MEMORANDUM

To:         Members of the Board of Education
From:       Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject:    Out-of-School Time Programming Update

Summary

Several recent Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) reports have reviewed opportunities for the county’s youth to access and participate in Out-of-School Time programs. For the purpose of this memorandum, Out-of-School Time programs refer to programs that support wellness and learning of school-age children before and after school as well as during extended school breaks such as summers. OLO reports published from 2016 to 2019 highlighted several key findings including inconsistencies in access to Out-of-School Time programming. For example, the reports found that students impacted by poverty had less access to Out-of-School Time programs citing several factors including costs, access to transportation, and additional paperwork to request fee exemptions as barriers. Additionally, the reports collectively noted that of the 42,740 Out-of-School Time program slots in 2016, subsidized through County agency funding, including Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), most (more than 39,000) were supporting secondary school-age students. The reports also offered several suggestions including expanding County programs supporting elementary school-age students, expansion of after-school transportation, reducing the facility fees for programs in Title I schools, availability of bilingual Out-of-School Time programs, and providing improved communication and processes for families to access programs. The Executive Summary of the OLO reports are included in the Attachment.

Following the release of OLO report 2016-11, several changes have taken place. First, MCPS eliminated the extracurricular after-school fees for secondary school students. Second, County Government expanded Out-of-School Time programs such as Excel Beyond the Bell (EBB), and MCPS increased its summer elementary school program slots primarily in Title I schools. Lastly, the Children’s Opportunity Fund was established; currently one of its priorities is determining how the county may support additional Out-of-School Time programs; specifically targeting underserved students. This memorandum provides the current state for MCPS sponsored and non-MCPS sponsored Out-of-School Time programs with a focus on county-supported programs.
MCPS Sponsored and non-MCPS Sponsored Programs

Programming That Occurs During the School Year

A wide range of after-school, summer, and online learning programs that provide students with opportunities to pursue extracurricular interests, academic enrichment, and other engaging activities outside of the classroom currently exists in MCPS. Programming options identified by school level follow.

At the elementary school level, Title I sites receive allocations that fund various after-school activities specific to the needs and special interests of the students at each school. School staff also may apply for grants and partner with community organizations (including their Parent Teacher Association) to expand after-school options for students. There are clubs and activities that are staff led at many elementary school sites. Examples of activities include theater, run club, and chess. Some elementary school sites also offer Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programming after school. Students engaged in this programming are experiencing activities such as coding, LEGO, and STEM clubs.

At the secondary school level, several extracurricular programs may be offered in all middle and high schools and are associated with a districtwide, non-athletic stipend for teacher sponsors, funded by MCPS. For example:

- Academic enrichment programs such as Math Team, Mock Trial, Forensics and Debate, It’s Academic, or STEM Clubs including Science Olympiad;
- Opportunities in the creative and performing arts such as Drama, Choral and Instrumental Music, or Marching Band; and
- Leadership opportunities such as Student Government, Model United Nations, Business Challenge (a Junior Achievement program), Yearbook, or Newspaper.

In addition, all secondary schools receive a local allocation for extracurricular programs developed at the school level under the leadership of the principal. These programs are student- and school-driven and matched to student interest in the local school community. These may include International Club, Gay/Straight Alliance, Book Club, Chess Club, or Asian or African-American student organizations, among dozens of additional programs offered in local schools.

At the middle school level, the growing partnership with KID Museum provides all students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on, project-based learning in STEM through Invent the Future Challenge, a year-long activity of school-based teams that culminates with a countywide STEM competition. This partnership not only provides the opportunity for all middle schools to engage in a rigorous STEM challenge, it also operates to eliminate barriers associated with expensive STEM competitions offered throughout the county and region. The partnership with KID Museum also provides 20 selected middle schools with in-depth, hands-on STEM experiences that take place on-site at KID Museum five times per year.
There also are several extended learning opportunities outside the school day, which allow students to make up coursework, access enriched learning experiences, or earn credits toward high school graduation. These include:

- Middle school Extended Day and Extended Year academic programs;
- High school credit-bearing coursework offered after school, during summer, and online throughout the year throughout MCPS; and
- Online courses now offered throughout the year to all students, not simply for credit recovery, but also for students who may need additional support; are enrolled in Career and Technology Education programs of study; or wish to accelerate their progression in core course sequences, to allow for earlier access to Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes, open up their schedules later in high school, pursue an Early College or career program of study.

**Summer Programming**

At the elementary school level, staff in the Division of Title I and Early Childhood Programs and Services (DTECPS) coordinates a host of out-of-school opportunities for students enrolled in prekindergarten (pre-K) and Head Start programs and students attending Title I schools. The majority of these programs operate for five weeks during summer. Beginning in summer 2019, all of the programs were available as full-day programs for enrolled students. As a result, staff in DTECPS has seen an increase in the number of enrolled students. Enrollment for summer 2019 reached approximately 7,600 students, an increase from approximately 4,000 students in 2015. These programs are the pre-K/Head Start, Extended Learning Opportunities and BellXcel (formerly, Building Educated Leaders for Life) programs.

In previous years, when DTECPS’ summer programs were partial day programs, the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg coordinated with the Title I team to schedule an afternoon component at selected sites. In addition to the centralized allocation of funds for summer programs, Title I schools may offer school-based extended day programming using school-based Title I funds or local funds. Additionally, during the past two summers, several non-Title I schools have developed summer enrichment programs through the district’s SummerUp initiative. These programs are developed jointly with school staff to offer a variety of experiences and are in a pilot phase to inform options for expansion of programs beyond Title I schools.

At the secondary school level, MCPS has supported many programs during summer including high school regional programs, local school-based programs, and online courses for original credit or credit recovery. In recent years, the district has expanded its offerings to include career readiness and coding camps for middle school students. For example, this summer, MCPS partnered with Montgomery College to offer middle schools students a “Montgomery Can Code” camp at Montgomery College. Through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant, students also participated in the Science of Fire and Rescue and the STEMing the Earth camps that were co-led by professionals in these fields, which included research projects and field trip experiences.
**Government-sponsored Programs**

MCPS partners with other County agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Recreation Department to support several Out-of-School Time programs for students. One major program is EBB, an after-school program provided through a partnership among MCPS; the Department of Recreation; the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families; and Action in Montgomery, which brings together multiple agencies and organizations to offer programs that address learning, social and emotional growth, critical thinking, and physical health and wellness of students. The program has expanded into more schools. During the 2019–2020 school year, EBB will operate at five elementary schools (one program is paired across two schools) and eight middle schools and is estimated to serve approximately 3,700 students.

Another partnership program is RecXtra, led through the County’s Recreation Department, and currently available at 13 MCPS middle schools (with an additional 3 sites opening in the 2019–2020 school year). RecXtra operates to provide after-school activities that include sports, the arts, baby-sitting instruction, chess, improvisational theater, sewing, dance, poms, cooking, yoga, STEM, and mentoring.

Additionally, the Regional Youth Services Program (formerly, the School and Community Based Youth Services Program) contracts through the Department of Health and Human Services and is operated by EveryMind, the YMCA, Family Services, Inc., and the City of Rockville. Programming exclusively is psycho-educational in nature supporting parent/guardian workshops and mental health student groups.

Finally, The George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy, Inc. is celebrating its thirty-first year supporting students in Grades K–12 with various academic programs including Saturday School, the Young Scholars Programs, SAT/ACT tutoring, and others. The Saturday School program serves approximately 3,000 students across 12 high school sites on Saturdays. For the 2019–2020 school year, elementary school sites will be added.

**Athletics**

Another key aspect of Out-of-School Time programs is the MCPS high school interscholastic athletics program. The MCPS high school interscholastic athletics program includes competition in 20 sports, with 31 varsity-level teams and 13 junior varsity-level teams available at each of the 25 comprehensive high schools. Approximately 23,000 students participate annually in the MCPS high school interscholastic athletics program. These figures include pompons, cheerleading, and three varsity coed corollary sports designed largely to increase interscholastic competitive athletic opportunities for students with disabilities.
The MCPS middle school interscholastic athletics program includes competition in four sports, with seven total teams: boys’ and girls’ softball, boys’ and girls’ basketball, boys’ and girls’ soccer, and coed cross-country. Approximately 5,000 students participate annually in the MCPS middle school athletics program.

MCPS Athletics Facts and Figures

- More than 300 MCPS teams won sportsmanship awards during the 2018–2019 school year;
- During the 2018–2019 school year, MCPS teams won 207 team championships including:
  - 13 state championships
  - 34 district or regional championships
  - 30 sectional championships
  - 129 division or county championships; and
- A total of 151 MCPS student-athletes won individual state championships.

MCPS believes participation in interscholastic athletics supports the overall mission of the school district to ensure that every student will have the academic, creative problem solving, and social-emotional skills to be successful in college and career. The MCPS philosophy of interscholastic athletics is founded in our vision, mission, purpose, and R.A.I.S.E. Core Values, which were established in July 2017:

- Respect and Sportsmanship;
- Academic Excellence;
- Integrity and Character;
- Spirited and Safe Competition; and
- Equity and Access.

The vision of MCPS athletics is to promote academic excellence, athletic achievement, positive sportsmanship, and upstanding citizenship by providing an education-based interscholastic athletics program. The mission of MCPS athletics is that every student-athlete will attain the mental, moral, physical, and social-emotional skills to excel in the classroom, community, and the realm of competition. The purpose of MCPS athletics is to provide an innovative education-based interscholastic athletics program that maximizes diverse participation through a commitment to equity and access.

With a wide array of athletic programming, school administrators, athletic directors, and coaches are responsible for developing appropriate supervision plans for their respective teams and programs. This planning process is reinforced throughout the school year by staff in the Division of Systemwide Athletics and through staff in the offices of School Support and Improvement and the Chief Operating Officer.
In addition to ensuring appropriate supervision plans are in place, coaches are trained in how to prevent bullying, hazing, and in how to promote a positive culture of sportsmanship and citizenship among their student athletes. At the start of every season, coaches engage their teams in the code of conduct, with a specific emphasis on anti-hazing and anti-bullying. This is reinforced at all levels of interscholastic athletics program. Given the incident at Damascus High School and indicators of a need for more consistent supervision, coaches reviewed their supervision plans and anti-hazing and anti-bullying education of students and staff. Additionally, an external review of MCPS athletics and after-school programs was conducted. Staff will implement recommendations resulting from the external review.

**Utilization of MCPS Facilities by Agencies/Organizations to Support Out-of-School Time Programs**

*Before- and After-school Child Care*

Before- and After-school Child Care is provided by private child care providers in many MCPS schools. The program is administered by the Community Use of Public Facilities, the County Government Agency that has oversight and responsibility for providing public access to available government facilities.

Private child-care providers provide before- and after-school child care in 119 MCPS elementary schools, and 1 middle school site. In order to become the designated before- and after-school child care provider in a school, providers participate in a selection process that includes input from the local school community. The process is governed by Montgomery County Executive Regulation 6-17AM, *Before and After School Childcare Programs in Public Schools*, which requires that providers in schools be subject to a competitive selection process on a regular cycle.

The process for selecting providers for the 2019–2020 school year temporarily was suspended, with all existing providers continued in place for the upcoming school year. The decision to temporarily suspend the selection process was mutually reached by MCPS and CUPF in light of various factors, including recent litigation challenging aspects of the regulation and selection process. MCPS is working closely with CUPF to identify potential revisions to the re-bid process and to review the Regulation 6-17AM as a whole to advance the mission of high quality before- and after-school child care in Montgomery County. As a potential framework is developed to move forward, MCPS and CUPF will engage with the broader community, including other agency partners, child-care providers, parents/guardians of school-age children, and other experts on school-age child care.

Overall, monitoring Out-of-School Time programs and after-school activities pose unique safety challenges for school personnel. Once the school day ends, school facilities are open to community use. Typical visitor management protocols that are utilized during the school day give way to a less secure environment, as front offices are closed. The issue of community use of school facilities after hours has been an area of focus in several recent analyses of MCPS school safety...
and security, beginning with the interim report on safety and security in MCPS high schools published in August 2017. With that being the case, all after-school sponsors are expected to take active supervisory roles in administering their after-school program and have clear plans in place for supervision of students. MCPS currently is supporting CUPF through a new fee study to determine whether increased fees may be applied to enhance after-school security during non-school hours. This fee study will entail benchmarking with other districts and counties in terms of after-hours security in school facilities.

Next Steps

MCPS is committed to working with County Government to determine options to expand Out-of-School opportunities for students; specifically underserved students. For the fourth consecutive year, the Board has supported funding to offer additional after-school and summer programs. Moving forward, MCPS will focus on the following key areas:

- Continue to coordinate with the county to strategically locate and support programming opportunities for students;
- Continue to develop and work through revised regulation with CUPF and agency partners; and
- Strengthen and enhance supervision and security as well as other operational aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding with CUPF.

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Attachment
Out of School Time and Children’s Trusts

Executive Summary of OLO Memorandum Report 2016-11

Out of school time (OOST) refers to before- and after-school programs, summer school, Saturday school, and extracurricular activities such as sports. To help the Council understand the opportunity gap in OOST and strategies for narrowing this gap, this Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) memorandum report describes local demand and practices in other jurisdictions to expand OOST opportunities. This report also provides an overview of the strategies used in other jurisdictions to fund OOST and other services for children, including the use of Children’s Trusts and other public finance approaches that provide dedicated revenue for children’s services. Six summary findings and three recommendations for action follow.

Finding #1: Out of school time activities, including after-school clubs and sports, can improve student performance and help narrow the achievement gap in conjunction with other initiatives.

Research suggests that OOST activities, including extracurricular activities such as after-school clubs and sports, can impact a wide range of youth outcomes. These include improving students’:

- Engagement that includes program attendance and year-to-year retention;
- Positive skills and beliefs that include critical thinking, growth mindset, persistence, self-regulation, collaboration, and communication;
- Educational outcomes that include high school day attendance, on-time grade promotion, and progress toward mastery of academic skills and content.

Yet, it is important to recognize that OOST and extracurricular programs “are at best one part of a much larger, multi-faceted approach toward closing the achievement gap.” Overall, participation in OOST programs generally leads to small gains in academic outcomes.

Finding #2: There is an opportunity gap in OOST and extracurricular activities by income.

For many low-income families, the cost of participating in extracurricular and enrichment activities is too high. Nationally, the number of upper middle class students active in school clubs and sports teams has increased since the 1970’s, while participation rates for working class students have plummeted. This translates into a widening spending gap: there was $2,000 per child spending gap on enrichment activities between the top and bottom decile of families in 1972 ($600 v. $2,800) compared to a more than $5,000 per child enrichment gap between these families in 2007 ($800 v. $6,500). State and local data suggests that an OOST opportunity gap by income, race, and ethnicity for extracurricular participation persists in Montgomery County as well.

Finding #3: In FY2016, about $31.1 million was expended in Montgomery County on publicly subsidized OOST programs for 42,740 school year slots and 12,717 summer slots.

Most publicly supported OOST slots targeted services to secondary and non-poor students.

- **MCPS’ extracurricular activities and summer school programs account for over half of OOST slots and costs.** Low-income students have diminished access to these programs due to their reliance on parent fees and MCPS' academic eligibility requirements for extracurricular participation.
- **Less than 2% of publicly subsidized OOST programs offer comprehensive after school programs** that operate on a regular basis, offer multiple activities, have adult supervision, and other children.
Out of School Time and Children’s Trusts

- **Less than 8% of school year OOST programs serve elementary students or students across the K-12 grade span**; 39,000+ of 42,740 school year slots exclusively serve secondary students.
- **Publicly subsidized school year slots targeting the economically disadvantaged had the capacity to serve 17% of low-income students enrolled in MCPS and 13% of students in high-poverty schools.**

**Finding #4:** Funding and student engagement are challenges to scaling up high quality OOST programs for low-income youth.

The costs of operating high-quality OOST programs are substantial, averaging $4,600 per school year for after-school programs and from $1,100 to $2,800 per child for high-quality summer learning programs. OOST programs are typically covered by four revenue sources: parent fees, private funds, public funds, and in-kind contributions. Since low-income parents typically can only cover nominal fees, OOST efforts targeting low-income children often face funding obstacles.

Other potential barriers to OOST participation among low-income youth include conflicting obligations (e.g. sibling care or employment), personal preferences, and attitudinal barriers such as disinterest or negative attitudes. Youth engagement is especially challenging for voluntary summer learning programs, although feasible if school systems partner with community-based providers to also offer enrichment options.

**Finding #5:** Other jurisdictions have used a variety of public finance approaches to generate revenue for OOST and other children’s services.

These public finance approaches often depend on the will of voters or changes to state law to permit increased taxation. These include:

- Special Taxing Districts that raised $100 million for Miami-Dade’s Children’s Trust;
- Special Property Taxes that raised $32 million for Seattle and $15 million for Portland;
- Property Tax and Budget Set Asides that allocated $15 million to Oakland’s Fund for Youth and Children; and $59 million for San Francisco’s Children’s Investment Fund; and
- Fees and Narrow Taxes that generated $13 million from beer taxes for preschools in Arkansas; and is anticipated to raise $91 million in soda taxes for pre-K in Philadelphia.

**Finding #6:** New property taxes or “sin taxes” analogous to other jurisdictions could raise tens of millions in new revenue to fund OOST and other children’s programs.

Adopting a new property tax like Miami-Dade’s Children’s Trust or a soft-drink tax like Philadelphia’s would raise between $83 and $84 million in new revenue for Montgomery County while more modest increases in property taxes implemented elsewhere could generate $27 to $66 million in additional revenue. Conversely, if the County implemented guaranteed property or budget set-asides analogous to other jurisdictions, it would be required to reallocate $66 to $97 million from current purposes to local children’s programs.

**OLO Recommendations for County Council and/or Children’s Opportunity Fund (COF):**

- **Conduct a needs assessment of current OOST programs** to map available options and identify service and quality gaps across the County;
- **Coordinate existing OOST programs in the County** to identify opportunities for expansion and collaboration among current OOST service providers; and
- **Conduct needs assessments and reviews of best practices for other potential COF investments** that may favorably impact the achievement gap, such as early childhood education, children’s behavioral health, and workforce development for youth.
Local Perspectives on Out of School Time

OLO Report 2018-2  December 5, 2017

Summary. This report responds to the Council’s request for OLO to assess the availability of and need for OOST activities locally. Overall, OLO finds that while OOST program offerings in Montgomery County generally align with parents’ priorities and preferences for OOST activities, many families face barriers in access to OOST, and providers face numerous challenges in serving low-income families.

Background. OLO defines out of school time (OOST) programs as any activity with adult supervision that occurs regularly outside of school hours and serves school-age children in groups. Research suggests that OOST activities can impact a wide range of youth outcomes. These include improving student attendance and year-to-year retention, increasing positive skills and beliefs, and improving educational outcomes such as on-time grade promotion. National data show, however, that OOST participation varies significantly depending on family income, race and ethnicity, and parental educational attainment.

OOST Landscape in Montgomery County. The provision of OOST programs in Montgomery County is varied and highly decentralized such that no single regulatory framework applies to all local OOST providers. The public and quasi-public entities that directly provide or fund OOST include:

- Montgomery County Public Schools;
- The County Government;
- The Housing Opportunities Commission;
- The Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families; and
- The Children’s Opportunity Fund.

Local nonprofit and for-profit organizations also offer OOST, and some of these receive public funding to support their programs. Additionally, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) often fundraise for and sponsor OOST programs and have a significant impact on the availability of OOST in individual schools.

Provider and Parent Surveys and Interviews. To examine the availability of OOST locally, OLO conducted two surveys. The first solicited information from OOST providers on the activities they offer and their perspectives on OOST in Montgomery County. The second, sent to local PTA chapters, gathered information from families on their experiences and preferences for OOST.

Of note, neither the provider or parent surveys were intended to produce statistical estimates on OOST provision or demand in the County. Instead, OLO used the surveys to learn more about provider and parent experiences with OOST. OLO also interviewed six OOST providers and conducted focus group interviews with parents. Four sets of findings emerge from the information analyzed and reviewed.

Finding #1: OOST program offerings generally align with parents’ priorities and preferences for OOST activities, though unmet need exists for bilingual programs.

OLO’s provider survey asked respondents about the programs and activities they offer. The most common category of activity offered was physical exercise and sports, followed by leadership and career skills. Their offerings generally align with parents’ priorities and preferences. However, in parent and provider interviews, OLO heard feedback that insufficient bilingual OOST programs exist in the County.
Finding #2: The role of PTAs in OOST provision varies and concerns exist that PTAs are ill-equipped to coordinate OOST programs. Some parents are also unsure of whether equity exists in OOST programs across schools. Survey data show that OOST-related activities vary among school PTAs. Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported that their PTAs advertised OOST program events; just over half reported that their PTAs coordinated OOST programs last school year. Several parents expressed concerns that their PTAs were ill-equipped to coordinate OOST; others shared feedback that disparities in OOST provision exist.

Finding #3: The cost of OOST programs is a concern with parents finding summer programs to be too expensive and OOST providers serving low-income families facing challenges in sustaining their programs. Most PTA survey respondents reported that summer camps are difficult to afford or unaffordable. OLO also heard feedback that programs for children with disabilities are either unavailable or unaffordable. OOST providers serving low-income families also reported having extremely limited funding for their programs despite increasing demand for their services, and facing difficulties in navigating funding.

Finding #4: Additional barriers to OOST provision and access include availability of transportation, the ability of providers to market their programs, and access to public space. The availability of transportation is a major determinant of the availability and accessibility of OOST, particularly in low-income communities. "Word of mouth" is the most common method used by OOST providers to market their programs and by parents to learn about programs. Finding information about OOST is a challenge for parents. Many OOST providers also find that the process for using public facilities to operate their programs is confusing, difficult, or unfair, or that the fees charged are too high.

Recommended Discussion Issues with Agency Representatives

1. **Opportunities to support OOST programming in high-poverty schools.** Given the challenges faced by PTAs in coordinating OOST, the Council may wish to discuss strategies such as funding afterschool coordinator positions for schools without comprehensive OOST initiatives in place.

2. **Strategies for enhancing OOST affordability and access.** The Council may wish to discuss ways to offset families’ summer program costs, support for providers in serving children with disabilities, and funding for transportation for OOST programs.

3. **Approaches for meeting demand for more bilingual programs.** The Council may wish to discuss opportunities to support OOST providers with hiring and training bilingual staff and to promote parent-led bilingual programs.

4. **County and MCPS roles in disseminating information on OOST programs.** The Council may wish to discuss whether opportunities exist to enhance or build on existing sources of information on OOST programs such as infoMONTGOMERY and the Child Care Resource and Referral Center.

5. **Opportunities to make the system for reserving and using public facilities more user-friendly.** The Council may wish to discuss with County Government representatives whether opportunities exist to make the ActiveMontgomery system more user-friendly for OOST providers and other users.
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 downtown and west County.

**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:  
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

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<th>Success Factors</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
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<td>High PTA participation</td>
<td>Lack of post-activity transportation</td>
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<td>Presence of an afterschool “champion”</td>
<td>Cost too high for many families</td>
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<td>Established culture of afterschool enrichment</td>
<td>Competition for available space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong, collaborative relationships among stakeholders</td>
<td>Limited availability of scholarships</td>
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<td>Dedication to time and effort required</td>
<td>Insufficient communication</td>
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<td>Motivated and engaging instructors</td>
<td>Low teacher stipends</td>
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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.