

ED COMMITTEE #2  
January 29, 2015  
**Worksession**

**MEMORANDUM**

January 27, 2015

TO: Education Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst *EW McGuire*

SUBJECT: **Worksession – Change of Project Scope and Amendment to the FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program, Montgomery County Public Schools, Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements Project**

Today the Education Committee will hold a worksession to review a change of project scope and amendment to the FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements Project. No funds are necessary at this time for this change of scope. The following individuals are expected to participate in this worksession:

- James Song, Director, Department of Facilities Management, MCPS
- Debbie Szyfer, Senior Planner, MCPS

The Council introduced this project scope change on December 9, 2014 (resolution attached at circles 1-2). The Board of Education requested this change of scope and CIP amendment on November 17, 2014 (transmittal attached beginning on circle 3). The approved FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes \$16.6 million to fund improvements at the Blair G. Ewing Center to house Alternative Education Programs. On November 17, 2014, the Board of Education approved a revised plan to house all Alternative Education Programs within the former English Manor Elementary School, and to apply the funds approved for the current Avery Road site to renovations and expansion of the English Manor Elementary School site necessary to house the Alternative Education Programs.

The Board has also requested a CIP amendment related to feasibility planning for reuse of the current Ewing Center site on Avery Road for a possible bus depot. **The bus depot amendment is not before the Committee today. The Committee will schedule discussion of the proposed bus depot and any potential reuse of the Avery Road site this spring in the context of the CIP program as a whole. The Board has stated its intent to use the former English Manor ES to house the Alternative Education Programs regardless of the future use of the current Avery Road site.** The Committee's decision on the English Manor ES scope change today is independent of any other future decisions on the Avery Road site.

### **Public Hearing Testimony**

The Council held a public hearing on the project scope change on January 13. A total of nine speakers testified; four speakers spoke in support of the requested scope change and five speakers were opposed.

### **English Manor ES**

The former English Manor Elementary School is a closed school facility currently owned by Montgomery County. The County has leased the building to non-profit tenants for educational and child care purposes since the 1980's. The current tenant has a year-to-year lease arrangement.

Under State law and County regulations, the Board of Education has reclamation rights to closed schools held by the County unless the Board of Education has stated during a disposition process that a closed school will not be needed for educational purposes for at least 10 years after a proposed sale. No such process has occurred for English Manor ES. The Board's transmittal memorandum requests that the former English Manor ES site be reverted back to the Board of Education for educational purposes. The County and MCPS can resolve the leasing and ownership transfer processes related to this request as the planning moves forward.

### **The Blair G. Ewing Center for Alternative Education Programs**

The Superintendent convened a project team in 2013 to develop and implement a strategic redesign, vision, and mission for Alternative Education Programs. Attached is a memorandum to the Board of Education in February 2014 that describes the resulting redesign of Alternative Education Programs and outlines the primary components of the new model (circles 6-13).

One feature of the redesign of the Alternative Education Programs is consolidation of formerly smaller, dispersed programs into one secondary alternative school site for middle and high school students. The current 2014-2015 school year is the first year of implementation for the consolidated Alternative Education Programs, which are currently housed at the Blair G. Ewing Center on Avery Road in Rockville.

The Ewing Center facility was assessed as part of the FACT assessment process in 2010-11 in which older school facilities are assessed for improvements and modernizations. The building was identified for system and other building improvements and the Council appropriated FY15 funds to begin planning the modifications to the building.

The Board of Education's transmittal memorandum states (circle 4) that "...the new vision for Alternative Education Programs required a second look at the current facility to ensure that the secondary Alternative Education Programs were appropriately accommodated with the funds approved." The Board memorandum outlines that the current Avery Road facility is poorly configured for the redesigned secondary program and would require the majority of the funds to be spent on building systems rather than reconfiguring the building. The Board's

conclusion is that “The English Manor facility is better suited to support the Alternative Education Programs...”

MCPS provided additional detail on the history of the program and facility design as well as more explanation of the programmatic elements that will be better accommodated in the English Manor ES site. These are detailed on circles 14-15; Council staff notes the following:

- The original feasibility planning based on the FACT assessment was completed before the redesign of the Alternative Education Programs, requiring a reassessment with this new programmatic focus.
- MCPS staff provides several examples on circles 14-15 of how the pod configured structural layout of the current Avery Road site is an impediment to the new Alternative Education Programs. MCPS states that the English Manor site layout is more conducive to the program needs, and thus would be more cost effective to renovate.
- Circle 15 states that MCPS will conduct neighborhood outreach and gather input during the feasibility study and design processes.

MCPS staff reports that during the search for an alternative to the current Avery Road site MCPS also examined other centrally located sites, specifically the closed Broome School and the Carl Sandburg facility. These were deemed less appropriate than the English Manor site due to issues related to size and site as well as timing.

### **Cost**

The FY15-20 approved CIP project for the Ewing Center Improvements includes a 6-year total of \$16.6 million (approved PDF is on circle 16). Of that total, \$1.5 million was appropriated in FY15 to begin design planning. Construction funds are programmed in FY17-19. The Board is requesting this amendment to change the scope at this time to allow the feasibility planning to go forward on the approved FY15 schedule.

MCPS currently estimates that the \$16.6 million project total should be sufficient to make system and program improvements at English Manor ES. However, the actual project cost estimate will not be known until the feasibility planning is completed for the English Manor site. If additional funds are determined to be necessary following the planning process, the Board will have to return to the Council with a revised project cost request in the FY17-22 CIP.

One question has been raised as to whether MCPS has sufficient confidence in and experience with the revised program model at this stage in its implementation to warrant permanent investment in a facility design to support it. MCPS staff reports that the program model, as seen in the attached Board memorandum regarding the program redesign, is research based and takes into consideration best practices from other jurisdictions. In addition, MCPS staff states that program flexibility is an important concern for planning in any MCPS

educational facility, given that program needs can change over time for a variety of reasons. **The Committee may want MCPS to comment further on this issue during the worksession.**

**Council staff recommendation**

**Council staff recommends approval of the Board's requested project scope change for the Blair G. Ewing Alternative Education Programs from the Avery Road facility to the former English Manor ES site.** The Board has reclamation rights to this facility and has stated its programmatic intent to relocate the Alternative Education Programs to this site. The FY15 appropriation covers only the planning phase of this project. Use of the approved funds to plan improvements to the English Manor ES site is consistent with the approved purpose of the project and the Board's policy direction for the Alternative Education Programs.

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: December 9, 2014  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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By: County Council

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**Subject:** Change of Project Scope within and Amendment to the FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program, Montgomery County Public Schools, Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements Project

**Background**

1. Section 5-306 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires that the County Council adopt a six-year capital improvements program for the Board of Education. This section also allows the Council to make amendments, revisions, and modifications to the program.
2. Section 302 of the County Charter provides that the Council may amend an approved capital improvements program at any time by an affirmative vote of six Councilmembers.
3. The Board of Education has requested a change of scope for the Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements Project. The approved FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) project for the Blair G. Ewing Center includes \$16.6 million to fund improvements at the Blair Ewing Center to house Alternative Education programs. On November 17, 2014, the Board of Education approved a revised plan to house all Alternative Education programs within the former English Manor Elementary School, and to apply the funds approved for the Blair G. Ewing Center to renovations and expansions of the English Manor Elementary School site necessary to house the Alternative Education programs.
4. In its November 17, 2014, action, the Board of Education also requested that the former English Manor Elementary School be reverted back to the Board of Education for educational purposes.
5. A public hearing was held on DATE.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following action:

The FY15-20 Capital Improvements Program of the Montgomery County Public Schools is amended to change the scope of the Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements project from improvements to the current facility to improvements to the former English Manor Elementary School site in order for the Alternative Education programs to relocate to the English Manor Elementary School site.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

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Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

November 19, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, County Executive  
The Honorable Craig Rice, President, Montgomery County Council

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Transmittal—Fiscal Year 2015 Amendment to the FY 2015–2020  
Capital Improvements Program—Blair G. Ewing Center

Board of Education Meeting Date: November 17, 2014

Type of Action:

Amendment

Transfer

Notification

JPS:JS:ak

Attachment

Copy to:  
Mr. Bowers  
Dr. Zuckerman  
Mr. Klausing  
Mr. Song  
Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

November 17, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Amendment to the Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program—  
Blair G. Ewing Center

**Background**

During the 2013–2014 school year, I charged an Alternative Education Programs project team to develop a new vision for alternative education in Montgomery County Public Schools. As a result of the project team's work, all secondary school Alternative Education Programs were consolidated into the Blair G. Ewing Center. Although a Fiscal Year 2015 appropriation was approved to begin the planning process for improvements to the Blair G. Ewing Center facility, the new vision for Alternative Education Programs required a second look at the current facility to ensure that the secondary Alternative Education Programs were appropriately accommodated with the funds approved.

WHEREAS, The Blair G. Ewing Center facility, which was constructed in the early 1970s with a classroom pod organization, does not have an ideal building configuration to support the new vision for Alternative Education Programs in Montgomery County Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, The building remains less than ideal to support the redesigned program for secondary school students and makes it difficult to supervise the students due to the classroom pod organization; and

WHEREAS, The approved Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program includes \$16.6 million for improvements to the Blair G. Ewing Center, with the majority of those funds to be spent on building systems replacement in the facility and will not address all of the building configuration concerns; and

WHEREAS, In order to provide the Alternative Education Programs with a facility that will support the program and students, the *Superintendent's Recommended Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Budget and Amendments to the Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program* includes that the Alternative Education Programs, currently housed at the Blair G. Ewing Center, be relocated to the former English Manor Elementary School site and the existing facility be renovated and expanded to accommodate the Blair G. Ewing Center Alternative Education Programs; and

WHEREAS, The English Manor facility is better suited to support the Alternative Education Programs and the approved \$16.6 million should be sufficient to make the systemic renovations to English Manor as well as the programmatic improvements and expansion to support the redesigned Alternative Education Programs; and

WHEREAS, A feasibility study needs to be conducted during the 2014–2015 school year to determine the scope of facility improvements and expansion and planning for the relocation of Blair G. Ewing Center to the English Manor site; and

WHEREAS, If the feasibility study determines that the \$16.6 million is not sufficient, the cost of the project will be increased in the Fiscal Years 2017–2022 Capital Improvement Program; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education requests an amendment to the adopted Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program to change the scope of the Blair G. Ewing Center Improvements project from improvements to the current facility to improvements to the former English Manor Elementary School site in order for the Alternative Education Programs to relocate to the English Manor site; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Education requests to the county executive and the County Council that the former English Manor Elementary School site be reverted back to the Board of Education for educational purposes; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the county executive and the County Council.

JPS:LAB:JS:ak

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

February 24, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools  
Subject: Alternative Programs

**Executive Summary**

Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) commitment to equity compels a change in how we seek to meet the needs of students through alternative education opportunities. In 2012–2013, enrollment in Alternative Programs included 52.9 percent Black or African American, 27.2 percent Hispanic/Latino, 11.8 percent White, 5.9 percent Two or More Races, and fewer than 5 percent Asian students. Seventy-two percent of students are males. More than 86 percent of these students were receiving or have received Free and Reduced-price Meals System services. The same year, the dropout rate for Alternative Programs students was 70.9 percent compared to the 7 percent dropout rate for all MCPS students. In order to ensure that academic performance is not predictable by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, a redesigned Alternative Programs model will provide specific supports and interventions to meet the needs of this unique student population so that they may achieve success. The new Alternative Programs model will provide students with personalized learning plans, innovative pathways for learning, and expanded social emotional services.

**Background**

In 2012, the Board of Education and I laid the foundation for a redesign of Alternative Programs when the Board appointed the first principal, Dr. Ira K. Thomas, to lead these programs. In 2013, a new leadership team of skilled resource teachers and an assistant principal were selected based on their dedication to providing high-quality alternative education for students. Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, deputy superintendent of school support and improvement, created a project team of central services and school-based staff members to develop and implement a strategic redesign, vision, and mission for Alternative Programs (Attachment). After researching best practices for alternative education and visiting model schools, the project team recommended a

new secondary alternative school for middle and high school students with innovative pathways for learning, personalized learning plans for all students, and expanded social emotional services. The project team also is working with a steering committee, which includes representatives from community organizations, public agencies, and local businesses, to coordinate therapeutic wrap-around services for these Alternative Programs students and their families.

Even in our district with a record of outstanding student performance, implementing high-quality alternative education has remained a challenge. MCPS operates secondary alternative school programs for middle and high school students who are unsuccessful in their home schools for a variety of reasons. In 2006, a work group assessing Alternative Programs for the Board of Education recommended the formation of a nontraditional comprehensive high school with expanded hours. In 2008, the Board of Education's Committee on Special Populations proposed additional alternative regional education centers. In recent years, programs such as McKenney Hills Center, Emory Grove Center, Karma Academy, the Kingsley Wilderness Academy, and the Phoenix Academies have either closed or ceased operations because of underenrollment.

Performance data illustrate unacceptable gaps in student achievement by race, gender, and socioeconomic status. In 2012–2013, the graduation rate for Alternative Programs was 8.9 percent. In the same school year, 14.2 percent of students passed the Algebra High School Assessment (HSA) exam and 20.0 percent passed the English HSA. In a recent Gallup poll, 59 percent of students in Alternative Programs indicated they felt “stuck” or “discouraged” in items measuring hopefulness in school. A recent instructional program review conducted by staff members in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs and the Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI) underscored a need for improved instruction, higher expectations, and greater student engagement.

Stakeholder feedback also supports a complete redesign. Surveys from more than 40 home school administrators, counselors, and teachers called for improved mental health services to address students' social and emotional needs, clear entrance and exit program requirements, specialized college and career readiness programs, expanded outreach to families, and positive models to reverse a culture of failure. Advocacy groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Parents' Council, the African American Student Achievement Action Group, and the Latino Student Achievement Action Group, also have provided feedback on the redesign. These groups have identified the need for increased rigor, opportunities for acceleration, individualized learning plans, expanded wrap-around services, an improved physical plant, dual credit programs, and credit recovery options.

During interviews, current Alternative Programs students, and students who recently returned to their home schools, said they value having smaller classes, but they also describe lack of rigorous courses, low expectations, scant resources, a depressing physical environment, and an absence of clubs or extracurricular activities. Following are a sampling of recommendations from students:

- *“Change it so we could stay there. I miss having small classes. A lot of us didn’t want to go back to our schools, but we knew we didn’t want to be there either. There was a guy who didn’t want to go back to his school and told me he would drop out instead.”*
- *“Make it more interesting and harder...Teachers didn’t give you enough work there.”*
- *“Offer chances to make up credits.”*
- *“Help make them have classes that will help us go to college. My family has no money and I couldn’t take AP classes.”*
- *“Make it like a normal school...Can we have things like sports teams, clubs, activities...field trips?”*
- *“Give students more freedom. They’re not all as bad as you think. They just act bad when everyone thinks they will be bad.”*

These student voices compel our district to engage students in meaningful learning experiences by personalizing our approach to instruction.

### **Vision for Redesign**

The Alternative Programs Project Team studied research-based best practices in hundreds of schools, considered lessons learned from model school visits, and gathered stakeholder feedback in identifying essential components of an Alternative Programs redesign. Beginning in October 2013, the project team visited the Boston Day and Evening Academy in Roxbury, Massachusetts; the Lowell Middlesex Alternative Charter School in Lowell, Massachusetts, and other alternative schools in local districts to understand the implementation of best practices. Listed below are some lessons learned from the research and visits to these high-performing schools:

- Design individualized learning plans with measurable goals and criteria for success.
- Offer shorter-length, proficiency-based courses to maintain student motivation and reinforce success.
- Provide students with high-interest educational experiences that prepare them for college and career.
- Enhance online learning with opportunities for acceleration.
- Provide wrap-around services for students and families.
- Establish student support teams to frequently monitor student achievement.
- Provide a safe and welcoming facility for students and families.

### *Theory of Action*

In collaboration with the project team, Dr. Thomas created the following theory of action and developed three components of the redesign that will be implemented during the next three years:

If we engage students who have not been successful in middle and high school programs through offering students varied pathways for learning; developing personalized learning plans for every child; and providing students with a family-like, stable environment that meets their

social/emotional needs, then students will have the resilience needed to persevere over challenges to reach their highest potential through college and career readiness opportunities.

In future years, this school will operate with a flexible schedule, including the possibility of establishing day and evening hours, to engage students traditionally served by Alternative Programs. Additionally, this school may enroll other students at risk for dropping out who are in need of an alternative school experience.

### *Component 1: Personalized Learning Plans*

Effective alternative schools develop individualized learning plans for every child. The National Alternative Education Association suggests having student support teams create and monitor these plans. The Urban Institute reported that successful alternative education requires “flexible, individualized programming with high expectations and clearly identified goals.” The team also visited Boston College’s City Connects program to learn how their organization lowered the dropout rate by nearly half in schools where they coordinated individualized plans. One size does not fit all when it comes to effective education. As a result, the Alternative Programs redesign also includes personal learning plans for all students. Personalized learning reflects individual needs, capabilities, and learning styles to achieve better outcomes for all students. These learning plans will include measurable goals and criteria for success. Student support teams, made up of educators and mental health professionals, will measure student progress toward academic and social emotional goals. A full-time interventions coordinator will ensure that students and families access needed school and community resources. In addition, Alternative Programs will continue to receive support through the Interventions Network to create these plans and monitor progress.

### *Component 2: Pathways for Learning*

Research shows successful alternative schools offer students creative pathways for learning to prepare them for college and meaningful careers. In *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, the Gates Foundation called for engaging students by creating a school culture that promotes challenging academics with curriculum choices that are “relevant to the lives and goals of students.” A *Job for the Future* study found that successful alternative schools should embed high academic standards that are “transparently linked to learning and work experiences.”

The Alternative Programs redesign will provide a variety of dynamic learning experiences for students. All courses will include rigorous inquiry-based instruction and experiential learning. Students will be provided with opportunities for online learning and acceleration. Flexible scheduling will allow expanded opportunities for internships, academic support, and credit recovery. Beginning next year, students may take new electives including Code.org computer programming courses as well as *Lights, Camera, Media Literacy!* In future years, students who decide to stay in Alternative Programs through graduation may take a sequence of shorter-length, competency-based courses aligned to Common Core State Standards. The school administration

will work to strengthen partnerships with Montgomery College and the Thomas Edison High School for Technology to provide students greater access to college and career experiences. Existing budget resources will be realigned to support changes to staffing and instructional programming. A curriculum program coordinator position will be created to help lead the development and implementation of the instructional and curricular redesign, and resource teachers for individual programs will be realigned to support content areas.

### *Component 3: Social Emotional Learning*

Social emotional learning is essential to high-performing alternative schools. In *A Call for Change*, the Council of Great City Schools found that supportive learning environments promoting “a sense of success, safety, and value in society” were critically important for African American males. The study also calls for wrap-around services and mental health services. Furthermore, model schools that the team visited embedded time in the school schedule for students to receive therapeutic services and academic support. These schools also included time for educators to participate in professional development with colleagues.

The redesign will provide social and emotional learning support in a nurturing, caring environment. Alternative Programs will include comprehensive, therapeutic, and wrap-around services for students and families. On-site mental health specialists will support students and connect families to resources. Expanded and individualized wrap-around services will address health-related and environmental barriers to student achievement. Alternative Programs plans to partner with outside agencies and organizations to support our students in battling substance abuse issues. Time also will be embedded in the school day for students to access counseling and staff to meet in student support teams and participate in professional development. Staffing reallocations will create reading specialist, psychologist, and counselor positions to address academic and social emotional learning needs of students. Physical upgrades to make the building more inviting will include new paint, furniture, a technology lab, and signage.

### **Next Steps**

Staff members in Alternative Programs and central services are preparing to implement the redesign in the 2014–2015 school year. Dr. Rebecca A. Thessin, chief school improvement officer, and Dr. Monique T. Felder, director of interventions, also are providing support for the school in developing the capacity of leaders at Alternative Programs to lead this work and in piloting personalized learning plans for students this semester. The Office of Human Resources and Development is partnering with OSSI to attract caring, dedicated, skilled teachers. This summer, all staff will participate in a 5-day onboarding program (in addition to the established 5-day pre-service week) to understand the mission and values of the school. Teachers also will participate in professional development on inquiry-based learning and developing and monitoring personalized learning plans.

## Conclusion

For a number of years, MCPS has been wrestling with how to meet the needs of students in Alternative Programs. The existing program structure has not succeeded in preparing students for graduation, college, and careers. Our commitment to equity compels us to consider a new approach. New York University Professor Pedro Noguera argues effective school reform requires not only “commitment, effort, and will” but also “coordinated and coherent services to children and families.” With our understanding of these requirements and of research-based models, MCPS is poised to redesign and implement an Alternative Programs model that is consistent with our core value of equity.

## References:

Almeida, Cheryl and Cecilia Le and Adria Steinberg, with Roy Cervantes (September 2010) *Reinventing Alternative Education: An Assessment of Current State Policy and How to Improve It; Jobs for the Future.*

Aron, Laudan Y. (January 2006). *An Overview of Alternative Education*, The Urban Institute.

Bridgeland, John M. and Dilulio, John J. and Morison, Karen Burke (March 2006). *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts.* A report by the Civic Enterprises in association with the Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

City Connects (2012). *The Impact of City Connects: Progress Report 2012*, Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support.

Council of the Great City Schools (August 2012). *“A Call for Change: A Preliminary Blueprint to Improve Educational Excellence and Opportunity for African American Males in Urban Public Schools.”* A report for the National Summit on Educational Excellence and Opportunity for African American Males.

Hammond, Cathy; Linton, Dan; Smink, Jay; and Drew, Sam (May 2007). *Dropout Risk Factors and Exemplary Programs: A Technical Report.* National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.

National Alternative Education Association (January 2009). *Exemplary Practices in Alternative Education: Indicators of Quality Programming.*

Noguera, Pedro (2003). *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education*, Teachers College Press, New York, NY.

Quinn, M.M. & Pourier, J.M. (2006). *Study of Effective Alternative Education Programs: Final Grant Report*. American Institutes for Research.

West, Thomas C. (March 2013). *Just the Right Mix: Identifying Potential Dropouts in Montgomery County Public Schools Using an Early Warning Indicators Approach*, Office of Shared Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools.

JPS:bnk

Attachment

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Project Team Members for Alternative Programs**

**Alternative Programs Redesign Committee**

Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez, deputy superintendent, Office of School Support and Improvement  
Dr. Kimberly A. Statham, deputy superintendent, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Programs  
Dr. Christopher S. Garran, associate superintendent of high schools, Office of School Support and Improvement  
Dr. Rebecca A. Thessin, chief school improvement officer, Office of School Support and Improvement  
Dr. Monique T. Felder, director, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Programs  
Dr. Ira K. Thomas, principal, Alternative Programs  
Ms. Anne R. Taylor, coordinator for special initiatives, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs

**Alternative Programs Redesign Project Team**

Mrs. Ann M. Brado, instructional specialist, Department of Special Education Services  
Ms. Arla Bowers, instructional specialist, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs  
Miss Jennifer C. Bernard, instructional specialist, Staff Development Teacher Project Team  
Mr. Marc J. Cohen, principal, Seneca Valley High School  
Ms. Mary B. Dempsey, acting director, Appeals/Transfer Team  
Dr. Rhonda C. Dillard, coordinator, Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Ms. Kathryn M. Esmay, instructional specialist, Skillful Teaching Team Unit  
Dr. Monique T. Felder, director, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Programs  
Dr. Genevieve L. Floyd, supervisor, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs  
Mrs. Linda L. Freese, senior router, Transportation Support Services Unit  
Mrs. Meredith P. Gramlich, teacher, Alternative Programs  
Mrs. Laura G. Griffiths, staff development teacher, Alternative Programs  
Ms. Amanda J. Hearn, psychologist, Alternative Programs  
Mrs. Phyllis Anigbogu, resource teacher, Alternative Programs  
Ms. Michelle E. Lipson, supervisor, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs  
Ms. Gwendolyn J. Mason, director, Department of Special Education Services  
Mr. William McGrath, instructional specialist, Department of Special Education Services  
Mrs. Helen A. Nixon, assistant to associate superintendent, Office of Human Resources and Development  
Mrs. Sheri L. Phillips, resource teacher, Alternative Programs  
Mr. Lorenzo R. Prillman, resource teacher, Alternative Programs  
Dr. Elizabeth A. Rathbone, student services specialist, Department of Student Services  
Mr. James Richard, assistant principal, Alternative Programs  
Ms. Laura L. Shabazz, resource teacher, Alternative Programs  
Miss Jean A. Smith, counselor, James Hubert Blake High School  
Mr. Frank G. Soo Hoo, resource teacher, Alternative Programs  
Ms. Angela M. Stevenson, content specialist, Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Ms. Deborah S. Szyfer, senior planner, Division of Long-range Planning  
Ms. Anne R. Taylor, coordinator for special initiatives, Department of Enriched and Innovative Programs  
Dr. Ira K. Thomas, principal, Alternative Programs  
Dr. Kara B. Trenkamp, director, Department of Instructional Technology  
Ms. Gail S. Woolf, partnership manager, Office of the Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer  
Ms. June L. Zillich, supervisor, Office of the Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer

Details to Support Board Requested Scope Change for Blair Ewing Alternative Education Programs

January 22, 2015

1. The original feasibility study was finalized prior to the work of the Alternatives Program Redesign Project Team. At that time, the Alternative Education programs were structured differently with three different high school programs which were all located at the current Blair Ewing Center and three middle school programs, which were located at three different sites, including one at the current Blair Ewing Center. The revision of the program consolidated all of the high school programs to create one high school program and consolidated all of the middle school programs to one location at the Blair Ewing Center site. The individual programs were too small to ensure there were sufficient teachers for each of the academic areas. The consolidation helps provide high quality teachers in all of the academic areas to the high school and middle school programs and provides a greater range of elective courses to the students.
2. The current Blair Ewing site is approximately 22.5 acres compared to English Manor which is approximately 8.25 acres. The Blair Ewing facility is over 85,000 GSF compared to English Manor which is approximately 50,000 GSF. Based on the student population and program needs for the revised alternative education programs (AEP), approximately 70,000-75,000 GSF is required to support the programs. Therefore, with the proposed addition in the scope change, the English Manor is better suited to support the size and programs of the school. In addition, the site size of English Manor is better suited to support the revised AEP.
3. Based on the site and building size comparison listed above, greater funds are required to upgrade the current Blair Ewing facility compared to the English Manor facility. In addition, it will be more cost effective in the life-cycle of the facility (30-40 years) to maintain the English Manor facility for the number of students that MCPS needs to serve.
4. At the time of the first feasibility study, the architects were not charged to evaluate other facilities and were asked to maintain the current building footprint of Ewing Center. With the revised AEP, if the architects were to compare the current facility with English Manor, the study would show that English Manor is better suited to support the AEP and would be more cost effective.
5. In the previous AEP structure that had several individual AEP programs, the pod configuration allowed the programs to run more independently and keep the students separate. However, with the consolidation, it is important that only the middle school and high school be kept separate, to the maximum extent possible. With the increased number of students in each program, the pod configuration does not allow the separation of the middle and high school students that the AEP requires.
6. For all school construction projects, easy supervision and clear circulation paths are critical elements of facility design. Due to the pod configuration and split levels, the current Blair Ewing Center does not provide good supervision of students nor is there a clear circulation path in the school. In addition, due to the current building layout and multi-levels, it would be difficult to create a clear circulation path or improved supervision.

7. The individual bathrooms for each classroom are not used nor are they desired for the future building. These bathrooms create a supervision issue for staff. During the feasibility study, the staff requested that these bathrooms be eliminated and preferred student group toilets.
8. In the current Blair Ewing facility, the specialty classrooms (i.e. art, music, science, drama, and PE) are located in different parts of the facility, which would create more interaction between middle and high school students than desired. This type of spatial relationship within the building is another critical element of facility design.
9. The alternative education program is a countywide program that needs to be centrally located. Some students take public transportation to the school in support of the alternate schedules. Concerns were raised by students and staff about the safety of the public transportation bus stop along Route 28. The English Manor location provides safer public transportation alternatives for the students.
10. The current Blair Ewing building structure does not provide an ideal layout to facilitate the therapeutic needs and services for the students. Ideally, to support the social and emotional needs of the students, staff should be able to intervene in a swift manner. Once again, the pod configuration and split levels create obstacles to provide the interventions swiftly. The linear layout of the English Manor will allow staff to provide the interventions in a more efficient and quick manner.
11. The English Manor facility is a two-story structure with one double-loaded linear classroom wing. This design will allow easy separation of the middle and high school students and clear supervision and circulation.
12. Although the current English Manor facility was a former elementary school and the square footage is smaller than what is required for the AEP, the proposed addition would allow MCPS to provide the specialty and career technology education (CTE) classrooms needed to support the program. This addition would be located in an area that should minimize the interaction of the middle and high school students.
13. The addition would provide a new building elevation to the neighborhood. For all school design projects that MCPS conducts, if the feasibility study is approved, the adjacent neighbors and neighborhood associations would be invited to participate in the feasibility study and subsequent schematic design process to share their concerns and input into the design of the project.

# Blair Ewing Center Improvements (P651515)

Attachment to Resolution #17-1103

Category                    Montgomery County Public Schools  
 Sub Category            Individual Schools  
 Administering Agency   Public Schools (AAGE18)  
 Planning Area            Rockville

Date Last Modified            4/21/14  
 Required Adequate Public Facility    #MISSING  
 Relocation Impact            #MISSING  
 Status                            #MISSING

	Total	Thru FY13	Est FY14	Total 6 Years	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	Beyond 6 Yrs
<b>EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)</b>											
Planning, Design and Supervision	1,512	0	0	1,512	605	454	302	151	0	0	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	350	0	0	350	0	0	263	87	0	0	0
Construction	14,049	0	0	14,049	0	0	2,810	5,835	5,404	0	0
Other	668	0	0	668	0	0	0	201	467	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>6,274</b>	<b>5,871</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)</b>											
G.O. Bonds	16,579	0	0	16,579	605	454	3,375	6,274	5,871	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,579</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>6,274</b>	<b>5,871</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (000s)**

Appropriation Request	FY 15	1,512
Appropriation Request Est.	FY 16	0
Supplemental Appropriation Request		0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		0
Expenditure / Encumbrances		0
Unencumbered Balance		0

Date First Appropriation	FY 15
First Cost Estimate	
Current Scope	0
Last FY's Cost Estimate	0

**Description**

The Blair Ewing Center was assessed as part of the FACT process during the 2010-2011 school year. To address facilities needs at this school, an FY 2013 appropriation for facility planning was approved in the Modifications to Holding, Special Education and Alternative Centers project for a feasibility study to identify improvements for this building. An FY 2015 appropriation was approved to begin planning the modifications to this building. While the planning funds remain on the schedule requested by the Board of Education, due to fiscal constraints, the construction funds were programmed one year later in the approved FY2015-2020 CIP. This project is scheduled to be completed August 2018.

**Coordination**

Mandatory Referral - M-NCPPC, Department of Environmental Protection, Building Permits, Code Review, Fire Marshall, Department of Transportation, Inspections, Sediment Control, Stormwater Management, WSSC Permits

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