

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION**



**Public Roundtable on  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education Special Education  
Transportation**

**Testimony of  
Raphael Park  
Deputy Superintendent of Operations  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education**

**Before the  
Committee of the Whole  
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman**

December 3, 2025  
9:30 A.M.  
Council of the District of Columbia

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee of the Whole, and Council staff. My name is Raphael Park. I am honored to serve as the Deputy Superintendent of Operations and Interim Director of Student Transportation at OSSE.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide an update following our oversight hearing on student transportation on October 28th. Today, I will focus my testimony on several important matters: the status of the GPS procurement project, our efforts to strengthen parent communication, and the strategic plan guiding OSSE-DOT's work.

### **Procurement of a Routing, GPS, and Parent Application System**

I want to begin with the upcoming modernization of our routing, GPS, and parent application system ("system") because I know how important this work is to the families we serve.

With the support of the Mayor and the Council, OSSE established a new \$3.2 million capital project in Fiscal Year 2025 to procure an updated system. I am pleased to share, alongside my colleague Courtney Lattimore, Interim Deputy Chief Procurement Officer from the Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP), that OCP awarded a letter contract on this project last week. As a result, we now have a highly capable vendor in place to move into the implementation phase. Implementation will require data integration, equipment installation, staff training, and accuracy testing, and OSSE looks forward to meeting with the vendor next week to discuss these matters.

Our goal is to deliver a system that is reliable, precise, and useful for families and for our agency. Having a signed contract is an essential step towards meeting this goal, and we appreciate OCP's partnership with this important project.

### **Family Communication**

I would like to address family communication next. OSSE-DOT is committed to strengthening communication with the families we serve. We understand how stressful it is when a parent is waiting for information on their student's bus. Much of this pressure comes from call surges and the lack of a family-facing phone application. We look forward to implementing our new system, which will improve transparency and reduce our call volume. In the interim, we are taking concrete actions to improve family communication.

First, in February 2023, we established the Daily DOT Updates webpage so that families can check for delays or cancellations without needing to call.<sup>1</sup> We continue to maintain this page.

Second, in Fiscal Year 2025, we installed internal GPS chips on every OSSE-DOT bus. Although this system is not family-facing, it has enabled Parent Resource Center (PRC) staff to view bus locations in real time and provide families who call in with accurate arrival time estimates.

Third, and lastly, many of our bus attendants voluntarily send text updates to families. These messages reduce anxiety and prevent unnecessary calls to the PRC. However, texting parents is

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily DOT Updates*, OFF. OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUC., <https://osse.dc.gov/page/daily-dot-updates> (last visited Dec. 1, 2025).

not currently a required duty under our collective bargaining agreements. We are actively working with our union partners to determine whether this can become a formal job requirement. Reaching an agreement would allow us to create a consistent, systemwide expectation for proactive communication while we prepare for the long-term GPS solution.

Please know that OSSE-DOT is deeply committed to continuing to improve our family communications in the short-and-long-term.

### **OSSE-DOT Strategic Plan**

Lastly, OSSE is currently developing an agencywide, multi-year strategic plan, which will be released in Fiscal Year 2026. That plan will outline system-level priorities across the entire state education agency, including transportation.

In the meantime, OSSE-DOT has developed a roadmap that identifies strategic priorities to maximize operational efficiency, control costs, and improve service. This internal plan was developed to provide a multi-year vision grounded in the realities of student transportation and the needs of the community.

Our roadmap, which is attached to my written testimony, identifies priority projects that we began implementing in Fiscal Year 2025. These projects include developing the OSSE-DOT Parent Portal, reducing staff absenteeism, and procuring and implementing the new GPS routing system. Each project includes timelines, milestones, and performance metrics. These are active projects driving our day-to-day decisions and our long-term planning.

### **Conclusion**

OSSE-DOT remains committed to strengthening student transportation services for families and schools. We are excited about the awarded contract, continuously reimagining our communication strategies, and executing our long-term vision to provide students with disabilities efficient, timely transportation service. Afterall, this is what our families want and deserve.

Thank you for your continued partnership and oversight. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.