



Research Agenda

Years 9 and 10

Chelsea Coffin
Director

Hannah Mason
Senior Education Research Analyst

Established in 2017, the D.C. Policy Center’s Education Policy Initiative (EPI) provides original, objective analyses to inform education policy discussions and formulation in the District of Columbia. In research years 9 and 10, EPI’s research will focus on identifying trends in the new normal for D.C.’s public schools.

The proposed research agenda will address three important questions:

- ➔ **What is the pulse on system health for D.C.’s schools as they continue to recover from pandemic-era setbacks?**
- ➔ **How are shifts in post-COVID student cohorts shaping outcomes?**
- ➔ **How is new momentum—particularly in career pathways—driving change?**

For each of these areas, EPI has identified topics for in-depth research and issues for shorter briefings. These ideas emerged from the team’s community engagement process, where EPI researchers convened local organizations, research advisors, and community members to make sure the proposed research is relevant and valuable to stakeholder interest and need.

REPORTS

SYSTEM HEALTH

State of D.C. Schools reports: To what extent has D.C. made progress on key metrics across the city and compared to the nation?

Demand for and future enrollment in D.C.’s public schools: What is the estimated future enrollment, and how does it compare to expected growth in post-pandemic years?

Shifts in early childhood education: What is the impact of potential changes imposed by budget constraints for early childhood education and young children needing seats?

COHORT ANALYSIS

Learning outcomes for post-pandemic cohorts: To what extent have learning outcomes rebounded for students in post-pandemic cohorts?

Shifts in attendance perceptions: How has chronic absenteeism shifted for the youngest cohorts who did not experience virtual learning?

PROMISING CHANGES

Postsecondary success for D.C.’s high school students: What is the landscape of career development opportunities (CDOs) available to DCPS students?

Launching careers: How can work-based learning be more relevant to careers, including skills development?

BRIEFINGS

The EPI team will produce briefings based on interest from the education community, suggestions from partner organizations, or available data sources. Priority topics include:

- ✓ **AI in education:** How are schools using AI?
- ✓ **Family engagement:** What strategies are effectively engaging families at schools?
- ✓ **Practical life skills:** How are high schools providing students with opportunities to develop practical life skills?
- ✓ **Adult public charter schools:** How are adult public charter schools complementing PK-12 schools?
- ✓ **Specialized school programs:** What specialized school programs are most in demand for D.C. public schools?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

EPI will continue prioritizing community perspectives and voices in all stages of our research process. This looks like:

- ✓ **Links to student voice on research projects**
- ✓ **Community engagement and listening sessions**
- ✓ **Membership in external stakeholder groups**
- ✓ **Dissemination events**
- ✓ **D.C. Voices series**
- ✓ **Research advisors**

OUTREACH

Outreach for the EPI team across all themes in the research agenda includes testifying before the DC Council and DC State Board of Education, offering advocacy cross-support to partner organizations, and conducting briefings with policymakers.

DATA SOURCES

The EPI team integrates a variety of information and data to inform the 2-year research agenda, including:

- ✓ **Publicly available data**
- ✓ **Data and information curated by the D.C. Policy Center through listening sessions, questionnaires, and interviews**
- ✓ **Student level data accessed through OSSE data requests, DCPS data sharing agreements, the DC Education Research Collaborative, and My School DC**
- ✓ **Data shared by schools**