

OLO Memorandum Report 2015-14

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To: County Council

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Office of Legislative Oversight

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

An estimated 127,000 (80%) of Montgomery County children ages 6 to 17 participate in out-of-school time activities, including 62% of middle school students who participate in extracurricular activities at school.¹ Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB), a collaborative effort of the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families (Collaboration Council), the Montgomery County Department of Recreation (Recreation) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), has provided out-of-school time activities for MCPS middle school students since FY12. In FY15, EBB served 1,750 students at seven mid-low and mid-high poverty schools.

Authority, Scope and Organization. This report responds to the Council's interest in exploring the intended impact of County social service programs on student achievement and the achievement gap, the types of student outcomes that are monitored, and the resources needed to expand programs to at-risk students. The Council requested this report in the Office of Legislative Oversight's FY14 Work Program, adopted via Council Resolution 17-830.

This memorandum report has four parts. Part I summarizes research about out-of-school time activities and after school programs. Part II describes EBB and presents program data. Part III provides data about MCPS schools' poverty and performance at the middle school level and Part IV presents findings. In sum:

- Nationally, youth average about five hours a week in organized activities. Between 10% and 20% of children participate in after school programs. Although the variety of after school program models complicates program evaluation, some programs have limited but meaningful impacts on students' academic outcomes.
- Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) served 1,750 students in FY15, including 1,400 students at six mid-high poverty schools, i.e. schools with poverty rates of 50% to 75%. The average EBB enrollee attended two days a week and received five hours of organized activities plus meals and transportation. A FY14 survey, with a 35% response rate, showed 74% of respondents agreed EBB helped improve academic attitudes and behaviors.
- Since 2004, MCPS' middle school poverty rate grew from 24% to 33%. In 2014, 42% of Hispanic students and 35% of Black students attended a mid-high poverty school. The 2014 Grade 8 Reading MSA test results show the proficiency rate of students eligible for FARMS at mid-high poverty schools was 69% compared to 84% for students not eligible for FARMS. Districtwide, the comparable rates were 70% and 91%.

¹ The 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates there are 158,230 County children ages 6 to 17. The estimate for middle school student participation is from the 2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey cited in the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children Youth and Families' 2015 Children Agenda's Databook.

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I. Out-of-School Time in the United States

This part provides background information about out-of-school time organized activities, provides a review of evaluation research and presents three case studies of after school programs.

A. Out-of-School Time and Organized Activities as Development Contexts

Discretionary activities outside of the school day, or out-of-school time activities, account for 40 to 50 percent of a school child's waking hours. Activities can include passive leisure time such as watching television or playing video games, extracurricular activities such as participating in clubs or sports teams or educational activities such as tutoring or civic or religious activities. Activities can be organized or unstructured. As defined by development experts, organized activities have the following characteristics:

Structure, adult supervision, and an emphasis on skill building; they are generally voluntary, have regularly and scheduled meetings, maintain developmentally based expectations and rules for participants in the activity setting, involve several participants, offer supervision and guidance from adults, and are organized around developing particular skills and achieving goals. These activities are often characterized by challenge and complexity that increase as participants' abilities develop.²

In the United States, approximately 80% of children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 17 participate in organized activities outside of the school day.³ Children's participation rates vary by ethnicity and income. By race, rates are lower for Hispanic (70%) and Black (76%) children compared to White (86%) children. By income, rates range from 61% for children in families with household incomes below the federal poverty level to 94% for those with household incomes above 400% of the federal poverty level.

² "Organized Activities as Developmental Contexts for Children and Adolescents," Joseph L. Mahoney et. al. *Organized Activities as Contexts of Development: Extracurricular Activities, After School and Community Programs*, edited by JL. Mahoney, RW Larson & JS Eccles, 2009, p. 4, Retrieved 7/15/15 from www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/garp/articles/mahoney05.pdf

³ "Indicator 5.3: Participation in organized activities outside school, age 6-17 years," National Survey of Children's Health. NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved 6/24/2014 from <
<http://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=2518&r=1>>

A consensus exists that these activities can be a source of positive influence for children and adolescents. For example, in a research study of youth participation in organized activities, Mahoney and Vest state:

Over the past three decades, it has become evident that organized activities, such as extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs, are important contexts of development for adolescent's physical, psychosocial, cognitive, and educational functioning. On balance evidence suggests that participation in organized activities is linked to both relatively low rates of problem behaviors and high levels of positive adjustment (e.g., Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). Coupled with the adult supervision and safety typically provided in organized activity settings, the research has provided a basis for supporting increases in local, state, and federal investments in the provision of organized activities (e.g., Mahoney, Parente, & Zigler, 2009).⁴

In a 2006 article, Mahoney, Harris and Eccles reported findings from a review of a national sample of children and adolescents' time diaries. Their research coded information from the diaries into eight classes of activity to determine how children spend their free time and to address concerns about the effects of over-scheduling or lack of participation in organized activities.⁵ They reported that, on average, youth spent about five hours per week in organized activities which was about the same amount of time they spent on out-of-school educational activities. Compared to other activities, youth spent less time performing household chores and hanging out but more time playing games and watching television.⁶

Exhibit 1 (on the next page) displays a list of eight key contextual features proven to promote positive development. Mahoney reports this list was developed by scholars appointed by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine who looked at the development research across various contexts including families and schools. The features are expected to evolve, but for now the list reflects current thinking about characteristics of organized activities that create positive contexts for youth development.⁷

Formal after school programs, which are the focus of this report, are a subset of organized activities. They typically operate throughout the academic year on a regular basis, offer more than one type of activity, and engage with participants in groups. Formal after school programs generally seek to promote additional learning and development outside of school, but specific program goals can vary widely. Some programs aim to support participants' academic learning while others aim to offer structured recreational or academic enrichment activities focused on promoting social and emotional development and engagement. Providing a supervised, safe, stable environment is another central purpose for many programs.

⁴ "The Overscheduling Hypothesis Revisited: Intensity of Organized Activity Participation During Adolescence and Young Adult Outcomes," Joseph L. Mahoney and Andrea E. Vest, *J Res Adolesc.* 2012 September 1; 22(3): 409–418. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00808.x.

⁵ "Organized Activity Participation, positive youth development and the over-scheduling hypothesis. Society for Research in Child Development. Social Policy Report. 2006. The eight classes of activities were: organized activities; educational activities; household chores; TV; hanging out; playing games; attending class and personal care.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁷ "Organized Activities as Developmental Contexts for Children and Adolescents," p. 11.

Exhibit 1. Features of Contexts That Promote Positive Development

1. **Physical and psychological safety.** The context provides secure and health-promoting facilities and practices, allows for safe and appropriate peer interactions, and discourages unsafe health practices and negative or confrontational social interchanges.
2. **Appropriate structure.** The context provides clear, appropriate, and consistent rules and expectations, adult supervision, guidance, and age-appropriate monitoring in a predictable social atmosphere where clear boundaries are known and respected.
3. **Supportive relationships.** The context offers stable opportunities to form relationships with peers and adults wherein social interchanges are characterized by warmth, closeness, caring and mutual respect, and where guidance and support from adults is available, appropriate and predictable.
4. **Opportunities for belonging.** The context emphasizes the inclusion of all members and maintains a social environment that recognizes, appreciates, and encourages individual differences in cultural values, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
5. **Positive social norms.** The context maintains expectations and requirements for socially appropriate behavior and encourages desirable and accepted values and morals.
6. **Support for efficacy and mattering.** The context allows for and supports autonomy, values individual expression and opinions, concentrates on growth and improvement rather than absolute performance, encourages and enables individuals to take on challenging responsibilities and to carry out actions aimed at making a difference.
7. **Opportunity for skill building.** The context offers opportunities to learn and build physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social skills that facilitate well-being in the present and prepare individuals for health and competent functioning in the future.
8. **Integration of family, school and community efforts.** The context provides opportunities for synergistic experiences that integrate transactions across family, school and community.

Source: From the Findings of the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Cited in "Organized Activities as Development Contexts for Children and Adolescents."

B. Evaluation Research on After School Programs

This section reviews the evaluation research literature for after school programs. Studying the impact of after school programs is challenging for a number of reasons. First, after school programs vary in their structure, nature of programming offered, and targeted populations. As a result, the impacts of after school programs are likely to vary as well. Second, since students may participate in multiple out-of-school time activities, e.g., music lessons, in addition to or instead of an after school program, it is difficult to isolate specific program impacts. Finally, designing a study that compares participating students with truly similar non-participating students is usually not possible, further limiting researchers' ability to accurately measure the impact of specific programs.

A review of the evaluation research finds only a few studies address after school program participation by income and race; and, evidence about whether participation varies by income is mixed. Research studies find minority children are less likely than white children to participate in out-of-school time activities generally; and program affordability, transportation and other obligations are factors that limit access.

The research identifies staff quality, intentional programming and active learning as characteristics of programs that yield positive outcomes. It suggests after school programs have the potential to improve academic performance and social and developmental outcomes, prevent risky behaviors such as drug use and criminal activity, and contribute to healthy lifestyles.⁸ Finally, research from a 2009 study found that high-quality after school programs for middle school students that ran for four hours a day had an average annual per enrollee cost of \$2,640.

1. Participant Demographics, Program Access and Participation Levels

Researchers estimate that 10-20% of all school-aged children participate in after school programs (not including other out-of-school-time activities). The racial and socioeconomic demographics of after school program participants provide an important context for assessing the appropriate role of these programs in addressing relevant policy issues, such as the achievement gap. This section describes how participation rates vary among income groups and by race, examines evidence on the underlying factors that influence program access for low-income and minority students and addresses the link between participation and positive outcomes.

Participation by income. A few studies have found that low-income youth are less likely to participate in after school programs than high income youth, although the evidence is mixed. For example, one study found that 20% of children from the top fifth of families with the highest incomes participated in after school programs, compared with 13% of children from the bottom fifth of families with the lowest incomes. Similarly, a different study found that low-income students were underrepresented among program participants of 20 high-quality after school programs. However, another study found no significant differences in participation rates based on income.⁹

Participation by race. A limited number of studies of the race and ethnicity of after school program participants indicate that African American youth may be more likely to participate than white youth. One study estimates that 26% of African-American children and adolescents participate in after school programs compared with 13% of white youth and 12% of Latino youth. However, African-American and Latino youth are both less likely than white youth to participate in out-of-school-time activities more generally.¹⁰

⁸ "After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What It Takes to Achieve It," *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation: Issue Brief No. 10*, Harvard Family Research Project, February 2008.

⁹ Gardner, M., Roth, J. L., and Brooks-Gunn, J., "Can After-School Programs Help Level the Playing Field for Disadvantaged Youth?" *Equity Matters: Research Review No. 4*, October 2009, p. 11, Retrieved 6/24/2014 from http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/11242_after-school_report_10-7-09_web.pdf >

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 11-12 and Wimer, C., Bouffard, S.M., Caronogan, P., Dearing, E., Simpkins, S., Little, P.M.D., & Weiss, H., "What Are Kids Getting Into These Days? Demographic Differences in Youth Out-Of-School Time Participation," Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, Harvard Family Research Project, pp. 10-11, and "Indicator 5.3: Participation in organized activities outside school, age 6-17 years," National Survey of Children's Health. NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved 6/24/2014 from < <http://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=2518&r=1&g=456> >

Factors influencing program access. Studies have found evidence of several reasons for lower participation rates of low-income and minority youth in after school programs and other out-of-school time activities, including: program affordability; access to transportation; and competing obligations such as sibling care and employment (for older adolescents). For example, 46% of nonparticipants 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.

On the other hand, evidence of higher participation rates of African American youth compared with white youth in after school programs may be explained by the fact that many programs target minority youth specifically. Little is known about the role of personal preferences and attitudes toward school in after school program participation for low-income and minority youth.¹¹

Levels of participation required for positive outcomes. Students' participation in after school programs can vary in frequency, duration and breadth: a student may attend for only a few days during a semester or several days per week, for one semester or several years, and for one type of activity or several. In evaluating the outcomes of after school programs, most studies consider only whether a student participated or not, rather than examining the amount or type of participation. Findings from studies that do examine the role of levels of participation are mixed and include the following:

- Some studies have found that elementary school-aged children who attend after school programs frequently over several years are more likely to experience academic gains than other children;
- Studies have found that adolescents who attend programs frequently and/or for long durations are more likely to earn higher grades compared with other adolescents, and that attendance for long durations may influence progression in school and graduation rates positively; and
- Limited studies have found that attending programs more frequently during a given year or attending programs frequently for a long duration can have positive impacts on school attendance for children and adolescents.¹²

2. Program Characteristics and Outcomes

The evaluation literature identifies several program characteristics associated with positive outcomes:

- *Program staff quality:* Participants are more likely to benefit from programs when they develop supportive relationships with staff. This requires that staff have the capacity to engage in positive and quality interactions with youth.¹³
- *Focused and intentional programming:* After school programs achieve better outcomes when activities are designed explicitly to target specific outcomes and when more time is spent on structured skill-building than on unstructured recreation time.¹⁴

¹¹ Gardner, M. et. al., pp. 13-15 and Wimer, C., et. al., p. 15

¹² Gardner, M. et. al., pp. 21-22

¹³ "After School Programs in the 21st Century," p. 7

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8 and Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., "A Meta-Analysis of After School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(2010), p. 296

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- *Active learning:* Hands-on, active learning, which allows participants to practice new skills and behaviors, has been identified as a common feature of those after school programs that achieved positive outcomes.¹⁵
- *Combining academic components with social skills building:* Including academic components as well as social or personal skill-building was associated with positive academic outcomes.¹⁶
- *Partnerships with families, schools and communities:* Some studies have shown that effective collaboration with families, schools and the community also promotes positive outcomes.¹⁷

Research on Positive Outcomes. Researchers have found mixed evidence that after school programs can generate the following positive outcomes:

- *Academic improvement:* After school programs can have meaningful impacts on standardized test scores, academic performance, academically-related attitudes and beliefs, and school attendance; however, not all programs have significant effects on these measures.
- *Social and emotional development:* Some after school programs have been found to improve participants' self-esteem and assertiveness as well as decrease depression and anxiety.
- *Prevention of risky behaviors:* Studies have found evidence of after school programs reducing pregnancies, teen sex, drug use and juvenile crime.
- *Contribute to healthy lifestyles:* Certain after school programs were shown to reduce obesity and increase fitness and knowledge about healthy lifestyles among program participants.¹⁸

Magnitude of academic outcomes and impact on the achievement gap. A 2009 review of the evaluation research literature found that the average impact of after school programs on academic outcomes can be limited but meaningful and "on par with those of other remedial education interventions," such as summer school and Title 1 programs. The review notes uneven impacts given the variation among programs:

Taken together, the research seems to suggest that while the effects of successful after-school programs on academic outcomes may be small, they are meaningful nonetheless. It is, however, important to consider that not all after-school programs offer equal academic benefits for all youth. Although positive effects emerge, on average... the majority of studies... did not find that program participants showed higher academic performance than nonparticipants.¹⁹

¹⁵ "After School Programs in the 21st Century," p. 3 and, Durlak, J., et. al., p. 296

¹⁶ "After School Programs in the 21st Century," p. 3 and Gardner, M. et. al., p. 20

¹⁷ "After School Programs in the 21st Century," pp. 8-9

¹⁸ "After School Programs in the 21st Century," pp. 2-5, and Gardner, M. et. al., pp. 17-19

¹⁹ Gardner, M. et. al., p. 19

Additionally, the authors developed a rough estimate of the potential impact of expanding after school programs to 100% of youth living below the poverty line on the achievement gap, emphasizing that such a major expansion is not practically realistic. They found that this expansion would result in only 2% decreases in the Black-white and Hispanic-white achievement gaps in reading and between 4% and 5% decreases in the achievement gaps in math. In conclusion, they noted, “Our review suggests that after-school programs may have positive and meaningful effects on youths’ academic outcomes, but after-school programs are best viewed as part of a multi-faceted approach toward closing the achievement gap.”²⁰

3. Characteristics and Cost to Deliver “High-Quality” Programs

While the costs of individual after school programs vary depending on many factors, a 2009 report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation attempted to quantify in general terms the full costs of high-quality after school programs, including costs covered by in-kind donations.²¹

To arrive at their estimates, researchers examined 111 programs for children and adolescents in six cities that were all considered to be “high-quality.” Some programs ran year-round, while others operated only during the school year. On average, programs ran for almost four hours per day and 150-180 days during the school year, and for between six and nine hours per day and 35-44 days during the summer, depending on the age groups of students served. Only programs meeting minimum standards for participation rates, staff-to-youth ratios and years of operation were included. The table below lists selected program characteristics.

Table 1. Characteristics of 111 High-Quality After School Programs

Average	Programs Serving	
	Elementary/Middle School Students	Teens
Staff/Youth Ratio (school-year)	1 to 8.3	1 to 9.3
% Participants that attended all of the time	79%	64%
% Staff with college degree	67%	84%
% Staff who are teachers or certified specialists	24%	31%
Hours of training staff received per year	28.4	32.70

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, p. 11

The study characterized the estimates it produced as full cost estimates because they counted both out-of-pocket expenditures and the value of in-kind donations such as space. The study noted that out-of-school time programs typically rely on three to five sources of funding. Donated resources, which can include services, equipment and space, on average, account for 20% of program resources.

²⁰ Gardner, M. et. al., p. 27

²¹ Grossman, J. B., Lind, C., Hayes, C., Maken, J., and Gersick, A., “The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs,” The Wallace Foundation, January 2009.

The table below lists average annual costs per slot and per enrollee as well as median annual and daily costs per slot for programs examined in the report. Average costs per slot exceed average costs per enrollee because there were multiple enrollees per slot since not all enrollees attended every day. These figures suggest an annual cost of about \$4 million for every 1,000 slots or \$4,000 per slot.

Table 2. Average and Median Full Costs of High-Quality After School / Out-of-School-Time Programs

Programs Serving	Average annual cost		Median annual cost per slot	Median daily cost per slot
	Per slot	Per enrollee		
Elementary/Middle School Students				
School-year	\$4,320	\$2,640	\$3,780	\$21
Summer of year-round program	\$1,330	\$1,000	\$1,270	\$28
Teens				
School-year	\$4,580	\$1,880	\$3,450	\$22
Summer of year-round program	\$1,420	\$790	\$1,150	\$36

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

C. Three After School Program Case Studies

OLO examined three case studies to better understand how other communities have implemented and structured after school programs or city or countywide after school systems. OLO selected these case studies to illustrate collaborative efforts with community organizations, the use of quality assessment measures and programs that serve middle school students. The first case study examines an after school program at a New York City school; the second looks at the implementation of a quality improvement system for after school programs in Austin, Texas; and the third describes a city-wide after school initiative in Providence, Rhode Island.

Captain Manuel Rivera Junior School (PS/MS 279), New York City.²² In 1998, The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF) received funding from The After School Corporation (TASC) to develop an after school program at Captain Manuel Rivera Junior School, PS/MS 279. PS/MS 279 is a K-8 school located in the Bronx, and CHCF is a local community organization that had worked with the school in the past and submitted an initial funding proposal to TASC. Programming includes homework help, academic clubs, arts activities and community service.

CHCF's after school coordinator manages approximately 30 CHCF staff members, organizes training opportunities for staff, and works closely with the school principal and staff. The coordinator also sits on the school cabinet, which is the decision-making body for the school. Classroom teachers assist with curriculum development for academic support classes on a volunteer basis, and other volunteers including paraprofessionals, college students, high school students and parents assist with various other aspects of

²² *Making the Most of After-School Time: Ten Case Studies of School-Based After School Programs*. National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2005, pp. 49-58, retrieved 6/24/2014 from < http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/A_New_Day_for_Learning_Resources/Building_and_Sustaining_Partnerships/Making_the_Most_of_After-School_Time.pdf >

the program. One challenge faced by CHCF is a difficulty in recruiting licensed teachers and workers with four-year degrees to the program staff.

Students are placed in small groups led by adult leaders. For four days per week, the groups begin with homework help and then continue with other activities, while on Fridays the focus is on clubs and activities. TASC sponsors a variety of academic clubs that aim to make math, reading and other academic subjects fun – for example by reading and writing sports-related articles. CHCF also provides an arts program that includes theater, dance and choir. Performances and other events throughout the year provide participants with the opportunity to show off their skills to friends and parents. Community service activities include food drives and trips to nursing homes and hospitals.

As a TASC site, the after school program at PS/MS 279 receives guidance from TASC on program management, and staff attend training provided by TASC. TASC also requires CHCF to submit quarterly reports, and a TASC program officer visits the school twice a year to assess the program.

Ready by 21 Coalition for Austin/Travis County, Austin, Texas and Quality Counts.²³ The Ready by 21 Coalition for Austin/Travis County was founded in 2003 to advance collaboration on services for children and families among nonprofits, government agencies and the broader community, using tools provided by the national Ready by 21 initiative of the Forum for Youth Investment. In 2007, a local coalition of youth service providers, educators, government agencies and community members created a quality committee and applied to participate in the Ready by 21 Quality Counts initiative, which helps communities build or enhance their quality improvement systems (QIS) for after school programs.

The committee agreed to use the Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA) of the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. This is a research-based assessment tool that measures the extent to which after school programs offer youths access to specific developmental experiences. The committee also later adopted the full Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), which links training and coaching to the Youth PQA. United Way for Greater Austin became the lead intermediary for the QIS, which was initially implemented among local programs funded by United Way and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

The committee emphasized that the aim of the QIS was not to “endorse” certain programs over others, but rather to promote continuous improvement among all programs. To engage more programs in the QIS, the coalition encouraged participation during networking events and offered YPQI youth worker skills workshops to demonstrate how the QIS helped with capacity-building, rather than just functioning as an assessment.

In 2008, 22 programs signed on to the QIS, each agreeing to identify one staff member to conduct a self-assessment of the program, act as an external assessor for other programs, and participate in a Planning

²³ Yohalem, N., Devaney, E., Smith, C., and Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., *Building Citywide Systems for Quality: A Guide and Case Studies for Afterschool Leaders*, The Forum for Youth Investment, October 2012, pp. 50-58, retrieved 6/24/2014 from <<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Documents/Building-Citywide-Systems-for-Quality-A-Guide-and-Case-Studies-for-Afterschool-Leaders.pdf>>

With Data workshop to learn to interpret and use assessment data. The elements of the continuous improvement cycle for each program are as follows:

- Conducting a baseline Youth PQA self-assessment or external assessment
- Participation of a manager in the Youth PQA Planning With Data training
- Development of a quality improvement plan using data from baseline assessment
- Program staff participation in YPQI trainings aligned with areas identified for improvement
- Conducting a second assessment to measure improvement

By the end of the first year, all 22 programs remained engaged with the process. Since then, the coalition has worked to strengthen and expand the QIS. Changes have included ensuring that programs send staff with decision-making authority to the Planning With Data training, establishing two windows of time during the year available for programs to request external assessments (to facilitate scheduling), and developing QIS agreements at the program level rather than the funder or parent organization level. Additionally, in 2010 United Way began requiring a self-assessment prior to applying for funding, and participation in the QIS after receiving funding. As of 2011, over 50 organizations had participated in the QIS, 460 individuals had received training and 30 trained assessors were available to conduct external assessments.

AfterZones, Providence, Rhode Island.²⁴ In 2003, the Wallace Foundation provided a five-year, \$5 million grant towards a collaborative effort in Providence, Rhode Island to improve coordination of out-of-school time activities. At the time, no city agency was involved in the provision or oversight of out-of-school time activities in Providence. Existing programming providers included the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and local sports leagues and church groups; most programs were funded by private foundations or user fees.

The initial planning process found that existing after school providers lacked a common definition of quality, that funding was not sufficient to meet programmatic needs, and that there was a lack of programming for middle school youth in particular, even though data showed significant drops in student achievement for this age group. The Mayor of Providence created the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), which was placed within an existing nonprofit but ultimately became an independent organization, to act as the intermediary for the coordination of after school programming in the city.

PASA created AfterZones, each of which coordinates the provision of after school activities within a middle school and its surrounding community facilities such as libraries, parks and community centers. Each AfterZone has a manager, a site supervisor and a coordinating council. Individual providers apply to run programs in the AfterZones. The school system provides space, transportation home and assists with recruitment by providing time during the day for recruitment fairs. Funding for AfterZones has been provided through the city, Federal grants, and private foundations.

Programming was initially selected primarily to attract interest from youth, but after two years PASA began to work to align programming with school curricula. PASA provided training to programming providers in the areas of literacy, arts, science and health and established Club AfterZone, an hour of programming focused on homework help and academic enrichment. PASA also coordinated closely with Supplemental

²⁴ Kotloff, L. J., Korom-Djakovic, D., *Afterzones: Creating a Citywide System to Support and Sustain High-Quality After-School Programs*, Public/Private Ventures, 2010, retrieved 6/24/2014 from < <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/coordinating-after-school-resources/Documents/Afterzones-Creating-Citywide-System-to-Support-and-Sustain-High-Quality-After-School-Programs.pdf> >

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Education Services (SES), an entity that also provides after school programming, such as test preparation. PASA ensured that SES students do not enroll in conflicting SES programs and provides transportation home for SES students.

PASA has worked with stakeholders to develop quality standards and an assessment process for continuous improvement. PASA decided to use the Weikart Center's Youth PQA tool for the assessment of service delivery combined with its own checklist for assessing administrative practices, staffing and professional development; this hybrid tool is called the Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment (RIPQA). Feedback on the RIPQA has been positive: stakeholders have compared it favorably against previous assessment processes and have found that it promotes quality improvement effectively.

After PASA piloted the RIPQA among AfterZone providers, the RIPQA has been used by providers across the state of Rhode Island, including the state's 21st Century Community Learning Centers. By participating in the RIPQA and fulfilling some additional requirements, any provider in the state can be endorsed by PASA. Additionally, during the implementation period, PASA decided to align its professional development offerings with the RIPQA in order to ensure that trainings more closely reflected its established program standards.

Finally, PASA acquired a management information system called YouthServices.net to manage data on enrollment, attendance, participant demographics, and program schedules. The system has primarily been used to track enrollment and attendance and manage student transportation by providing drop-off lists for bus drivers. Additionally, the system's reporting functions have been used to provide data to funders, including information on how many participants attended regularly. One challenge faced by providers is that some already had similar systems in place or have different information management requirements (for example, to manage fee payments), and therefore must now use multiple information systems.

A 2010 review of the AfterZones program found that most programs achieved high scores in the RIPQA assessment, which measures the quality of adult support and adult and peer interactions, the physical and emotional safety of the environment, and opportunities for youth to plan and make choices. The last area, opportunities to plan and make choices, received relatively lower scores than other areas. A 2011 evaluation of AfterZones outcomes found that, on average, participants only attended Afterzones for 25 days annually. Even so, AfterZones participation over two years reduced absences from school and improved grades in math classes. More research is necessary to determine whether improvements persist in the long term.

II. Excel Beyond the Bell

Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) was launched in 2008 as a joint initiative of the Montgomery County Recreation Department ("Recreation"), the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families (Collaboration Council) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The mission of EBB 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."²⁵

²⁵ *Excel Beyond the Bell Action Agenda*, Adopted October 22, 2008, retrieved on 7/1/2014 from <
<http://excelbeyondthebell.org/pdf/EBBActionAgenda.pdf> >

Since 2008, EBB has worked toward its mission through activities in the areas of communications and advocacy, quality standards and professional development for youth development practitioners, financing and resources, and data and accountability. In 2011, EBB began its “middle school pilot,” which provides after school recreational and social programming at select middle schools. Currently, EBB’s primary areas of focus are professional development for youth development practitioners and the middle school pilot. This part summarizes EBB’s services and outcomes, and is organized as follows:

- **Section A** provides background on the history of EBB;
- **Section B** describes current EBB services;
- **Section C** examines EBB’s FY12-14 funding (from all sources) and expenditures;
- **Section D** describes data on EBB program participants; and
- **Section E** summarizes available EBB outcome data.

A. Background on Excel Beyond the Bell

In 2007, the Collaboration Council and the Montgomery County Out-of-School Time System-Building Task Force issued a report, funded by the Governor’s Office for Children and prepared by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at Wellesley College, that assessed out-of-school time needs and the status of the existing out-of-school time system in the county. The Task Force included 31 stakeholders from the public, nonprofit and private sectors with, “an active interest in increasing the capacity and quality of after school programs.”²⁶

The overview to the Task Force report, *Status of Out-of-School Time in Montgomery County, Maryland*, highlighted the County’s growing diversity as one of its greatest strengths and greatest challenges, cited concerns about crime and violence and called for an after school program infrastructure in response. It stated:

In parts of Germantown, Takoma Park, Silver Spring and Gaithersburg, concern over gangs and crime has increased. Violence among our youth is growing in many areas of the county. Change is all around us. Whether this change becomes an epidemic of risky behaviors, juvenile crime and academic failure or of positive developing and engaged youth prepared for adulthood is dependent upon, in Gladwell’s words, how and in what places we push. The demonstrated promise of high quality after school programs supported by a sustained infrastructure of standards, funding and accountability can be the tipping point that brings an epidemic of academic, social, emotional and physical well-being for all of our youth.²⁷

The Task Force report presented the results of three different surveys, including a survey of 1,043 County parents. Roughly half (54%) of the respondents from the parent survey had children in middle school. Among the middle school parents, 29% reported that their children participated in after school activities: 19% participated in school activities and 10% participated in community activities.²⁸

²⁶ *Status of Out-of-School Time in Montgomery County, Maryland*, Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families and the Montgomery County Out-of-School Time System-Building Task Force, January 4, 2007, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

²⁸ Among high school youth, 43% participated in afterschool activities, include 37% at school and 6% outside of school. P. 18.

The Task Force report described a vision for a countywide system of “affordable and high quality” after school activities. NIOST, writing on behalf of the Task Force, addressed four focus areas:

- **Demand and Capacity:** Information about supply and demand is critical to building an effective and sustainable system. Some of the key issues to be addressed included the lack of a centralized database, a lack of coordination between school and community programs and a need for community level assessments to direct program placement.
- **Program Standards:** Standards can drive program quality. Issues to be addressed in this area included the lack of universal standards to measure health and safety and program quality; only certain after school programs must be state-licensed as school-aged childcare, usually at the elementary school level.
- **Professional Development:** A high quality system of out-of-school-time activities must have staff who are well trained and well compensated. The workgroup reported that inconsistencies exist between the amount of professional development activities available for licensed childcare providers compared with non-licensed after school workers and the lack of an accountability structure for non-licensed programs.
- **Finance and Resources:** Expanded programming depends on having adequate and appropriate program space in school and community settings. The workgroup reported that funding is fragmented and not well targeted, and after school providers reported being at full capacity and under-funded.

The report called for the creation of a “governance and financing entity that will oversee policy development and interagency agreements and accountability.”²⁹ In FY08, the County Government provided funding to develop a framework for an out-of-school time system in the County, and Excel Beyond the Bell became the brand for the system. In May 2008, Montgomery County held the first Excel Beyond the Bell Symposium to launch EBB and to bring together stakeholders to discuss goals and strategies.

The Collaboration Council was designated as the intermediary for the EBB partnership group of about 20 public and private agencies, public officials, foundations, businesses and parents. The EBB Action Agenda, adopted in October 2008, established the EBB mission and four overarching goals:

Goal One: Montgomery County residents of all generations will understand and support the value of out-of-school programs in preparing children and youth for positive futures that help sustain the local quality of life.

Goal Two: Out-of-school programs will be safe, developmentally appropriate and well run; all people who work with children and youth will be skilled in engaging them and supporting their intellectual, social-emotional and physical development.

Goal Three: An intentional mix of public and private funding and resources will create and sustain accessible, high quality programs.

Goal Four: Data that describes need and demand for programs, their availability, and their impact on youth will be available to guide decision-making.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 11

A follow-up June 2010 report prepared by NIOST documented EBB's progress. Accomplishments included increased awareness among policymakers regarding the value of out-of-school time programs, the launch of Advancing Youth Development training, a 30-hour training curriculum developed the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work, and the use of the Efforts to Outcomes software system by out-of-school time programs funded by the Collaboration Council to track participant demographics and attendance.³⁰

In 2011, EBB launched the middle school pilot in three middle schools as an interagency initiative of Recreation, the Collaboration Council and MCPS. The aim was to develop, "the most comprehensive out-of-school programming model in the County with the expectation it can be taken to scale and replicated in other County Middle Schools."³¹

The EBB Theory of Change, developed in 2010, maps the components of EBB which align with the four focus areas discussed earlier. It envisions these components coming together to promote increased participation, program variety and funding and better resource allocation. In turn, these outcomes will help realize the Collaboration Council's Children Agenda by generating a wide array of quality EBB programs that are accessible and available in every community; and large percentages of youth who consistently participate in quality, effective EBB programs.

B. Current Excel Beyond the Bell Services

EBB provides services in two primary areas: (1) professional development for youth workers and (2) the middle school pilot, which has delivered after school programming in select middle schools since 2011. Recreation, the Collaboration Council and MCPS jointly manage EBB; both Recreation and the Collaboration Council also contract with providers that deliver training and programming.

1. EBB professional development for youth workers and program quality assessment

Collaboration Council staff report that while the State has established clear professional development standards and certification requirements for child care workers, no similar framework exists at the State level for professionals who work with youth aged 12 and over. Since 2008, EBB has provided training for well over 1,000 youth workers in the county and worked to develop standards for youth worker professional development. More broadly, EBB has rolled out a framework for assessing overall program quality.

Training. Advancing Youth Development (AYD) is a 30-hour certificate program developed by the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work and functions as a foundational course for youth workers. The Collaboration Council has provided this program to over 350 professionals since FY08.

³⁰ Gannett, E. and Starr, B., *Update on the Status of Out-of-School Time in Montgomery County*, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Wellesley College, June 2010.

³¹ "Montgomery County Excel Beyond the Bell: Programming Overview", retrieved on 7/1/2014 from <
<http://excelbeyondthebell.org/EBBprogrammingoverview.pdf> >

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Currently, the Collaboration Council requires its contract providers who deliver programming for the middle school pilot to ensure that front-line staff have completed the AYD program. The Collaboration Council also requires that providers attend various trainings related to the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) model, which is a program quality assessment process (see below).

The Recreation Department does not currently require its contract providers to attend trainings, however, all 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. Unlike the Collaboration Council, Recreation does not have funding to pay contractors to pay their staff to attend training. The Recreation Department in partnership with the Collaboration Council offers a variety of trainings at no cost to contract providers.

Trainings are offered via the Collaboration Council, and funding has been provided by the County Government, the Governor's Office for Children and private foundations. The Collaboration Council holds an EBB symposium annually. Examples of professional development opportunities provided through EBB for youth development practitioners include:

- The Working with Immigrant Youth Symposium, held in 2009;
- Paid Internships for high school students at middle school sites through TeenWorks, Montgomery County Recreation's comprehensive workforce development initiative;
- Scholarships funded by the Howard and Geraldine Polinger Foundation to enroll in the Introduction to Youth Development course at Montgomery College offered in 2014³² and
- The 2014 Symposium "Supporting and Building of Youth Social Emotional Learning:"

Professional development standards. In October 2013, EBB released the first edition of its "Core Competencies for Youth Development Practitioners," which defines sets of knowledge, skills and abilities considered necessary for youth development work at the entry, intermediate and advanced/administrative levels. This document aims to serve a similar purpose to the Maryland Child Care Credential Program's "Core of Knowledge," which defines the theories and practices essential for child care professionals.

EBB's core competencies are based on several sources including the Advancing Youth Development Manual, the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Program Quality Standards Framework and the National School After School Association/National Institute of Out of School Time (NIOST) documents. EBB's core competencies are organized into four domain areas:

- 1) Youth development practitioners as resources to youth:** includes criteria in the areas of safety, health, program design, and program activities.
- 2) Youth development practitioners as partners with families:** includes competencies to engage and support families of program participants.
- 3) Youth development practitioners as partners with schools and communities:** includes skills for building reciprocal relationships with schools and communities.

³² The Collaboration Council worked with Montgomery College to develop the Introduction to Youth Development class and a credential in youth development.

- 4) Youth development practitioners as partners with colleagues and organizations:** includes demonstrating commitment to professional development and professionalism and the ability to advocate for programs and contribute to their sustainability.

Program quality assessment. Since Fall 2010, the Collaboration Council has promoted use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment tool (Youth PQA) to assess the quality of out-of-school time programs in the following areas: (1) Safe Environment, (2) Supportive Environment, (3) Positive Interaction, and (4) Youth Engagement. As described in Part I, on page 10, the Youth PQA is a research-based standardized assessment instrument that forms part of the David P. Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), a continuous improvement model. The YPQI also provides training modules and organizational policies for including youth and staff in decision-making related to quality. EBB's middle school pilot providers have participated in the YPQI to evaluate program quality since FY12, and EBB has organized numerous YPQI-related trainings.³³

2. Middle School Pilot Program

Since EBB launched its middle school pilot in FY12, the program has provided after school recreational programming, hot meals and transportation home at select middle schools. The stated EBB mission is:

[To] provide an exemplary out of school time (OST) system, where all children and youth will have safe, engagement places to learn so they can succeed in school and life. EBB is committed to helping students develop a sense of belonging, build relationships with peers and adults, acquire new skills, develop new interests and increase school attendance as a result of their participation in the program. Providing sufficient breadth and depth of programs will support student achievement and personal growth, in turn inspiring youth to achieve their full potential.³⁴

Service delivery is a joint effort of Recreation, the Collaboration Council and the MCPS Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships (OCEP). Both Recreation and the Collaboration Council contract with providers to deliver programming; Recreation also delivers programming directly and provides site coordination. MCPS administrative staff within schools are hired and paid for by Recreation to act as site liaisons, and school staff play a key role in recruiting students to the program. Additionally, Recreation works collaboratively with MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services (MCPSFNS) to coordinate meals. MCPSFNS serves as the sponsor for the after school meals program; and since FY15, MCPS provides transportation. MCPS' OCEP provides oversight and support for both the overall partnership as well as the day to day logistics.

Governance. When the three major EBB partners, i.e., the Collaboration Council, Recreation and MCPS, realized that the partnership lacked the necessary structure to support its growth, OCEP facilitated an interest based process that yielded the current governance structure. Governance occurs at three levels: (1) the Executive Committee, which provides overall oversight and strategic planning; (2) the Coordinating Committee, which is responsible for operational leadership and addresses shared issues across school sites, and (3) school-specific advisory committees, which have decision-making authority over day-to-day aspects of the school's program.

³³ "Building Partnerships for Positive Results: 2012 Annual Report," Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, p. 5

³⁴ MCPS Handout. Roles of the Partners from the "Partnership Guidelines" p. 1.

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The Executive and Coordinating Committees include representatives from Recreation, the Collaboration Council and MCPS, and the school advisory committees include school principals or other administrators, site liaisons, guidance counselors, parents, students, and programming providers. Recreation also funds a part-time site coordinator and school liaison for each school; this role provides school-level operational management for the EBB program.

Participating schools. The three major EBB partners selected the three original EBB pilot sites based on recommendations from officials in MCPS' central administration. To date, EBB has targeted schools based on several factors including schools with high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced meals (FARMS), achievement challenges and geographic balance. As shown in Table 3, the program was initially offered in three middle schools in FY12; in two more schools in FY13, and in a sixth school in FY14. In FY15, EBB launched a program at Montgomery Village Middle School. Depending on fiscal realities, EBB hopes to expand to more schools in FY17.

Table 3. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Original Pilot Sites (3) and Expansion Sites (4)

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

Source: Collaboration Council

Program schedule and content. The EBB middle school pilot ran either two or four days per week in FY12-FY14 and is running for four days a week at seven sites in FY15. The program is offered from 2:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m., for three 10-week sessions (fall, winter and spring) during the school year or for a total of about 28-weeks after school holidays are taken into account. As such, a student who attends every day would receive about 10 hours of activities a week plus meals. A 5:15 p.m. bus home is provided as part of the EBB program, which is additional to the 4:30 p.m. "activity bus" provided by MCPS.

In FY16, the program structure will migrate to a two semester scheduling model. The program will be offered for 28 weeks or two sessions of 14 weeks each. The fall semester will start at the end of September and end in January. After a three week break, the second semester will begin in mid-February.

In addition to the school year program, the Recreation Department funds and operates a summer EBB program in conjunction with MCPS Summer School. The summer program was held at four middle schools in 2015. 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 hours are from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Students receive meals between summer school and the summer program. Recreation reports staff provide many off-site activities such as canoeing, hiking and swimming in addition to the provider

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programs. Transportation to school is provided through the summer school program; however, parents must pick up participants when the EBB Summer program ends at 5:30 p.m..³⁵

Recreation staff and providers under contract to Recreation or the Collaboration Council deliver EBB programming. During the school year, each EBB session begins with a snack or supper period starting at 2:45 p.m.. Participants then choose from several activities, with a second snack or supper break around 4:00 p.m. Offered activities vary by day and school, and Recreation and the Collaboration Council work with school staff to identify activities of interest to students. Programs can last one or two hours. While many last two hours, one hour programs have been offered to accommodate students in other activities.

Recreation staff report that EBB programs must have an academic component to comply with federal requirements for a registered after school meal program. Although no specified time slot for homework exists, students have the flexibility to do homework in place of an activity and homework help is available to students who seek it. Recreation staff report that because EBB qualifies as a registered after school meals program site, free meals are available to any student at the school whether they are enrolled in EBB or not. Exhibit 2 is a sample schedule from Clemente Middle School.

Exhibit 2. Sample EBB Middle School Pilot Schedule: Mondays at Clemente MS, Fall 2013

Time	Activity	Provided by
2:45-3:15	Hot supper	MCPS
3:15-4:00	Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kid's Kitchen: Food and Fitness • Shooting Stars • Hoop ED: Team Sports 	Recreation contractor Recreation staff Recreation contractor
3:15-5:15	Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clancy Works Dance: ASPIRE • AOB: Express Yourself! Fun with Painting and Printmaking 	Collaboration Council-contractor Collaboration Council-contractor
4:00-4:15	Snack	MCPS
4:15-5:15	Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kid's Kitchen: Food and Fitness • Shooting Stars • Hoop ED: Team Sports 	Recreation contractor Recreation staff Recreation contractor
5:15	EBB bus home	Recreation (MCPS in FY15)

Source: Collaboration Council

C. Funding and Expenditures

The Collaboration Council, the Recreation Department and MCPS combine resources to fund EBB. The Collaboration Council funds professional development and quality assessment activities; the Collaboration

³⁵ The 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. Only school year data are reported here; school year data are excluded.

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Council and Recreation jointly fund the middle school pilot and MCPS provides in-kind resources. Table X summarizes the blended Collaboration Council and Recreation EBB funding and expenditures through FY14, not including MCPS' in-kind resources. It also separates EBB pilot program expenditures (P) and EBB system expenditures (S). Total EBB program expenditures increased 60% since FY12, from \$645,000 to \$1 million. In FY14, the Collaboration Council accounted for 62% of EBB program expenditures.

Table 4. Collaboration Council and Recreation Excel Beyond the Bell Funding and Expenditures, FY12-FY14

	FY12 Actuals	FY13 Actuals	FY14 Budgeted
Funding Sources			
<i>Collaboration Council</i>			
County Government Grant(S)	\$98,000	\$111,801	\$125,000
Governor's Office for Children (P)	\$487,884	\$442,000	\$442,000
Private Foundations (P)	\$71,346	\$79,679	\$90,000
Earned Reinvestment (P)		\$25,000	\$56,250
Other Public Support (P)	\$400	\$2,627	\$0
Subtotal Collaboration Council	\$657,630	\$661,107	\$713,250
<i>Recreation</i>			
County Government	\$69,000	\$213,680	\$395,585
Total funding	\$726,630	\$874,787	\$1,108,835
Expenditures			
<i>Collaboration Council</i>			
Personnel (P)	\$92,062	\$98,636	\$122,027
Consultants - Research/Program Quality & Evaluation (P)	\$27,325	\$28,662	\$47,496
Consultants - Program Expansion (P)		\$35,000	\$26,087
Direct Services to Youth (P)	\$456,983	\$442,000	\$442,000
Training Cost - Youth Workers (S)	\$47,044	\$52,772	\$43,150
Conferences (S)	\$1,791	\$4,152	\$4,325
Other (Professional Development/Travel) (S)	\$2,588	\$1,489	\$1,500
Overhead (S)	\$29,837	\$20,674	\$27,022
Subtotal Collaboration Council	\$657,630	\$683,385	\$713,607
<i>Recreation</i>			
Personnel (P)	\$69,000	\$193,680	\$168,985
Operating (including contracted providers/vendors) (P)		\$20,000	\$226,600
Rec. administration of Collaboration Council grant adjusted (S)	(\$95,000)	(\$95,000)	(\$125,000)
Subtotal Recreation	(\$26,000)	\$118,680	\$270,585
Total expenditures	\$631,630	\$802,065	\$984,192
EBB System Expenditures (S)	(\$13,740)	(\$15,913)	(\$49,003)
EBB Program Expenditures (P)	\$645,370	\$817,978	\$1,033,195

Source: OLO, Collaboration Council and Department of Recreation

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The expenditures listed above exclude costs for space rentals, meals, or transportation for the middle school pilot. EBB is not charged for the use of its space at select middle schools by Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), nor is it charged for meals which are provided via MCPS using federal funds. Recreation and the Collaboration Council funded transportation costs from FY12 through FY14.³⁶ Staff report that this funding was not included in the budgeted amount for EBB but instead was provided from other areas of the Recreation budget. Recreation estimated the total value of rental space at roughly \$10,000 and the cost of meals at \$200,000 for the FY14 school year.³⁷

D. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Participants

Enrollment Data. EBB measures unique participant enrollment in the middle school pilot for two distinct periods: a school year (or fiscal year) and for each session during a school year. Table 5 shows unduplicated annual enrollment counts by school from FY12 to FY15. Of note:

- Total enrollment grew from 744 in FY12 to 1,752 in FY15, an increase of just over 1,000
- Argyle, Clemente and Loiederman, the three original pilot schools, all saw their enrollment decrease in year two and increase in years three and four.
- Forest Oak and Neelsville, the two schools added to the pilot in FY13 saw enrollment increases in FY14 and again in FY15 when programming increased from two to four days a week.

Table 5. Excel Beyond the Bell Annual Enrollment by School, FY12-FY15

Middle School	Enrollment (Unduplicated)				Change
	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	
Argyle	270	197	231	290	+20
Clemente	253	212	297	343	+90
Loiederman	221	202	241	233	+12
Forest Oak ¹	-	110	138	197	+87
Neelsville ¹	-	120	154	222	+102
Col. E. B. Lee	-	-	243	216	-27
Montgomery Village	-	-	-	251	NA
Total Enrollment	744	841	1,304	1,752	+1,008
Program Cost	\$631,630	\$817,978	\$1,033,195		
Cost per enrollee	\$867	\$973	\$792		

¹Parttime site with program offered two days per week in FY13 and FY14 expanded to 4 days in FY15.
Source: Collaboration Council

Combining the expenditure data from the previous table with the enrollment data yields a program cost per enrollee at \$792 per year in FY14, not including space, meals or transportation.

³⁶ The Collaboration Council funded Monday busing for the first three years of the program.

³⁷ The annual rental space estimate assumes a cost for all six sites of \$3,309 per session and the basis for the annual meal estimate is a cost of \$40,600 for 50,750 snacks and \$158,911 for 54,236 suppers in FY14.

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Table 6 displays unique session enrollment counts and average enrollment calculations. The fiscal year average divides the total enrollment count by three sessions; the four-day block enrollment average counts the two schools with only two days of programming in FY13 and FY14 as one site. All sites were programmed for four days in FY15. The data show:

- The fall session consistently has the highest enrollment share at 40%;
- Average yearly enrollment grew by 586 (from 400 to 986) reflecting a doubling of sites; and
- Average program usage grew from 133 to 141 enrollees per four day program block.

Table 6. Enrollment by Session in Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Schools, FY12-FY15

	Enrollment (Duplicated)				Change	Distribution of Enrollment
	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15		
# of school sites	3	5	6	7	+4	
# of 4-day program blocks	3	4	5	7	+4	
Fall Session	499	577	914	1,208	+709	40%
Winter Session	382	483	754	897	+515	32%
Spring Session	318	424	663	852	+534	28%
Sum of session enrollment	1,199	1,484	2,331	2,957	+1,758	
Average enrollment per session	400	495	777	986	+586	
Average enrollment per 4 day block	133	124	155	141	+8	

Source: OLO and Collaboration Council.

Participation Rates. EBB reports average daily attendance (ADA) by session and year and also reports ADA as a percentage of average daily enrollment. Table 7 displays these data for FY12 through FY14. It uses average yearly enrollment data from the previous table to compute average days per enrollee. It shows:

- The average participant enrolls for two days a week or 20 days per 10 week session; and
- Through FY14, attendance rates averaged at least 75%, declining to 66% in FY15.

A 66% attendance rate totals 13 days of a 10 week session for a student enrolled for two days a week.

Table 7. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Total Average Daily Attendance by Session, FY12-FY15

Session	Average Daily Attendance (ADA)				Average Daily Enrollment				Ratio of Average Attendance to Enrollment			
	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Fall	158	180	337	358	182	272	436	555	87%	66%	77%	65%
Winter	148	168	308	305	192	240	402	451	77%	70%	77%	68%
Spring	173	218	255	279	247	242	346	414	70%	90%	74%	67%
Annual Ave. ADA	160	189	300	314	205	252	395	473	78%	75%	76%	66%
Ave. enrollees/year					400	495	777	986				
Ave. days/enrollee					1.95	1.96	1.97	2.08				

Source: OLO and Collaboration Council

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Collaboration Council staff caution that the ADA attendance to enrollment ratios are very sensitive to the students listed on the initial enrollment rosters who enroll but never attend or attend only once. The average daily attendance session counts in Table 7 include these student counts. Collaboration Council staff explain that the resulting ratios are lower than those they track and publish for individual programs because the student enrollment counts they use for these individual program ratios exclude students who enrolled but never attended or attended only once.

Participant demographics. MCPS provides EBB with participant demographic data from students whose parents provided permission to share data. Table 8 displays participants' data for FY12 through FY14. Of note,

- For all three years, African-American students represented the largest racial and ethnic group to participate in the middle school pilot, followed by Hispanic students.
- More girls than boys participate although the gap narrowed in FY14.
- After FY12, the percentage of participants eligible for FARMS (whose parents provided permission to share data) rose from 46% to 58%.

Table 8. 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

E. Middle School Pilot Program Quality and Outcome Data

EBB measures program quality and outcomes of the middle school pilot via the Youth Program Quality Improvement (YPQI) assessment tool and student surveys. The Collaboration Council has also conducted provider and parent surveys. Beginning in the summer of 2015 and continuing into next year, the Collaboration Council will conduct school administrator surveys.

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

Program quality. The Collaboration Council uses a quality assessment process and student surveys to measure middle school pilot program quality for its EBB programs.

The YPQI Assessment Tool. YPQI is an online tool that can be used for self-assessments or external evaluations. Since FY12, the Collaboration Council has trained all program managers of EBB programs funded through the Collaboration Council in the use of the YPQI assessment tool and also hired external contractors to assess the quality of the middle school pilot using the YPQI's assessment tool. For self-assessments, program managers, working with their staff, rate their programs using the criteria in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. YPQI Assessment Criteria used to Assess the Collaboration Council's Excel Beyond the Bell Programs

Area	Criteria
Safe Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological and emotional safety is promoted. • The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards. • Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present. • Program space and furniture accommodate the activities. • Healthy food and drinks are provided.
Supportive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff provides a welcoming atmosphere. • Session flow is planned, presented and paced for youth. • Activities support active engagement. • Staff supports youth in building skills. • Staff supports youth with encouragement. • Staff uses youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict.
Positive Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging. • Youth have opportunities to collaborate and work cooperatively with others. • Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors. • Youth have opportunities to partner with adults.
Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth have opportunities to make plans. • Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests. • Youth have opportunities to reflect.

Source: Collaboration Council

Programs are scored on a five point scale where a score of one indicates that criteria have not been achieved, three that they have been somewhat achieved and five that they are fully achieved. The scoring process provides feedback to show where program improvements are needed. The self-assessment results for FY13 showed higher scores in the areas of "safe environment" (4.52) and "supportive environment" (4.43) than in the areas of "positive interaction" (3.97) and "youth engagement" (3.74).

Collaboration Council contractors must conduct at least one assessment in the fall and use the results to submit a program improvement plan when the Collaboration Council holds a data workshop in December.

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

The Collaboration Council opens their quality training workshops to Recreation Specialists because many of the topics are relevant to their responsibilities; however, EBB program contractors funded by Recreation lack the funding to pay their staff for the additional time to participate in the self-assessment process.

The Collaboration Council also contracts with two specialists who conduct external evaluations using the YPQI tool. The contractors then used this information to score the EBB programs. In FY14, the external assessment scores were: safe environment: 4.59; supportive environment: 3.58; positive interaction: 3.24 and youth engagement: 2.32.³⁸ In FY14, the Collaboration Council hired quality coaches to work with program managers to address their improvement plans. The quality coaches were well received; and, in FY16 the Collaboration Council will expand its on-site quality coaching services to include programs identified by the Recreation Department.

EBB Participant Satisfaction Surveys. EBB has surveyed students to assess program quality since FY12. The surveys are routinely administered by Recreation staff to every student participant during the last few weeks of each program session. In FY12 and FY13, surveys included questions on student satisfaction with the program and with staff. In FY13 and FY14, surveys included questions related to the YPQI program indicators in the areas of “Safe Environment”, “Supportive Environment”, “Positive Interaction” and “Youth Engagement”. Table 9 summarizes the results of the surveys in each year.

Table 9. Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Participant Satisfaction Surveys, FY12-FY14

Year	Topic	Results	
		“Yes”	“Kind of”
FY12 (672 respondents)	Program Satisfaction	78%	17%
	Satisfaction with Staff	77%	18%
“Agree” or “Strongly Agree”			
FY13 (1,605 respondents)	Program Satisfaction	90.8%	
	Satisfaction with Staff	88.5%	
	Safe Environment	91.2%	
	Supportive Environment	89.1%	
	Positive Interaction	90.4%	
	Youth Engagement	86.6%	
FY14 (3,040 respondents)	Safe Environment	91.1%	
	Supportive Environment	89.5%	
	Positive Interaction	89.1%	
	Youth Engagement	87.6%	

Source: Collaboration Council

³⁸ The Collaboration Council explains scores for youth engagement are generally lower because it takes more training, practice, and skill to attain higher scores in interaction and youth engagement. The Collaboration Council also notes that a national review of program quality data by the center that developed the tool identified this same pattern nationally.

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

EBB Participant Program Outcomes. EBB measures middle school pilot program outcomes via a participant survey that asks about positive social and personal skills and academic attitudes. Recreation staff distribute the participant outcome surveys at the end of the school year to current enrollees and students enrolled in a prior session. The FY14 response rate was 35%. Participants answer approximately 30 questions aimed at measuring the program's effect on participants' attitudes and behaviors. Table 10 displays the survey results for three years. Of note:

- 67% of respondents in FY12 said the program helped them with a "stronger sense of self;"
- 84% of respondents in FY13 and 90% in FY14 agreed that EBB helped with a "sense of belonging;" and
- Roughly three-fourths of respondents in FY13 and FY14 agreed that EBB improved their "academic attitudes and behaviors."

Table 10. Results of Excel Beyond the Bell Middle School Pilot Participant Outcome Surveys, FY12 - 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

MCPS Data. Under a memorandum of understanding with MCPS developed each year, EBB receives MCPS data on participants' academic achievement, school attendance and academic eligibility. Because the data are aggregated and provided at the end of each year, it is not possible to track individual participants' academic performance over time. Nor is it possible to compare EBB participants' performance with similar students who did not participate in the program. As such, specific academic outcomes of the EBB middle school pilot cannot be tracked or reported.

III. Background Data on Concentrated Poverty and School Performance at MCPS Middle Schools

Montgomery County Government's Positive Youth Development (PYD) program framework is an initiative started in 2006 that delivers an array of community services on and off school campuses. PYD programs like Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) target high poverty schools and the communities they serve. Besides EBB, other services that fall under PYD include middle school RecZone programs, Linkages to Learning, High School Wellness centers, Sports Academies, Teen Works and community gang prevention programs.

Closing the MCPS achievement gap is a unifying focus of several PYD programs. In 2008, MCPS and the County Government jointly launched the Kennedy Cluster project; and in FY15, this partnership was expanded to the Watkins Mill cluster.³⁹ This MCPS/County Government partnership coordinates student health, family stability and out-of-school time services to address the root causes of MCPS' racial/ethnic achievement gaps.⁴⁰ With the expansion of partnership services to the Watkins Mill Cluster in FY15, four of the seven middle schools sites that offer EBB are part of either the Kennedy or Watkins Mill Cluster.

EBB emphasizes the delivery of organized activities in a safe, stable environment so that children have the supports they need to achieve. Given the links between EBB's services and the broader MCPS/County Government partnership that aims to improve educational outcomes for low-income children, this part presents background data on MCPS school poverty and performance at the middle school level.⁴¹ This part is organized as follows:

- **Section A** describes changes in middle school enrollment and FARMS eligibility since 2004;
- **Section B** presents characteristics of MCPS' middle schools by their poverty concentration;
- **Section C** examines Grade 8 MSA Reading scores by school poverty tier; and
- **Section D** examines the EBB program sites and Grade 8 MSA Reading scores of students who are eligible for FARMS and attend mid-low and mid-high poverty middle schools.

A. MCPS Middle School Enrollment and Poverty Concentrations Trends: 2004-2014

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). Table 11 (on the next page) ranks the 38 MCPS middle schools by their 2013-2014 FARMS rates. The data show that over one-half of FARMS eligible middle school students are concentrated in 13 schools (those with the highest FARMS rates). Comparatively, the 13 middle schools with the lowest FARMS rates have only 12% of the total middle school FARMS students.

³⁹ MCPS staff now refer to the Kennedy and Watkins Mills partnerships as the Cluster Projects.

⁴⁰ The Board of Education has asked the Office of Shared Accountability to conduct an evaluation of the Kennedy and Watkins Mill Cluster Project. The OSA evaluation, which is underway, is expected to be a multi-year effort. The first of two reports is scheduled to be delivered in December 2015.

⁴¹ At the high school level, an OLO analysis that compared the performance of MCPS' two high school consortia and three Upcounty high schools with similar characteristics to the 14 remaining high schools found differences in student achievement by student subgroup and school poverty level. See OLO Report 2014-7 for details.

Table 11. MCPS Middle School Student Enrollment and FARMS Enrollment by School, 2013-14

School Name	Official Enrollment	FARMS Total		Cumulative FARMS Share
		#	%	
Thomas W. Pyle MS	1,411	22	1.6%	--
Herbert Hoover MS	1,041	41	3.9%	1%
North Bethesda MS	901	47	5.2%	1%
Robert Frost MS	1,155	67	5.8%	2%
Cabin John MS	950	69	7.3%	2%
Rosa M. Parks MS	880	94	10.7%	3%
Westland MS	1,223	145	11.9%	5%
Tilden MS	781	95	12.2%	6%
John H. Poole MS	351	43	12.3%	6%
William H. Farquhar MS	577	71	12.3%	7%
John T. Baker MS	813	153	18.8%	8%
Kingsview MS	987	194	19.7%	10%
Rocky Hill MS	1,091	237	21.7%	12%
Lakelands Park MS	1,003	226	22.5%	14%
Ridgeview MS	670	169	25.2%	16%
Takoma Park MS	954	256	26.8%	18%
Julius West MS	1,131	344	30.4%	22%
Roberto W. Clemente MS	1,147	380	33.1%	25%
Earle B. Wood MS	937	321	34.3%	28%
Shady Grove MS	583	215	36.9%	31%
Redland MS	507	201	39.6%	32%
Gaithersburg MS	681	290	42.6%	35%
Martin Luther King Jr. MS	609	272	44.7%	38%
Silver Spring International MS	950	426	44.8%	42%
Sligo MS	446	213	47.8%	44%
Eastern MS	870	416	47.8%	48%
Benjamin Banneker MS	831	400	48.1%	52%
Briggs Chaney MS	873	421	48.2%	56%
Parkland MS	883	448	50.7%	60%
Newport Mill MS	614	345	56.2%	63%
White Oak MS	724	409	56.5%	67%
Forest Oak MS	815	461	56.6%	72%
Loiederman MS	835	498	59.6%	77%
Montgomery Village MS	647	398	61.5%	80%
Col. E. Brooke Lee MS	659	406	61.6%	84%
Argyle MS	830	512	61.7%	89%
Neelsville MS	862	548	63.6%	94%
Francis Scott Key MS	903	590	65.3%	100%
Middle School Level Totals	32,125	10,443	32.5%	

Source: OLO and MCPS. Data from "Number of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals, Maryland Public Schools, Eligibility as of October 2013. Montgomery County."

B. Distribution of MCPS Students by School Poverty Tier and Race/Ethnicity

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) uses the percent of students who are FARMS eligible as a proxy to categorize a school's poverty concentration as low, mid-low, mid-high, or high. According to NCES, for the 2012-13 school year approximately 61% of suburban students nationwide attended a low or mid-low poverty school. Table 12 shows the districtwide and school level distributions of MCPS students by NCES' poverty tiers.⁴² Of note:

- 73% of MCPS students attend low or mid-low poverty schools;
- 38% of MCPS elementary students attend mid-high or high poverty schools; and
- 24% of MCPS middle school students attend mid-high poverty schools, more than double the share of MCPS high school students (10%) who attend mid-high poverty schools.

Table 12. National and MCPS Student Distributions by NCES School Poverty Concentration

Poverty Concentration	% of students who are FARMS eligible	MCPS Student Distributions by Poverty Tier and School Level			MCPS District Distribution	National Suburban NCES Data
		Elementary	Middle	High		
Low poverty	25% or less	42%	41%	42%	42%	32%
Mid-low poverty	25.1 to 50%	19%	35%	48%	31%	29%
Mid-high poverty	50.1 to 75%	27%	24%	10%	21%	21%
High poverty	More than 75%	11%	0%	0%	6%	17%

Source: OLO, NCES and MCPS

Distribution of MCPS Middle School Students by Race/Ethnicity and Poverty Tier. Nationwide, NCES reports that the percentages of students in low-poverty and high-poverty schools vary by race/ethnicity, with higher percentages of Asian students (38%) and White students (29%) attending low poverty schools and higher percentages of Black (45%) and Hispanic (45%) students attending high-poverty schools.

Table 13 (on the next page) provides MCPS middle school student distributions by race/ethnicity and poverty tier. The data show 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 high poverty school.

⁴² This table uses NCES data for the 2012-13 school year and MCPS data for the 2013-14 school year. OLO used a dataset of individual student counts for each school to calculate these percentages. The percentages are the percent of MCPS students at that level that attend a school with a FARMS rate that falls within the NCES definitions.

Table 13. Summary Data for MCPS' 38 Middle Schools Aggregated by Poverty Concentration

MCPS Middle School Data (2013-14)	Poverty Tier ⁴³			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

C. A Review of 2014 Grade 8 Reading MSA Data by School and Student Poverty

MSDE and MCPS use the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) to track progress in meeting achievement goals and complying with the No Child Left Behind Act. MSAs in Reading, Math and Science are administered annually to students in Grades 3 to 8.⁴⁴ Students who receive proficient or advanced scores pass the exam; students who receive basic scores fall below the proficiency threshold and do not pass the exam.

Average Proficiency Rates for MCPS Students Districtwide and by School Poverty Tier. Table 14 presents data for the Grade 8 Reading MSA for the 2014 academic year, both districtwide and broken down by school poverty tier.⁴⁵ Of note:

- The districtwide average reading proficiency rate for 10,400 students was 85%;
- Mid-high poverty schools had a 17% lower rate of proficient and advanced students compared to low poverty schools, and an 8% lower rate compared to mid-low poverty schools;
- The proportion of proficient and advanced students and all test takers were similar by poverty tier.

⁴³ Since there are no MCPS middle schools in the NCES High Poverty category, that category is not included in the table.

⁴⁴ 2014 was the last year MSA tests were administered in MCPS schools. Beginning in 2014-2015, all Maryland students in Grades 3-8 will take the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

⁴⁵ OLO extracted Grade 8 Reading test results from the MSDE Report Card website. The totals and percentages for each poverty tier are the aggregate results for a group of schools, e.g. the sum of all test takers and the percentage of students who passed for the 14 low-poverty schools.

Table 14. 2014 MCPS Grade 8 Reading MSA Proficiency Rate for All Students by School Poverty Tier

Category	# of Test Takers	Proficient and Advanced Students		Distribution of Proficient and Advanced Students	Distribution of All Test Takers
		#	%		
Districtwide	10,398	8,817	85%	n=8,817	n=10,398
Poverty Tier					
Low	4,324	3,791	92%	44%	42%
Mid-Low	3,666	3,032	83%	34%	35%
Mid-High	2,408	1,814	75%	21%	23%

Source: OLO and MSDE

Average Proficiency Rates for Students Eligible to Receive FARMS Districtwide and by School Poverty Tier.

Table 15 presents data for the Grade 8 Reading proficiency rates for the subgroup of 3,300 students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS). Of note:

- The districtwide reading proficiency rate for students eligible to receive FARMS is 70%, or 15% below the 85% average for all students (shown in Table 14 above); and
- The subgroups of students eligible to receive FARMS attending mid-low or mid-high poverty schools had nearly the same proficiency rates (68% and 69%, respectively), and these rates were 7-8% below the rate for students eligible to receive FARMS who attend low poverty schools.

Table 15. 2014 MCPS Grade 8 Reading MSA Proficiency Rate for FARMS Students by School Poverty Tier

Category	# of Test Takers	Proficient and Advanced Students		Distribution of All Proficient and Advanced Students	Distribution of All Test Takers
		#	%		
Districtwide	3,291	2,295	70%	n=2,295	n=3,291
Poverty Tier					
Low ¹	480	365	76%	16%	15%
Mid-Low	1,426	974	68%	42%	43%
Mid-High	1,385	956	69%	42%	42%

¹Data for North Bethesda and Thomas Pyle are not reflected in the low poverty numbers.

Source: OLO and MSDE

Average Proficiency Rates for Students Not Eligible to Receive FARMS by School Poverty Tier. Table 16 presents Grade 8 Reading proficiency data for the 7,100 MCPS students who are not eligible for FARMS. A 21% gap separates the districtwide average for the subgroup of students not eligible to receive FARMS (91%) from the average for the subgroup of students eligible to receive FARMS (70%). By school poverty tier, the proficiency rate for non-FARMS students who attend low and mid-low schools is nearly the same while the rate for non-FARMS students who attend mid-high poverty schools is 8- 9% lower.

Table 16. 2014 MCPS Grade 8 Reading MSA Proficiency Rate for non-FARMS Students by School Poverty Tier

Category	# of Test Takers	Proficient and Advanced Students ¹		Distribution of All Proficient and Advanced Students	Distribution of All Test Takers
		#	%		
Districtwide	7,107	6,489	91%	6,489	7,107
Poverty Tier					
Low	3,844	3,579	93%	55%	54%
Mid-Low	2,240	2,053	92%	32%	32%
Mid-High	1,023	858	84%	13%	14%

¹Test results were not reported for 1,939 middle and high income test takers including 1,462 students at four low poverty schools, 389 students at two moderate poverty schools and 88 students at one high poverty school. The numbers of proficient and advanced students in this table reflect a proficiency rate of 95% for these students. OLO and MSDE

Average Proficiency Rates by Students' Eligibility to Receive FARMS Within each School Poverty Tier. A comparison of the data in the two preceding tables yields information about how Grade 8 reading proficiency rate averages differ by a student's eligibility to receive FARMS within each school poverty tier. Table 17 displays these data. Specifically:

- Within the 14 low poverty schools, the 3,844 students not eligible for FARMS had a proficiency rate 17% higher than the 480 students eligible for FARMS;
- Within the 14 mid-low poverty schools, the 2,240 students not eligible for FARMS had a proficiency rate 24% higher than the 1,426 students eligible for FARMS; and
- Within the 10 mid-high poverty schools, the 1,023 students not eligible for FARMS had a proficiency rate 15% higher than the 1,385 students eligible for FARMS.

Of note, the narrower gap (15%) for the mid-high poverty schools compared to the mid-low poverty schools (24%) reflects a lower average score for the subgroup of students not eligible for FARMS who attend mid-high poverty schools while the average scores for students eligible for FARMS in each of these tiers are comparable.

Table 17. 2014 Grade 8 Reading MSA Gaps Among Subgroups of Students Eligible and Not Eligible for FARMS Within a School Poverty Tier

School Poverty Tier	# of Students Eligible for FARMS		# of Students Not Eligible for FARMS		% of Students Proficient and Advanced		Subgroup Difference by Tier
	Test takers	Proficient & Advanced	Test takers	Proficient & Advanced	Eligible for FARMS	Not Eligible for FARMS	
Low	365	480	3,579	3,844	76%	93%	17%
Mid-Low	974	1,426	2,053	2,240	68%	92%	24%
Mid-High	956	1,385	858	1,023	69%	84%	15%

Source: OLO and MSDE

D. A Review of 2014 Grade 8 Reading MSA Data for EBB and non-EBB Schools

MCPS' 24 mid-low and mid-high poverty middle schools account for 85% of all FARMS test takers and 84% of all proficient or advanced FARMS students. This section aligns Grade 8 Reading MSA data by school for the subgroup of students eligible for FARMS and EBB program sites. Table 18 on the next page ranks Grade 8 Reading MSA school proficiency data for students eligible for FARMS at the 24 mid-low and mid-high schools. The table highlights the EBB program sites in bold and shades the lowest and highest performing schools. The data show the proficiency rate of the subgroup of students eligible for FARMS student was 55% at the lowest ranked school compared to 80% at the top ranked school. EBB programs are located at three of the six lowest performing schools and two of the six highest performing schools.

Table 18 also displays the average number of test takers among the subgroup of students who are eligible for FARMS and the school proficiency rates of this subgroup by poverty tier. Low poverty schools average 40 test takers per school among students eligible for FARMS compared to 102 test takers for the 14 mid-low poverty schools and 139 test takers for 10 mid-high poverty schools.

If the average rate of proficient and advanced students eligible for FARMS at low poverty schools (76%) is used as a benchmark, then the two top performers among the group of 24 mid-low and mid-high schools exceed this benchmark. The two top performers and their respective proficiency rates are Newport Mill (77%) and Parkland (80%). Moreover, while schools in the low poverty tier averaged 40 test takers, Newport Mill had 100 test takers, or 2.5 times as many, and Parkland had 138 test takers, or more than three times as many.

This pattern is similar for Forest Oak and Argyle, the two schools with EBB programs that rank among the six top performing mid-low and mid-high poverty schools. At these schools, the rates of proficient and advanced students eligible for FARMS, i.e., 75% for Forest Oak and 74% for Argyle, are just below the 76% low poverty school benchmark. In terms of test takers, Forest Oak had 133 test takers, or more than three times the average for low poverty schools, and Argyle had 160 test takers, or four times as many.

Table 18. 2014 MCPS Grade 8 Reading MSA Proficiency Rate for Students Eligible for FARMS by Poverty Tier and by School for 24 Mid-Low and Mid-High Poverty Schools

School Poverty Tier	Averages for Students Eligible for FARMS	
	# of Test Takers	% Proficient and Advanced
Low Poverty	40	76%
Mid Low Poverty	102	68%
Mid High Poverty	139	69%
Mid-Low or Mid-High Poverty School ¹	# of Test Takers Eligible for FARMS	% Advanced or Proficient
Redland	62	55%
A. Mario Loiederman (FY12)	149	59%
Neelsville (FY13)	150	59%
Gaithersburg	87	61%
Montgomery Village (FY15)	135	63%
White Oak	118	64%
Eastern	145	66%
Briggs Chaney	131	66%
Silver Spring International	160	67%
Col. E. Brooke Lee (FY14)	112	68%
Shady Grove	72	68%
Julius West	128	69%
Martin Luther King Jr.	88	71%
Roberto W. Clemente (FY12)	133	71%
Ridgeview	62	71%
Francis Scott Key	190	72%
Earle B. Wood	109	73%
Sligo	62	73%
Benjamin Banneker	106	74%
Argyle (FY12)	160	74%
Takoma Park	81	74%
Forest Oak (FY13)	133	75%
Newport Mill	100	77%
Parkland Middle	138	80%
Averages for 24 Mid Low and Mid High Poverty Middle Schools	117	69%

¹Schools with EBB program sites are shown in bold with the first program year in parenthesis. OLO and MSDE

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.

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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 ⁴⁷			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.