

Resolution No.: 17-63
Introduced: February 15, 2011
Adopted: February 15, 2011

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Amendment to the FY2011 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight

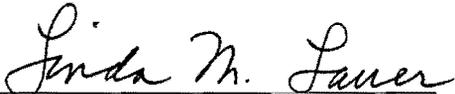
Background

1. Chapter 29A of the County Code provides that the Director, Office of Legislative Oversight, shall prepare the Office of Legislative Oversight Work Program, which shall be submitted to the Council for approval.
2. On July 13, 2010, the Council adopted Resolution 16-1419 to establish the initial Fiscal Year 2011 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight. At the time of Council approval, the Council indicated its expectation that an amendment would be adopted during the fiscal year that assigns additional projects to OLO for the balance of FY11.
3. OLO's initial FY11 Work Program included a major assignment on achieving a structurally balanced budget in Montgomery County. As outlined in Council Resolution 16-1419, OLO completed this assignment and reported back to the Council in two parts. Part I, Revenue and Expenditure Trends, was completed in late November; Part II, Options for Long-Term Fiscal Balance, was completed in December 2010. Since that time, the Council has assigned OLO a number of follow-up tasks.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the addition of the following projects to the Office of Legislative Oversight's Fiscal Year 2011 Work Program.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Linda M. Lauer
Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

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*Project numbering continues from OLO FY11 Work Program, as approved in Council Resolution 16-1419, adopted July 13, 2010.

PROJECT #6
FOLLOW-UP TO OLO REPORT 2011-2,
ACHIEVING A STRUCTURALLY BALANCED BUDGET IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Principal agencies: County Government, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and Park and Planning

Origin of project: Councilmember Floreen's recommendation, as adopted in Council Resolution 16-1419, FY11 OLO Work Program

At the Council's direction, OLO's report on achieving a structurally balanced budget in Montgomery County was completed during the first half of FY11 in two parts. Part I reviewed the spending and revenue trends of the past decade, and Part II outlined options for achieving long-term fiscal balance.

For the second half of FY11, this project represents OLO's work on assignments related to the Council's next steps on OLO Report 2011-2. Specific tasks that OLO will work on include:

- **Respond to Councilmembers' questions and information requests**

OLO will prepare responses to Councilmembers' questions on OLO Report 2011-2 and requests for related information. This includes questions/requests posed during the Council's sessions on the report as well as those subsequently submitted to OLO. As answers are researched and completed, OLO will circulate copies of written responses to all Councilmembers.

In addition, OLO staff are available on an ongoing basis to meet with Councilmembers and/or their staff members to discuss technical questions related to the report. As part of this process, in January, OLO offered a series of four brown-bag "tutorials" for Council staff on the options outlined in the report.

- **Participate in the Council's process of community engagement**

Working with representatives from various community and business groups, the Council President's Office is coordinating a series of public meetings to discuss achieving a structurally balanced budget in Montgomery County. On January 20th, the Council President distributed a schedule of seven upcoming meetings (between January 27 and February 28) and encouraged all Councilmembers to participate in as many meetings as possible.

At these meetings, the plan is for OLO staff to present a 15-minute overview of Part I and Part II of OLO Report 2011-2. Following OLO's briefing, Councilmembers will field questions from residents.

- **Provide staff support as requested to assist the Council with further review and analysis**

As outlined by the Council President, the Council will select a short list of options for more research and analysis. On an as-needed basis, OLO will provide staff support to the Council during this phase of review.

**PROJECT #7
ASSIST WITH REVIEW OF THE FY12 OPERATING BUDGET**

Principal agencies: All County-funded agencies

Origin of project: County Council

This project is similar to the one assigned in last year's work program. During the upcoming budget season, OLO staff will assist central Council staff to prepare analyses for Committee and Council worksessions on the FY12 operating budget.

Specifically, for this portion of the Work Program, the OLO Director will work collaboratively with the Council Staff Director to identify specific budget areas for OLO to assist with. Priority consideration will be given to topics that OLO staff has studied in recent years.

**PROJECT #8
ASSIST WITH STAFFING THE CLARKSBURG INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE**

Principal agencies: County Government, Park and Planning

Origin of project: Council Resolutions 16-1551

On October 26, the Council terminated the Council Town Center Development District (Resolution 16-1544) and on November 30, the Council established the Clarksburg Infrastructure Working Group (Resolution 16-1551).

The Council has tasked the Clarksburg Infrastructure Working Group with reviewing and prioritizing a list of necessary infrastructure items for the Clarksburg area, and proposing suitable options to pay this infrastructure. The Resolution states that the Working Group will report back to the Council by April 1, 2011.

The Council's Deputy Staff Director has been assigned lead responsibility for staffing the Working Group. Because of OLO's previous work related to the tasks assigned to the Working Group, OLO staff will attend the Working Group's meetings and provide technical support as needed. The specific research and analysis work to be performed by OLO staff will be determined in consultation with the Deputy Staff Director after the Working Group has started meeting.

PROJECT #9
SERVICES FOR MCPS STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Principal agencies: Montgomery County Public Schools
County Government (DHHS)

Origin of project: Councilmember Andrews' recommendation

Autism is a complex developmental disability that causes problems with social interaction and communication among other significant impacts.¹ The symptoms of autism generally fall under a continuum known as the autism spectrum that includes "classic autism," Asperger's syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorder. Symptoms usually start before age 3 and can cause delays or problems in many different skills that develop from infancy to adulthood.

Federal law requires that every public school system provide a "free, appropriate education" to all students with disabilities, including students with autism.² Students identified with autism in Montgomery County Public Schools accounted for nearly 9% of students with disabilities in 2010. Since 2000, MCPS' enrollment of students identified with autism has increased more than ten-fold over from 128 to 1,501 students. In FY 2010, of the 1,501 MCPS students with autism, 365 were served by MCPS' Autism and Asperger's programs at a cost of \$9 million in local funds while the remaining 1,136 MCPS students with autism were served in other special and general education programs.

This project will compile information on MCPS programs and County Government services for students on the autism spectrum. This project will also summarize research-based practices for serving autistic students recognized by federally-funded agencies and clearinghouses. Toward this end, OLO will collect and synthesize information from a variety of sources to summarize:

- The legal mandates that shape MCPS' delivery of autism services;
- How MCPS students are diagnosed on the autism spectrum;
- Best practices for serving children with autism across the age span (age 3 to 21), as recognized by federal agencies;
- Trends in MCPS funding of autism services and autism enrollment;
- The types of services provided by MCPS and County Government programs for students on the autistic spectrum; and
- Performance outcomes and existing evaluations of MCPS' autism programs and services.

In addition, OLO will work with the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations to elicit the perspectives of parents on program strengths and opportunities for improvement among MCPS and County Government services for children with autism.

¹ National Institutes of Health (<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/asd.cfm>)

² The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**PROJECT #10
ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS IN MCPS**

Principal agencies: Montgomery County Public Schools
County Government (DHHS)
District Court

Origin of project: Council President Ervin's recommendation

School systems often rely on alternative programs to reduce dropout rates among students who have been unsuccessful in traditional programs. Alternative programs can embody a number of approaches aimed at enhancing student success that include:³

- Alternative classrooms within a traditional school;
- Separate alternative schools with a special curriculum (e.g., parenting or job skills);
- Continuation schools for students no longer attending traditional schools;
- Residential schools for special case students, usually placed by the courts or the family;
- Second-chance schools for students at highest risk of being expelled or incarcerated; and
- Summer and evening schools that enable students to earn academic credits.

MCPS operates six secondary alternative school programs for middle and high school students. The intent of MCPS' alternative programs is to help students return to and function effectively in their home comprehensive secondary school. The average stay in a MCPS alternative program is one to three semesters. In 2010, approximately 225 students participated in MCPS' alternative programs at a total cost of \$7 million with \$6.7 million in local funds.

The purpose of this OLO project is to describe MCPS' alternative programs. This project will review MCPS' six alternative schools, alternative programs delivered at comprehensive secondary school sites (e.g., Alternative I placements), and targeted interventions aimed at reducing dropout rates. OLO will conduct the research and analysis for this project to describe:

- The legal mandates that shape MCPS' delivery of alternative services;
- Best practices for delivering alternative programs and improving graduation rates;
- Trends in MCPS alternative program funding and enrollment;
- The types of alternative services provided by MCPS;
- Summary of performance outcomes and existing evaluations of MCPS' alternative services and programs;
- MCPS coordination with other agencies to deliver alternative programs; and
- Strategies and interagency efforts being implemented in other jurisdictions to implement alternative programs and improve graduation rates.

³ Summarized from the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University

PROJECT #11
FOOD IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Principal Agency: Montgomery County Public Schools

Origin of project: Councilmember Leventhal's and Council President Ervin's recommendation

According to the Centers for Disease Control, childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years, and based on U.S. dietary guidelines, the average diet of today's school children is high in saturated fat and sodium and low in fruits, vegetables, and dietary fiber. To improve the nutrition of school meals, President Obama recently signed the Health, Hunger Free Kids Act, which authorizes the United States Department of Agriculture to update nutritional guidelines for school meals and develop guidelines for all other foods sold in schools. The legislation provides a six-cent increase in the per meal reimbursement rate for schools that meet the new nutritional guidelines.

Montgomery County Public Schools' Department of Food and Nutrition Services provides meals for students and staff, and administers the following school nutrition programs:

- National School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs;
- Maryland Meals for Achievement Program, and
- Summer Food Service.

Based on recent data, MCPS annually serves 13.1 million meals, serving 58% of all elementary school students and 29% of all middle and high school students. In the current school year, approximately 31% of all MCPS students (41,000) receive free and reduced price meals.

This OLO project on food in Montgomery County Public Schools will:

- Review MCPS' policies and practices regarding food and school nutrition, with a focus on the work of the Division of Food and Nutrition Services. This will include looking at: the legal mandates that shape MCPS' delivery of food and nutrition services; how MCPS' food service is funded; and the results of any studies MCPS has conducted related to the performance of the Division of Food and Nutrition Services.
- Research and write-up case studies of innovative approaches to improving food and school nutrition that are being implemented in other school systems (e.g. school lunches and salad bars). The case studies will include information on whether there are evidence-based findings that demonstrate results of the various innovative approaches.