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Performance of Montgomery County Public Schools' High Schools – A FY 2014 Update

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Executive Summary of Office of Legislative Oversight Report Number 2014-7 April 8, 2014

This report updates OLO's 2009 high school consortia report by describing changes in the demographics and performance of Montgomery County Public Schools' 25 comprehensive high schools. OLO's original report found that neither the Northeast nor the Downcounty Consortium enhanced racial or economic integration, but each may have narrowed the achievement gap among some measures of student performance at the start of each consortium.

This current report takes a wider view than the original to consider demographic and performance changes among 11 consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to MCPS' 14 other high schools. In effect, this report compares MCPS' high-poverty high schools to its low-poverty high schools.

Overall, OLO finds an increase in the stratification of MCPS high schools by income, race, and ethnicity. OLO also finds that the achievement gap between high- and low-poverty high schools has widened among a majority of measures considered. With high-poverty consortia and consortia-like high schools utilizing similar approaches to advance student achievement (e.g. expanded signature programs and freshman academies), OLO finds that MCPS' approach is not working as intended.

MCPS HIGH SCHOOLS: In this report, MCPS' 11 high-poverty high schools are referred to as "consortia and consortia-like schools" to reflect their common demographics and strategies to engage students. These high schools consist of Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook in the Northeast Consortium; Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Kennedy, Einstein, and Wheaton in the Downcounty Consortium; and Gaithersburg, Watkins Mill, and Seneca Valley high schools.

MCPS' other 14 high schools, referred to as non-consortia or low-poverty high schools in this report, consist of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Churchill, Clarksburg, Damascus, Walter Johnson, Magruder, Richard Montgomery, Northwest, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, Rockville, Sherwood, Whitman, and Wootton high schools.

RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION: In 2013, a majority of the MCPS' low-income, Black, and Latino students attended MCPS' 11 consortia and consortia-like high schools. Among these schools:

- Students receiving free and reduced priced meals (FARMS) accounted for 2 in 5 students compared to 1 in 6 students among MCPS' other, low-poverty non-consortia high schools;
- Blacks and Latinos accounted for 2 in 3 students compared to less than 1 in 3 students among MCPS' other high schools; and
- Whites and Asians accounted for 1 in 4 students compared to nearly 2 in 3 students among MCPS' other high schools.

Since 2010, the economic, racial, and ethnic stratification of students among MCPS high schools has increased. More specifically, the share of Black and Latino students in MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools grew while the share of White, Asian, and non-FARMS students in MCPS' low-poverty non-consortia high schools grew.

ACHIEVEMENT GAP AMONG HIGH SCHOOLS: To consider the progress of students among MCPS' high schools, OLO reviewed data across seven measures of performance described in the table below. Most of these measures align with current MCPS' career and college readiness milestones.

Performance Measures	Definitions	MCPS Milestone?
Graduation	Students who graduate with their four-year cohort.	Yes
Academic Eligibility	Students eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the school year.	No
Algebra 2 by Grade 11	Students who completed this course with a grade of C or above by Grade 11.	Yes
AP Performance	Graduates earning a score of three or above on at least one AP exam.	Yes
SAT/ACT Performance	Graduates earning a score of 1,650 or above on the SAT or a score of 24 or above on the ACT.	Yes
Dropout	Students who dropped out of their four-year cohort in high school.	No
Suspensions	Students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions in a school year.	No

Table S-1 summarizes data on the current performance of MCPS students by high school type on these measures. Overall, OLO finds that an achievement gap exists by high school type within MCPS where compared to their peers in low-poverty high schools, students in high-poverty consortia and consortia-like high schools are:

- 91% as likely to graduate on-time;
- 76% as likely to maintain their academic eligibility for the entire school year;
- 71% as likely to complete Algebra 2 by Grade 11 with a C or better;
- 55% as likely to earn at least one qualifying score of 3 or above on an AP exam;
- 44% as likely to score 1,650 or above on the SAT or 24 or above on the ACT;
- 189% as likely to drop out of their high school class; and
- 207% as likely to experience an out-of-school suspension.

Table S-1: Current Performance by School Type

Performance Measures	Consortia & Consortia-Like Schools (C)	Non-Consortia Schools (N)	Performance Gap (N-C)	Performance Ratio (C/N)*
Graduation rate, 2013	83.5%	91.7%	***8.2%***	91%
Academic eligibility rate, 2012	62.0%	82.1%	***20.1%***	76%
Algebra 2 by Grade 11 rate, 2012	50.2%	70.4%	***20.2%***	71%
AP performance rate, 2013	34.7%	62.6%	***27.9%***	55%
SAT/ACT performance rate, 2013	23.0%	52.7%	***29.7%***	44%
Dropout rate, 2013	8.7%	4.6%	***-4.2%***	189%
Out-of-school suspensions rate, 2013	5.8%	2.8%	***-3.0%***	207%

*Interpreted as how likely consortia & consortia-like students meet the benchmark compared to non-consortia students.

HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT GAP AMONG SUBGROUPS: OLO also finds an achievement gap among subgroups by school type where subgroups in consortia and consortia-like high schools are less likely to meet college readiness benchmarks and more likely to demonstrate at-risk outcomes than subgroup peers in non-consortia high schools. For example, the data in Table S-2 show that:

- FARMS graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were only 58% as likely as their non-consortia peers to earn a SAT score of 1,650 or above or an ACT score of 24 or above.
- Non-FARMS, Asian, Black, and Latino graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were only 61-65% as likely as their non-consortia peers to earn one or more qualifying AP scores.
- Non-FARMS students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were more than twice as likely as their non-consortia peers to receive an out-of-school suspension.

Table S-2: Performance Ratios by School Type and Subgroup

Performance Measures	FARMS	Non-FARMS	Asian	Black	Latino	White
Graduation rate, 2013^	101%	92%	98%	101%	89%	97%
Academic eligibility, 2012	86%	81%	88%	84%	79%	92%
Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11, 2012	94%	77%	88%	94%	76%	89%
AP performance, 2013	82%	61%	64%	65%	63%	88%
SAT/ACT performance, 2013	58%	55%	67%	62%	35%	88%
Dropout rate, 2013	92%	231%	100%*	86%	132%	128%
Out-of-school suspensions, 2013	109%	211%	100%*	107%	142%	100%*

^ Calculated as % of subgroup students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools who graduated on time divided by the % of subgroup students enrolled in non-consortia schools who graduated on time.
* 2013 values estimated because rates below 3% not reported

HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT GAP TRENDS: Across a majority of the measures considered, the achievement gap between high- and low-poverty high schools has widened over the past three to four years. For the remaining measures, the gap has either narrowed or remained the same. More specifically, the data show that the achievement gap by school type widened for –

- ***AP Performance,*** where graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 55% as likely as non-consortia graduates to meet this benchmark in 2013 compared to being 67% as likely in 2010.
- ***SAT/ACT performance,*** where graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 44% as likely as non-consortia graduates to meet this benchmark in 2013 compared to being 50% as likely in 2010.
- ***Academic eligibility,*** where students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 76% as likely as non-consortia peers to meet this benchmark in 2012 compared to being 78% as likely in 2009.
- ***Out-of-school suspension,*** where students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 207% as likely as non-consortia peers to have this outcome in 2013 compared to being 196% as likely in 2010.

The data also show that the achievement gap by school type narrowed or the stayed the same for -

- ***Algebra 2 by Grade 11,*** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 71% as likely as non-consortia students to meet this benchmark in 2012 compared to being 67% as likely in 2010.
- ***Graduation Rates,*** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 90-91% as likely as non-consortia students to meet this benchmark in both 2013 and 2010.
- ***Dropout Rates,*** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 189% as likely as non-consortia students to demonstrate this outcome in both 2013 and 2010.

RECOMMENDED DISCUSSION ISSUES:

OLO recommends the Council discuss with the Board of Education and MCPS leadership their goals for ***improving student integration*** and ***narrowing the achievement gap*** between low- and high-poverty high schools and the alignment between these goals and MCPS' operating budget.

As noted in the prior OLO report, MCPS' Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums began with a commitment and federal funding to promote integration to enhance student achievement among County students. These efforts aligned with the Board of Education's "Quality and Integrated Education Policy" to promote integrated schools. The goals of the high school consortiums also align with research indicating that Black and Latino students learn more in integrated schools and perform better in college attendance and employment.

Given the achievement gap between MCPS' high- and low-poverty high schools and the benefits of integration on student achievement, ***OLO recommends that the County Council discuss with MCPS its current vision for using integration as a strategy for narrowing the gap.***

With its FY15 budget request, MCPS also reports that narrowing the achievement gap remains a district-wide priority and that it is utilizing multi-year budgeting to focus resources. They note that their FY14 budget added 23 positions to high-poverty high schools to lower class sizes and their FY15 proposed budget requests funding for an additional 15 high school focus teachers in English language arts and mathematics. MCPS' also cites increased funding to support collaborations that serve children, its student support model, career lattice system, and 18.5 ESOL positions as strategic investments proposed for FY15 that focus on narrowing the achievement gap. Together, these proposals total approximately $7 million in FY15.

To improve the County Council's oversight of MCPS appropriations aimed at narrowing the achievement gap, a review of MCPS' total $2.3 billion budget proposed for FY15 is warranted. Toward this end, ***OLO also recommends that the County Council discuss with MCPS the allocation of its base budget funding to narrow the achievement gap with a specific focus on approaches being under-taken to improve achievement among high-poverty high schools and the efficacy of these efforts.***

For a complete copy of OLO-Report 2014-7, go to:
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/reports/2008.html

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT REPORT 2014-7

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LIST OF CHART AND TABLES

CHAPTER I: Authority, Scope, and Organization

A. Authority

Council Resolution 17-830, *FY 2014 Work Program for the Office of Legislative Oversight*, adopted July 30, 2013.

B. Scope, Purpose, and Methodology

The purpose of this Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report is to improve the County Council's understanding of the performance of Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) high schools.

In FY 2013, the County Council tasked OLO to update its 2008 achievement gap and 2009 high school consortia reports.[1] The achievement gap refers to disparities in educational achievement by student race, ethnicity, and service subgroup where typically White, Asian, and higher income students demonstrate higher levels of achievement than their Black, Latino, and lower income peers. MCPS' high school consortia - the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums (NEC and DCC) - were developed to narrow the achievement gap in part by promoting racial and income integration.

Last year, the Council released OLO's 2013 achievement gap report.[2] That report found that MCPS had achieved progress in narrowing some gaps, but that sizable gaps remained and some gaps had widened among above-grade level measures of performance (e.g. AP/SAT scores). This report updates the Council on the performance of MCPS' high schools by comparing the performance of MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high school campuses to its other comprehensive high schools (i.e. non-consortia high schools).

Of note, the original OLO achievement gap and consortia reports found that MCPS at best had achieved mixed progress in narrowing the achievement gap. The original consortia report also found that the consortiums did not enhance racial or economic integration, but that the beginning years of both the NEC and DCC were marked by improved student achievement among some measures. The purpose of this current study is to discern whether MCPS' consortia and consortia-like campuses (i.e. its high-poverty high schools), have achieved progress in narrowing the achievement gap or enhancing either racial or economic integration since 2009.

For this current study, OLO staff identified seven measures of student performance for review and compiled data on these measures from MCPS and Maryland State Department of Education data sources. MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools are identified as the 8 high schools in the NEC and DCC and three additional high schools with similar demographics: Gaithersburg, Watkins Mill, and Seneca Valley High Schools.

This report describes trends in demographics and student performance among MCPS' high-poverty, consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to its low-poverty, non-consortia high schools. It concludes with findings and recommendations for discussion that are designed to enhance the Council's oversight of resources appropriated to MCPS to improve student achievement and narrow the achievement gap within and among MCPS high schools.

[1] See OLO Report 2008-2 (http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/2008-2.pdf) and OLO Report 2009-4 (http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/2009-4.pdf)
[2] See OLO Report 2013-4 (http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/oloreport2013-4.pdf)

C. Organization of Report

Chapter II, Background, summarizes key findings from OLO's 2009 consortia report and describes the commonalities between MCPS' consortia high schools and its three consortia-like campuses.

Chapter III, Changes in Student Demographics, describes changes in student race, ethnicity, and income demographics between MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools (its high-poverty high schools) and all other high schools (i.e. low-poverty, non-consortia high schools).

Chapter VI, Changes in Student Performance, describes changes in student performance among consortia and consortia-like high schools to non-consortia (low-poverty) high schools by student race, ethnicity, and income.

Chapter V, Summary of Findings and Recommended Discussion Issues, presents OLO's key findings and offers a set of recommended questions for discussion aimed at improving the Council's oversight of funds appropriated to MCPS' high schools.

D. Key Terms and Definitions

OLO used the following terminology in this report to describe student subgroups and high schools.

- **Asian** refers to students identified as Asian or Asian American by MCPS.
- **Black** refers to students identified as Black/Non-Hispanic or African American by MCPS.
- **Latino** refers to students identified as either Latino or Hispanic by MCPS. Latino students can be of any race (e.g., White, Black, or Asian).
- **White** refers to students identified as White/Non-Hispanic or Caucasian by MCPS.
- **Students receiving free and reduced price meals** (FARMS) are students who are currently receiving free and reduced price meals. These students are also referred to as "low-income" students in the report.
- **Ever FARMS** refers to students who have ever received free and reduced price meals.
- **Students not received free and reduced price meals** (non-FARMS) are students who are not receiving free and reduced priced meals.
- **Consortia and consortia-like high schools** refer to 11 high schools that enroll a majority of MCPS' low-income, Black, and Latino students: Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook High Schools in the Northeast Consortium (NEC); Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Kennedy, Einstein, and Wheaton High Schools in the Downcounty Consortium (DCC); and three Upcounty high schools with demographics similar to the NEC and DCC - Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill High Schools. These schools are also referred to as high – poverty, lower income, red-zone, and focus high schools in this report and elsewhere.
- **Non-consortia high schools** refer to the remaining 14 comprehensive high schools in MCPS that enroll a majority of MCPS' higher income, White, and Asian students: Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Churchill, Clarksburg, Damascus, Walter Johnson, Magruder, Richard Montgomery, Northwest, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, Rockville, Sherwood, Whitman, and Wootton High Schools. These schools are also referred to as low-poverty and green-zone high schools.

CHAPTER II: Background

This chapter provides an overview of the key findings from the original OLO high school consortia report and a rationale for the analysis undertaken in this report in three parts:

A. **Consortia Key Features,** describes the grants that were awarded to MCPS to develop the high school consortiums, their goals, and the key strategies utilized by each consortium;

B. **Consortia Performance Results Through 2008,** describes the progress the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums achieved on their integration and student achievement goals from their inception through 2008; and

C. **Consortia-Like High Schools,** describes the similarities between the Northeast and Downcounty Consortia high schools and the three additional high-poverty high schools included in this report's analysis.

Overall, this chapter identifies the following key findings:

- Racial and economic integration to help enhance student achievement and narrow the achievement gap are stated goals of MCPS' Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums.
- The consortiums have relied on three key strategies – signature programs, freshmen academies, and student choice – to promote integration and student performance.
- The consortiums did not achieve racial or economic integration between 1998 and 2008 but achieved mixed progress in narrowing the achievement gap among student subgroups.
- The demographics of three additional MCPS high schools – Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill – mirror the demographics of the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums.

A. Consortia Key Features

Origins: The Northeast Consortium began as a plan to relieve overcrowding in the eastern part of the County and to promote voluntary integration.[3] In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education's Magnet School Assistance Program (MSAP) awarded MCPS a three-year, $2.9 million grant to implement the Northeast Consortium in three high schools: Paint Branch, Springbrook, and Blake High Schools. Reducing minority isolation and strengthening students' academic knowledge were explicit goals of the Northeast Consortium.

The Downcounty Consortium also began as a plan to relieve overcrowding in the lower part of Montgomery County. In 2002, MCPS was awarded a three-year, $2.0 million grant from the Department of Education's Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Program to support the Downcounty Consortium across five campuses: Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Kennedy, Einstein, and Wheaton High Schools. Improving economic integration and narrowing the achievement gap were explicit goals of the DCC. In 2005, MCPS was awarded another federal SLC grant of $1.5 million to support two of the three Northeast Consortium campuses: Blake and Paint Branch.

Goals: As summarized in Chart 1 on the next page, common objectives articulated by MCPS in the three federal grant applications were to: improve students' academic knowledge and vocational skills; and narrow the achievement gap by race, ethnicity, and income.

[3] See original OLO consortia report (OLO Report 2009-4) for greater detail regarding the consortiums origins.

Chart 1: Student Performance Goals by Federal Grant for High School Consortia

Student Performance Goals	1999-01 MSAP Grant	2003-06 SLC Grant	2005-10 SLC Grant
1. Reduce minority isolation	√		
2. Strengthen students knowledge of academic subjects and vocational skills	√	√	√
3. Improve freshmen performance by subgroup		√	√
4. Improve student engagement by subgroup			√

Sources: MCPS grant applications

Key Program Features: MCPS has used three strategies to implement the high school consortiums:

- **Signature Programs** "that integrate a specific focus or distinguishing theme with the skills, concepts, and instructional strategies of some portion of a school's curriculum. The theme or focus becomes the vehicle for teaching the traditional high school curriculum in a fresh, interesting, and challenging way."[4] Although the vast majority of MCPS high schools offer a signature or academy program, the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums offer a higher concentration of these programs as listed in Chart 2 below.

Chart 2: Signature Programs by Consortia High School

Consortium	High School	Signature and Academy Programs
Northeast Consortium	Blake	Humanities and Public Service, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Business and Consumer Services
	Paint Branch	Science and Media, Finance, Engineering Technology, Child Development and Education, NJROTC, and Restaurant Management
	Springbrook	International Studies, Technology
Downcounty Consortium	Montgomery Blair	Human Services, Entrepreneurship, Media Literacy, Science, Math and Technology and International Studies
	Einstein	Finance, International Studies, and Visual and Performing Arts
	Kennedy	International Studies, Multimedia and Telecommunications, Sports Medicine and Management, and NJROTC
	Northwood	Environmental Sciences, Political Science and Public Advocacy, Humanities and Film, and Musical Theater
	Wheaton	Information Technology, Engineering, and Biosciences and Medicine, and Global and Cultural Studies

Source : MCPS website

[4] See http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/high/signatures.aspx

- **Freshmen Academies**: All five Downcounty Consortium high schools and two of the Northeast Consortium campuses (Blake and Paint Branch) also house freshmen academies aimed at improving the transition and performance of Grade 9 students.[5] Common features of the freshmen academies include:
  - Smaller learning communities with dedicated faculty;
  - Accelerated, double period literacy and mathematics courses for students two or more grades behind in literacy and/or math; and
  - Connections, a freshman seminar that introduces students to career and higher education options.

- **Student Choice**: The consortiums also offer student choice, with MCPS bus service provided to students who attend high schools outside of their base areas. The choice application process encourages students to rank their order of preference for high schools based on their interest in the schools' signature programs. MCPS guarantees students' assignment to their base school (determined by where the student lives) if it is their first choice or it is their second choice and their first choice is not available.

  MCPS assigns students to schools based on students' ranking of school choices, the number of students selecting their base school, the capacities of consortia high schools, and the socioeconomic status and gender of students.

B. Consortia Performance Results Through 2008

Integration Results: An objective of the Northeast Consortium was to improve racial integration among participating schools; a current objective of both consortiums is to promote economic integration. OLO's original report found that the consortiums were unable to reverse minority isolation with White student enrollment among these schools declining at a faster rate than the decline in the school system overall as noted in Table 1.

Table 1: White Enrollment for MCPS High Schools, NEC, and DCC, 1998 - 2008

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
MCPS*	**52.9%**	**52.2%**	**51.9%**	**51.1%**	**50.1%**	**49.2%**
Blake	**	43.2%	47.0%	47.2%	47.8%	47.4%
Paint Branch	41.5%	40.2%	39.8%	38.6%	35.9%	33.7%
Springbrook	28.7%	27.5%	27.2%	25.7%	23.8%	22.6%
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**Change** 1998-08**
MCPS*	**47.4%**	**46.2%**	**45.0%**	**43.5%**	**42.1%**	**-10.8%**
Blake	45.5%	45.8%	45.6%	42.3%	37.3%	-5.9%
Paint Branch	31.2%	29.7%	25.7%	24.1%	22.5%	-19.0%
Springbrook	19.9%	17.2%	16.1%	16.2%	14.5%	-14.1%

[5] Seneca Valley and Gaithersburg High Schools also offer freshman academies.

Table 1: White Enrollment for MCPS High Schools, NEC, and DCC, 1998 - 2008, Continued

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change 2004-08
MCPS*	**47.4%**	**46.2%**	**45.0%**	**43.5%**	**42.1%**	**-5.3%**
Montgomery Blair	28.1%	27.2%	27.0%	26.1%	25.4%	-2.7%
Einstein	26.7%	26.2%	23.9%	24.0%	22.6%	-4.1%
Kennedy	18.8%	17.4%	15.8%	15.2%	12.4%	-6.4%
Northwood***		30.1%	28.2%	25.5%	25.4%	-4.7%
Wheaton	17.8%	15.3%	12.7%	11.0%	10.7%	-7.1%

*MCPS refers to all MCPS high schools ** Change for Blake 1999-2008 *** Change for Northwood based on 2005 – 08 data.

OLO's original report also found that the consortiums were unable to achieve economic integration. As noted in Table 2, student poverty rates, as measured by the percentage of students who had ever received free and reduced priced meals (Ever FARMS), increasing at a faster rate among 6 of 8 Northeast and Downcounty Consortia schools than for MCPS high schools overall.

Table 2: Ever FARMS Enrollment for MCPS High Schools, NEC, and DCC, 1998 - 2008

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
MCPS*	**32.7%**	**32.5%**	**32.7%**	**33.2%**	**33.5%**	**34.3%**
Blake	**	32.9%	28.5%	27.3%	25.8%	27.3%
Paint Branch	28.4%	28.1%	29.0%	30.4%	31.5%	34.9%
Springbrook	43.1%	43.1%	44.3%	45.3%	47.8%	48.2%
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**Change** 1998-08**
MCPS*	**35.4%**	**36.4%**	**37.5%**	**37.8%**	**38.9%**	**6.2%**
Blake	29.3%	29.8%	29.7%	33.8%	36.5%	3.6%
Paint Branch	37.9%	39.4%	42.1%	43.3%	43.7%	15.3%
Springbrook	50.4%	53.6%	56.1%	55.4%	56.2%	13.1%
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**Change FY04-08**
MCPS*	**35.4%**	**36.4%**	**37.5%**	**37.8%**	**38.9%**	**3.5%**
Montgomery Blair	52.4%	52.7%	52.0%	52.6%	53.1%	0.7%
Einstein	59.2%	60.2%	62.7%	62.8%	65.6%	6.4%
Kennedy	60.9%	63.3%	64.5%	63.8%	67.8%	6.9%
Northwood***		49.7%	53.2%	55.4%	56.0%	6.3%
Wheaton	77.2%	78.3%	79.1%	80.7%	81.4%	4.2%

* MCPS refers to all MCPS high schools ** Change for Blake 1999-2008. *** Change for Northwood based on 2005 – 08 data.

Achievement Results: MCPS' federal grant applications to begin each consortium included specific performance goals. These goals and each consortium's progress relative to the performance of MCPS high schools overall on these measures are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Summary of NEC Progress on Student Performance Goals

Student Performance Goals	Time Frame	Overall Progress?	Progress Relative to all MCPS high schools?
1. Increase the percent of students who complete Algebra I by the end of Grade 9	1999-03	**Yes**	Same progress
	2004-07	No	Less progress
2. Increase the percent of grads who take at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam	2000-04	**Yes**	Same progress
	2004-07	**Yes**	Same progress
3. Increase the percent of grads who earn at least one qualifying AP score	2000-04	**Yes**	Same progress
	2004-07	**Yes**	Less progress
4. Increase the percent of grads who take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	1998-01	**Yes**	Greater progress
	2001-05	No	Less progress
	2006-08	No	Same progress
5. Increase the SAT scores of grads	1998-01	No	Same progress
	2001-05	**Yes**	Same progress
	2006-08	No	Same progress

Table 4: Summary of DCC Progress on Student Performance Goals

Student Performance Goals	Time Frame	Overall Progress?	Progress Relative to all MCPS high schools?
1. Increase student promotion rate from Grade 9 to 10	2005-08	**Yes**	Greater progress
2. Decrease freshmen course failure rate by subgroup	2004-08	No	Less progress
3. Increase freshmen grade point average by subgroup	2004-08	No	Less progress
4. Decrease student ineligibility by subgroup*	2004-08	**Yes**	Greater progress
5. Increase student promotion rate from Gr. 9 to grad.	2005-08	**Yes**	Greater progress
6. Increase graduation rate	2004-07	No	Less progress
7. Increase AP participation among grads by subgroup	2004-07	**Yes**	Same progress
8. Increase AP performance among grads by subgroup	2004-07	**Yes**	Same progress
9. Increase SAT participation among grads by subgroup	2006-08	**Yes**	Greater progress
10. Increase SAT scores among grads by subgroup	2006-08	**Yes**	Greater progress

* Finding based on OLO analysis of all high school data, not just freshmen data.

As noted in Table 3, OLO's original report found that the Northeast Consortium achieved mixed progress in meeting its student performance goals. More specifically, the NEC achieved progress on a slight majority of its goals, but the rate of progress was similar to or less than the rate of progress achieved by MCPS overall (e.g. increases in the percent of graduates who take an Advanced Placement exam). OLO also found that the NEC achieved greater progress at the beginning of its consortium (1998-2003) than in later years.

However, the DCC experienced more favorable student performance results with its high schools achieving progress on seven of 10 measures as noted in Table 4. Moreover, among five of these seven measures, the combined rate of progress among the DCC campuses exceeded the progress achieved among all MCPS high schools. These findings suggested that the DCC during its initial years was effective at accelerating student learning and narrowing the achievement gap between lower-income and higher-income high schools in the County.

C. Consortia-Like High Schools

As OLO staff approached updating the original high school consortia report, OLO staff decided to broaden this project to consider a review of changes in demographics and performance among consortia high schools and three consortia-like high schools:

- Gaithersburg,
- Seneca Valley, and
- Watkins Mill high schools.

Similar to the DCC and NEC, these campuses disproportionately serve students receiving FARMS and Black and Latino students as summarized in Table 5 on the next page.[6] More specifically, between 2010 and 2013:

- Students received FARMS accounted for 1 in 2 to 3 students enrolled at the three "consortia-like" high schools and in the NEC and DCC consortiums compared to 1 in 6 or 7 students enrolled among MCPS' other high schools (i.e. non-consortia schools).
- White students accounted for 1 in 4 to 5 students enrolled at Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill High Schools and 1 in 5 to 7 students enrolled at NEC and DCC campuses but represented 1 in 2 students enrolled in non-consortia high schools.
- Black and Latino students accounted for 2 in 3 students enrolled in the consortia-like high schools and the NEC and DCC high schools, but for less than 1 in 3 students enrolled in the non-consortia schools.

These three "consortia-like" campuses have also utilized some of the strategies utilized by the NEC and DCC campuses to promote student achievement: freshman academies and signature programs and academies. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services houses a Wellness Center at Gaithersburg High School similar to the one housed at Northwood High School within the DCC. MCPS has also sought federal magnet school funding to enhance programming for at least one of these three consortia-like high schools – Watkins Mill High School.[7]

[6] Enrollment data for this section compiled from MCPS' School Safety at Security at a Glance reports, 2008-2013.
[7] See 2010 Washington Post article on MCPS' High Tech High proposal at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/09/29/AR2010092903960.html.

Table 5: Distribution of MCPS High School Students by School Type and Student Income, Race, and Ethnicity, 2010 and 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013
FARMS	**Consortia-Like High Schools***	**37.5%**	**45.3%**
	Northeast Consortium	31.7%	38.4%
	Downcounty Consortium	42.7%	47.6%
	***All other MCPS high schools*	*14.4%*	*16.8%*
ASIAN	**Consortia-Like High Schools**	**10.7%**	**10.4%**
	Northeast Consortium	14.0%	12.7%
	Downcounty Consortium	11.6%	11.4%
	All other MCPS high schools	*14.4%*	*17.0%*
BLACK	**Consortia-Like High Schools**	**30.0%**	**31.2%**
	Northeast Consortium	44.1%	46.3%
	Downcounty Consortium	28.9%	27.7%
	All other MCPS high schools	*13.8%*	*13.7%*
LATINO	**Consortia-Like High Schools**	**32.3%**	**34.8%**
	Northeast Consortium	19.9%	23.0%
	Downcounty Consortium	38.4%	41.5%
	All other MCPS high schools	*15.6%*	*16.0%*
WHITE	**Consortia-Like High Schools**	**22.9%**	**19.4%**
	Northeast Consortium	18.9%	14.3%
	Downcounty Consortium	18.1%	15.4%
	All other MCPS high schools	*50.8%*	*47.9%*

*Consortia-Like High Schools are Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, & Watkins Mill High Schools
** Refers to all other comprehensive high schools in MCPS (i.e. Non-Consortia High Schools)

Given the similarities in demographics and strategies utilized by the NEC and DCC high schools as compared to Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mills' high schools, OLO's analysis in the next two chapters compares changes in student demographics and academic performance among consortia and consortia-like high schools (also referred to as high-poverty high schools) to all other MCPS high schools (referred to as low-poverty, non-consortia high schools). More specifically,

- **The Consortia and Consortia-Like High Schools** include the eight high schools that comprise the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums - Blake, Paint Branch, Springbrook, Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Kennedy, Einstein, and Wheaton – and three Upcounty high schools: Gaithersburg, Watkins Mill, and Seneca Valley. Together, these 11 high schools enroll a majority of the County's Black, Latino, and low-income (FARMS) students. These schools have also been referred to as red-zone and focus high schools.

- **The Non-Consortia High Schools** include the 14 remaining comprehensive high schools in MCPS: Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Churchill, Clarksburg, Damascus, Walter Johnson, Magruder, Richard Montgomery, Northwest, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, Rockville, Sherwood, Whitman, and Wootton. Together, these 14 high schools enroll a majority of the County's White, Asian, and higher income (non-FARMS) students. These schools have also been referred to as low-poverty, high-income, and green-zone high schools.

CHAPTER III: Changes in Student Demographics

This chapter reviews student demographic data by school type (consortia/consortia like vs. non-consortia) to discern whether MCPS has achieved progress since 2008 on the integration goals noted in their original high school consortia grant applications.[8] This chapter is presented in two parts:

A. **Changes in Student Demographics by Income** describes changes in MCPS' high school enrollment overall and by FARMS status and school type from 2008 to 2013; and

B. **Changes in Student Demographics by Race and Ethnicity** describes changes in the racial and ethnic composition of MCPS' high school enrollment from 2010 to 2013.

Overall, OLO finds that MCPS has lost ground in achieving its racial and economic integration goals since 2008. Over the past three to five years, MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools have become more polarized (i.e. segregated) by income, race, and ethnicity.

A. Changes in Student Demographics by Income

Goals of the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums include improving the economic integration of its participating schools. Toward this end, MCPS has applied "ever FARMS participation" – whether a student has ever received free or reduced priced meals - as a potential factor in the student choice application process for both consortiums since 2006.

OLO's original report found that the consortiums were unable to achieve economic integration. As noted in Table 2 on page 6, student poverty rates, as measured by the percent of ever FARMS students, increased at a faster rate among 6 of 8 Northeast and Downcounty Consortia schools than for MCPS high schools overall between 1998 and 2008. To consider whether MCPS has achieved progress on this goal since 2008, Table 6 describes enrollment data for all students by school type and FARMS status from 2008 to 2013.

Table 6: High School Enrollment by School Type and FARMS Status, 2008 - 2013

Students	High Schools	2008	2010	2013	Change	
					#	%
ALL	**All High Schools (HS)**	**43,553**	**44,192**	**44,447**	**894**	**2.1%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	18,560	18,621	18,743	183	1.0%
	Non-Consortia HS	24,993	25,571	25,704	711	2.8%
FARMS	**All High Schools**	**8,730**	**10,786**	**12,644**	**3,914**	**44.8%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	5,789	7,106	8,314	2,525	43.6%
	Non-Consortia HS	2,941	3,680	4,330	1,389	47.2%
NON-FARMS	**All High Schools**	**34,823**	**33,406**	**31,803**	**-3,020**	**-8.7%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	12,771	11,515	10,429	-2,342	-18.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	22,052	21,891	21,374	-678	-3.1%

[8] Enrollment data for this chapter compiled from MCPS' School Safety and Security at a Glance reports, 2008-2013.

Several findings emerge from an analysis of the data included in Table 6, including the following:

- **Tremendous growth in FARMS students among MCPS high schools.** Between 2008 and 2013, FARMS enrollment has increased by 45% among all high schools with a 44% increase among consortia and consortia-like schools and a 47% increase among non-consortia schools.
- **MCPS' overall increases in enrollment have been driven by non-consortia schools.** From 2008 to 2013, four times as many new students enrolled in non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools (711 vs. 183 students).
- **Growth in FARMS occurred disproportionately in consortia and consortia-like schools.** Although MCPS' high school FARMS enrollment has increased by 44-47% across each school type, most of the growth in FARMS enrollment occurred on consortia and consortia-like campuses (2,525 students) rather than among non-consortia high schools (1,389).
- **Declines in non-FARMS occurred disproportionately in non-consortia schools.** Consortia and consortia-like schools experienced three times the decline in their non-FARMS enrollment - diminishing by 2,372 students (or 18%) compared to a decline of 678 students (3%) among non-consortia schools.

An analysis of the distributions of students by school type in Table 7 offers two related findings:

- **Two-thirds of all high school students receiving FARMS enrolled in consortia or consortia-like schools.** Although a majority of all MCPS students attend non-consortia schools, only a third of students receiving FARMS attended these schools from 2008 to 2013.
- **Non-FARMS enrollment decreased in consortia and consortia-like schools from 2008 to 2013.** The proportion of non-FARMS students enrolled in these schools declined from 37% to 33% while the proportion enrolled in non-consortia schools increased from 63% to 67%.

Table 7: Distribution of High School Students by School Type and FARMS status, 2008 - 2013

Students	High Schools	2008	2010	2013
ALL	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	42.6%	42.1%	42.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	57.4%	57.9%	57.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***14.8%***	***15.7%***	***15.7%***
FARMS	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	66.3%	65.9%	65.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	33.7%	34.1%	34.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-32.6%***	***-31.8%***	***-31.5%***
NON-FARMS	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	36.7%	34.5%	32.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	63.3%	65.5%	67.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***26.7%***	***31.1%***	***34.4%***

These data points suggest a flight of middle-class students from consortia and consortia-like high schools not apparent among non-consortia schools. In fact, while the distribution gap between high-poverty and low-poverty schools italicized in Table 7 remained fairly constant for all students and FARMS students between 2008 and 2013, it has widened for non-FARMS students. These findings suggest that MCPS has lost ground toward economically integrating its high school consortiums.

B. Changes in Student Demographics by Race and Ethnicity

A stated objective of the Northeast Consortium included in MCPS' application for federal magnet school assistance was the racial integration of its participating schools. MCPS began the NEC with federal magnet school assistance funding that supports the elimination, reduction, and prevention of minority group isolation in public schools with substantial numbers of students of color. OLO's original consortia report, however, found that neither the NEC nor the DCC were able to reverse minority isolation or to maintain their White student enrollment (see Table 1 on pages 5 and 6).

To consider whether MCPS has achieved progress on this goal since 2008, Table 8 describes enrollment data for all MCPS high school students by race and ethnicity. Data from 2010 to 2013 are presented to enable comparisons among subgroups by race and ethnicity.[9]

Table 8: High School Enrollment by Student Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	**All High Schools**	**6,361**	**6,534**	**173**	**2.7%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	2,246	2,162	-84	-3.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	4,115	4,372	257	6.2%
BLACK	**All High Schools**	**9,793**	**9,883**	**90**	**0.9%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	6,256	6,358	102	1.6%
	Non-Consortia HS	3,537	3,525	-12	-0.3%
LATINO	**All High Schools**	**9,837**	**10,584**	**747**	**7.6%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	5,855	6,474	619	10.6%
	Non-Consortia HS	3,982	4,110	128	3.2%
WHITE	**All High Schools**	**16,640**	**15,334**	**-1,306**	**-7.8%**
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	3,645	3,015	-630	-17.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	12,995	12,319	-676	-5.2%

The data in Table 8 demonstrate an increasing stratification of students by school type with the non-consortia schools enrolling a greater share of White and Asian students and the consortia and consortia-like schools enrolling a greater share of Black and Latino students. From 2010 to 2013:

- Black enrollment increased by 2% (102 students) among consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to a 0.3% decline (12 students) among non-consortia high schools.
- Latino enrollment increased by 11% (619 students) among consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to a 3% increase (128 students) among non-consortia high schools.
- Asian enrollment declined by 4% (84 students) among consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to a 6% increase (257 students) among non-consortia high schools.

[9] MCPS reset its baseline for subgroups by race and ethnicity in 2010 to align with federal changes in these classifications.

- White enrollment decreased by 17% (630 students) among consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to a 5% decrease (676 students) among non-consortia high schools.

Table 9 provides another perspective on the increasing stratification of students by comparing the percentage of each subgroup enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to non-consortia high schools.

As noted in Table 7, a majority (57-58%) of MCPS' high schools students were enrolled in non-consortia, low-poverty campuses in 2010 and 2013. Yet, a noted in Table 9, more than half of FARMS, Black, and Latino students were enrolled in one of MCPS' 11 consortia and consortia-like, high-poverty high schools. Moreover, over the past three years, the share of Black and Latino students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools has increased while the share of White, Asian, and non-FARMS students enrolled in non-consortia/low-poverty campuses has increased.

Table 9: Distribution of High School Students by Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013
ASIAN	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	35.3%	33.1%
	Non-Consortia HS	64.7%	66.9%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***29.4%***	***33.8%***
BLACK	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	63.9%	64.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	36.1%	35.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-27.8%***	***-28.7%***
LATINO	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	59.5%	61.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	40.5%	38.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-19.0%***	***-22.3%***
WHITE	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	21.9%	19.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	78.1%	80.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***56.2%***	***60.7%***

Together, these data points suggest a flight of Asian and White students from consortia and consortia-like high schools not apparent among non-consortia schools. Although White enrollment among MCPS high schools has declined in almost equal numbers between high-poverty and low-poverty schools, an increasing share of White students were enrolled in non-consortia high schools in 2013 as compared to 2010 (80% vs. 78%). Moreover, all of the increase in Asian high school enrollment has been driven by the non-consortia schools with Asian enrollment decreasing among consortia and consortia-like schools. These findings suggest that MCPS' high-poverty and low-poverty high schools are increasingly becoming segregated by race and ethnicity.

CHAPTER IV: Changes in Student Performance

This chapter describes and analyzes the progress that MCPS high schools overall and by school type (i.e. school poverty/consortia status)[10] have achieved across seven measures of student performance:

1. **Academic eligibility**, defined as the percentage of students who were academically eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the entire school year.
2. **Out-of-school suspensions**, defined as the percentage of students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions during a school year.
3. **Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11**, defined as the percentage of students who completed this course with a grade of C or higher by the end of Grade 11.
4. **AP performance,** defined as the percentage of graduates earning a score of three or higher on at least one Advanced Placement exam.
5. **SAT/ACT performance,** defined as the percentage of graduates earning a combined score of 1,650 or higher on the SAT or a score of 24 or higher on the ACT.
6. **Graduation rate,** defined as the percentage of students who graduate from high school with their four-year cohort.
7. **Dropout rate,** defined as the percentage of students who dropped out of their four-year cohort in high school.

An overall analysis on the data reviewed in this chapter offers two key findings on the achievement gap in Montgomery County Public Schools relative to high-poverty and low-poverty high schools.

- ***A persistent achievement gap by school poverty level exists within MCPS*** where the lower-poverty (non-consortia) high schools demonstrate consistently higher levels of student performance than higher-poverty (consortia and consortia-like) high schools.
- ***The achievement gap by school poverty may depress the achievement of every subgroup in high-poverty schools*** where fewer students within each subgroup by race, ethnicity, and income reach desired benchmarks in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to non-consortia high schools.

With few exceptions, consortia and consortia-like high schools on average yield lower performance results than non-consortia schools for all students and subgroups, including the three higher performing subgroups: non-FARMS, White, and Asian students. Since lower performing subgroups (i.e. FARMS, Black, and Latino students) are disproportionately enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools, the achievement gap by consortia status/school poverty level may exacerbate the achievement gap by race and ethnicity.

A review of trend data on the seven performance measures also demonstrates that MCPS has not narrowed the achievement gap by school type on a majority of measures in recent years. More specifically, the data show that:

[10] Consortia and consortia-like schools include the eight high schools comprising the Northeast and Downcounty consortiums and three high schools whose demographics mirror these consortiums: Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill. Non-consortia high schools refer to the 14 other comprehensive high schools within MCPS.

- For four measures ***– academic ineligibility, out-of-school suspensions, AP and SAT/ACT performance –*** the performance gap widened between high-poverty and low-poverty schools.
- For three measures –***Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11, graduation, and dropout rates –*** the performance gap has narrowed slightly or remained the same between high-poverty and low-poverty schools.

Together, these summary findings suggest that MCPS' investments aimed at narrowing the achievement gap between high- and low-poverty high schools have been ineffective. A description of the data and methodologies used to arrive at these findings are described below; descriptions of the performance measures reviewed in this report and project findings follow.

Data Sources and Methodology: This report utilizes MCPS data for the first five measures and Maryland State Department of Education data for the last two measures. MCPS tracks each of these seven measures in whole or part as part of its strategic planning and school improvement efforts. Depending on availability, this report describes three to five years of trend data for each measure.

Table 10: Student Performance Data Sources

Project Measures	Data Sources and Years
Academic Eligibility	MCPS: Unpublished data (2009-2012)
Out-of-School Suspensions	MCPS School Safety and Security at a Glance Annual Reports (2008-2013) https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/SafetyGlance/
Algebra 2 by Grade 11	MCPS: Memorandum from Susan Marks on Successful Completion of Algebra 2 with C or Higher - December 19, 2012 (2010-2012) http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2012/Algebra%202%20Prin%20Memo%2012.12.19.pdf
AP Scores among Graduates	MCPS: Unpublished data and memorandum from Joshua Starr on Preliminary Class of 2013 AP and IB Exam Participation and Performance (2008-2013) http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/pdf/APIBMemo2013.pdf
SAT/ACT Scores among Graduates	MCPS: Unpublished data and memorandum from Geoffrey Sanderson on 2013 SAT Participation and Performance – October 23, 2013 (2010-2013) http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/reports/2013/SAT%20Prin%20Memo.pdf
Graduation	MSDE: Maryland Report Card (2010 to 2013) http://www.mdreportcard.org/
Dropout	

This report describes performance by student subgroups among all students, by student eligibility for free and reduced priced meals (FARMS), and by student race and ethnicity among the four largest subgroups – Asian, Black, Latino, and White students. Data on non-FARMS students is calculated as the difference between all students and current students eligible for FARMS.

To compile data on high-poverty and low-poverty schools, OLO compiled performance data by student subgroup and individual schools into one dataset, and then conducted analysis for schools overall and by school type (consortia and consortia-like or non-consortia).

In some cases, OLO estimated missing cell entries based on reported school outcome data by school or district-wide averages for specific subgroups. This estimation technique mainly affects data for Asian and White student subgroups who, as a result of federal privacy rules, have missing, suppressed, or estimated cell entries for the numbers of students receiving out-of-schools suspensions or who dropped out of their four-year class cohort after 2010.

Finally, to consider the gap in performance between high-poverty and low-poverty schools (i.e. consortia and consortia-like schools to non-consortia schools) by student subgroups, OLO analyzed MCPS data to describe the relative performance of each subgroup among the seven measures reviewed. To do this, OLO calculated performance ratios to compare the relative performance of students and subgroups in consortia and consortia-like schools to their non-consortia peers.[11] Performance ratios by consortia status are interpreted as follows:

- A performance ratio of 100% indicates equal student or subgroup performance between high-poverty, consortia and consortia-like schools and low-poverty, non-consortia schools.
- A performance ratio above 100% indicates that consortia and consortia-like students or subgroups are more likely to demonstrate an outcome than their non-consortia peers.
- A performance ratio below 100% indicates that consortia and consortia-like students or subgroups are less likely to demonstrate an outcome than their non-consortia peers.

1. Academic Eligibility

According to MCPS Regulation IQD-RA,[12] students must have a 2.0 grade point average with no more than one failing grade in the prior marking period to be academically eligible to participate in extracurricular activities such as interscholastic athletics and student government. To consider the performance of consortia and consortia-like schools on this measure compared to non-consortia schools, Table 11 on the next page describes the percent of students who were academically eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the entire school year in 2009 and 2012 by school type and FARMS status. An overall analysis of the data from Table 11 offers the following findings:

- **Students in non-consortia schools had higher rates of academic eligibility than peers in consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2012, 82% of students in non-consortia high schools were academically eligible for the entire school year compared to 62% of students in consortia and consortia-like high schools.
- **From 2009 to 2012, academic eligibility rates improved overall, but were driven by gains among non-consortia schools rather than consortia and consortia-like schools.** Overall, there was a 2% increase in academic eligibility rates among all schools and a 3% increase among non-consortia schools compared to a negligible (less than 1%) increase among consortia and consortia-like schools.
- **FARMS students experienced far lower rates of academic eligibility than their non-FARMS peers.** In 2012, 8 in 10 non-FARMS students were academically eligible for the entire school year compared to 5 in 10 FARMS students.

[11] Performance ratios in this chapter are defined as percentage of all students in consortia and consortia-like schools demonstrating an outcome divided by the percentage of all students in non-consortia schools demonstrating the same outcome (e.g. graduation rate for consortia and consortia-like schools/graduation rate for non-consortia schools).
[12] http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/iqdra.pdf

- **Both FARMS and non-FARMS students experienced higher rates of academic eligibility in non-consortia schools**. In 2012, FARMS students were 8 percentage points more likely to be academically eligible for the year in non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools, and non-FARMS students were 16 percentage points more likely to be academically eligible if enrolled in non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools.

Table 11: Percent of High School Students Academically Eligible All Quarters by School Type and FARMS Status, 2009 & 2012

Students	High Schools	2009	2012	Change	
				#	%
ALL	All High Schools	72.2%	73.8%	1.6%	2.2%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	61.8%	62.0%	0.2%	0.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	79.6%	82.1%	2.5%	3.1%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***17.8%***	***20.1%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	49.2%	53.3%	4.1%	8.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	49.1%	50.6%	1.5%	3.0%
	Non-Consortia HS	49.3%	58.5%	9.2%	18.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***0.1%***	***7.9%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	77.9%	81.0%	3.1%	4.0%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	66.4%	70.2%	3.8%	5.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	84.9%	86.3%	1.3%	1.6%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***18.5%***	***16.1%***		

Table 12 on the next page describes the percent of students who were academically eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities in 2009 and 2012 by student race and ethnicity. An overall analysis of the data from Table 12 offers the following findings:

- **Black and Latino students experienced far lower rates of academic eligibility than their White and Asian peers.** In 2012, nearly 9 in 10 Asian and White students were academically eligible for the entire school year compared to 7 in 10 Latino students and 6 in 10 Black students.
- **Across student subgroups, academic eligibility rates were higher among non-consortia high schools compared to consortia and consortia-like high schools**. In 2012, academic eligibility rates for Black and White students were 8-9 points higher in non-consortia schools; and among Asian and Latino students, rates were 11-17 points higher.
- **Among race and ethnicity subgroups, Latino students experienced the largest increases in their eligibility rates.** From 2009 to 2012**,** the percentage of Latino high school students academically eligible for the entire school year increased by 36% in consortia and consortia-like schools (from 47% to 63%) and by 41% in non-consortia schools (from 57% to 81%).

Table 12: Percent of High School Students Academically Eligible All Quarters by Student Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2009 & 2012

Students	High Schools	2009	2012	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	85.8%	88.6%	2.8%	3.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	80.7%	81.4%	0.7%	0.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	88.7%	92.0%	3.3%	3.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***8.0%***	***10.6%***		
BLACK	All High Schools	56.4%	60.5%	4.1%	7.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	54.3%	57.3%	2.9%	5.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	60.0%	66.2%	6.2%	10.4%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***5.7%***	***9.0%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	50.9%	70.7%	19.8%	38.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	46.9%	63.7%	16.8%	35.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	57.1%	80.7%	23.6%	41.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***10.2%***	***16.9%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	85.0%	87.2%	2.2%	2.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	79.3%	81.2%	1.9%	2.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	86.7%	88.7%	2.0%	2.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***7.4%***	***7.5%***		

To further consider gaps in student academic eligibility rates by school type, Table 13 describes the relative performance of students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools compared their non-consortia peers on this benchmark using performance ratios.

Table 13: Academic Eligibility Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2009 & 2012

Performance Ratios*	2009	2012	Change
ALL	77.6%	75.5%	*-2.1%*
FARMS	99.6%	86.5%	*-13.1%*
NON-FARMS	78.2%	81.3%	*3.1%*
ASIAN	91.0%	88.5%	*-2.5%*
BLACK	90.5%	86.6%	*-3.9%*
LATINO	82.1%	78.9%	*-3.2%*
WHITE	91.5%	91.5%	*0.1%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools meeting benchmark divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools meeting the benchmark. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools meet this benchmark compared to students in non-consortia high schools.

An overall analysis of the data in Table 13 yields two key findings:

- **In 2012, students in consortia and consortia-like schools overall and by subgroup were less likely than non-consortia peers to be academically eligible for the school year**. For example, Latino students in consortia and consortia-like schools were only 79% as likely as their peers in non-consortia schools to maintain their academic eligibility for the school year.
- **Between 2009 and 2012, the relative performance of consortia and consortia-like students overall and across most subgroups declined on this measure**. For example, Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 91% as likely as their non-consortia peers to reach this benchmark in 2009 to being 87% as likely to reach this benchmark in 2012.

Together, these findings suggest a difference in academic eligibility rates by school type that has widened for most student subgroups by race, ethnicity, and income since 2009.

2. Out-of-School Suspensions

An out-of-school suspension is defined as "the act of excluding a student from school for a defined period of time for disciplinary reasons with notice to the parent/legal guardian."[13] Out-of-school suspension categories include: arson, fire, and explosives; attack; disrespect, insubordination, and disruption; fighting; theft; threats; weapons; and refusal to obey school policies.[14] For more than a decade, MCPS has monitored out-of-school suspension rates among student subgroups to comply with local and state mandates aimed at reducing the disproportionate representation of Black students and students with disabilities among suspended students.

Table 14 on the next page describes the percent of high school students by subgroup and school type who received out-of-school suspensions in 2008, 2010, and 2013. Trends in out-of-school suspensions are described for all students and by FARMS status from 2008 to 2013. Overall, an analysis of Table 14 data offers the following findings:

- **Students in high-poverty high schools have higher rates of out-of-school suspensions than their peers in low-poverty schools.** In 2013, 6% of students in consortia and consortia-like schools received out-of-school suspensions compared to 3% of students in non-consortia schools.
- **From 2008 to 2013, out-of-school suspension rates declined significantly for all students across FARMS subgroups and school types.** Over a five-year span, out-of-school suspension rates have diminished by 26-47% depending on student group and school type. Out-of-school suspension rates, however, have remained virtually unchanged or increased slightly since 2010.
- **In high schools, FARMS students experienced higher rates of out-of-school suspensions than their non-FARMS peers.** In 2013, 8% of FARMS students received an out-of-school suspension compared to less than 3% of non-FARMS students.

[13] http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jgarb.pdf
[14] www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/Safetyglance/currentyear/definitions.shtm#outreporting

- **Across most student subgroups, out-of-school suspension rates were higher among consortia and consortia-like high schools than among non-consortia high schools**. In 2013, out-of-school suspension rates for Black, Latino, FARMS, and non-FARMS students enrolled in consortia or consortia-like schools were 1-2 points higher than their subgroup peers enrolled in non-consortia schools.

Table 14: Percent of High School Students with Out-of-School Suspensions by School Type and FARMS Status, 2008 – 2013

Students	High Schools	2008	2010	2013	Change	
					#	%
ALL	All High Schools	6.0%	4.0%	4.1%	-1.9%	-31.8%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	7.8%	5.5%	5.8%	-2.1%	-26.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	4.5%	2.8%	2.8%	-1.7%	-38.4%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-3.3%***	***-2.7%***	***-3.0%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	11.7%	8.3%	7.9%	-3.9%	-33.0%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	11.5%	8.2%	8.1%	-3.4%	-29.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	12.1%	8.4%	7.4%	-4.7%	-38.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***0.6%***	***0.2%***	***-0.6%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	4.5%	2.6%	2.6%	-2.0%	-43.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	6.2%	3.9%	4.0%	-2.2%	-35.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	3.5%	1.9%	1.9%	-1.7%	-47.4%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-2.6%***	***-2.0%***	***-2.1%***		

Table 15 on the next page describes out-of-school suspensions by race and ethnicity and by school type from 2010 to 2013 to reflect federal changes in racial and ethnicity classifications in 2010. Since MCPS no longer reports data points below 3 percent by subgroup to comply with federal privacy rules, OLO cannot describe changes in out-of-school suspension rates among White and Asian students between 2010 and 2013.

An analysis of Table 15 data yields the following findings:

- **Black and Latino high school students had higher rates of out-of-school suspensions than their White and Asian peers.** In 2013, 9% of Black and 5% of Latino students received an out-of-school suspension compared to less than 3% of White and Asian students.
- **Out-of-school suspension rates were higher for Black and Latino students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to non-consortia high schools**. In 2013, Black and Latino students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools were 1-2 points more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their subgroup peers enrolled in non-consortia schools.

Table 15: Percent of High School Students with Out-of-School Suspensions by Student Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	1.1%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	1.2%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Non-Consortia HS	1.0%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-0.2%***			
BLACK	All High Schools	8.9%	9.1%	0.3%	2.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	9.0%	9.3%	0.3%	3.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	8.6%	8.7%	0.1%	1.0%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-0.4%***	***-0.7%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	4.9%	4.8%	-0.1%	-1.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	5.8%	5.4%	-0.4%	-6.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	3.5%	3.8%	0.3%	8.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-2.3%***	***-1.6%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	1.7%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	2.2%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Non-Consortia HS	1.6%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-0.6%***			

To further consider gaps in suspension rates by school type, Table 16 describes the relative performance of consortia and consortia-like students on this measure compared to non-consortia students using performance ratios.

Table 16: Out-of-School Suspension Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2013

Performance Ratios*	2010	2013	Change
ALL	196.4%	207.1%	*10.7%*
FARMS	97.6%	109.5%	*11.8%*
NON-FARMS	205.3%	210.5%	*5.3%*
ASIAN**	120.0%	100.0%	*-20.0%*
BLACK	104.7%	106.9%	*2.2%*
LATINO	165.7%	142.1%	*-23.6%*
WHITE**	137.5%	100.0%	*-37.5%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools who were suspended divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools who were suspended. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools were suspended compared to students in non-consortia high schools

** 2013 values estimated because rates below 3% not reported

An analysis of the data in Table 16 offers three key findings:

- **In 2013, students in high-poverty high schools overall and among most subgroups were more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their peers in low-poverty high schools**. For example, non-FARMS students in consortia and consortia-like schools were more than twice as likely (211% as likely) as their peers in non-consortia schools to have been suspended out-of-school.
- **Between 2010 and 2013, the relative performance of consortia and consortia-like students overall and among several subgroups declined on this measure**. For example, FARMS students in consortia and consortia-like schools were slightly less likely than their non-consortia peers to receive an out-of-school suspension in 2010 (98% as likely) compared to being more likely (110% as likely) to receive an out-of-school suspension in 2013.
- **Yet, for Latinos, their relative performance in consortia and consortia-like schools compared to non-consortia schools improved**. In 2010, Latinos enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools were 66% more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their non-consortia peers while in 2013, they were only 42% more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension.

3. Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11

MCPS has monitored student completion of Algebra 2 by the end of Grade 11 with a grade C or higher as an indicator of college- and career-readiness.[15] According to MCPS, "research has shown that students who complete Algebra 2 by the end of Grade 11 with a "C" or higher will perform better on the SAT and ACT college entrance exams and are less likely to require remedial mathematics courses in college."[16]

To consider how consortia schools performed on this measure relative to non-consortia schools, Table 17 on the next page describes the percent of students who completed Algebra 2 with a grade of C or higher by the end of Grade 11 from 2010 to 2012 for all students by school type and by FARMS status. An analysis of this data offers the following findings:

- **Students in non-consortia schools have higher rates of successful Algebra 2 completion by the end of Grade 11 than consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2012, 70% of students in non-consortia schools achieved this benchmark compared to 50% of students in consortia and consortia-like schools.
- **From 2010 to 2012, Algebra 2 by Grade 11 completion rates improved overall with consortia and consortia-like schools achieving greater progress than non-consortia schools.** Overall, consortia and consortia-like schools increased their Algebra 2 completion rates by 20% (8.3 points) from 2010 to 2012 compared to a 13% (7.8 point) increase among non-consortia schools.
- **FARMS students experienced lower rates of Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11 than non-FARMS students.** In 2012, 7 in 10 non-FARMS students met this benchmark by the end of 11th grade compared to 4 in 10 FARMS students.

[15] This indicator is currently tracked as one of five graduation, career and college readiness measures included among MCPS' Five Districtwide Milestones (http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/framework//).
[16] http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/math/stage/math-frequently-asked-questions.aspx#11

- **FARMS students experienced the largest increases in their Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11 rates from 2010 to 2012.** During this time frame, the share of FARMS students reaching this benchmark increased by 34% (9.8 points).
- **Non-FARMS students enrolled in non-consortia schools met the Algebra 2 by Grade 11 benchmark at a significantly higher rate than their peers enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2012, Algebra 2 completion rates for non-FARMS students were 17 points higher in non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools (75% vs. 58%).

Table 17: Percent of Students Completing Algebra 2 by Grade 11 by School Type and FARMS Status, 2010 & 2012

Students	High Schools	2010	2012	Change	
				#	%
ALL	All High Schools	54.0%	62.6%	8.6%	15.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	41.8%	50.2%	8.3%	19.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	62.6%	70.4%	7.8%	12.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***20.7%***	***20.2%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	28.5%	38.3%	9.8%	34.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	28.3%	37.5%	9.2%	32.5%
	Non-Consortia HS	28.9%	39.8%	10.8%	37.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***0.6%***	***2.3%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	61.5%	70.1%	8.6%	13.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	49.1%	58.3%	9.2%	18.8%
	Non-Consortia HS	68.3%	75.3%	7.0%	10.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***19.3%***	***17.0%***		

Table 18 on the next page describes the percent of students who met the Algebra 2 by the end of Grade 11 benchmark by student race and ethnicity and by school type from 2010 to 2012. An analysis of this data offers the following findings:

- **Black and Latino students experienced far lower rates of Algebra 2 completion than their White and Asian peers.** In 2012, nearly 8 in 10 Asian and White 11th graders met this benchmark compared to 4 in 10 Black and Latino 11th grade students.
- **Black and Latino students experienced the largest increases in their Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11 rates from 2010 to 2012.** During this time frame, the share of Black students reaching this benchmark increased by 30% (10.2 points), and the share of Latino students reaching this benchmark increased by 26% (8.3 points).
- **Algebra 2 completion rates were higher for subgroups enrolled in non-consortia high schools compared to consortia and consortia-like high schools**. In 2012, Algebra 2 completion rates for Asian, White, and Latino students were 8-11 points higher in non-consortia schools and for Black students, Algebra 2 completion rates were 3 points higher in non-consortia schools.

Table 18: Percent of Students Completing Algebra 2 by Grade 11 by Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2012

Students	High Schools	2010	2012	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	73.4%	79.8%	6.4%	8.7%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	63.9%	73.0%	9.1%	14.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	78.4%	82.9%	4.5%	5.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***14.5%***	***9.9%***		
BLACK	All High Schools	34.2%	44.4%	10.2%	29.8%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	34.6%	43.4%	8.7%	25.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	33.3%	46.0%	12.7%	38.1%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-1.3%***	***2.7%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	32.6%	40.9%	8.3%	25.5%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	26.6%	35.9%	9.3%	35.1%
	Non-Consortia HS	41.0%	47.2%	6.2%	15.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***14.4%***	***11.3%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	69.6%	76.2%	6.6%	9.5%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	61.3%	69.5%	8.2%	13.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	71.9%	77.8%	6.0%	8.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***10.5%***	***8.4%***		

To further consider gaps in Algebra 2 completion rates by school type, Table 19 on the next page describes the relative performance of students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to students in non-consortia schools. An analysis of this data yields three findings:

- **In 2012, students in consortia and consortia-like schools overall and by subgroup were less likely than students in non-consortia schools to complete Algebra 2 by Grade 11**. For example, Asian students in consortia and consortia-like schools were only 88% as likely as their peers in non-consortia schools to meet this benchmark.
- **Between 2009 and 2012, the relative performance of students in consortia and consortia-like schools overall and across most subgroups improved on this measure**. For example, Latino students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 65% as likely as their non-consortia peers to reach this benchmark in 2010 to being 76% as likely to reach this benchmark in 2012.
- **The relative performance of FARMS and Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools declined on this benchmark**. More specifically, Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 4% *more* likely to reach this benchmark than their non-consortia peers in 2010 (104% as likely) to being 6% *less* likely to reach this benchmark in 2012 (94% as likely); FARMS students in consortia and consortia-like schools loss 4 percentage points in their likelihood to meet this benchmark relative to their peers in non-consortia schools (98% as likely to 94% as likely).

Together, these findings suggest a difference in Algebra 2 completion rates by school type that has narrowed for most student subgroups by race, ethnicity, and income since 2010.

Table 19: Algebra 2 by Grade 11 Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2012

Performance Ratios*	2010	2012	Change
ALL	66.8%	71.3%	*4.5%*
FARMS	97.9%	94.2%	*-3.7%*
NON-FARMS	71.9%	77.4%	*5.5%*
ASIAN	81.5%	88.1%	*6.6%*
BLACK	103.9%	94.3%	*-9.6%*
LATINO	64.9%	76.1%	*11.2%*
WHITE	85.3%	89.3%	*4.1%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools meeting benchmark divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools meeting the benchmark. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools meet this benchmark compared to students in non-consortia high schools

4. AP Performance

Advanced Placement (AP) courses allow students to complete college-level courses while they are in high school. High school graduates can often use qualifying AP exam scores (3 or higher) to earn college credit or Advanced Placement status upon entry to college. MCPS has tracked the number of students taking AP exams as a measure of college readiness for more than a decade.[17] Table 20 on the next page describes the percent of high school graduates overall and by FARMS status who earned at least one qualifying AP score in 2008, 2010, and 2013. An analysis of the data offers the following findings:

- **Graduates from non-consortia schools have higher rates of earning qualifying AP scores than their peers in consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2013, 63% of graduates from non-consortia schools achieved this benchmark compared to 35% of graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools.
- **From 2008 to 2013, the achievement gap by school type widened on this measure.** The share of non-consortia graduates earning at least one qualifying AP score increased by 14% (7.5 points) compared to a -0.5% (0.2 point) decrease among graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools from 2008 to 2013. Moreover, from 2010 to 2013, the share of graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools meeting this benchmark *declined* by 8% compared to an 11% *increase* for non-consortia graduates.
- **A greater percentage of non-FARMS graduates achieved this benchmark compared to graduates receiving FARMS.** In 2013, 59% of non-FARMS graduates earned at least one qualifying AP score compared to 25% of FARMS graduates.

[17] Qualifying AP and International Baccalaureate exam scores are included among the college and career readiness measures tracked under MCPS' Districtwide Milestones (http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/framework//).

- **Non-FARMS graduates from non-consortia schools had higher rates of AP performance than peers attending consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2013, qualifying AP score attainment rates were 27 points higher for non-FARMS graduates from non-consortia schools than from consortia and consortia-like schools while AP score attainment rates were only 5 points higher for FARMS graduates from non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools.

Table 20: Percent of Graduates Earning Score of 3 or Higher on AP by School Type and FARMS Status, 2008 - 2013

Students	High Schools	2008	2010	2013	Change #	Change %
ALL	All High Schools	46.4%	49.1%	51.4%	5.0%	10.8%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	34.9%	37.8%	34.7%	-0.2%	-0.5%
	Non-Consortia HS	55.1%	56.6%	62.6%	7.5%	13.6%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***20.2%***	***18.8%***	***27.9%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	22.3%	25.7%	25.3%	3.0%	13.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	21.3%	25.6%	23.5%	2.2%	10.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	24.6%	25.9%	28.6%	4.0%	16.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***3.3%***	***0.3%***	***5.1%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	50.9%	54.6%	59.3%	8.4%	16.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	39.3%	43.0%	41.4%	2.2%	5.5%
	Non-Consortia HS	57.8%	60.7%	67.9%	10.1%	17.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***18.5%***	***17.6%***	***26.5%***		

Table 21 on the next page describes the percent of high school graduates who earned at least one qualifying AP score by race and ethnicity from 2010 to 2013. Overall, an analysis of this data offers the following findings:

- **A greater percentage of White and Asian graduates achieved the AP benchmark compared to Black and Latino graduates.** In 2013, 70% of Asian and 69% of White graduates met the AP benchmark compared to 36% of Latino and 19% of Black graduates.
- **Across every race and ethnicity subgroup, a greater share of graduates met the AP benchmark from non-consortia schools than from consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, qualifying AP score attainment rates were 8-29 points higher for every racial and ethnic subgroup of graduates from non-consortia schools compared to consortia schools.
- **The AP achievement gap for most subgroups between high-poverty and low-poverty schools widened.** Between 2010 and 2013, the AP performance gap for Asian graduates by school type increased by 11 points, for Black graduates it increased by 15 points, and for Latino graduates it increased 8 points.

Table 21: Percent of Graduates Earning Score of 3 or Higher on AP by Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	65.6%	70.0%	4.4%	6.8%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	54.8%	50.3%	-4.5%	-8.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	72.5%	79.2%	6.7%	9.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***17.7%***	***28.9%***		
BLACK	All High Schools	20.6%	22.1%	1.5%	7.5%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	22.6%	18.5%	-4.1%	-18.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	17.5%	28.4%	10.9%	62.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-5.1%***	***10.0%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	36.4%	35.8%	-0.6%	-1.7%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	31.6%	28.7%	-2.9%	-9.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	41.0%	45.4%	4.4%	10.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***9.4%***	***16.8%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	63.1%	68.8%	5.7%	9.1%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	56.4%	62.1%	5.7%	10.1%
	Non-Consortia HS	65.2%	70.5%	5.3%	8.1%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***8.8%***	***8.4%***		

To further consider gaps in AP performance rates by school type, Table 22 on the next page uses performance ratios to compare the performance of graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools to their non-consortia school peers. An analysis of this data yields two key findings:

- **In 2013, graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and by subgroup were less likely than non-consortia peers to earn one or more qualifying AP scores**. For example, non-FARMS students in consortia and consortia-like schools were only 61% as likely as their peers in non-consortia schools to meet this benchmark.
- **Between 2010 and 2013, the relative performance of students from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and across most subgroups declined on this measure**. For example, Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 29% *more* likely to reach this benchmark than their non-consortia peers in 2010 (129% as likely) to being 35% *less* likely to reach this benchmark than their peers in 2013 (65% as likely).

These findings suggest that the AP performance gap by school type has widened for all students and every subgroup except White students since 2010.

Table 22: AP Performance Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2013

Performance Ratios*	2010	2013	Change
ALL	66.8%	55.4%	*-11.4%*
FARMS	98.8%	82.2%	*-16.7%*
NON-FARMS	70.8%	61.0%	*-9.9%*
ASIAN	75.6%	63.5%	*-12.1%*
BLACK	129.1%	65.1%	*-64.0%*
LATINO	77.1%	63.2%	*-13.9%*
WHITE	86.5%	88.1%	*1.6%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools meeting benchmark divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools meeting the benchmark. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools meet this benchmark compared to students in non-consortia high schools

5. SAT/ACT Performance

Based on research about factors that support college completion, MCPS identifies a combined Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) score of 1,650 or an ACT score of 24 as a measure of student readiness for college-level work.[18] To be consistent with other measures of college readiness monitored by MCPS, such as AP and IB performance, this section describes the percent of *graduates* that meet this benchmark rather than the percentage of *test takers* that meet this benchmark.

Table 23 on the next page describes the percent of high school graduates who scored at least 1,650 on the SAT or a 24 on the ACT by school type and FARMS status in 2010 and 2013. Overall, an analysis of Table 23 data offers the following findings:

- **A higher proportion of graduates from non-consortia schools met this benchmark.** In 2013, 53% of graduates from non-consortia schools achieved the SAT/ACT score benchmark compared to 23% of graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools.
- **The achievement gap by school type on this measure widened from 2010 to 2013.** While the overall percentage of MCPS graduates meeting this benchmark increased by 3%, the percentage of graduates from non-consortia schools meeting this benchmark increased by 6% compared to a 7% decline for consortia and consortia-like schools.
- **Non-FARMS graduates achieved this benchmark at higher rates than their FARMS peers.** In 2013, 50% of non-FARMS graduates achieved this benchmark of college and career readiness compared to 10% of FARMS graduates.
- **FARMS subgroups enrolled in non-consortia schools attained higher SAT and ACT performance levels than peers from consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, SAT/ACT attainment rates among non-FARMS graduates were 27 points higher from non-consortia schools and 6 points higher for FARMS graduates from non-consortia schools.

[18] SAT and ACT performance are included among the college and career readiness measures tracked under MCPS' Districtwide Milestones (http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/framework//).

Table 23: Percent of Graduates Earning 1,650 on SAT/ 24 on ACT by School Type and FARMS Status, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ALL	All High Schools	39.8%	40.8%	1.1%	2.7%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	24.8%	23.0%	-1.8%	-7.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	49.6%	52.7%	3.1%	6.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***24.7%***	***29.7%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	8.4%	10.0%	1.6%	19.2%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	7.1%	8.0%	0.9%	13.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	10.5%	13.7%	3.2%	30.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***3.4%***	***5.6%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	47.1%	50.2%	3.1%	6.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	32.2%	32.1%	-0.1%	-0.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	54.8%	58.8%	4.0%	7.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***22.6%***	***26.7%***		

Table 24 on the next page describes the percent of high school graduates by race and ethnicity that scored at least 1,650 on the SAT or a 24 in 2010 and 2013. An analysis of this data shows that:

- **White and Asian graduates achieved this benchmark at higher rates than their Black and Latino peers.** In 2013, 63% of White and 61% of Asian graduates achieved this benchmark compared to 14% of Black and Latino graduates.
- **For each subgroup, SAT and ACT performance levels were higher among non-consortia schools than among consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, SAT/ACT performance rates were 8-22 points higher for race and ethnicity subgroups enrolled in non-consortia schools vs. consortia and consortia-like schools.

To further consider gaps in SAT and ACT performance by school type, Table 25 on the next page uses performance ratios to compare the performance of graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools to non-consortia schools. An analysis of the data in Table 25 yields three findings:

- **In 2013, graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and by subgroup were less likely to meet SAT/ACT performance benchmarks than non-consortia peers**. For example, graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools were 43% as likely as their peers in non-consortia schools to earn a SAT/ACT scores indicative of college readiness.
- **Between 2010 and 2013, the relative performance of students from consortia and consortia-like schools declined on this measure overall and among most subgroups**. For example, graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools who received FARMS went from being 68% as likely as their non-consortia peers to reach this benchmark in 2010 to being 58% less likely to reach this benchmark in 2013.

Table 24: Percent of Graduates Earning 1,650 on SAT/ 24 on ACT by Race, Ethnicity and School Type, Classes of 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	56.6%	60.6%	4.0%	7.0%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	40.7%	44.7%	4.1%	10.0%
	Non-Consortia HS	66.0%	67.2%	1.1%	1.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***25.4%***	***22.4%***		
BLACK	All High Schools	11.9%	13.7%	1.8%	15.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	10.6%	11.2%	0.6%	5.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	13.9%	18.1%	4.1%	29.7%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***3.3%***	***6.9%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	14.0%	14.3%	0.3%	2.2%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	8.2%	8.0%	-0.2%	-2.4%
	Non-Consortia HS	21.5%	22.9%	1.3%	6.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***13.4%***	***14.9%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	59.3%	63.2%	3.9%	6.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	52.3%	56.8%	4.5%	8.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	61.3%	64.7%	3.4%	5.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***9.1%***	***7.9%***		

Table 25: SAT/ACT Performance Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2013

Performance Ratios*	2010	2013	Change
ALL	50.0%	43.6%	*-6.4%*
FARMS	67.6%	58.4%	*-9.2%*
NON-FARMS	58.8%	54.6%	*-4.2%*
ASIAN	61.7%	66.5%	*4.9%*
BLACK	76.3%	61.9%	*-14.4%*
LATINO	38.1%	34.9%	*-3.2%*
WHITE	85.3%	87.8%	*2.5%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools meeting benchmark divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools meeting the benchmark. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools meet this benchmark compared to students in non-consortia high schools

- **The relative performance of Asian and White students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools improved on this measure between 2010 and 2013**. For example, Asian graduates from consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 62% as likely as their non-consortia peers to reach this benchmark in 2010 to being 67% as likely to reach this benchmark in 2013.

Together, these findings suggest that the SAT/ACT performance gap by school type has widened for all students and each subgroup since 2010 except among Asian and White students.

6. Graduation Rate

Since 2010, MSDE has utilized the four-year cohort graduation rate to track its graduation rates. This "on-time" measure of graduation rates align with national standards for measuring graduation rates because it describes the percent of first time 9th graders who graduate with their class within four-years. The four-year cohort measure, however, differs from the previous leaver graduation rate used in Maryland because it excludes students who take longer than four-years to graduate, including students with disabilities who earn special education certificates.

Table 26 describes the four-year cohort graduation rate for all MCPS high school students and by school type and FARMS status for the Classes of 2010 and 2013.

Table 26: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate by School Type and FARMS Status, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ALL	All High Schools	86.2%	88.3%	2.2%	2.5%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	81.1%	83.5%	2.4%	2.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	89.7%	91.7%	2.1%	2.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***8.5%***	***8.2%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	73.4%	78.0%	4.6%	6.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	72.8%	78.4%	5.6%	7.7%
	Non-Consortia HS	74.5%	77.4%	2.9%	3.9%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***1.7%***	***-1.0%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	89.6%	91.8%	2.2%	2.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	85.2%	86.8%	1.6%	1.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	92.1%	94.3%	2.2%	2.4%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***6.8%***	***7.4%***		

Overall, an analysis of Table 21 data offers the following findings:

- **Students in non-consortia schools have higher four-year graduation rates than students in consortia and consortia-like schools.** In 2013, 92% of students in non-consortia schools graduated "on-time" compared to 84% of students in consortia and consortia-like schools.

- **From 2010 to 2013, graduation rates improved overall and were driven by gains among consortia, consortia-like, and non-consortia schools.** Overall, there was a 2-3% increase in four-year graduation rates across all high schools, including consortia and consortia-like schools. The graduation rate gap by school type also slightly diminished during this period.
- **Non-FARMS students had higher four-year graduation rates than FARMS students.** In 2013, the graduation rate for non-FARMS students was 92% vs. 78% for FARMS students.
- **For non-FARMS students, graduation rates were significantly higher on non-consortia campuses than for consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, the graduation rate of non-FARMS students from non-consortia schools was 7 points higher than the rate for non-FARMS students from consortia and consortia-like schools. Conversely, graduation rates for FARMS students were 1 point lower on non-consortia campuses.
- **FARMS students experienced the largest increases in their graduation rates.** From 2010 to 2013, the percentage of FARMS students graduating on time increased by 8% (5.6 points) on consortia and consortia-like campuses and by 4% (2.9 points) on non-consortia campuses.

Table 27 describes the four-year cohort graduation rate for all MCPS high school students by race, ethnicity, and school type for the Classes of 2010 and 2013.

Table 27: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate by Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

				Change	
Students	**High Schools**	**2010**	**2013**	**#**	**%**
ASIAN	All High Schools	94.7%	<95.0%	0.3%	0.3%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	92.6%	93.7%	1.0%	1.1%
	Non-Consortia HS	96.0%	95.6%	-0.3%	-0.4%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***3.3%***	***1.9%***		
BLACK	All High Schools	78.1%	83.9%	5.8%	7.5%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	78.6%	84.1%	5.5%	7.0%
	Non-Consortia HS	77.2%	83.6%	6.4%	8.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-1.5%***	***-0.6%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	74.2%	77.5%	3.2%	4.4%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	69.7%	73.7%	3.9%	5.6%
	Non-Consortia HS	80.0%	83.1%	3.0%	3.8%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***10.3%***	***9.4%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	93.7%	94.7%	1.0%	1.1%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	91.9%	92.3%	0.3%	0.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	94.2%	95.3%	1.1%	1.2%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***2.3%***	***3.1%***		

Several key findings emerge from an analysis of the data in Table 27:

- **White and Asian students experienced higher four-year graduation rates than their Black and Latino peers.** In 2013, 95% or more of White and Asian students graduated within four-years compared to 78% of Latino and 84% of Black students.
- **For most student subgroups, graduation rates were higher among non-consortia schools compared to consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, graduation rates for Asian, Latino, and White students were 2-9 points higher in non-consortia schools while for Black students there was no negligible difference in graduation rates by school type (< 1 point).
- **Black students experienced the largest increases in their four-year graduation rates from 2010 to 2013.** During this time frame, the percentage of Black students graduating "on-time" increased by 6% (7.5 points), with similar increases in consortia and consortia-like and non-consortia high schools.

To further consider gaps in graduation rates by school type, Table 28 describes the relative performance of students from consortia and consortia-like schools to non-consortia students on this benchmark using performance ratios.

Table 28: Graduation Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2013

Performance Ratios*	2010	2013	Change
ALL	90.4%	91.1%	*0.6%*
FARMS	97.7%	101.3%	*3.6%*
NON-FARMS	92.5%	92.0%	*-0.5%*
ASIAN	96.5%	98.0%	*1.6%*
BLACK	101.8%	100.6%	*-1.2%*
LATINO	87.1%	88.7%	*1.6%*
WHITE	97.6%	96.9%	*-0.7%*
* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools meeting benchmark divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools meeting the benchmark. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools meet this benchmark compared to students in non-consortia high schools.			

An overall analysis of the data in Table 28 reveals four key findings:

- **Students from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and among most subgroups were less likely than their non-consortia peers to graduate "on-time" in 2013**. The difference in graduation performance ratios ranged from Latino, non-FARMS, and all students in consortia and consortia-like schools being 89-92% as likely as their non-consortia peers to graduate on time with the Class of 2013 to Asian and White students in consortia and consortia-like schools being 97-98% as likely as non-consortia peers to graduate on time.
- **In 2013, FARMS and Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools were just as likely as their non-consortia peers to graduate from high school.** There was only a negligible gap in on-time graduation rates by school type where FARMS and Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools were 101% as likely as their non-consortia peers to graduate on time from the Class of 2013.

- **From 2010 and 2013, the graduation gap by school type narrowed slightly for all students.** More specifically, the Class of 2013 in consortia and consortia-like schools was 91% as likely as their non-consortia peers to graduate on time compared to the Class of 2010 in consortia and consortia-like schools being only 90% as likely as their non-consortia peers to meet this benchmark.
- **There was mixed progress among subgroups in narrowing the gap in graduation rates by school type between 2010 and 2013.** For example, the graduation gap narrowed by two percentage points among Latino students in Classes of 2010 and 2013 by school type, but it widened by nearly a percentage point among non-FARMS students.

Although the data show a slight (< 1 percent point) decline in the graduation gap by school type among all students since 2010, these findings also show that a graduation gap by school type persists among several subgroups. Thus, there has been mixed progress in narrowing the graduation gap by school type among subgroups since 2010.

7. Dropout Rate

A dropout is defined as any student who leaves school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a Maryland approved educational program and who is not known to have enrolled in another school or state-approved educational program during the current school year.[19] To comply with federal requirements for calculating dropout rates, MSDE began tracking four-year cohort dropout rates with the Class of 2010. Four-year cohort dropout rates track the percentage of first time 9th graders who drop out of school within a four-year cohort period.

Table 29 on the next page describes the percent of students by school type and FARMS status who dropped out from the Classes of 2010 and 2013. An analysis of the data shows that:

- **Students in consortia and consortia-like schools have higher rates of dropping out than peers in non-consortia schools.** In 2013, nearly 9% of students in consortia and consortia-like schools had dropped out of their four-year class compared to 5% of students in non-consortia schools. FARMS students, however, had slightly higher dropout rates in non-consortia vs. consortia and consortia-like schools (11% vs. 10%).
- **From 2010 to 2013, dropout rates declined for all students across school types and by FARMS status.** Dropout rates have declined by 14-15% (1 point) across consortia, consortia-like, and non-consortia schools and by 16-20% (1-2 points) by FARMS status.
- **FARMS students had higher dropout rates than non-FARMS students.** In 2013, FARMS students were twice as likely to drop out as non-FARMS students (10% vs. 5%).
- **FARMS students have experienced the largest declines in their dropout rates.** Since 2010, the overall dropout rate from FARMS students diminished by 20% (2.4 points) with a 25% (3.2 point) reduction in FARMS dropout rates among consortia schools compared to a 16% (0.9 point) reduction among non-consortia schools.
- **For non-FARMS students, dropout rates were higher among consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, dropout rates for non-FARMS students from consortia and consortia-like schools were twice the rate of their peers from non-consortia schools (8% vs. 4%).

[19] 2010 Annual Report on Our Call to Action, p. 52.

Table 29: Four-Year Cohort Dropout Rate by School Type and FARMS Status, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ALL	All High Schools	7.4%	6.3%	-1.1%	-14.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	10.2%	8.7%	-1.4%	-14.2%
	Non-Consortia HS	5.4%	4.6%	-0.8%	-15.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-4.8%***	***-4.2%***		
FARMS	All High Schools	12.4%	10.0%	-2.4%	-19.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	12.9%	9.7%	-3.2%	-25.0%
	Non-Consortia HS	11.6%	10.6%	-1.0%	-8.9%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-1.3%***	***0.9%***		
NON-FARMS	All High Schools	6.0%	5.0%	-0.9%	-15.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	8.8%	8.1%	-0.7%	-8.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	4.4%	3.5%	-0.9%	-20.9%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-4.4%***	***-4.6%***		

Table 30 on the next page describes the percent of high school students by race, ethnicity, and school type who dropped out of their four-year cohort within the Classes of 2010 and 2013. Since MCPS no longer reports data points below 3 percent by subgroup to comply with federal privacy rules, OLO cannot present or analyze changes in out-of-school suspension rates among Asian high school students during this time frame.

An overall analysis of the data in Table 30 offers the following findings:

- **Black and Latino high school students had higher dropout rates than their White and Asian peers.** In 2013, 9% of Black and 12% of Latino students had dropped out of their four-year cohort compared to 3% or less of White and Asian students.
- **Across most student subgroups, four-year dropout rates were higher among consortia and consortia-like schools**. In 2013, four-year dropout rates for Latino and White students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools were 1-3 points higher than for peers enrolled in non-consortia schools. Yet for Black students, their dropout rates were higher in non-consortia schools by 1 point.
- **Among subgroups by race and ethnicity, Black and Latino students experienced the largest declines in their four-year dropout rates.** From 2010 to 2013, the dropout rate among Black and Latino students diminished by 15-22% (2-3 points) compared to a 13% (0.4 point) drop for White students.

Table 30: Four-Year Cohort Dropout Rate by Race, Ethnicity, and School Type, 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change	
				#	%
ASIAN	All High Schools	2.6%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	4.4%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Non-Consortia HS	1.5%	<3.0%	n/a	n/a
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-2.9%***			
BLACK	All High Schools	11.2%	8.7%	-2.5%	-22.1%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	10.8%	8.2%	-2.6%	-23.9%
	Non-Consortia HS	11.8%	9.5%	-2.2%	-19.0%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***1.0%***	***1.3%***		
LATINO	All High Schools	14.3%	12.2%	-2.1%	-14.6%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	17.0%	13.5%	-3.4%	-20.3%
	Non-Consortia HS	10.8%	10.2%	-0.6%	-5.3%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-6.2%***	***-3.3%***		
WHITE	All High Schools	3.5%	3.0%	-0.4%	-12.9%
	Consortia & Consortia-Like HS	5.2%	3.7%	-1.5%	-28.6%
	Non-Consortia HS	3.0%	2.9%	-0.1%	-3.5%
	Gap (Non-Cons - Cons)	***-2.2%***	***-0.9%***		

To further consider gaps in dropout rates by school type, Table 31 on the next page describes the relative performance of students from consortia and consortia-like schools to non-consortia students on this outcome using performance ratios. An analysis of this data yields three findings:

- **In 2013, students from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and among most subgroups have higher dropout rates than their non-consortia peers**. For example, all students and non-FARMS students in consortia and consortia-like schools were practically twice as likely (189% to 231% as likely) to dropout as their peers in non-consortia schools.
- **In 2013, FARMS and Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools, however, were less likely to dropout than non-consortia peers.** Unlike other subgroups, both FARMS and Black students in consortia and consortia-like schools were less likely (86-92% as likely) to drop out as their non-consortia peers.
- **Between 2010 and 2013, the relative performance of students from consortia and consortia-like schools overall and across most subgroups improved on this measure**. For example, Latino students in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 57% more likely to drop out of school as their non-consortia peers in 2010 to being 32% more likely to drop out than peers in 2013. Similarly, White students in consortia and consortia-like schools went from being 73% more likely to dropout of school as their non-consortia peers in 2010 to being 28% more likely to dropout than peers in 2013.

Table 31: Dropout Gap by School Type and Subgroup, 2010 & 2013

Performance Ratios*	2010	2013	Change
ALL	188.9%	189.1%	*0.2%*
FARMS	111.2%	91.5%	*-19.7%*
NON-FARMS	200.0%	231.4%	*31.4%*
ASIAN**	293.3%	100.0%	*-193.3%*
BLACK	91.5%	86.3%	*-5.2%*
LATINO	157.4%	132.4%	*-25.1%*
WHITE	173.3%	127.6%	*-45.7%*

* Calculated as % of subgroup students in consortia and consortia-like schools who dropped out divided by the % of subgroup students in non-consortia schools who dropped out. Interpreted as how likely students in consortia and consortia-like high schools drop out compared to students in non-consortia high schools

** 2013 values estimated because rates below 3% not reported

Together, these findings suggest a difference in dropout rates by school type with a narrowing of the consortia dropout gap for most student subgroups since 2010. The only variation to this trend is the increasing gap in dropout rates by consortia status among non-FARMS students: In 2010, non-FARMS students attending consortia schools were 200% as likely to drop out of school as their peers in non-consortia schools, but their likelihood increased by 31 percentage points in 2013.

CHAPTER V: Summary of Findings and Recommended Issues for Discussion

The intent of this Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report is to improve the County Council's understanding of the performance of Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) high schools and high school consortiums in particular. Towards this end, this report updates OLO's 2009 consortia report[20] to describe demographic and performance trends among MCPS' consortia, consortia-like, and non-consortia high schools that are stratified by poverty levels.[21]

OLO's original consortia report found that MCPS' consortiums did not enhance racial or economic integration but may have narrowed the achievement gap among some measures of student performance at the start of each consortium. For this study, OLO reviews the performance of MCPS' consortia high schools together with the performance of three consortia-like campuses with demographics similar to the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums – Gaithersburg, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill high schools. This study compares changes in demographics and performance between consortia and consortia-like schools to all of the other comprehensive high schools within MCPS referred to as non-consortia schools.[22] This study also reviews a narrower set of measures.

This chapter is presented in two parts to describe OLO's major project findings and recommended issues for discussion for the County Council with the Board of Education and MCPS leadership. Overall, OLO finds (1) an increasing stratification of MCPS high schools by income, race, and ethnicity; and (2) evidence of an achievement gap between high- and low-poverty high schools that has widened among a majority of measures reviewed. Thus, the components of MCPS' high school consortia model designed to offset the impact of poverty on student achievement - expanded signature programs and freshman academies in both consortia and consortia-like schools, coupled with student choice among the consortia schools – have not worked as intended.

A. Key Project Findings

Finding #1: Montgomery County's high schools are stratified by income, race, and ethnicity.

OLO's review of data finds that MCPS' high schools are stratified by income, race, and ethnicity. Although the Northeast and Downcounty Consortia high schools and three consortia-like high schools enroll a minority of all MCPS high school students, they enroll a majority of the school system's Black, Latino, and low-income students receiving free and reduced price meals (FARMS). More specifically, in 2013:

- Students receiving FARMS accounted for 2 in 5 students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to 1 in 6 students enrolled among MCPS' other high schools;
- Black and Latino students accounted for 2 in 3 students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools, but for less than 1 in 3 students enrolled among other MCPS high schools;
- White students accounted for 1 in 6 students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to 1 in 2 students enrolled in MCPS' other high schools.

[20] See OLO Report 2009-4 (http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/2009-4.pdf)
[21] MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools refer to its high-poverty high schools; the non-consortia high schools refer to MCPS' low-poverty high schools.
[22] The original study compared consortia schools to all MCPS high schools.

In this report, MCPS' 11 high-poverty, high schools are referred to as **"consortia and consortia-like schools"** because they are similar in their demographics and rely on some common strategies to enhance student achievement (e.g. expanded signature programs and freshmen academies). These high schools consist of Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook high schools in the Northeast Consortium; Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Kennedy, Einstein, and Wheaton high schools in the Downcounty County; and Gaithersburg, Watkins Mill, and Seneca Valley high schools.

MCPS' other 14 high schools enroll a majority of the school system's Asian, White, and non-FARMS populations. These schools are referred to as **"non-consortia"** and low-poverty high schools in this report and consist of the following high school campuses:

- Bethesda-Chevy Chase,
- Churchill,
- Clarksburg,
- Damascus,
- Walter Johnson,
- Magruder,
- Richard Montgomery,
- Northwest,
- Poolesville,
- Quince Orchard,
- Rockville,
- Sherwood,
- Whitman, and
- Wootton.

Finding #2: MCPS' high schools have become more polarized by income, race, and ethnicity.

OLO's original report found that the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums did not achieve their economic or racial integration goals. With this report, OLO finds that MCPS continues to lose ground on its integration goals because its high schools have become more polarized by race, ethnicity, and income since 2010.

As noted in Table A on the next page, there have been shifts in enrollment where consortia and consortia-like high schools enroll a greater share of Black and Latino students in 2013 than in 2010 and a smaller share of non-FARMS students. In turn, the non-consortia schools enrolled a greater share of White, Asian, and non-FARMS students in 2013 than in 2010. These shifts in enrollment suggest a flight of middle-class, White, and Asian students from high-poverty, consortia and consortia-like high schools to low-poverty, non-consortia high schools. Thus, there has been an increasing polarization of MCPS high school enrollment by race, ethnicity, and income among high-poverty and low-poverty high schools since 2010.

Table A: Distribution of High School Students by School Type, FARMS Status, Race, and Ethnicity 2010 & 2013

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change
FARMS	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	65.9%	65.8%	-0.1%
	Non-Consortia (N)	34.1%	34.2%	0.1%
	Gap (N-C)	***-31.8%***	***-31.5%***	***0.3%***
NON-FARMS	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	34.5%	32.8%	-1.7%
	Non-Consortia (N)	65.5%	67.2%	1.7%
	Gap (N-C)	***31.1%***	***34.4%***	***3.3%***

Table A: Distribution of High School Students by School Type, FARMS Status, Race, and Ethnicity 2010 & 2013 - Continued

Students	High Schools	2010	2013	Change
ASIAN	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	35.3%	33.1%	-2.2%
	Non-Consortia (N)	64.7%	66.9%	2.2%
	Gap (N-C)	***29.4%***	***33.8%***	***4.4%***
BLACK	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	63.9%	64.3%	0.4%
	Non-Consortia (N)	36.1%	35.7%	-0.4%
	Gap (N-C)	***-27.8%***	***-28.7%***	***-0.9%***
LATINO	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	59.5%	61.2%	1.7%
	Non-Consortia (N)	40.5%	38.8%	-1.7%
	Gap (N-C)	***-19.0%***	***-22.3%***	***-3.3%***
WHITE	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	21.9%	19.7%	-2.2%
	Non-Consortia (N)	78.1%	80.3%	2.2%
	Gap (N-C)	***56.2%***	***60.7%***	***4.5%***

Finding #3: An achievement gap exists between consortia and consortia-like (high-poverty) high schools and non-consortia (low-poverty) high schools.

To consider whether an achievement gap by school type exists among MCPS' high schools, OLO reviewed performance data by school type on seven measures listed in Table B. Four of these measures directly align with MCPS' district-wide measures for college and career readiness: on-time graduation rate, successful completion of Algebra 2 by grade 11 with a C or better, AP performance, and SAT/ACT performance.

Table B: High School Performance Measures Reviewed

Performance Measures	Definitions	MCPS Milestone?
Graduation Rate	Students who graduate with their four-year cohort.	Yes
Academic Eligibility Rate	Students who were eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the entire school year.	No
Algebra 2 by Grade 11 Rate	Students who completed this course with a grade of C or higher by the end of Grade 11.	Yes
AP Performance Rate	Graduates earning a score of three or higher on at least one AP exam.	Yes
SAT/ACT Performance Rate	Graduates earning a score of 1,650 or higher on the SAT or a score of 24 or higher on the ACT.	Yes
Dropout Rate	Students who dropped out of their four-year cohort in high school.	No
Out-of-School Suspensions Rate	Students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions during a school year.	No

Table C describes the current performance of MCPS' high school students on the seven performance measures and demonstrates an achievement gap in performance by consortia status/school type. More specifically, Table C shows that:

- On every favorable measure of performance, a higher percent of students enrolled in non-consortia schools meet the benchmark than students in consortia and consortia-like high schools. For example, 70% of 11th graders from non-consortia schools completed Algebra 2 with a grade of C or better in 2012 compared to 50% of 11th graders from consortia and non-consortia schools.
- On every at-risk measure, a higher percent of students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools experienced these outcomes than students in non-consortia schools. For example, 9% of students in consortia and consortia-like high schools dropped out of their graduating class compared to 5% of non-consortia students.

Table C: Current Performance by School Type

Performance Measures	Consortia & Consortia-Like Schools (C)	Non-Consortia Schools (N)	Performance Gap (N-C)	Performance Ratio (C/N)*
Graduation rate, 2013	83.5%	91.7%	***8.2%***	91%
Academic eligibility rate, 2012	62.0%	82.1%	***20.1%***	76%
Algebra 2 by Grade 11 rate, 2012	50.2%	70.4%	***20.2%***	71%
AP performance rate, 2013	34.7%	62.6%	***27.9%***	55%
SAT/ACT performance rate, 2013	23.0%	52.7%	***29.7%***	44%
Dropout rate, 2013	8.7%	4.6%	***-4.2%***	189%
Out-of-school suspensions rate, 2013	5.8%	2.8%	***-3.0%***	207%
*Interpreted as how likely consortia & consortia-like students meet the benchmark compared to non-consortia students.				

Table C also shows gaps in achievement by school type by describing the relative performance of students in consortia and consortia-like schools to their non-consortia peers with performance ratios. For example, graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were only about half as likely as their non-consortia peers to earn a SAT score of 1,650 or more or an ACT score of 24 or more in 2013, but students from consortia and consortia-like schools were twice as likely as non-consortia students to drop out of school or be suspended. These stark differences in performance by school type suggest stark differences in the high school experiences of students by school type.

Finding #4: The achievement gap by school type may negatively impact student subgroups in consortia and consortia-like schools.

OLO also examined performance data by school type by income, race, and ethnicity to discern if student subgroups performed differently in consortia and consortia-like high schools (high-poverty schools) compared to non-consortia high schools (low-poverty high schools). As noted in Table D, subgroups in consortia and consortia-like schools were often more likely to demonstrate at-risk outcomes and less likely to achieve college and career benchmarks than their peers in non-consortia high schools. More specifically, the data in Table D show that:

- FARMS graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were only 58% as likely as their non-consortia peers to earn a SAT score of 1,650 or more or an ACT score of 24 or higher.
- Non-FARMS, Asian, Black, and Latino graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were only 61-65% as likely as their non-consortia peers to earn one or more qualifying AP scores.
- Non-FARMS students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were more than twice as likely as their non-consortia peers to receive an out-of-school suspension.

Table D: Performance Ratios by School Type and Subgroup

Performance Measures	FARMS	Non-FARMS	Asian	Black	Latino	White
Graduation rate, 2013^	101%	92%	98%	101%	89%	97%
Academic eligibility, 2012	86%	81%	88%	84%	79%	92%
Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11, 2012	94%	77%	88%	94%	76%	89%
AP performance, 2013	82%	61%	64%	65%	63%	88%
SAT/ACT performance, 2013	58%	55%	67%	62%	35%	88%
Dropout rate, 2013	92%	231%	100%*	86%	132%	128%
Out-of-school suspensions, 2013	109%	211%	100%*	107%	142%	100%*

^ Calculated as % of subgroup students enrolled in consortia and consortia-like schools who graduated on time divided by the % of subgroup students enrolled in non-consortia schools who graduated on time.
* 2013 values estimated because rates below 3% not reported

The differences in subgroup performance between consortia and consortia-like high schools compared to non-consortia high schools, particularly in SAT, ACT and AP performance, suggests that high-poverty high schools may diminish the performance of subgroups on performance measures that reflect college and career readiness.

Alternatively, among graduation and dropout rates, consortia and consortia-like high schools may offer a benefit or not harm some subgroups. For example, FARMS and Black students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were just as likely as their non-consortia peers to graduate on time in 2013 and were less likely than their non-consortia peers to dropout of school (by 8-14%).

Finding #5: The achievement gap between consortia and consortia-like (high-poverty) high schools and non-consortia (low-poverty) high schools has widened.

OLO examined trend data by school type on seven performance measures to discern whether the achievement gap between consortia and consortia-like high schools and their lower-poverty non-consortia peers has narrowed. Table E presents this data and notes that the performance gap by school type widened on four measures and remained the same or narrowed on three measures.

Table E: Trends in the MCPS High School Achievement Gap

Measures	High Schools	Base Year	Current Year
Performance Measures Where the Gap Widened			
AP performance, 2010 - 2013	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	37.8%	34.7%
	Non-Consortia (N)	56.6%	62.6%
	Gap (N-C)	***18.8%***	***27.9%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***67%***	***55%***
SAT/ACT performance, 2010 – 2013	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	24.8%	23.0%
	Non-Consortia (N)	49.6%	52.7%
	Gap (N-C)	***24.7%***	***29.7%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***50%***	***44%***
Academic eligibility, 2009 – 2012	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	61.8%	62.0%
	Non-Consortia (N)	79.6%	82.1%
	Gap (N-C)	***17.8%***	***20.1%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***78%***	***76%***
Out-of-school suspensions, 2010 – 2013	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	5.5%	5.8%
	Non-Consortia (N)	2.8%	2.8%
	Gap (N-C)	***-2.7%***	***-2.8%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***196%***	***207%***
Measures Where the Gap Stayed the Same or Narrowed			
Measures	**High Schools**	**Base Year**	**Current Year**
Algebra 2 completion by Grade 11, 2010 – 2012	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	41.8%	50.2%
	Non-Consortia (N)	62.6%	70.4%
	Gap (N-C)	***20.7%***	***20.2%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***67%***	***71%***
Graduation rate, 2010 – 2013	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	81.1%	83.5%
	Non-Consortia (N)	89.7%	91.7%
	Gap (N-C)	***8.6%***	***8.2%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***90%***	***91%***
Dropout rate, 2010 – 2013	Consortia & Consortia-Like (C)	10.2%	8.7%
	Non-Consortia (N)	5.4%	4.6%
	Gap (N-C)	***-4.8%***	***-4.1%***
	Performance Ratio (C/N)	***189%***	***189%***

More specifically, the data show that the achievement gap by school type widened for -

- **AP Performance**, where graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 55% as likely as non-consortia graduates to meet this benchmark in 2013 compared to being 67% as likely in 2010.
- **SAT/ACT performance**, where graduates from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 44% as likely as non-consortia graduates to meet this benchmark in 2013 compared to being 50% as likely in 2010.
- **Academic eligibility**, where students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 76% as likely as non-consortia peers to meet this benchmark in 2012 compared to being 78% as likely in 2009.
- **Out-of-school suspension**, where students from consortia and consortia-like high schools were 207% as likely as non-consortia peers to have this outcome in 2013 compared to being 196% as likely in 2010.

The data also show that the achievement gap by school type narrowed or stayed the same for –

- **Algebra 2 by Grade 11,** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 71% as likely as non-consortia students to meet this benchmark in 2012 compared to being 67% as likely in 2010.
- **Graduation Rates,** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 90-91% as likely as non-consortia students to meet this benchmark in both 2013 and 2010.
- **Dropout Rates,** where students from consortia and consortia-like schools were 189% as likely as non-consortia students to demonstrate this outcome in both 2013 and 2010.

B. Recommended Discussion Issues

Issue #1: Integrating MCPS' High-Poverty High Schools

MCPS' Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums began with a commitment and federal funding to promote integration to enhance student achievement among County students. These efforts aligned with the Board of Education's "Quality and Integrated Education Policy" to promote integrated schools.[23] The goals of the consortiums also aligned with research indicating that Black and Latino students learn more in integrated schools and perform better in college attendance and employment.[24]

As a result of subsequent court decisions that limited the desegregation options available to states and school districts, MCPS' consortiums have focused on economic rather than racial integration since 2005.[25] As noted in this OLO study, however, MCPS' high schools remain stratified by income, race, and ethnicity, and have become more polarized since the original OLO consortia report in 2009.

[23] See http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/acd.pdf
[24] See http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/11/pdf/lostlearning.pdf
[25] Ibid and see http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~tjou/words/law/MoCoDiversity.pdf

Given the achievement gap between MCPS' high- and low-poverty high schools and the benefits of racial and economic integration on student achievement, OLO recommends that the County Council discuss with MCPS' its current vision for using integration as a strategy for narrowing the gap.

Recommended questions for discussion include:

- Does either economic or racial integration remain explicit goals of the Board of Education? If so, how does MCPS monitor its progress toward these goals?
- What strategies are effective and legally feasible to promote economic and/or racial integration among MCPS high schools?
- What strategies, if any, are underway to address the increasing racial, ethnic, and economic polarization of MCPS' consortia and consortia-like high schools?
- Given the experiences of other school systems, what additional strategies could MCPS pursue to advance economic integration? What are the benefits, drawbacks, and potential costs of adopting these policy options locally?

Issue #2: Narrowing the Achievement Gap between Low- and High-Poverty High Schools

Current features of the Northeast and Downcounty Consortiums aimed at narrowing the achievement gap include student choice, signature programs, and additional staffing to support freshman academies. Other MCPS' high-poverty high schools also offer expanded signature programming, freshman academies, and collaborative partnership aimed at addressing the out-of-school factors that contribute to the achievement gap (e.g. Wellness Centers).

According to MCPS, narrowing the achievement gap is a district-wide priority and it is utilizing multi-year budgeting to focus resources. They note that their FY14 budget added 23 positions to high-poverty high schools to lower class sizes and their FY15 proposed budget requests funding for an additional 15 high school focus teachers in English language arts and mathematics.[26]

MCPS' also cites increased funding to support collaborations that serve children, its student support model, career lattice system, and 18.5 ESOL positions as strategic investments proposed in the FY15 budget that are focused on narrowing the achievement gap.[27] Together, these proposed additions to the FY15 budget focused on the achievement gap total approximately $7 million.

Beyond the proposed marginal changes in the FY15 budget aimed at narrowing the achievement gap, the County Council needs to understand the allocation of MCPS' base budget funds aimed at narrowing the achievement gap to provide effective oversight of this funding. The Board of Education's overall budget request for FY15 is $2.3 billion, so the bulk of achievement gap focused spending occurs with existing MCPS operating budget funding.

[26] See http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/budgetbrief/LoweringClassSizes.pdf

[27] See the following MCPS FY15 Budget Briefs:
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/budgetbrief/InvestingInEnglishLangLearners.pdf,
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/budgetbrief/InvestingInTeacherLeadership.pdf,
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/budgetbrief/ImprovingStudentSupportModel.pdf, and
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/budgetbrief/CollaboratingToServeOurChildren.pdf

With regard to this study, the County Council is especially interested in understanding MCPS' investments aimed at narrowing the achievement gap among the County's high schools. Toward this end, OLO recommends the following questions for discussion with MCPS representatives:

- What strategies are underway to improve student performance among MCPS' high-poverty high schools, particularly among the measures reviewed in this report?
- To what extent has MCPS realigned existing resources to support improved performance in high-poverty high schools? What realignments are proposed for the FY15 budget?
- What progress does MCPS anticipate in the short-term and the long-term in narrowing the high school achievement gap by school poverty based on current investments?
- How will MCPS use data and evaluation to determine the efficacy of its efforts to narrow the achievement gap among its high- and low-poverty high schools?

CHAPTER VI: Agency Comments

The written comments received from the Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools on the final draft of this report are attached. This final OLO report also incorporates technical corrections and comments provided by MCPS staff. As always, OLO greatly appreciates the time taken by staff to review our draft report and provide feedback.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org
MARYLAND

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award 2010 Award Recipient

April 3, 2014

Dr. Chris Cihlar, Director
Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins, Senior Legislative Analyst
Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Drs. Cihlar and Bonner-Tompkins:

Thank you for providing Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff members with the opportunity to review and provide comment on the draft Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report, *Performance of Montgomery County Public Schools' High Schools—A FY 2014 Update*. MCPS staff members who participated in this review appreciate the collaborative process used throughout the study and review of the report. Comments and suggestions provided by MCPS staff members during the technical review were incorporated where appropriate.

As you may know, I have included $200,000 in my Fiscal Year 2015 budget for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of current MCPS processes, policies, structures, resources and outcomes, among other things, that enable students to choose an option other than their home school. This review will, of course, include the Downcounty and Northeast consortiums. I believe that this forthcoming process will enable MCPS and our communities to engage in shared learning about what the current state is, and then develop a vision and plan for student choice in the future. This OLO report reaffirms what we have extensively discussed over the years and that has been highlighted in previous OLO reports—we have a longstanding and persistent achievement gap. As we have discussed with the Council on many occasions and as we explain below, addressing and eliminating the achievement gap is the most important priority of MCPS and we continue to allocate resources accordingly.

We do not take any issue with the facts as presented in the report, but we have strong reservations that the overall findings and outcomes presented in the follow-up report lack proper context and relevance to the original intent and rationale for grants to create the Northeast (NEC) and Downcounty (DCC) consortia. To provide a more complete understanding for readers of this report, we offer the following comments:

- Wealth in Montgomery County is unequally distributed geographically. The DCC and NEC communities have become important locations for families with limited means to reside and raise their children. There is little acknowledgement of this underlying demographic reality in Chapter III of the report, calling into question the finding that, "… MCPS has lost ground toward economically integrating its high school consortiums." It would be more complete to

state that the larger increases in the number of students receiving Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) services at consortia high schools, compared to non-consortia high schools, is a function of the changing demographics of the communities served by the consortia high schools. It is not simply a failure of the consortia high schools to achieve economic integration. The same point applies to the study's finding that "… neither the NEC nor the DCC were able to reverse minority isolation or to maintain their White student enrollment." While schools exercise some influence on communities, clearly the consortia high schools are not in control of dramatic changes in the area that have followed immigration and increased race/ethnic diversity of the population over the last several years.

- Because consortia high schools serve a limited geographic area, it is problematic to compare demographic trends in these schools to trends in non-consortia high schools that serve very different geographic areas. As geographic differences are aligned with demographic variances in the county, consortia high schools should be assessed by their success within the context of the geographic area they serve. The comparison of consortia high schools to non-consortia high schools also could be problematic in that differences found may be due to factors other than the consortia features. An ideal study would compare the same high schools with and without the treatment of consortia implementation. Given these concerns, MCPS previously suggested that the OLO study compare the consortium schools with a set of schools with similar racial and economic demographics.

- MCPS has long embraced the tenet of avoiding minority group isolation. The federal government considers a school minority isolated if minority group students constitute more than 50 percent of the school's enrollment as defined by the Middle Schools Assistance Program.. The OLO report establishes a focus on the reduction in the percentage of non-Hispanic White students in the consortia high schools and, to a lesser degree, reductions in Asian students' percentages. Thus, the report concludes that integration goals are not succeeding and minority group isolation is occurring at consortia high schools. However, Table 5 in the OLO report—that identifies race/ethnic percentages of consortia high schools—clearly demonstrates very diverse student populations at the consortia high schools. Although the percentage of non-Hispanic White and Asian students is lower than that of African American and Hispanic students, this statistic does not translate to a lack of student diversity. Based on the data, I question the report's use of the term "segregated" and believe it is inconsistent with the data displayed in Table 5.

- Chapter I of the OLO report states that student performance goals in the federal grant for high school consortia included 1) reducing minority isolation, 2) strengthening student knowledge of academic subjects and vocational skills, 3) improving freshmen class performance by subgroup, and 4) improving student engagement by subgroup. These are the measures by which MCPS and the federal government evaluated implementation, progress, and success. It is important to avoid equating similar, yet slightly different descriptors when referencing intended or actual outcomes. The phrases "reducing minority isolation" and

"enhancing racial and economic integration" are similar, but should not be used interchangeably. Minority isolation was described earlier. Integration is the inclusion of more than one socioeconomic or racial/ethnic group in a school.

The conclusion that the changing demographics of consortia high schools reflect a "flight" of middle class, Asian, and non-Hispanic White students out of the consortia area is unsupported. Additionally, I am not clear as to whether there is an agreed upon definition of, or methodology for measuring "white flight." The largest factor in the changing demographics of the consortium area is movement into the area of African American and Hispanic families. Non-Hispanic White enrollment has been trending down for 40 years in the school system as previous generations of these students have aged out of the school system and have been replaced by a diverse student population. In addition, the comment about high poverty and low poverty schools becoming more segregated fails to convey how most of the changes described are due to disparities in the spread of wealth and race/ethnicity across the county, as previously mentioned. Given these points, the comments made in Chapter III should be placed in the demographic context of the communities the consortia serve and the terms "flight" and "segregated," should not be used, as they are unsupported.

In addition to providing the above comments, I think it is important to highlight MCPS' efforts to close the achievement gap. These efforts are especially important in the schools examined in the OLO report, in which African American and Hispanic students constitute the highest percentage of enrollment.

Eliminating the achievement gap is at the core of our strategic priorities. During the course of many years, MCPS has employed a focused strategy of dismantling institutional barriers to rigorous coursework, disaggregating and analyzing data, and initiating conversations about ensuring equity. We allocate resources according to student need by investing more in schools with high needs. We continue to provide comprehensive supports for students and are building more community partnerships to meet the many and varied needs of our students and families. We also closely analyze which students are in which classes and monitor their performance, and we engage in intentional conversations about race and ethnicity. The work has yielded results, but as the demographic landscape continues to shift and the demands on students, teachers, and schools increase, significant work remains to be done.

MCPS' awareness of the achievement gap between racial/ethnic groups among students receiving educational services such as FARMS, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Special Education programs has prompted action. We are deliberate in addressing variance in performance across and among different schools. MCPS has shifted the equity lens from the broad focus on system and school-level data to a specific focus on each and every student. By incorporating this refined focus, MCPS is able to accelerate progress. Content and delivery of curriculum, strong instruction, professional development, and an engaged staff and community are the key elements needed in order to facilitate change at the school level, in every

classroom, and for every student. Broader measures of social emotional learning—including knowledge of the arts, world languages, science, and civic engagement—are providing a more complete picture of how prepared our students are for the complex world in which they live. It tells us how well our schools and our communities are doing in providing students the knowledge and skills they need to become outstanding citizens.

The Montgomery County Board of Education's recommended Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget reaffirms our longstanding commitment to and specific plans for closing the achievement gap. The recommendation calls for the supplemental funds to encourage exemplary teachers to move to or stay in high needs schools; additional elementary school counselors, psychologists, and pupil personnel workers to work directly with impacted students; additional staff members in middle schools to provide focused support to ESOL students; high school focus teachers to reduce English and mathematics class sizes in the most impacted high schools; staff to improve mathematics teaching and learning; a redesign and strengthening of Alternative Programs; and funding to increase project-based learning at Wheaton High School.

The MCPS approach to closing the achievement gap continues to be our central priority. MCPS will continue to disaggregate and carefully study all data to ensure equitable access. Knowing and meeting the needs of each and every individual student is the key to improving student results; the addition of a student-centered instructional approach, enhanced by a stronger community commitment, will move MCPS closer to the ultimate goal of eliminating the achievement gap.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this OLO report and we look forward to continuing our conversation with the County Council about ways we can work together to ensure that all children are prepared to thrive in their future.

Sincerely,

Joshua P. Starr, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JPS:jmc

Copy to:
Mr. Leggett
Mr. Rice
Members of the Board of Education
Executive Staff