



D.C. POLICY CENTER

Education Policy Initiative

PUBLIC HEARING

BILL 25-800

**MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENT ACT
OF 2024**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

November 6th, 2024, 12pm

Hearing Room 412

John A. Wilson Building

Testimony of Chelsea Coffin

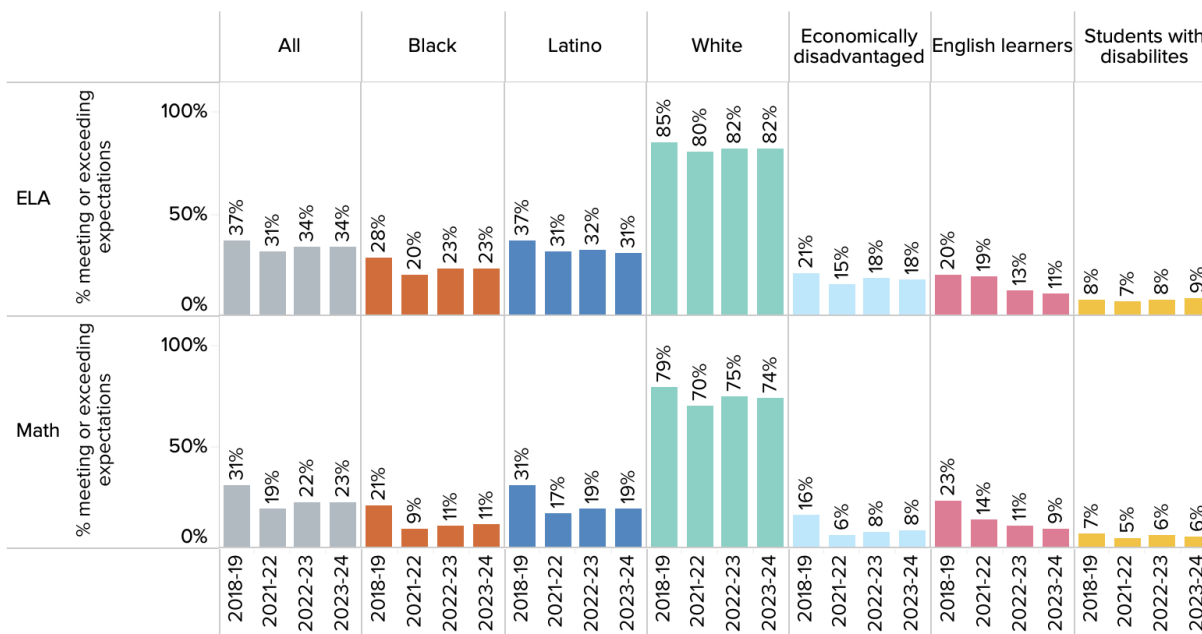
Director, Education Policy Initiative

D.C. Policy Center

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole.

My name is Chelsea Coffin, and I am the Director of the Education Policy Initiative at the D.C. Policy Center, an independent think tank focused on advancing policies for a growing, vibrant, and compelling District of Columbia. Today, I am here to discuss the urgent need to improve math instruction and achievement in D.C., especially in middle and high school grades and for students who are the furthest behind. I will also highlight the critical need for professional development in math and explain how the Math Task Force recommendations should be different than those of the Early Literacy Task Force, particularly in linking professional development to achievement.

Share of D.C.'s public school students meeting or exceeding expectations in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, over time



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). District of Columbia Statewide Assessment Results from 2018-19, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. OSSE. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/page/data-and-reports-0>

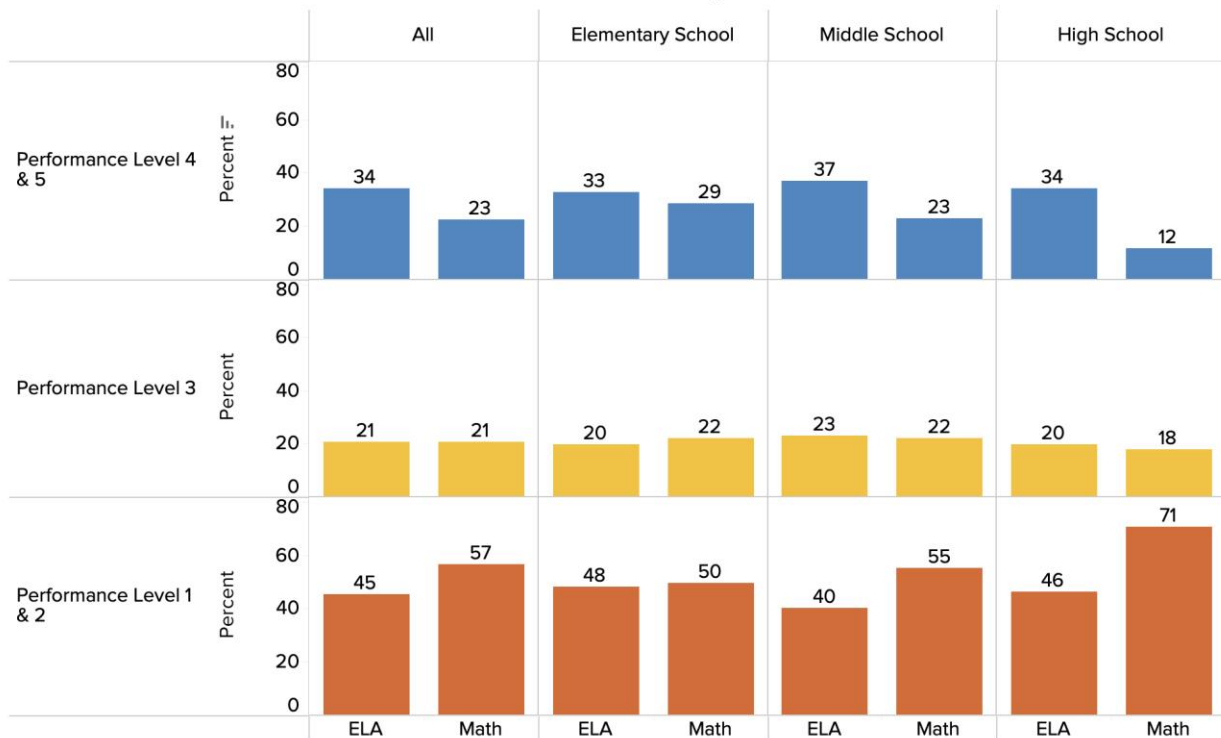
Note: As of school year 2023-24, D.C. shifted from the PARCC statewide assessment to the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessments of Progress in Education (DC CAPE).

Note: The percent of English learners meeting or exceeding expectations in both ELA and math for school year 2018-19 and 2021-22 includes both active English learners and monitored students. School years 2022-23 and 2023-24 are active English learners only.



There is need to focus on strengthening math instruction and achievement in D.C. through a dedicated Task Force. Statewide assessment results show that a smaller share of students are meeting or exceeding expectation in math (23 percent in math compared to 34 percent in English Language Arts, or ELA). Furthermore, the gap between pre-pandemic achievement and achievement in school year 2023-24 is greater in math (8 percentage points lower) than ELA (3 percentage points lower).

Performance level on DC CAPE statewide assessment, school year 2023-24



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'s 2023-24 Statewide Assessment Results and Resources.

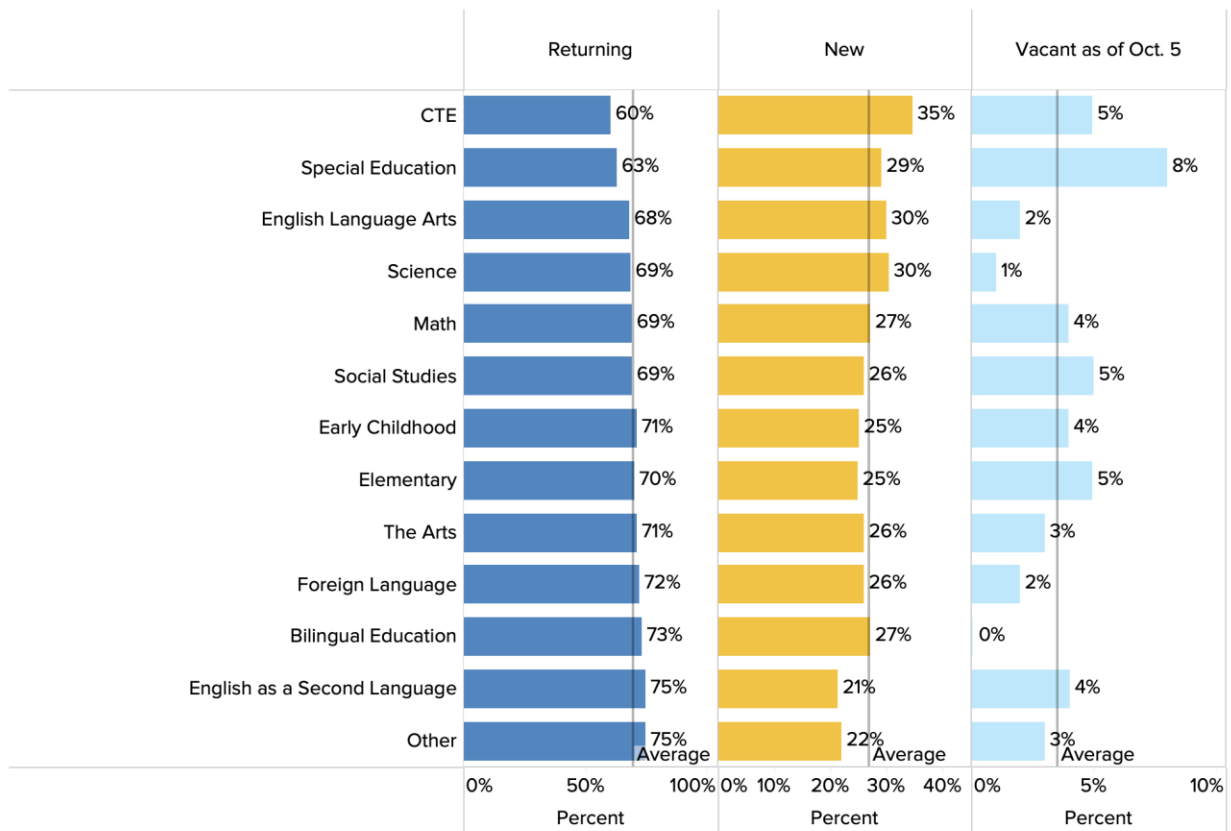
Note: Here are descriptions of the performance levels.
 Level 1: Did Not Yet Meet Expectations
 Level 2: Partially Met Expectations
 Level 3: Approached Expectations
 Level 4: Met Expectations
 Level 5: Exceeded Expectations



Beyond the lower overall achievement, a larger share of students (especially at secondary schools) are at the lowest performance levels in math than ELA. For

example, among middle school students, the share of students performing at Levels 1 & 2 (did not yet meet or partially met expectations) is 55 percent doing in math and 40 percent doing so in ELA. The gap between ELA and math is even larger for high school students,¹ more than 20 percentage points in the percent at Levels 1 & 2—this means it will be harder to catch up students in math than ELA.

Teacher retention status by subject in D.C., school year 2023-24



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'s District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/node/1597311>

■ Returning
 ■ New
 ■ Vacant as of Oct. 5



Bill B25-800, Mathematics Education Improvement Amendment Act of 2024, proposes a task force to identify actionable steps to improve math instruction and

¹ Students in high school take different math subjects, meaning the standardized assessments are not the same for each student in math during these grades.

achievement, especially for struggling students. This work will build on some strategies used for literacy in D.C., focusing on evidenced-based instructional materials, professional development for educators, and curricula to improve math education. Prioritizing resources and training for math teachers is imperative, particularly given that 27 percent of math teachers are new to their school, subject, or grade band in a given year.

I will close with some recommendations for [OSSE’s newly-created Math Task Force](#).

The Math Task Force should approach the problem in a way that is different from the Early Literacy Task Force² in important ways. First, given the greater challenges to math achievement in middle and high school grades, the Task Force should focus on these grades, or continued support after a strong foundation in elementary school grades. Second, the Task Force should emphasize a strong connection to learning outcomes and evaluation related to professional development and recommended materials instead of just the availability of materials and professional development. This will allow the system to see which approaches are working and where to intensify efforts. Third, there should be a stronger focus on tools for families to support math learning at home. This should be a core recommendation, not just of an area for further consideration, as the DC SBOE includes in SR24-24, “Recommending Actions to Improve Mathematics Performance in the District of Columbia.” Families play a vital role in supplementing learning, but most parents have likely been taught math in a different way and can benefit from a better understanding of how the subject is taught now.

² Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2023. “Recommendations for Structured Literacy Instruction in the District of Columbia.” OSSE. Retrieved from https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Official%20Early%20Literacy%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I welcome any questions you may have.