



February 22, 2021

The Hon. Robert White, Chairperson
Committee on Government Operations and Facilities
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmember White and Members of the Committee:

I write in advance of the February 23, 2021 performance oversight hearing on the Office of the Chief Technology Officer to share potential questions you may wish to raise related to ongoing work of the Office of the D.C. Auditor.

As you know, ODCA will shortly publish an audit of education data required by *The District of Columbia Education Research Practice Partnership Establishment and Audit Act of 2018*. The audit followed a recommendation for such a review by the National Academy of Sciences in its 2015 report, *An Evaluation of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia*. And that report, in turn, was an evaluation the Council required of the impact of the 2007 Public Education Reform Amendment Act which transitioned to mayoral control of public schools and created the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Among the roles assigned to OSSE in 2007 was creating and managing public education data systems.

The D.C. Code, § 38–2609. Development of the educational data warehouse system, states:

(a) The OSSE, *in coordination with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer*, shall develop and implement a longitudinal educational data warehouse system... (emphasis added).

In advance of ODCA releasing the comprehensive education data audit, you may want to ask the District's Chief Technology Officer to provide in detail what the role of OCTO has been in developing, collecting, using and making accessible the District's public education data. The District has received two competitive federal grants totaling \$10 million to build a Statewide Longitudinal Data System and has allocated even more in District capital funds to that purpose. It may be useful to have on the public record what role OCTO has played heretofore in building such a system, and what plans OCTO may have going forward to work with and/or oversee the education agencies on data collection and management.

A second area also encompassed in ODCA's recent work is the District's overall oversight and management of information technology practice and operations. Reports issued by ODCA and by the Office of the Inspector General have emphasized the importance of OCTO providing the kind of enterprise-wide leadership envisioned when the office was created in 2001. In this context the Committee may wish to consult the report issued in January 2020 by the D.C. Homeland Security Commission, [Safeguarding Cyberspace in the Nation's Capital](#), and seek the Chief Technology Officer's views on its recommendations. The report's principal finding:

The District continues to lack well-established coordination and collaboration processes within the government and across the National Capitol Region to safeguard the District's cyberspace.

The Commission issued 10 recommendations, including several related to governance including these two:

- Adopt a formal cyber governance structure with clear roles, responsibilities, and processes to enable continued progress and prevent future bureaucratic lapses.
- Fully authorize OCTO and the CISO (OCTO's chief information security officer) to develop, deploy, and enforce, in partnership with HSEMA and in coordination with other governmental entities, cyber policy and procedures across all entities under the District's internet domain or system.

I hope this background information is of use to you and the Committee in the course of the Council's performance oversight hearings. Please let me know if ODCA can provide any additional information on these or other issues of concern to the Council. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Patterson
District of Columbia Auditor

cc: Members, Committee on Government Operations and Facilities