

October 15, 2008

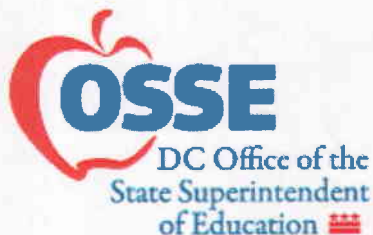
Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-6400

Dear Dr. Briggs:

The District of Columbia is excited to submit for your review the enclosed DC Growth Model Proposal. A growth model will be particularly valuable in the District of Columbia where the majority of students historically have scored well below proficiency. This new approach will better demonstrate the progress that schools, districts, and the state are making toward the goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-2014. Over the past months, the District has received invaluable assistance from several experts in the area of growth and value-added models including U.S. Department of Education peer reviewers.

The District of Columbia student data tracking systems have a long history resulting, in part, from the District's ability to closely monitor enrollment and achievement data. Because of the District's size, on-site internal and external enrollment audits of all public schools have been conducted each October for the last six years. The audits physically track the enrollment of every student enrolled in the DC public schools. In addition, external observers monitor the state assessment administrations in every public school in the District each spring.

As a result, the District is uniquely able to ensure the accuracy of student achievement data across years. Longitudinal achievement data from the District were used in some of the earliest large-scale studies of growth and value-added studies including those by the New American Schools in 2002-2003. In 2007-2008, the District of Columbia was fortunate to receive \$5.7 million from an Institute for Education Sciences grant to support the District of Columbia Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The District made the commitment to invest \$19 million over five years to further improve the state data systems and create an integrated data warehouse. To match student data over time, the District will rely on the Levenshtein algorithm to validate that students' records were properly merged. The matching algorithm is described in Appendix B of this proposal.



Again, we are excited about the growth model proposal and we look forward to the formal feedback and to working closely with the U.S. Department of Education to continue to improve and refine the model. The District of Columbia remains committed to developing state-of-the-art systems to support high quality data-driven decision- making and improved student achievement.

If you have questions about these submissions, please contact Bill Caritj in the OSSE Division of Assessment and Data Reporting at 202-741-0256 or at bill.caritj@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gist", is written over the typed name.

Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent for Education

Attachments

cc: Kimberly A. Statham, Deputy State Superintendent
Susan Rigney, U.S. Department of Education
Patrick Rooney, U.S. Department of Education
William H. Caritj, State Director of Assessment

**SUBMISSION FOR THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NCLB GROWTH MODEL PILOT PROGRAM**

Washington DC

October 15, 2008

Table of Contents

Submission for the U.S. Department of Education NCLB Growth Model Pilot Program

Introduction	1
Background	3
State Assessment Background	3
Our Current Accountability Plan	3
The Seven Core Principles and the Washington DC Growth Model Program ..	4
Core Principle 1: 100% Proficiency by 2014 and Incorporating Decisions about Student Growth into School Accountability.....	4
1.1 How does the State accountability model hold schools accountable for universal proficiency by 2013-14?	4
1.2 Has the State proposed technically and educationally sound criteria for “growth targets” for schools and subgroups?	4
1.3 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of making annual judgments about school performance using growth?	5
Core Principle 2: Establishing Appropriate Growth Targets at the Student Level.....	6
2.1 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of depicting annual student growth in relation to growth targets?.....	6
Core Principle 3: Accountability for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics Separately.....	7
3.1 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of holding schools accountable for student growth separately in reading/language arts and mathematics?.....	7
Core Principle 4: Inclusion of All Students	8
4.1 Does the State’s growth model proposal address the inclusion of all students, subgroups and schools appropriately?	8
Core Principle 5: State Assessment System and Methodology	8

5.1	Has the State designed and implemented a statewide assessment system that measures all students annually in grades 3-8 and one high school grade in reading and mathematics in accordance with NCLB requirements for 2005-06, and have the annual assessments been in place since the 2004-05 school year?.....	8
5.2	How will the State report individual student growth to parents?	9
5.3	Does the Statewide assessment system produce comparable information on each student as he/she moves from one grade level to the next?	12
5.4	Is the Statewide assessment system stable in its design?.....	12
	Core Principle 6: Tracking Student Progress	12
6.1	Has the State designed and implemented a technically and educationally sound system for accurately matching student data from one year to the next?.....	12
6.2	Does the State data infrastructure have the capacity to implement the proposed growth model?	17
	Core Principle 7: Participation Rates and Additional Academic Indicator	18
7.1	Has the State designed and implemented a statewide accountability system that incorporates the rate of participation as one of the criteria?	18
7.2	Does the proposed State growth accountability model incorporate the additional academic indicator?	18
	Summary	18
	Appendix A: Technical Details on the Implementation of the Growth Model in Washington DC by Harold C. Doran	
	Appendix B: Application of the Levenshtein Distance Metric For the Validation of Merged Data Sets by Harold C. Doran and Paul Van Wamelen	
	Appendix C: Washington DC Family Score Report Mockup	