DC EDUCATION
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

OSSE AND SUPPORT FOR EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT DATA USE

Statement of
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before the
Committee of the Whole,
Council of the District of Columbia

OSSE PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING

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* The views expressed are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

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Good morning, Chairman and members of the Council and Council staff. My name is Dara Zeehandelaar Shaw, and I am the director of the DC Education Research Collaborative. We are a research-practice partnership that brings together the city's education providers, practitioners, policymakers, community members, and researchers. We are hosted by the Urban Institute, and the views expressed here are my own and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

This morning, I'd like to share with you some of the work that we're undertaking, explain the partnerships that we maintain with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and other city agencies under our master service agreement with OSSE, and emphasize the importance of continuing to support the use of research and data to increase transparency, drive decision-making, enhance learning opportunities, and support the entire public education ecosystem.

First, I'll highlight our current research pipeline. OSSE is providing data on one of our major projects: a study on school discipline after the 2018 Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act, looking at disparities in out-of-school suspension rates by race, gender, and disability status. We're presenting our partners and Advisory Committee members with preliminary findings one week from today. We're also working with OSSE's Division of Postsecondary and Career Education to design a study on the impact of career and technical education programs of study, using data from the Office of Education Through Employment Pathways as a first-time test of a partnership with an external researcher.

We're working with other agencies and education providers as well. Many of these projects use, or will use, public or student-level OSSE data. We've partnered with DC Public Schools on a four-year study on career development opportunities for high schoolers. We're working with the Department of Energy and the Environment to understand the learning and behavioral impact of environmental education. We're working with EmpowerK12 and several charter local education agencies to study the outcomes of changes to math instruction and student supports. And we're supporting the 80-plus student-researchers of the State Board of Education's Student Advisory Committee as they gather data and make recommendations on issues that matter most to them and their peers. I'm hopeful that we will soon add the Department of Employment Services to that list, as we're developing a study on how the Summer Youth Employment Program can be a first step on students' career development journeys.

All our work relies on partners willing to lend their expertise so that researchers ask relevant, impactful questions. OSSE is a key member of our Advisory Committee of institutional representatives, educators, and community members, keeping us accountable to students' needs and making sure we work where we're needed most. Our work also depends on smooth access to high-quality data, and we will work with OSSE this spring as our current master service agreement for data access is up for renewal. I'd like to thank the OSSE team for their continued collaboration and support for creating the actionable, transparent research the city's students need.