

MEMORANDUM

October 8, 2015

TO: Education Committee
Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Sue Richards, Senior Legislative Analyst
Natalia Carrizosa, Legislative Analyst
Office of Legislative Oversight

SUBJECT: **Worksession on OLO Memorandum Report 2015-14: Excel Beyond the Bell:
Montgomery County's After School Program**

Today, the Education Committee and the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee will meet to discuss OLO Report 2015-14 which was released by the Council on July 28, 2015. The Council asked OLO to compile information about the impact of social service programs on student achievement and resources needed to expand programs to at-risk students. This OLO report examines the Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) after school program for middle school students.

Overall, OLO found evaluation research for after school programs is complicated by the breadth program types that exist; however, there are some programs that have limited but meaningful impacts on students' academic outcomes. EBB served roughly 18% of students who attend MCPS' mid-high poverty middle schools in FY15.¹ On average, participants received five hours a week of organized activities plus meals and transportation. Current data practices aggregate data by school but do not support tracking or reporting of specific academic outcomes for individual participants.

OLO will provide a short PowerPoint presentation summarizing the report and its recommendations. Agency representatives planning to attend the worksession include:

- Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, Inc. – Executive Director April Kaplan, Lynn Sobolov, Manager, Excel Beyond the Bell, and Cheryl Jenkins, Director, Data and Research.
- County Government – Department of Recreation Director Gabriel Albornes, Robin Riley, Division Chief and Adrienne Clutter, Manager, Youth Development.
- Montgomery County Public Schools – Timothy B. Warner, Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer

The report's findings are attached at ©1 and the full report is available on-line at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/reports/2008.html>. The rest of this packet provides an overview of OLO's findings and suggests issues to frame the Committees' discussion with agency representatives.

¹The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) uses the percent of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) as a proxy to categorize a school's poverty concentration as low, mid-low, mid-high or high. At a mid-high poverty school, 50% to 75% of students are eligible for FARMS.

A. Summary of OLO Report 2015-14

OLO Memorandum Report 2015-14 provides a summary of research about out-of-school time activities, program data for Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB); and select data about MCPS' school poverty rates and performance at the middle school level. Key findings from the memorandum report include:

- Organized activities are important for children's development. Nationally, about 80% of children ages 6 to 17 participate in organized activities outside the school day, and 10% to 20% attend after school programs. Rates are comparatively lower for poor and minority children.
- Evaluation research for after school programs is complicated by the wide variety of programs that exist. One research review found the average impact on programs to be "on par with those of other remedial education interventions" such as summer school and Title 1 programs. One study of high quality programs estimated the average per enrollee cost for a school year program for elementary and middle school students at \$2,640, including costs covered by in-kind donations.
- The two-pronged focus of the Collaboration Council's delivery of Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) services is the establishment of professional development standards and training curricula for youth development practitioners and piloting an after school program at select MCPS middle schools.
- The Collaboration Council has provided training for well over 1,000 youth workers since 2008; and developed new standards for youth development practitioners that were published in 2013
- Since it was initiated in 2011, the EBB after school pilot has expanded steadily from three to seven school sites. Six of the seven sites are at high poverty schools where 60% of the student body is eligible for free or reduced price meals (FARMS). Recreation also operates a summer EBB program.
- The EBB program model emphasizes organized activities delivered in a stable supportive environment. Service delivery is an interagency effort of the Recreation Department, the Collaboration Council and MCPS. Recreation and the Collaboration Council each contract with service providers; Recreation staff and contract providers offer enrichment activities; Recreation funds MCPS in-school administrative staff who act as site liaisons and school staff help recruit students to the programs. MCPS coordinates snacks and meals and provides transportation.
- EBB program data show a doubling of program sites and a decline in the ratio of daily attendance to enrollment in FY15. An average EBB enrollee participates two days a week at a per enrollee cost of roughly \$800, not including meals or transportation. Most EBB enrollees are African American or Hispanic students and the share of enrollees eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMS) reflects the FARMS share for EBB school sites.
- Results of an external quality assessment process show EBB's pilot "fully or somewhat meets" three of the four Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) criteria for "high quality" programs. Surveys show participants are largely satisfied with the program. A majority of EBB participants surveyed about outcomes consistently agree that EBB helped them achieve social, personal and academic outcomes. Current data practices support tracking or reporting of academic outcomes at the school level, but not for individual EBB participants.

- MCPS' middle school poverty rate grew from 24% to 33% since 2004. In 2014, 42% of Hispanic and 35% of Black middle school students attend a “mid-high” poverty school. The 2014 Maryland School Assessment Grade 8 Reading data show that the districtwide average score for proficient and advanced students in the subgroup of students eligible for FARMS was 70% compared to 91% for the subgroup of students not eligible for FARMS, for an achievement gap of 21 percentage points.
- Roughly 18% of MCPS middle school students who attend mid-high poverty schools participate in EBB. This compares favorably to the national rate of after school participation of 10% to 20%. At a cost of \$800 per enrollee, expanding EBB to serve 18% of students in the remaining 28 MCPS would total about \$3.2 million (not including meals or transportation.).

B. Discussion Issues

In preparation for today’s meeting, Collaboration Council staff prepared an updated summary of EBB program data (through FY15) attached at ©11. This Fall marks the start of the fifth year for the EBB pilot program. The updated data show the preliminary enrollment count for FY16 is 1,121 students. These preliminary numbers are expected to change during the season.

OLO offers two discussion questions to help frame the Education and PHED Committees’ discussion with the representatives attending today’s worksession.

1. **What collaborative practices are in place to identify, recruit and enroll students who could most benefit from EBB? Are there follow-up practices to sustain participation after the initial enrollment period?**
2. **What efforts are underway to strengthen MPCPS and Collaboration Council data sharing practices, including the tracking of academic outcomes for individuals?**

C. List of Attachments

| Item | Begins at: |
|---|------------|
| Excerpt of findings from OLO Memorandum Report 2015-14 – <i>Excel Beyond the Bell: Montgomery County's After School Program</i> July 28, 2015 | ©1 |
| Excel Beyond the Bell FY12-FY15 – Updated program data | ©11 |

IV. Findings

In 2008, Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) was launched as a cooperative effort of the Montgomery County Collaboration Council, the Recreation Department and Montgomery County Public Schools to address Montgomery County's lack of a cohesive out-of-school-time system. The EBB middle school pilot program model emphasizes the delivery of organized after school activities in a safe, stable environment. In FY15, EBB after school activities were provided at seven mid and high poverty MCPS middle schools. This part presents findings organized in three sections:

- **Section A** presents findings from a review of evaluation research;
- **Section B** presents findings about Excel Beyond the Bell's operations and outcomes; and
- **Section C** presents findings about poverty and school performance at MCPS middle schools.

A. Evaluation Research Findings

Finding 1: Organized activities are important for children's physical, psychosocial, emotional and educational development. Nationally, about 80% of children ages 6 to 17 participate in organized activities outside the school day. However, participation rates are comparatively lower for poor and minority children.

Forty to fifty percent of a child's waking hours are spent in discretionary activities, both organized (e.g., extracurricular activities, after school and community programs) and unstructured (e.g. watching television). Organized activities provide important developmental contexts because they are structured and supervised; occur at regularly scheduled times; involve several participants; and focus on skill building and competency. Research studies find that participation in organized activities is linked to low rates of problem behaviors and high levels of positive adjustment.

Multiple contexts, including the family, school and community, combine to create a child's developmental experiences. An expert review of research across these multiple contexts identified eight features that are key to positive development: a safe environment, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities for belonging, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunity for skill building and integration of family, school and community.

Nationally, youth average about five hours a week in organized activities. While approximately 80% of children ages 6 to 17 participate in organized activities outside the school day, participation levels vary by income and race: 61% of poor children participate compared to 94% of affluent children; and 70% of Hispanic and 76% of Black children participate compared to 86% of their White peers.

The research points to several reasons for lower participation rates for low-income youth, including program affordability, access to transportation and competing obligations such as sibling care and employment (for older adolescents). For example, 46% of non-participants in the federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which target high-poverty schools, reported that they would have participated if they had easier access to a ride home, and 28% said they did not participate because they needed to take care of a younger sibling.

Finding 2: A variety of after school program models exist, complicating evaluation research about program impacts. However, research indicates that programs can produce positive academic, social and personal outcomes. Programs should not be the only approach for closing the achievement gap but instead be viewed as part of a multi-faceted approach.

After school programs vary in their structure, nature of programming offered, and targeted populations. Programs can serve one or many age groups. They can have a single focus or offer a mix of activities. The focus of some programs may be academic learning; others may promote social and emotional development and engagement; still others may aim to provide a supervised, safe, and stable environment. Hours of operation vary. In one group of "high-quality" programs," school year programs ran for almost four hours and summer programs ran for six to nine hours daily.

Studying the impact of after school programs poses a number of challenges. Because program models vary widely, impacts are likely to vary as well. Also, if students participate in multiple out-of-school time activities in addition to or instead of an after school program, it is difficult to isolate specific program impacts. And, because it is usually not possible to design a study that compares participating students with similar non-participating students, researchers' ability to accurately measure the impact of specific programs is limited.

Despite these limitations, evaluation research literature provides evidence that after school programs can lead to positive outcomes for youth in four areas: academic improvement; social and emotional development; prevention of risky behaviors and healthy lifestyles.

A 2009 review of after school evaluation research found that the average impact of programs on academic outcomes is limited but meaningful and "on par with those of other remedial education interventions," such as summer school and Title 1 programs. However, the authors noted that not all after school programs achieve significant academic improvements.

The authors also estimated that expanding after school programs to 100% of youth living below the poverty line on the achievement gap (a major expansion that may not be practical or realistic) would have limited effects. The authors estimated a 100% expansion would result in decreases of 2% in the Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gaps in reading; and, between 4% and 5% in the Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gaps in math. They concluded that after school programs "are best viewed as part of a multi-faceted approach toward closing the achievement gap."

Finding 3: A 2009 study estimated that "high-quality" after school programs for middle school students have an average annual per slot cost of \$4,320 and a per enrollee cost of \$2,640, including costs covered by in-kind donations.

A 2009 report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation attempted to the full costs of high-quality after school programs, including costs covered by in-kind donations. To develop their estimates, researchers examined 111 programs for in six cities considered to be "high-quality." The table on the next page shows the average annual costs for both school-year programs and summer programs. The data includes the average cost per slot in the program and per enrollee, since some programs have multiple enrollee's per program slot.

Table 19. Average Full Costs of High-Quality After School/Out-of-School-Time Programs

| Programs Serving | Average annual cost | |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| | Per slot | Per enrollee |
| Elementary/Middle School Students | | |
| School-year | \$4,320 | \$2,640 |
| Summer of year-round program | \$1,330 | \$1,000 |
| Teens | | |
| School-year | \$4,580 | \$1,880 |
| Summer of year-round program | \$1,420 | \$790 |

Source: Grossman, J. B., Lind, C., Hayes, C., McMaken, J., and Gersick, A., "The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs," The Wallace Foundation, January 2009, pp. 16-31

B. Excel Beyond the Bell Program Operation Findings

Finding 4: Excel Beyond the Bell's current services are focused on two related objectives: (1) professional development standards for youth development practitioners; and (2) a pilot of after school programs at select middle schools.

The EBB mission is "to inspire children and youth to realize their full potential by building a sustainable system offering safe, quality and accessible out-of-school time programs." Currently, it is focused on two services: establishing professional development standards for youth development practitioners and piloting after school programming at select middle schools.

- **Youth Development Practitioners.** Collaboration Council staff report that no framework comparable to the State's professional development standards and certification requirements for child care workers exists for professionals who work with youth aged 12 and over. The Collaboration Council has adopted a two-pronged approach to remedy this problem that it is implementing through EBB. First, it has provided training for well over 1,000 youth workers since 2008, including managers and staff of EBB programs and providers. The training includes a 30-hour certificate program developed by the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work and training in the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) model, a quality self- assessment and program improvement process. Second, the Collaboration Council has developed new standards for youth development practitioners that were published in "Core Competencies for Youth Development Practitioners," released in 2013.
- **After School Programming.** EBB launched a middle school pilot in three schools in 2011. The pilot provides after school recreational and social programming, hot meals and transportation home for students at participating middle schools. Service delivery is an interagency effort of the Department Recreation, the Collaboration Council and MCPS. Recreation and the Collaboration Council each contract with service providers; Recreation delivers on-site programming and provides site coordination. Recreation funds MCPS in-school administrative staff to act as site liaisons, and school staff help recruit students to the program. MCPS coordinates snacks and meals and provides transportation.

Excel Beyond the Bell: Montgomery County's After School Program

Finding 5: Since it began in FY12, the EBB after school pilot has expanded from three to seven school sites. Most sites are high poverty schools where roughly 60% of the student body is eligible for free or reduced price meals (FARMS). The Recreation Department operates a summer EBB program.

The EBB middle school pilot was initially offered at three schools in FY12, two more schools in FY13, a sixth school in FY14; and a seventh school in FY15. Six of seven program sites are at mid-high poverty schools where 60% of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals ("FARMS").

Table 20. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Program School Sites (3) and Expansion Sites

| Middle School | Location | % FARMS eligible in FY14 | Year EBB started | # of days per week | Summer |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Argyle | Wheaton | 62% | FY12 | 4 | 2013-15 |
| Roberto Clemente | Germantown | 33% | FY12 | 4 | 2013-15 |
| A. Marion Loiederman | Silver Spring | 60% | FY12 | 4 | 2013+2015 |
| Forest Oak | Gaithersburg | 57% | FY13 | 2/4 | 2013-2015 |
| Neelsville | Germantown | 64% | FY13 | 2/4 | 2013-2014 |
| Col. E. Brooke Lee | Silver Spring | 62% | FY14 | 4 | 2014 |
| Montgomery Village | Montgomery Village | 62% | FY15 | 4 | No |

Source: Collaboration Council

In FY15, all seven sites offered four days of programming per week, usually from 2:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m., for about 28 weeks of the school year. In FY16, the program structure will migrate to a two semester scheduling model with two sessions of 14 weeks each.

Recreation uses its funds, plus community grants, to operate a summer EBB program that is aligned with MCPS Summer School. The program targets summer school students in need of additional support and engagement during summer months as identified by MCPS; however, students do not need to attend summer school to participate in the EBB Summer program.

The EBB Summer program runs from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Students receive meals between summer school and the summer program. Recreation staff provide many off-site activities such as canoeing, hiking and swimming in addition to the provider programs. Transportation to school is available through the summer school program; however, parents must pick up participants when the program ends. The program was held at five middle schools in 2013 and 2014, with grant support at two sites each year. In 2015, the program is at four sites, with no grant funding.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The five school sites with programs in 2013 were Argyle, Clemente, Forest Oak, Loiederman (through a Community Foundation Grant) and Neelsville (through an Identity partnership). In 2014, the school sites were Argyle, Clemente, Forest Oak, E. Brooke Lee (through a United Way Grant) and Neelsville (through an Identity partnership). In 2015, the four school sites are Argyle, Clemente, Forest Oak and Loiederman. The data reported here are for the school year only; summer program data are not included.

Finding 6: The EBB program model emphasizes organized activities delivered in a stable, supportive environment. Recreation staff and contract providers offer a range of enrichment activities such as sports, arts, STEM and cooking that vary by day and by site. The Collaboration Council and Recreation provider contracts specify different training requirements.

EBB programs provide organized activities and opportunities for positive interactions in a stable, supportive environment. The program model consists of mostly two-hour programs. There are some one hour programs offered to accommodate students in other activities. Each day students choose from several recreational and enrichment activities including sports, arts, STEM and cooking. Offerings vary by day and by school. Recreation and the Collaboration Council consult with school staff to identify activities of interest to students. Students also receive a snack and hot supper and transportation home.

Programs are delivered by a mix of Recreation staff, providers who are under contract to the Recreation Department or the Collaboration Council and high school students in Recreation's Teen Works program who receive service hour credits. Collaboration Council contracts also require providers to attend various trainings related to the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) model. Recreation staff are required to attend training annually with an annual training goal that meets or exceeds the MSDE State standard. Providers contracted by Recreation have the option to attend voluntarily and are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity but, unlike the Collaboration Council, Recreation does not fund contractors to pay their staff to attend.

Finding 7: EBB data for all programs combined show enrollment increases that reflect a doubling of program sites; and a decline in the ratio of daily attendance to enrollment in FY15. The average enrollee participates two days a week at a per enrollee program cost of about \$800, not including meals or transportation.

The Collaboration Council monitors and reports enrollment and attendance data for the EBB program sites. The data for the first four years of program operations, displayed in the table on the next page, show:

- Enrollment grew by 135%, from 744 to 1,752 unique students;
- Duplicate enrollment counts, or the total number of participants across all three sessions, grew from 1,200 students in FY12 to just under 3,000 participants in FY15; and
- Across all programs, the number of participants per site is about twice the average daily enrollment, indicating that the average participant enrolls for two days a week.

The Collaboration Council monitors the ratio of average daily attendance to average daily enrollment on a program by program and site by site basis to track the share of enrolled students who attend the program. For all programs combined, the ratio has declined from three out of four enrolled students attending from FY12 through FY14 to two of three enrolled students who attend in FY15.

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Collaboration Council staff caution that daily attendance to enrollment ratios are very sensitive to students listed on the initial enrollment rosters who enroll but never attend or attend only once. The Collaboration Council also notes that the ratios below are lower than those published for individual programs because the student enrollment counts for the individual program ratios exclude students who enrolled but never attended or attended only once.

The Collaboration Council and Recreation jointly fund EBB with in-kind contributions from MCPS. Since FY12, EBB program expenditures for the middle school pilot grew from \$645,400 to \$1 million. Per enrollee costs in FY14 were \$792, excluding federally funded meals and transportation funded by MCPS.

Table 21. Excel Beyond the Bell Program Measures, FY12-FY15

| | FY12 | FY13 | FY14 | FY15 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|
| # of Sites | 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| # Students (Unique Enrollment Count) | 744 | 841 | 1,304 | 1,752 |
| # Participants (Duplicate Enrollment Count) | 1,199 | 1,484 | 2,331 | 2,957 |
| Average # of Days Per Enrollee | 1.95 | 1.96 | 1.97 | 2.08 |
| Average Daily Attendance (ADA) | 160 | 189 | 300 | 314 |
| Average Daily Enrollment | 205 | 252 | 395 | 473 |
| Ratio of ADA to Average Daily Enrollment | 78% | 75% | 76% | 66% |
| EBB Program Expenditures | \$645,370 | \$817,978 | \$1,033,195 | NA |
| Per enrollee program cost | \$867 | \$973 | \$792 | NA |

Source: OLO and Collaboration Council

Finding 8: Most EBB enrollees are African American or Hispanic students. The share of EBB enrollees who are eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMS) is comparable to the FARMS share for EBB school sites.

MCPS provides EBB with participant demographic data from students whose parents provided permission to share data. The percentage of parents' giving permission varied from 57% in FY13 to 73% in FY14. This dataset, displayed in the table on the next page, shows:

- African-American students represent the largest racial and ethnic group to participate in the middle school pilot, followed by Hispanic students; and
- The share of EBB participants eligible for free or reduced price meals ("FARMS") is comparable to the share of students eligible for FARMS at EBB school sites overall (as shown in Finding 5 above).

Table 22. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Participant Demographics, All Schools, FY12-FY14

| | FY12 profile | | FY13 profile | | FY14 profile | |
|---|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| # of unique enrollees | 774 | | 841 | | 1,302 | |
| % of participants with data | 72% | 536 | 57% | 479 | 73% | 952 |
| Race and ethnicity | | | | | | |
| African American | 36% | 193 | 40% | 192 | 41% | 390 |
| Hispanic | 27% | 145 | 30% | 144 | 34% | 324 |
| White | 16% | 86 | 9% | 43 | 7% | 67 |
| Asian American | 15% | 80 | 17% | 81 | 15% | 143 |
| Multiple/Other | 5% | 27 | 4% | 19 | 4% | 38 |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 55% | 295 | 55% | 264 | 53% | 505 |
| Male | 45% | 241 | 45% | 216 | 47% | 447 |
| Youth receiving special services | | | | | | |
| ESOL | 28% | 150 | 6% | 29 | 10% | 95 |
| Free & Reduced Price Meals | 46% | 247 | 58% | 278 | 58% | 552 |
| Special Education | 12% | 64 | 13% | 62 | 12% | 114 |

Source: Collaboration Council

Finding 9: Results of an external quality assessment process show EBB's pilot "fully" or "somewhat" meets three of the four Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) criteria for "high quality" programs, and surveys show participants are largely satisfied with the program.

During FY13 and FY14, the Collaboration Council contracted with outside evaluators who conducted quality assessments of the middle school pilot using the David P. Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) assessment tool. This tool assesses four categories of program performance: (1) Safe Environment, (2) Supportive Environment, (3) Positive Interaction, and (4) Youth Engagement. From FY12 through FY14, EBB also surveyed participants about their perceptions of the program.

In FY14, the outside evaluators reported that the middle school pilot "fully met" the criteria for Safe Environment; "somewhat met" the criteria for Supportive Environment and Positive Interaction; and "partially met" the criteria for Youth Engagement. Finally, EBB participant survey results from FY12-FY14 show participants have been largely satisfied with EBB middle school pilot program and staff quality.

Finding 10: A majority of EBB participants surveyed about their behavioral and academic outcomes consistently agree that the program helped them achieve social, personal and academic outcomes. Current data practices do not support tracking or reporting of specific academic outcomes.

EBB measures middle school pilot program outcomes via a separate participant survey. Three years of results, displayed below, show participants consistently find EBB led to positive social personal and academic outcomes. Scores have generally improved over the years. The percentages of those who agree EBB helped them with a sense of belonging or a stronger sense of self have generally exceeded the percentages of those who agree EBB helped with academic behaviors and attitudes.

Table 23. Results of Excel Beyond the Bell Participant Outcome Surveys, FY12, FY13 and FY14

| FY12 (53% response rate) 394 responses | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Coming to EBB helped me with: | Yes | Kind of | Not Really |
| Positive life choices | 63% | 23% | 14% |
| Stronger sense of self | 67% | 23% | 9% |
| Improved core values | 61% | 26% | 13% |
| Improved academic attitudes | 57% | 29% | 15% |
| FY13 (33% response rate) 276 responses | | | |
| Coming to EBB helped me with: | Strongly agree or agree | | Disagree or strongly disagree |
| Positive life choices | 78% | | 22% |
| Sense of self | 80% | | 20% |
| Positive core values | 81% | | 19% |
| Sense of belonging | 84% | | 16% |
| Academic attitudes and behaviors | 72% | | 28% |
| FY14 (35% response rate) 459 responses | | | |
| Coming to EBB helped me with: | Strongly agree or agree | | Disagree or strongly disagree |
| Positive life choices | 84% | | 16% |
| Sense of self | 86% | | 14% |
| Positive core values | 84% | | 16% |
| Sense of belonging | 90% | | 10% |
| Academic attitudes and behaviors | 74% | | 26% |

Source: Collaboration Council

From FY12 through FY14, MCPS provided EBB with middle school pilot participants' school attendance, report card averages, and academic eligibility aggregated by school. Because the data are aggregated and provided once a year, the Collaboration Council cannot track individual participants' academic performance over time or compare EBB participants' performance with similar students who did not participate in an EBB program. This means specific academic outcomes of the EBB middle school pilot cannot be tracked or reported.



C. MCPS Middle School Poverty and Performance Findings

Finding 11: Since 2004, MCPS' middle school poverty rate grew from 24% to 33%. In 2014, 42% of Hispanic and 35% of Black middle school students attend a "mid-high" poverty school.

Since 2004, MCPS middle school enrollment held steady but school poverty, measured as the percent of students eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) grew from 24 to 33 percent. In the 2013-14 school year, 10,443 students were eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) and 4,615 (44%) of these students attend 10 schools with the highest FARMS rates (referred to as "mid-high poverty schools"). The distribution of MCPS middle school students by race/ethnicity and school poverty tier shows 47% of Asian and 67% of White students attend a low poverty school and 35% of Black students and 42% of Hispanic students attend a mid-high poverty school.

Table 24. Summary Data for MCPS' 38 Middle Schools Aggregated by Poverty Concentration

| MCPS Middle School Data (2013-14) | Poverty Tier | | | District Totals |
|--|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| | Low | Mid-Low | Mid-High | |
| # of schools | 14 | 14 | 10 | 38 |
| # of students | 13,164 | 11,189 | 7,772 | 32,125 |
| % of students | 41% | 35% | 24% | 100% |
| Distribution of FARMS Students | 1,504 | 4,324 | 4,615 | 10,443 |
| Distribution of Students by Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
| Asian Students (n=4,787) | 47% | 35% | 17% | 15% |
| Black Students (n=6,767) | 20% | 45% | 35% | 21% |
| Hispanic Students (n=8,220) | 20% | 37% | 42% | 26% |
| White Students (n=10,658) | 67% | 26% | 7% | 33% |
| All Other Students (n=1,693) | 46% | 35% | 19% | 5% |

Source: OLO and MCPS

Finding 12: In 2014, there was a 21% districtwide Grade 8 Reading achievement gap between test takers who were and were not eligible for FARMS. Among "mid-low" poverty schools, this gap was 24%.

Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) are used to track progress in meeting achievement goals and complying with the No Child Left Behind Act. Students who receive proficient or advanced scores pass the exam; students who receive basic scores do not pass the exam.

⁴⁷ As defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a low poverty school has a FARMS rate of 25% or less; a mid-low poverty school has a FARMS rate between 25.1% and 50%; a mid-high poverty school has a FARMS rate between 50.1% and 75%; and a high poverty school has a FARMS rate above 75%. Since there are no MCPS middle schools in the NCES High Poverty category, that category is not included in the table.

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The table below shows the districtwide averages of proficiency scores on the Grade 8 Reading MSA by FARMS eligibility status subgroups and averages for these subgroups by school poverty tier. The districtwide gap between the subgroups eligible and not eligible for FARMS was 21%. By school poverty tier, the gaps between the subgroups were 17% for the 14 low poverty schools, 24% for the 14 mid-low poverty schools, and 15% for the ten mid-high poverty schools which include six of seven EBB schools.

Of note, the narrower gap for the mid-high poverty schools compared to the mid-low poverty schools reflects a lower average score for non-FARMS students attending the mid-high poverty schools (84% compared to 92%) as the average scores for low-income students are comparable (69% and 68%).

Table 25. 2014 Grade 8 Reading MSA Gaps for FARMS and non-FARMS Eligible Students Within a School Poverty Group

| School Group | % of Proficient and Advanced | | Difference |
|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | FARMS students | Non-FARMS students | |
| Districtwide | 70% | 91% | 21% |
| Low Poverty | 76% | 93% | 17% |
| Mid-Low Poverty | 68% | 92% | 24% |
| Mid-High Poverty | 69% | 84% | 15% |

OLO and MSDE

Finding 13: In FY15, EBB served 18% of MCPS students at MCPS' ten "mid-high" poverty middle schools. This share aligns with national research that finds 10% to 20% of children attend after school programs, not counting other activities.

Six of seven EBB school sites were mid-high poverty schools. Together, these schools accounted for 1,400 of EBB enrollees in FY15 or roughly 18% of the 7,800 students who attend MCPS' ten mid-high poverty middle schools. According to national research, between 10% and 20% of school children attend after school programs, not counting other extracurricular activities. EBB's 18% enrollment rate means the level of after school program participation of MCPS middle school students at these ten schools falls just below the upper end of the national estimate. If students at these ten schools are participating in community after school programs or RecZones instead of or in addition to EBB, this rate could exceed 20%.

Current fiscal realities limit bringing EBB to scale at this time; however, if the fiscal situation improves, in theory, EBB could be expanded to the remaining 13 mid-low poverty middle schools or to the 14 low poverty schools as well. These schools are currently served by RecZones and MCPS extracurricular activities.

Expanding EBB to serve 18% of the 11,200 students who attend a mid-low poverty school would result in a net increase of 1,670 enrollees, assuming enrollment at Roberto Clemente stayed around 340. A similar expansion to serve 18% of the 13,000 students who attend one of the fourteen low poverty schools would result in another 2,400 enrollees. These estimates assume current program enrollment patterns, attendance ratios and staffing complements. At a cost of roughly \$800 per enrollee, the estimated cost to serve the mid-low poverty schools would be \$1.3 million and the cost to serve the low poverty schools would be \$1.9 million. These estimates exclude meals and transportation.

Excel Beyond the Bell FY12-FY15



Participant Satisfaction (percent agree or strongly agree)

| | FY13 n=1605 | FY14 3040 | FY15 1599 |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Program Satisfaction | 91% | 90% | 90% |
| Satisfaction with Staff | 89% | 89% | 89% |
| Safe Environment | 91% | 91% | 92% |
| Supportive Environment | 89% | 90% | 89% |
| Positive Interaction | 90% | 89% | 90% |
| Youth Engagement | 87% | 88% | 86% |

Participant Outcomes (percent agree or strongly agree)

| | FY13 n=276 | FY14 459 | FY15 480 |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Positive life choices | 78% | 84% | 87% |
| Sense of self | 80% | 86% | 89% |
| Positive core values | 81% | 84% | 87% |
| Sense of belonging | 84% | 90% | 90% |
| Academic attitudes | 72% | 74% | 74% |

Year-End Academic Measures

| | FY12 | FY13 | FY14 | FY15 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| School attendance (mean % days attended) | 96% | 95% | 95% | 94% |
| Year-end grade average (mean average) | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | -- |
| Year-end eligibility (% eligible end of year) | 88% | 91% | 88% | -- |