.

Figure 1: *Requests for Assistance (RFA) - A Four Year Comparison*

SY 22-23 — 702
SY 21-22 — 657
SY 20-21 — 507
SY 19-20* — 401
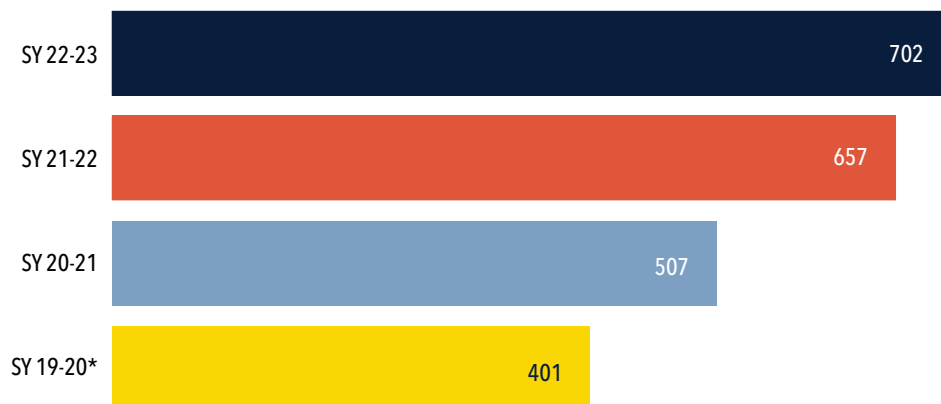
*SY2019-20 marked the start of the current COVID-19 pandemic, where 333 RFAs were recorded prior to in-person school closings, and only 68 RFAs following.
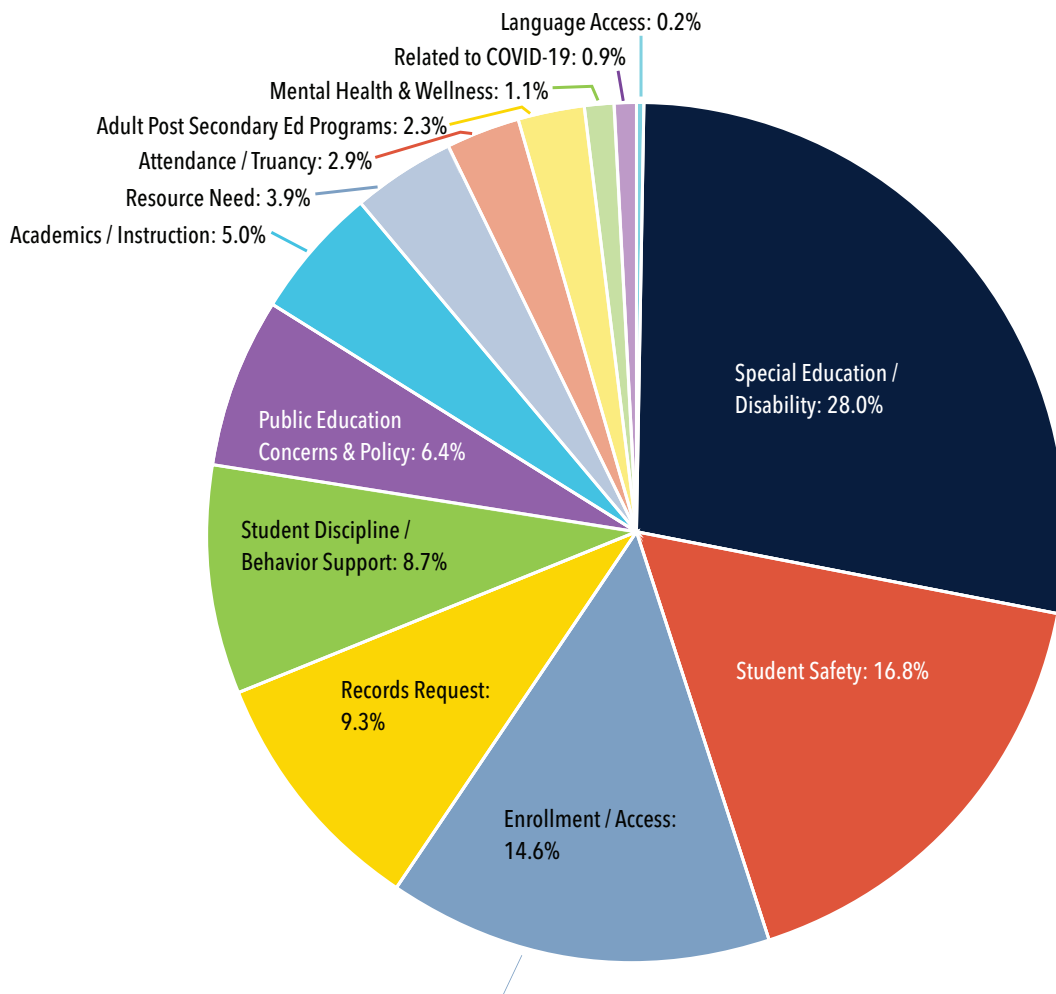
Our RFA hotline has seen consistent growth since school closures due to the COVID-19 health crisis in SY 2019-20. Most recently, our office has seen the highest volume of requests in our history. In SY 2022-23, we recorded more than 700 unduplicated RFAs. This growth can be attributed to the development of more pathways for families to access our support. This past school year we added an online portal for parents to submit requests in English, Spanish and Amharic and expanded how we promote our RFA process on social media. We also joined more in-person events in which families were able to directly connect with us about their concerns.

RFA ANALYSIS AND BREAKDOWN

SY 2022 - 23 BY RFA TOPIC

Requests for assistance related to **Special Education** remained the top area of concern for families in SY 2022-23. Families who requested assistance related to **Special Education / Disability** were looking for special education support as it related to Individualized Education Plans/Programs (IEPs), 504 plans, initiating the evaluation process, and change of location of services (LOS). Calls related to **Student Safety** became the second highest topic area this school year. A significant amount of these calls related to bullying, creating a safety plan, and transfer requests due to safety concerns. **Enrollment / Access** is the third highest topic area this year. This category captures questions and concerns ranging from school choice, the lottery process, to enrollment, withdrawals, and age limit cut offs.

Figure 2: *Primary Topic Areas*

Language Access: 0.2%
Related to COVID-19: 0.9%
Mental Health & Wellness: 1.1%
Adult Post Secondary Ed Programs: 2.3%
Attendance / Truancy: 2.9%
Resource Need: 3.9%
Academics / Instruction: 5.0%
Public Education Concerns & Policy: 6.4%
Student Discipline / Behavior Support: 8.7%
Records Request: 9.3%
Enrollment / Access: 14.6%
Student Safety: 16.8%
Special Education / Disability: 28.0%

Family members and former public school students continued to reach out to our office for support when making **Records Requests** from their previous schools. Many of these requests were made from former students seeking documentation to obtain vital records, provide proof of academic completion for employment, and/or seeking admissions to higher educational institutions. Often, residents inquiring about assistance with getting access to their records reached our office after multiple unsuccessful attempts. A significant portion of those RFAs came from former students of closed schools.

SY 2022 - 23 SECONDARY TOPIC AREAS

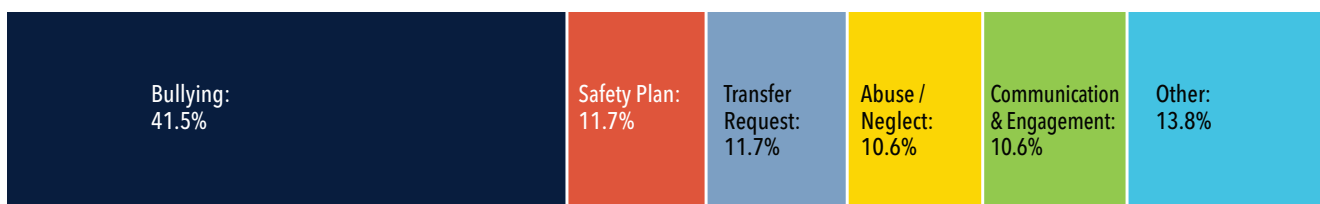## SPECIAL EDUCATION: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Figure 3: *Special Education Related Calls by Subtopic*

Special Education Placement: 17.8%	Evaluation: 17.2%	Transportation: 13.4%	Academic Supports: 12.1%	Individual Education Plan (IEP) 10.2%	Other: 29.3%
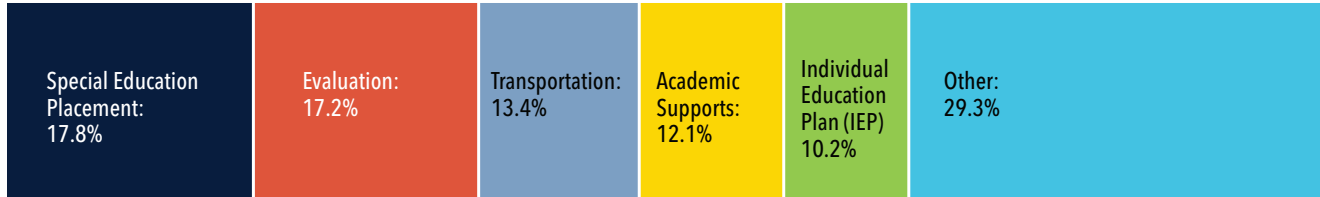
Requests categorized as "**Special Education Placement**" refers to families seeking clarity about the physical placement of their children in special education settings be it classroom or school building location. Some requests came from families whose children attend public charter schools and are seeking placement in a setting with more support structures. Several requests in this subtopic from families attending a school within DC Public Schools (DCPS) related to implementation of a district wide location of services policy update. RFAs categorized under "**Evaluation**" include families requesting support through initial SPED evaluation processes, requesting Independent Education Evaluations (IEE), or re-evaluating and revising current IEPs or 504 plans. RFAs related to "**Transportation**" under the "**Special Education / Disabilities**" primary topic deal specifically with the transportation services afforded to students with IEPs provided by OSSE. Requests categorized as "**Academic Supports**" relate to the need for more academic services for a student based on a diagnosed or suspected disability. Requests with this classification usually lead to coaching sessions on communicating with their schools or providing support with requesting modified services or evaluation/re-evaluation for new services. RFAs categorized as "**Individual Education Plan (IEP)**" relate to issues with the implementation of the IEP itself at a school. Families categorized under this secondary topic who were either confident in the IEP created but felt the school was not providing those services or expressed capacity issues preventing those services from being provided with fidelity.

STUDENT SAFETY

Figure 4: *Student Safety Related Calls by Subtopic*

| Bullying: 41.5%	Safety Plan: 11.7%	Transfer Request: 11.7%	Abuse / Neglect: 10.6%	Communication & Engagement: 10.6%	Other: 13.8%

In DC, bullying occurs when a student experiences *severe, pervasive or persistent behavior* that impacts their physical or mental health and disrupts their ability to participate in school or youth-facing programs. Bullying can be classified into three separate categories: Physical, Verbal, and Cyber. RFAs categorized as "**Bullying**" dealt specifically with either of these three classifications of bullying or harassment. These requests related to incidents that either have occurred within the school building, along routes to and from school, or through social media platforms. Requests labeled under "**Safety Plan**" highlight an immediate need to create a direct plan of action to ensure the safety of their children. Often, we communicate student and families' wishes and work with school staff to develop a safety plan for these students. RFAs related to "**Transfer Request**" under the "Student Safety" primary topic relate to the request of families to transfer schools based on safety incidents that have occurred. It is important for families to understand that transferring mid-year is not guaranteed and is not a common occurrence. For families with students enrolled in public charter schools or out-of-boundary

DCPS schools, we are able to walk them through the enrollment process at their in-boundary DCPS school. For families with issues at their child's in-boundary DCPS school, when possible we guide them through the My School DC post-lottery process, and if necessary, connect them directly with DCPS central for alternative setting solutions. In a few instances, we also work with partner agencies to request a safety transfer. Requests related to "**Abuse / Neglect"** deals with incidents where a school staff member or an adult affiliated with a school community has been accused of potential verbal or physical abuse to a student. RFAs related to "**Communication & Engagement**" deal with instances where a school did not communicate a safety concern to a family adequately or if proper documentation (e.g. incident report) was not provided to a family of a student involved in an incident.

ENROLLMENT / ACCESS

Figure 5: *Enrollment & Access Related Calls by Subtopic*
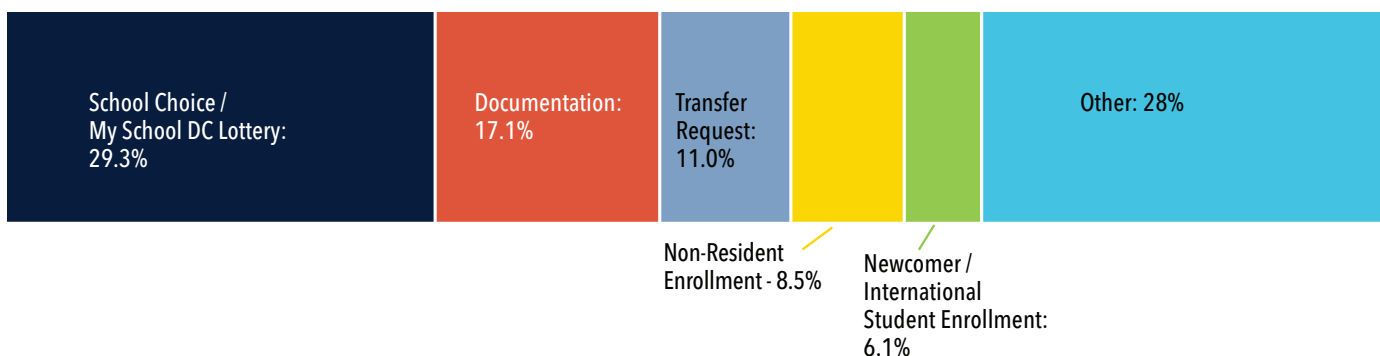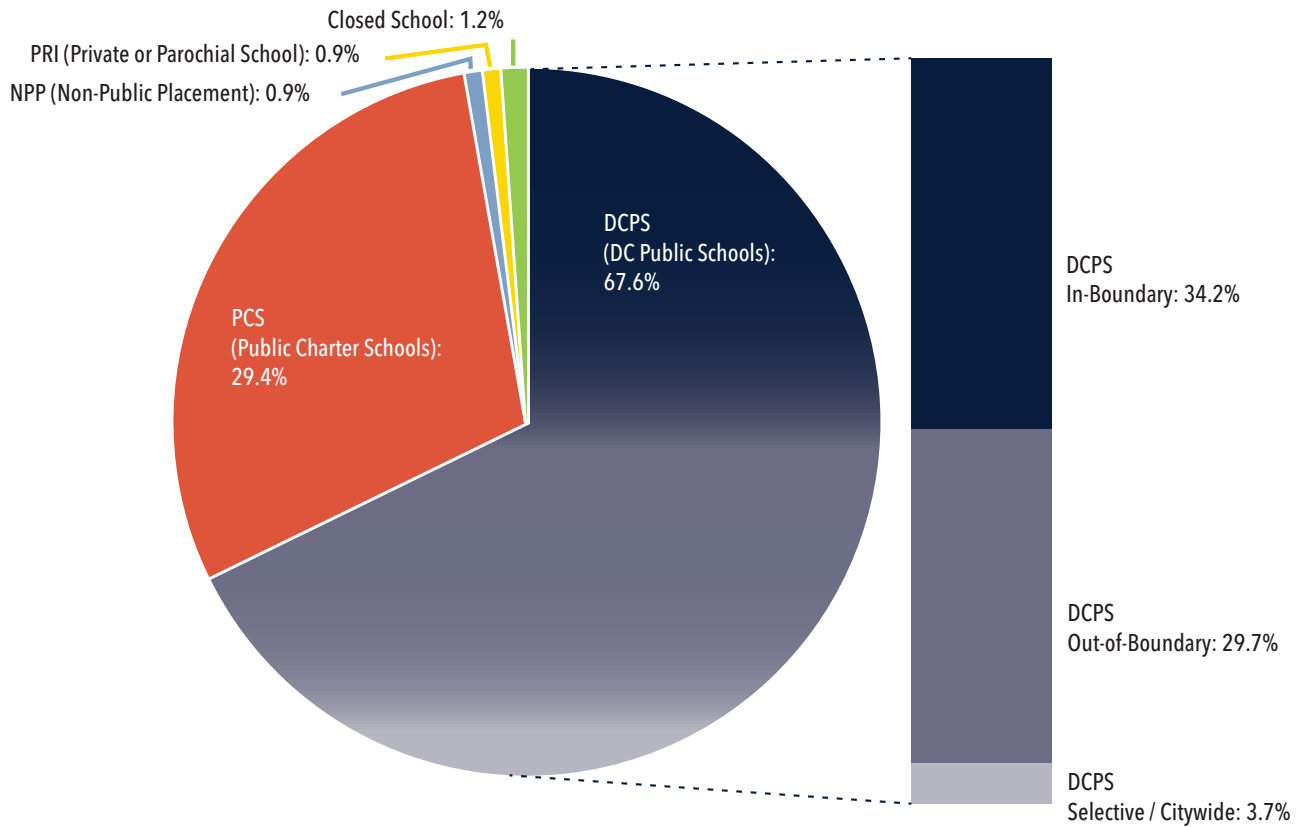

RFAs categorized under "**Enrollment / Access**" dealt with the issues throughout the school selection and enrollment process. These requests also relate to the accessibility of sought-after programming within their schools. Requests related to "**School Choice / My School DC Lottery**" dealt directly with issues related to school choice and understanding the My School DC lottery process including mid-year enrollment and transferring. RFAs labeled as "Documentation" when families needed help understanding what documentation is needed when enrolling for a new school. This includes a range of circumstances, such as families experiencing housing insecurity who are unaware of or need additional information on McKinney-Vento protections; families who are struggling to produce current versions of required documentation; and recently arrived families who lack much of the required paperwork needed to enroll. Many families not satisfied with their current school sought assistance with understanding mid-year transfer processes, captured under "**Transfer Request**." As previously stated, it is important for families to understand that transferring mid-year is not guaranteed nor a common occurrence. We walk families with students enrolled in public charter schools or out-of-boundary DCPS schools through the enrollment process at their in-boundary DCPS school. We also guide families with issues at their child's in-boundary DCPS school through the My School DC post-lottery process and connect them with the DCPS central team about potential for alternative settings. RFAs categorized under "**Non-Resident Enrollment**" related to callers who recently moved into DC, are planning to move and want to enroll in DC schools, or families who recently moved out of the city and are seeking information on the tuition process to maintaining enrollment or re-enrollment. Requests labeled "**Newcomer / International Student Enrollment**" involves the enrollment of students of families who are new residents within the United States. We connect those families with school teams focused on getting the necessary information from their home country to ensure their enrollment or access to equitable programming.

SY 2022-23 RFAS BY SECTOR

More than two-thirds of our RFAs came from students and families being served by DCPS. About 34 percent of our RFAs were from students who attend their in-boundary schools within DCPS and about 30 percent came from out-of-boundary DCPS schools. About four percent of all calls came from DCPS selective / citywide schools. Nearly 30 percent of our RFAs came from students and families served by one of the District's 60+ charter LEAs. Less than five percent of calls received related to non-public placement, private, or closed schools.

Figure 6: *Requests for Assistance - By School Sector*

Closed School: 1.2%
PRI (Private or Parochial School): 0.9%
NPP (Non-Public Placement): 0.9%
PCS (Public Charter Schools): 29.4%
DCPS (DC Public Schools): 67.6%
DCPS In-Boundary: 34.2%
DCPS Out-of-Boundary: 29.7%
DCPS Selective / Citywide: 3.7%

We continued to receive a more balanced number of requests from families either enrolled in DCPS in-boundary school (34.2%), DCPS out-of-boundary school (29.7%), or public charter schools (29.4%) for a second consecutive year. We saw a slight increase in calls related to in-boundary DCPS schools in SY2022-23. We also noticed a decrease in calls related to DCPS selective / citywide schools.

SY 2022 - 23 RFAS BY GRADE BAND

Figure 7: *RFAs by Grade Band*
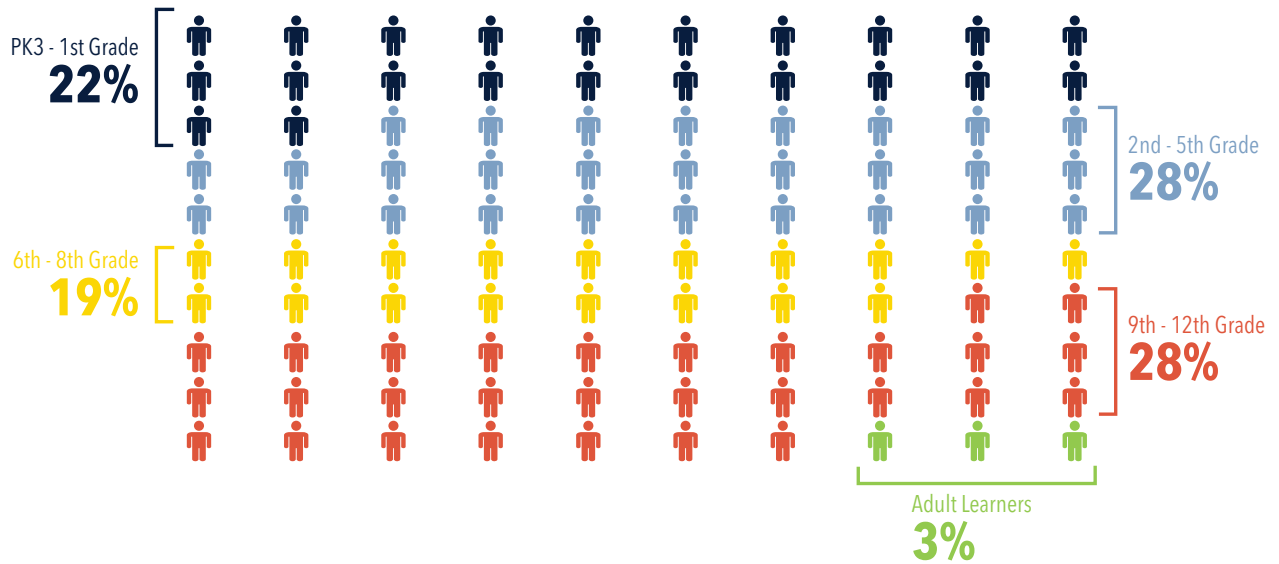
About 22 percent of requests received in SY2022-23 were from families with students in early childhood education settings between prek-3 and the first grade. An additional 28 percent of students were enrolled between second and fifth grades. Families with students enrolled in elementary grades comprised half of the total RFAs we received, a five percent decrease from last year.

Requests from families with students enrolled in middle school grades remained consistent with trends from previous school years. In 2022-23, about 19 percent of RFAs were regarding students enrolled between the sixth and 8th grades compared to 19.8 percent from SY 2021-22.

We saw an increase of families with students enrolled in high school. In SY 2022-23, about 28 percent of RFAs came from the families of students enrolled between ninth and twelfth grades. In SY 2021-22, about 24 percent of requests were related to high school students.

More than two-thirds of our RFAs came from students and families being served by DCPS.

Understanding that many students and families are overextended, our office continues to diversify our outreach methods. In SY 2022-23, we met directly with more than 3,600 students, families, and educational stakeholders. As we continue to engage with the families of DC public and charter schools, we are focused on connecting with families from frequently forgotten communities. We collaborate with community based organizations (CBOs) on DC Housing Authority (DCHA) properties, service providers engaged with families facing housing insecurity, and government agencies serving families with students averting or exiting the justice system. We our expanding our outreach to families who speak languages other English, by connecting with Faith-based partners, and community resource exchanges targeting our recently arrived residents.

Figure 8: *Outreach & Engagement*

Online Resources Accessed: 3,599

Meetings / Workshops: 3,690

Social Media Engagement: 5,325
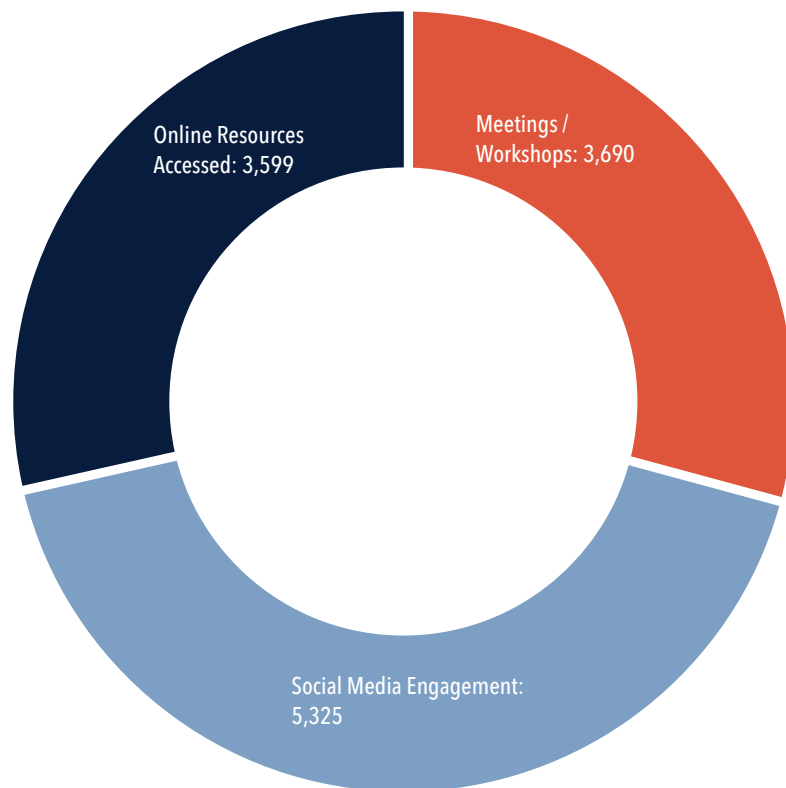
As we adapted to the needs within our communities, our office utilized virtual platforms to enhance our engagement strategy. We continued to create and adapt materials across various online modes of communication. We adapted most of our physical and online resources to versions that are mobile device friendly and/or meant for social media distribution. We developed informational videos covering a range of educational topic areas. We created informational campaigns for families to break down complicated educational policies. As a result, more than 3,500 unique users were able to access our online resources and we have been able to engage with more than 5,300 unique users indirectly through various social media campaigns.

I. Trainings & Workshops

While our Request for Assistance (RFA) hotline is the primary way we assist families, training and workshops is our secondary approach to provide additional resources and supports. We engaged with more than 1,500 families this year.

To help families better understand the resources available to them, our office assembled a panel of experts from various sectors to discuss what schools should be doing to better support their children when it comes to bullying and harassment.

Below is a sampling of the sessions we were able to offer students and families in SY2022-23:

- Bullying & Harassment Panel Discussion

  The safety of our students has been a concern in DC before the pandemic. Since students returned to in-person instruction, instances of harassment and bullying have increased exponentially. As our office responds to the needs of families, we have seen that solutions to these concerns may vary depending the grade, school, and situation. To help families better understand the resources available to them, our office assembled a panel of experts from various sectors to discuss what schools should be doing to better support their children. Members of the panel joined us from the following offices / organizations:

  - DCPS Office of School Improvement and Supports Behavior & School Culture Team
  - Mayor's Office of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing
  - DC Office of Human Rights
  - SchoolTalk DC

  Our team of experts discussed what bullying and harassment are, in-school and out-of-school support structures, preventing discrimination, sexual harassment, and assault. Families were able to ask panelists questions and were given their direct contact information.

- Multigenerational Family Engagement

  Multigenerational families are not a new concept or practice, especially amongst immigrant families. However, there has been a notable increase in children being directly raised by their grandparents or non-biological parents in recent years. There are several factors contributing to this shift including economic instability and parent substance abuse. During SY 2022-23 slightly over 10 percent RFAs came from multigenerational families, nearly double the total from SY 2021-22. Their top concerns were student safety and special education. In response to this need, we hosted four Multigenerational Community Conversations across the city (Wards 2 and 8) and one virtually. These community conversations were held in partnership with CFSA Grandparent Program, Plaza West (a living community for grandparents raising grandchildren), DCKinCare Alliance, Shaw Community Center, and SBOE representatives, Allister Change and Carlene Reid. We wanted to engage with this community directly about challenges and barriers unique to being a non-parental caregiver. We are committed to supporting unique families and look forward to a partnership with these family leaders and providers to grow a community of ongoing support.

- **Student Safety Focus Groups**

The safety of our children should always come first. Unfortunately, we know that instances of harassment and violence persist which jeopardizes the safety of our children. In response to the volume of requests for assistance our office receives related to student safety, we have worked with numerous schools, government agencies, and community-based organizations to ensure that each student and their families are safe while traveling to and from school. OSA started conducting focus group discussions to learn more from students. Our goal has been to elevate those perspectives to key policy stakeholders within DC government. These discussions were used to guide current and future policy discussions related to their safety. Our office has spoken with nearly 1,200 students and family members between SY 2019-20 and 2021-22. In SY 2022-23, we focused our efforts exclusively on students enrolled in schools located within Safe Passage priority areas designated by the DME's office. As a result, we spoke with an additional 170 students and family members from DCPS and public charter schools.

- **Supporting Families of Students with Disabilities**

Although 28 percent of requests from our Office sought support navigating special education, 36 percent of all families we interacted with disclosed their student has a disability. As we seek better solutions for these families, we must highlight the experiences of parents who have found success as their child's best advocate. Our "Know Your Rights" special education workshop is in-person,designed for families with students in need of specialized instruction and other supports (translation services were available). This past school year we hosted two sessions for 130 attendees on special education at locations in Wards 4 and 7 with our partners from Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) and the Ward 7 Ed Council. The sessions were opened by a panel of parent leaders who shared their journeys of challenges and success, followed by sessions from OSA staff covering basic provisions of federal and local special education law to understanding procedural safeguards. Then, parents are free to engage and interact with District serving special education experts and resources, our partners included: Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) Strong Start and Division of Student Transportation, DC Special Education Cooperative, DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction and Early Stages, Advocates for Justice and Education, Children's Law Center, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services, Special Education HUB, Mayors Office of Deaf, Blind and Hard of Hearing, Department of Disability Services, Decoding Dyslexia, and Office of Disability Rights. We also hosted mini SPED workshops for partners throughout the city focusing on individual topics in special education.

The safety of our children should always come first.

- Parent Leadership & Advocacy

  In SY 2022-23, we ran workshops to help families better understand their role in the public education structure covering parent organizing, governance of public education, and how school funding is processed in DC. We hosted in-person and virtual workshops in collaboration with SBOE President Eboni Rose Thompson and Representative Rob Henderson in Wards 5 & 7. OSA also led workshops with school partners, PTOs and community groups throughout the District helping them understand the budget cycles of their schools. Additionally, we facilitated workshops with various education stakeholders on ways to increase parent engagement within the decision making process at their schools.

- Student Engagement & Leadership Development
  - Youth Advocacy Workshop Series

    We piloted a five-week Youth Advocacy Workshop series for students. As a part of these workshops, students learned the important steps necessary to become effective advocates in the communities they represent. From identifying a problem to proposing solutions, students developed skills needed to affect change. Students developed their own advocacy plans of action as the workshops progressed.

Mikva,
DC Summer Fellowship Cohort.

We collaborated with Boys & Girls Club: Game Changers Externship and Mikva DC Summer Fellowship. As a part of their externship experience with our office, student leaders explored the Education landscape in DC and developed advocacy campaigns around various topics including the availability of diverse courses at every DC high school, bullying support, and access to mental health resources for students. Our student leaders from Mikva went through an extended version of our Youth Advocacy Workshop Series. They both had the opportunity to dive deeper into the education landscape and worked to address issues related to street harassment and the disproportionate amount of Black students who are disciplined in schools.

OSA Staff and Boys & Girls Club Externship students.

- DC Student Leaders Summit

On May 30th, 2023, we hosted our second annual DC Student Leader Summit: Voice to Power. The goal of the summit is to create space for DC students leaders to engage in conversations about effective leadership, and for them to empower their peer DC students leaders by giving them the tools needed to enhance their advocacy efforts. We partnered with the Office of Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington for a virtual summit that was simulcast at the DC branches of the Boys and Girls Club. Four important topics were discussed at the Summit: (1) "Who Am I? Identity & Self Exploration;" (2) "Creating Change through Organizing & Advocacy;" (3) "Communicating as a Leader;" and a Panel Conversation on "How I did It" (4). It was important for us that these conversations and workshops were not only featuring students but were led by students. Outside of the panel, students leaders facilitated all of these conversations, our panel consisted of current and former student leaders whose leadership are still active in the community. SBOE student representative China Jones-Burgess, Dietrich Williams Capitol Hill Boys Club, DC Youth Mayor Diya Bardwell, and Office of Councilmember McDuffie Deputy Chief of Staff Jonathan McNair. Forty student leaders joined us for the summit. These students were connected to the summit via a staff member at their school, a classmate, or became informed via Social Media.

- OSA & Student Conversation on Connecting with Behavioral Health in DC Schools

Our office has recognized the need for additional conversations, guidance, and awareness on topics regarding the mental and behavioral health of our students. While we have hosted these conversations with Parents/Guardians and generally concerned or caring adults, we saw a desire for more general information about accessing supports from students through response in focus groups and surveys. As a result, our office pivoted a family facing workshop - Navigating Behavioral Health in DC Schools to a model that became more Q&A for students. We hosted sessions with our OST partners and youth-led CBOs throughout the school year. Participants learned about accessing the schools based behavioral health system, ways to advocate for their peers, and gained access to resources in their school buildings or neighborhoods.

II. Resources & Supports

- ### Bullying & Harassment Resource Guide

  Throughout the school year, we received multiple requests for assistance regarding bullying and harassment concerns. Parents and caregivers were often unsure about who to contact, the investigation process, or who to place complaints to. Our office created an interactive online resource to support parents, caregivers, and community members through the process. This guide provides information and resources from how to take the first steps of communicating with a school, to what to do if interested in the appeals process. Additionally, it covers District wide definitions, policies, and additional community-based resources.

> *Our office has recognized the need for additional conversations, guidance, and awareness on topics regarding the mental and behavioral health of our students.*

- ### College & Career Course Selection Guides

  Navigating high school can be a complicated task. Planning for life after exiting high school can be even more complex. In collaboration with our Mikva fellow, Gavin Neubauer, our office developed two-course selection guides for students and families to explore different academic and career exploration programs in DC. Our **College Course Selection Guide** helps high school students and families align their interest with the expansive amount of courses available. Many courses are available to prepare students for college and can help boost their applications for those higher learning institutions. This guide was created to help students understand those college preparation options, including the available Advance Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Dual Enrollment programs here in DC. Our **Career & Technical Education Guide** helps students and families navigate DCPS and charter high schools wide range of programs designed to give students the skills needed to start their career in one of many highly sought-after career fields. Currently, 17 DCPS high schools, two public charter high schools and six adult education public charter schools offer programs meant to explore potential career options. This guide was created to explore the various programs available to high school students and adult learners.

- ### Dyslexia Guidebook

  As a resource for struggling readers and spellers in DC, the Office of the Student Advocate maintains a Dyslexia Guidebook, created in partnership with Decoding Dyslexia. The current iteration of the Dyslexia Guidebook includes an overview of dyslexia, a timeline of implementation of the Addressing Dyslexia & Other Reading Difficulties Amendment Act of 2020; science of reading; decoding; components of effective reading instruction; and effective reading instruction resources. In the upcoming school year, OSA will release the third edition of the Dyslexia Guidebook. This version will include information on what to expect from your school/LEA during this next implementation phase, OSSE approved screeners, and how to interpret screener results.

...gain a deeper understanding of current systems of support and where additional support is needed.

- **EL Navegador**

  In 2021, we began our EL Services Inventory by connecting with multiple schools and community partners who work directly with EL students and families. Our hope was to gain a deeper understanding of current systems of support and where additional support is needed. These conversations spearheaded the creation of EL Navegador. Launched in the beginning of SY 2022-2023, this online tool is for newcomer and EL families to better understand the DC public education system and services available to them. This online resource center currently includes:

    - **Know Your Rights:** Federal and district rights for families with limited English proficiency and regarding English language learner services.

    - **How to Enroll:** Information on choosing a DC school, how schools identify English Language students, and community resources to navigate the process.

    - **Assessments:** Explanation of state-approved English Language Learner screeners, statewide content assessments, and how to request special education evaluations.

    - **Resources:** Local and nationwide resources for students and families, including legal aid, food assistance/distribution, healthcare, and out-of-school time opportunities.

  This is a living resource, meaning it will be continuously updated based on questions and feedback gathered from community members. The second iteration of EL Navegador will be published in SY 2023-2024.

- **Community Resource Guide**

  Our Education and Community Resource Guide was created during our inaugural school year to fill the void of centralized public education information and resources. The online Education & Community Resource Guide is a publicly available citywide initiative including more than 400 resource listings organized into 33 category areas. The guide provides students, parents, families, and communities across all 8 wards with a roadmap to getting started in navigating the public education landscape in DC. This guide was developed to highlight organizations and government agencies in the sphere of public education that provide critical services to residents across DC. We have since continued to update and improve the guide to include new resources and supports for families based on services currently available in our city. In the coming school year, we will be adding a search feature to the guide to allow families to easily find the resources and information they are looking for.

III. Accessible Engagement: Mobile & Virtual Strategies

Our initial social media engagement strategy was to drive users to contact our office utilizing our Request for Assistance (RFA) hotline. Since the pandemic, our office pivoted to adapt resources that residents can access and navigate easily via social media and distribute among their own networks. In addition to providing important updates on key policies or events, we expanded the following family friendly information series:

- 15 with the Team

  The needs and concerns of families drives the creation of our resources and events. Throughout our six years of operation, we have noticed consistent trends in information that families are seeking based on the time of year when significant school related events occur. As a result, we created an online recurring live series called "15 with the Team." Members of our team discuss popular topics and give answers to frequently asked questions related to DC public education. We also adapted this series for Spanish speaking audiences titled "15 con el Equipo."

  Released episodes cover the following topic areas:

  - Becoming Actively Engaged
  - Bullying & Harassment
  - DC Education Landscape
  - DC Governance
  - Dyslexia & Recent Legislation

  - Early Stages: Identifying & Addressing Developmental Delays
  - High School Course Selection
  - Post Lottery Enrollment
  - Special Education
  - Student Safety & Safe Passage (3 parts)

  The goal is for parents and community members to use this information to become well informed and be the best advocates for their child and family. Full episodes of "15 with the Team" and "15 con el Equipo" can be streamed on our Facebook and YouTube channel (@DC_Advocate).

- Need Help?

  As we continue to connect with families through traditional means, we continue to maximize social media as a tool to provide families with necessary information. In addition to "15 with the Team," we created the "Need Help?" informational series on Instagram (@dc.advocate). Topic areas for "Need Help?" were chosen based on the volume of calls received from our RFA hotline. Special Education, Student Safety, and Enrollment/Access were the top-3 topic areas of concern for families that reached out to our office. We produced family friendly resources to distribute on our social media platforms based on the calls we receive from families. The information that is presented follows the steps our office takes to resolve the concerns of families.

CLIMATE & CULTURE

Having a healthy climate and culture within the school building is essential towards student success. Unfortunately, increased student safety incidents and higher rates of discipline erode a healthy school culture. We examined the RFAs related to **Student Safety** and **Student Discipline / Behavior Support** via the lenses of school climate and culture below.

- **Student Safety**

   Issues impacting the safety of students has consistently been a top-5 area of concern for families who requested assistance from our office. When schools closed for in-person instruction in 2020, the number of calls decreased significantly. Since schools reopened in SY 2021-22, there was a surge of student safety related calls returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 9: *Student Safety Requests for Assistance by Year*

Year	Percent
2023	17%
2022	13%
*2021	1%
2020	10%
2019	19%
2018	14%
2017	16%

Post-Pandemic
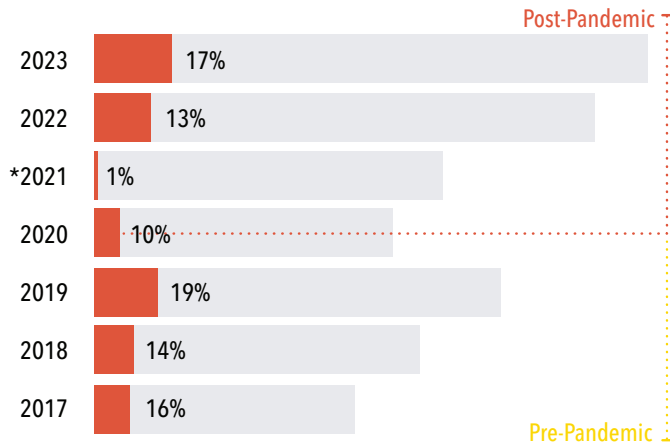
Pre-Pandemic

*Schools were operating virtually for SY 2020 - 21 in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As the number of calls to our office through our RFA line continues to grow each year, the volume of calls related to student safety continues to increase as well. Nearly 17 percent of RFA calls received in SY2022-23 related to **Student Safety.** Nearly two-thirds of those student safety related calls directly related to **Bullying**, creating a **Safety Plan**, and Requesting a **Safety Transfer**.

Figure 10: *Student Safety Related Calls (Top 3 Subtopics)*

Bullying: 41.5%	Safety Plan: 11.7%	Transfer Request: 11.7%	Other: 35.1%

COMMUNITY BASED HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE:

While instances of bullying and harassment are significant but often go unnoticed, the highest area of concern for students from the start of SY2021-22 to now has been community based violence. Instances of community violence often spill into our school buildings, which fractures the well-being of all students in attendance. Many students we have spoken with in focus group discussions and through the RFA process experienced being assaulted, robbed, and having weapons drawn on them while traveling to and from school.

Figure 11: *Portion of students who listed community based violence as an area of concern.*

About 16% of students in SY21-22 listed community based violence as a concern jeopardizing their safety.

SY2021-22

About 37% of students in SY22-23 listed community based violence as a concern jeopardizing their safety.

SY2022-23

The rate of students expressing community based violence has doubled in the past school year. Many students expressed fear particularly traveling home after school, especially when participating in after school activities or receiving academic support after school hours. These fears are magnified during winter months when the sun sets earlier. Many students are more concerned when their journey to and from school requires them to travel alone.

STREET HARASSMENT / GENDER BASED HARASSMENT

Street harassment and gender based harassment includes any unwanted attention or physical contact based off a student's gender (e.g. Sexual Harassment). The rate of students who have experienced street harassment or gender based harassment while traveling to and from school are consistently higher and often go unaddressed. During SY2021-22 in collaboration with the Urban Institute, we asked students if they have received unwanted attention or experienced unwanted physical contact. Students who identified as female were twice as likely to report unwanted attention as male students.

Figure 12: *(SY21-22) Portion of students who experienced any unwanted physical contact, physical or sexual assault by gender identification.*

About 19% of students who identified as male reported receiving unwanted attention.

Male

About 7% of students who identified as male reported unwanted contact or physical / sexual assault.

About 39% of students who identified as female reported receiving unwanted attention.

Female

About 11% of students who identified as female reported unwanted contact or physical / sexual assault.

While facilitating our most recent focus group discussions in SY2022-23, we noticed a consistent trend with the results above. Students were asked to identify what conditions made them feel unsafe while traveling to and from school. One third of respondents reported experiencing street harassment or gender-based harassment outside of school.

Figure 13: (SY22-23) *Portion of students who experienced street harassment or gender-based harassment outside of school.*

About 19% of students who identified as male reported experiencing street or gender based harassment.

Male

About 43% of students who identified as female reported experiencing street or gender based harassment.
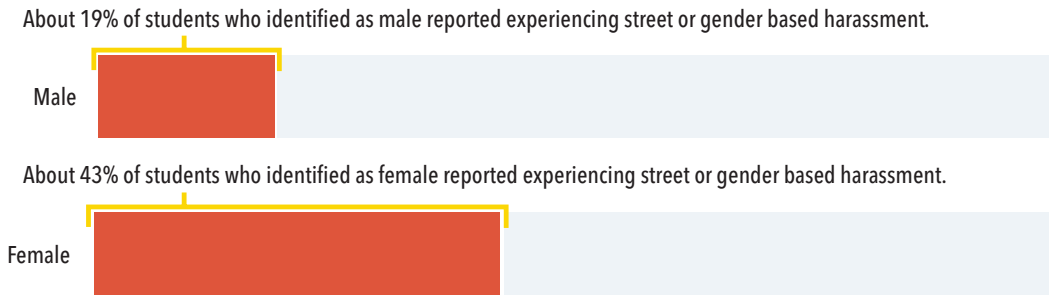
Female

While 19 percent of male respondents reported experiencing street or gender-based harassment, more than 40 percent of female students reported experiencing such treatment. Even though students were asked these similar questions in different ways over a two-year period, students who identified as female were still twice as likely to experience unwanted attention outside of school than male students.

Approximately 17 percent of the students we spoke with in those focus groups for SY2022-23 identified within LGBTQIA+ communities, with an additional 10 percent not being sure how they identified. About 47 percent of those students who identify as LGBTQIA+, or who were unsure, experienced some form of street harassment or gender-based harassment.

Figure 14: *Portion of LGBTQIA+ students, and those who are unsure how they identify themselves, who experienced street harassment or gender-based harassment.*

No: 52.7%

Yes: 47.3%
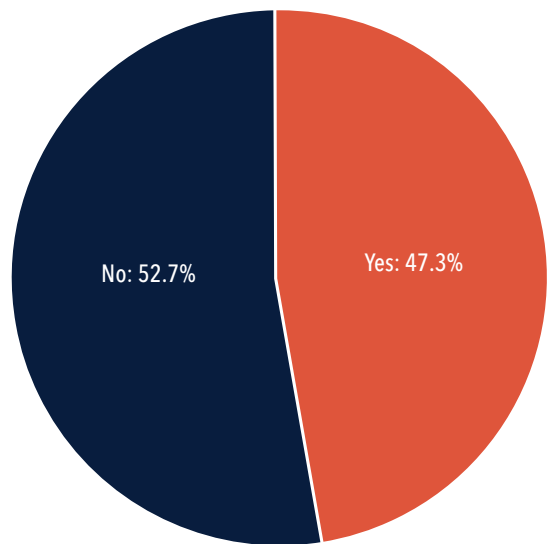
It is unrealistic to expect students who experience these incidents to prioritize their coursework over safety. When addressing student safety, much more needs to be considered to ensure the safety of female students and students within LGBTQIA+ communities.
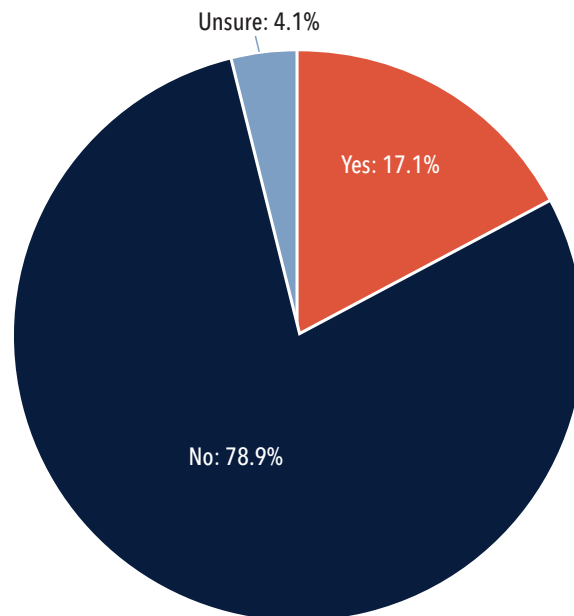
IN SCHOOL BULLYING & HARASSMENT:

Bullying is when a student is impacted by severe, pervasive or persistent behavior that impacts their physical or mental health and disrupts their ability to participate in school or youth-facing programs. Bullying can be classified into three separate categories: physical, verbal, and cyber. Families who have contacted us regarding bullying unfortunately expressed that their students have experienced all three forms in some capacity.

Too many students have been physically assaulted on a recurring basis by the same group of students at school. Too many students are verbally abused in school or sexually harassed, disrupting their abilities to focus on their academic coursework. Too many students expressed being cyber-attacked by students and threatened even while physically away from the school building. The rate of cyberbullying-related calls has increased over the years. Incidents originating in schools are now more likely to follow students to their homes. Incidents outside of school are finding their way inside the school buildings more than ever. From fights being recorded and distributed on social media, to verbal threats being made online, the trauma these students experience continues to evolve. Quite often these incidents sprawl into multiple overlapping incidents that explode into confrontations involving adults on or near school buildings.

While we have been able to work with some of those schools to create safety plans, or refer families to partner agencies and organizations to mediate those conflicts, many of our families feel hopeless and request transfers. As our office continued to facilitate student safety based focus groups with students and families, we noticed a similar rate of students being bullied compared to the RFAs we received. Of the 174 students and family members we spoke with in 2023, approximately 17 percent of those respondents reported experiencing bullying with an additional four percent being unsure.

Figure 15: *Have you been bullied or have you experienced harassment while at school?*

Students who identify as female reported instances of bullying or harassment in school at a higher rate than students identifying as male. About 19% of female students reported experiencing bullying or harassment in school compared to only seven percent of male students.

ENHANCING EQUITABLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018 (SFASA) has brought about significant enhancements in the standardization of exclusionary discipline practices and the documentation, collection, and reporting of data within the District [7]. This alignment of discipline policies across Local Education Agencies (LEAs) has yielded positive outcomes, as evidenced in our engagements with school leaders, families, and students. Nevertheless, student discipline continues to rank as a predominant category in our Requests for Assistance year after year. Frequently, discussions surrounding student discipline serve as an underlying theme in various areas of concern when parents reach out to us. Often, our conversations with families revolve around issues such as bullying, student safety, behavioral health, or special education. As we delve deeper into the parental concern, we often discover disciplinary actions as either the precursor to the issue the parent is seeking assistance with or as an occurrence closely associated with the parent's request for help.

- Discipline (8.7% of RFAs)

Figure 16: Discipline Related Calls (Top 3 Subtopics)

Out-of-School Discipline: 61.2%	In-School Discipline: 10.2%	Potential Discrimination: 10.2%	Other: 18.4%

DISPROPORTIONATE RATES OF DISCIPLINE

As a District, we have strengthened the in-school support systems provided to students in the realms of behavioral health, restorative justice, and school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports. However, we continue to witness a notable reliance on exclusionary discipline by schools, especially as they grapple with the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic compounded by gaps in access to quality support services for our most vulnerable students. The disparity occurs across charter LEAs and DCPS. African-American students constitute 64 percent of all public school students in the District, yet in the SY 2021 – 22 [8],* they accounted for 80% of in-school suspensions, 92% of out-of-school suspensions, and 90% of expulsions [9].** A similar disproportionality is observed among students with disabilities, who constitute only 18% of the student population but account for 32% of all out-of-school suspensions, 29% of in-school suspensions, and 24% of expulsions [10].**

*At the time of this report, data is not yet available for SY 22-23
**Note: DCPS expulsions were suppressed for data privacy concerns in the OSSE State of Discipline Report SY 21-22.

As a District, we have strengthened the in-school support systems provided to students in the realms of behavioral health, restorative justice, and school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports.

DISPROPORTION OF BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS ACROSS LEAS
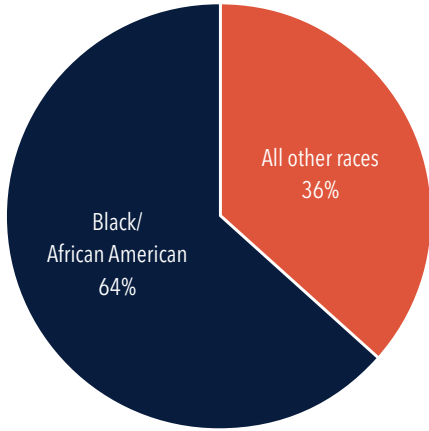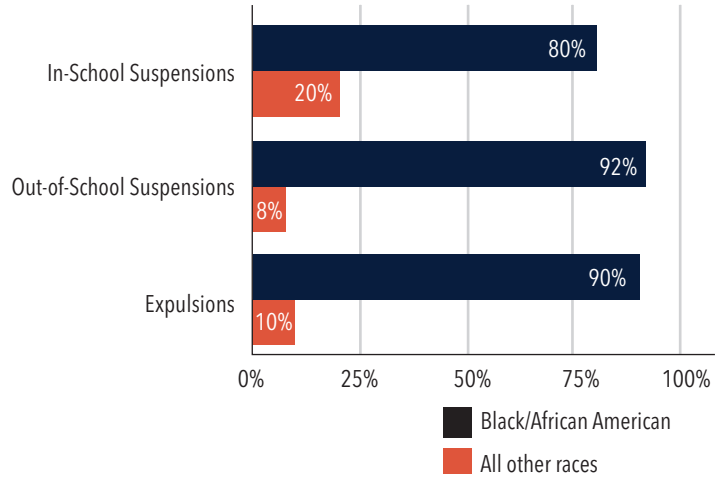
Figure 17: Student Demographics

Black/African American 64%
All other races 36%

Figure 18: Disciplinary Actions, by Race

In-School Suspensions: 80% / 20%
Out-of-School Suspensions: 92% / 8%
Expulsions: 90% / 10%

■ Black/African American
■ All other races

DISPROPORTION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS LEAS

Figure 19: Student Demographics

Students with a Disability 18%
Students without a Disability 82%

Figure 20: Disciplinary Actions, Students with Disabilities

In-School Suspensions: 29% / 71%
Out-of-School Suspensions: 32% / 68%
Expulsions: 24% / 76%

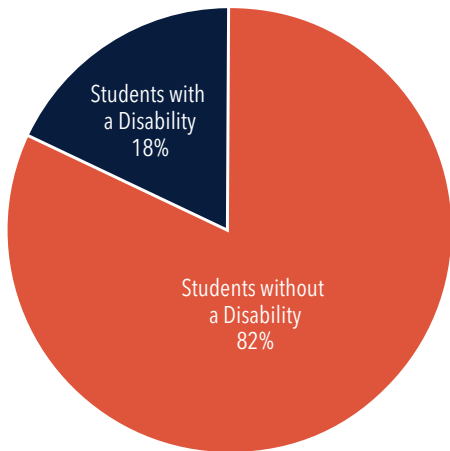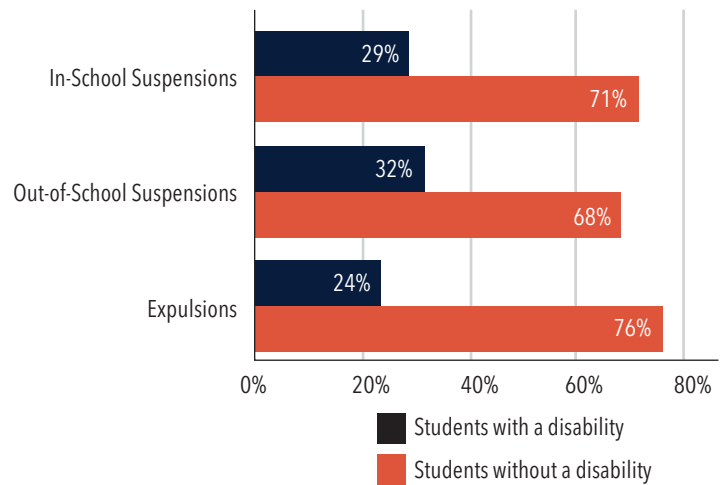■ Students with a disability
■ Students without a disability

Source: SY 21-22 OSSE: "State of Discipline"

OUT OF COMPLIANCE LEAS

During the 2021-2022 school year, there were a total of 3,292 reported out of school suspensions or expulsions in grades K-8 [11]. Among these, 625 were administered in violation of compliance standards because they did not align with the criteria for a "serious safety incident" [12]. This non-compliance primarily stemmed from the determination by OSSE that the student did not "intentionally cause, attempt to cause, or threaten bodily harm or emotional distress to another individual" [13]. This number accounts for 20 percent of all reported K-8 suspensions and expulsions but spans 26 LEAs, indicating that a significant number of LEAs serving K-8 engaged in excessively punitive disciplinary actions and thus found themselves in violation of SFASA [14]. Although out-of-compliance actions have decreased compared to previous years, the substantial number of LEAs with significant out-of-compliance actions remains a cause for concern.

The circumstance in grades 9-12 is more alarming, with 50 percent (N=1,636) of suspensions and expulsions in SY 21-22 falling outside the scope of a "serious safety incident" and hence non-compliant with SFASA [15]. Per the law, just as in K-8, unless the incident qualifies as a "serious safety incident", students should receive disciplinary actions other than out-of-school suspensions. Of the 1,636 reported out-of-compliance disciplinary actions for students in grades 9-12, 13 LEAs were implicated [16].

IMPLICATIONS OF EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE

Overly punitive disciplinary practices carry significant implications for both individual students and the broader school community. One of the largest concerns is the disruption of academic progress, as suspended or expelled students miss direct instructional time, leading to academic setbacks and increased dropout risk. These practices also contribute to widening achievement gaps, disproportionately affecting minority and disabled students, exacerbating educational inequalities. Additionally, they can create a negative school climate, making students feel ostracized and unsafe, while also causing negative emotional and behavioral consequences. Research has shown that students receiving exclusionary discipline practices are also more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

While disciplinary actions such as suspensions and expulsions are necessary components of a comprehensive school discipline framework, the number of LEAs out of compliance with SFASA standards raises concerns, particularly within the high school grade band. In order to advance our commitment to improving equitable discipline policies and fostering school environments that are not only restorative and positive but also conducive to learning and development, it is imperative that we devise strategies to hold schools with high rates of non-compliance accountable for amending their disciplinary practices and procedures.

OSSE has made the following notable improvements to its discipline data collection over the past school year: 1) schools now submit discipline data at 3 points throughout the school year instead of once at the end of the school year, 2) data will now be collected on restorative justice practices, and 3) schools will now report how continuing education was provided during exclusion. As discipline data collection continues to be refined, it is now imperative for us to utilize these glaring areas of growth as opportunities to support the holistic development of all our students and repair the harm done by punitive exclusionary discipline practices.

EL LEARNERS AND FAMILIES

In response to a steady increase of EL students enrolled in public schools [17], we have made efforts to increase accessibility of our services to English Language Learners (EL) and families with limited English proficiency (LEP). In 2021, we connected with multiple school leaders and community partners who work directly with EL students and families to gain a deeper understanding of existing systems of support. These conversations spearheaded the creation of *EL Navegador*, a centralized online tool for newcomer and EL families to better understand the DC public education system and services available to them.

(From left to right) OSA Staff, Valeria Popolizio Torres and Renatta Landrau, present on EL Services Inventory and creation of EL Navegador at the 2023 National Migrant Education Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Amidst our services inventory, school leaders and community partners discussed the unique experiences of newcomer students and families, who are oftentimes identified as English/multilingual learners.

Newcomer students and families have a myriad of different experiences and residency status when migrating to the United States. In SY 2022-23, thousands of people seeking asylum were bussed in from southern U.S. Border states [18]. (Matter, 2023). Many local agencies and organizations, such as DCPS Language Acquisition Division, met with newly arrived families to guide them through the school enrollment process and connect them to basic supports. Throughout the school year, we received questions from community organizations and service providers across the district regarding what documentation families need to enroll in school, the differences between public and public charter schools, and how to access adult education programs.

OSA continued to approach outreach efforts with the intentionality of reaching newcomers and families with LEP. We took an on-the-ground approach to promote our events to ensure that multilingual families can access this information. Flyers and registration for events hosted by our office are available in multiple languages. Beyond posting flyers at metro stations and bus shelters in neighborhoods with historically large populations of Spanish-speakers and Amharic-speakers, we connected with businesses in Mt. Pleasant, Columbia Heights, and Benning Road, to post resources that our office provides. Additionally, we made efforts to remove language and capacity barriers for families who want to attend our workshops. We invested resources towards providing interpretation services at all our events and, at times, have been able to partner with community organizations to provide child-care. Increased engagement and attendance have demonstrated that these are best practices in amplifying accessibility to events and workshops.

Our community partners have also fortified bridges between the services we provide and multilingual families. We continued to foster and strengthen relationships with existing community partners. In doing so, our office has been able to hear and learn from students and families directly. During the school year, the Department of Human Services (DHS) Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) Program invited our office to present a Know-Your-Rights workshop for newcomer students. Students were curious to learn more about attendance policies, employment opportunities, out-of-school English language resources, and information about accessing higher education. In response to this and other conversations with families and community members, we have created

new sections to *EL Navegador* and updated already existing sections. It is our hope that *EL Navegador* is used as a tool to elevate student and community voices on supports that are needed by EL students and newcomer students. For School Year 22-23 we have updated the living-resource to include topics such as:

- **Understanding the System:** Information on the DC public education system and answers to frequently asked questions.

- **Adult Education:** Explanation of different programs offered by DC schools and community organizations to learn English, earn a GED, or a professional certification.

- Updated sections include **How to Enroll, Know Your Rights, and Assessments.**

These efforts have also heightened visibility of our Request for Assistance (RFA) line. There has been an incremental increase of Spanish speaking families reaching out for support. Social workers and case managers who work with Spanish speaking and newcomer families have also sought additional guidance and support from our office. Many of the concerns that multilingual families face are similar to those whose English is their first language. Families are seeking additional information about special education evaluations/services, seeking mental health supports, and issues regarding student safety/bullying and harassment.

## SUPPORTING FAMILIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Families continue to request assistance related to special education at the highest rate. This year we saw an increased rate of calls compared to last school year. Nearly 1-in-3 families who contacted our office supported a student with one or more diagnosed disabilities.

Figure 21: Number of Families Supporting Students with Disabilities
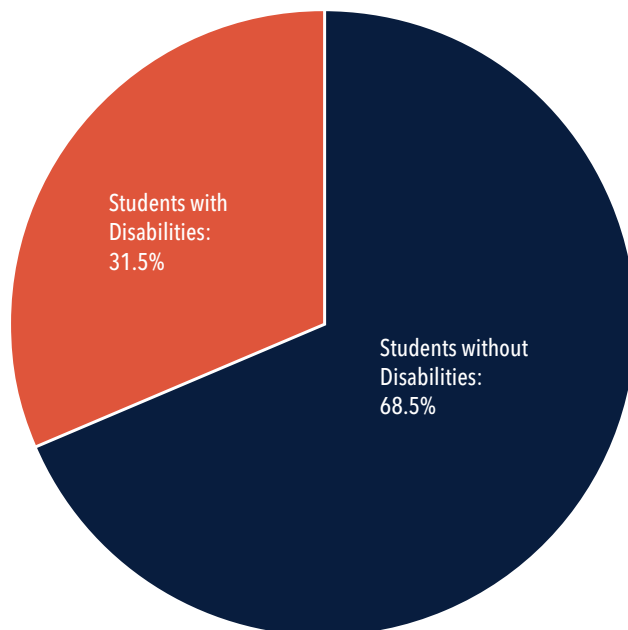
Students with Disabilities: 31.5%

Students without Disabilities: 68.5%

The top-3 areas of concerns for families related to special education related to issue **placement**, the **evaluation** process, and **transportation.**

Figure 22: Special Education Related Calls (Top 3 Subtopics)

Special Education Placement: 17.8%	Evaluation: 17.2%	Transportation: 13.4%	Other: 51.6%
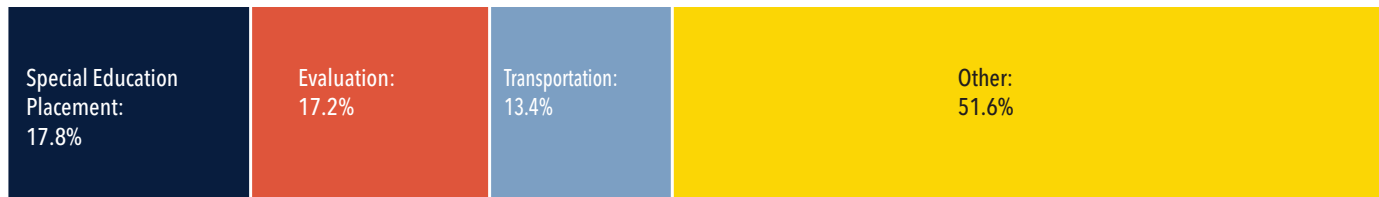
RFAs related to "**Special Education Placement**" include the location of services (LOS) policies that determine what school building a student may be located in addition to the actual educational setting a child is placed in within the school building:

This category is not distinct from a singular Local Education Agency (LEA). Families whose children attended public charter schools needed help with placement into an appropriate setting within their current school building that had more support structures in place to successfully implement their IEP. If it was determined that the school could not provide the required accommodations listed on their IEP, our office connected those families to agencies / offices / organizations to work with schools to provide LOS options that could provide those accommodations.

Many calls categorized as **Special Education Placement** from DCPS families were related to DCPS' implementation of an updated LOS practice [19]. DCPS moved resources so every feeder pattern housed specialized instruction supports and self-contained programs. If a student's school did not have the required self-contained classroom setting or capacity, DCPS would move their LOS to a school with available seats in their in-boundary feeder pattern. Historically, many students traveled across the city to receive the required accommodations. While this practice shift has been helpful for many families, there have been challenges. Many families felt a loss of agency in not being able to choose their schools. Families that have students with disabilities develop meaningful relationships with school staff that are fostered over the years. Other families actively sought to be in school buildings outside of their feeder pattern due to past challenges with their in-boundary school.

RFAs related to "**Transportation**" under "**Special Education**" deal specifically with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) student transportation services. OSSE provides these transportation options for students whose IEP team determined transportation service is required. Unfortunate circumstances disrupted those bus routes OSSE's Parent Resource Center has worked tirelessly to resolve the transportation concerns of the families we represented.

The top-3 areas of concerns for families related to special education related to issue placement, the evaluation process, and transportation.

STREET HARASSMENT / COMMUNITY BASED VIOLENCE

INCREASED FUNDING FOR SAFE PASSAGE WORKERS:

Current programs related to student safety while traveling to and from school are referred to as "Safe Passage" [20]. Safe Passage is a city-wide approach to ensure the safety of students and their families while in transit. A main facet of DCs approach to safe passage involves safe passage workers who are employed by community based organizations to walk/engage/monitor students along their paths to and from school. These organizations work with both traditional DC public and charter schools across six wards.

We facilitated focus group discussions assessing student perceptions of safety and safe passage programming. Nearly two-thirds of student respondents who have seen a Safe Passage worker reported feeling safer and three-fourths of adult respondents felt safer [21]. More than 60 percent of students and family members who have never seen a Safe Passage worker expressed support for the program once learning more [22]. Several students expressed having more trust in approaching Safe Passage workers assigned to their school for support while commuting than staffers from their school. Many students also suggested that more should be done to hire more reliable workers. In focus groups with students several described instances when safe passage workers were unhelpful in maintain their sense of safety.

Our school communities need more community-based solutions to ensure the safety of our children, it is important continue to strengthen programming that is centered around the input from those communities. While Local Education Agencies (LEA) continue to find solutions that address bullying and harassment outside of their physical school spaces, the addition of more Safe Passage workers can better support students enduring those negative interactions in spaces where they are isolated the most.

As our students continue to endure instances of violence and harassment, funding for the Safe Passage Safe Blocks initiative should be increased to ensure the following:

1. Increase the number of personnel available for every school that requests for Safe Passage support;

2. Increase the pay of Safe Passage workers to ensure the most qualified applicants are being selected from those school communities;

3. In collaboration with school leaders Hire Safe Passage workers that are representative of the school communities (i.e. Race, Ethnicity, Language Spoken, Gender Identification, etc.)

Safe Passage is a city-wide approach to ensure the safety of students and their families while in transit.

4. Develop and facilitate professional development opportunities to:
    - Increase the language capacity of monolingual and multilingual staff; Equip staff members with conflict resolution, de-escalation, and traffic safety skills.

Re-define at the State Level what safe travel to and from school is, what it looks like, and how students should experience it:

Even though more than 60 percent of students in 2020 reported that they felt safe traveling to and from school, about 58 percent of those same students said that they felt either uncomfortable, concerned, afraid, or in danger while traveling to and from school. Similar differences between the experiences and the perceptions of students were observed in 2022 and most recently in 2023.

Figure 23: *Student Perceptions of Safety by Year (3-year Overview)*
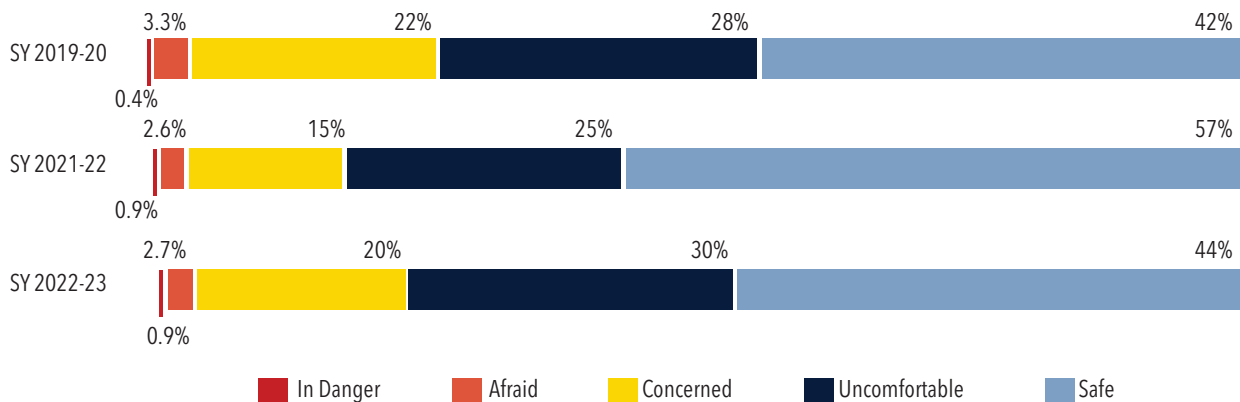
During focus group discussions, many students who said that they felt safe also highlighted instances where they have witnessed instances of violence and drug usage, endured harassment, or even seen someone carrying a weapon. A majority of students in each focus group mentioned they must always be aware of their surroundings. In order for any policy related to student safety can be felt by students, it is important for students to understand what safety is, what it looks like, and how they should experience it.

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments defines "school safety" as:

> *"...schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying and harassment, and the influence of substance abuse. Safe schools promote the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying and harassment, the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds, and other emergencies"* [23].

This definition of safety should be adopted by every LEA in DC and must extend with students along their routes to and from school. Before students can be expected to embrace any policy or program put into place to address their needs, they must know what it means to be safe.

LEAs should consider the following when standardizing expectations of safety:

- LEAs must find ways to incorporate perceptions of safety into any social emotional learning (SEL) framework or curriculum that is adopted;

- LEAs must find meaningful ways to include student and family voice in the center of current and future policy decisions related to student safety;

- LEAs must review those policies yearly with students and school community members to ensure that all students, families, and stakeholders have shared expectations on student safety.

BULLYING / HARASSMENT / CYBERBULLYING

STRENGTHEN EXISTING BULLYING LAWS:

In 2013 the District adopted a bullying prevention framework that aimed to reduce incidents of bullying across the District by emphasizing prevention and proper procedures for responding when incidents occur[24]. In the most recent public reporting about incidents of bullying in the District, the Office of Human Rights' (OHR) report noted that the average District school, both neighborhood and charter, experiences seven reported and confirmed incidents of bullying each year[25]. Nationally, the percentage of students in public schools who experienced bullying at least once a week in school decreased in SY2019 – 20 compared to SY 2009-10[26]. The rate of bullying decreased by nearly ten percentage points between SY 2009-10 and SY 2017-18 . The rate of bullying increased slightly in SY 2019-20[27].

Figure 24: *Bullying Rates Reported Nationally by Public Schools (SY2010 - 20)*
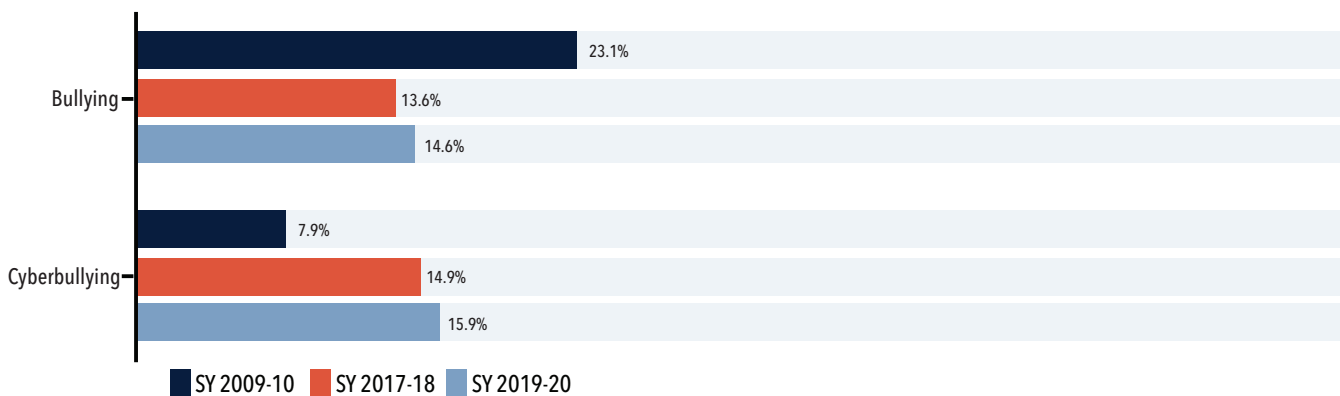
Even though the rates of bullying within American public schools fell over that ten year period, the percentage of students who reported cyberbullying has doubled over that same timespan[28]. While schools across the District are adopting policies to address physical forms of bullying within their school buildings, and are adding piecemeal policies on cyberbullying most have not evolved to account for the increased presence of social media in our students' lives. The increased use of technology in and outside of the classroom presents unique challenges and it is important that we adopt policies that address the nuance of those challenges. Currently, policies in DC addressing bullying online and on social media are inconsistent and need to be strengthened to combat cyberbullying.

1. **Create a standard definition of cyberbullying for all LEAs to adopt:** Inconsistencies exist in how cyberbullying is defined by LEAs. While some schools provide detailed definitions and criteria when identifying cyberbullying, other schools only include acceptable usage of technology policies, with some schools completely neglecting bullying online. This ambiguity can create confusion among students, parents, and staff, hindering effective identification and reporting of cyberbullying incidents. Some LEAs provide step-by-step procedures regarding the investigative process for any bullying incident, while some policies lack clear instructions or accessible reporting mechanisms for students, parents, and staff to report incidents, others allow for multiple warnings before parents are involved.

2. **Extending support to better protect students when bullying occurs off school grounds, or while on a private device:** Unfortunately, DC anti-bullying laws do not cover incidents that occur off-campus (ASPA, 2021). Bullying prevention policies only apply to instances of bullying or cyberbullying sent from or to someone located on "school grounds" and at "school sponsored events." These polices include transportation to school or while waiting for public transit for a school-sponsored event (ASPA, 2021), but not on public transit for personal usage outside of school time. The bullying policies cover all pieces of property owned by the school or LEA, but those policies do not apply to private devices that are off school

Currently, policies in DC addressing bullying online and on social media are inconsistent and need to be strengthened to combat cyberbullying.

property. Due to these limitations, many schools are not able to assist families when these occurrences happens off school grounds. Current bullying policies need to adopt a universal definition of cyberbullying. Current bullying policies should also extend those protections for students off school grounds or while logged onto personal devices.

3. **Increase the urgency to re-establish a student sense of safety by reducing the investigation timeframe from 30 days to 14 days:** Most LEAs in the District bullying prevention policy mirror the recommendations for Bullying Prevention produced in 2013 that allows schools 30 days to investigate allegations of bullying. Today's technology, specifically mobile devices and social media have eroded the barrier that homes once provided against bullies. Students far too often endure ridicule and embarrassment over videos shared innocently but become fodder/humor amongst their peer group. By allowing a 30 day window to resolve allegations of bullying we are inviting increase risk for behavioral health challenges. We must match the urgency of reporting with quick resolutions and remedies to help our students feel whole and safe at home, school, or online.

LEAs should consider the following when strengthening bullying policies:

- LEAs must create clear guidelines on how all reported instances of bullying will be investigated;
- LEAs must find meaningful ways to support families when instances of bullying occur at their homes;
- LEAs must explore how they can best support students when logged into their personal devices while not on school property.

Merge Digital Citizenship curriculum with Social Emotional Learning programs:

Digital citizenship is defined as "the responsible use of technology to learn, create, and participate" [29]. In 2010, Common Sense Education in collaboration with ProjectZero (PZ) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education launched the Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum. The curriculum built on key insights from PZ's research on "how young people engage with moral and ethical issues in digital life" [30]. Digital citizenship is now being implemented in various schools and school districts to promote responsible and ethical online behavior among students.

Digital citizenship initiatives aim to foster safe and responsible online behavior among students. Through education and awareness, schools have seen positive changes in students, including increased knowledge about online etiquette, improved digital safety practices, and enhanced skills in navigating the digital world confidently. By promoting empathy, respect, responsible communication, and the management of one's digital footprint, digital citizenship programs can help address cyberbullying and create a safer online environment for all [31].

Some notable districts include Montgomery County School District in Maryland [32], Lewisville Independent School District in Texas [33], Jurupa Unified School District in California [34], New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) [35], and Omaha Public Schools (OPS) in Nebraska [36]. Many of these districts utilized survey tools like "BrightBytes Technology & Learning" to gather data and analyze the effectiveness of their technology programming including digital citizenship. The implementation of digital citizenship programs often involves the use of different tools and resources. Some of these tools including:

- "Be Internet Awesome," Google's initiative for students in grades 3-5;
- Common Sense Education's curriculum with free lesson plans and interactives for K-12 students;
- EverFi-Ignition, a digital literacy curriculum for grades 6-9 focused on digital wellness and safety.

A recent survey found that approximately 60% of the teachers using the Common Sense Education's digital citizenship materials in their classrooms cited cyberbullying as the most frequently addressed topic [37]. Another survey found that three-quarters of 3rd – 5th grade teachers reported teaching digital citizenship in their classrooms, including topics of privacy and safety, digital drama, cyberbullying, digital footprints, and media literacy [38]. To school psychologists who are working with vulnerable populations of youth or advocating for prevention programs in schools to improve student emotional well-being, digital citizenship programs may be seen as an attractive addition. Adopting similar digital citizenship curricula within the District is one step that can be taken for LEAs to protect their students from cyberbullying.

EASING THE BURDEN FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILIES

While there are many programs that support older Washingtonians, they are primarily geared towards grandparents who are now child free. Grandparents face a unique set of challenges while navigating the public education system with their grandchildren. Technology barriers, behavioral health challenges, and navigating a school system that generally looks and behaves differently than it did when their children were in school provide additional hurdles to an already complicated family dynamic.

More than ever, schools are relying on technology to communicate with families through online portals and apps. Students complete and submit assignments online. Teachers post grades and reminders online. Grandparents who are not technologically literate have difficulty keeping up with the various forms of communication, making it difficult for them to hold their students accountable or advocate for their needs. As a result they may rely on their student to maintain and relay communication with the school while feeling disconnected from the education process.

Oftentimes, the reasons grandchildren are placed with their grandparents are rooted in traumatic experiences that require increased behavioral health support. Grandparents struggle with accessing the proper tools and systems to provide consistent and immediate assistance. Special education continues to be a main barrier for all of our families and it is an especially difficult system for grandfamilies to navigate. They do not always fully

Grandparents face a unique set of challenges while navigating the public education system with their grandchildren.

understand the process and their rights, particularly if they had an adverse experience in special education with their child. It fuels distrust and exasperation with the school community.

Use OSSE Student Information System to Streamline Access to Resources

- Currently, community based organizations (CBO) and school teams work in silos when offering support to families. The burden falls on the family to request help or seek out resources on their own. However, if we take the approach of a multidisciplinary team comprised of teachers, school leaders, school based clinicians, and local support agencies, grandfamilies can get streamlined access to services by checking a simple box during enrollment.

- Through the current SIS that populates OSSE data systems, LEA's already have access to student demographics, enrollment, contacts, and attendance data. If enrollment paperwork is adapted to include a box to indicate they are a grandfamily, LEA's can know which families need additional support before the school year even begins.

- As OST partners already submit their licensing through this system as well, it can also be adapted to assign CBO's to LEA's. These CBO's would serve as case managers for grandfamilies and have the ability to begin services with the family at the onset of the school year.

Increase Technology Literacy

- Standardize technology platforms used across school campuses and offer virtual and in-person support workshops that teach families how to access and use technology platforms at key checkpoints throughout the year.

- Ask for communication preferences on enrollment paperwork so families and schools are aware of the most reliable means to maintain communication with families be it via email, online platform, postal mail, or by phone.

SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

DE-MYSTIFY SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND JARGON IN HOME LANGUAGE.
Providing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other documents in home language.

Between 2012 – 2020, there has been an exponential increase of students with disabilities who are also identified as ELs. Across the nation, 11.78 percent of students served under IDEA are dually identified as an English Learner [39] . In School Year 2020-2021, 13.98 percent of students with disabilities were also identified as EL students [40] . Schools and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must make special considerations in providing support to families of students with disabilities.

Under Title VI, "all vital documents, including a student's IEP, must be accessible to LEP parents, but that does not necessarily mean that all vital documents must be translated for every language in the district" [41]. Schools currently provide Referral Acknowledgment Letters and OSSE IDEA Part B Procedural Safeguards in multiple languages, as required by Title VI [42] and the DC Language Access Act of 2004 [42]. However, they often rely on interpretation during evaluation and IEP meetings to explain documents to parents/caregivers. To fully involve them in the process, it is important that all documentation (from psycho-educational evaluations to the Individual Education Plan) also be translated and readily available in their preferred language. Many families have expressed how overwhelming the special education evaluation process may be, regardless of language proficiency. If parents/caregivers are provided all documents in their preferred language, it removes a barrier to meaningful engagement in the process and ensures accessibility beyond the scheduled meetings with schools.

INCREASE SUPPORTS AND AVENUES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Provide virtual learning options for students to support a non-disrupted education.

Throughout School Year 2021-22, our office received several calls from students, families, and case managers who sought information about virtual learning options. As we moved out of a public health emergency from the COVID-19 pandemic, less virtual options were available to students who did not qualify for Home and Hospital Instruction (HHIP). People sought information on virtual learning opportunities for unique reasons. Whether it be because of safety concerns, health/mental health reasons (i.e. impacts of bullying, lack of connectedness to school community), and the desire for more flexibility in their learning.

It is important to learn from the lessons of the inequities exacerbated from the COVID-19 pandemic. EL and newcomer students across the United States were disproportionately impacted by the digital divide – often leading to "higher rates of chronic absenteeism and disenrollment" [44]. In creating virtual learning programs, LEAs must build from a digital equity framework; where "all individuals and communities have the proper devices, adequate internet connectivity, and digital skills training for employment, education, civic engagement, access to essential services, and full participation in society" [45].

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), has acknowledged the desire of some students to participate in online courses for numerous reasons, including "[a] need for increased flexibility (i.e. in order to be able to gain work experience during school hours)" [46]. Students have access to course options, including AP courses, that closely align with Virginia standards and are graduation requirements. Students in grades 6-12 have access to online tutoring services and are expected to regularly communicate with their assigned site-based mentor (who ensures students have the necessary resources for online schooling), their teacher, and school counselor. [47]

Currently, the District of Columbia has limited public online schooling options such as: Friendship Public Charter School Online Academy and the virtual learning program at the DCPS Opportunity Academies (Luke C. Moore, Ballou STAY, and Roosevelt STAY). These courses have limited capacity and typically follow a traditional school day schedule. Expanding access and holistic supports (in-school and through community-based organizations) to virtual learning opportunities, including self-paced online instruction, creates learning spaces for students who for numerous individual reasons (i.e. student safety concerns, health/mental health issues stemming from trauma and stress) may otherwise be disengaged.

...it is important that all documentation be translated and readily available in a parents/caregivers preferred language.

SECTION VIII

STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 7C

Advocates for Justice in Education (AJE)

Benjamin Banneker High School

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington

Briya Public Charter School

Cedar Community

Center City Public Charter School (Congress Heights)

Child and Family Services Agency Grandparent Program

Children's Law Center

Council of the District of Columbia

Critical Exposure

DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

DC Kincare Alliance

DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB)

DC Public Library

DC Public Schools (DCPS)

DC State Board of Education (SBOE)

DC United Foundation

DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction

DCPS Language Acquisition Division (LAD)

DCPS Welcome Center

Deanwood Citizens Association

Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

District Department of Transportation (DDOT)

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative (ERFSC)

Empowerment Enterprise II (EE2)

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative (FSFSC)

Federal City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

Food Justice DMV

Georgetown University

Howard University

Kid Power

Many Languages One Voice (MLOV)

Mayfair/Paradise Family Strengthening Collaborative

Mayor's Office on African Affairs (MOAA)

Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (MOLA)

Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Special Liaison Branch (SLB)

Mikva Challenge DC

My School DC

Office of Human Rights

Office of Victim Services Justice Grant (OVSJG)

Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE)

Plaza West

Randle Highlands Parent Teacher Organization

Roosevelt STAY

Shaw Community Center

Smart from the Start

So Others May Eat (SOME)

The Lab @ DC

Ward 1 Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC)

Ward 2 Education Council

Ward 3 - Wilson Feeder Education Network (W3EdNet)

Ward 4 Education Alliance

Ward 5 Education Equity Committee

Ward 6 Mutual Aid

Ward 6 Public Schools Parent Organization

Ward 7 Education Council

Ward 8 Council on Education

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Woodland Terrace Family Strengthening Collaborative

Woodson Warriors Parent Teacher Organization

SECTION IX

REFERENCES

1. Conner, J., Posner, M., & Nsowaa, B. (2022). The Relationship Between Student Voice and Student Engagement in Urban High Schools. The Urban Review. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-022-00637-2

2. Cook-Sather, Alison. "Sound, Presence, and Power: 'Student Voice' in Educational Research and Reform." Curriculum Inquiry, vol. 36, no. 4, 2006, pp. 359–90. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4124743. Accessed 19 Jul. 2022.

3. See note 2.

4. Kirshner, B. (2015). Critique and Collective Agency in Youth Development. In Youth Activism in an Era of Education Inequality (pp. 23–53). essay, New York University Press.

5. Mitra, D. (2018). Student Voice in Secondary Schools: The Possibility for Deeper Change. Journal of Educational Administration, 56(5), 473–487. https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-01-2018-0007

6. See note 5.

7. Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act, D.C. Law 22-157 (2018). https://code.dccouncil.us/us/dc/council/laws/22-157

8. Office of the State Superintendent.(2023). State of Discipline: 2021-22 School Year. Retrieved September 1, 2023 from https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/2021-22%20Discipline%20Report_2.pdf

9. See note 8.

10. See note 8.

11. See note 8.

12. See note 8.

13. See note 8.

14. See note 8.

15. See note 8.

16. See note 8.

17. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. (2023). Public School students by special need categories. Edscape. https://edscape.dc.gov/page/pop-and-students-public-school-students-special-need-categories

18. Matter, J. (2023, May 4). DC at capacity for housing migrant families, says DHS. FOX 5 DC. https://www.fox5dc.com/news/dc-at-capacity-for-housing-migrant-families-says-dhs

19. DC Public Schools Division of Specialized Instruction. (n.d.). Placement and location of services. https://dcpsspecialed.wixsite.com/home/location-of-services

20. Safe Passage (n.d.) Retrieved Sept. 7, 2023, from https://safepassage.dc.gov/

21. OSA Student Safety Report 2022

22. See note 21.

23. Safety. Safety | National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). (n.d.). https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety#:~:text=Image,the%20influence%20of%20substance%20use.

24. Office of Human Rights (OHR). (n.d.). District-wide model Bullying prevention policy. https://ohr.dc.gov/bullyingprevention/policy

25. See note 24.

26. Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools. Coe - discipline problems reported by public schools. (n.d.). https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/a07/discipline-problems

27. See note 26.

28. See note 26.

29. Teaching Digital Citizens in Today's World. Common Sense Education. (2019). https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship

30. See note 29.

31. See note 29.

32. Montgomery County Public Schools (n.d.) Digital citizenshipYour Characters Count. http://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/digital-citizenship/index.html

33. Lewisville Independent School District. (n.d.). Digital Learning / Digital citizenship. https://www.lisd.net/digitalcitizenship#:~:text=Digital%20Citizenship%20curriculum%20is%20required,with%20the%20Technology%20Applications%20TEKS

34. Jurupa Unified School District (2023). Digital Citizenship. https://jurupausd.org/our-district/BizServ/it/chromebooks/Pages/Digital-Citizenship.aspx

35. New York City Public Schools (n.d.). Digital Citizenship. https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/school-environment/digital-citizenship#:~:text=This%20includes%20knowing%20and%20understanding,Younger%20or%2013%20and%20Older.&text=Share%20values%20with%20your%20children,is%20not%E2%80%94acceptable%20online%20behavior.

36. Omaha Public Schools, Nebraska

37. Vega, V., & Robb, M. B. (n.d.). Inside the 21st-century classroom - common sense media. Common Sense. https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2019-educator-census-inside-the-21st-century-classroom-key-findings.pdf

38. Lauricella, A. R., Herdzina, J., & Robb, M. (2020). Early childhood educators' teaching of Digital Citizenship Competencies. Computers & Education, 158, 103989. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2020.103989

39. Kkushiyama. (2022, April 8). OSEP fast facts: Students with disabilities who are English learners served under idea part B. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. https://sites.ed.gov/idea/osep-fast-facts-students-with-disabilities-english-learners#:~:text=Approximately%201.6%25%20of%20students%20enrolled,served%20under%20IDEA%20are%20EL.

40. See note 39.

41. Ryder, R. E. (2017, June 27). IEP Translation - Communication from OSEP. IDEA. https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf

42. Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (1964). https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI-Overview

43. DC Language Access Act, D.C. Official Code §§2-1931 (2004). https://ohr.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ohr/publication/attachments/LanguageAccessActRegulations-English.pdf

44. Workie, E., Hinkle, L., deDufour, A., & Lacarte, V. (2022, February). Advancing Digital Equity among Immigrant-Origin Youth. Washington DC; Migrant Policy Institute.

45. See note 44.

46. Alexandria City Public Schools. (2022). ACPS Online Courses Program and Registration Information. Online Learning Program. https://www.acps.k12.va.us/programs-services/online-learning-program

47. See note 46

OFFICE OF THE
STUDENT
ADVOCATE

441 4th St, NW, Suite 723N
Washington, DC 20001
202.741.4692
student.advocate@dc.gov
@DC_Advocate
studentadvocate.dc.gov