

**Department of Education Response to Comments Received on DC School Choice Incentive Program 1855-0015 60-Day FRN Vol. 76 24007 4/29/2011**

Comment: Three commenter's expressed concern that the Department's proposed data collection will not capture all the information necessary to implement the program, ensure compliance with accountability requirements, and conduct a meaningful evaluation. One commenter recommended that the Department collect additional information about the students who apply to and enroll in the program. Other commenter's urged the Department to collect additional data on the English language learner (ELL) students who participate in the program and the services and program available for them; and, the number of students who drop out of the program. Commenter's also suggested that the Department compare graduation rates for the students who participate in the program with those in DC public schools and collect data and other information about schools participating in the program.

Discussion: We agree that rigorous data collection is a key aspect of this program and that all schools that participate in this program need to be held accountable for all students to receive a high-quality and equitable education. This proposed data collection instrument collects information about the students who apply to enroll in the program. ED will collect further information about students who participate in the program after scholarships have been awarded, e.g., through information collected from schools during the course of the students participation in the program and in the context of the evaluation. The combination of these data collection efforts is expected to collect the information the commenter's suggest, including (1) the numbers of students applying, awarded scholarships, enrolling in the program, and continuing in/leaving the program each year, disaggregated by various student characteristics such as grade, gender, IEP status and language; (2) the types of schools participating students choose to attend including their religious affiliation; and (3) the outcomes specified in the statute, such as achievement and high school graduation. At this time, the design and plan for the evaluation required by the statute is in development so further detail about any data collection instruments developed for the evaluation is not currently available. The opportunity for the public to comment on any further information collection will be announced separately in the *Federal Register*.