

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program is Making a Difference.

- **The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP)** was part of an innovative three-sector federal education initiative that was requested, shaped, and championed by local D.C. leaders in 2004. While the initial five-year authorization expired in 2009, the program has received continued appropriations for current children only. The Obama Administration and the democratic majority prevented siblings and new children from joining the OSP, effectively ending the program.
- **Including proposed FY2011 funding**, Congress has invested just over \$400 million in the three-sector federal initiative in D.C. since 2004. Beginning in FY2009, Congress disrupted what had been equal funding for each sector. D.C. Public Schools have since received \$104 million; charter schools \$60 million; and the OSP just over \$36 million (assumes FY2011 figures of \$42 million, \$20 million, and \$9.4 million respectively).
- **The OSP** has been subjected to intense congressional scrutiny and has proven to be an effective federal program. A November 2010 report from the Government Accountability Office looked into how D.C. Public Schools spent their three-sector federal funds and cited problems with monitoring the funds.
- **Reauthorization bills** introduced in the House (Speaker Boehner) and the Senate (Chairman Lieberman) will reauthorize the OSP for five years; allow new low-income students to enter the program; create a sibling preference; modestly increase scholarship amounts for inflation; and continue a rigorous program evaluation.

The OSP is a federal program with a proven record of **POSITIVE RESULTS**.

- **A Major finding of the 2010 report** was that students who actually used their scholarships had graduation rates of 91% – 21% higher than those interested in the program who did not receive a scholarship. OSP students continue to show academic gain in reading.
- **The U.S. Department of Education’s (DOE) Institute for Education Sciences (IES)** found that OSP participants’ gains were among the largest achievement impact of any of the programs studied so far. DOE’s own “What Works Clearinghouse” validated the research behind the OSP.
- **Four consecutive studies from Georgetown University and University of Arkansas** found that parents are very satisfied, more involved in their children’s education, and becoming savvy educational consumers.

The OSP enjoys **BROAD LOCAL SUPPORT.**

- **Nearly 9,000 low-income families** have applied to participate in the program since inception and more than 7,800 signed a petition calling for reauthorization.
- **Four separate polls (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011)** clearly show that District residents support all options for low-income parents. A February 2011 Lester & Associates poll showed 74% favor reauthorization of the OSP. A majority of the D.C. City Council supports continuation of the program.

The OSP **HELPS THOSE MOST IN NEED.**

- **Average annual income for a family of four** is just \$25,000 and more than 93% of OSP children would otherwise be attending a SINI (School in Need of Improvement) school.
- **44% of OSP children** are in Wards 7 and 8; more than 75% in Wards 7, 8, 4, and 5.
- **The Opportunity Scholarship Program** is not the solution for the District; but the OSP is a necessary option for low-income parents who have no other choice. The OSP is about ensuring children from low-income families have the same educational access and opportunity as their higher-income peers. The OSP is also about funding what works in education. Support OSP Reauthorization.