



# The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog  
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## Using Data and Evaluation to Improve DC's Education Programs and Services

By Soumya Bhat

Today, DCFPI testified before the Council Committee on Education about the performance of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Highlights of our testimony are below, and you can read our full testimony [here](#).

**Explore the adequacy of services to students who are homeless:** Given DC's family homelessness crisis, providing educational continuity to homeless students is critical to ensuring that all students can succeed in school. Are children who are homeless being identified? Is the city doing enough to help homeless students get to their school of origin if they want to? The city should assess the capacity of homeless liaisons at schools, ensure the state level coordinator at OSSE is able to effectively support liaisons, and that transportation and other direct supports to students are adequate.

**Continue to engage the public and release data on issues facing the District's education system:** Last year, DCFPI testified on the value of the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLED) to inform education policy decisions, urging OSSE to develop a more systemic, streamlined way to engage with the public and respond to data requests. Since then, OSSE's Division of Data, Assessment, and Research staff held meetings with community organizations to share their research agenda and also better understand the data and research priorities of the larger community. We hope this work continues in the next year.

**Evaluate the Community Schools pilot program to highlight the program's impacts:** Community Schools use public schools as central hubs for students and the larger community to access integrated services and supports. There are currently six grantees operating Community School partnerships in the District. Ultimately, the District should expand the program, but right now, we should prioritize data collection and evaluation of the model. The city should collect information on key indicators such as school readiness, student attendance, adult education, and families' access to key services to assess the impact of Community Schools. This will be particularly important to attract additional funding from non-public sources, but also to show District leaders the impacts on student learning, health, family engagement, and other outcomes over time.

**Maintain the focus on child care quality, particularly for infants and toddlers:** DCFPI would like to hear about progress made with OSSE's new quality improvement "hubs" in high-need DC neighborhoods, an initiative funded in the FY 2015 budget that has our support. During oversight, we would like to learn more about how this work is leading to increased access to quality child care in the District.