
District of Columbia

School Management	D 
Finance	C 
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	B 
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	F 
Data	F 
Pipeline to Postsecondary	No grade
Technology	D 
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	★

School Management. The District of Columbia does a poor job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. Ninety-two percent of teachers say that routine duties and paperwork interfere with their teaching, and the district's academic standards receive a below-average mark. However, the district has an excellent charter school law.

Finance. Overall, the district earns a middling grade in this category. The district gets a low mark for the simplicity of its school funding mechanism, and only 72% of principals report a major amount of control over the school budget, compared with the national average of 90%.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. The district receives an above-average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Twenty-three percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. The district also earns a high mark for working with national programs to recruit non-traditional teachers and requires incoming teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. The district receives a very low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-seven percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, 16 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 67% percent of principals report that personnel policies are a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. The district gets a very low mark for its data system. The district does not have a P-20 longitudinal data system and does not provide educators with an interactive school-level database for analysis.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. We are unable to grade the district for its efforts to improve college and career readiness because of insufficient data.

Technology. The district receives a low grade in this category. It does not require technology testing for teachers and does not offer a computer-based assessment. The district also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the district supports common academic standards.

Gold Stars. In the Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation category, the District of Columbia receives a gold star for participating in national programs authorized to certify nontraditional administrators. To receive a gold star in this category, a state must have approved New Leaders for New Schools to propose candidates for state certification.
