



**D.C. POLICY CENTER**

Education Policy Initiative

## FY2025 PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Hearing Room 412 (Track B)

John A. Wilson Building

Testimony of Hannah Mason

Senior Education Research Analyst, Education Policy Initiative

D.C. Policy Center

**Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole.**

My name is Hannah Mason, and I am the Senior Education Research Analyst 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, my testimony will focus on findings included in our recent State of D.C. Schools, 2023-24 report that focuses on strong system health and modest progress toward academic recovery.

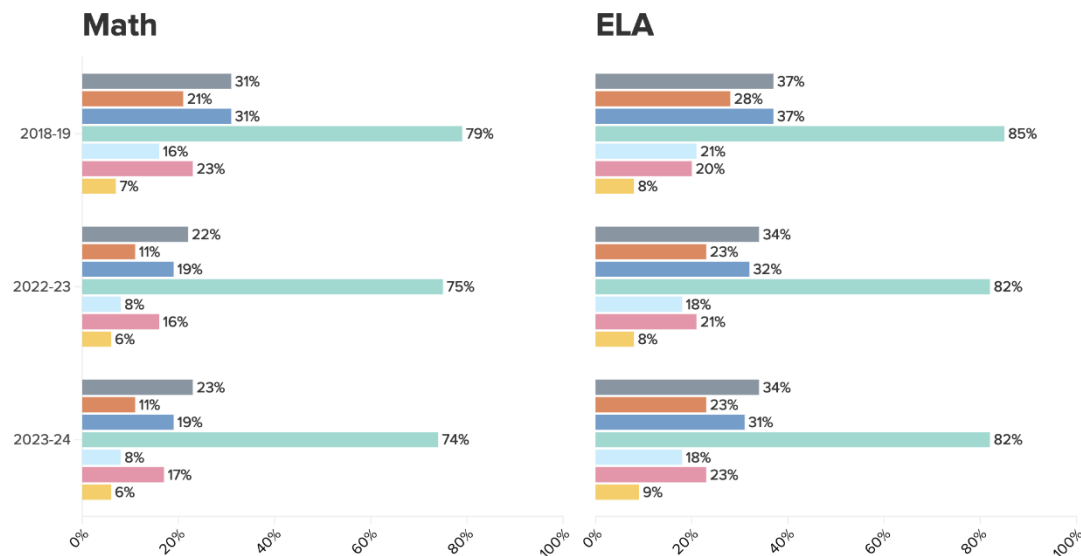
**D.C.'s increasing teacher retention reflects strong signs of system health.** In school year 2023-24, 74 percent of teachers returned to their same school and role — a three-percentage point increase from the previous year.<sup>i</sup> This positive trend continues, with 76 percent of teachers returning to their same school and role for the 2024-25 school year. These retention rates matter because poor teacher retention negatively impacts student performance.<sup>ii</sup> D.C.'s progress highlights a clear commitment to retaining educators — one of the ways OSSE is sustaining these trends of teacher retention is through launching the first citywide apprenticeship in teaching program which provides a cost-free pathway for current paraprofessionals to enter the teaching profession.<sup>iii</sup>

**D.C. is making modest progress in learning outcomes post-pandemic.** In school year 2023-24, 34 percent of students met or exceeded expectations on the English Language Arts (ELA) CAPE assessment, showing no change from the previous year and a three-percentage point decrease compared to pre-pandemic school years. In math, 23 percent of students met or

exceeded expectations, a one percentage point increase from the previous year but eight percentage points lower than in school year 2018-19.<sup>iv</sup>

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

Select student group: All Black Latino White Economically disadvantaged English learners Students with disabilities



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2024. "District of Columbia Statewide Assessment Results for school years 2018-19, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24." Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/page/data-and-reports-0>

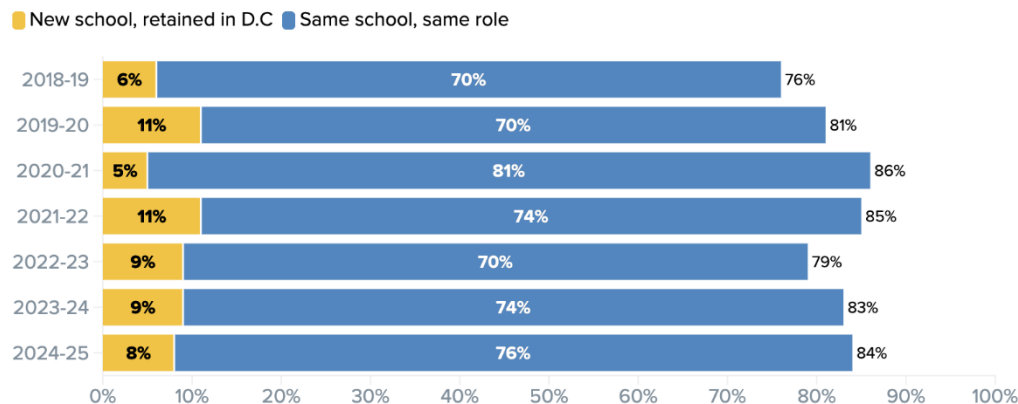


### More promising signs for D.C. student outcomes come from the 2024 NAEP results.

At the state level, D.C.'s most recent scores are on par with 2022 scores in math for 8th grade and reading for 4th and 8th grades. Importantly, D.C. saw a significant increase of 8 percentage points in 4th grade math — outpacing growth for all public schools and large cities.<sup>v</sup> D.C.'s 4th grade math score of 231 matches the large city average and is moving closer to the national public-school average of 237. In reading, the average 4th grade score in D.C. was 209, compared to the national average of 214.<sup>vi</sup> These results suggest that D.C. is making academic gains for its students, a positive sign given the learning disruptions caused by COVID-19 — which is promising given OSSE's numerous academic investments. These investments include more than 350 educators completing science of reading courses<sup>vii</sup>, over \$33 million dollars in

high impact tutoring investment over three fiscal years reaching over 12,000 students<sup>viii</sup>, and hiring dedicated literacy specialists in schools to support local districts with planning and professional learning systems related to literacy.<sup>ix</sup>

### Teacher retention in D.C.'s public schools, over time



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2024. "District of Columbia Educator Retention data for school years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2023-24, and 2024-25."



### Another sign of D.C.'s strong health system is the increase in public school

**enrollment.** Between 1990 and 2019, public school enrollment grew every year.<sup>x</sup> However, nationally, public school enrollment has declined – decreasing by 0.2 percent across the country as of the fall 2023 counts.<sup>xi</sup> D.C., on the other hand, has a different story to tell. In the 2023-24 school year, 90,608 students enrolled in public schools, a 2.3 percent increase from the previous year, with pre-kindergarten experiencing the greatest enrollment boost of 3.4.<sup>xii</sup> The increase in enrollment signals high demand for D.C. public schools, which is promising given the decline in births starting in 2016.<sup>xiii</sup> These trends continue in school year 2024-25 with preliminary data showing a 1.1 percent increase in public school enrollment.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Looking ahead, there is an opportunity for D.C. to build on these system strengths and the modest improvements in learning outcomes.<sup>xv</sup>**

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

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<sup>i</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. "2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief." OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Loeb, S., Ronfeldt, M., & Wyckoff. 2013. *How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement*. American Educational Research Association. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0002831212463813>

<sup>iii</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2024. "Educator Workforce Report Highlights Successes and Strategies for Enhancing Educational Excellence." OSSE. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/release/educator-workforce-report-highlights-successes-and-strategies-enhancing-educational#:~:text=OSSE%20is%20also%20proud%20to,Spring%20Literacy%20Conference%20and%20more>

<sup>iv</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2024 "District of Columbia Statewide Assessment Results for school years 2018-19 and 2023-24." OSSE. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/page/data-and-reports-0>

<sup>v</sup> Coffin, C. "Chart of the week: Digging into D.C.'s gains on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade national math assessment." D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/chart-of-the-week-digging-into-d-c-s-gains-on-the-4th-grade-national-math-assessment/>

<sup>vi</sup> The Nation's Report Card. 2024. Data Tools – State Profiles: District of Columbia. Retrieved from [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/DC?chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=DC&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2024R3&cti=PgTab\\_OT](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/DC?chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=DC&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2024R3&cti=PgTab_OT)

<sup>vii</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2023. *Annual Report – From Recovery to Restoration: Leading with Momentum*. OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/OSSE\\_AR2023%201.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/OSSE_AR2023%201.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. *High Impact Tutoring Report: Fiscal Year 2024*. OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/FY24%20HIT%20Report.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/FY24%20HIT%20Report.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2023. "2023 OSSE Annual Report: Advancing Excellence." OSSE. Retrieved from <https://osse.dc.gov/page/2023-osse-annual-report-advancing-excellence>

<sup>x</sup> Institute of Education Sciences (IES). 2023. "Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by level and grade: Selected years, fall 2019 through fall 2031." IES. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23\\_203.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23_203.10.asp)

<sup>xi</sup> Institute of Education Sciences (IES), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). 2024. "NCES Data Show Public School Enrollment Held Steady Overall From Fall 2022 to Fall 2023." IES NCES. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press\\_releases/12\\_5\\_2024.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/12_5_2024.asp)

<sup>xii</sup> Coffin, C., & Mason, H. 2025. *State of D.C. Schools, 2023-24: Strong system health and modest progress*. D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from

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<sup>xiii</sup> Coffin, C., & Rubin, J. 2022. *Declining births and lower demand: Charting the future of public-school enrollment in D.C.* D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/enrollment-decline/>

<sup>xiv</sup> Government of the District of Columbia. 2024. "Mayor Bowser and OSSE announce My School DC lottery now open for 2025-26 school year." Executive Office of the Mayor. Retrieved from <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-and-osse-announce-my-school-dc-lottery-now-open-2025-26-school-year#:~:text=Preliminary%2C%20unaudited%20numbers%20show%20enrollment,www.myschooldc.org/>.

<sup>xv</sup> Coffin, C., & Mason, H. 2025. *State of D.C. Schools, 2023-24: Strong system health and modest progress.* D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from xx.