

**Response to Questions from Councilmember Kevin Chavous
regarding the Creation of a State Education Office:**

1. How many full-time employees does your agency/office have that are hired through federal dollars?

None. The four full-time staff members are paid out of the Board's budget from the District.

2. What level of funding does your agency/receive for state functions?

None. The Board currently performs no "state" functions.

3. How would the creation of an SEO improve/hamper the functions of your agency?

See attached letter.

4. How are state functions in your office/agency kept separate from local functions?

Not applicable. All public charter schools function as local education agencies (LEAs) under the oversight of the chartering authorities.

5. Regardless of whether your office/agency receives funds for state functions, specifically describe how frequently your office/agency is audited, the exact type of monitoring your office/agency receives and how the SEO, as described in the draft, would increase/decrease the level of oversight your office/agency receives.

Currently, the Board undergoes a complete financial audit by a CPA firm each year.

In addition, the Board is required in the DC School Reform Act to submit an annual report to the Mayor, and another to the City Council, the Control Board and members of the DC Oversight and Appropriations Committees of Congress. These reports include substantial information on the schools under the Board's guidance and all oversight and monitoring activities relating to the schools. Board staff are also in frequent contact with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Mayor and City Council members.

Since the SEO would largely supplant functions currently performed by DCPS, it would not substantially increase or decrease the oversight that this Board receives. The audit function of the new office, however, could represent a substantial, and we believe unnecessary growth in oversight. This new office could require too much compliance activity from a volunteer Board and a four-person staff.

6. Please describe any situation in which you feel there has been a conflict of interest when DCPS provided oversight of your office.

DCPS does not provide oversight for this office. However, DCPS does functions as the "state" as it relates to the administration of federal entitlements. While there has never been reason for this Board to question the activities of the DCPS grant office, it may nevertheless be a conflict of interest for DCPS to both administer and compete for federal grants.

7. Please describe your day-to-day working relationship with the State Office that is directed by Arlene Ackerman, who is serving as the District's State Education Officer.

While there have been occasional meetings with the Superintendent and her staff in the past, the Board presently does not have contact with Mrs. Ackerman on a regular basis. Board staff does work regularly, however, with such DCPS offices as Categorical Programs, Student Assessment, and Special Education.

8. Please describe your day-to-day working relationship with the Office run by Margaret Beach, who also administers State functions for the DCPS.

The Board's staff works closely with the Office of Categorical Programs run by Dr. Beach on a number of issues. Dr. Beach has been instrumental in setting up policies and procedures for various charter school needs, such as creating student ID numbers for new students and acquiring cumulative files from DCPS schools. Gloria Browner of that office works with Board and school staff on federal entitlements and other grant programs, and has been a valuable resource to our schools.