



March 26, 2008

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for 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 pleased to submit for your review the enclosed addendum to the District of Columbia Growth Model Proposal. This submission provides additional information in response to your request of February 29, 2008.

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 weeks, the District has received invaluable assistance from several experts in the area of growth and value-added models, including three of the U.S. Department of Education peer reviewers.

We are excited about this proposal and we look forward to additional feedback from the peer reviewers 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 me or Bill Caritj in the OSSE Division of Assessment and Data Reporting at 202-442-5562 or at bill.caritj@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent for Education

Attachment

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

District of Columbia
Growth Model Proposal: Supplemental Information
Response to February 29, 2008 Letter

Principle 1. Universal Proficiency

- Please provide additional information regarding how students who transition between schools are included in the growth model (i.e., how trajectories are established for students moving from elementary to middle and middle to high schools).

The table below provides the basic trajectory model. In cases where students move between school at the same level (e.g., elementary to elementary school), the trajectory targets will remain the same; they will not reset. The only case where the trajectory would reset is where students "graduate" from an elementary school and matriculate to either a middle or junior high school. If the student moves from grade 5 at an elementary school to grade 6 at a middle school, for example, the trajectory would be established using the grade 6 "earliest grade level" trajectory highlighted below.

DC understands that the expectations for meeting growth targets must be high and that the opportunities for schools to show growth must be limited to a degree. However, it is also believed that middle and junior high schools should have the same opportunities as elementary schools. By not allowing this one-time reset, the "middle" schools are put at a disadvantage. The primary benefit of growth models is at the school level and this one-time reset affords the middle and junior schools the same opportunity as the elementary schools by permitted them to maximize the number of students included in the model.

For example, without the reset, students enrolled in the state in grade 3 would not be available for inclusion in their middle school growth model. Similarly, students enrolled in the state beginning in grade 4 would only be used in the growth model calculation for one year (i.e., grade 7). These cases would dramatically reduce the number of cases permitted to determine growth for middle and junior high schools.

An analogous one reset rule would not apply at the LEA and SEA level.