Overview
School and Program Information

This section of the Toolkit aims to provide you with some useful information regarding when schools are in session and how to contact key players and offices in both the District of Columbia and Prince George's County public school districts. Please note that more extensive public school listings, school profiles, and information about how to apply to specialized programs, charter schools, and schools outside of your client's neighborhood boundary are available on the school district or the DC Public Charter School Board's websites at:

DC Public Schools: http://www.dcps.dc.gov

DC Public Charter School Board: http://dcpcsb.org

PG County Public Schools: http://www1.pgcps.org

This section also includes information related to non-traditional school programs, which are not as easy to find on any one website. Programs included are special education private school listings in the state of Maryland and the OSSE-approved special education non-public and psychiatric residential treatment facilities in the DC metropolitan area, credit recovery programs, (including online courses and summer school), and information about how to obtain a General Education Diploma (GED) in both the District of Columbia and in Maryland.

CLC Tip Sheet
School Calendars

District of Columbia Public Schools (2018-2019 SY)

Please see link below for DCPS's academic calendar:
https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/2018-19-traditional-calendar

Prince George's County Public Schools (2018- 2019 SY)

Please see link below for PGCPS's academic calendar:
http://www.pgcps.org/2018-2019-calendar-as-grid/

CLC Tip Sheet
Things You Should Do to Monitor Your Client's Education

Before the School Year Begins:

♦ Ensure the child is enrolled in an appropriate school and that all necessary tuition contracts and registration paperwork has been completed.

♦ Inquire about any orientations or welcome sessions.

♦ Ensure your client has the required school uniform, supplies, etc.

♦ Ensure the school has a copy of your client's IEP or 504 Plan. Do not assume the school will timely receive copies of school records from the child's previous schools. If there are particularly significant evaluations or if your client has a history you want the school to be aware of, provide that information to the school as well with a detailed cover letter. Provide that letter and documentation to the Registrar, the individual the school identifies as responsible for special education services or the principal if no other contact is identified, and retain a copy for yourself.

♦ Make sure your client has transportation to and from school if needed. If your client is receiving transportation through the District of Columbia Public Schools, call the Parent Resource Center a few days before the start of school to confirm your client's route number and pick up time.

♦ Make sure your child has a plan for aftercare if needed.

♦ Record reminders for key school year dates on your calendar (*i.e.*, the first day of school, end of advisory periods, when progress reports and report cards are issued, parent/teacher conference dates, vacation days, etc.). If your client receives special education services, also set reminders for when triennial re-evaluations and annual IEP revisions are due.

♦ Get a copy of your client's transcript and determine how many credits your client has to graduate.

Early in the School Year:

♦ Get a copy of your client's class schedule and review it for its appropriateness (*i.e.*, proper classes/credits to meet graduation requirements, appropriate special education hours, etc.).

♦ Make sure your client has all the supplies he/she needs for class (*i.e.*, locker, any special notebooks, materials).

♦ Call to introduce yourself to the client's teachers and service providers and ask them the best way to communicate with them throughout the school year. Given the high case load of

some service providers, it is also helpful to ask them who their designee is if they are unavailable, and get multiple contact mediums (fax, phone, email). Give them your business card!

- Introduce yourself to the assistant principal or other personnel responsible for discipline and request to be notified of all disciplinary matters pertaining to the student. Give them your business card!

- Schedule a school visit and class observation to monitor your client's progress and services.

- Request a 30-day IEP review meeting for a special education student in a new school in order to review the child's services and meet his/her providers.

- Line up tutors as needed to assist with the child's areas of weakness. Tutoring is available through CFSA for youth in care.

Mid-Year:

- Consider school options for next year and whether you need to complete a lottery application.

- Request annual IEP review meetings and consider whether ESY services are needed for the summer.

Throughout the Entire Year:

- Obtain copies of all progress reports and report cards as soon as they are issued.

- Attend all meetings that pertain to the student's progress.

- Check in with the caretaker, teacher, tutor, or other persons close to the child to determine if the child is learning and making academic progress.

- If your client is not making progress, consider whether evaluations are warranted to determine the source of the child's learning difficulties.

- Make sure there is a person (parent or other person who qualifies as the parent) who is qualified and identified to make educational decisions for the child if the child receives special education services.

- Ensure that the school has accurate contact information for your client's caregiver, especially after placement changes.

CLC Tip Sheet
Questions to Ask on School Visits
You may want to modify this list depending on the type of school and the child's needs.

Questions to Ask at a Potential School and/or a Child's Current School

♦ How many students are in the child's classroom?

♦ How many adults are in the classroom? What are their roles (*e.g.*, teacher, aide, or clinician)? What are they certified/trained in? For high school students, is the teacher highly qualified in the subject he/she is teaching? Special education certification?

♦ How are the children at the school grouped (*e.g.*, by disability classification, age, gender, ability level?)

♦ Are there times of the day (*e.g.*, lunch or recess) where children from different groupings interact?

♦ How are special education and related services (*e.g.*, speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling) offered? Are there full-time employees to provide those services or do the providers float between different schools? How often are the providers at the school? What are they trained/certified in? How are services provided (*e.g.*, pull-out, integrated in the classroom)?

♦ How does the school implement behavior interventions (*e.g.*, a point system, token economy, a time-out room)?

♦ Does the school provide free breakfast and lunch? (Many private schools do not, which mean you may need to discuss with the child's social worker and caretaker how to make sure the child has enough money for meals.)

♦ For high schools, does the school provide a diploma-track or a certificate-track? What percentage of the student body is on each track?

♦ Ask any other questions that are important to the child, for example:
  • Does the school offer the extracurricular activities the child enjoys?
  • Do the students have to wear uniforms?

Additional Questions to Ask at a Child's Current School

♦ How many hours of specialized instruction is the child receiving? Who provides it? In what setting are the services provided (*e.g.*, self-contained classroom, pull-out, inclusion)? Does the child have a dedicated aide? If yes, why?

♦ If the child is in a self-contained classroom, is the child ever integrated with regular education students (*e.g.* at lunch or recess)?

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- What related services does the child receive (*e.g.,* counseling, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, or occupational therapy)? When do those occur during the week? What are the provider's name and qualifications? Where are those services provided (*e.g.* outside or inside the classroom)? Get service trackers to see what the child has been working on and to make sure that he/she is actually receiving the required services.

- For high schools, if the child is on the diploma track, how many Carnegie units has he/she earned? How many more does he/she need to graduate? Is the child in the correct classes?

- Get an update on the student's progress. What are the child's strengths and weaknesses, academically and behaviorally? What is he/she working on at school right now? Get work samples. Is the child making progress in each of his/her academic subjects? How does his/her progress compare to other students in the class? Have any recent evaluations or assessments (formal or informal) been done? If yes, get copies of the results. What areas of the student's performance need improvement? What is the school's plan to help the child? If there is a behavior system in the class (*e.g.,* token economy, point system, or behavior charts), how does the child do with that?

- Ask about special education and other school records. Do you and the school have up-to-date records? Be sure that you have a copy of the child's current, finalized IEP. Also request comprehensive school records (*e.g.,* attendance, report cards, IEP progress reports, meeting notes, prior IEPs, assessments   and evaluations, and disciplinary records).

- Ask about discipline/suspensions/behavior. Does the child have any suspensions (in-school or out-of-school)? Why? What interventions – including positive behavioral interventions – have been attempted with the student? What was the result? Get copies of discipline records.

- Ask about the student's relationships with peers/social interactions. How does the student interact with his/her peers? Any concerns?

CLC Information Sheet
Education Resources for Pregnant and Parenting Teenagers*

District of Columbia Public Schools:

♦ Home and Hospital Instruction:
  - o If a student has medical complications related to pregnancy such that they cannot physically attend school, they may be eligible for Home and Hospital Instruction (please see information on this program in the "Other Policies and Resources" section of this toolkit).
  - o Students are eligible for Home and Hospital Instruction for several weeks after the birth of a baby.

♦ New Heights Teen Parenting Program:
  - o https://dcps.dc.gov/page/expectant-and-parenting-students
  - o Through this program, students will continue to earn credits towards a diploma while also receiving the assistance, support, and guidance they will need to handle the responsibilities of parenting.
  - o Students are eligible to receive case management and assistance securing services such as childcare vouchers, WIC, housing, TANF, and employment until their 20th birthday.

♦ Students are eligible to continue at their school of origin, if they so choose.

Prince George's County Public Schools:

♦ Homebound and Hospital Instruction:
  - o http://www.pgcps.org/homeandhospitalteaching/
  - o If a student has medical complications related to pregnancy such that they cannot physically attend school, they may be eligible for Homebound and Hospital Instruction (please see information on this program in the "Other Policies and Resources" section of this toolkit).
  - o Students are eligible for Home and Hospital Teaching for several weeks after the birth of a baby.

♦ Adolescent Single Parent Program:
  - o http://www1.pgcps.org/contactus/index.aspx?id=156958
  - o The Adolescent Single Parent Program is offered through the College and Career Readiness and Innovative Programs Office at several area high schools.
  - o Information about this program can be obtained by calling 301-780-2100.

♦ Students are eligible to continue at their school of origin. Expecting mothers under the age of 16 are permitted to withdraw from their school of origin and enroll in an appropriate educational program; appropriateness will be determined by the student, her family, school personnel, and medical personnel.

♦ See Administrative Issuance 5011 (Home and Hospital Teaching) and 5119.3 (Educational Programs/Services for Pregnant Girls) for further information.

*Please see the Children's Law Center Practice Kit on Sexual Health Issues and Teen Parents for additional resources.

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CLC Information Sheet
Credit Recovery

Ways to Complete Courses for Additional Credit:

♦ **Credit Recovery Courses Through DCPS:**

- Students can earn additional credits by participating in credit recovery courses.

- To enroll in a credit recovery course, the student must have previously failed the course. Credit recovery courses may **not** be earned for original credit.

- These classes are often offered before school, during lunch, or in the evening, particularly at the alternative high schools.

- Each school determines which courses and at what time the courses will be offered. If your student needs a course that is not offered at their home school, they may take credit recovery courses at another DCPS high school.

- Further information can be obtained from the Academic Planning and Scheduling Office at (202) 442-5047.

♦ **STAY Programs:**

- The STAY Program is offered at Ballou High School and Roosevelt High School.

- A student can be enrolled in traditional high school courses and the STAY Program at the same time to earn additional credits.

- Courses taken in the STAY Program can be either for credit recovery or original credit.

♦ **Summer School:**

- A student may earn up to 2 credits per summer through DCPS' Summer School Program or one original credit.

  - Courses taken during DCPS's Summer School Program can only be taken for credit recovery (the student must have previously failed the course).

  - Enrollment is open to all DCPS students in grades 9-12, with priority given to students who have not earned the credits to be promoted to the next grade level, current seniors, and 9th graders.

  - DCPS's Summer School Program is available free to all DC residents, even if the student attends a charter school or is a ward placed in a home in a surrounding jurisdiction, though priority access is granted to DCPS students.

- A student may earn up to 2 credits per summer through PGCPS's Summer School Program for high school students and transitioning middle school students.

  - Courses may be taken for credit recovery or as original credit.

  - Students should have these courses pre-approved for transfer by the principal and the Office of College & Career Readiness at DCPS.

  - These courses are open to students from surrounding jurisdictions; however, there is often a significant fee for the PGCPS Summer School Program.

  - There is a fee reduction if the students are wards of the District of Columbia and attend PGCPS schools.

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CLC Information Sheet
General Education Diploma ("GED")

What is the GED?

The GED is a nationally recognized measure of high school knowledge and skills, similar to a high school diploma. The GED is earned by passage of a four-subject high school equivalency test, rather than attendance at a specific program. Typically, only students over the age of 18 can earn a GED; however, students 16 or 17 years of age can earn a GED if they are granted an age waiver by OSSE.

OSSE awards a State High School Diploma, rather than a GED Credential, to any DC resident who has passed the GED exam since January 1, 2014 (https://osse.dc.gov/node/1157727). All future GED passers as well as any DC resident who has passed the GED since Jan. 1, 2014 will earn a State Diploma.

There are many misconceptions among the community about earning a GED; it is important that you counsel your client and their family on the difficulties of earning a GED and the length of time it will realistically take for a student to study for and pass the GED test. Additionally, many programs require that a student be proficient at a certain level in math and reading prior to entering the GED preparation program.

What are the requirements for obtaining a GED in the District of Columbia?

- The youth must be a DC resident who has not already graduated from a traditional high school program.
- The youth must be 18 years of age or older. If the youth is 16 or 17 years of age, they may take the GED test if they have been granted an age waiver from OSSE. To receive a waiver the student must provide documentation proving that s/he:
  - Has not been enrolled in a traditional high school program for at least six months and has submitted a Notice of Intent to Home School with OSSE;
  - Has not been enrolled in a traditional high school program for at least six months, and is enrolled in a DCPS or DC Public Charter School-based educational program that provides academic preparation toward GED completion;
  - Is incarcerated or in an out-of-home secure placement within the juvenile justice system and s/he could not reasonably be able to complete a traditional high school diploma program based on his/her current level of academic credits and time remaining for compulsory education; or
  - Is enrolled in a program established by federal law to provide GED test preparation to youth under the age of 18.
- The youth must demonstrate preparedness to successfully complete the exam by either:
  - Providing documentation that s/he completed the GED Ready® official practice exam with a result of "likely to pass" or "too close to call"; or
  - Completing an approved GED preparation program and having a letter of endorsement from the preparation program.
- The youth must pay $15 or $3.75/section and schedule a time to take the test.

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- The youth must score at least a 145 on each section to pass the test. If the youth fails only portions of the test, they make retake those individual sections. Each student gets two free retakes per section.
- For more information on DC's implementation of the 2014 test or to apply for an age waiver you can contact OSSE's GED Program Office at (202) 274-7173.

What are the requirements for obtaining a GED in Maryland?

- Must be at least 17 and submit verification an official school withdrawal form
- Scheduling Fee: $45 ($11.25 per module)
- Resident for at least 3 months
  - License, permit, ID card issued by MVA, military ID
- Offered in English and Spanish, but essay must be written in English
- More information can be found here: http://www.dllr.maryland.gov/gedmd/ged.shtml

How can you prepare to take the GED?

In addition to being required in DC, most students will need a GED preparation course to support them in their study for the GED.   You can find information on GED preparation programs in DC here: http://dclibrary.org/node/5510; this website links to the District of Columbia Adult Education Directory, which includes information on an array of adult literacy and adult education program sites, in addition to GED services. You can find information on GED preparation programs in Maryland here: https://www.dllr.state.md.us/gedmd/programs.shtml. Many programs are offered in the evening or have flexible schedules to accommodate working adults. Additionally, many programs have age or proficiency requirements.

In addition to taking a GED preparatory class, you may also take a GED practice test at gedready.com for $6/section. Having a student take the GED preparatory test can give the student a good idea of the difficulty level of the test, and help them assess their readiness and whether aspiring to pass the GED is a realistic educational goal.

School Contact and Program Information
Resources and Links

Non-Traditional School Program Information: DC and Maryland

♦ **DCPS Special Education Programs & Resources Guide for Families: School Year 2017-2018***
  o https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/Family%20Programs%20and%20Resources%20Guide%2017-18_1.pdf
  o The purpose of this resource guide is to help educate DCPS families about special education programs offered in the district. The guide offers an in-depth description of each program and various special education-related resources.

♦ **OSSE Division of Elementary, Secondary and Specialized Education Approved Nonpublic Day Schools**
  o https://osse.dc.gov/publication/osse-approved-nonpublic-schools-and-programs-list
  o The above link includes a list of OSSE approved nonpublic day schools for students with disabilities. The list contains school contact information, disabilities and grades served, and school approval status. This list was updated as of July 9, 2018.

♦ **OSSE Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and Workforce Investment Council (WIC) Partnership Guide**
  o https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service_content/attachments/2018%20OSSE%20AEFLA%20%26%20WIC%20Career%20Pathways%20Partnership%20Guide.pdf
  o This document details an array of adult education, occupational literacy, digital literacy, Career Essential Boot Camps, and post-secondary education and training services offered by OSSE and WIC.

♦ **MANSEF Membership Directory**
  o http://mansef.org/news-detail.php?news_int_id=70
  o This document details the non-public special education schools approved by the Maryland State Department of Education.   MANSEF is the Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF), which is a non-profit organization of the special education schools which are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, created to promote quality services for children and youth with disabilities. The above link is a directory of a MANSEF members and their program descriptions. This Directory was updated for the 2017-2018 SY and published on August 7, 2017. The 2018-2019 version was not published as of July 31, 2018.

- **PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5119.3, Educational Programs/Services for Pregnant Girls**
  - http://www1.pgcps.org/generalcounsel/index.aspx?id=179107
  - This particular administrative procedure pertains services and programs available to pregnant students attending Prince George's County Schools. This website links to PGCPS's Office of the General Counsel's list of all procedures involving students. Please scroll through the list of procedures for Administrative Procedure 5119.3.

* DCPS's SY 2018-2019 Guide was not published at the time this Practice Kit was finalized. Practitioners should contact DCPS's Division of Specialized Instruction to obtain an updated copy of this resource.