

**MEMORANDUM**

March 28, 2019

TO: E&C and PHED Committees

FROM: Stephanie Bryant, Legislative Analyst  
Blaise DeFazio, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Office of Legislative Oversight

SUBJECT: **Worksession on OLO Report 2019-3: *Afterschool Bookings at MCPS Elementary Schools***

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the E&C and PHED Committees will discuss OLO Report 2019-3, which was released on March 19<sup>th</sup>. This report responds to Council's request to compare the availability of afterschool programming among elementary schools based on the percentages of students receiving Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) and to determine factors that influence afterschool providers operating in schools. The Executive Summary for Report 2019-3 appears on © 1.

The following Executive Branch and Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) staff will be available at the worksession to provide comments and answer questions:

- Ramona Bell-Pearson, Director, Community Use of Public Facilities
- Robin Riley, Director, Department of Recreation
- Monica Martin, Department of Health and Human Services
- Niki Hazel, Director, Dept. of Elementary Curriculum and Districtwide Programs, MCPS

**COUNCILMEMBERS PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED COPIES OF REPORT 2019-3 AND SHOULD BRING A COPY OF THE REPORT TO THE WORKSESSION.**

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This section summarizes key findings from Report 2019-3. Comments on these findings from Chief Administrative Officer Andrew Kleine are attached at ©3.

In this report, OLO analyzed school demographic, programmatic, and facilities data from the 2017-2018 school year and conducted stakeholder interviews to assess the availability of afterschool programming. In sum, OLO found that elementary schools with Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, higher student enrollment, and a childcare provider onsite tend to have more afterschool programming. Comparatively, schools with more students eligible for FARMS, ESOL, or SPED or have high student mobility tend to have fewer afterschool programming. OLO also identified practices associated with robust afterschool programming, along with barriers. OLO's major findings are summarized below:

- Schools with more active Parent-Teacher Associations have more afterschool bookings. Active PTAs have more capacity to fundraise, organize, and promote afterschool programs in their respective schools.

- Higher FARMS schools with a greater percent of students eligible for bus service tend to have fewer afterschool bookings. Stakeholders reported that without bus transportation available following afterschool programming, many students cannot participate.
- Examining elementary school data by high school cluster revealed that five clusters had, on average, the fewest afterschool bookings per student: Gaithersburg, Northeast Consortium, Northwest, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill. In comparison, elementary schools in clusters with the highest bookings per student are located down and west County.
- The presence of an afterschool champion and an established culture of afterschool enrichment were reported by stakeholders as keys to robust afterschool programming.
- Conversely, stakeholders identified barriers to successful afterschool programming, including: lack of post-activity transportation, high program costs, and availability of scholarships.

## OLO RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of Report 2019-3, OLO had four recommendations:

1. **Examine funding-based and non-funding-based options to increase afterschool programming at High FARMS elementary schools.** See the list of schools at ©5. Funding examples include:
  - Expand Excel Beyond the Bell, approximately \$269,000 per school annually
  - Designate Community Grants for On-site Programs, FY18 afterschool grants averaged \$42,203
  - Provide Afterschool Activity Transportation, approximately \$4,490 per school (one day/wk.)
  - Increase Elementary Teacher Stipends, approx. cost for 100 teacher hours: \$3,320 at \$30/hr.
  - Reduce Facility Fees for Programs at Title I Schools, cost TBD
2. **Discuss limitations of Excel Beyond the Bell with relevant stakeholders and identify potential solutions.** While principals overwhelmingly lauded Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB) and appreciated the increase in free afterschool programming that the program affords, they also noted some limitations of the program. These include limited program capacity, no scheduling options for families, and lack of programming for students in kindergarten through first grade. The Council can discuss these reported limitations with stakeholders and work to identify potential logistical and budgetary solutions.
3. **Discuss with Executive Branch staff options for changes to the Community Use of Public Facilities' (CUPF) Facility Fee Assistance Program (FFAP) to allow broader use of school facilities by program providers offering free or reduced-cost afterschool programs at elementary schools.** OLO recommends that the Council discuss potential changes to the FFAP to expand afterschool programming at high poverty elementary schools. Examples include opening the program to for-profit providers or paid instructors, expanding the age range to include elementary students, and increasing the types of programs that can apply.
4. **Discuss with Executive Branch and MCPS representatives ways to provide schools and PTAs a list of afterschool program vendors and information on best practices for facilitation successful afterschool programming.** Stakeholders from PTAs and schools reported to OLO that having information about previously-vetted vendors who provide afterschool programming could help facilitate the expansion of programming options. In addition, MCPS, MCCPTA, school administration, and school PTAs could work together to consolidate and distribute information about successful practices to implement programming used at schools with robust afterschool programs.

# Afterschool Bookings at MCPS Elementary Schools

OLO Report 2019-3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

March 19, 2019

This Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) report responds to Council's request to compare the availability of afterschool programming among elementary schools based on the percentages of students receiving Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) and to determine factors that influence afterschool providers operating in schools. OLO analyzed school demographic, programmatic, and facilities data from the 2017-2018 school year and conducted stakeholder interviews to assess the availability of afterschool programming. In sum, OLO found that elementary schools with Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, higher student enrollment, and a childcare provider onsite tend to have more afterschool programming. Comparatively, schools with more students eligible for FARMS, ESOL, or SPED or have high student mobility tend to have fewer afterschool programming. OLO also identified practices associated with robust afterschool programming, along with barriers.

**Data Analysis.** OLO used quantitative techniques to determine whether certain characteristics such as percentage of students receiving FARMS or number of PTA members, influence the rate of afterschool programming. Key OLO findings include:

- The data show a strong connection between a lack of afterschool programming and a schools' FARMS rate when excluding four outlier elementary schools that have targeted programming through Excel Beyond the Bell.
- Elementary schools with more PTA members, higher student enrollment, and a childcare provider onsite tend to have more afterschool bookings.
- Elementary schools with more students eligible for FARMS, English as a Second Language (ESOL), or special education services experience greater numbers of students entering or withdrawing during the school year – referred to as student "mobility."
- Schools with more active Parent-Teacher Associations have more afterschool bookings. Active PTAs have more capacity to fundraise, organize, and promote afterschool programs in their respective schools.
- Higher FARMS schools with a greater percent of students eligible for bus service tend to have fewer afterschool bookings. Stakeholders reported that without bus transportation available following afterschool programming, many students cannot participate.
- Examining elementary school data by high school cluster revealed that five clusters had, on average, the fewest afterschool bookings per student: Gaithersburg, Northeast Consortium, Northwest, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill. In comparison, elementary schools in clusters with the highest bookings per student are located down and west County.

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**Afterschool programming** is defined as activities occurring at MCPS elementary schools between the hours of 3:00pm and 6:30pm during the 2017-2018 school year. Generally, a provider must obtain a permit for a room reservation and time for each day. This is considered one booking. OLO used the number of bookings per school as a measure of the availability of afterschool programs. OLO did not include reservations made by schools or PTAs outside of Community Use of Public Facilities' reservation system or assess the quality of afterschool programming available.

**FARMS** refers to students who are eligible for free and reduced-priced meals at school. The percentage of students in a school who are eligible for FARMS provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students in a school.

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For a complete copy of OLO-Report 2019-3, go to:  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Reports/CurrentOLOReports.html>

**Factors Affecting Afterschool Programming at Schools.** During stakeholder interviews, OLO identified practices that differentiate elementary schools with robust afterschool programming from those with lower afterschool program availability.

### Success Factors for and Barriers to Afterschool Programming

Success Factors	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High PTA participation</li> <li>• Presence of an afterschool “champion”</li> <li>• Established culture of afterschool enrichment</li> <li>• Strong, collaborative relationships among stakeholders</li> <li>• Dedication to time and effort required</li> <li>• Motivated and engaging instructors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of post-activity transportation</li> <li>• Cost too high for many families</li> <li>• Competition for available space</li> <li>• Limited availability of scholarships</li> <li>• Insufficient communication</li> <li>• Low teacher stipends</li> </ul>

**Overcoming Barriers to Afterschool Participation.** OLO identified several strategies undertaken to overcome barriers at High FARMS elementary schools and establish after school programming. These include:

- Expanding Excel Beyond the Bell and/or Linkages to Learning. For schools with a high FARMS rate, OLO found both programs are assets to schools and increase the availability of afterschool programming by replicating factors found at schools with robust afterschool programming.
- Partner with Providers or Community Groups. Stakeholders reported collaborating with providers or community groups to provide free or reduced-cost afterschool programming. Examples include Howard University (Kemp Mill Elementary); Manna Food and Black Rock Center for the Arts (Germantown Elementary); and Master Method Karate (Wheaton Woods).
- Administering Low-Cost, Teacher-Led Programs. At Germantown Elementary school, staff coordinate to provide reduced-cost, teacher-lead afterschool clubs. For an eight-week class, the school charges \$6 for FARMS students and \$8 for non-FARMS students. This funding pays for club materials, snacks, and teacher stipends.

### OLO Recommendations

**Recommendation #1:** Examine funding-based and non-funding-based options to increase afterschool programming at High FARMS elementary schools. Funding examples include:

- **Expand Excel Beyond the Bell**, approximately \$269,000 per school annually
- **Designate Community Grants for On-site Programs**, FY18 afterschool grants averaged \$42,203
- **Provide Afterschool Activity Transportation**, approximately \$4,490 per school (one day per week)
- **Increase Elementary Teacher Stipends**, approx. cost for 100 teacher hours: \$3,320 at \$30/hr.
- **Reduce Facility Fees for Programs at Title I Schools**, cost TBD

**Recommendation #2:** Discuss limitations of Excel Beyond the Bell with relevant stakeholders and identify potential solutions.

**Recommendation #3:** Discuss with Executive Branch staff options for changes to the Community Use of Public Facilities’ (CUPF) Facility Fee Assistance Program (FFAP) to allow broader use of school facilities by program providers offering free or reduced-cost afterschool programs at elementary schools.

**Recommendation #4:** Discuss with Executive Branch and MCPS representatives ways to provide schools and PTAs a list of afterschool program vendors and information on best practices for facilitation successful afterschool programming.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Andrew W. Kleine  
Chief Administrative Officer

**MEMORANDUM**

March 13, 2019

**TO:** Chris Cihlar, Director  
Office of Legislative Oversight

**FROM:** Andrew W. Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer *AWK*  
Office of the County Executive

**SUBJECT:** OLO Draft Report 2019-3: Afterschool Bookings at MCPS Elementary Schools

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the OLO Draft Report 2019-3: Afterschool Bookings at Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Elementary Schools. Below you will find our response to the recommendations laid out in the report.

**Recommendation #1:**

Discuss with Executive Branch staff about changes to the Community Use of Public Facilities' (CUPF) Facility Fee Assistance Program (FFAP) to allow broader use for those groups providing free or minimal cost programs at elementary schools.

**CAO Response:**

We agree with the proposed change to open the FFAP to for-profits offering free or reduced programs in Title 1 schools and those with a high Free And Reduced Meals Student (FARMS) population.

We also support expanding the program to cover more elementary school students. However, we may need to locate the afterschool services in a central facility to accommodate older siblings who may need to be co-located with younger siblings. Middle Schools would better accommodate this space demand.

Executive Regulation 25-16AM was amended in June 2017 to remove the criteria that volunteer staff must lead the program making it possible for paid instructors to participate through a provider offering free or reduced rates for services. We are also in agreement that the Executive Regulation could be further amended to remove the requirement that the primary goal of the Provider be to serve vulnerable youth or low-income individuals.

Chris Cihlar, Director  
March 13, 2019  
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**Recommendation #2:**

Discuss with the Executive Branch and MCPS about providing a list of afterschool vendors and best practices for successful afterschool programming to schools and PTAs.

**CAO Response #2:**

This is a process that CUPF could put into place with the consent and cooperation of MCPS. We recommend that any list be for informational purposes only and not be offered as an endorsement of any one program. Inclusion on the list would be subject to approval by MCPS, as the facilities and programs are under their control. Assuming that MCPS will partner with CUPF to develop and distribute this list, we agree that such a resource would benefit the PTA and other similar Community Groups.

We will make sure that the necessary amendments be made to Executive Regulation 25-16AM for presentation to the County Council for their approval and adoption. In light of the fact that many of the provisions pertain to programs operated within MCPS properties, it will be necessary to get Board of Education approval or consent to the amended regulation before it becomes final.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Ramona Bell-Pearson at [Ramona.Bell-Pearson@montgomerycountvmd.gov](mailto:Ramona.Bell-Pearson@montgomerycountvmd.gov) or 240-777-2722.

cc: Fariba Kassiri, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Victoria Buckland, Acting Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Dale Tibbits, Special Assistant to the County Executive  
JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children, Youth and Family Services, Health and Human Services  
Robin Riley, Director Montgomery County Recreation Department  
Dr. Henry R. Johnson, Jr. Chief of Staff Montgomery County Public Schools

**Elementary Schools with the Lowest Afterschool Bookings per Student (Bottom 25%)**  
(Excludes Schools with Excel Beyond the Bell)

School	Cluster	Farms	No. Bookings /Student	% of Students Eligible for Bus Service
Stonegate	Northeast Consortium	Low	0.487	65.8%
Strawberry Knoll	Gaithersburg	Mid-Low	0.482	50.4%
Germantown	Northwest	Mid-Low	0.472	68.8%
Mill Creek Towne	Col. Zadok Magruder	Mid-Low	0.469	76.0%
Sherwood	Northeast Consortium	Low	0.461	100.0%
Ronald McNair	Northwest	Low	0.439	39.0%
Fields Road	Quince Orchard	Mid-Low	0.434	63.1%
Monocacy	Poolesville	Low	0.425	100.0%
Galway	Northeast Consortium	Mid-High	0.414	71.1%
Jackson Road	Northeast Consortium	High	0.411	77.5%
Olney	Sherwood	Low	0.384	78.8%
Rosemont	Gaithersburg	Mid-High	0.378	92.9%
Piney Branch	Downcounty Consortium	Mid-Low	0.373	63.1%
Great Seneca Creek	Northwest	Mid-Low	0.369	39.3%
Whetstone	Watkins Mill	Mid-High	0.348	63.1%
Gaithersburg	Gaithersburg	High	0.344	19.7%
New Hampshire Estates	Downcounty Consortium	High	0.333	46.1%
Arcola	Downcounty Consortium	High	0.321	82.9%
Burtonsville	Northeast Consortium	Mid-Low	0.306	100.0%
Dr. Charles R. Drew	Northeast Consortium	Mid-Low	0.297	55.3%
Washington Grove	Gaithersburg	Mid-High	0.287	88.5%
Fox Chapel	Clarksburg	Mid-High	0.235	62.7%
Greencastle	Northeast Consortium	Mid-High	0.218	52.2%
Watkins Mill	Watkins Mill	High	0.218	51.3%
Wheaton Woods	Downcounty Consortium	High	0.209	33.5%
Cresthaven	Northeast Consortium	Mid-High	0.198	88.9%
Stedwick	Watkins Mill	Mid-High	0.186	59.8%
Georgian Forest	Downcounty Consortium	High	0.186	86.9%
Lucy V. Barnsley	Rockville	Mid-Low	0.116	77.6%
Strathmore	Downcounty Consortium	Mid-High	0.084	92.5%
Brown Station	Quince Orchard	Mid-High	0.055	33.5%
Roscoe R. Nix	Northeast Consortium	Mid-High	0.022	81.9%