PreK & Early Head Start Parent Policy Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

Presentation to FCPS School Board

June 23, 2026

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Executive Summary

The FCPS Parent Policy Committee presents this comprehensive annual report on the PreK and Early Head Start program, documenting current operations, achievements, and recommendations for continued program excellence.

Program Scope and Impact

The report provides an overview of FCPS's PreK and Early Head Start EHS, encompassing the program's current state, impact, and measurable outcomes. Through detailed analysis of enrollment processes, service delivery, and student achievement data, the report reflects the program's critical role in preparing young learners for academic success while supporting families through comprehensive services.

Key Areas of Focus

The assessment covers six essential components: program structure and enrollment capacity, eligibility and enrollment procedures with current demographic data, strategic goal expansion efforts including early childhood inclusion classes, comprehensive services aligned with federal grant requirements, program impact and student outcome data, and recommendations for FCPS School Board consideration for program enhancement.

Summary of 2025-2026 PPC Recommendations

The Parent Policy Committee presents three recommendations to enhance program services for students and families:

Staffing
Include PreK students in school-based staffing formulas for Time to Teach (TTT), ensuring consistent access to specials classes for all students.

Extended Care
Provide access to PreK students for afterschool childcare and enrichment programs at schools, including on teacher workdays.

Strategic Program Expansion
Continue funding program expansion to increase the number of families the program can serve, including expanding who can qualify, such as higher income qualification or other situations, such as job loss or medical conditions.

Annual Charge of The Parent Policy Committee

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require the establishment and maintenance of a policy council at the agency level (i.e., Fairfax County Head Start) and a policy committee at the delegate level (i.e., FCPS). This policy committee must be composed of parents of currently enrolled children as a majority of its membership to:

- Involving parents in the design and implementation of the program
- Serve as an advisory committee for effective governance and improvement of the program

All FCPS PreK and Early Head Start (EHS) parents are invited to serve on the Parent Policy Committee (PPC) as a regional representative or to attend the PPC quarterly meetings. In addition, the PPC elects representatives to attend the Fairfax County Head Start Policy Council's monthly meetings.

The FCPS PreK and EHS PPC provides transparency and oversight of the Federal Head Start Grant budget, provides feedback to improve program services to families, and serves as an advisory to the FCPS School Board on how to continue to improve the program through a yearly school board report and presentation with recommendations chosen by PPC representatives and the executive board.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The work of the PreK and EHS program and the PPC recommendations are in direct alignment with the FCPS strategic plan, *Goal 1: Strong Start: PreK-12*. This year's recommendations support the following measures:

- ➔ *Measure A) Availability of Pre-K programs (including inclusive Pre-K) to meet community needs.*
- ➔ *Measure C) Early and consistent access to and preparation for advanced instruction and enrichment opportunities*

PreK and Early Head Start Program Overview

Program Vision

Every Child Ready to Learn

Program Cost and Scope

The FCPS PreK and EHS program provides high-quality preschool education and comprehensive services for students identified as having economic and educational risk factors. The purpose is to provide a strong start and develop kindergarten readiness skills, including academic and social-emotional skills.

The program operates by braiding funding from federal and state grants and local sources:

- Early Head Start Federal Grant
- Head Start Federal Grant
- Virginia Preschool Initiative State Funding
- FCPS and Fairfax County Local Funding
- Title 1

The total combined budget and cost per child can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. *PreK and EHS budget for FY 25*

Total Budget PreK & EHS	Cost Per Child Early Head Start	Cost Per Child PreK
$41,762,527	$35,980.65	$15,156.36

For the 2025-26 school year, the program was able to serve up to 2426 students in elementary school sites across FCPS. Table 2 shows the student slots in PreK and EHS across the division.

Table 2. *PreK and EHS Program Scope SY 25-26*

Program	FCPS School Sites	Number of Classrooms	Student Slots	Age of Students Served
PreK	78	136	2378	3 or 4 years old by Sept 30th
Early Head Start	3	6	48	Pregnant mothers, birth to 30 mo. old by Sept 30th
Total	**78**	**142**	**2426**	

Program Application and Eligibility

Both the Federal Head Start (HS) grant and the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) set out clear guidelines for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) to determine student eligibility for the programs.

As seen in Table 3, FCPS PreK and EHS program staff process over 5000 applications each year, including supporting families submitting applications, conducting family interviews to determine economic and educational risk factors, document collection, verification of proof of age, residency, and eligibility criteria, and enrollment at school sites.

Table 3. *FCPS PreK Applications by School Year*

SY 2022-23	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25	SY 2025-26
5029	5619	5345	5269

To meet ***Age*** eligibility, students in the PreK program must be 3 or 4 by September 30 of the school year, with priority given to four-year-olds. EHS serves pregnant mothers and children up to age 30 months by September 30. Infants may start in the EHS classroom at 6 weeks of age.

To meet ***Residency*** requirements, families must live in Fairfax County. Family applications are assigned to their base school or designated transportation feeder. When spaces become full at a PreK site, waitlisted families are offered a space at a nearby school with the option of providing their own transportation.

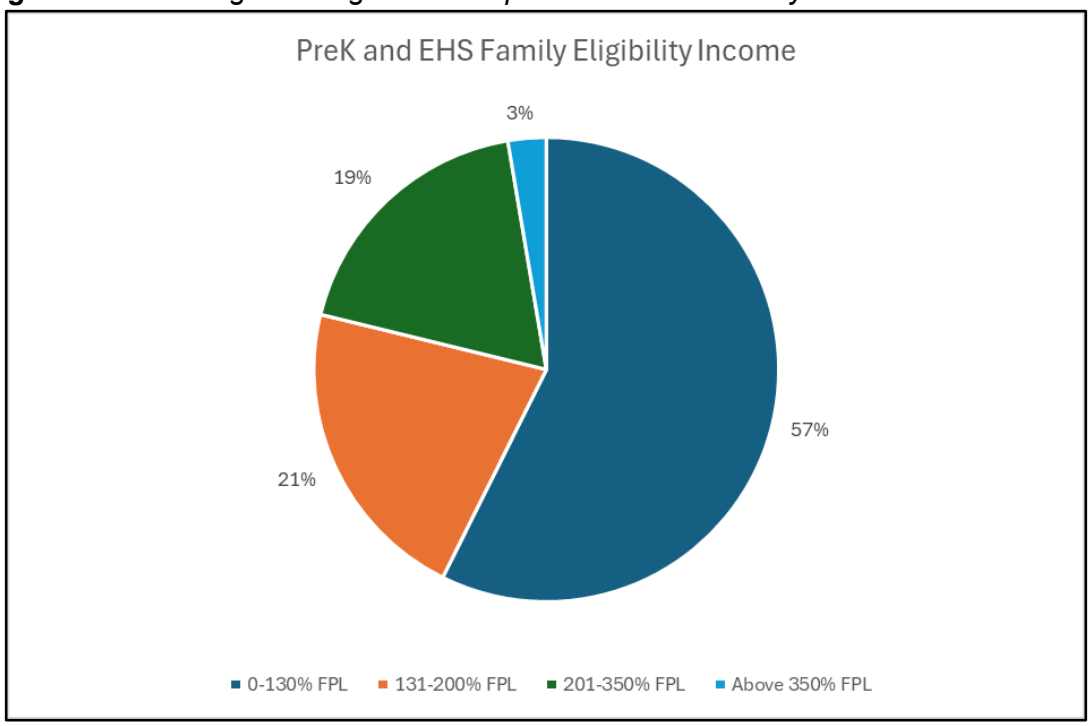
Families can be found eligible for the PreK and EHS program by having a combination of ***economic and educational risk factors***. Table 4 shows the program *Eligibility Criteria* that are used. Because demand exceeds available enrollment slots, students with multiple risk factors receive priority placement.

Table 4. *Criteria for Eligibility in PreK and EHS Programs*

Head Start Eligibility Criteria	Virginia Preschool Initiative Eligibility Criteria
Family income below Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Family receives public assistance Child is homeless Child is in foster care	Family income below 200% of FPL Child is homeless Parent or guardian did not graduate from high school Child is eligible for special education services Local Criteria (up to 15% of enrollment): income <350% FPL, parent incarceration, CPS referral, foster care

Income levels must be collected and reported to VDOE for all Virginia Preschool Initiative students during the fall verification report (October 1). See Figure 1 for income information for students enrolled in the programs for SY 2025-26. As more students are found eligible through IEP eligibility for the inclusion program, the percentage of students in the top two income categories have increased slightly from a total of 14% last year to 22% this year.

Figure 1. *Percentage of Program Participants Based on Family Income Information SY 25-26*

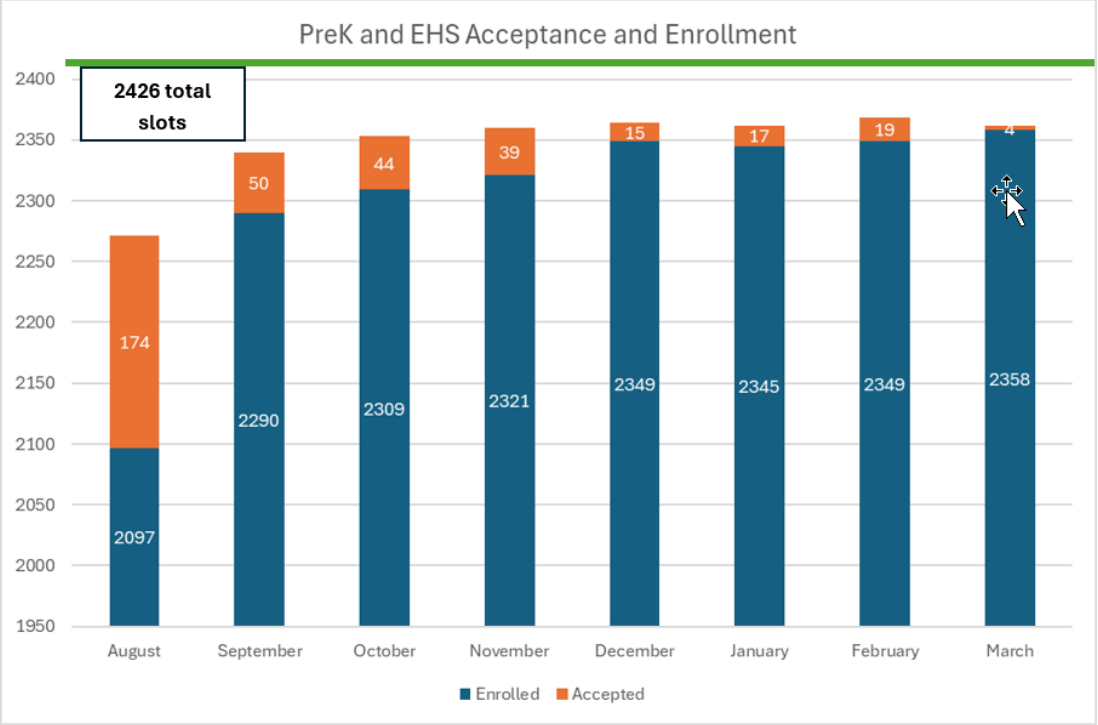


Program Enrollment

The PreK and EHS program works to maintain full enrollment in program slots. Application acceptance begins in January of each year for the following school year, to maximize available slots with enrolled students. Four-year-old applications are processed first, and students are accepted on a rolling schedule based on eligibility priority. Three-year-old applications are processed if they are transitioning from EHS or as needed to fill available spaces at their school site. If three-year-olds are not processed in the previous year, they are contacted to continue the application for their four-year-old year.

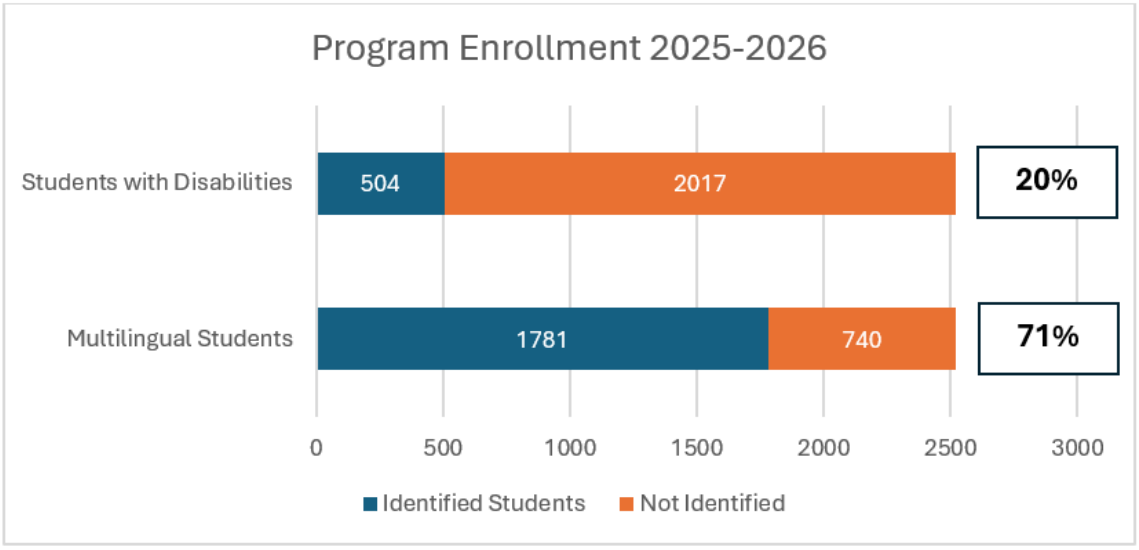
Program staff support families through enrollment and address barriers such as obtaining required medical documentation without insurance or established healthcare providers. Despite this support, barriers can delay school entry. High mobility among served families creates enrollment fluctuations requiring continuous slot filling. Figure 2 displays monthly acceptance and enrollment data for SY 2025-26, with gaps between enrollment and total slots reflecting student mobility and minimal unfilled slots due to insufficient eligible students in specific feeder areas. During SY 25-26, 189 students started the program but then dropped enrollment for various reasons such as moving, while 222 additional students have started after the fall September 30th enrollment verification.

Figure 2. *Number of Students Accepted & Enrolled at End of Month Aug.- Mar. SY 25-26*



The students enrolled in the PreK and EHS program represent a diverse population of students who receive a strong start for kindergarten readiness. Figure 3 shows available data for students with disabilities and multilingual students served in the program.

Figure 3. *Percentage of PreK and EHS Enrollment Identified as SWD or Multilingual Learner*



Program Waitlist

Both Head Start and VPI require programs to maintain a waitlist to fill slots that are vacated and to measure unmet need. Children are accepted from the waitlist based on priority. If parents can provide transportation, a child on the waitlist may also be placed at a non-feeder school site if space is available.

The waitlist varies throughout the year and from site to site, depending on community need. Information is shared with community-based partners to maximize the number of students served before kindergarten. Table 5 shows the number of children who remained on the waitlist at the end of April over the past 4 years.

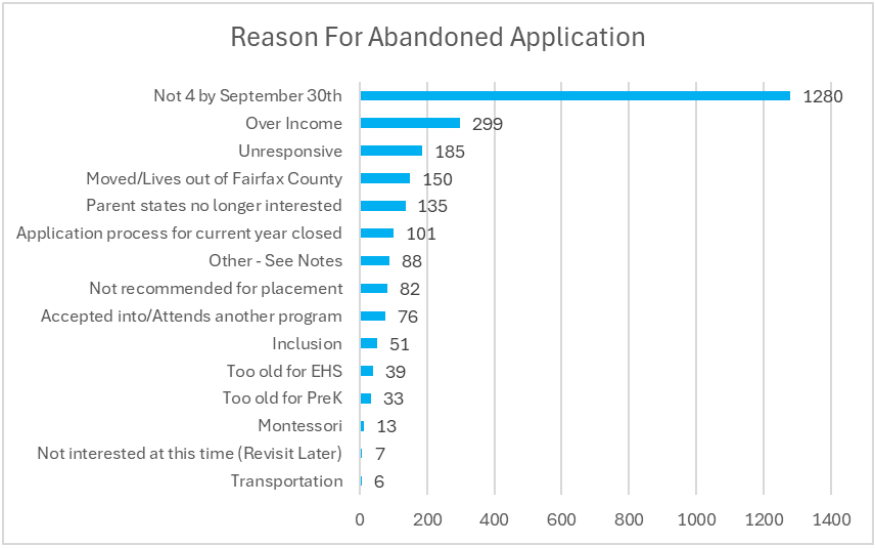
Table 5. *Number of Eligible Children Remaining on the Waitlist in April of Each Year*

April 2023	April 2024	April 2025	April 2026
288	429	474	404

One factor that has influenced the waitlist over the past several years includes categorical eligibility for all students with disabilities in the 2022-23 school year, which corresponds with a large increase in the waitlist the following year as more students were found eligible. A second factor is the expansion of PreK slots in the program by 552 over the past 3 years, which could contribute to a decrease in the number of families on the waitlist.

Alternatively, for students who are accepted or on the waitlist, some applicants are not found eligible or may not complete the process. Figure 4 shows data on why applications have been abandoned during the 2025-26 school year. The largest category is three-year-olds who apply and are not processed due to no space at their neighborhood school, as the program prioritizes 4 year olds.

Figure 4. *Reported Reason for Not Completing Application to Enrollment SY 25-26*



PreK Program Expansion and Inclusion

In alignment with the FCPS strategic plan, the PreK program has expanded to serve more students, including students with disabilities. Table 6 shows the number of classrooms and slots over the past four school years, with a projection for SY 26-27.

Table 6. *PreK Program Scope with Inclusion by Year*

Type of Classroom	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	SY 25-26	Projected SY 26-27
Traditional PreK Classrooms	105	110	107	43	19
PreK Inclusion Classrooms	5	7	61	133	166
Total Full Day PreK Slots	1826	2064	2198	2378	2486
Schools with PreK and/or PreK Inclusion Classrooms	63	66	73	78	83

Traditional PreK classrooms have always served students with disabilities and continue to do so. Typically, PreK classrooms have a ratio below 25% of students with disabilities, which approximates natural proportions. The students included in these classrooms may have Resource Level Early Childhood Special Education Services or may be dually enrolled in PreK for half the day and Early Childhood Class-Based (ECCB) for half the day. Due to nearly twice as many preschool-aged students with disabilities being served compared to general education students, this creates an imbalance of students for natural inclusion proportions to serve all students with disabilities in this way.

The PreK program, in partnership with Early Childhood Identification and Services (ECID&S) implemented several inclusive classroom models to increase the number of students with disabilities accessing the PreK curriculum with typically developing peers. These programs fit the state definition of early childhood inclusion, with the classroom make-up having 50% or more students without IEPs. The PreK inclusion classroom model's initial implementation was SY24-25 and will continue to expand. The four inclusion models are listed here:

Single Teacher Inclusion Model

These classes are staffed with one dually certified teacher and one instructional assistant. Each single-teacher inclusion classroom can serve 13 students: eight general education and five students with disabilities. The teacher provides direct services and serves as the case manager for the students with disabilities. All students attend full-day sessions five days a week. ***(SY25-26 – 12)***

Itinerant Inclusion Model

An ECSE-endorsed teacher and instructional assistant work between two PreK classrooms, collaborating and co-teaching with the general education PreK teaching team. The ECSE teacher provides direct services to individual students with disabilities and serves as the case manager for students with IEPs in both classrooms. Each classroom serves 14 income-eligible students and four students with disabilities; all students attend full-day sessions five days a week. ***(SY25-26 – 40)***

Co-teaching Inclusion Model

An ECSE-endorsed teacher co-teaches all day long in one classroom with the general education teaching team and serves as the case manager for the students with IEPs. The classroom has 18 students total: twelve general education students and six students with IEPs. All students attend full-day sessions five days a week. ***(New for SY26-27)***

Paired Classroom Inclusion Model

A special education preschool class (ECCB or PAC) is paired with a general education PreK class, allowing for flexible grouping across the classrooms. With two teachers and two classrooms, this model allows for inclusion while maintaining enrollment capacity for both special education students and income- eligible students. This model occurs in all schools where ECSE and general education classes are co-located. Students receiving half-day special education services in this model receive the majority (2 hours daily) of their instruction engaging in whole-class or small-group lessons with their general education peers. ***(SY25-26 – 41 classroom pairs)***

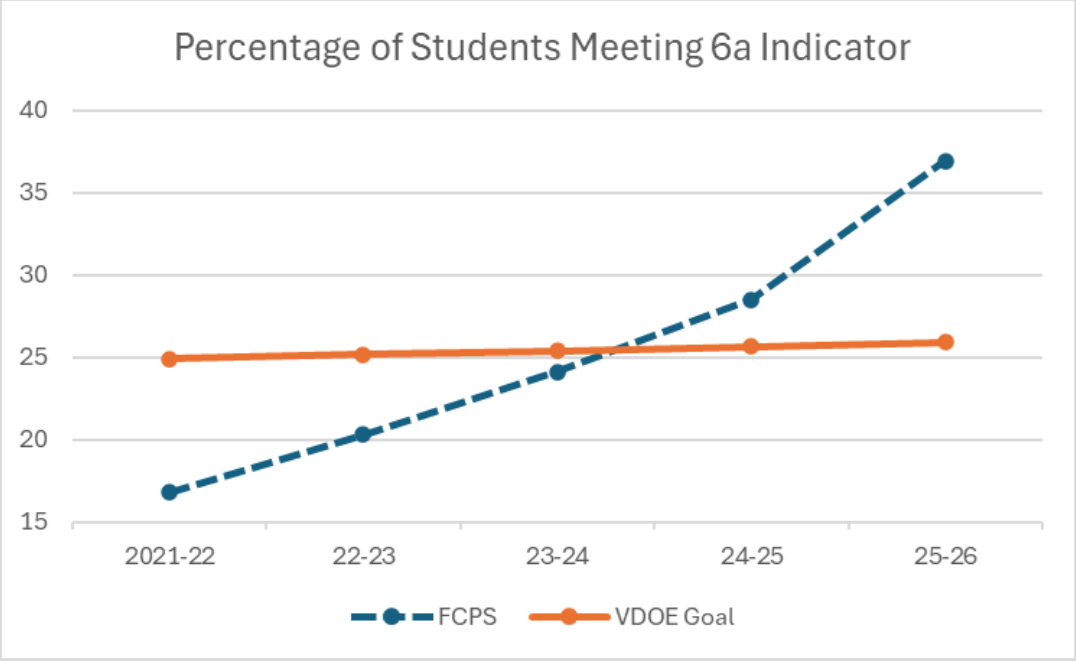
Professional Development to Support the Inclusion Expansion

The PreK and EHS program staff have worked closely with the ECID&S staff in order to provide professional development to build teacher capacity for inclusion. This year, a new PD series was created to support teachers implementing the Preschool Autism Classroom Paired Model to highlight some of the specific needs in these classrooms. In addition, ongoing professional development in early childhood curriculum and best practices, co-teaching, behavior management, as well as joint program staff development day sessions on academic content and social-emotional learning have been key components of this work.

Inclusion State Indicator Data

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has set Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) with an annual goal for Indicator 6a. Children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program. With the work that FCPS PreK and ECID&S have been doing together toward increasing inclusion, the division has begun to exceed the state goal for this indicator, as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. *Percent of Students Aged 3-5 Years Old Meeting Indicator 6a for Inclusion*



Program Services and Grant Requirements

The PreK and EHS program operates following FCPS initiatives and policies, while adhering to Head Start Program Performance Standards and Virginia Preschool Initiative Guidelines. These frameworks establish the requirements for delivering high-quality preschool experience. This report outlines the key services that fulfill these requirements, including:

- Required Participation in Virginia Quality Birth to 5 (VQB5)
- Education and Child Development Program Services
    - Curriculum and Assessment
    - Professional Development
    - Support for Multilingual Learners
    - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS for Academic Readiness, Behavior, and Wellness)
- Health (including Nutrition and Mental Health)
- Family Engagement
- Support for Children with Disabilities
- Transition Services
- Human Resources Management
- Governance and Community Partnership
- Transportation

Participation in VQB5

From the VDOE *VQB5 - Virginia's Quality Measurement and Improvement System* website: To prepare all children for kindergarten, Virginia's early childhood system must ensure that all children have quality teaching and learning experiences that meet their unique needs. In response to state law, Virginia has

developed the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) to measure and help improve the quality of all publicly-funded birth-to-five classrooms and support families to choose quality programming across program types. All publicly funded birth-to-five early childhood programs are required to participate in VQB5 on an annual basis (VQB5 Participation Requirements). VQB5 Quality Profiles include information about performance on quality measurements and other topics of interest to families, policymakers, and the general public. View VQB5 Quality Profiles at: EarlyChildhoodQuality.doe.virginia.gov

VQB5 measures the quality of infant, toddler, and preschool teaching and learning based on two nationally recognized quality indicators: interactions and curriculum.

Measuring Quality Interactions

The quality of teacher-child interactions is measured with the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool. VQB5 sites are required to complete two types of CLASS observations: local and external observations.

- During SY 2025-26, the PreK and EHS program:
  - Completed 284 Local Observations with feedback and ongoing coaching
  - Participated in more than 110 External Observations

Measuring Use of Quality Curriculum

Quality is measured through the optional use of a comprehensive curriculum that aligns with Virginia's early learning and development standards.

- PreK and inclusion classrooms use the FCPS PreK Program of Studies, an approved VDOE curriculum.
- EHS classrooms use Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos, an approved VDOE curriculum.

As part of VQB5, FCPS PreK and EHS are also required to be part of Ready Region Capital Area and must participate in required training and activities, such as planning for Coordinated Enrollment to increase parent access to quality early childhood experiences.

Education and Child Development Program Services

The PreK and EHS team work to meet grant compliance and ensure a high-quality educational program for all students through a variety of supports.

Curriculum

The education team writes and updates the FCPS PreK Program of Studies to continue to align with the Virginia Standards of Learning, Virginia Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The Education Team builds and aligns curriculum resources and tools with both the FCPS Equitable Access to Literacy Plan and commitments in the FCPS Strategic Plan. The team develops and refines instructional resources and guides school teams in using resources to plan for teaching and learning. The team continues to support teaching teams with integrating and implementing Heggerty Phonological Awareness (Early PreK) and Alphabet Animal Friends to target foundational literacy skills. The team continues to support teachers by embedding

Computational Algebraic Thinking (CAT) standards into math teaching and learning through the use of Sense-Making Routines and Math Focus Lessons. A focus on computational algebraic thinking skills lays a strong foundation for problem-solving skills and math readiness skills.

Social-emotional learning is a cornerstone of the PreK and Early Head Start curriculum. All PreK classes use the *Second Step* Early Learning curriculum to build students' social skills and self-regulation, and teachers receive training in Conscious Discipline classroom practices during their first two years in the program. In SY25-26, professional development focused on embedding SEL throughout the instructional day, strengthening Tier 1 implementation, and equipping teachers to use the developmental continuum and available resources to plan targeted Tier 2 classroom support. EHS teachers use the Creative Curriculum for instructional planning, which is a developmentally appropriate curriculum for infants and toddlers; Creative Curriculum includes monitoring tools to support the unique needs of individual children as they grow in all areas of development.

Assessment

All PreK students participate in the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) and the Virginia Language and Literacy Screening System (VALLSS). The PreK program staff monitors training and completion of assessments as well as facilitates quarterly data dialogues to interpret student data and plan instruction to increase student outcomes. Throughout the year, PreK teachers use performance assessments and the Early Childhood Rubric (ECR) Assessment Tool to monitor student progress towards foundational readiness skills. EHS teachers monitor progress using Teaching Strategies Gold.

Professional Development and Coaching

In SY 25-26, the PreK and Early Childhood Special Education programs collaborated to provide professional development on supporting foundational literacy skills as well as foundational math with early numeracy through explicit instruction and intentional guided play experiences. To build teacher capacity for explicit instruction of foundational readiness skills, the Education Team facilitated a cohort of teachers engaged in LETRS for Early Childhood Educators, as well as Computer Science in Early Childhood PD series. To meet Head Start and VPI requirements, Resource Teachers facilitated coaching visits and virtual bi-weekly Collaborative Learning Team (CLT) meetings.

Support for Multilingual Learners

The PreK program creates a language-rich environment where students develop communication skills through authentic peer interactions. Using Virginia ELDS standards and a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum, teachers focus on language, communication, and emergent literacy to support language acquisition. Daily routines incorporate Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies and high-leverage practices like interactive read-alouds to enhance oral language development. The Early Childhood Rubric (ECR) Assessment Tool enables teachers to monitor students' developmental language progress. Teachers were provided with new big book resources to support GLAD strategies that target building academic vocabulary.

MTSS

The PreK and EHS program supports students through the multi-tiered system of support. Teachers participate in solution-seeking conversations as part of their collaborative learning team to leverage strategies to support students. If needed, additional support is provided through a consultation request, classroom observation, and coaching. The PreK and EHS team also support a core team process when additional developmentally appropriate interventions are needed. Program staff, including Early Childhood and Disabilities Resource teachers, Speech and Language Pathologists, Mental Health Specialists, Family Services Specialists, and Health and Nutrition Specialists, collaborate with teachers and school-based staff to support a variety of academic readiness, behavioral, and social-emotional needs through intervention plans and data collection. Table 7 shows the number of teacher consultation requests by category by the end of May 2026. The total number of MTSS consultations has decreased substantially during SY 25-26 from the past two years, as seen in Table 8. Some potential factors for this decrease are the increased staffing, co-teaching, and collaboration in teaching teams in the inclusion classrooms, and additional professional development on behavior and social-emotional learning.

Table 7. Teacher Consultation Requests for PreK and EHS Students Aug-May SY 2025-26

Area of Reported Need	Number of Consult Requests	Percentage of Total Consult Requests
Readiness instructional, literacy, math, SEL	10	7%
Speech articulation & intelligibility	70	52%
Behavior self-regulation and safety	55	40%
Wellness health, nutrition, attendance, family concerns	1	1%
Total Consultation Requests	136	

Table 8. *Number of PreK and EHS MTSS consultations submitted by school year.*

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
234	**247**	**136**

Health and Nutrition

The PreK and EHS Health and Nutrition Services Team is dedicated to ensuring that students are healthy, safe, and prepared to learn. Staff collaborate with parents to verify that grant-related and school health entry requirements, including immunizations, physical examinations, dental assessments, blood lead levels, and hemoglobin tests are current. They also identify any chronic conditions or allergies to facilitate safe classroom participation. Students undergo basic screenings to assess developmental milestones, vision, hearing, blood pressure, hemoglobin levels, height, and weight.

According to Head Start Program Performance Standards, ongoing medical and dental care are essential. Staff connect families with community resources tailored to their individual needs and work collaboratively with the Fairfax County Health Department and authorized county health clinics through partnership meetings to establish medical and dental homes.

All students enrolled in the PreK and EHS programs receive breakfast, lunch, and snacks at no cost to families. FCPS Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) provides these meals through the USDA's School Lunch and Breakfast Program for PreK students and the Child and Adult Care Food Program for EHS students. Registered dietitians collaborate with families, healthcare providers, and FNS to accommodate allergies, medical conditions, special diets, and cultural considerations.

Mental Health

Through a trauma-informed approach, the PreK and EHS program supports the social-emotional health of students, families, and staff. Six Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists serve 142 classrooms across 78 schools, coaching teachers in Second Step Early Learning and Conscious Discipline implementation, conducting observations, supporting data collection, participating in MTSS processes, and developing crisis safety plans and interventions. Additionally, they connect families experiencing trauma to community mental health resources and collaborate with school administrators and clinical teams to ensure consistent responses during student emotional escalation.

The program addresses increasing student mental health challenges and social-emotional regulation difficulties, including unsafe and disruptive behaviors. Mental Health Specialists help school-based teams adhere to Head Start and Virginia Preschool Initiative policies limiting exclusionary discipline and meet new Head Start requirements for monthly mental health consultations in all classrooms.

Family Engagement

The PreK and EHS Family Services Team deliver collaborative, responsive services essential to high-quality early childhood education. Using the Office of Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) framework, the team engages parents, children, and communities through strength- based processes focused on school readiness through culturally responsive, goal-oriented relationship- building strategies.

Family Services staff collaborate with program staff and county agencies to support Head Start and VPI families while connecting them to community resources. Student readiness strategies include individualized enrollment appointments, Family Orientation, ongoing Family Center Meetings, Parent Policy Committee governance participation, social media and newsletter communications for community resources and program updates, kindergarten transition support with virtual parenting curriculum access to *Ready Rosie* for increased family engagement.

Family Services Specialists guide students and families through the MTSS process, provide crisis intervention support, and connect families to community resources. Families enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start receive individualized Family Partnership Agreements (FPAs) to establish goals and ensure alignment with program standards. Through intentional, goal-directed relationships, the team works to cultivate school-ready children, resilient families, and thriving communities.

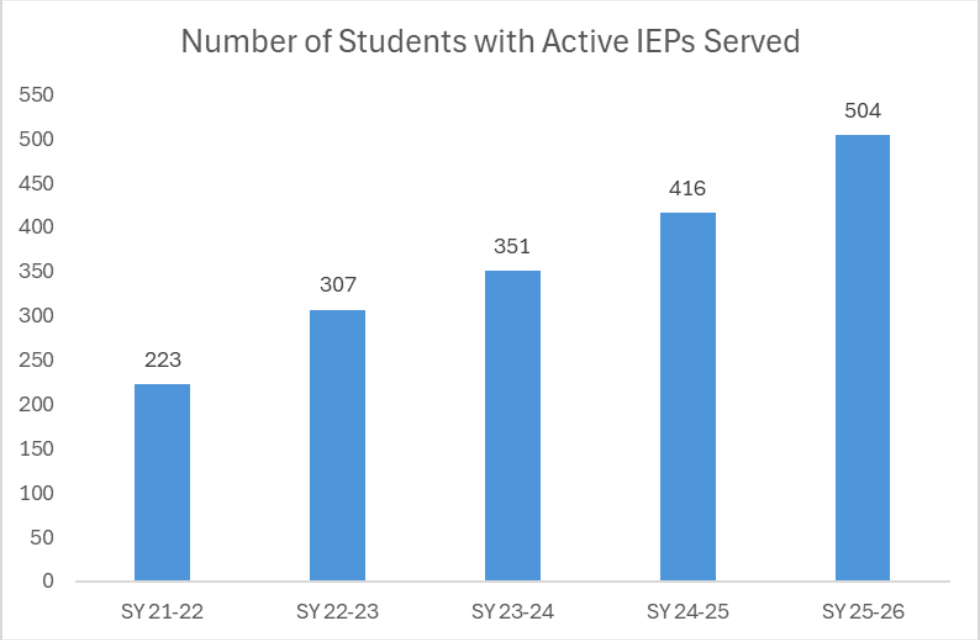
For Early Head Start, services can begin during pregnancy, with Family Services and Health & Nutrition staff providing education, support, and resources to ensure optimal prenatal care before a classroom transition.

Support for Children with Disabilities

The FCPS PreK and EHS Special Service Team support the learning and development of students in PreK and EHS classrooms, with a focus on those with disabilities or suspected disabilities. Through the MTSS process, the team collaborates with teaching staff, families, and children to implement early childhood best practices and targeted interventions across all tiers of instruction. The team coordinates screenings in developmental, social- emotional, hearing, and speech-language areas to identify students in need of additional support. When students are referred to Child Find, the team assists families and educators throughout the evaluation process.

The PreK and EHS program continue to serve a growing number of students with disabilities or developmental delays eligible for special education. Figure 6 illustrates the number of students with active IEPs or IFSPs served over the past four years.

Figure 6. *Number of Students with Disabilities Served in PreK and EHS*



In addition to supporting these students with IEPs during SY 25-26, the Disabilities Team has provided the following services:

- 410 parents have been contacted, and children screened due to a parent-reported concern during the initial family interview
- 80 students received individual speech-language screenings.
- 249 students have been referred to ECID&S
    - 236 of these students were referred for evaluations (95%)
    - 218 of these students met eligibility criteria (96%)
    - 9 of these students have eligibility pending

Transition Services

Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative program standards require implementing strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families. This includes support through communication and collaboration with parents of transitioning students, between educators and with the receiving school of transitioning students, between programs of transitioning students, and to nurture a whole community commitment to school success for all children. These strategies and practices include:

- Parent-Teacher conferences, held at least twice a year
- Home visits and orientation at the beginning of each school year
- End of the year home visit/parent conference
- PreK family center meeting with the topic of transition to kindergarten
- School-based Kindergarten orientations and registration events
- Success in Kindergarten Parent Strategies Resource, available online in 8 languages
- Transition-related information shared with the receiving teacher (assessment data,

progress summary reports, transition plans)
- Collaboration with Fairfax County Head Start and VPI staff for transitioning students
- Engaging in the Neighborhood School Readiness Project (NSRP) and the Opportunity Neighborhood teams

Of enrolled PreK and PreK Inclusion students, 91% will be transitioning to kindergarten for the next school year. Forty seven percent of EHS students transitioned to PreK in the SY 25-26.

Human Resources Management

PreK and EHS classrooms must meet grant requirements for staffing, professional development, and ratios that are unique from most other FCPS requirements.

Adult-Child Ratio - PreK classrooms that serve a majority of four-year-old students maintain a teacher ratio of 1 teaching team member to 10 students at all times, including rest time and teacher planning time. PreK classrooms are currently staffed with one teacher and one IA for 18 students. EHS classrooms may have no more than 8 students, with each adult having no more than 3 students under their primary care. FCPS EHS classrooms are staffed at 3 teachers to 8 students, so that ratio is always maintained throughout the day.

Planning Time - PreK and EHS teachers are entitled under their contracts to planning time of 300 minutes per week, with up to 60 minutes of that time being for their Collaborative Learning Team (CLT). PreK teachers are not in the schools' staffing formula for Time To Teach (TTT), so specials, such as music, PE, and art, aren't available to cover teacher planning time. The PreK office provides sub funding for 300 minutes per week for each teacher to get a planning time sub. In the event that a sub does not show up for the planning time and cannot be rescheduled, the school is responsible for ensuring the teacher receives coverage for planning to meet collective bargaining requirements.

Educational Requirements for Instructional Assistants - Head Start standards require teacher assistants to have a higher level of education than other elementary IA positions. For PreK, a Child Development Associates (CDA) equivalent certification or higher degree, or working toward meeting the requirements within 2 years, is required. EHS teacher assistants must have a CDA credential or a comparable credential and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Professional Development - Head Start and VPI program standards require at least 15 hours of professional development specific to early childhood topics and curriculum to be provided. The PreK office meets this requirement through the half-day that is available on most staff development days, plus professional development in the monthly CLT data dialogue.

Governance and Community Partnerships

Governance - The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) state that each agency must establish and maintain a policy council at the agency level (i.e., Fairfax County Head Start) and a policy committee at the delegate level (i.e., FCPS). A program must establish a policy

committee composed exclusively of parents of currently enrolled children as a majority. Throughout the 2025-26 school year, FCPS PreK and EHS parents had the opportunity to serve on the Parent Policy Committee (PPC). PPC functions as an advisory committee to the FCPS Superintendent. Parents had the opportunity to run for and be elected to the Executive Board and regional representative positions, and PPC selected parents as policy council representatives. The PPC Executive Board was responsible for planning and facilitating quarterly PPC meetings, as well as preparing the presentation for the school board. All PPC members had the opportunity to learn more about program operations and provide feedback and recommendations to the program, as well as contribute to the creation of the annual recommendations to the school board. The feedback provided by the policy council has had an impact on recruitment strategies, family communications, and family engagement strategies.

Community Partnerships - FCPS PreK and EHS program staff are active members on a variety of teams and work groups in the county (e.g., Fairfax County Head Start comprehensive service area work groups, VPI Steering Committee, Ready Region Capital Area, Neighborhood School Readiness Project, Opportunity Neighborhood, Trauma Informed Community Network, and Fairfax Early Childhood Transition Team).

Transportation

During SY 25-26, the PreK program served students from 132 different base elementary schools across Fairfax County. Many of the families that the PreK program serves do not have access to personal transportation, and VPI guidelines state that transportation “must never be a barrier” for families to access the program. The PreK and EHS program has worked collaboratively with the FCPS Transportation department to increase access to bus transportation for students at feeder schools through co-locating with Early Childhood Special Education feeder sites and increasing some routes to ensure there is a feeder site for each school. There has also been more alignment with routes between early childhood programs, so more students can access inclusion at sites where it is available. Please note, transportation may still be cited as a reason for a family not accessing an available slot outside of their base school or feeder site, due to a long waitlist at their base school.

Program Impact

Academic Impact

The FCPS PreK and EHS program serves students with economic and educational risk factors that could impact school success in elementary school and beyond. All students are assessed at the beginning and the end of the year using the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) assessments and the Virginia Language and Literacy Screener System (VALLS). The Early Mathematics Assessment (EMAS) measures a variety of early math skills, including numeracy, computation, patterning, and geometry, as part of the VKRP. Throughout the year, teachers teach and practice kindergarten readiness skills in the areas of Math, Literacy, and Social-Emotional skills to prepare students to enter kindergarten ready to be successful. On the assessments, reaching the goal of skill developmental bands growing or strong is more difficult in the spring with higher benchmarks or more challenging tasks, so a child may not move up bands while still making growth.

In both Math and Literacy, data show that students make gains between the fall and spring assessment windows. Figure 7 shows FCPS 4-year-old student growth made from fall to spring assessment windows during SY 25-26 based on preliminary data. In each assessment, more students are in the expected developmental bands of growing or strong in Spring compared to Fall.

After students' transition to kindergarten, the impacts of a PreK experience on their academic readiness continue. Figure 8 shows preliminary data from EDSL for the current school year of kindergarten students with PreK experience compared to all Kindergarten students. Students with PreK experience outperform students without PreK experience on both Fall and Spring kindergarten VALLS and VKRP assessments.

Figure 7. *VKRP and VALLS Developmental Bands Fall to Spring SY 25-26 for 4-Year-Olds*

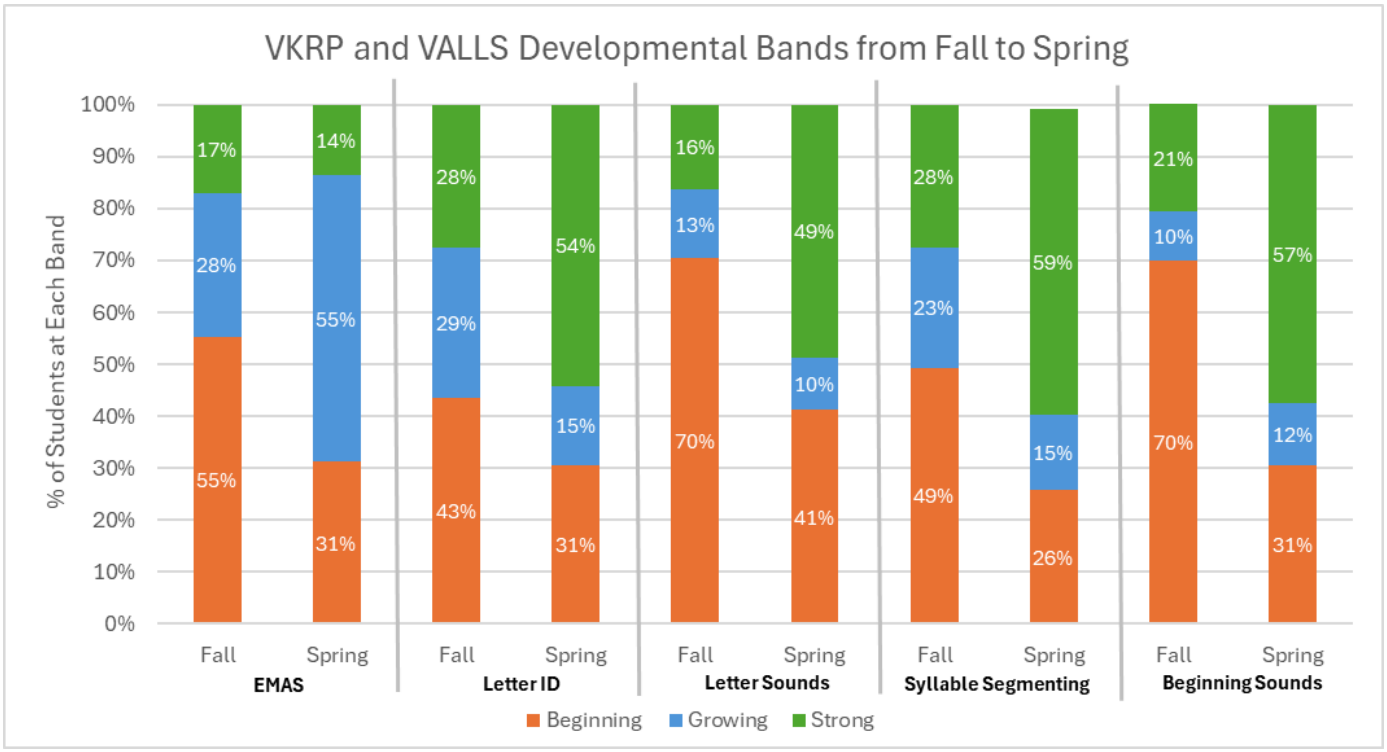
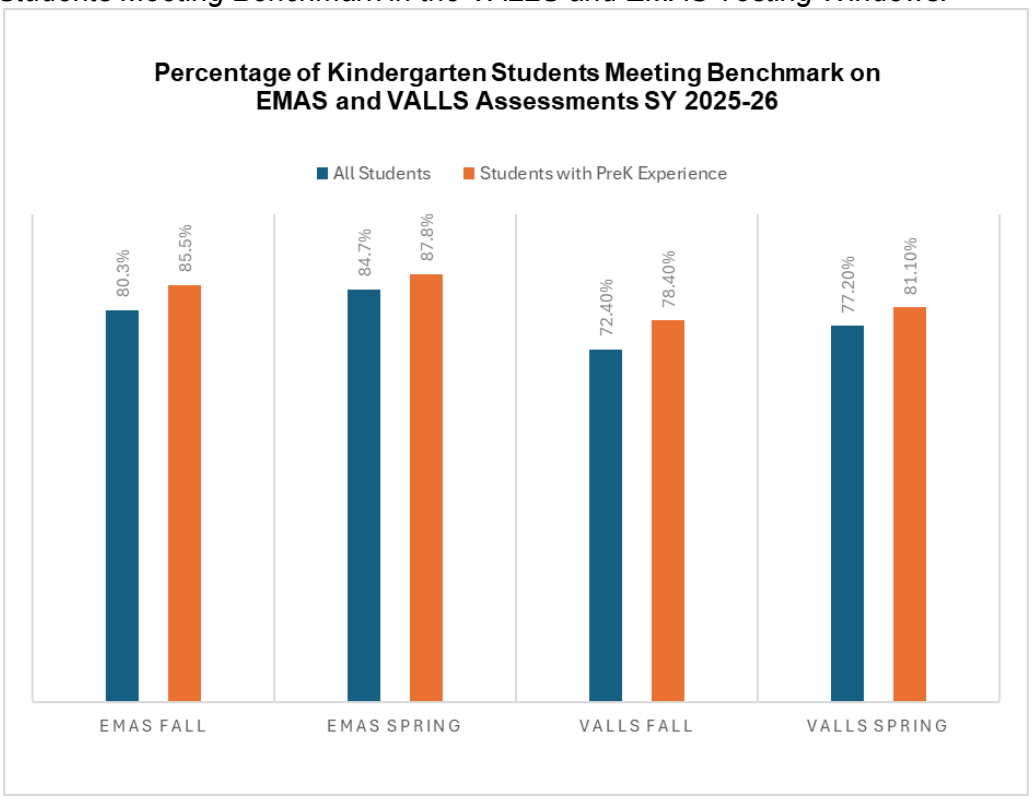


Figure 8. *K Students Meeting Benchmark in the VALLS and EMAS Testing Windows.*



Impact on Families

Parents across the program and on the PreK and EHS parent policy committee have shared their own anecdotal stories about how having the opportunity to access this high-quality program has impacted their child and their families. This is a brief sample of some of those stories shared at the PPC meetings:

- *One family shared that their son was a "covid baby," and starting the program has helped him with his social interactions and learning from others before kindergarten. The child used to hide from other children, and now he is very communicative and social.*
- *One family shared that having their child attend the program has allowed them to access work and educational opportunities that weren't available before because their child is in school.*
- *One family shared that their child loves going to school so much more than they liked going to the previous daycare. She loves books now and doing all kinds of learning activities.*
- *One family shared that nutritious food is very important in the program; they know their child always has food available at school.*
- *One family shared that it has really helped them out financially. After the loss of a job, they ended up in a situation, and it really saved their family. Sending the child to private daycare cut into their other budget, such as for food.*
- *One family shared that the program has promoted confidence and independence for their child, and the child is developing her own voice.*

Looking to the future

The PreK and EHS program continues working toward the FCPS Strategic Plan Goal 1, including "Availability of PreK programs (including inclusive Pre-K) to meet community need."

There are a variety of data sources available to use in order to continue to identify areas to expand program access.

- The map in Appendix A shows the percentage of students in each pyramid who entered kindergarten without a PreK experience for SY 25-26.
- The map in Appendix B shows the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in each pyramid who entered kindergarten without a PreK experience for SY 25-26.
- The map in Appendix C shows where early childhood programs are currently located, including PreK, Early Childhood Class-Based, and Preschool Autism Classes.
- Appendix D includes the waitlist for the PreK program by program site.

Additional considerations are federal and state grant funding for Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. For FY26, VPI is expected to reallocate projected funded slots to previous years' levels, with minimal slots available for expansion across the commonwealth. This reallocation meets the funding needs for the PreK program for SY 25-26 but may impact future expansion funding available.

PPC Recommendations to the School Board

The Parent Policy Committee presents three recommendations to enhance program services for students and families. These recommendations were approved by the Parent Policy Committee during their May 12, 2026, meeting.

Recommendation 1

Include PreK students in school-based staffing formulas for Time to Teach (TTT), ensuring consistent access to specials classes for all students.

PreK students are not included in the staffing formulas for the elementary schools where they attend. This means that at many schools, students do not have access to special classes such as music, PE, or art for enrichment in line with *Strategic Plan Goal 1.e*. It has been an ongoing recommendation from the parent policy committee to guarantee all early childhood students' access to these classes. Many families who are eligible for PreK through the economic and educational risk factors do not have access to these types of enrichment activities in community settings due to cost or inability to find programs that are able to serve students with disabilities.

Lack of access to consistent specials also impacts PreK teachers' ability to have planning time on a daily basis at most schools. Planning subs often come for a 5-hour block of time one day a week. PreK teachers at the same school often cannot coordinate common planning time if their planning time sub coverage is on different days. It is especially important for teachers co-teaching in the inclusion models to have common planning time together.

Recommendation 2

Provide access to PreK students for afterschool childcare and enrichment programs at schools, including on teacher workdays.

PreK students are not currently able to attend the School Aged Child Care (SACC) program that serves students K-6 in the elementary schools. The SACC program allows students to engage in enrichment activities and social interactions with students in a setting with fewer academic demands and can foster the development of more social skills with students from their communities.

Not having access to before or after care at or near the school site can be a barrier to many families who would qualify for the program due to economic eligibility, but who need access to full-day care due to their work schedule. Childcare centers and home-based childcare typically have full-day care to cover a parent's workday and have fewer teacher workdays when school is not available but may not offer the same kindergarten readiness benefits.

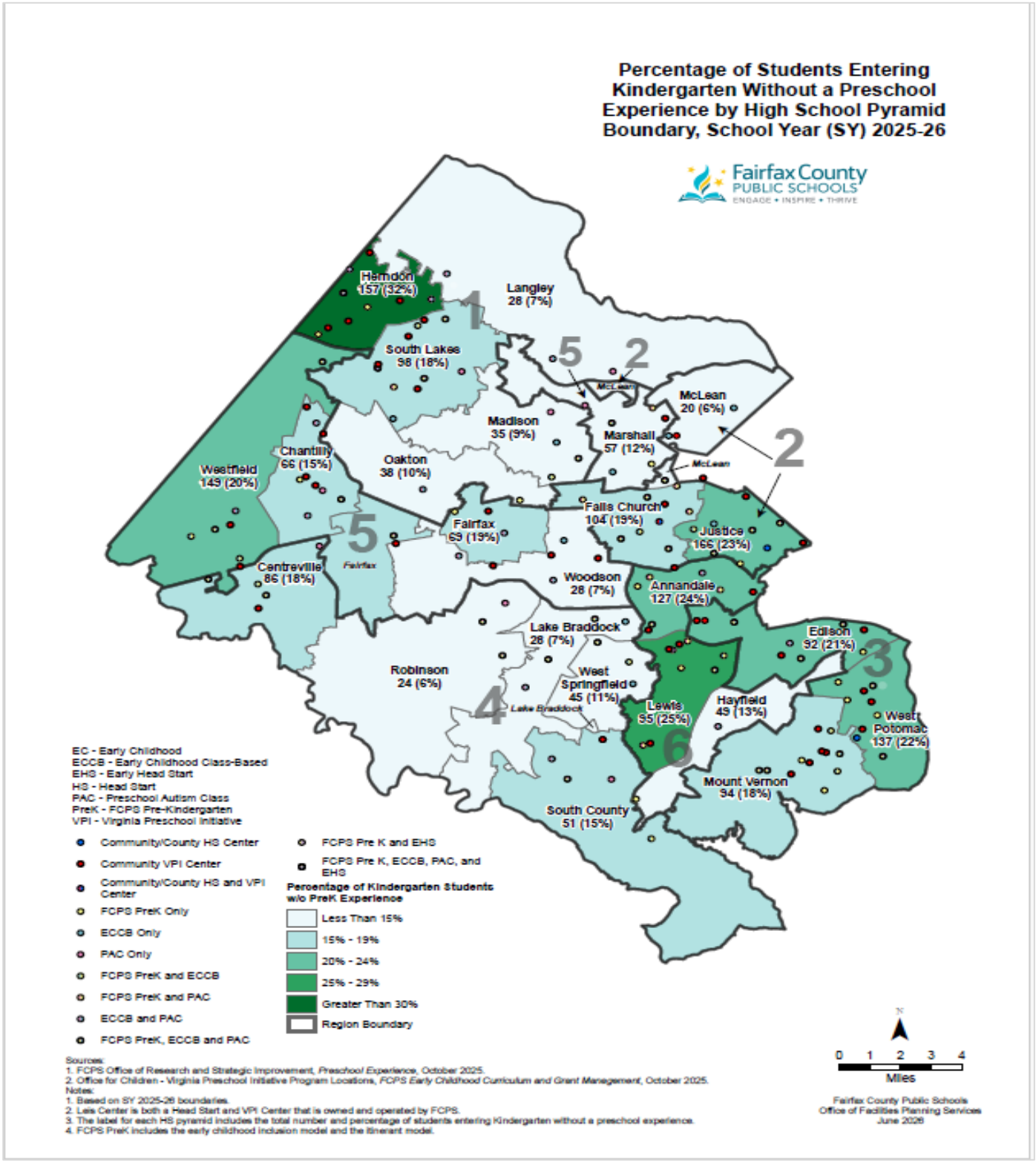
Recommendation 3

Continue funding program expansion to increase the number of families the program can serve, including expanding who can qualify, such as higher income qualifications or other situations, such as job loss or medical conditions.

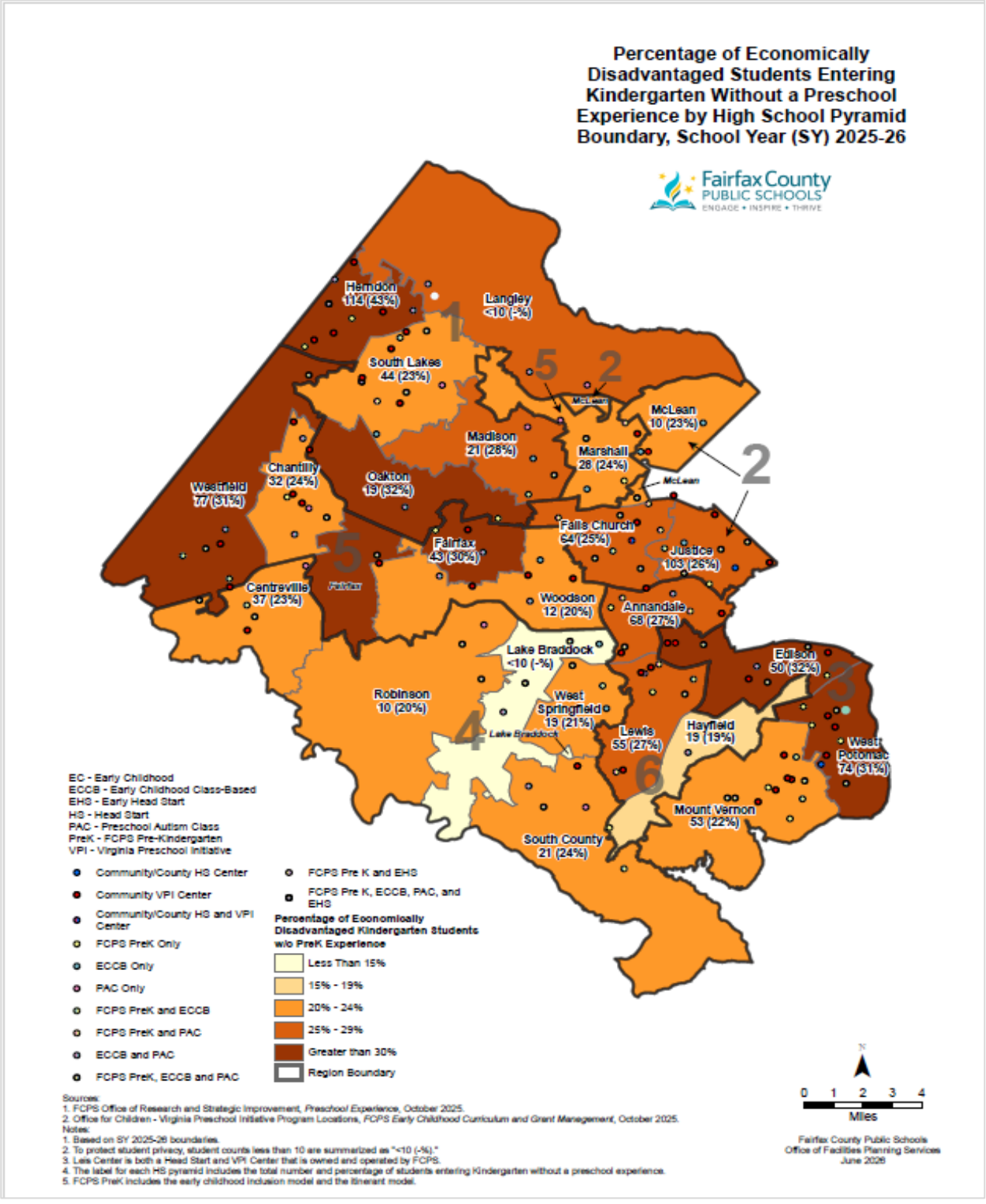
The PreK and EHS program continues to have an ongoing need for a waitlist in many areas of the county. Students who qualify for the program but have a higher family income may end up on the waitlist but may also not be able to afford private preschool due to the high cost of living in Fairfax County. Additionally, families who experience job loss or family emergencies such as medical conditions may not apply until program slots are already filled.

Continuing to expand PreK slots at schools where there is a waitlist ensures that more families will be able to access high-quality early childhood education to be ready for kindergarten.

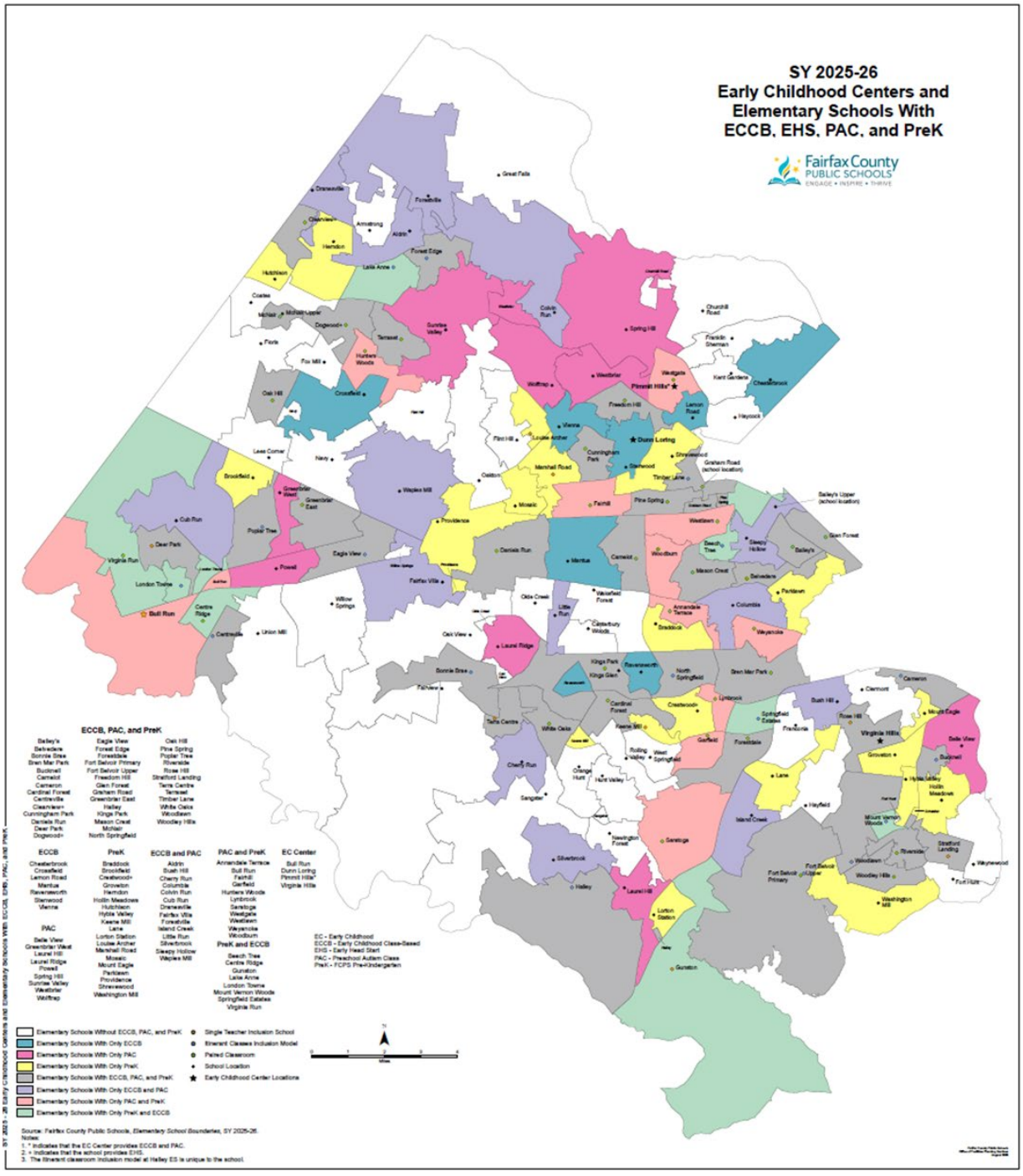
Appendix A: All Students Entering Kindergarten with No PreK Experience



Appendix B: Economically Disadvantaged Students Entering Kindergarten with No PreK Experience



Appendix C Program Locations SY 2025-26



Appendix D

Average Number of Students on PreK Waitlists

Region	School	# of students
1	Clearview	3
1	Cunningham Park	3
1	Dogwood	3
1	Forest Edge	4
1	Herndon	1
1	Hunters Woods	2
1	Hutchison	8
1	Lake Anne	2
1	Louise Archer	0
1	Marshall Road	1
1	Mosaic	6
1	Terraset	6
2	Bailey's	4
2	Beech Tree	1
2	Belvedere	3
2	Camelot	8
2	Fairhill	3
2	Glen Forest	3
2	Graham Road	1
2	Mason Crest	7
2	Parklawn	11
2	Pine Spring	5
2	Timber Lane	3
2	Westlawn	3
2	Woodburn	1
3	Bucknell	0
3	Cameron	6
3	Ft. Belvoir	20
3	Groveton	4
3	Hollin Meadows	6
3	Hybla Valley	4
3	Mount Eagle	2
3	Mt. Vernon Woods	3
3	Riverside	4
3	Rose Hill	4
3	Stratford Landing	0
3	Washington Mill	4
3	Woodlawn	1
3	Woodley Hills	8
4	Bonnie Brae	3
4	Bull Run	2
4	Cardinal Forest	6
4	Centre Ridge	3
4	Centreville	5
4	Halley	5
4	Keene Mill	0
4	Kings Park	4
4	Terra Centre	1
4	White Oaks	2
5	Brookfield	4
5	Daniel's Run	3
5	Deer Park	4
5	Eagle View	14
5	Freedom Hill	11
5	Greenbriar East	5
5	London Towne	8
5	McNair	16
5	Oak Hill	6
5	Poplar Tree	3
5	Providence	13
5	Shrevewood	8
5	Virginia Run	12
5	Westgate	3
6	Annandale Terrace	10
6	Braddock	15
6	Bren Mar Park	4
6	Crestwood	2
6	Forestdale	7
6	Garfield	0
6	Gunston	4
6	Lane	3
6	Lorton Station	2
6	Lynbrook	0
6	North Springfield	4
6	Saratoga	3
6	Springfield Estates	2
6	Weyanoke	3

Appendix D Parent Policy Committee Attendance

Committee Member Name	Representing School	Nov	Feb	Mar	May
Alaa Elsheikh	Westgate	x			
Alysia Samuel	White Oaks	x			
Angela Vibas	Westgate	x	x	x	
Astrid Rivas	McNair	x			
Carina Harris	Belvedere	x	x		
Cerita Gantt	Forest Edge	x			
Clara Villeda-Flores	Deer Park	x	x	x	
Daniel Urquizu Castillo	Westgate	x			
Dmira Foggo	Beech Tree	x			
Dot Johnson	Washington Mill	x	x	x	x
Garrett Snoeyenbos	Lane, Springfield Estates	x	x	x	x
Getu Birhanu Geleta	Dogwood	x			
Gisela Monge	Belvedere	x			
Malika Welborn	Terra Center	x	x	x	
Maria Santos	Bailey's	x			
Martina chambers	Clearview	x			
Nicole Iriarte	Beech Tree	x	x	x	
Nolan Gordon	Deer Park	x	x	x	
Rawan Ramadan	Braddock	x			
Rinku Jose	Westgate	x	x	x	
Rosanna Lucero	Lake Anne	x	x	x	
Roxana Vega	Beech Tree	x			
Samrawit Hailu	Westgate	x			
Sarah Latif	Dogwood	x			
Shaunna Clark	Ft Belvoir	x	x	x	
Theresa Do	Mason Crest	x	x	x	x
Vilma Chavez	Braddock	x	x		

Afra Taha	Louise Archer		x		
Ammar Mohammed	Shrevewood		x		
Amrita Sigdel Chhetri				x	
Asma	Poplar Tree		x		
Ayawovi N'Sougan	Herndon		x		
Balamidhuan	Clearview		x		
Braah Ibrahim			x		
Bushra Yasin	McNair			x	
Cesar Flores	Mason Crest			x	
Cynthia Moya	North Springfield		x		
EUN HYUNG LEE	Eagle View		x	x	
Fatumah Abdulrahman	Daniels Run		x		
Hafsa Malik	Gunston		x		
Isabel Martinez	Shrevewood		x		
Keiry Yulissa Diaz	Herndon			x	
Laura Jayne				x	
Magdalena	Centre Ridge		x		
Melanie Chinche				x	
Miroslava Korcekova	Terra Centre		x		
Mohamed	Daniels Run		x		
Mohammad Asim Nasin	Brookefield		x		
Mousumi Khatun	Woodlawn		x		
Neena Omar	Poplar Tree		x		
Nina Leung	North Springfield		x		
Olvin	Poplar Tree		x		
Rgat Kidanu				x	
Roji Gauchan	Oak Hill		x		
Rowshon Ara Khan	Crestwood			x	
Sarah	Brookfield		x		

Sarwat Mehtab				x	
Sedigheh Sohrabi	Hunters Woods		x	x	
Sheila Motey	Washington Mill		x		
Shitanesh Abebe	Forest Edge		x		
Solomon	McNair		x		
Vasila Rakhmonkulova	Halley		x		
Veronica Gutierez	Annandale Terrace			x	
Veronica Ortuno Hurtado	Mason Crest			x	
Xochitl Garcia	Woodlawn				x
Myra Sorto Aguilar	Glen Forest				x
Irma Temaj Rojas	Shrevewood				x
Nicole Tapia	Annandale Terrace				x
Joeli Martinez	Graham Road				x
Cesar Flores	Mason Crest				x

2025-26 Policy Committee Report Approval

The PPC executive board has reviewed and approved the 2025-26 Fairfax County Public Schools PreK and Early Head Start Policy Committee Annual Report to the Fairfax County School Board.