

Resolution No.: 17-1266
Introduced: November 25, 2014
Adopted: November 25, 2014

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Amendment to the FY15 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight

Background

1. On July 29, 2014 the Council adopted Resolution 17-1183 to establish the FY15 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight. Resolution 17-1183 assigned the Office of Legislative Oversight 15 projects to be undertaken during the current fiscal year.

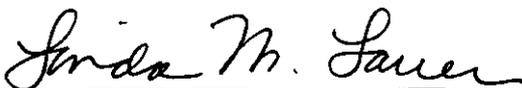
In order to more effectively meet the needs of the Council, OLO is pursuing several strategies that will allow it to be more flexible in the way it addresses Council priorities. To that end, assignment number 15 in the OLO Work Program was entitled "November Supplement to the Work Program." This was a placeholder intended to provide space for the Council to add needed projects.

2. Since the approval of the OLO FY15 Work Program several projects, as described below, have been identified by Councilmembers as appropriate OLO assignments.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the addition of the following projects to the Office of Legislative Oversight's FY15 Work Program. These projects are an addition to the OLO Work Program and will not require or result in any delays to those projects currently assigned in the FY15 OLO Work Program.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

PROJECT #16
COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES

Principal Agencies: Office of Common Ownership Properties
Office of Consumer Protection

A Common Ownership Community (COC) is a self-governing residential community that can: adopt and enforce rules regarding the appearance and use of common and privately-owned property in the association; assess annual dues for the maintenance of common property; and hold its members accountable for rule violations. Since the 1990s, Montgomery County has experienced significant growth in Common Ownership Communities, with approximately 40% of County residents now residing in one of these communities.

Created by County Code, the Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) advises the County Executive and the County Council on common ownership communities, promotes public awareness of rights and obligations of living in a common ownership community, and impartially settles disputes among homeowners, tenants, residents, boards of directors, and management companies. The increase in the number of Common Ownership Communities has led to a growth in both the number and complexity of homeowner disputes heard by the CCOC.

This OLO report will help the Council better understand how the CCOC currently functions and what changes, if any, might be made to the CCOC that would allow it to function more effectively in today's environment. OLO will examine the CCOC's current practices and policies, with specific focus on the following areas:

- The original CCOC mission and duties;
- The change in scope of CCOC operations and its impact on current practices;
- The current dispute resolution process; and
- Challenges in the current system and opportunities for streamlining and modernizing CCOC processes.

OLO will make recommendations regarding improvements to the current dispute resolution process and daily operations of the CCOC.

PROJECT #17 RESOURCES AND STAFFING AMONG MCPS SCHOOLS

Principal Agency: Montgomery County Public Schools

MCPS utilizes K-12 budget staffing guidelines to assign school-based staff to its 202 campuses.¹ MCPS also allocates funding for additional staffing and programming to deliver additional services to students with disabilities and struggling learners. For example, MCPS allocates additional staff to high-poverty elementary schools to help offset the impacts of poverty on student achievement.² MCPS also allocates additional staffing for its special education programs.³

Research on narrowing the achievement gap suggests that equalizing funding, reducing class sizes, enhancing teacher quality, and improving the curriculum and use of instructional interventions may help narrow the gap.⁴ Research also shows that schools that tend to fall on the wrong side of the achievement gap (i.e., high-poverty schools) often have fewer resources to address the impact of poverty on student achievement, including more inexperienced teachers and higher staff turnover.

In recent conversations between the County Council and MCPS representatives, the question of whether differences in school staffing and experience contribute to gaps in performance between high- and low-poverty schools has been raised. A related question is whether MCPS invests more resources in high-poverty high schools than low-poverty ones to address student need.⁵

To help improve the Council's understanding and oversight of how MCPS funds schools to help narrow the achievement gap, this project will describe trends in resources and staffing among MCPS' high- and low-poverty schools. Further, OLO will compile data describing the costs of MCPS' general education programs to enable meaningful comparisons among schools that are not biased by the additional cost and staffing associated with specialized programs (e.g., special education, ESOL, and signature programs). Metrics to be reviewed and analyzed by OLO may include:

- Per pupil expenditures by grade span
- Per pupil salary costs
- Class sizes
- School size
- School capacity/overcrowding
- Professional positions per student
- Teacher experience and turnover
- Administrator experience and turnover
- Instructional interventions

¹ http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/FY15_RecommendedOperatingBudget.pdf

² See <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/leadingforequity/pdf/HarvardCase-DifferentiatedTreatment.pdf> or pages 61-69 of OLO Report 2007-5 <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/2007-5.pdf>

³ http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/budget/fy2015/FY15_RecommendedOperatingBudget.pdf

⁴ See description of the Opportunity Gap and references to Barton and Coley (2009) and Darling-Hammond (2010) in OLO Report 2013-4 at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/resources/files/oloreport2013-4.pdf>

⁵ See <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/Letter-to-Councilmember-Branson-5.1.14.pdf>

PROJECT #18
MEMO ASSIGNMENTS AS NEEDED

Principal Agencies: All

In order to better meet the needs of Councilmembers, OLO will leave space on its work program to conduct small scale research reports. Upon the request of Councilmembers and the approval of the Council President, OLO will, on an as-needed basis, add assignments to its Work Program that are smaller in scale than typical OLO assignments. These reports will be published in a memo format and address topics that arise over the course of the year.

One of OLO's FY15 priorities is to provide more flexibility in its ability to take on and complete research assignments that arise over the course of the year. Projects that are added to the Work Program under Project #18 will be released in the same manner as past OLO projects but will not necessarily be referred to a committee for discussion. They will be research based and require only minimal interaction with staff of other government agencies.

Three of these projects that OLO will undertake during FY15 have already been assigned:

1. To organize resources to better address the education and employment challenges facing County youth, the Ready for Tomorrow: Education and Workforce Summit was convened on October 18, 2014. The summit brought together community members, non-profits, the business community, and policymakers to make recommendations for addressing the achievement gap and preparing the workforce for tomorrow. To capture key lessons learned from the Summit, OLO will draft a proceedings document with the intent that it serve as a potential blueprint for coordinating future efforts.
2. In many jurisdictions, an Inspector General or similar type of entity examines relevant issues that arise in the local school system. Councilmembers want to know which jurisdictions employ an Inspector General or similar type of entity to examine school system-related issues and the experiences of these jurisdictions.
3. An economic impact statement estimates the costs and benefits to private organizations and individuals in the County attributable to a legislative action (see County Code, Sec. 2-81B). In order to support the Council's review of economic impact statements, OLO will compile questions that should be answered by the Executive when submitting economic impact statements. OLO expects this will include different questions for different classes of legislation (e.g., public health and safety, environmental protection, contracting) in order to help clarify how enactment of a bill could affect employment, business retention, private investment, income levels, property values and other economic conditions in the County. OLO staff will confer with Council central staff to develop these questions.