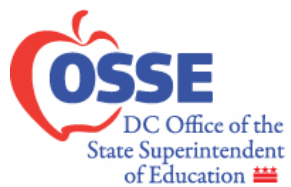




**State Superintendent
Deborah Gist**



**District of Columbia Office of the State
Superintendent of Education (OSSE)**

What is the Patterns of Practice Review?

The Patterns of Practice (POP) Review is an examination of a school's activities in relation to a set of research-based indicators associated with schools demonstrating proficient levels of academic achievement. The POP Review considers a set of 51 indicators related to the following nine standards:

- Curriculum
- Assessment & Evaluation
- Instruction
- Comprehensive & Effective Planning
- School Culture
- Professional Development
- Leadership
- Parent & Community Involvement

Emphasis is placed on indicators related to Instruction based on research that without effective classroom instruction is required for children to reach their full academic potential.

The POP Review process looks for evidence of the presence of indicators associated with substantial school improvement. It includes collecting detailed information on the quality of instruction, assessment, curriculum, planning, and parent involvement. Data collection activities include classroom observation, surveys and interviews with staff, and the review of documents related to the educational program. Review teams will be composed of consultants selected by OSSE for their expertise in the area of educational administration and pedagogy.

What government agency authorized the conduct of Patterns of Practice Reviews?

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) authorized the development and implementation of Patterns of Practice Reviews in the spring of 2008. Dr. Deborah Gist, State Superintendent of Education, has made the Office of School Improvement, led by Dr. Shanika Hope, responsible for the Patterns of Practice Review activity. Ms. Victoria Thomas and Marcus Moore, Academic Improvement Specialists, in the Division of Educational Excellence serve as managers.

To exercise its oversight of the POP Reviews the Office of School Improvement will undertake the following activities:

- Identify the schools for POP Review in collaboration with DCPS and DC Charter School Board
- Establish the schedule for POP Reviews in collaboration with DCPS and DC Charter School Board

- Contact principals of schools identified for POP Reviews to provide background on this activity and introduce the POP Team leader charged with completing preparatory activities
- Recruit and train expert consultants to conduct POP Reviews

What is the source of the indicators upon which the POP Review is based?

With assistance from its regional technical assistance center, Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC), OSSE decided to base the POP Review on indicators included in *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement* created by the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) and published by Information Age Publishing, Inc. (2007). CII is one of five national centers under the federal Comprehensive Centers Program. This handbook has received the approval of the U.S. Department of Education; in addition, it received the honor of being designated Best Publication of the Year by Division H of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in 2008.

The State of Virginia is also using the handbook as the backbone of a major effort to provide training and technical assistance to districts (known as divisions in Virginia) and schools identified as in need of improvement under both state and No Child Left Behind accountability provisions. Virginia's effort began in 2007 with an assistance program for divisions designated as in probation status and continues this year at both division and school levels. This year Virginia has begun to coordinate various activities conducted by elements of its statewide system of support within this indicators-based framework.

Why is OSSE conducting POP Reviews?

Under provisions in the federal Title 1 program (Section 1117 of P.L. 107-110 No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), OSSE is required to provide a statewide system of support to assist Title 1 districts (i.e., DCPS and DC Charter School Board) and schools that are in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The statewide system of support extends beyond OSSE's own resources, including organizational partners, distinguished educators, support teams, and other consultants to assist districts and schools with expertise appropriate to the needs of the district or school.

The results of POP Reviews will help OSSE deliver appropriate service through its statewide system of support. It is expected that the results of these reviews will also inform DCPS and DC Charter School Board's technical assistance efforts. Finally, schools that undergo POP Reviews will receive valuable feedback about the extent to which their operations related to the nine standards reflect a set of processes and practices identified with successful schools. Schools will be able to use this information in their school improvement planning.

How many schools will have POP Reviews during 2008-2009?

Currently, there are plans to conduct POP Reviews of XX schools. All of them are public charter schools under the management of the DC Charter School Board.

How have these schools been selected?

OSSE and the DC Charter School Board collaborated in the selection of the schools in which POP Reviews will take place. All of these schools have been identified for school improvement under NCLB accountability provisions.

When will the POP Reviews be conducted?

POP Reviews during the 2008-2009 school year will take place between January and April 2009.

Who will conduct the POP Reviews?

OSSE has contracted with Aspen Systems to secure the services of a group of 15 expert consultants who will, among other responsibilities related to OSSE's statewide system of support, conduct the POP Reviews in schools during the 2008-2009 school year. These consultants have strong backgrounds in education. They include former principals, teachers, and district-level administrators. Most have had experience in conducting on-site reviews in schools. They have participated in a series of training events provided by MACC related to the conduct of a POP Review as the POP Review process was being designed; their feedback on aspects of the POP Review has been very helpful.

How are POP Reviews conducted?

In general, POP Reviews are on-site visits to schools and include a variety of data collection activities. The only data collection activity outside the period of the on-site visit is the conduct of on-line survey to which all staff within the school are encouraged to respond. Responses to the survey will be collected in the week leading up to the on-site visit.

During the on-site visit the POP Review Team will gather data from multiple sources including:

- classroom observation in a sample of classrooms
- interviews with teachers and school leadership

- focus groups with instructional and non-instructional personnel as well as with parents
- review of key documents requested from the principal prior to the on-site visit

The POP Review team leader will work with the principal prior to the on-site visit to establish a schedule for the data collection activities. Using a staff roster, the team leader will select the teachers whose classrooms will be visited; this sample is intended to represent the grade levels within the school. To ensure the integrity of the review process which seeks to obtain a profile of the school during its normal operations, teachers whose classrooms will be visited will not be notified in advance. Staff invited to participate in focus groups will be notified in advance to facilitate scheduling. Key documents will be examined during the on-site visit; principals will not be burdened with photocopying or mailing requirements.

How many days does the POP Review Team spend on-site in schools for a POP Review?

The POP Review Team will spend 2-3 days in each school. The number of classroom observations, interviews and focus groups will be determined by factors including school enrollment and/or presence of special programs. At this time OSSE has decided to focus the POP Review process in the areas of Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.

How are the results of the POP Review reported?

Following the on-site visit, the POP Review Team will synthesize the information it collected. The team will structure its analysis using the set of nine standards and 51 indicators that constitute the POP Review framework. The POP Review Team will come to consensus regarding the nature of the findings and recommendations to include in the report.

A written POP Review report will be prepared by the team and submitted to the Office of School Improvement within OSSE.

Do the POP Review reports contain the names of the schools, school staff, and other persons involved in the review?

No. POP Review reports will not include the names of individual teachers who have been observed nor will there be any kind of summative 'grade' for schools in the sample. The review team will simply report what they observed and what data they gathered for each of the standards and associated indicators in the framework.

Do the POP Review reports contain any student names or academic data regarding individual students?

No. POP Review reports will NEVER contain the names of students or academic data regarding individual students.

It is important to point out that, in the conduct of interviews with teachers whose classrooms have been observed, the POP reviewer will be asking how the teacher differentiates instruction and maintains records of student mastery, but the teacher will not be asked to provide information identifying individual students.

Who will get to see and use the POP Review reports?

The main purpose of the review is to provide input to OSSE related to the operation of its statewide system of support. However, participating schools should find the reports valuable to inform their own internal discussions about professional development and school improvement. DCPS and the DC Charter School Board may also find that the reports provide useful information about professional development and other technical assistance needs.

How do POP Reviews differ from other examinations of schools and/or classrooms?

There are differences in purpose and design. The POP Review's main purpose is to inform OSSE's efforts to assist districts and schools in need of improvement through its statewide system of support. To do this OSSE will be most interested in identifying themes and critical needs that emerge in the POP Review findings across multiple schools settings. The POP Review is NOT for the purpose of evaluating the quality of individual schools or individual school staff.

The POP Review's design reflects two major principles:

- using multiple data sources to triangulate the determination of findings, and
- maximizing the review's objectivity by having external reviewers observe classrooms and review documents used by the school.

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