



Fiscal Year 2019  
Performance Oversight Questions  
Office of the Student Advocate

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## **Office of the Student Advocate Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Oversight Questions**

### **Program Operations and Community Engagement**

#### **Q1. What were the major accomplishments of the Office of the Student Advocate in FY19 and to date in FY20?**

- 1. Request for Assistance Line-** In FY19, we continued to operate our Request for Assistance (RFA) line live, Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.
  - School Year (SY)2018-19, we were able to support 507 callers.
  - Four-Year Review- Since our first year of operation in SY2015-16, we have seen a 276 percent increase in requests for assistance.
  - SY2019-20 Requests to Date- To date, in Quarters 1 and 2 of SY2019-20, we have received 245 requests for assistance.
  
- 2. Community Outreach-** In addition to the increased volume of calls through our RFA line, we significantly increased our interactions and contacts with families beyond our four walls. In SY2018-19, we met face-to-face with 3,317 individuals and distributed resources to over 6,750 people through our outreach and community engagement efforts. To date, in Quarters 1 and 2 of SY2019-20, we have engaged with over 1,123 education stakeholders.
  
- 3. Online Advocacy Tools: Resource Toolkits -** As we reviewed our Requests for Assistance and feedback received from service providers, it became evident that there were certain issue areas that required specific information for families to have to navigate those processes in order to move past that barrier as it affects their educational experience. We created and/or revamped toolkits that address the following needs students and families in the District may have:
  1. Homelessness
  2. Behavioral/Mental Health
  3. Bullying
  4. Attendance/Truancy
  5. Military/Service Families
  6. Special Education
    - a. Dyslexia (in progress)
  7. Safe Passage
  8. Student Discipline
  9. Race, Equity, and Inclusion
  10. Teacher Representation
  
- 4. Bullying Podcast-** In SY18-19, our office launched our first bullying prevention podcast, in partnership with DC Office of Human Rights Citywide Bullying Prevention Program (OHR Bullying). This podcast was developed to provide clarity regarding local laws and definitions of bullying, to discuss bullying prevention practices, and to share accessible resources and supports for students and families. A podcast forum facilitates more open conversations about bullying, including what bullying is and what the school's role is in ensuring student safety and how parents can be partners. We were intentional about discussing practical tools and techniques that

parents, school staff and other caring adults can employ to reduce incidents of victimization and aggressive behavior. In SY 19-20 we are planning to host podcast sessions with students, school staff, and stakeholders to share experiences and strategies that work.

- 5. Safe Passage-** In SY 2018-19, we worked to re-engage the community on topics including student safety and safe passage. In Ward 8, we established a Ward 8 Student Safety and Safe Passage Working Group, which includes students, parents, Ward 8 non-profit and community-based organizations, government offices and agencies, and schools/ LEAs. These conversations aim to bring education, health and safety, and community leaders together to discuss how to address the community violence impacting students, schools, and communities.

The Ward 8 group led to cohesive strategies and communication across Sectors and LEAs to serve families and increase safety as students crossed neighborhoods throughout the ward to and from school. OSA was able to launch [Safe Spots](#) a pilot Safe Passage initiative in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. Safe Spots are businesses, community organizations, and District government locations along corridors in the city heavily trafficked by students during arrival and dismissal. These locations have agreed to offer respite to students when student feel unsafe or need refuge from an ongoing ruckus.

In SY 19-20 OSA connected with school leaders, parents and public safety officials in Ward 4 as well as Ward 7 to discuss their communities respective concerns and develop solutions for student safety during arrival and dismissal. OSA continues to partner with the DME for an expansion of Safe Spots in several other wards.

- 6. Special Education Workshop Series-** Our office continues to be committed to supporting parents with students who need specialized instruction. We returned to fill a void that emerged after several traditionally strong stakeholders in the Special Education community saw reduction in capacity creating a larger knowledge and access gap between LEA's and parents. In SY18-19 we hosted our informational sessions on special education in Wards 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in partnership with DC State Board of Education Members (Emily Gasoi, Ward 1; Karen Williams, Ward 7; Markus Batchelor, Ward 8), DC Councilmember (Councilmember Brienne Nadeau, Ward 1), ward-based education organizations (Ward 1 Education Council; Ward 7 Education Council; Ward 8 Education Council), ward-based community organizations (East River Family Strengthening Collaborative; Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative; PAVE), and DC public and charter schools (KIPP DC Public Charter Schools; Columbia Heights Education Campus; Cardozo Education Campus). Thanks to our government and organizational stakeholders, we changed the format of the session from panel presentations to small group table discussions in which providers had the opportunity to interact with families and respond to questions and concerns specific to their student's educational needs.

Our SY18-19 partners included: Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, OSSE State Advisory Panel on Special Education, OSSE State Complaints Office, OSSE Strong Start, OSSE Office of Dispute Resolution, DC Special Education Cooperative, DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction, DCPS Section 504 and Accommodations Team, Advocates for Justice and Education, Children's Law Center, and Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services.

Workshops in Ward 1 are conducted in Spanish, English and Amharic interpretation services is available. In addition to our workshop series, we have expanded the resources and tools related to special education on our website, including our workshop presentation, as both a printable handout and a webinar; a list of special education acronyms, abbreviations, and definitions; a list of resources and organizational supports; our ask sheets; and our Parent & Family Go-To Guide. We have these resources in multiple languages.

7. **Student Discipline-** In SY18-19, our office partnered with Howard University School of Law where we conducted a comparative analysis of student discipline policies for DCPS and each of the public charter LEAs. This analysis was conducted in order to develop resource tools for families that would support their school selection and transition processes. These tools will allow for parents and students to explore their school options in a more informed way. We also want to help parents be more proactive with school discipline policies instead of reactive when a problem arises.

We continued to work in partnership with Howard Law in SY19-20 to produce additional comparative analysis of student discipline policies for DCPS and each of the public charter LEAs. The analysis conducted this year was a review of compliance to date with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018.

1. The Compliance review focused on 7 areas:
  - a. Publication of updated Handbooks
  - b. Limits on the number of days a student may be suspended
  - c. Written justification for suspension of more than 20 cumulative days
  - d. Due Process Rights
  - e. Elimination of exclusionary discipline for certain behaviors
  - f. Continuity Plans for suspended students
  - g. Alternative Disciplinary Methods

District of Columbia Student Discipline Guide- With the passage of the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, we created a guide to help students, families, and school staff navigate the new law. Developed in partnership with Every Student, Every Day Coalition, the guide explains new rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under DC law. English, Amharic and Spanish language guides are available in print upon request and at most public libraries; French, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese versions available online. In SY 18-19 we distributed 1,300 discipline guides to parent organizations, service providers, schools and libraries. In 19-20 to date we have distributed 600+ English versions as well as 300 Spanish and 100 Amharic copies.

8. **Go-To Guide/Ask Sheets-** Our Parent Go-To Guide is a collection of parent-centered documents we previously offered in isolation on our website and printed at various outreach events. By placing these resources in one guide, parents have access to information in one handy document. The guide is a readily available resource that families can use to easily navigate laws and processes relevant to public education, allowing families to access and utilize their power in a larger capacity. In Sy 19-20 we updated the guide with additional information for Mental Health, Bullying, Military/Service Families and Homeless Students.

This guide, translated in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, and French, is available both online and in print. Over 5,000 printed copies were distributed in SY18-19 to parents, schools, libraries, and other resource centers. So far in SY19-20, we have distributed 2,400 Go-To Guides to EdFest attendees and we distributed over 1,000 Guides to public libraries across the District. In SY 19-20 Spanish and Amharic printed versions were also produce and distributed to schools with high populations, as well as Mayoral Offices with constituencies that communicate in those respective languages.

- 9. Language Access Improvements** - In SY18-19, we continued our partnership with the Mayor's offices on various affairs (i.e. African Affairs) and community-based organizations/family collaboratives (i.e. Collaborative Solutions for Communities) in order to reach immigrant or non-English speaking families in supporting their efforts to navigate our public education system. We have implemented additional language access improvement to be in compliance with the Language Access Act by translating portions of our website, materials, and our outreach brochure into all of the required languages (e.g. Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese and Korean). We also use the services of the Language Line, which we utilize frequently to communicate with callers to our RFA line who do not speak English. We have translated our Go-To Guide and other outreach materials as well as portions of our webpage into all of the required languages (e.g. Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese and Korean). Since SY 18-19 all of our sessions in Ward 1 have interpretation services available. SY 19-20 we have printed material in Spanish, Amharic, and English at all community and public facing events.

**Q2. Identify any legislative, statutory, or regulatory requirements that the Office of the Student Advocate lacks sufficient resources to properly implement. Please note any operational or logistical barriers to your office's operations.**

Currently, OSA statutory limitations are reflections of our capacity constraints. We are unable to administer additional Parent Education Resource Centers (PERCs) as currently legislated due to a lack of staffing capacity. The operation of the current PERC has a staff of 3 FTEs, and 2 fellows; this would need to be replicated to open additional PERCs. In absence of an additional public space separate from our current one, we answer our line live and also developed a comprehensive Online Education & Community Resource Guide.

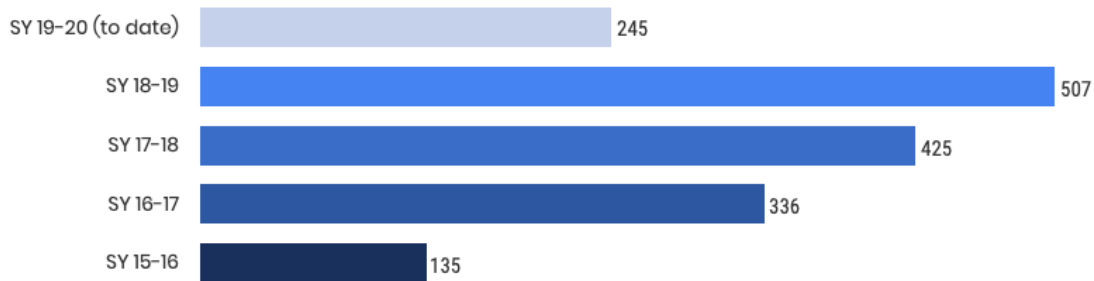
While we have been able to hold meetings in every ward in FY19, staffing capacity has limited our ability to further scale our efforts so we can continue to meet requests as they come to us. In lieu of staffing capacity for FY19, we have partnered with multiple entities in their engagement efforts so that we have representation in every ward, and we have also distributed our materials to every library and all stakeholders in order to raise awareness about our office.

As required by our legislative mandates, our office operates a public education hotline, or the Request for Assistance (RFA) line. The RFA line supports our ability to work directly with students, parents, families, and community members to answer any public education related questions and inquiries. We consider our RFA line to be a "311 system" for public education through which we provide relevant resources, information, and appropriate agency or organization referrals to meet the specific needs of the caller. In addition to resources and

referrals, the RFA line allows our office to provide one-on-one coaching to families on a variety of public education issues.

We currently do not have the capacity to provide all students with an advocate who can join conversations and be present with parents at meetings. In order to deliver our advocacy services within the communities we serve, we need an additional FTE to help us serve students and families who need a knowledgeable and reliable partner when communicating with school and other public education officials. There is only one community-based organization that offers such services, which means those families seeking advocates after these providers reach capacity are forced into dilemmas between basic needs and ensuring adequate education for their children through the hiring of an attorney, or education consultant. Those families who do not have these resources are left with no other avenues of support.

### Request for Assistance: Comparisons by Year



In FY19, we directly served 507 families through our RFA line. While we received 758 calls total in FY19, over 250 calls were made outside of our operating hours. The number of calls made to our RFA line outside of our operating hours shows the great need families have regarding public education. When callers reach our office voicemail during non-operating hours, the bilingual (English and Spanish) voicemail message shares our website resources (accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and provides our email address.

The OSA Establishment Act of 2013 mandates that our office advocate on behalf of current and prospective public-school students and their parents or guardians before the Office of the Ombudsman or public school officials. In Winter/Spring 2020 OSA will pilot individual educational advocacy for families with special education concerns. In past practice, OSA has performed this function in cases where it is requested by the Ombudsman. In these cases, the parent or guardian usually has a diminished capacity to actively participate.

The majority of our statutory or regulatory requirements for the Office of the Student Advocate that did not move forward in FY2019 were reflections of the fiscal constraints to the budget. The statute has strong wording on how the PERCs and several core functions of the office should interact with the public. The statute lacks the associate funding for implementing fully all that was passed into law.

### **Q3. Provide the Committee with the mission, vision, goals, and services for the Office of the Student Advocate.**

### ***Our Mission***

The mission of the Office of the Student Advocate is to support DC residents to achieve equal access to public education through advocacy, outreach, and information services. We work in partnership to equalize the balance of power between families and schools by increasing family voice, access, and power in our system of public education. We achieve this goal by ensuring families are connected to resources and supports, informed of their rights, and understand the intricacies of the public education school system.

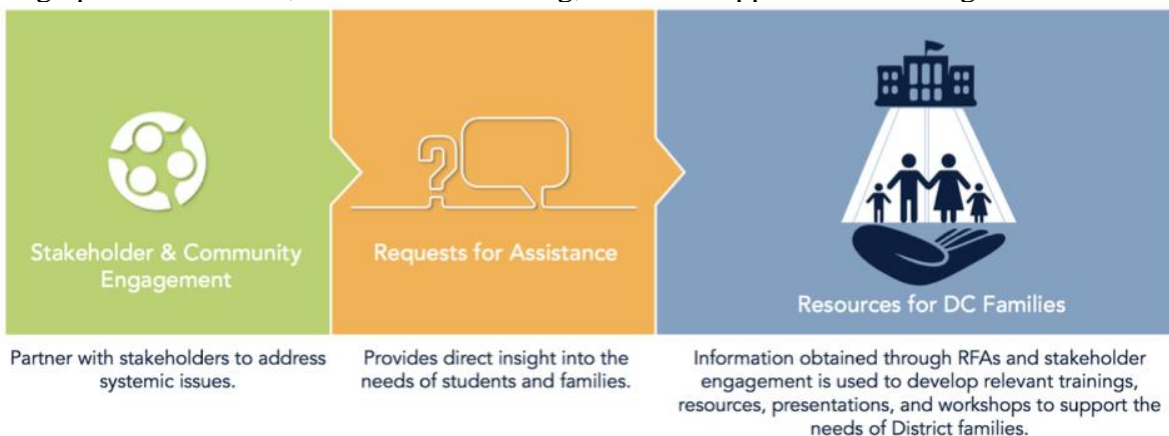
Families can often feel discouraged by what they perceive to be a lack of support and clear guidance from agencies and offices connected to public education. Our engagement with families through coalition building and outreach provides us with information necessary to develop targeted trainings, information sessions, and workshops to help empower families and further support student and parent leadership.

The lack of systematic coordination within the city makes it difficult for families and other stakeholders to collaborate effectively towards improving the educational outcomes of our city's youth. This lack of coordination results in often unclear, redundant, and inefficient solutions meant to address the needs and concerns of families. In our office, we work to fill this void by being knowledgeable about the various policies and programs within our school systems, building relationships among individual leaders and groups, and connecting students and families with the resources they need. Through the variety of resources, toolkits, and guides that we have within our office, we see ourselves as a source of clarity in an often unclear education landscape.

Within this system, the Office of the Student Advocate plays a unique role in the DC education landscape as the only governance structure that combines the access and influence of a government agency with the direct, grassroots outreach necessary to serve our families and communities. Our office serves “to make the [public] school system more accessible and to boost parent engagement...and access to resources.”

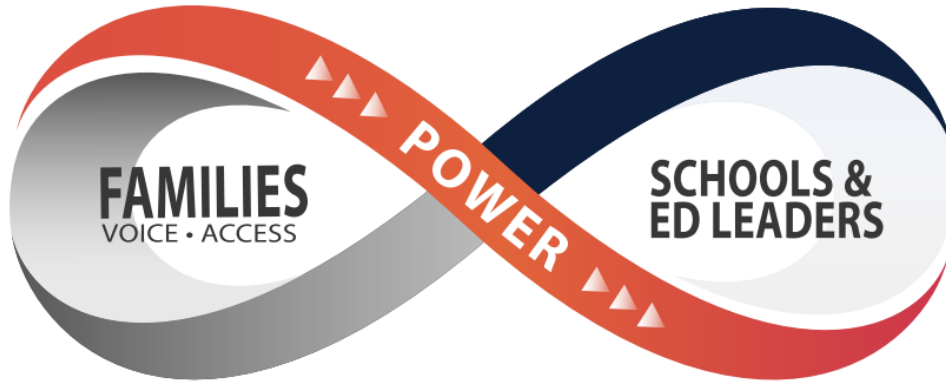
### ***How Our Work Supports Families***

In our day-to-day work, we define equity and support students and families in their advocacy through parent education, one-on-one coaching, resource supports and trainings.



Our work is focused on building equity through collaboration and partnerships with students and families. The sharing of power between schools, families, and communities must be relational.

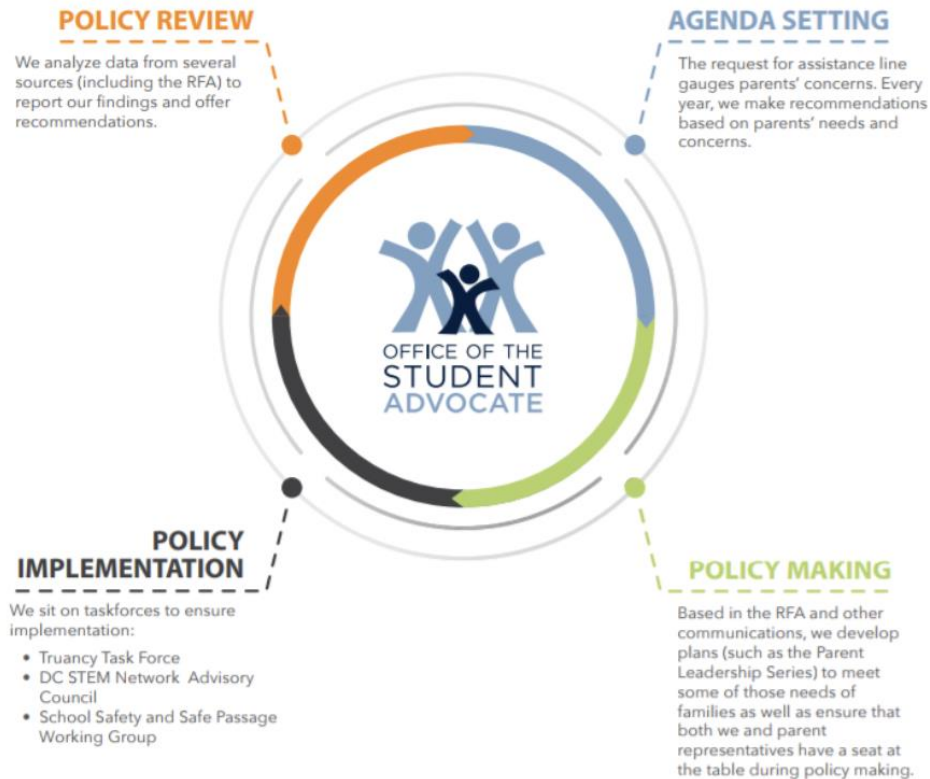
This concept of relational power promotes the idea that power is not finite and that sharing power with families does not limit the amount of power that schools have; rather it recognizes the roles that families, schools, communities, and other stakeholders each have in the educational achievement of all students



We do this through gaining insight into the needs of our families and the greater community in our Request for Assistance line, participation in and hosting of community events and informational panels, coalition building with community organizations and governmental entities, development of tools, resources, and toolkits, and facilitation of workshops, and connecting families to appropriate referrals and resources within the community. We have already surpassed the number of RFAs that we have received from last year, and we regularly receive invites to share information about our services to schools and community organizations. We aim to elevate the parent voice into the very discussions that are of concern to our community members on a systemic level. For instance, we have several stakeholders who also attend our parent meetings, where parents can directly have their concerns addressed. We have also incorporated the community voice into the DME's work with Safe Passage.



## OSA INTERVENTION THROUGHOUT FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



Policy Cycle was adapted from James E. Anderson in his Public Policy Making (1974)

Our office works to achieve our mission through four strategic goals:

1. Shift the balance of power in favor of our community members by convening stakeholders at all levels around topics of community importance.
2. Develop and support the knowledge base of students, parents, and community stakeholders.
3. Ensure that family and community perspectives are included in all relevant public education conversations.
4. Mobilize community-level leadership in grassroots education advocacy.

More of the specifics regarding how we implement these strategic goals are outlined in the questions to follow.

### ***Office of the Student Advocate – Ongoing Work and Initiatives*** ***Initiatives and Collaborative Projects***

- **Bullying Workshops & Podcasts:** Hosted in partnership with the DC Office of Human Rights Citywide Bullying Prevention Program, this workshop series is focused on providing clarity regarding local laws and definitions of bullying, discussing bullying prevention practices, and sharing accessible resources and supports for students and families.

- **Special Education Workshop Series:** This series is focused on providing information to families about provisions of federal and local special education law, the difference between 504 plans and IEPs, prompting evaluation, determining eligibility for services, and understanding procedural safeguards. This forum also gives families the opportunity to interact with local level special education experts to workshop their specific concerns. Our SY 2018-19 partners included: Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) State Advisory Panel on Education, OSSE State Complaints Office, OSSE Strong Start, OSSE Office of Dispute Resolution, OSSE Division of Student Transportation, DC Special Education Cooperative, DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction, DCPS Section 504 and Accommodations Team, DCPS Early Stages, Advocates for Justice and Education, Children's Law Center, and Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services.
- **Discipline Guide:** With the passage of the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, we created a guide to help students, families, and school staff navigate the new law. Developed in partnership with the Every Student, Every Day Coalition, the guide explains new rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under DC law. Families often feel alone and overwhelmed when figuring out how to move forward after the school makes a discipline decision for their student. All students and families should know their rights whether or not they seek to challenge a disciplinary decision. Schools must ensure that their discipline policies are in accordance with the new law and other relevant DC and federal laws.
- **Safe Passage Initiatives:** The safe passage of our students traveling to-and-from school is paramount, but we know that the instances of community violence surrounding our schools and communities jeopardizes the safety of our children. In SY 2018-19, we worked to engage the community on topics including student safety and safe passage. We established an on-going Ward 8 Student Safety and Safe Passage Working Group, which includes students, parents, non-profit and community-based organizations, government offices and agencies, and schools/ LEAs. These conversations aim to bring education, health and safety, and community leaders together to discuss how to address the community violence impacting students, schools, and communities. These efforts are now being replicated across the city, with our work expanding to Wards 4, 5, and 7 in addition to Ward 8.

Our office also launched [Safe Spots](#) a pilot Safe Passage initiative in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. Safe Spots are businesses, community organizations, and District government locations along corridors in the city heavily trafficked by students during arrival and dismissal. These locations have agreed to offer respite to students when student feel unsafe or need refuge.

In SY 2018-19 we revamped our online safe passage toolkit to include more local resources and supports. The toolkit continues to provide resources for parents and caregivers to discuss issues of safety and transportation with their children. It offers lesson plans and curriculum resources for educators to embed safety practices inside and outside of the classroom and even strategies for reaching out to neighbors and community members to collaboratively make our spaces safer and more welcoming. The toolkit is organized into 6 sections based on the 6 E's prescribed by the National Safe Routes to School in order to utilize a comprehensive, integrated approach:

1. **Education:** Inform students, families, and community members about safety.
2. **Encouragement:** Use events and activities to promote safe practices.
3. **Engineering:** Implement physical improvements to streetscape.
4. **Enforcement:** Partner with local law to address traffic and crime issues.
5. **Evaluation:** Assess success and identify unintended consequences or opportunities.
6. **Equity:** Create access to opportunities and ensure equitable outcomes for everyone.

#### Resources Developed

- **Parent & Family Go-To Guide:** The Parent & Family Go-To Guide, designed and developed by our office, is a quick, concise, and family-friendly public education resource reference for any stakeholder needing information about the DC education system. This guide is a collection of documents that serve as a reference for parents and families looking for information, policy guidance, and conversation starters on a host of education topics. The guide includes over 75 questions students and families can use to initiate conversations with schools about:
  - Achievement/Testing
  - Behavior
  - Enrollment
  - Response to Intervention
  - Special Education

In SY 19-20 we updated the guide with additional information for Mental Health, Bullying, Military/Service Families and Homeless Students. Also, the guide was made available in print for Spanish and Amharic speaking families.

- **Online Education & Community Resource Guide:** The online Education & Community Resource Guide is the first publicly available citywide initiative of its kind and is a continuously evolving resource that currently has more than 400 resource listings organized into 20 category areas. The guide provides students, parents, families, and communities across all 8 wards with a roadmap to getting started in navigating the public education landscape in DC. This guide was developed to highlight organizations and government agencies in the sphere of public education that provide critical services to residents across DC. This resource serves to acknowledge the work that is already being done by countless government agencies, offices, and community-based organizations while connecting families to those vital resources in one centralized location.
- **Parent Leadership Toolkit:** Creating and establishing parent organizations are useful and effective ways to organize parent voices and amplify their power in the educational landscape.

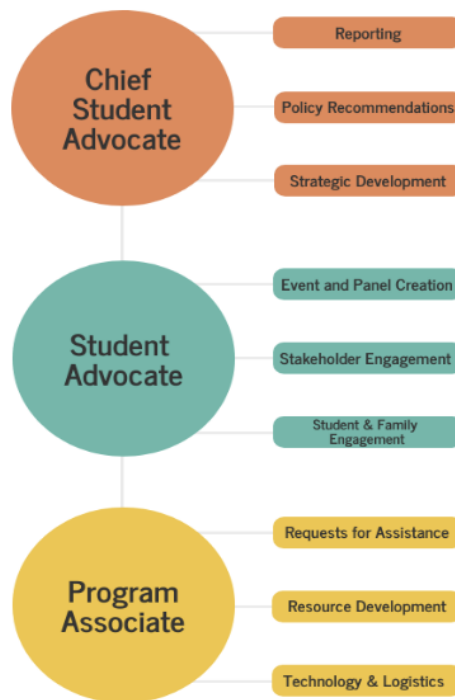
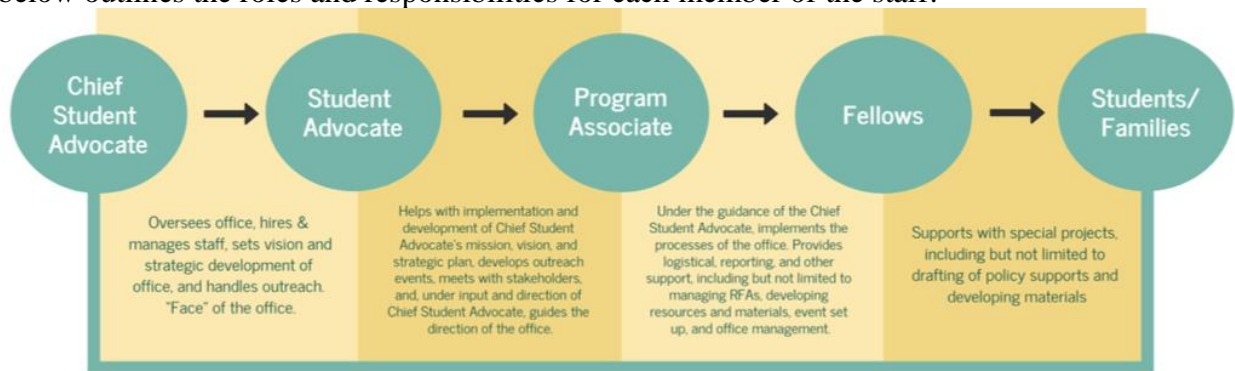
Effective advocacy involves identifying the purpose and objectives of the work in the communities, understanding the issues and opinions behind the causes, investing in the power of the advocates, and strategically leveraging available tools and skills to maximum utility. Because we know that one size does not fit all, our online Parent Leadership Toolkit provides an outline of how to create and establish a parent organization with the right structure, leadership, and procedures for your school. In addition to outlining how to create school-based parent organizations, the leadership toolkit includes information on school budget, pathways for advocacy, and understanding public education governance.

- Online Information & Advocacy Resources and Tools: In an effort to streamline information that helps parents better understand the public education system, policies, and procedures, we have continued to improve the resource supports available on our website that are accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Our resources provide families the ability to better understand our public education system and a broad range of education-relation topics. Along with using these tools to advocate effectively, the tools can also be used to foster positive relationships between families and schools. A list of our resource topics includes:
  - Advocacy & Lobbying Toolkit
  - Attendance and Truancy Resources
  - Behavioral & Mental Health Resources
  - Bullying Resources
  - Effective Communication Toolkit
  - Enrollment Resources
  - High School Graduation Requirements & Information
  - Homeless Children & Youth Resources
  - Parent Leadership Toolkit: Parent Organization Resources
  - Right to Know Ask Sheets
  - Safe Passage
  - Special Education & Other School Supports
  - Student Discipline
  - Student Leadership Information & Resources
  - Testing & Assessments Resources
  - DC Public Education Governance Structure
- Race, Equity, and Inclusion Toolkit (Website): Race and class often serve as barriers to engagement, leaving a void between students, families, communities, and schools. We created our Race, Equity, and Inclusion toolkit as a resource for families, schools, and community organizations looking to begin their work towards creating and maintaining equitable and inclusive spaces in education. The information and resources included in the toolkit have been pulled from organizations, educators, and scholars who have been instrumental in moving the conversation on race, equity, and inclusion forward both nationally and locally. In the toolkit, families, schools, and community organizations can access standardized definitions, articles, books, videos, and other informational materials addressing issues surrounding race, equity, and inclusion.
- My Teacher DC Parent Resource: With DC’s confusing education landscape, countless resources have been created to help families choose which schools are the best fit for their students, with

the most recent being the DC School Report Card. Information regarding the students attending public and public charter schools is plentiful, but there is limited information regarding the teachers working within these school buildings. Teachers play a vital role in establishing the culture of any school, but families do not have access to information about schools' teaching staff. The Teacher Representation resource is an informative tool that pairs information locally about DC public and charter schoolteachers with national research on the importance of having a representative teacher workforce. This resource also has a list of detailed questions families can choose from to ask school leadership when choosing a school for their children.

**Q4. Provide the Committee with the operational guidelines for the Office of the Student Advocate.**

The Office of the Student Advocate is comprised of 3 full time employees (FTEs). The chart below outlines the roles and responsibilities for each member of the staff:



As outlined in the above chart, the Chief Student Advocate is responsible for setting and overseeing the vision for the office. The Chief Student Advocate manages partnerships and

coalitions, hires and manages staff, serves on task forces, and provides policy recommendations. The Student Advocate, under the direction of the Chief Student Advocate, helps to strategically implement the office's vision by meeting with stakeholders, assisting in coalition building and community engagement, and assisting in the office's strategic development. Required to understand the Chief Student Advocate's broader vision, the Program Associate creates and implements office processes, assists in logistics and administration, and drafts external-facing materials on behalf of the office. Fellows support special projects and develop resources and toolkits, such as the Safe Passage and Parent Leadership toolkits. Fellows generally have advanced degrees and experience in community engagement, education, and/or public policy. Given the size of the office, there are several areas of operation that all staff and fellows regularly provide support in. For example, all staff are responsible for addressing Requests for Assistance. This is to ensure that any family who contacts our office will receive a response from a live caller. All staff also track issues of interest to the community and provide feedback to the Chief Student Advocate, who determines how these areas fit within her broader vision for the office.

Our process for engaging with the public is informed by the goals and vision of our community and governmental stakeholders as well as the information shared with us by our families. This allows us to create programming that fully aligns with the needs of our families. Our outreach strategy is a citywide approach of targeting communities by ward. We operationalize this by engaging regularly to keep abreast of their concerns by conducting school visits with principals, PTA, and/or school-based service providers; participating in multi-agency taskforces; community-wide surveying; and being present for neighborhood-wide education coalition meetings. We strive to engage all District stakeholders face-to-face whenever public education is part of the discourse. We review this information along with our RFA data in order to develop the trainings, workshops, resources, and toolkits relevant to the concerns brought to our attention from the community.

**Q5. Does the Chief Student Advocate have the resources necessary to execute their duties? If not, describe the areas in which resources are lacking.**

Currently, the statutory limitations are around our capacity constraints. We are unable to administer additional Parent Education Resource Centers (PERCs) as currently legislated due to a lack of staffing capacity and programmatic funds to secure and furnish additional brick and mortar community office space.

In order to deliver our advocacy services within the communities we serve, we need an additional FTE to help us serve students and families who do need a knowledgeable and reliable partner when communicating with school and other public education officials. There is only one community-based organization that offers such services, which means those families seeking advocates after these providers reach capacity are forced into pocketbook dilemmas between food/rent and ensuring adequate education for their children through the hiring of an attorney or education consultant. Those families who do not have these resources are left with no other avenues of support.

In FY19, the Committee of the Whole supplemented our funding with a one time enhancement of \$15,000 for outreach. We have used and will continue to use these funds to expand our services to families of students that are English language learners; hosting trainings and workshop with live translation; revamp, reprint, and distribute our printed products; and design our website to be more intuitive and interactive. We will be able to offer printed versions in the six languages of our redesigned brochure and Parent & Family Go To Guide. We posted advertisements of our services in 3 languages in communities where English learning families are clustered. Additional ads were placed in buses shelters that serve those communities as well. We rebranded our web footprint to be uniform and aligned with the designs from our revamped promotional material.

**Q6. Describe the Office of the Student Advocate’s stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts for FY19 and to date in FY20.**

In FY19, we leveraged relationships into partnerships in all 8 wards. In SY 2018-19, we broadened our outreach to places where families go for support. In addition to schools and education-focused organizations, we continued our outreach to service providers, libraries, hospitals, recreation centers, child care centers, DC’s Office of Unified Communications (DC 311), homeless family services, entities focused on community violence, organizations working with non-English speaking communities and local universities working with school-age children and families.

The efforts have afforded us the opportunity to extend our services deeper into the community. As a result of our office’s relationship-building and resource sharing, we consistently receive referrals from DC Council, the State Board of Education, Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, DCPS Central Office, DC Public Charter School Board, schools, local level administrators, and community-based organizations.

We worked with over 90 entities and were present at over 100 events and meetings citywide to take part in relevant public education conversations. In FY19, our office engaged with over 3,400 individuals, ranging from families to service providers and government agencies, outside of our RFA process. We continued to scale successful partnerships and replicate opportunities for engagement with students and families. We also extended our reach through media advertisement. We placed ads on buses, at Metro stations, across major social media platforms, and on local radio stations.

In FY19, we participated in the following community outreach events in partnership with government, organizational, and community stakeholders:

- OSSE Parent & Engagement Summit
- My School EdFest
- Know Your Rights, Special Education Workshop Series
- KIPPDC/DME Safe Passage Student Convening
- Ward 7 Ed Council Student Safety Panel
- OSSE State Advisory Panel on Special Education: Town Hall
- Ward 1 Education Town Hall: Chancellor & DME Search

- AJE Call to Action Solutions Not Suspensions
- DYRS Level Up Truancy
- DCPS Student Resource Fairs (Multiple Campus)
- Decoding Dyslexia Community Meeting
- DC Prep Benning Anti Violence Student Led Rally
- Back to School Night/Fairs (DCPS & PCS Campuses)
- National Children Center Student Carnival
- DCPS Multi-Lingual Fair
- DECC Student Transportation Summit
- Anacostia Reclaiming Our Peace Student Rally
- Ward 8 Safe Passage Work Group
- Ward 7 Safe Passage/Student Safety Group
- Ward 4 Safe Passage/Student Transportation Group

The Office of the Student Advocate engages in education policy discussions and thought-leadership through membership on task forces, advisory committees, working groups, panels, and conference participation, which include:

- 2019 National Family and Community Engagement Conference
- Equity in the Center Summit
- Special Education Leader Network
- Raise DC Graduation Pathways Summit
- CJCC Police and Schools Summit
- DC Policy Center Racial Equity Symposium
- LEE Diversity in Public Leadership Summit
- Every Day Counts! Truancy Task Force
- School Safety and Safe Passage Working Group (co-chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice and the Deputy Mayor for Education)
- The Steering Committee for Parent Leadership Training in partnership with Multicultural Community Service
- DCPS Child Find panels
- DC Democratic State Committee: Addressing Educational Inequality in DC
- DC Court Education Working Group: Juvenile Justice Subcommittee
- DHS Mental Health Expansion Coordinating Committee: Student & Parent Committee

These groups largely represent a cross-section of leaders from government agencies and community organizations, and we represent a valuable mix of both because of our unique placement as an agency with direct service to students, parents, and community members.

- Below is the comprehensive list of public-private bodies we contribute to on behalf of students and families:
- Contributor for the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative Annual Business Meeting & Community Conference 2019
- Contributor to the KIPP Safe Passage Citywide Convening 2019
- Presenter for the OSSE Parent & Family Engagement Summit 2018



- Presenter for the Racial Equity Symposium 2019
- Presenter at the 2019 National Family and Community Engagement Conference
- Presenter at 2018 NCFL Families Learning Conference
- Contributor for DC SPED Co-op SPED Leader Network 2018
- Contributor for RaiseDC Graduation Pathways Summit 2018
- Contributor PCSB Voices in Choice 2018
- Presenter at SXSW Education Conference 2019
- Contributor for From Community Schools to Community Districts: Building Systems for Student Success
- Presenter for LEE Diversity in Public Leadership Summit
- Presenter for EdPioneers Leadership Story- FGH presentation
- Panelist on DC Democratic State Committee: Addressing Educational Inequality in DC: How to Politically Move the Needle Forward?

**Q7. Does the Office of the Student Advocate continue to partner with the Mayor’s office on various affairs (African Affairs, etc.) to provide language services to immigrant and non-English speaking families?**

In FY19, we continued to work to comply with the Language Access Act by translating and posting our outreach brochures and Parent & Family Go-To Guide into all the required languages (e.g. Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Amharic, Chinese, and Korean). We continue to partner with several Mayoral Office that support English learning students and families. Our partnership with the Mayor’s offices has been an asset that ensures our translate material is communicating and presenting our information to the community in a culturally competent manner. In addition to translations of printed materials, we also utilize the Language Line to communicate with callers to our Request for Assistance line who do not speak English in real time. We also offered live interpretation services for Spanish and Amharic-speaking families during our Special Education workshops to eliminate English mastery as a barrier for access.

We will continue to use the Language Line services to support the language needs of any caller. We are also committed to deepening our partnerships with community-based organizations and government agencies to reach and engage with non-English or limited English-speaking students and families. While access to the Language Line has been valuable to our office, we know that in order to serve all communities well we need to be present within those communities through other trusted persons and entities. To that end, our community outreach to communities non- or limited-English speaking communities has been possible through collaborative efforts with the Mayor’s offices on various affairs (i.e. African Affairs, Latino Affairs, etc.) and community-based or religious organizations that are trusted in those communities. Because of the strong relationships that we have nurture with various schools, we have been able to support non-English speaking families by the support of interpretation from bilingual staff members at some of the schools.

The Office of the Student Advocate continues to deepen our partnerships with community-based organizations and governmental entities to reach and engage with students and families from marginalized communities. For example, in SY 2018-19, our office began to work with the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizen Affairs to serve families with justice involved Parents. We are working closely together with several other stakeholders including DC Department of Corrections to develop resources so parents reintegrating to the community can navigate our public education space.

**Q8. Are the Office of the Student's Advocate's information technology needs met? If not, what areas are in need of attention (i.e. computer support, internet and phone functionality, etc.)?**

The Office of the Student Advocate needs a secure database system to house and track our Requests for Assistance. District resident provided information and details with the expectation of confidentiality; our current system of Microsoft365 OneDrive is not sufficient. All of our analytical reports and data generate trends are being produce via excel which require a substantial commitment of staff time. There are several tech products that could reduce that commitment and free up staff time to allow increase interaction with students and families.

**Q9. Please list all settlements entered into by the agency or by the District on behalf of the agency in FY19 or FY20, to date, and provide the parties' names, the amount of the settlement, and if related to litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g. administrative complaint, etc.).**

Not applicable to our office.

**Q10. Please describe the agency's procedures for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct committed by or against its employees. List and describe any allegations received by the agency in FY19 and FY20, to date, whether or not those allegations were resolved.**

Not applicable to our office. As an agency we have agency-wide procedures to address allegations of this sort. Please refer to the State Board question responses for greater detail.

**Q11. Please list the administrative complaints or grievances that the agency received in FY18 and FY19, to date, broken down by source. Please describe the process utilized to respond to any complaints and grievances received and any changes to agency policies or procedures that have resulted from complaints or grievances received. For any complaints or grievances that were resolved in FY19 or FY20, to date, describe the resolution.**

Not applicable to our office. We do not usually deal with matters of this nature.

## **Performance Plan**

**Q12. Provide the Chief Student Advocate’s performance plan/strategic plan for FY19. Did the Office of the Student Advocate meet the objectives set forth in the plan? Provide a narrative description of what actions the office undertook to meet the key performance indicators, including an explanation as to why any indicators were not met.**

**FY 2019 PERFORMANCE PLAN**

For FY19, the Office of the Student Advocate had the following performance plan:

***#1: Increase Office Awareness and Visibility/Outreach***

Goal: Continue to build on current community engagement strategies and expand partnerships/collaborations to establish citywide office awareness.

This engagement includes but is not limited to:

- Continuing to engage and partner with a variety of stakeholders across all eight wards, such as:
  - State Board of Education,
  - DCPS’s Office of Family and Public Engagement and the Community Action Teams,
  - Public Charter School Board,
  - Schools and school leaders,
  - Parent organizations
  - Civic groups and organizations (i.e. ward education councils, etc.)
  - Service providers and community-based organizations (i.e. family collaboratives, etc.)
  - Parents, students, and community members, and,
  - Governmental agencies and offices (i.e. any relevant agency or office that services families – traditional and non-traditional)
- Continuing to distribute materials across the District
- Presenting and serving on panels, committees, and action teams
- Communicating the trends that we see in our work through reporting and communications
- Increase communication efforts to non-English speaking communities and translate resource materials to relevant languages
- Via partnerships with community-based organizations and service providers, increase services and communication to District at-risk students and families (e.g. homeless, child welfare, and justice involved populations)

**FY19 Strategy Implemented to Meet Performance Goal #1: Increase Office Awareness and Visibility/Outreach:**

In FY19, we have increased the visibility of the office through strategic partnerships with government and community-based entities as well as extensive outreach to schools, service providers, and community-based organizations.

During SY 2018-19, we partnered with organizations and offices to increase the visibility of our office. This work is evident by the representation of stakeholders engaged in our Safe Passage discussions across the District. What started off as a Ward 8 specific Safe Passage working group evolved into a collaborative effort among DC public and public charter schools, State Board of Education members, Education Councils, leadership from MPD and WMATA. Additionally, we increased our outreach by conducting school and ward level meetings to engage families regarding issues related to Safe Passage.

In SY 2019-20 we are replicating our efforts in Ward 8 for Safe Passage to other communities across the District. We are present in Ward 4 and Ward 7 convening parents, stakeholders, school leaders, and community members to discuss the safety concerns for students traveling to and from school daily.

In SY 2018-19, we continued our Special Education Workshop Series with partners from both government and community sectors. We have held joint sessions with OSSE SAPSE, PAVE, KIPPDC, Education Councils and Service providers in wards 1, 5, 7, & 8.

In FY19, we continued our partnership with the Mayor's offices on various affairs (i.e. African Affairs) and community-based organizations/family collaboratives (i.e. Collaborative Solutions for Communities) in order to reach immigrant or non-English speaking families in supporting their efforts to navigate our public education system. We made significant outreach to organizations and government offices working with non-native English speaking and immigrant communities to reach families within those communities to offer support.

Additionally, in FY19, we conducted a number of school visits and reached out to various community organizations and government entities to present about our office and share what services our office provides for families. We shared details on ways that we can work with community-based organizations, family service providers, and schools to support the families and students that they serve.

**FY19 Partnerships/Coalitions:**

- Office of the Deputy Mayor of Education
- Office of the Attorney General
- State Advisory Panel on Special Education, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- State Complaints Office, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- Office of Dispute Resolution, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- Division of Health & Wellness, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- Student Transportation, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- Division on Specialized Instruction and Family Engagement, Office of the State Superintendent for Education
- Office of College and Career Programs, DC Public Schools
- Office of Family and Public Engagement, DC Public Schools
- Division of Specialized Instruction, DC Public Schools

- Office of Equity, DC Public Schools
- Office of Integrity, DC Public Schools
- Office of Student Wellness, DC Public Schools
- DC Public Charter School Board
- DC Fiscal Policy Institute
- DC Department of Parks & Recreation
- Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services
- Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE)
- Pathways to Power
- Black Swan Academy
- Sasha Bruce Youthwork
- Global Kids
- American University School of Education
- Howard University School of Law
- Advocates for Justice and Education (AJE)
- School Justice Project
- Children's Law Center
- Disability Rights DC at University Legal Service
- East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE)
- Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Georgia Avenue Family Support Collaborative
- Teaching for Change
- Community of Hope
- Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals, and Educators
- Georgetown University Institute of College Preparedness
- Washington Lawyers' Community for Civil Rights Under Law
- Ward 1 Ed Council
- Ward 5 Council on Education
- Ward 7 Education Council
- Ward 8 Council on Education
- My School DC

***#2: Collaborate and Expand Service Capacity***

Goal: Build relationships with education stakeholders, community-based and civic organizations, and community professionals to establish a more coordinated approach in serving underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations.

- Expand our outreach to District Government agencies and continue the establishment of ongoing partnerships and collaboration.

- Continue to work closely with the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education in partnership to provide joint parent and student trainings on systemic trends highlighted through their work and to be responsive to student and parent advocacy needs highlighted through our individual and collective work. Partner with the Office of the Ombudsman in supporting families in case of conflict resolution as their advocate to offer strategies for parent empowerment and to improve educational access and outcomes for all students.
- Engage in conversation with community professionals and organizations regarding opportunities for collaboration and best practices for supporting underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable student populations, their families, and look for opportunities to spark valuable engagement avenues for all public education stakeholders in DC.
- Expand collaborative relationships with service providers and community-based organizations that work with the District's at-risk students and their families.
- Expand collaborative relationships with service providers and community-based organizations that work with the District's non-native English-speaking communities, students, and their families in an effort to provide more supports, resources, and trainings.

**FY19 Strategy Implemented to Meet Performance Goal #2: Collaborate and Expand Service Capacity:**

In FY19, we met this goal by expanding our outreach efforts as noted above in our work to increase the visibility of our office. Our office expanded and nurtured new partnerships with DC government agencies and offices to meet a host of issues and needs facing students and families. In addition to the aforementioned partnerships and collaborative efforts, our office would like to highlight the following areas:

***Expanding our Outreach to DC Agencies***

In FY19, we conducted additional outreach to District Government agencies and offices to ensure they were aware of our office, the resources and supports we offer to families, communities, and schools, and to spark opportunities for partnership. Our outreach included interactions with:

- The Council of the District of Columbia
- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
- Office of the Attorney General
- DC Public Schools
- DC Public Charter School Board
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education
- My School DC
- Individual DCPS and public charter schools
- Child & Family Services Agency
- Office of Human Rights
- DC Public Library
- Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

- Department of Corrections
- Department of Behavioral Health
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Parks & Recreation
- Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
- District of Columbia Housing Authority
- Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants
- Mayor's Office on Community Relations and Affairs
- Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
- Mayor's Office on African Affairs
- Mayor's Office on Returning Citizens Affair
- Office of Unified Communications

### ***Collaborative Working Relationship with the Ombudsman***

We worked closely with Office of the Ombudsman to further define the roles of our offices and discuss opportunities to support families in a responsive and collaborative way. This collaborative action is evidence through our support of families in informal mediation processes and in our referrals to the Ombudsman's office and their referrals to our office. In SY 18-19 the CSA performed the duties of the Ombudsman for several months on an interim basis. The Ombudsman office and OSA continue to collaborate and work to support families. The Ombudsman Office was also a key partner in the development of the District of Columbia Student Discipline Guide that helps families and schools navigate the Student Fair Access to School Act Amendment of 2018.

### ***Community Outreach/ Collaborative Relationships with services providers and community-based organizations to reach more at-risk families:***

In FY19, we also did a significant amount of presentations to parent and civic organizations regarding our office and the services that our office provides. A snapshot of our FY19 stakeholder and community outreach is listed above. Please reference Q6.

### ***Language Access***

In FY19, we continued to move closer to compliance with the Language Access Act. In addition to consulting with various Mayoral Offices such as Latino Affairs, and African Affairs. We have sought partnerships with CBOs trusted in the English Language Learning Community such as LAYC, Collaborative Solutions for Communities, Many Languages One Voice. Our efforts with our partners is twofold, we seek to increase our contact and outreach in communities present in school buildings but not reflective in our data. Secondly, we hope to increase the capacity of our partner organizations to address public education concerns brought to them by their community.

### ***Homeless Families***

In SY 18-19 our office joined DC Prep, Children's Playtime Project, Sasha Bruce Youthwork and several community leaders in conversations about ways to decrease barriers to success for students and families experiencing housing instability. We hosted focus groups with parents at several of the temporary shelter sites at the hotels along New York Avenue. We conducted brief interview surveys with parents and frontline staff assigned to facilities for young adult-headed households. Regardless of location, nearly every parent expressed dissatisfaction in the current options available to get their children to school; many believed that too often decisions are made for the convenience of decisionmakers.

In SY 2019-20 our office plans to continue to meet families where they are and host workshops & sessions for residents at temporary hotel-based shelter sites, but also expanded to the short-term family housing facilities. Moreover, we will revamp our current homeless student and family toolkit to be an online and in hand pocket guide. Our Office has distributed Family Go-to Guides and Discipline Guides at both the temporary hotel shelter sites and the short-term family housing locations.

### ***Special Education Families***

In SY 2018-19, we continued our Special Education Workshop Series with partners from both government and community sectors. We have held joint sessions with OSSE SAPSE, PAVE, KIPPDC, Education Councils and Service providers in wards 1, 5, 7, & 8.

We have supported OSSE SAPSE town hall and facilitated breakout sessions at the OSSE Family Engagement Summit for parents with Special Education needs. In SY 2019-20 we have partnered with Decoding Dyslexia DC to produce a handbook for parents and schools seeking facts, supports, and resources both national and local.

### ***Student Discipline***

In SY18-19, our office partnered with Howard University School of Law where we conducted a comparative analysis of student discipline policies for DCPS and each of the public charter LEAs. This analysis was conducted in order to develop resource tools for families that would support their school selection and transition processes. These tools will allow for parents and students to explore their school options in a more informed way. We also want to help parents be more proactive with school discipline policies instead of reactive when a problem arises.

We continued to work in partnership with Howard Law and Advocates for Justice in Education in SY19-20 to produce additional comparative analysis of student discipline policies for DCPS and each of the public charter LEAs. The analysis conducted this year was a review of compliance to date with the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018.

With the passage of the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, we created a guide to help students, families, and school staff navigate the new law. Developed in partnership with Every Student, Every Day Coalition and the Ombudsman for Public Education, the guide explains new rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under DC law.

### ***Justice Involved Families***



In SY 18-19, our office began discussions with the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizen Affairs, the DC Department of Corrections, National Re-Entry Network for Returning Citizens and residents currently housed at DC Jail about barriers to be an active and informed parent while justice-involved and as a returning citizen. Parental expertise does not stop at arrest, although justice-involved residents have physical limitations to being active partners in education of their children, they can still be a resource. We engaged small group conversations with several residents at DC Jail who expressed a desire to be more informed about grade level educational standards so they can ask appropriate questions of their children. They expressed a desire to be informed at a baseline level of the subjects their children were enrolled in and assignment dates. The overall request is to be informed of educational progress without depending exclusively on their co-parent for access. Leadership from DC Department of Corrections and the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizen Affairs see a protective benefit for both child and justice-involved parent.

In Spring of SY 19-20, our office will release a Returning Citizen Parent and Family Go-To Guide with information for parents that are justice-involved or returning citizens that will lay out ways to be an active educational partner while away. The guide will also contain information on how to engage students with grade and age appropriate conversation starters.

In SY 19-20 we began conversations with the School Justice Project, Children's Law Center and Juvenile Justice Initiative to see discuss options/solutions for students detain or in custody of the Court. We were invited to joined the Court Education Working Group Juvenile Justice Subcommittee. Our office plans to collaborate with the Ombudsman office and several other agencies and organizations to develop recommendations and action steps that will support families of justice involved students.

### ***Deepening Community Partnerships***

We worked to foster and deepen our partnerships with various community-based organization, family collaboratives, and service providers to reach families that have been harder for our office alone to reach. This work manifested itself in our partnerships with the organizations listed below through presentations and regular working relationship with their staff. These partnerships have yielded opportunities to interact with their clients or families as they deal with public education concerns Our relationships with these organizations has resulted in referrals to our office and our ability to conduct presentations and trainings for families.

The organizations included:

- Advisory Neighborhood Commissions
- Black Swan Academy
- Boys and Girls Club FBR Branch
- Coalition for DC Public Schools & Communities
- Collaborative Solutions for Communities
- Community of Hope
- DC Alliance for Youth Advocates
- Douglass Knoll Community Center

- East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Edgewood Brookland Family Support Collaborative
- Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Georgetown University Institute of College Preparedness
- Global Kids
- Safer Stronger DC
- Sasha Bruce Youthwork

### ***#3: Parent Leadership and Advocacy***

Goal: Improve the capacity of parents, families, and prospective parents to navigate the education landscape and educational processes so that they become better informed about options that allow them to become better self-advocates.

- Further develop the knowledge base of parents regarding issues of public education in the District and how those issues connect to the way our public education governance structure and overall government structure works.
- Create access for public school parents to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making.
- Create brochures and informational materials for parents on areas of special education, student discipline, student enrollment/school selection, and effective communication tools; provide additional resources and links to community resources.
- Continue to improve and make appropriate adjustments to ensure that the website presence of the Office of the Student Advocate is user-friendly and interactive for students and families.
- Improve access to families of non-English speaking populations; offer materials online, and in printed form, in translated languages outlining the services of our office.
- Provide resources in the areas of parent and student rights and responsibilities and services for on-going support.

### **FY19 Strategy Implemented to Meet Performance Goal #3: Parent Leadership and Advocacy**

In FY19, we met this goal through the following initiatives:

#### ***Online Education & Community Resource Guide***

The online Education & Community Resource Guide is the first publicly available citywide initiative of its kind and is a continuously evolving resource that currently has more than 400 resource listings organized into 20 category areas. The guide provides students, parents, families, and communities across all 8 wards with a roadmap to getting started in navigating the public education landscape in DC. This guide was developed to highlight organizations and government agencies in the sphere of public education that provide critical services to residents across DC. This resource serves to acknowledge the work that is already being done by countless government agencies, offices, and community-based organizations while connecting families to those vital resources in one centralized location.

The guide can be found online at: <http://sboe.dc.gov/page/resource>.

### ***Race, Equity, and Inclusion***

Race and class often serve as barriers to engagement, leaving a void between students, families, communities, and schools. We created our Race, Equity, and Inclusion toolkit as a resource for families, schools, and community organizations looking to begin their work towards creating and maintaining equitable and inclusive spaces in education. The information and resources included in the toolkit have been pulled from organizations, educators, and scholars who have been instrumental in moving the conversation on race, equity, and inclusion forward both nationally and locally. In the toolkit, families, schools, and community organizations can access standardized definitions, articles, books, videos, and other informational materials addressing issues surrounding race, equity, and inclusion.

This resource will be available online at: <https://reitoolkit.dc.gov/>

### ***Navigating School Choice***

Choosing a school can be a daunting task in a city with over 60 LEAs and more than 260 public and charter schools. Since SY 2018-19, about 20 percent of our requests for assistance from families has been related to school enrollment. Of these calls regarding enrollment, the top areas of concern from families include:

- Pre-k Enrollment
- My School DC/Lottery Process
- SPED Placement
- Transfer requests

Our office is intentional about creating resources for families that will educate families and guide them through the numerous processes related to school choice. We developed My Teacher DC, a website dedicated to educated families on how to ensure a diverse and a representative teaching staffs exist at the schools they choose. In addition to providing important information relating discipline rates and student achievement to the representation of teachers within a school building, this resource will provide families a detailed list of questions that should be answered by school staff members before choosing a school for enrollment.

This resource will be available online at: <https://myteacher.dc.gov>. (Release February 2020)

### ***Online Information & Advocacy Resources and Tools***

Our office aims to serve as a hub for information for both current and prospective families regarding information on public education and issue that impact education. Our efforts to meet the needs of students and families has led us to develop several resources, toolkits, and tip sheets that are available on our website. In addition to our online Education & Community Resource Guide, our website also has resources on topics that provide support to students and their families in all aspects of education and achievement. In FY19, we expanded the resource support

we have for families. All of our resources can be found on our website at [studentadvocate.dc.gov](http://studentadvocate.dc.gov). Those resources include:

- Advocacy & Lobbying Toolkit
- Attendance and Truancy Resources
- Behavioral & Mental Health Resources
- Bullying Resources
- DC Student Discipline Guide
- Effective Communication
- Enrollment
- Graduation Requirement
- Homeless Children & Youth Resources
- Parent Leadership Toolkit
- Race, Equity, and Inclusion Toolkit ([reitoolkit.dc.gov](http://reitoolkit.dc.gov))
- Right to Know Ask Sheets
- Safe Passage
- Special Education & School Supports
- Student Discipline
- Student Leadership
- Teacher Representation ([myteacher.dc.gov](http://myteacher.dc.gov))\*
- Testing & Assessments
- DC Public Education Governance

*\*Web pages will be available February 2020.*

The resources can be found online at: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/advocacy>.

### ***Special Education Support***

In SY 2018-19, we continued our Special Education Workshop Series with partners from both government and community sectors. We have held joint sessions with OSSE SAPSE, PAVE, KIPPDC, Education Councils and Service providers in wards 1, 5, 7, & 8.

In SY 2019-20, our office is creating a Dyslexia handbook to help inform families and educational stakeholders about Dyslexia. The toolkit is 11 pages and includes Need to Know, Common Myths, Signs and Symptoms, and Terms to Know as well as a guide of questions to ask your student's school, and a page that includes both local and national resources that can provide more information and support for students with dyslexia. Located online, this toolkit will provide families and stakeholders with pertinent information that will help guide them through the initial phase of navigating dyslexia and the obstacles it presents.

In order to create this handbook, we partnered with Decoding Dyslexia DC. Our hope is that this toolkit will not only raise awareness about dyslexia, but also act as a tool to empower any individual to advocate for students with dyslexia who need their support.

In Winter SY19-20 OSA will work with families directly by supporting students and families through the independent educational evaluations (IEE) and preliminary independent educational plan (IEP) process. Our presence will help families understand the information being presented in those meetings and to make sure that students are receiving the services they need to thrive in school.

### ***Student Discipline***

With the passage of the Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, we created a guide to help students, families, and school staff navigate the new law. Developed in partnership with Every Student, Every Day Coalition, the guide explains new rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under DC law. Families often feel alone and overwhelmed when figuring out how to move forward after the school makes a discipline decision for their student. All students and families should know their rights prior to deciding to challenge a disciplinary decision. Schools must ensure that their discipline policies are in accordance with the new law and other relevant DC and federal laws. Information about this resource is detailed in a previous question. Please reference Q1.

This resource can be found online at: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/discipline>

### ***Language Access***

In FY19, we partnered with the Mayor's offices on various affairs (e.g. African Affairs) and community-based organizations/family collaboratives (e.g. Collaborative Solutions for Communities) in order to reach immigrant or non-English speaking families in supporting their efforts to navigate our public education system. Additionally, we have done significant outreach to organizations and government offices working with non-native English speaking and immigrant communities in an effort to reach families within those communities to offer support. Please reference Q1 for details about our language access improvements.

### ***#4: Improve Educational Outcomes by Effecting Systemic Change***

Goal: The Office of the Student Advocate is committed to identifying and recommending strategies to improve educational outcomes for all students and increase students' and families' ability to achieve equal access to public education.

- Build relationships and work collaboratively with students, parents, families, government agencies, community-based organizations, and all education stakeholders to identify systemic barriers that impact educational outcomes for students and limit access to quality public education.
- Participate in relevant education policy focused conversations, such as testifying before DC Council on policies and legislation and membership on task forces and committees (i.e. Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force and Truancy Task Force).
- Provide quarterly data reports and any identified trends to education stakeholders in order to continue conversations about areas that require systemic change and to discuss how our office is working to impact those challenges.

- Work to develop access points for public school students to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making.

**FY19 Strategy Implemented to Meet Performance Goal #4: Improve Educational Outcomes by Effecting Systemic Change**

In FY19, we met this goal by deciding to be intentional and focused on all of our engagement efforts. Our office expanded and nurtured new partnerships with DC government agencies and offices to meet a host of issues and needs facing students and families. To do this, we ensured that elected leadership had a presence in our public endeavors. Over 90% of all OSA-facilitated public events were co-sponsored by an SBOE Representative, Councilmember or Mayoral designee. Our core belief of centering policy making on family engagement requires us to close the distance between the conversations held in communities and those held in District buildings.

We provided leadership, guidance and support on multiple taskforces discussed at length in our response to Q6. Our presence in these conversations are driven by discussions that we have with families via RFA line and in the community. Student discipline and student safety have been top RFA categories since our office opened. These RFAs allowed us to contribute uniquely to the conversations around student discipline in FY19, with our joint analysis on all public-school discipline policies with Howard University School of Law highlighting the need for the Student Fair Access to School Act.

Our work related to student discipline revealed a relationship between disciplinary rates, student achievement, and teacher representation within a school building. Student populations that are underrepresented by classroom teachers typically have receive higher disciplinary actions and have lower assessment results and graduation rates. In SY 19-20 our office is facilitating conversations between local colleges/universities and high school principals to establish a more intentional pathway to teaching for males of color using existing dual-enrollment programming.

Our office has worked to develop a centralized place where tools and information can be found to assist in starting conversations about Race Equity and Inclusion. We are excited to release our Race, Equity, and Inclusion Toolkit at [REItoolkit.dc.gov](http://REItoolkit.dc.gov); the site is designed to amplify the voices of parents and community members, to create a more equitable and inclusive public education system. This toolkit can be used to learn more about the dynamics of race, equity, and inclusion in D.C.'s education system. The information in this toolkit is relevant to parents, community members, and school staff. Parents and school staff can use this resource to start conversations with their children about REI and advocate for change in their school community. Community members can use this toolkit to inform their conversations about REI and connect with organizations supporting race, equity, and inclusion initiatives throughout D.C. and across the nation. Our hope is that this toolkit will serve as a starting point for crucial conversations that need to occur more often in our community to help end discriminatory behaviors not only in our schools but also in our communities.

We continued to tackle the gap between policy and practice as it relates to special education. DC Council and the District have made clear what the system should look like, and we have made it

our goal to help translate those efforts for parents and LEAs. We outline the details of our special education workshop series in our responses to Q1 and Q3.

***#5: Increase Student Engagement and Advocacy***

Goal: Work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to improve the capacity of students to navigate the education landscape and educational processes so that they become better informed about options that allow them to become better self-advocates.

- Work collaborative with relevant stakeholders to develop access points for public school students to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making (ie: Student Advisory Committee)
- Create more access for students to use the RFA process by becoming more youth friendly.
- Work with relevant stakeholder groups and organizations to support on-going student engagement or leadership organizations or opportunities.

**FY19 Strategy Implemented to Meet Performance Goal #5: Increase Student Engagement and Advocacy:**

We learned from FY 19 that student voice does not need to be prioritized solely at student engagement events. Our conversations about safe passage this year is a reflection of our commitment to create space for students in all conversations about improving public education. Student-led initiatives from Thurgood Marshall Academy, KIPP College Prep Academy, Anacostia High School, Ballou High School, branch members from FBR Boys and Girl Club, the Marion Barry Youth Leadership institute provided the framework in how to discuss student safety and safe passage. These student driven initiatives included representation from DC Council, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the State Board of Education, WMATA transit police, Metropolitan Police Department, LEAs, and local businesses. These collaborative efforts focused on solutions that students felt were important to keep them safe.

In SY 2018-19 our office attended every DCPS High School Resource Fair. Student voice is a vital piece to any solution the District proposes. So far in SY 2019-20, we have been working to establish meaningful relationships with community-based organizations that already have working relationships with students. These partnerships will allow us to engage youth on issues our office is currently working on and identify experiences of students that need to be elevated for discussion. These relationships will allow our office to assist students create meaningful solutions.

**Q13. Provide the agency's performance plan/strategic plan for FY20. What steps has the office taken in FY19 and to date in FY20 to meet the objectives set forth in the performance plan?**

For FY20, the Office of the Student Advocate will continue with a similar plan for performance while adding additional elements in order to deepen and scale our programmatic work and engagement with students, families, schools, and the community. Our FY20 performance plan includes:

***#1: Increase Office Awareness and Visibility/Outreach***

Goal: Continue to build on current community engagement strategies and expand partnerships/collaborations to establish citywide office awareness.

This engagement includes but is not limited to:

- Continuing to engage and partner with a variety of stakeholders across all eight wards, such as:
  - State Board of Education,
  - DCPS's Office of Family and Public Engagement and the Community Action Team and other relevant divisions within DCPS,
  - Public Charter School Board,
  - Schools and school leaders,
  - Parent organizations
  - Civic groups and organizations (i.e. ward education councils, etc.)
  - Service providers and community-based organizations (i.e. family collaboratives, etc.)
  - Parents, students, and community members, and,
  - Governmental agencies and offices (i.e. any relevant agency or office that services families – traditional and non-traditional);
- Continuing to distribute materials across the District;
- Presenting and serving on panels, committees, advocacy coalitions, and working groups
- Communicating the trends that we see in our work through reporting and communications;
- Sharing out the data from our office on a more regular basis;
- Increase communication efforts to non-English speaking communities and translate resource materials to relevant languages ;
- Via partnerships with community-based organizations and service providers, increase services and communication to District at-risk students and families (e.g. non-English speaking communities, homeless families, child welfare, and justice involved populations)

***#2: Collaborate and Expand Service Capacity***

Goal: Build relationships with education stakeholders, community-based and civic organizations, and community professionals to establish a more coordinated approach in serving underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations.

- Expand our outreach to District Government agencies and continue the establishment of ongoing partnerships and collaboration.
- Continue to work closely with the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education in partnership to provide joint parent and student trainings on systemic trends highlighted through their work and to be responsive to student and parent advocacy needs highlighted through our individual and collective work. Partner with the Office of the Ombudsman in supporting families in case of conflict resolution as their advocate to offer strategies for parent empowerment and to improve educational access and outcomes for all students.
- Engage in conversation with community members and community-based/non-profit organizations regarding opportunities for collaboration and best practices for supporting underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable student populations, their families, and



look for opportunities to spark valuable engagement avenues for all public education stakeholders in DC.

- Expand collaborative relationships with schools, service providers and community-based organizations that work with the District's at-risk students and their families.
- Expand collaborative relationships with schools, service providers and community-based organizations that work with the District's non-native English speaking communities, students, and their families in an effort to provide more supports, resources, and trainings.

### ***#3: Parent Leadership and Advocacy***

Goal: Improve the capacity of parents, families, and prospective parents to navigate the education landscape and educational processes so that they become better informed about options that allow them to become better self-advocates.

- Further develop the knowledge base of parents regarding issues of public education in the District and how those issues connect to the way our public education governance structure, budgetary understanding, and deepening of the overall knowledge of how the government structure works.
- Increase access for public school parents to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making.
- Create brochures and informational materials for parents on areas of special education, student discipline, student enrollment/school selection, and effective communication tools; provide additional resources and links to community resources.
- Continue to improve and make appropriate adjustments to ensure that the website presence of the Office of the Student Advocate is user-friendly and interactive for students and families.
- Improve access to families of non-English speaking populations; offer materials online, and in printed form, in translated languages outlining the services of our office.
- Provide resources in the areas of parent and student rights and responsibilities and services for on-going support.
- Deepen and scale our partnerships with other parent and family service organizations and government agencies to meet the needs of families in all of the places families show up and to provide programming in collaboration with those entities.

### ***#4: Improve Educational Outcomes by Effecting Systemic Change***

Goal: The Office of the Student Advocate is committed to identifying and recommending strategies to improve educational outcomes for all students and increase students' and families' ability to achieve equal access to public education.

- Build relationships and work collaboratively with students, parents, families, government agencies, community-based organizations, and all education stakeholders to identify systemic barriers that impact educational outcomes for students and limit access to quality public education.
- Participate in relevant education policy focused conversations, such as testifying before DC Council on policies and legislation and membership on task forces and committees (i.e. Student Safety and Safe Passage Working Group; Every Day Counts! Truancy Task Force; Every Student Every Day Coalition).

- Provide quarterly data reports and any identified trends to education stakeholders in order to continue conversations about areas that require systemic change and to discuss how our office is working to impact those challenges.
- Sharing our office's data on a monthly basis in order to share the trends we are seeing in real time.
- Meet quarterly with DCPS leadership to share our office's data and the trends we are seeing in order to foster a closer working relationship and to find ways to work collaboratively to support their efforts (i.e. equity framework, special education, and student/family grievance process).
- Increase our outreach to schools and local education agencies to support their efforts and to provide technical assistance on issue areas as they arise.
- Develop and implement a schools/local education agencies technical assistance in order to provide guidance and support to schools and LEAs on the implementation of new and existing citywide policies and procedures – specifically in the areas of special education, student discipline, and attendance.
- Share with schools and LEAs the data and trends from our office on a monthly and quarterly basis. This effort would be to support their understanding of the trends that we are seeing on a citywide level and issue areas specific to their individual schools.
- Continue to annually collect and review individual LEA student handbooks and conduct an analysis of all of the policies. Share with LEAs our findings and work with individual LEAs to support the development and implementation of student and family centered policies and procedures in order to remove barriers to access to schools, equitable service of educational services, and promote a more positive environment for students and families.

#### ***#5: Increase Student Engagement and Advocacy***

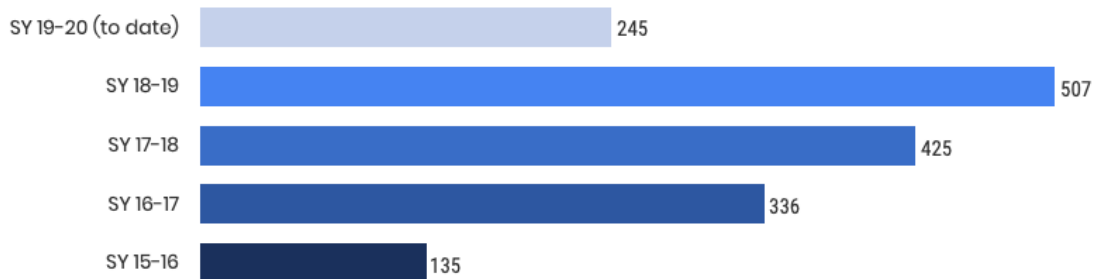
Goal: Work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to improve the capacity of students to navigate the education landscape and educational processes so that they become better informed about options that allow them to become better self-advocates.

- Work collaborative with relevant stakeholders to develop access points for public school students to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making (ie: Student Advisory Committee)
- Create more access for students to use the RFA process by becoming more youth friendly.
- Work with relevant stakeholder groups and organizations to support on-going student engagement or leadership organizations or opportunities.
- Work to develop access points for public school students to have voice in the thought development stages of policy making.
- Add student leaders as facilitators and thought-partners to develop the programming in our office.
- Provide support to student groups doing advocacy work that is aligned with the programming aspects of our office (i.e. safe passage and student safety, transportation, etc.).

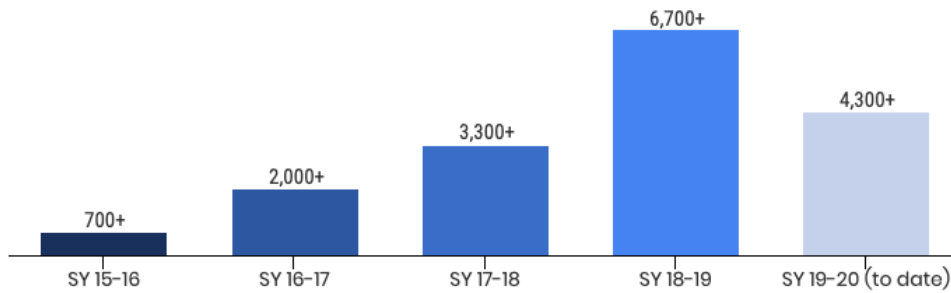
**To date we have worked to execute our FY20 performance plan by doing the following:**

1. In November 2019, we released our office’s fourth annual report, which focused on our work for school year 2018-19. The report can be found here: <https://sboe.dc.gov/page/annual-quarterly-reports>.
2. We revamped our website to make it more user friendly and mobile accessible – studentadvocate.dc.gov. In addition revamping of our website, we also refreshed the resources we provide on our website. We developed two additional web sites with OCTO for parents that are designed on a different platform and deliver information to user in less than 3 clicks. REItoolkit.dc.gov (available now) and MyTeacher.dc.gov (available Feb 2020).
3. In SY 2019-20, we have distributed over 4,000 copies of our Parent & Family Go-To-Guide. Our Parent & Family Go-To Guide is a collection of family-centered documents and resources designed to help families navigate the public education system in the District (<https://sboe.dc.gov/page/advocacy>). Guides are available at DC Public Libraries.
4. In SY 2019-20, we have distributed over 1,500 copies of our DC Student Discipline Guides. This guide – created for students, families, and school staff – explains new rules for school discipline that all public schools must follow under DC law. (<https://sboe.dc.gov/page/discipline>) Guides are available at DC Public Libraries.
5. Our office finished the translation of all of our materials produce in SY 2018-19 into all six major languages in the District. Spanish and Amharic resources materials have been printed and distributed to our partners and DC public libraries that serve communities with significant populations of Spanish and Amharic speakers.
6. We have increased our outreach to schools, LEAs, and other family serving organizations in order to reach a wider range of families. This strategic outreach has already shown a return on investment. For SY 18-19 and SY 19-20, we served more than 700 families through our Request for Assistance (RFA) line. We are currently on pace to contact more students and families through outreach and material distribution than last year.

### Request for Assistance: Comparisons by Year



## Outreach Comparison by Year



7. We have engaged several community in the area of student safety and safe passage. We are continuing our working relationship with the DME in their efforts but we have also launch additional work in Wards 4, 5, 6, 7 and Ward 8. In Ward 8 we continue to facilitate the Ward 8 Student Safety and Safe Passage Working Group, which includes students, parents, Ward 8 non-profits and community-based organization, government offices and agencies, and schools/LEAs. The work from these working groups resulted in the launch of the Safe Spot initiative, which are a collection of community organizations and businesses that have agreed to be a safe haven for students who feel their safety is being threatened. We are attempting to replicate the Ward 8 effort in Wards 4 and 7. We are continuing to rollout Safe Spots in partnership with the DME in Ward 7 & 5 with a goal of having Safe Spots in all Safe Passage Priority Areas.
8. We are working to support student voice but making more meaningful connections with students inside and outside of school buildings. Our office is working along with individual schools to support student lead initiatives; attending and sharing resources for students at the resource fairs hosted at DC Public Schools and Public Charter Schools; and working with community-based organizations focused on student advocacy and voice (i.e. The Boys & Girls Club, DC Prep etc.). Our office is intentional about allowing student voice to guide our work.
9. Our special education workshop continues to be in high demand, and to date we have hosted the workshop in three wards (Wards 1, 5, and 8). The presentation and resources from these workshops have been turned into a webinar available on our website. All materials from these workshops are also available in all six major languages of the District.
10. Our office is creating a Dyslexia handbook to help inform families and educational stakeholders about Dyslexia. The toolkit is 11 pages and includes Need to Know, Common Myths, Signs and Symptoms, and Terms to Know as well as a guide of questions to ask your student's school, and a page that includes both local and national resources that can provide more information and support for students with dyslexia. Located online, this toolkit will provide families and stakeholders with pertinent

information that will help guide them through the initial phase of navigating dyslexia and the obstacles it presents.

11. In Winter SY19-20 OSA will work with families directly by supporting students and families through the independent educational evaluations (IEE) and preliminary independent educational plan (IEP) process. Our presence will help families understand the information being presented in those meetings and to make sure that students are receiving the services they need to thrive in school.
12. Our office continues to increase our visibility throughout the city by attending a host of community meetings and through school visits. As we see trends and issue areas, we are working to provide technical support to schools and LEAs to address specific issue areas (i.e special education, student discipline).
13. Created and started to implement our plan to execute programming in all eight wards. This strategy is a combination of school-based trainings and workshops, community-focused workshops, and resources supports and trainings in partnership with other trusted community organizations.

The above is just a snapshot of the work we have undertaken so far in FY19. We look forward to sharing more of our FY19 work with you in the coming months.

### **Interagency Collaboration**

**Q14. What efforts have been made to improve Office of the Student Advocate functions in FY19 and FY20 to date? Describe efforts to collaborate with boards and agencies to engage in District education initiatives and include in your response specifically any partnerships or collaborations with the following:**

- a. **Office of the State Superintendent for Education:** We work with OSSE in a variety ways. We engage frequently with OSSE Strong Start, State Advisory Panel for Special Education, Office of Dispute Resolution, State Complaints Office, and the Division of Transportation for our special education workshop series. We participate in OSSE's Parent and Family Engagement Summit annually, helping us increase our reach to student and families. We also collaborate with OSSE's dual enrollment team to expand more program options to students in Wards 7 and 8. Additionally we speak frequently with OSSE's Homeless Education Program. We are able to maintain these relationships by meeting with OSSE frequently to talk about the work of our office and ways that we can continue to work collaboratively to support students and families.
- b. **Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education:** Our office has worked closely with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. We worked closely with the DME of their safe passage work in addition to the complimentary work our office has done to support citywide safe passage efforts. The Chief Student Advocate also participates on several task forces and working groups led by the DME's office: School Safety and Safe Passage Working Group, Cross-Sector Collaboration Task

Force, Every Day Counts! (Truancy) Task Force, and the Transportation Task Force.

We currently partner with DME formally to establish safe spots – to include businesses, libraries, recreation centers and others – where students can go if they feel unsafe on their way to or from school. We will work with partners in the business community, law enforcement, and schools to begin establishing Safe Spots in Ward 8 and then expand to other interested communities.

- c. DC Public Schools:** Our office’s working relationship with DCPS is continuously expanding. We work regularly with the Office of Family and Public Engagement’s Community Action Team, to support the needs of students and families in their respective wards; DCPS CARE (Comprehensive Alternative Resolution & Equity) Team, to address grievances within the LEA; and the Division of Specialized Instruction, to provide information and access to families experiencing special education challenges. DCPS’ Community Action Team, has been a valuable partner with all of our programming in addition to pushing information out about the trainings and events that we host. We also work with school support liaisons and instructional superintendents when providing resources to families. In FY19, we started working more closely with the Office of Integrity and Office of Equity. We make referrals to the Office of Integrity when a DCPS concern touches topic areas that must be addressed across offices within DCPS to streamline information gathering for families. We have also worked with Early Stages, to clarify child find processes for families, and the Section 504 and Student Accommodations Team, to clarify information around development and implementation of 504 plans during our special education workshops.
- d. DC Public Charter School Board:** Since our first year of operation, we have continued to work with the leadership and community outreach staff of the Public Charter School Board. Nicole Newman, Community Engagement Specialist, has been a thought-partner in our work in Wards 7 and 8. Nicole is also a member of our ward 8 safe passage/student safety working group. Our office has also been invited to present to family and student groups convened by PCSB to have deeper conversations about concerns that students and families have and to share relevant resources from our office. PCSB continues to be supportive in sharing information regarding our outreach events and trainings to their schools. They post our resources and engagement opportunities in their bulletins and with school leaders. Their information sharing has increased our reach to charter leaders and families.
- e. Office of Human Rights’ Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Program:** Our office has worked with the Former Director of Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Program, Suzanne Greenfield, and her interim replacement, Mary Wallace. We regularly refer families seeking assistance with bullying concerns to their office. In turn, they have referred families to our office for concerns related to bullying that often arise. In addition to being a source for and of trusted

referrals, Ms. Greenfield also offered thought-partnership in the initiatives that our office undertook. We have hosted two citywide bullying workshops and released a bullying podcast with her partnership. We continue to utilize their web resources and distribute them to families as needed.

- f. **DC Public Libraries:** Our working relationship with DC Public Library has continued to grow. We recognize that the front line staff at DCPL locations serve as important referral sources for those seeking information and/or in need of support. Along with ensuring that our informational materials and resources are located in their library locations, we host many of our community meetings and trainings at DCPL library locations.

*This list is in addition to the other partnership and coalition working relationships that were mentioned in Q6.*

**Q15. Describe the Office of the Student Advocate’s relationship with the State Board of Education and any improvements that can be made.**

We work with State Board of Education Members and staff to ensure that concerns and questions of families reaching out are heard and understood. The impact of our partnership with Members is evident in the ward-based outreach events that we host across the city. State Board members and staff also consistently refer families in need of support to our office.

The Chief Student Advocate submits quarterly reports to State Board of Education and staff summarizing the work of the office for the past 90 days (quarter) of the fiscal year. The presentation of our reports allows for board members to engage deeply with the office’s work by asking questions about data presented and providing suggestions on how to scale the office’s work with their partnership.

Our office is always looking for opportunities to collaborate with board members in order to get public education knowledge to families and communities in all eight wards. In FY19, we partnered with several board members to host trainings, workshops, and family and community meetings within their wards (mentioned in Q6). We look forward to continuing our collaborative relationship in FY20.

SBOE Administrative Staff and OSA have move forward substantially, and past communication challenges are no longer a barrier to functioning the office.

**Q16. Describe the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education’s relationship with the Office of the Student Advocate and any improvements that can be made.**

The Office of the Student Advocate works to support families prior to the mediation process and conflict resolution actions by the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education. We do recognize that there are opportunities to provide more targeted interventions and support. We make referrals to Office of the Ombudsman when families are seeking to resolve specific complaints and concerns, particularly ones around chronic disciplinary action and adverse

actions via discretionary authority by schools. Office of the Ombudsman also makes referrals to our office when a caller's concern(s) does not warrant one-on-one case management.

We have also worked with Office of the Ombudsman on resource development, with examples including our Special Education "Know Your Rights" presentation, and the new DC Student Discipline Guide. The CSA served as interim Ombudsman during an early portion of FY19, we are truly sisters offices. OSA staff and Ombudsman staff often ensure coverage representation at community events and share institutional knowledge of interacting with other DC agencies as appropriate or when requested.

As Office of the Student Advocate and Office of the Ombudsman continue to grow, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the physical constraints that come with our shared office space.