A New Way Forward on Charter School Academic Accountability

DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

ASPIRE

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A New Way Forward on Charter School Academic Accountability

Updated June 1, 2024 to reflect revisions to the ASPIRE System that were made in response to public comment received during the policy approval process. See the ASPIRE Policy & Technical Guide for more detailed information.

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) revised its academic accountability system to evaluate schools and better understand student progress toward college and career readiness. The accountability system is now called the Annual School Performance Index Report & Evaluation (ASPIRE) and incorporates stakeholder feedback, research, and best practices on public charter school academic accountability from across the country. ASPIRE will be a key component of DC PCSB's decision-making going forward.

This paper aims to share DC PCSB's history of academic accountability, the rationale for revising our frameworks, and the components of and research base behind ASPIRE.

Introduction

DC PCSB is an independent government agency of the District of Columbia charged with providing oversight to DC's 134 public charter schools. DC PCSB's work centers around the vision that "every DC student receives a quality education that makes them feel valued and prepares them for lifelong learning, fulfilling careers, and economic security." Our commitment to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI) guides our actions and represents an important evolution in the way DC PCSB approaches our role and function.

DC PCSB aims to reach this vision by following our 2021-2024 Strategic Roadmap,[1] which is the organization's north star that guides our direction. It includes three priorities:

[1] Read more about the Roadmap at https://dcpcsb.org/strategic-roadmap. Note DC PCSB will launch a new Strategic Roadmap by the end of 2024/beginning 2025.

OUR VISION

Every DC student receives a quality education that makes them feel valued and prepares them for lifelong learning, fulfilling careers, and economic security.

OUR MISSION

DC public charter schools are environments where all students, especially those in historically marginalized groups, thrive.

OUR STRATEGIC ROADMAP

- **Excellent schools:** Ensure that DC PCSB decision-making responds to citywide need and results in improved outcomes for all DC students, especially those in historically marginalized groups;
- **Enduring partnerships:** Strengthen dialogue between families, school communities, and residents to create a shared understanding of DC PCSB's work, solicit feedback, and develop new partnerships across DC; and
- **Effective organization:** Align DC PCSB's internal structure, processes, and culture with their strategic plan to allow DC PCSB to create the conditions for student success in DC.

Accountability is a key strategy DC PCSB uses to realize these priorities, and it is at the heart of the public charter school and authorizer relationship. DC PCSB holds public charter schools accountable in three oversight areas: academic accountability, financial analysis, and compliance review (this includes following relevant laws).

Specifically, DC PCSB uses their **academic accountability system** to:

- Make school oversight decisions that support a quality DC charter sector;
- Share best practices across the sector and spotlight examples of success;
- Identify opportunities for school improvement to help DC PCSB meet the city's collective goal of increasing student achievement;
- Communicate school quality based on student outcomes; and
- Inform parent, family, and student school choice decisions.

The History of Academic Accountability at DC PCSB

DC PCSB has focused on academic accountability since its inception, monitoring student progress through school-designed individual accountability plans and goals. In 2010, DC PCSB launched an academic and school climate accountability system, known as the Performance Management Framework (PMF), to support its efforts in monitoring DC public charter schools. The PMF had the objective "to define high, medium, and low-performing standards, and to clearly communicate the expectations, rewards, and consequences to schools, families, and communities" (DC PCSB, 2009).

Over time, the PMF established common academic standards for every school in DC PCSB's portfolio: early childhood (PK), elementary (K – 5), middle (6 – 8), secondary (9 – 12), adult, and alternative education programs. Individual School Quality Reports were made public for all schools, and schools were placed in tiers – 1, 2, or 3, with Tier 1 being the best – based on their overall score on the framework.

DC stakeholders used the PMF and companion School Quality Reports to deepen understanding and inform decision-making. Families used the reports to better understand the nuances of each school's academic performance and make intentional choices about schools for their children.

Schools used the PMF to deepen their own understanding of how their school performed compared to others and many even chose to adopt PMF scores or targets as their charter goals rather than negotiating their own individual goals through DC PCSB's "Elect to Adopt the PMF as Charter Goals Policy" (2020). DC PCSB used the data from the PMF to inform oversight decisions such as requests to increase enrollment or to add additional grades.

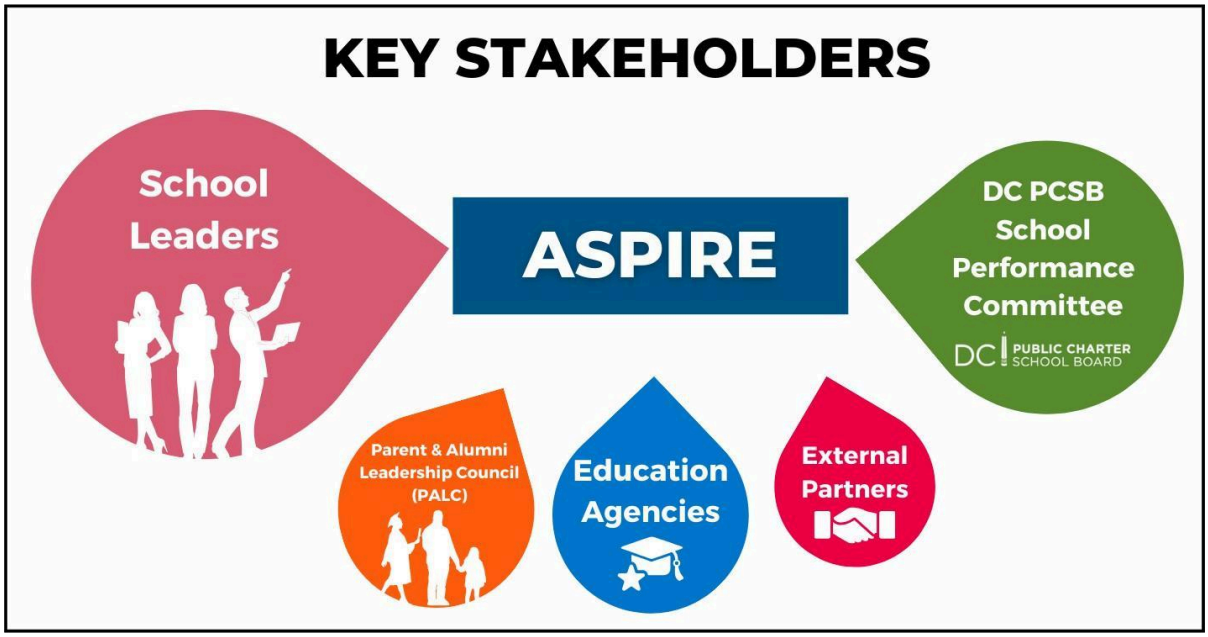
While the PMF was an exciting step forward in deepening citywide understanding of DC public charter school performance, DC PCSB knew from its own oversight and external feedback that there were opportunities to improve its academic accountability in service of the city's students.

Partnering to Revise the Academic Accountability System

In 2019, DC PCSB began conducting conversations with DC public charter school stakeholders, as well as local and national researchers and experts, to explore ways to strengthen its academic accountability system.

DC Charter School Stakeholders. In the winter and spring of 2021, DC PCSB engaged in dozens of formal meetings with school leaders, Parent and Alumni Leadership

Council (PALC) members, and the DC PCSB ad hoc School Performance Committee to gather detailed feedback on the PMF and identify other factors that should be considered to measure the quality of academic performance. These discussions informed DC PCSB's initial thinking about ways to revise the frameworks within its accountability system. DC PCSB also held focus groups with parents and community leaders to get their thoughts on a range of topics about public education, including how they felt about academic accountability.



Significant feedback on the PMF from stakeholders included, but was not limited to, these considerations:

- Reduce correlation between a school's overall score on the School Quality Report and high enrollment of at-risk students and students with disabilities.
- Create more specific rating bands so stakeholders can understand the distinctions in schools' performances.
- Focus more on academic growth versus academic proficiency.
- Place more value on moving students along levels of academic proficiency on statewide assessments. (DC uses District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessments of Progress in Education [DC CAPE]) The state aligned with the national standard and set Level 4 ("met expectations") as the standard for proficiency in 2015.
- Place more value on non-academic achievements (i.e., unique, school-specific metrics.

- Define how outcomes may impact charter expansion, continuance, or revocation.

Local and national researchers and experts. DC PCSB also consulted national leaders and DC's state education agency, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), on equitable accountability systems. Many of the best practices found through external research aligned with the feedback heard from DC public charter school stakeholders.

DC PCSB partnered with Mathematica's Regional Educational Laboratory to discuss research, explore measures, and consider models used nationwide. DC PCSB also partnered with the National Charter School Institute's Assessing—Global access, Academics, Mission, and Equity (A-GAME) to discuss alternative levers to capture academic progress, school climate, and engagement. DC PCSB worked with an analysis vendor, Metropolitan Strategies & Solutions, to test the model's viability throughout the process.

Finally, DC PCSB consulted recommendations from the premier public charter school authorizing organization, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA.) In its *Guide to Performance Frameworks,* NACSA (2023, p. 14) makes the following recommendations for public charter school authorizers as they create performance frameworks:

- Keep your eye on your purpose—ensuring a quality education for all students.
- Stay focused on outcomes (not the inputs) and hold up a mirror to the school.
- Reduce reporting burdens for schools by using consistent reporting requirements.
- Automate and simplify when possible, using readily available or easily developed tracking tools.
- Require strong outcomes in literacy and numeracy while using more rigorous ways of evaluating school quality and student success (NACSA, 2023, p. 4).
- Complement the state system, while keeping in mind expanding definitions of school excellence and ensuring the Accountability Framework truly assesses student performance for accountability and monitoring purposes (NACSA, 2023, p. 14).
- Use a growth model (state or national) that enables schools to know if students—including student groups—are making sufficient progress to achieve or maintain proficiency (NACSA, 2023, p. 23).
- Look closely at performance to evaluate whether schools effectively serve all students. Look not only at the aggregate—which can mask performance for some groups—but also for groups of students, including racial and

socio-economic groups, Multilingual Learners, and students receiving special education services, among others (NACSA, 2023, p. 19).

- Assess for reliability, by considering “whether a measurement produces similar results over time and under the same circumstances” (NACSA, 2023, p. 11).
- Assess for validity, by considering “the extent to which a tool measures what you want it to measure” (NACSA, 2023, p. 14).

DC PCSB used this internal and external research as the foundation for revising its accountability system, now called ASPIRE. For more on the research base used to build ASPIRE, see Appendix A.

Annual School Performance Index Report & Evaluation (ASPIRE)

ASPIRE means achieving excellent schools for all students, particularly those from communities that have been historically marginalized.

ASPIRE is based on four guiding principles:

- Hold each school accountable for ensuring all students meet or exceed high performance and/or improvement targets, acknowledging that an excellent school is equitable;
- Reward high levels of growth for all students;
- Provide a rigorous, attainable benchmark to measure school performance; and
- Focus primarily on outcomes, in both performance and school climate measures.

Components of ASPIRE

There are five frameworks within ASPIRE:

- **PK-Only:** Schools exclusively offering grades PK3 and PK4.
- **PK – 8:** Schools offering any configuration of grade levels from PK through grade 8. Within this framework are distinct sub-frameworks based on grade configurations (e.g., PK – 3, 4 – 8, 6 – 8).
- **High School:** Any diploma-granting school starting in grades 8 or 9 and ending in grade 12.
- **Adult Education:** Any school meeting the federal definition of adult education.
- **Alternative Accountability:** Any campus meeting DC PCSB's criteria to be evaluated under Alternative Accountability.

The **PK-Only Framework** measures performance in three categories:

School Achievement and Progress

Captures useful information on what students know and can do.

School-Specific Performance

Metrics are specific to each school, and assess aspects of the school program important to the school's mission.

School Environment

Contains measures representing elements of a school's climate that are considered key predictors of student progress and achievement

The **PK – 8, High School, Adult Education, Alternative Accountability Frameworks** measure performance across four categories:

School Progress
For PK – 12 schools, measures academic growth in English language arts (ELA) and math from one year to the next or within one school year on a standardized assessment.

School Achievement
Captures how well schools prepare students to meet college and career readiness benchmarks.

School Environment
Contains measures representing elements of a school's climate that are considered key predictors of student progress and achievement.

School-Specific Performance
Metrics are specific to each school, and assess aspects of the school program important to the school's mission.

Almost all categories have multiple measures and each framework includes a different combination of measures most relevant to the grades and students the school serves. Within each framework, each measure has a unique number of possible points a school can earn within each category.

A summary of measures by framework is below. For details on measures in each category and specifics about the PK-Only and Alternative Accountability frameworks, see the DC PCSB ASPIRE Policy and Technical Guide.[2]

Spotlight: Changes from PMF to ASPIRE

While there were several changes made to the PMF to create ASPIRE, here are the highlights:

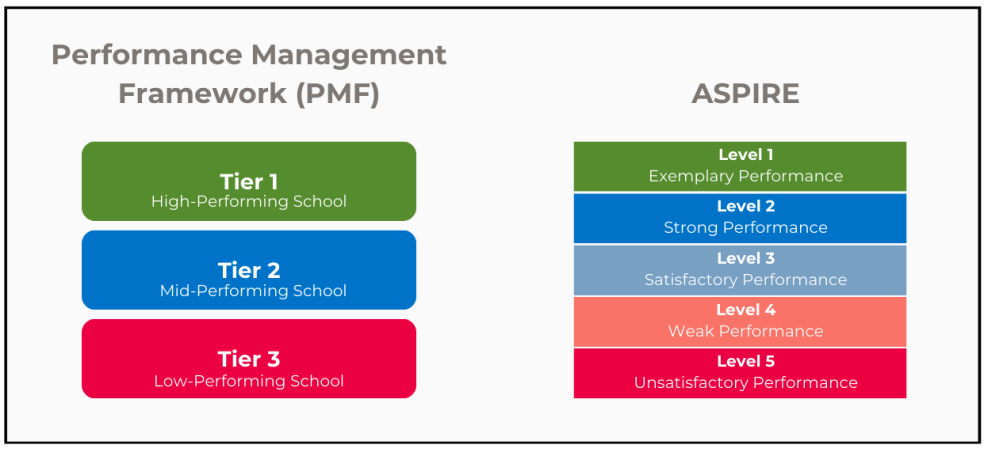
	Performance Management Framework	ASPIRE
Classifications	Three tiers	**Five levels**
Classification Descriptors	**Tier 1:** High-Performing school **Tier 2:** Mid-Performing school **Tier 3:** Low-Performing school	**Level 1:** Exemplary Performance **Level 2:** Strong Performance **Level 3:** Satisfactory Performance **Level 4:** Weak Performance **Level 5:** Unsatisfactory Performance
Categories	Student Progress, Student Achievement, Gateway, School Environment, College & Career Readiness, Leading Indicators	**School** Progress, **School** Achievement, School Environment, **School-Specific Performance**
How Measures Are Calculated	All measures calculated by "All Students"	PK-Only, PK – 8, High School: All measures (except CLASS and ACCESS) calculated by **student groups**
Floors & Targets	Set by sector performance	Set by **state** performance where available

	Performance Management Framework	ASPIRE
School-Specific	Mission-specific goals included as "untiered measures"	School-specific measures **included and scored** in framework
Attendance	In-Seat Attendance (ISA) for PK-Only, PK – 8, High School, Adult Ed	ISA for PK-Only, **Chronic Absenteeism** for PK – 8 and High School, **no attendance for Adult Ed**
State Assessment Used	PARCC 3+ and PARCC 4+	DC CAPE 4+
PARCC[1] Calculated	PARCC proficiency and growth measures (rates, floors, targets) calculated by framework	DC CAPE proficiency and growth measures (rates, floors, targets) calculated by **grade band**
Growth Measures	PK – 8 and High School state assessment growth: MGP	PK – 8 state assessment growth: MGP and **Growth-to-Proficiency (GTP)** High School state assessment growth: GTP
	No measure for English proficiency for PK – 8 and High School	ACCESS Growth for PK – 8 and High School
		School select growth assessment (opt-in)
Adult Ed Metric	Earned High-Level Certifications	Earned High-Level & **Mid-Level** Certifications

[1] In school year 2023 – 24, DC implemented a new name for its statewide assessment system. The District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessments of Progress in Education (DC CAPE) include the DC ELA assessment (DC ELA), the DC Math assessment (DC Math) and the DC Science assessment (DC Science).
[2] View the ASPIRE Policy and Technical Guide on the ASPIRE webpage at https://dcpcsb.org/aspire-system

Three Tiers to Five Levels

Stakeholder feedback suggested that the PMF's three broad tiers made it difficult to understand the differences between schools' performance. By moving from three tiers to five levels, ASPIRE offers stakeholders greater clarity in the distinction between schools' performance and the nuance behind the earned levels.



Chronic Absenteeism Replaces In-Seat Attendance

Regular school attendance is critical for academic success.[3] The PMF used In-Seat Attendance (ISA) as a metric for student engagement. While ISA rates tell us the number of students attending school each day, they often mask high levels of chronic absenteeism. ASPIRE measures chronic absenteeism to capture the percentage of students missing more than 10.0% of school days, including excused and unexcused absences.

PARCC/DC CAPE (Proficiency and Growth) Measures Rates, Floors, and Targets Are Calculated by Two Grade Bands

The PMF calculated PARCC rates, floors, and targets for PK – 8 using any configuration of grade levels from grade 3 to grade 8. In SY 2023 – 24, OSSE renamed its statewide assessment system to the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessments of Progress in Education (DC CAPE), which "includes DC assessments in English language arts/literacy (ELA), mathematics and science."[4] Like the PMF, DC PCSB's ASPIRE uses the state assessments, now DC CAPE.

However, ASPIRE accounts for the difference in performance at the elementary and middle school levels and supports differentiation for stand-alone middle schools. ASPIRE calculates rates, floors, and targets in the PK – 8 Framework in a 3 – 5 grade band and a 6 – 8 grade band.

[3] For more information on research supporting this rationale, see: bit.ly/3KgTHFq.
[4] For more information on DC CAPE, see https://osse.dc.gov/dccape.

Spotlight: New Elements in ASPIRE

ASPIRE also includes new elements that respond to stakeholder input.

School-Specific Performance Measures for All Frameworks

In response to school leader input, ASPIRE broadens the definition of excellence by allowing schools to set expectations for other aspects of students' learning and programming unique to each school and its mission. *(Note that School-Specific Performance measures will not be included in ASPIRE until Fall 2025. During SY 2024 – 25, DC PCSB staff will collaborate with schools to identify two school-specific performance measures and prepare for implementation.)*

School-Selected Growth Assessment for Bonus Points for PK – 8 and HS

School-selected, nationally normed growth assessments allow schools to highlight growth outside of the state assessment, PARCC/DC CAPE. These assessments often help schools make real-time decisions throughout the year to build on emerging successes or address learning gaps. This measure is available to all schools that serve students in grades 4 – 8 and/or high school for bonus points; it is not included in the "points possible" for any framework configuration.

Student Group Calculations

DC PCSB's commitment to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI) guides our work; disaggregating student outcomes by student group allows DC PCSB to evaluate whether schools effectively serve all students and achieve its strategic priority of improving outcomes, especially for historically marginalized groups.

Measures are disaggregated by student groups to amplify areas where schools serve all students, including racial and ethnic groups, socio-economic indicators, Emerging Multilingual Learners, and students receiving special education services. ASPIRE also prioritizes positive outcomes for students furthest from opportunity.

DC PCSB determined the weight for each measure based on the percentage of students educated in the charter sector. The weights for the five student groups are as follows:

- At-Risk - 40.0%
- Not At-Risk - 20.0%
- Students with Disabilities - 15.0%
- Emerging Multilingual Learners - 10.0%
- Race/Ethnicity - 15.0%
    - Racial/Ethnic Groups: Black, White, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.

- Student groups in the race/ethnicity category are weighted proportionally to the number of students included in the metric calculation.

Growth to Proficiency Added as a Growth Measure for PK – 8

The Growth to Proficiency measure tracks the change in students' test scores year-to-year and offers a picture of whether students are on track to achieve or maintain proficiency over time.

Implementation Timeline

The ASPIRE system was approved on June 10, 2024, and SY 2024 – 25 will serve as the first year of implementation. In SY 2025 – 26, DC PCSB will publish campus-level outcomes without an ASPIRE level and score, based on SY 2024 – 25 performance. SY 2026 – 27 will be the first year DC PCSB will publicly report ASPIRE outcomes, scores, and levels, based on SY 2025 – 26 performance data. DC PCSB will host a variety of engagement sessions with stakeholders, ranging from sharing high-level information about ASPIRE to hosting deep dives for other school staff, school board members, and more.

Our Aspirations

DC PCSB is committed to implementing ASPIRE intentionally and deliberately. DC PCSB's work as an authorizer—and the work it takes to lead a school—is not easy but their collective duty is to make sure every student in their community receives a quality education. While there may be tensions between holding schools to high student achievement standards and the evolving demands and expectations created following the pandemic, DC PCSB believes implementing ASPIRE is a key step to ensuring all public charter school stakeholders have what they need to support excellence for their students.

ASPIRE allows:

- **DC PCSB** to have a more nuanced understanding of school strengths and opportunities for improvement. This understanding will enhance our ability to fulfill DC PCSB's mission to approve, monitor, and evaluate schools with an emphasis on equity and academic excellence; and allows DC PCSB to live its REDI commitments.
- **School leaders** to have comparable data to understand where their students excel, where they need to take action to improve impact on student outcomes, and where they can use promising practices to spur innovation.
- **Families** to have information to make informed school choice decisions.
- **Community leaders** and partners to take data-informed and responsive action in support of schools and students.

- **Policymakers** to have the information and data they need to keep students, community, and equitable outcomes at the center of their policymaking.

Together, these stakeholders in the DC public charter community can leverage ASPIRE to drive decisions and ensure schools support all students in feeling valued and being prepared for a lifetime of learning, fulfilling careers, and economic security.

Appendix A: Research Base for ASPIRE

ASPIRE was built on local and national research on student learning, successful schools, and effective charter school accountability systems. Below is a selection of the research base of ASPIRE. DC PCSB adapted much of the overall structure from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' 2023 *Guide to Performance Frameworks*. See DC PCSB's ASPIRE Policy & Technical Guide for more detail.

ASPIRE Framework	Category
PK-Only	**<u>School Achievement and Progress Measures</u>** Accountability has a meaningful role in early childhood and can demonstrate whether students being served at PK-Only schools are progressing in critical academic areas. ASPIRE's PK-Only Framework measures align with research showing a comprehensive picture of early childhood programs can only be achieved by analyzing assessment outcomes and evaluating how teachers, staff, and children interact with one another (Meisels, 2006). **<u>School Environment Measures</u>** **Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS).** CLASS is an observational tool for analyzing the quality of teacher-student interactions in the classroom (Teachstone, n.d.). Research and developmental theory indicate that interactions in early childhood classrooms, along with the overall learning environment, are foundational to learning. Studies show students make greater gains in key areas of school readiness when they are in classrooms with more effective teacher-child interactions, as measured by CLASS scores; preschoolers, specifically, showed greater learning gains in executive functioning and early literacy (Burchinal et al., 2010). In response to public comment received, DC PCSB will give bonus points for CLASS. **PK In-Seat Attendance (ISA).** Regular school attendance is critical for academic success, and research shows students who miss too many days of pre-kindergarten have weaker literacy and numeracy skills entering kindergarten (Attendance Works, 2022). Chronically absent PK students are far more likely to be chronically absent in later grades (Ehrlich, Gynne & Allensworth, 2018). At the PK level, good attendance may also indicate strong parent/caretaker engagement (Attendance Works, 2022). **<u>School-Specific Measures</u>** In line with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) 2023 *Guide to Performance Frameworks,* prioritizing mission-specific measures "helps foster more diverse and innovative schooling options with students and communities. Rigorous measures of quality aligned to a school's mission provide insight into how well schools are delivering for students and communities" (NACSA, 2023, p. 26).

ASPIRE Framework	Category
PK – 8 Framework	**<u>School Progress Measures</u>** Per recommendations from significant research, ASPIRE captures students' growth in ELA and math (Data Quality Campaign, 2019 & Jennings & Sohn, 2014). DC PCSB assigns the most weight to the **School Progress or "growth" category.** The local and national decline in academic growth observed among students during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery period drives this emphasis (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). DC PCSB heard from school leaders the need to consider multiple measures of growth, including growth toward proficiency, and optional school selected measures to account for efforts to support students in achieving proficiency. **Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS).** CLASS is an observational tool for analyzing the quality of teacher-student interactions in the classroom (Teachstone, n.d.). Research and developmental theory indicate that interactions in early childhood classrooms, along with the overall learning environment, are foundational to learning. Studies show students make greater gains in key areas of school readiness when they are in classrooms with more effective teacher-child interactions, as measured by CLASS scores; preschoolers, specifically, showed greater learning gains in executive functioning and early literacy (Burchinal et al., 2010). In response to public comment received, DC PCSB will give bonus points for CLASS. **NWEA MAP K – 3 Growth Outcomes: ELA and Math.** Research shows students who are not reading proficiently in third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school on time (Hernandez, 2011). Thus, capturing growth toward meeting grade-level standards prior to students' first high-stakes assessment in third grade is critical. MAP is designed to be fair and equitable for all students (Meyer, 2022). It is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and its adaptive nature meets students where they are in their achievement (NWEA, 2022). **State Assessment Growth to Proficiency Rate: ELA and Math.** The Growth to Proficiency Rate measure assesses whether a student has made sufficient growth toward PARCC/DC CAPE proficiency (level 4). Generally, growth-to-standard measures offer a picture of whether students are on track to meet academic benchmarks and are helpful for offering more information about students who are already performing below a proficiency benchmark (Data Quality Campaign, 2019).

ASPIRE Framework	Category
	State Assessment Median Growth Percentile (MGP): ELA and Math. Many schools report enrolling students who perform one or more years below grade level, so it is critical to consider how well schools are accelerating student learning (NACSA, 2023, p. 21). Student growth percentile measures offer insight into whether students are learning, regardless of student proficiency level, and suggest a school's collective contributions to student outcomes. As a norm-referenced growth measure, MGP demonstrates growth relative to peers. Proficiency is not a requirement or indicator of students having a high Student Growth Percentile (SGP), for they do not reveal any information about how students are performing relative to grade-level learning goals (Data Quality Campaign, 2019). **ACCESS Growth Rate.** ACCESS assesses social and instructional English as well as the academic language associated with the four core subject areas, across the four language domains. DC PCSB did not report on ACCESS performance in the PMF. However, ESSA requires states to administer a yearly English proficiency assessment to English learners, demonstrating the importance of measuring Emerging Multilingual Learners' progress in English language acquisition (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Incorporating ACCESS Growth Rates in the ASPIRE System is worthwhile given English language proficiency declines during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery period. The Wisconsin Center for Education Research reports "an overall downward trend in student proficiency and growth" on ACCESS in 2021, particularly among elementary and middle schoolers (WIDA, 2021). DC PCSB recognizes an opportunity to formally track English learners' performance, thereby supporting DC public charter schools in monitoring Emerging Multilingual program quality at this critical post-pandemic moment. **[Opt-in] School Selected Nationally Normed Growth Assessment–ELA and Math.** School-selected, nationally normed growth assessments allow schools to highlight growth outside of the state assessment, PARCC/DC CAPE. Additionally, many schools utilize these assessments to inform their curriculum and identify learning gaps (NWEA, 2020). **<u>School Achievement Measures</u>** **State Assessment Proficiency Rate–English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) and Math.** The primary purpose of DC's state assessments is to provide high-quality, criterion-referenced assessments to measure students' progress toward college and career readiness (OSSE, 2023). NACSA recommends, "It is important to balance an evaluation of both the level at which students are performing and how much growth students are making toward proficiency each year. Ultimately, over time, schools must demonstrate that they can bring students up to and beyond grade level" (NACSA, 2023, p. 27).

ASPIRE Framework	Category
	<u>School Environment Measures</u> **Chronic Absenteeism.** Regular school attendance is critical for academic success. Chronic absence from school is correlated with lower levels of academic proficiency and higher likelihood of dropping out of high school. It is also correlated with an increased risk of poor life outcomes such as poverty, diminished health, and involvement in the criminal justice system (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). **Re-enrollment Rate.** Students and families choosing to return to a school each year may be an indicator of a positive school environment. While students in DC demonstrate high rates of mobility, the re-enrollment metric seeks to measure the percentage of students who choose to re-enroll in the same school year over year.[5] **<u>School-Specific Measures</u>** In line with NACSA's 2023 *Guide to Performance Frameworks*, prioritizing mission-specific measures "helps foster more diverse and innovative schooling options with students and communities. Rigorous measures of quality aligned to a school's mission provide insight into how well schools are delivering for students and communities" (NACSA, 2023, p. 26).
High School	**<u>School Progress Measures</u>** **Growth on the State Assessment in ELA and Math.** During the public comment period for the ASPIRE Policy & Technical Guide, commenters asked DC PCSB to place more weight on the School Progress category in the High School Framework. Many states do not include growth measures in their high school accountability systems, and many that do have measures that are not available in DC. OSSE's High School Growth to Proficiency metric measures whether a student has made sufficient growth towards a goal of Performance Level 4 (Proficient) on statewide assessments for ELA and math DC PCSB has adopted OSSE's High School Growth to Proficiency measures for ELA and math, worth 15 points together.

[5] See OSSE's rationale for using re-enrollment for accountability here, https://bit.ly/3p0yB6E, p. 128

ASPIRE Framework	Category
Framework	**ACCESS Growth Rate.** ACCESS assesses social and instructional English as well as the academic language associated with the four core subject areas, across the four language domains. DC PCSB did not report on ACCESS performance in the PMF. However, ESSA requires states to administer a yearly English proficiency assessment to English learners, demonstrating the importance of measuring Emerging Multilingual Learners' progress in English language acquisition (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Incorporating ACCESS Growth Rates in the ASPIRE System is worthwhile given English language proficiency declines during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery period. Wisconsin Center for Education Research reports "an overall downward trend in student proficiency and growth" on ACCESS in 2021, particularly among elementary and middle schoolers (WIDA, 2021). DC PCSB recognizes an opportunity to formally track English learners' performance, thereby supporting DC public charter schools in monitoring Emerging Multilingual program quality at this critical post-pandemic moment. **[Opt-in] School Selected Nationally Normed Growth Assessment–ELA and Math.** School-selected nationally normed growth assessments allow schools to highlight growth outside of the state assessment, PARCC/DC CAPE. Additionally, many schools utilize these assessments to inform their curriculum and identify learning gaps.[6] **ACT/SAT College Readiness Participation Rate (Bonus points)**. DC PCSB staff researched how other accountability systems capture student progress at the high school level to address the concerns raised about the School Progress category in the HS Framework. Many states do not include growth measures in high school accountability and the ones that do have measures that are not available in DC. In addition to reminding school leaders that the School-Specific Performance category offers high schools an opportunity for up to 10 more points toward growth. With this research, DC PCSB decided to introduce the ACT/SAT College Readiness Participation Rate, designed to reward schools with bonus points for high ACT or SAT testing participation rates for grade 11 students. **Advanced Coursework and Career Certification Participation Rate (Bonus points).** **<u>School Achievement Measures</u>** **9th Grade On-Track Rate.** Research suggests the first year of high school is a critical transition point for students (Allenwsorth, 2017). The 9th Grade On Track Rate is meaningful because 9th grade performance serves as an "early warning [indicator] useful for improving student achievement"(Allensworth, 2017). Further, successful completion of those courses in 9th grade predicts

	students' success in high school (Dynarski et al., 2018). Students who struggle academically are more likely to drop out (Ritter, 2015). **High School Graduation Rate–4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and 5-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.** High school graduation rate is an important indicator of school quality and is directly correlated with life outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). A high on-time graduation rate generally suggests that a school is effectively supporting its students academically and providing them with the necessary resources and support to complete their high school education successfully.

[6] NWEA's 2020 Growth Normative Data Overview available here, https://bit.ly/3NrKYSO.

ASPIRE Framework	Category
	AP/IB/CTE/DE Achievement Rate. Advanced coursework opportunities provide high school students with the opportunity to earn college credit while they are still in high school, allowing them to gain skills and demonstrate competencies in the kinds of learning they can expect in postsecondary education (Chatterji, Campbell & Quirk, 2021). Students who take advanced courses, specifically in math, science, and ELA, are likely to have better postsecondary outcomes (Ogut, Circi & Yee, 2021). **PSAT College Readiness Benchmark Achievement Rate.** The PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) is a strong indicator of college readiness and is highly related to success in college (College Board, 2014). While most students may not be college ready when taking the PSAT, indicators of students' trajectory toward college readiness can provide useful information to students and schools. A student's PSAT and ACT/SAT scores in the same content areas are highly and positively correlated (Proctor, Wyatt & Wiley, 2010). **ACT/SAT College Readiness Benchmark Achievement Rate - ERW and Math.** The ACT/SAT is a strong indicator of college readiness and is highly related to success in college (College Board, 2014). Meeting the ACT/SAT college readiness benchmark indicates that students are prepared to enter a four-year postsecondary institution and have a high likelihood of success in first-year college courses. Students who perform well on the ACT/SAT are more likely to persist to a second year of college and graduate on time (College Board, 2014). Unfortunately, research indicates that 40.0% of new college students take remedial courses because they are unprepared for the academic demands of college (Hanover Research Insights Blog, 2014). **College and Career Acceptance Rate.** There is a common belief that a traditional four-year college is the only career path after high school (Stefanakos, n.d.). DC PCSB believes there are many postsecondary pathways that can lead students to lifelong learning, fulfilling careers, and economic security. Viable options include college, trade and technical programs, the military, or entering the job market. **<u>School Environment Measures</u>** **Chronic Absenteeism.** Regular school attendance is critical for academic success. Chronic absence from school is correlated with lower levels of academic proficiency and higher likelihood of dropping out of high school. It is also correlated with an increased risk of poor life outcomes such as poverty, diminished health, and involvement in the criminal justice system (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

ASPIRE Framework	Category
	Re-enrollment Rate. Students and families choosing to return to a school each year may be an indicator of a positive school environment. While students in DC demonstrate high rates of mobility, the re-enrollment metric seeks to measure the percentage of students who choose to re-enroll in the same school year over year.[7] **School-Specific Measures** In line with NACSA's 2023 *Guide to Performance Frameworks*, prioritizing mission-specific measures "helps foster more diverse and innovative schooling options with students and communities. Rigorous measures of quality aligned to a school's mission provide insight into how well schools are delivering for students and communities" (NACSA, 2023).
Adult Education Framework	**School Progress Measures** **Adult Basic Education (ABE) Gains Rate.** As reported in DC's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan 2020 – 2023, "approximately 50,000 adult residents in the District do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent."[8] The city's adult-serving public charter schools are critical in boosting literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency rates.Developing these skills in adult learners is a precursor to helping students earn a secondary credential. **English as a Second Language Educational Gains Rate.** Approximately 70% of adult learners in DC speak a language other than English at home.[9] Anecdotally, many adult learners seek adult public charter school services initially to strengthen their English language skills. Regardless of the motivations for enrolling in English learner programs, an increase in English proficiency is positively correlated with higher wages, employability, and educational pursuits.[10] **School Achievement Measures** **GED Subject Test Achievement Rate.** Research suggests that individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent are better positioned to earn a job; earn, on average, double the income of their peers who do not have a high school diploma or GED; have lower unemployment rates; and have a higher likelihood of postsecondary school enrollment.

[7] See OSSE's rationale for using re-enrollment for accountability here https://bit.ly/3p0yB6E.
[8] Learn more about DC's plan here https://bit.ly/3ueE645.
[9] See research on DC's adult public charter schools here bit.ly/3YBASCP.
[10] See research on the importance of investing in multilingual learners here bit.ly/45vak8v.

ASPIRE Framework	Category
	High School Equivalency Achievement Rate. This measure reflects the attainment of a GED or the state-recognized equivalent. This measure reflects whether students have obtained the skills needed to get a job, retain a job, or attend college without needing remedial classes. **Industry- and Mid-Level Certification Achievement Rate.** This measure reflects the achievement of Industry-Level Certification or Mid-Level Certification with rigorous requirements, including assessments leading to employment in high-wage, high-demand fields. It assesses whether students have gained the skills necessary to secure a job in a high-wage, high-demand field and advance in their current careers. **Entered/Retained Employment or Postsecondary Enrollment Rate.** This measure tracks students' outcomes regarding employment or their entry into postsecondary education. It assesses whether students who initially joined the adult education program retained or obtained employment or entered postsecondary education or training upon program completion. **<u>School Environment Measures</u>** **Persistence Rate.** Adult education schools often serve students who faced challenges when they were enrolled in traditional education programs. Adult students who re-engage in learning must often "overcome significant barriers to participate in educational services" (Comings, 2007). Further, most adult students "come with [educational and career] goals that require hundreds, if not thousands of hours of instruction to achieve" (Comings, 2007). Consequently, adult-serving schools are tasked with providing students with support services "that help them persist in learning long enough to reach their educational goals" (Comings, 2007). While this measure captures the proportion of students who persist in their education, it also indicates whether adult education schools are successful in supporting students' educational pursuits. **<u>School Specific Measures</u>** In line with NACSA's 2023 *Guide to Performance Frameworks*, prioritizing school-specific measures "helps foster more diverse and innovative schooling options with students and communities. Rigorous measures of quality aligned to a school's mission provide insight into how well schools are delivering for students and communities" (NACSA, 2023).
Alternative	**<u>School Achievement Measures</u>** **GED Subject Test Achievement Rate.** This measure reflects the successful passage of GED subject tests, indicating that students have acquired the skills necessary to earn a secondary credential. **High School Equivalency Achievement Rate.** This measure reflects the attainment of a GED or the state-recognized equivalent. This measure reflects whether students have obtained the skills needed to get a job, retain a job, or attend college without needing remedial classes.

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