District of Columbia Office of the Student Advocate supports students, parents, and families in their advocacy through parent education, one-on-one coaching, resource supports, and trainings in order to amplify the voices of families and communities in processes and decision-making; to provide avenues for access to resources and understanding systems; and to support power families and communities already possess.
What We Do

We work in partnership to equalize the balance of power between families and schools by increasing family voice, access, and power in our system of public education. We achieve this goal by ensuring families are connected to resources and supports, informed of their rights, and understand how the system works.

For more information about our office or to access our online resources, visit studentadvocate.dc.gov or call us at 202.741.4692
The broader context is confusing...
While the structure of the city is complex, the choices individual parents make for their child’s educational journey is impacted by the structure.

So...

**Understanding how government works is vital. Making the system work for you and understanding how to engage with each of the key players is essential.**
Purpose of this Presentation:
To make the process of public education and government less mysterious

Goal for the Presentation:
To create a roadmap for advocacy
Question:

In this broader context, where do you see yourself?

Do you understand how public education fits into this equation?
Let’s take a step back…

In DC, we have mayoral control of schools.

But...the Mayor’s control over public schools is not equal...

§ 38–172. Mayor’s authority; rulemaking.

(a) The Mayor shall govern the public schools in the District of Columbia. The Mayor shall have authority over all curricula, operations, functions, budget, personnel, labor negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, facilities, and other education-related matters, but shall endeavor to keep teachers in place after the start of the school year and transfer teachers, if necessary, during summer break.

(b) The Mayor may delegate any of his authority to a designee as he or she determines is warranted for efficient and sound administration and to further the purpose of DCPS to educate all students enrolled within its schools or learning centers consistent with District-wide standards of academic achievement.


Essentially, the Mayor has control over DC Public Schools.
Mayoral Control of Public Schools:

“School districts are traditionally controlled by a locally elected school board, which makes decisions about how schools are run, including hiring and firing the...[Chancellor of DCPS]. Mayoral control, however, is a shift in the power structure wherein mayors are given a greater degree of authority over schools.”

Source: Top 5 Things to Know About Mayoral Control of Schools, Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/news/2013/03/22/57723/top-5-things-to-know-about-mayoral-control-of-schools/
Breakdown: The Public Education Governance Structure

- Mayor: Muriel Bowser
  - City Administrator: Kevin Donahue
    - Deputy Mayor for Education
      - Office of the State Superintendent of Education
      - DC Public Schools
      - Department of Parks & Recreation
        - Department of Employment Services
        - Workforce Investment Council
          - University of the District of Columbia
          - DC Public Library
          - State Board of Education
          - DC Public Charter School Board
          - Public Charter Schools
Deputy Mayor for Education is the Mayor’s designee responsible for developing and implementing the Mayor's vision for academic excellence and creating a high quality education continuum from birth to 24 (from early childhood to K-12 to post-secondary and the workforce).

§ 38–191. Department of Education; establishment; authority

“...responsible for the planning, coordination, and supervision of all public education and education-related activities under its jurisdiction, including development and support of programs to improve the delivery of educational services and opportunities, from early childhood to the post-secondary education level, including the District of Columbia Public Schools, public charter schools...”

“Promote, coordinate, and oversee collaborative efforts among District government agencies to support education and child development as it relates to education, including coordinating the integration of programs and resources...”

Adding more clarity:
What parents know...
Roles/Responsibilities of Teachers:
• planning/preparing lessons
• managing classroom behaviors
• assessing/evaluating student learning
• identifying difficulties and learning problems

Roles/Responsibilities of School Administrators:
• shaping a vision of academic success for all students
• creating a climate hospitable to education
• cultivating leadership in others
• managing people, data, and processes
• improving school leadership
But…

parents & families have questions about the unique complexities of our system…
What’s the Difference: DCPS v. Public Charter Schools

DC Public Schools?
The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is the traditional system of public schools in the District. DCPS is a system of neighborhood, matter-of-right schools, with some selective school options, and is required to serve all students in DC.

As a DC government agency, DCPS is under direct mayoral control and is subject to DC Council performance and budget oversight.

Public Charter Schools?
Charter schools are independent public schools that are free to innovate and are held accountable for student performance. They are publicly funded, tuition-free, and nonsectarian. Like traditional public schools, they are open to all DC residents and receive public funds according to how many students are enrolled.

A public charter school exercises exclusive control over its expenditures, administration, personnel, and instructional methods. While the DC Public Charter School Board, an independent DC government agency, is subject to some mayoral and DC Council oversight, the exclusive control individual charter LEAs have means they are not under the direct control, or oversight, of the mayor or the DC Council.
The Deeper Context: How It All Connects

Mayor

City Administrator

Deputy Mayor for Education

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

DC Public Schools

Department of Parks & Recreation

Department of Employment Services

Workforce Investment Council

University of the District of Columbia

DC Public Library

State Board of Education

DC Public Charter School Board

Public Charter Schools

Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education

Office of the Student Advocate
What are Local Education Agencies (LEAs)?

“...a public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.”


DC Public Schools (DCPS) & individual public charter networks are (i.e. Kipp, Friendship, or DC Prep) local education agencies or school districts.
What It All Means...

We essentially have **65 plus school districts** in the District of Columbia. And... each of the school districts, or LEAs, has their own policies and procedures.

DCPS has policies and procedures which are subject to our city regulations, code, and significant governmental oversight.

Public Charter Schools have the autonomy to create their own policies, with some considerations from DC Public Charter School Board or OSSE guidance.
A few examples...
Local Education Agency Leadership Roles

Using the DCPS Structure as an Example

Roles/Responsibilities of the Chancellor
• central authority of DCPS, the traditional public school system in the district
• delegates authority of education programs to the Deputy Chancellor for Social Emotional Academic Development and the Chief of Elementary Schools and Chief of Secondary Schools

Roles/Responsibilities of the Chiefs of Schools
• both the Chief of Elementary Schools and the Chief of Secondary Schools delegate oversight of individual schools to Instructional Superintendents

Roles of Instructional Superintendents
• manages clusters of individual schools

DCPS Senior Leadership Team
Local Education Agency Leadership Roles
Using the DCPS Structure as an Example

DCPS Office of Elementary Schools

Jeffrey Holmes
Chief, Elementary Schools

Katie Larkin
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster I

Mary Ann Stinson
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster II

Elizabeth Namba
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster III

Shawn Stover
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster IV

Eric Bethel
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster V

Kim Jackson
Instructional Superintendent, Cluster VI

Linda Randall
Director, 1st Grade Academy

Cheryl Ohlson
Deputy Chief, Early Childhood Ed.

**Instructional Superintendents** supervise clusters of 10-14 principals. Instructional Superintendents provide principals with feedback, coaching, guidance, and support necessary for them to be effective school leaders—with a particular focus on instructional leadership. They help principals develop their staff’s capacity to reach student achievement goals, and build positive relationships with their communities, while ensuring their schools are well-run, nurturing places of learning.

1st Grade Academy works to reduce the achievement gap through accelerated student learning, leadership for Reading Recovery®, supports for 1st grade programming, and implementation of sound instructional practices in classrooms. It also serves as a resource for PreK preparation.

The Early Childhood Education division supports schools and families in providing PreK students with comprehensive learning experiences that foster confidence and independence. The division also manages the implementation of DCPS’ Head Start grant.
Local Education Agency Leadership Roles

Using the DCPS Structure as an Example

DCPS Office of Secondary Schools

**Instructional Superintendents** supervise clusters of 10-14 principals. Instructional Superintendents provide principals with feedback, coaching, guidance, and support necessary for them to be effective school leaders—with a particular focus on instructional leadership. They help principals develop their staff's capacity to reach student achievement goals, and build positive relationships with their communities, while ensuring their schools are well-run, nurturing places of learning.

- **Andria Caruthers**
  Instructional Superintendent, Cluster VII

- **Drewana Bey**
  Instructional Superintendent, Cluster VII

- **David Pinder**
  Instructional Superintendent, Cluster IX

- **Jerry Jellico**
  Instructional Superintendent, Cluster X

- **Dwayne Foster**
  Executive Director, Athletics

- **Erin Bibo**
  Deputy Chief, College and Career

- **Sarah Navarro**
  Deputy Chief, Graduation Excellence

The **Athletics** division initiates, stimulates interest in, and conducts interscholastic athletic programs for all students.

The **College and Career** division works to provide all secondary students with access to rigorous career education and college preparatory programming in order to increase the number of students who graduate college and career ready.

The **Graduation Excellence** division develops, implements, and monitors effective graduation support services and dropout prevention in order to provide all students with the opportunity to graduate.
Public Charter School Networks has a different LEA structure and leadership roles. More about the organizational structures for each public charter LEA can be found on their individual website or on the DC Public Charter School Board’s website (http://www.dcpcsb.org/find-a-school)
The Role of DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

PCSB authorizes public charter schools in DC. After the comprehensive application process and approval of a public charter school’s charter, PSCB provides oversight and support to the schools it authorizes.

The DC Public Charter School Board is governed by a seven-member Board, nominated by the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the DC Council. The volunteer Board approves new schools, provides oversight to schools while in operation, and revokes a school’s charter if they fail to meet their performance goals.

The members of the Board delegates its power to run the daily functions of PCSB to the Executive Director, Dr. Michelle J. Walker-Davis.
OSSE is the state education agency for the District of Columbia. OSSE sets statewide policies, provides resources and support, and exercises accountability for all public education in DC. Provides information, policy guidance, and resources on education matters to local education agencies (LEAs) and parents.

The Interim State Superintendent of Education, Shana Young, leads the work of the DC state education agency (OSSE).
OSSE’s relationship to public schools

Programs that OSSE supports include:

• Adult and Family Education
• Assessment and Accountability
• Credit Flexibility – Waiver to Award Competency-Based Unit(s)
• DC ReEngagement Center
• Early Learning
  Provides leadership and coordination to ensure that all District of Columbia children, from birth to kindergarten entrance, have access to high quality early childhood development programs and are well prepared for school.
• Educator Licensure & Accreditation
• Elementary & Secondary Education
• Grants Management and Compliance
• Higher Education Licensure Commission
• Wellness and Nutrition Services

• Postsecondary Education
  (includes: DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program (DCTAG) and DC Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (DCLEAP)).
• Public Charter School Financing & Support
  Manages several federally funded programs for public charter school facility financing.
• Race to the Top
• Special Education Transportation (DOT)
• Specialized Education
  Provides the public with access to information about special education related services, approved placements and direct online connections to helpful documents.
• Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLED)
  The Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLED) is a single, comprehensive repository of student and education-related data needed to improve education planning, management, reporting, instruction and evaluation.
• Office of Dispute Resolution
Deeper Context:
The Relationship Between SBOE & OSSE
OSSE’s Relationship to Schools

State Board of Education

Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education
Office of the Student Advocate

DC Public Charter School Board
Individual DC Public Charter Schools

State Superintendent of Education

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

DC Public Schools (DCPS)
The DC State Board of Education: Meet the Members of the Board
The State Board of Education is responsible for advising the State Superintendent of Education on educational matters, including: state standards; state policies, including those governing special, academic, vocational, charter and other schools; state objectives; and state regulations proposed by the Mayor or the State Superintendent of Education.
As the central and chief policy-making body for the District of Columbia, the Council’s mission is to provide strong, innovative and effective leadership for the benefit of residents across the city. The Council’s central role as a legislative body is to make laws and is responsible for the oversight of multiple agencies, commissions, boards and other instruments of District government. The Council also plays a critical role in maintaining a balanced budget and the fiscal health of the District of Columbia government.

The Council of the District of Columbia: Meet the Members of the Council

The Council of the District of Columbia, which is led by the Council Chairman, has 13 members.
Council committees review the performance of government programs and agencies to ensure they are serving their established purposes and operating under pertinent regulations and budget targets. The Committee on Education is specific to education, but other committees (and the agencies and offices they oversee) have a connection to education as well.
DC Council’s Public Education Oversight

Council of the District of Columbia

Committee of the Whole

DC Public Charter School Board

State Board of Education

Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

DC Public Schools (DCPS)

Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education

Office of the Student Advocate
Areas of Government &

The Impact on Public Education
Executive Office of the Mayor Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*

- Mayor
  - Executive Office of the Mayor
    - Mayor's Office of Talent & Appointments
    - Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services
    - ServeDC
    - Mayor's Office on African American Affairs
    - Mayor's Office on African Affairs
    - Mayor's Office on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs
    - Mayor's Office on LGBTQ Affairs
    - Commission on Fathers, Men, and Boys
    - Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
    - Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens Affairs
    - Mayor's Office on Women's Policy Initiatives
    - Mayor's Office on Religious Affairs
Health & Human Services Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*
Public Safety & Justice Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*

- Mayor
- City Administrator
- Deputy City Administrator /Deputy Mayor for Public Safety & Justice
  - Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)
  - Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
  - Office of Human Rights
    - Office of Victims Services & Justice Grants
    - Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
    - DC National Guard

Christopher Geldart - Mayor for Public Safety & Justice

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Housing & Economic Development
Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*
Operation and Infrastructure’s Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*
Internal Services’
Connection to Public Education

*This graphic is not inclusive of all agencies and offices in this cluster. The agencies and offices listed have a direct impact or connection to public education.*
Let us help you with navigating public schools in the District of Columbia...

Call us at 202.741.4692
Check out our resources online at studentadvocate.dc.gov