



**MURIEL BOWSER**  
MAYOR

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Suite 504  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

Pursuant to the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 (D.C. Law 17-202, D.C. Official Code §38-271.05), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is pleased to submit to the Council of the District of Columbia its Fiscal Year 2019 Pre-K Report.

The District of Columbia's pre-K program continues to lead the nation in access and per-pupil funding. We have responded to the convincing evidence that high quality early care and educational experiences for young children can improve the odds of success in nearly every aspect of life. These investments will pay off and ensure that our youngest Washingtonians have the fair shot that they deserve.

Yet, access isn't enough. It is important that our schools are ready to serve our students in safe, nurturing, and academically engaging environments. To gauge this, we use an observational tool called CLASS<sup>®</sup> to observe the teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms. This tool provides educators with insights on how to improve their instruction. I am pleased to see that more classrooms across the District are considered high-quality on CLASS<sup>®</sup>.

This year's report highlights the District's progress towards providing high quality, universal pre-school to three and four year old children. The report presents analysis on the quality of current pre-K programs across all sectors. Further, it presents data on enrollment, capacity, and utilization of public pre-K programs. Finally, the report summarizes the progress made toward meeting the goals for pre-K education in the District and highlights future actions to ensure equitable access for our youngest learners.

Please contact Shana Young, Chief of Staff for OSSE, at (202) 322-1734 with any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser

Enclosures



District of Columbia  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

# FISCAL YEAR 2019 PRE-K REPORT

June 2020

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## Executive Summary

Overseen by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the District of Columbia's pre-K program continues to lead the nation in access and per-pupil funding for pre-K. Of the estimated 17,197 3 and 4 year olds in the District of Columbia, 13,768 students (80%) were enrolled in the District's Universal pre-K (i.e., DCPS, public charter schools and the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP), and 432 attended full-day subsidized child care. This represents an increase of 1 percent from the previous year.

Research indicates that high-quality early care and educational experiences for young children can improve the odds of success in nearly every aspect of life, from better social and working relationships to higher earnings and better health outcomes. The District of Columbia recognizes the importance and impact of pre-K as a catalyst for promoting positive outcomes and closing the existing achievement gap for young learners. This investment is particularly important for economically disadvantaged children and families, and pre-K continues to serve a substantial number of disadvantaged children; in fiscal year 2019 (FY19), 45 percent of enrolled children were identified as at risk.<sup>1</sup>

The District is focused on providing increased access to high-quality early learning opportunities young children need to succeed in school and beyond. Although access is important, in order to realize the full benefits of our investment in pre-K, there must be continued focus on high-quality instruction and care. The District has invested in several continuous quality improvement efforts to enhance pre-K quality and improved quality programming for young children, including offering professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and leaders, redesigning the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to focus on outcomes and continuous quality improvement, and allocating funding to improve access to and support for quality programming.

To measure classroom quality, OSSE oversees the collection of data using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®), a research-based observational measure. In the 2018-2019 school year, OSSE contracted with Teachstone Training, LLC, to conduct classroom quality evaluations in all publicly-funded pre-K programs in the District. In the 2018-19 school year, a total of 883 pre-K classrooms within 255 programs were observed using CLASS®. The 2018-19 school year CLASS® observation findings are discussed in the Quality of Public Pre-K Programs in DC section of this report.

CLASS® captures the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms across three domains: emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support. Based on that data, more classrooms across the District demonstrated higher-quality environments. Specifically, these classrooms supported social-emotional development, communicated behavioral expectations and maximized learning time compared to the year prior. The majority, 60 percent, of the District's pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality in emotional support, 40 percent of classrooms met or exceeded

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<sup>1</sup> D.C. Code § 38-2901 defines the term "at risk" as a DCPS student or a public charter school student who is identified as one or more of the following: homeless, in the District's foster care system; qualifies for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or a high school student that is one year older, or more, than the expected age for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

the target in classroom organization, and 17 percent met or exceed the target for instructional support. Classroom quality tends to remain stable year to year. Programs across the District experienced a trend of largely stable scores for emotional support and classroom organization domains over the past three years, and the instructional support domain scores increased by 5 percent in the 2018-19 school year from the previous year. Each sector—DCPS, public charter schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) with the PKEEP designation—has programs that are providing high-quality early learning experiences for children.

## Overview of Pre-K in the District of Columbia

It's been more than 10 years since the District of Columbia made free, universal pre-K available to all 3 and 4 year olds residing within the District with the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 (D.C. Official Code §38-271.01 *et seq.*). Since then, the District of Columbia has positioned itself as a national leader in the provision of early learning opportunities for young children. The District has made early childhood the centerpiece of its education reform agenda and continues to outrank other states in both access and funding.

Currently, the District serves 72 percent of all 3 year olds and 89 percent of all 4 year olds, which is in stark contrast to the national enrollment average of 5.7 percent for 3 year olds and 33 percent for 4 year olds. In terms of spending, while the national average expenditure is \$5,175 per child, the District's investment now stands at \$17,545 per child.<sup>2</sup> More information about the District's public pre-K enrollment can be found in the capacity of public Pre-K programs in DC section of this report.

The District utilizes a mixed-delivery system for publicly funded pre-K, offering pre-K services in traditional public schools, charter schools and community based organizations (CBOs) that have been designated as high-quality through the Pre-K Enhancement Program (PKEEP). Head Start services are provided in Title I public schools, some charter schools and some CBOs. Some CBOs provide early child care and education services to 3 and 4 year olds but are not a part of the universal pre-K program; these CBOs are funded through child care subsidies. In other cases, child care subsidies may be used to support services to extend the day or program year in CBOs, including in CBOs that qualify as PKEEP.

**Traditional Public Schools:** DCPS offers pre-K for 4 year olds in all of its elementary schools and many DCPS elementary schools also offer pre-K for 3 year olds. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) receive funding at the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) rate for children enrolling in the pre-K programs. As part of a school-wide Head Start model, DCPS provides comprehensive child and family support services in all of its Title I schools in accordance with Head Start requirements.

**Public Charter Schools:** Many public charter schools offer pre-K for 3 and 4 year olds. In the District, charter schools are authorized by the Public Charter School Board (PCSB). Charter schools are public, taxpayer-funded, and open to all District of Columbia residents. Charter schools receive funding at the UPSFF rate as well.

**Community-Based Organizations with one or more Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Programs:** Pursuant to the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 (D.C. Official Code §38-272.01, *et. seq.*), OSSE established the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP), which allocates funding at the UPSFF levels to CBOs to enhance high-quality pre-K education services in existing pre-K programs to ensure program quality is maintained. PKEEP grantees must meet several requirements, including providing teacher training opportunities; achieving accreditation; maintaining a low adult-to-child ratio; implementing a comprehensive curriculum that is aligned with the District of

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<sup>2</sup> Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., & DiCrecchio, N. (2019). The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/2018-2>

Columbia Early Learning Standards; implementing valid and reliable assessments; meeting teacher qualification requirements; and increasing parent involvement, as well as providing coordinated services to families. In addition, according to 5-A DCMR § 3501.1(f), a CBO designated as high-quality and providing pre-K education services must ensure that teachers and assistant teachers are paid wages equivalent to DCPS pre-K teachers based on years of experience. These grantees are reimbursed for enrolled children at the same UPSFF rate as DCPS and public charter schools and also receive funding for eligible children through the child care subsidy program to provide year-round, extended-day services.

**Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):** Community-Based Organizations are private non-profit and for-profit businesses that provide full-day early care and education and may also provide before- and after-school services. In addition to tuition paid by families, some CBOs receive federal and local funds to provide these services to working families through the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), via receipt of child care subsidy voucher payments. Funds are allocated to every state and the District of Columbia. Subsidies can be used for child care services including before- and after-care.

**Head Start:** The Head Start program provides a federal-to-local early childhood funding stream. The District of Columbia has several grantees and delegate agencies providing Head Start services to eligible children and families living below poverty levels as determined by the poverty guidelines published by the federal government (in 2018, \$25,100 for a family of four). Children are also eligible if they are in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or if their families receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

DCPS is the largest Head Start provider in the District of Columbia, serving 5,182 children in FY19 which represents a small decrease of 42 children from FY18. Through implementation of the Head Start School-Wide Model,<sup>3</sup> DCPS combines local dollars with federal Head Start dollars to offer early learning opportunities and comprehensive services consistent with the Head Start program model to all pre-K-aged children enrolled in Title I schools. A school is eligible to become a Title I school-wide program if 40 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. DCPS Head Start programs implement one of two high-quality, research-based curricula, Tools of the Mind or The Creative Curriculum, in classrooms serving students enrolled in pre-K 3 and pre-K 4. Head Start teachers assess children three times annually using a developmentally appropriate assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD.

The District of Columbia has expanded and aligned efforts of both Early Head Start and Head Start programs to better meet the needs of children from infancy through preschool age. Through this continuum of support, the District is focused on providing more young children access to high-quality early learning opportunities needed to succeed in school and beyond. Head Start program participation for FY19 is included in the Appendix. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the District of Columbia's mixed-delivery system.

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<sup>3</sup> District of Columbia Public Schools Early Childhood Education, <http://www.dcpsschoolbudgetguide.com/changes/ece.html>

Figure 1. Publicly-funded preschool programs at-a-glance

Setting	Universal Pre-K Program	Delivery System Overview	Funding Source	Number of Children Served in FY19
Traditional Public Schools	Yes	DCPS provides publicly-funded pre-K open to all District residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSFF for students enrolled in pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>• Federal Head Start funding for Title I schools.</li> </ul>	5,961
Public Charter Schools	Yes	Public charter schools provide publicly-funded pre-K open to all District residents. Public charter schools operate independently of the traditional public school system. Charter schools are authorized and monitored by the DC PCSB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSFF for students enrolled in pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>• Through a partnership with the United Planning Organization, select charter schools also receive federal Head Start funding to support pre-K programming.</li> </ul>	6,892
CBOs with Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program(s)	Yes	CBOs that achieve and maintain a high-quality designation under the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act provide publicly-funded pre-K open to all District residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSFF-level funding for students enrolled in pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>• Some programs receive Head Start funding from the federal government</li> <li>• Public funding for eligible children through the District’s subsidized child care program.</li> </ul>	915
Community-Based Organizations	No	CBOs that offer full-day, year-round early care and education services that include pre-K-aged children, including before- and after-school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding for eligible children through the District’s subsidized child care program.</li> <li>• Some also receive funding through the federal Head Start program.</li> </ul>	432



## Capacity of Universal Pre-K Programs in the District

### Enrollment

The District of Columbia continues to be a national leader in access to and participation in public pre-K. According to the 2018 census population estimates, approximately 17,197 3- and 4-year-old children resided in the District. During the 2018-2019 school year, the District served 89 percent (7,363) of its 4-year-old children, an increase of 3 percent from last year, and 72 percent (6,405) of its 3-year-old children, the same amount as last year. Cumulatively, the District served 80 percent of its 3- and 4-year-old children in public pre-K programs, an increase of 1 percent from the previous year. A total of 13,768 children were served in public pre-K in the District in FY19 (see Figure 2). An additional 432 children who were not enrolled in public pre-K received full-day subsidized child care in FY19.

**Figure 2. 3 and 4 year olds served In universal pre-K in DC in FY19**

	Census Data <sup>4</sup>	Number Enrolled	Percent Served
<b>Pre-K 3</b>	8,908	6,405	72%
<b>Pre-K 4</b>	8,289	7,363	89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,197</b>	<b>13,768</b>	<b>80%</b>

### Access to Universal Pre-K Programs in DC

The District continues to implement a mixed-delivery system for its Universal pre-K program to provide opportunities to participate in pre-K across all sectors, allowing for choice and flexibility both among families and those who provide pre-K services (e.g., providers, schools). In FY19, DC had 165 sites providing public pre-K. Of these, 78 sites were in DCPS, 61 sites were in public charter schools, and 26 sites were in CBOs (see Figure 3).

Enrollment in the District’s Universal pre-K increased from 13,505 in FY18 to 13,770 in FY19, which represents a two percent increase in enrollment. This growth was driven by continued increases in DCPS and CBO enrollment. Specifically, DCPS enrollment rose from 5,797 children in FY18 to 5,961 children in FY19, a 2.8 percent increase, and, in CBOs, enrollment increased from 788 to 915 children, a 14.8

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. (June 2018). Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for the United States, States, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017. Retrieved from [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP\\_2017\\_PEPSYASEX&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2017_PEPSYASEX&prodType=table)

percent increase. Pre-K enrollment in public charter schools declined slightly from 6,920 in FY18 to 6,892 children in FY19 (see Figure 3).

## Capacity

Actual classroom capacity may vary by age, sector and school. For public charter schools and CBO sites, capacity is estimated using classroom configuration data to determine an appropriate weight to calculate capacity. Public charter schools were weighted at 20 children per classroom and PKEEP classrooms were weighted at 16 children per classroom. For DCPS classrooms, capacity was calculated using the number of general education seats in both general and inclusion classrooms.<sup>5</sup> In FY19, the District's universal pre-K program had a total capacity of 13,979 seats. Just under half of the total capacity was in public charter schools with 6,880 seats; DCPS had 6,043 seats, and CBO sites had the remaining 1,056 seats (see Figure 3).

## Utilization

Estimated utilization is calculated as the number of enrolled children divided by the estimated capacity. In other words, utilization is defined as the percent of capacity that is filled by enrolled children. It is possible for utilization to be a negative number due to the methodology employed to determine capacity (i.e., overestimating or underestimating classroom capacity). Thus, the estimated number of available slots indicated for public charter schools (i.e., -12) represents an estimation that public charter schools are oversubscribed by 12 slots in the public charter school pre-K program. Utilization across DCPS and public charter school sectors and districtwide is high. Close to 99 percent of public pre-K slots are filled by children across the District (see Figure 3).

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<sup>5</sup> Self-contained classrooms were not included in either the classroom count or in calculating capacity for DCPS.

**Figure 3. Universal pre-K program access by sector in FY19**

Sector	Sites	Enrollment	Number of Classrooms	Estimated Capacity	Estimated Utilization	Estimated Number of Available Slots
DCPS	78	5,961	363	6,043	98.6%	82
Public Charter Schools	61	6,892	344	6,880	100.2%	-12
PKEEP in CBO Sites	26	915	66	1056	86.6%	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>13,768</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>13,979</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>211</b>

Utilization is also high across all eight wards and ranges from 95 percent in Ward 8 to more than 100 percent in Ward 2, Ward 3, Ward 6 and Ward 7 (see Figure 4). It is possible for utilization to exceed 100 percent due to student mobility. Utilization meeting or exceeding 100 percent indicates that all available pre-K slots are filled.

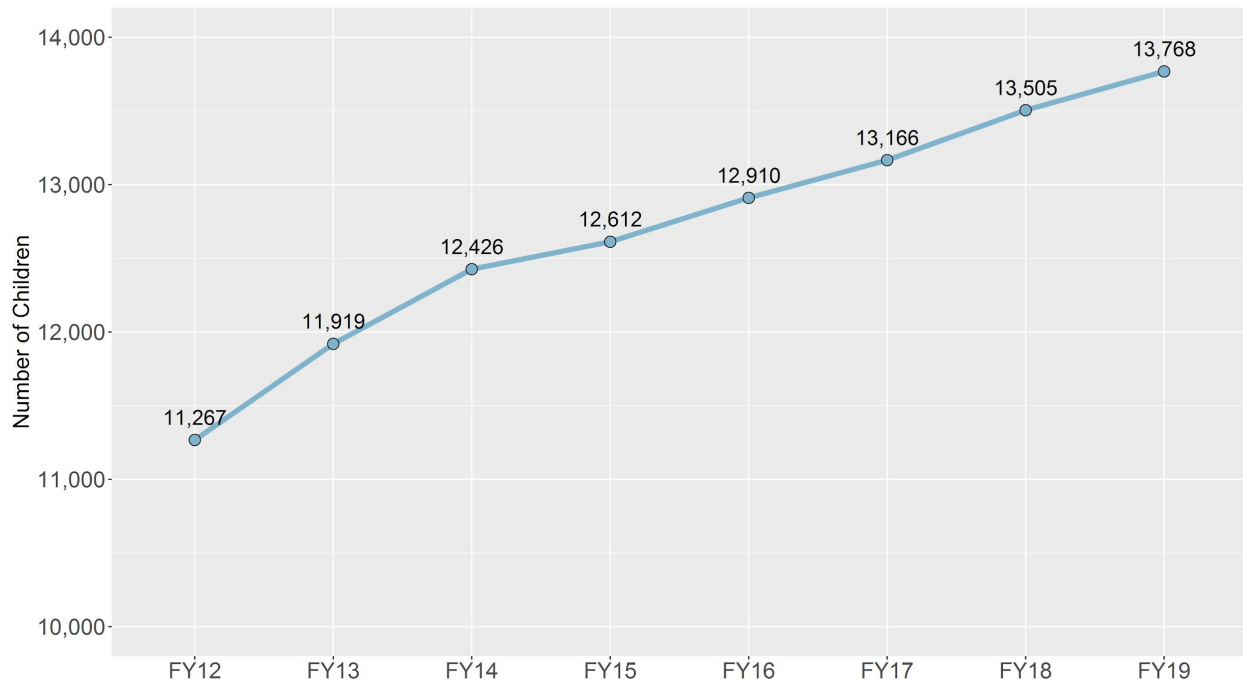
**Figure 4. Universal pre-K program access by ward in FY19**

	Total Sites	Enrollment	Number of DCPS Classrooms	Number of Public Charter Classrooms	Number of PKEEP Classrooms	Estimated Capacity	Estimated Utilization
Ward 1	14	1,136	32	15	20	1,144	99.3%
Ward 2	6	342	20	0	1	332	103.0%
Ward 3	9	420	17	0	5	407	103.2%
Ward 4	28	2,107	64	45	10	2,143	98.3%
Ward 5	30	2,509	30	100	6	2,583	97.1%
Ward 6	22	2,027	81	34	0	1,992	101.8%
Ward 7	21	2,197	54	61	5	2,196	100.0%
Ward 8	35	3,030	65	89	19	3,182	95.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>13,768</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>13,979</b>	<b>98.5%</b>

## Enrollment in Universal Pre-K over Time

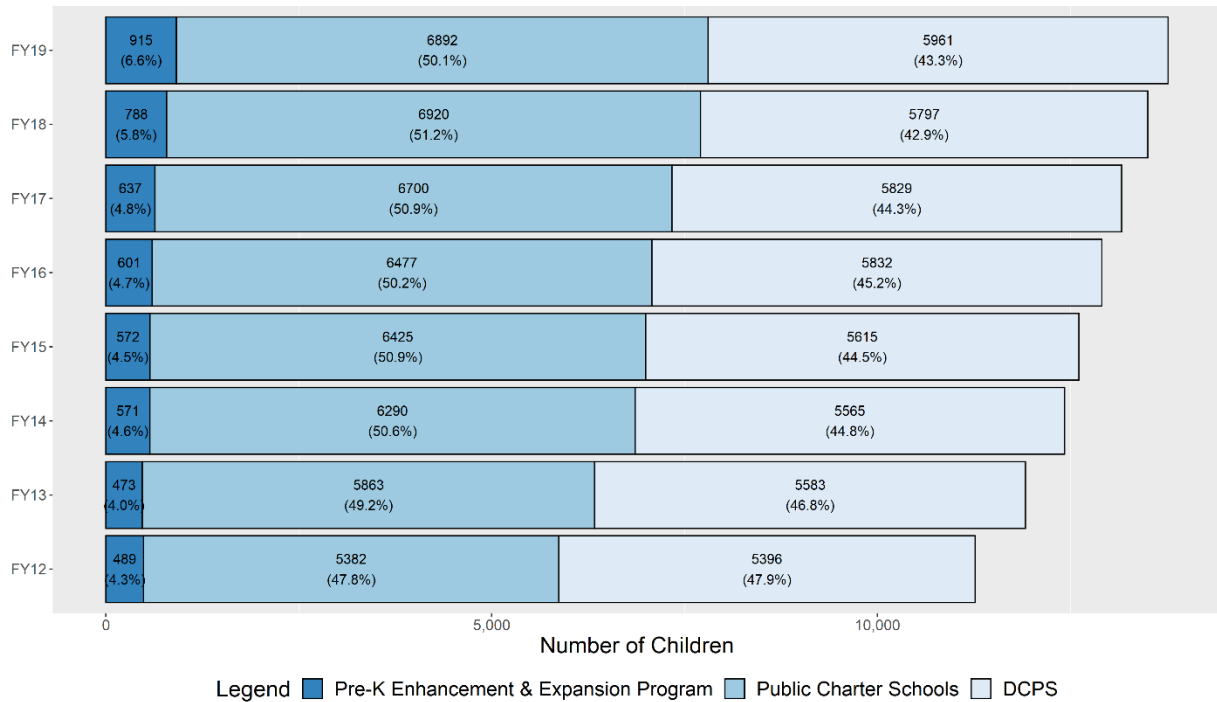
The District of Columbia has continued to increase enrollment in public pre-K programs. Over the past seven years, enrollment in public pre-K has increased 22 percent, from 11,267 in FY12 to 13,768 in FY19.

**Figure 5. Universal pre-K enrollment from FY12 to FY19**



Over time, growth in universal pre-K enrollment has been shared across all three sectors (see Figure 6). From FY12 to FY19, enrollment in DCPS pre-K programs increased by 565 children. During the same time period, pre-K enrollment increased by 1,510 children in public charter schools, and 426 children in PKEEP programs. However, in the most recent years, growth was concentrated in public charter schools and CBOs. While the increase in the total number of enrolled children from FY18 to FY19 was greater for CBOs than public charter schools, CBOs experienced the largest percentage increase in the number of children enrolled in pre-K, with a 14.8 percent increase in CBOs compared to less than a 1 percent decrease in public charter schools (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Universal pre-K enrollment by sector from FY12 to FY19**



## Demographics of Children Served in Universal Pre-K Programs in DC

As previously noted, universal pre-K programs in the District served more than 13,768 children in FY19. Across the District, 45 percent of children participating in universal pre-K were identified as at-risk<sup>6</sup>. In PKEEP, 50 percent of children (456) were identified as at-risk, compared to 42 percent (2,515) in DCPS, and 48 percent (3,280) in public charter schools. Approximately equal numbers of males (51 percent) and females (49 percent) were enrolled in Universal pre-K across the District. The majority of children enrolled in public pre-K were Black/African American (65 percent), followed by 18 percent White/Caucasian, 12 percent Hispanic, and less than 5 percent each who were American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Multiracial or Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. Finally, 11 percent of children (1,546) received special education services in universal pre-K programs in the District (see Figure 7).

<sup>6</sup> A student is identified as at-risk for academic failure if the student is identified as any one of the following: (1) whether a student is identified as having received (or is currently receiving) support from a number of assistance programs, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); (2) whether a student is (or ever was) a ward of the state under the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); or (3) whether a student was ever identified as homeless.

**Figure 7. Demographic characteristics of children enrolled in universal pre-K by sector**

		DCPS		Public Charter Schools		CBOs with PKEEP Designation*		District-Wide	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>At-Risk</b>									
	Yes	2,515	42%	3,280	48%	456	50%	6,251	45%
	No	3,446	58%	3,612	52%	459	50%	7,517	55%
<b>Gender</b>									
	Female	2,943	49%	3,428	50%	439	48%	6,810	49%
	Male	3,018	51%	4,464	50%	475	52%	6,958	51%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	n<10	n<10	31	<1%	D.S.	D.S.	46	<1%
	Asian	139	2%	71	1%	14	2%	224	2%
	Black/African American	3,161	53%	5,202	75%	540	59%	8,903	65%
	Hispanic/Latino	1,124	19%	D.S.	D.S.	n<10	n<10	1,670	12%
	Multiracial	212	4%	258	4%	10	1%	480	3%
	Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	n<10	n<10	13	<1%	n<10	n<10	15	<1%
	White/Caucasian	1,320	22%	779	11%	331	36%	2,430	18%
<b>Special Education</b>									
	Yes	951	16%	583	8%	12	1%	1,546	11%
	No	5,010	84%	6,309	92%	903	99%	12,222	89%

\*CBOs that have at least one classroom with a PKEEP designation

## The Quality of Pre-K Programming

With such a substantial investment and myriad of service delivery options for pre-K, a commitment to quality is critical to fully realize the benefits of early childhood education in the District.

At the federal level, the Head Start Reauthorization, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)<sup>7</sup> and the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)<sup>8</sup> mandate the implementation of program quality assessments and evaluations that expand the focus of state systems to include instructional quality. Thus, the District's focus on measuring classroom quality is critical for ensuring that programs are implementing high-quality pre-K in all sectors. OSSE has oversight responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of pre-K programs in the District.<sup>9</sup>

For the sixth consecutive year, OSSE elected to use CLASS<sup>®</sup> pre-K to measure classroom quality in all sectors across the District. CLASS<sup>®</sup> is a research-based observational measure that captures the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms. In the District, OSSE oversaw the data collection process to ensure the data was based upon observations of instruction in preschool and pre-K classrooms using CLASS<sup>®</sup>.

The CLASS<sup>®</sup> framework is used in two formal evaluation systems related to Pre-K, the STAR Framework, and Capital Quality. In August 2017, the US Department of Education approved the District's ESSA Consolidated Plan as required by 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.* For the first time, the District established its School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework, a common system of school accountability and transparency across all public schools. Families, educators and the public are able to view comparable, consistent information about all public schools in DC on the DC School Report Card. The STAR Framework uses CLASS<sup>®</sup> Pre-K as one of the measures of quality for programs serving pre-K-age children. OSSE released the initial DC School Report Card in early December 2018. In 2019, the District redesigned the existing Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), "Going for the Gold" introducing Capital Quality. Capital Quality also uses CLASS<sup>®</sup> Pre-K as a measure of quality and provides a method for CBOs, serving Pre-K children, to be evaluated with a common metric of quality.

### Overview of CLASS<sup>®</sup>

CLASS<sup>®</sup> provides a framework for observing key dimensions of classroom process, such as emotional and instructional support, that contribute to a quality classroom setting from preschool through grade 3.<sup>10</sup> Within each of the three CLASS<sup>®</sup> domains, emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support, there are dimensions of teacher-child interactions. These dimensions include specific ways of

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<sup>7</sup> ESSA (2015). Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 § 114 Stat. 1177 Sec. 1431 (2015-2016)

<sup>8</sup> CCDBG (2014). Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, Pub. L No. 113-186 § 128 Stat. 1999

<sup>9</sup> DC Code § 38-271.02(b)(5)

<sup>10</sup> Pianta, R.C., LaParo, K.M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). Classroom Assessment Scoring System Manual: Pre-K. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

capturing features of teacher-child interactions within these broader domains and provide teachers and program leaders with specific and actionable information for targeting professional development. Figure 8 describes how each CLASS® domain is organized into dimensions.

**Figure 8. CLASS® pre-K domains, dimensions and descriptions**

CLASS® Domain	CLASS® Dimensions	Description
<b>Emotional Support</b>	Positive climate	Relationships, respect, and positive affect
	Negative climate	Irritability, anger, and disrespect
	Teacher sensitivity	Awareness of and responsiveness to students' needs
	Regard for student perspectives	Going along with students' ideas and encouraging student expression
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	Behavior management	Effectively monitoring, preventing, and redirecting behavior
	Productivity	Maximizing time spent in learning activities
	Instructional learning formats	Facilitating activities and providing interesting materials
<b>Instructional Support</b>	Concept development	Promoting students' higher-order thinking skills
	Quality of feedback	Extending students' learning through teacher responses
	Language modeling	Facilitating and encouraging growth of students' language

Each dimension is scored on a scale of 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher quality, with the exception of the Negative Climate dimension, in which a lower score indicates higher quality. The dimension scores are then averaged to create a domain score<sup>11</sup>. Some research has shown that

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<sup>11</sup> Negative Climate is reverse coded, so that higher scores indicate lower negative climate, before averaging to create a domain score.



“threshold” scores of 5 or higher in emotional support and classroom organization and 3 or higher in instructional support are associated with better social and academic gains for children.<sup>12</sup> These threshold scores were previously the minimum scores that research has shown are associated with positive child outcomes for each CLASS® domain. Threshold scores were previously reported in this annual report as they can provide a useful benchmark of the pre-K experience on a student’s development and learning.

Over the past few years, the District has seen continued progress in all CLASS® domains. The District has adopted targets for each CLASS® domain as part of the efforts to continuously improve the quality of its pre-K programs. The District of Columbia’s targets for quality are set as a score of 6 for emotional support and classroom organization and a score of 4 for instructional support. These targets will be the basis for several of the findings presented in this report to show how the District’s pre-K classrooms scored in comparison to each CLASS® domain.<sup>13</sup>

In the 2018-2019 school year, OSSE contracted with Teachstone Training, LLC, to conduct classroom quality evaluations in all publicly-funded pre-K programs in the District. The classroom observations were pre-scheduled, lasted approximately three hours and took place over the course of one morning during a typical instructional day.

## Observed Classrooms

All pre-K classrooms in each of the three sectors in the universal pre-K mixed-delivery system (DCPS, public charter school and CBOs with PKEEP programs) were observed using the CLASS® measure. Additionally, all CBOs with classrooms serving preschool-aged children were also observed using the CLASS® measure. Although the measure has been validated in classrooms with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, it has not been validated in self-contained special education classrooms.<sup>14</sup> As a result, self-contained special education classrooms were not observed.

The next section of the report describes the experiences of the 13,778 children in the District’s pre-K 3 and pre-K 4 programs in 883 classrooms within 255 programs across all three sectors, during the 2018-19 school year.

Figure 9 shows the number of pre-K classrooms observed in FY19 by sector.

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<sup>12</sup> Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R. C., & Mashburn, A. J. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-Kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25 (2), 166-176.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix B for a comparison of this year’s data between thresholds and targets.

<sup>14</sup> Self-contained special education classrooms are determined by each LEA. It is, however, defined as classrooms specifically designated for children with more severe disabilities who may not be able to participate in general education programs.

**Figure 9. Pre-K classrooms observed by sector**

Type	DCPS*	PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS*	COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS with PKEEP*	COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	TOTAL
<b>Classrooms</b>	353	344	72	114	<b>883</b>
<b>Programs</b>	78	65	25	87	<b>255</b>

\* Note: DCPS, public charter schools and PKEEPS are all part of the District’s universal pre-K program. CBOs also offer preschool/pre-k programs for 3 and 4 year olds, though they are not part of the District’s universal pre-K program.

## 2018-19 CLASS Observation Findings

**Finding 1:** District-wide, the majority of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded targets for emotional support and almost half met targets for classroom organization. Nearly one-fifth (17 percent) of the District’s pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for instructional support.

**Figure 10: 2018-19 pre-K classroom-Level CLASS® scores**

CLASS® Domain	Number of Classrooms meeting/exceeding target	Percent of classrooms meeting/exceeding target
Emotional Support	528	60%
Classroom Organization	355	40%
Instructional Support	153	17%
All Domains	124	14%

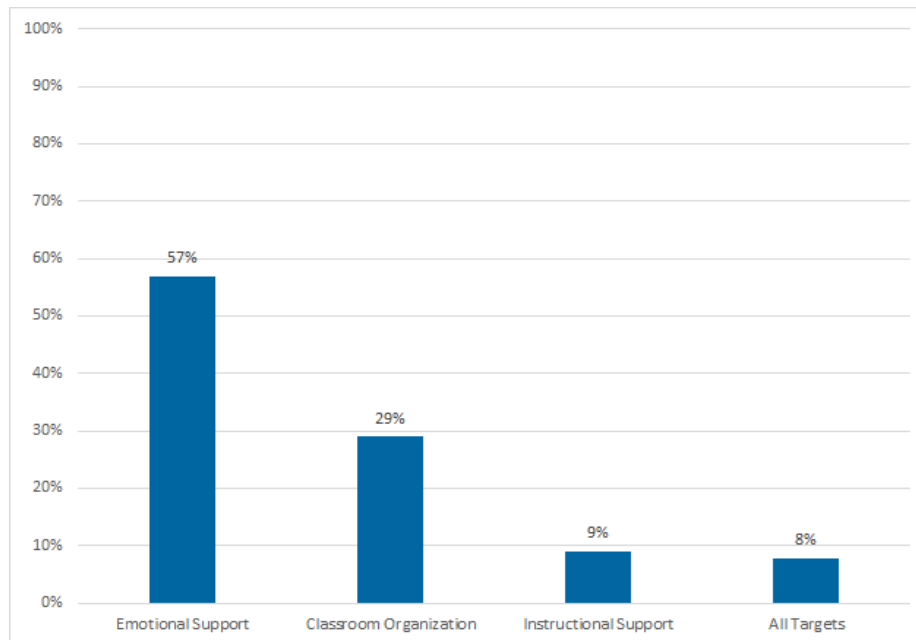
As shown in Figure 10, the majority (60 percent) of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality in emotional support. For the classroom organization domain, 40 percent of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality. Nearly one-fifth (17 percent) of pre-K classrooms in the District met or exceeded the target for quality in instructional support. Additionally, 14 percent of classrooms met all three CLASS® domain thresholds.

**Figure 11: 2018-2019 pre-K program-level CLASS® scores**

CLASS® Domain	District Average	Number of Programs meeting/exceeding target	Percent of Programs meeting/exceeding target
Emotional Support	5.96	145	57%
Classroom Organization	5.59	74	29%
Instructional Support	2.95	23	9%
All Domains	N/A	20	8%

As shown in Figures 11 and 12, 57 percent of pre-K programs met or exceeded the target for quality in emotional support, with an average score of 5.96. For the classroom organization domain, 29 percent of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality, with an average score of 5.59. Nearly one-tenth (9 percent) of pre-K classrooms in the District met or exceeded the target for quality in instructional support, with an average score of 2.95 while 8 percent of classrooms met all three CLASS® domain targets.

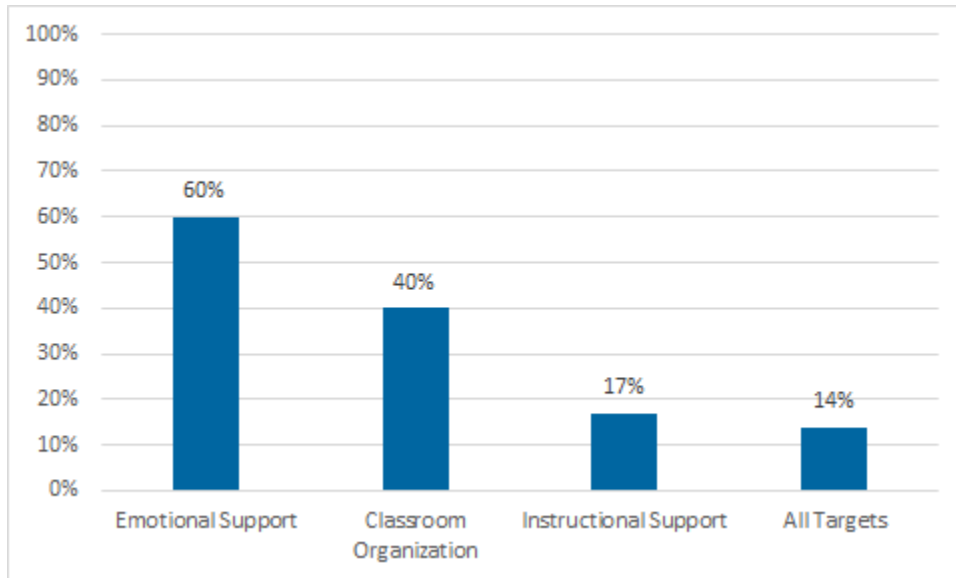
**Figure 12: Percentage of programs meeting CLASS® pre-K domain targets (N=255)**



As shown in Figure 13, 60 percent of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality in emotional support. For the classroom organization domain, 40 percent of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target for quality. Nearly one-fifth (17 percent) of pre-K classrooms in the District met or

exceeded the target for quality in instructional support while 14 percent of classrooms met all three CLASS® domain targets.

**Figure 13: Percentage of classrooms meeting CLASS® pre-K domain targets (N = 883)**



Consistent with national averages, emotional support and classroom organization were areas of strength for District classrooms. The emotional support domain measures teacher interactions with children that support the social and emotional functioning of children in their classrooms. Classrooms scoring at or above the target in this domain are those that typically exhibit warm, positive and respectful relationships between teachers and children (positive climate = 6.04). There is also an absence of irritability, anger, and disrespect between teachers and children in these classrooms (negative climate= 1.16).<sup>15</sup> Teachers in these classrooms are sometimes aware of children’s needs and are sometimes responsive and able to help children address problems that arise (teacher sensitivity = 5.84). In addition, teachers may be somewhat flexible to children’s interests and ideas and at times provide support for children’s independence and expression though other times they may not be (regard for student perspectives = 5.13).

The classroom organization domain measures classroom-level regulation processes that take place throughout the day. For this domain, 40 percent of the classrooms observed met or exceeded the target, with an average score of 5.59. Classrooms at or above the target are classrooms where behavioral expectations are communicated somewhat clearly and methods used to manage challenging behavior are often effective (behavioral management= 5.85). In these classrooms, teachers maximize learning time most of the time and have established some routines that allow the classroom to run efficiently (productivity= 5.85). Furthermore, in these classrooms, teachers generally make learning

<sup>15</sup> Negative Climate is scored in reverse. Lower scores for Negative Climate indicate higher quality.

objectives clear and provide children with a range of modalities that enhance learning opportunities (instructional learning formats= 5.08). Taken together, these findings suggest that children in the District are experiencing classroom environments and interactions with their teachers that support their social-emotional development and maximize learning time. Figure 14 shows average dimension scores for the classroom organization domain at the classroom-level.

Across the District's three sectors—DCPS, public charter schools, and CBOs—the average score in the instructional support domain was 2.95. In this domain, 17 percent of classrooms met or exceeded the target. The instructional support domain measures the ways teachers effectively support cognitive and language development in their classrooms. Classrooms with instructional support scores near the District average score of 2.95 may too often focus on instruction based on memorization techniques based on repetition during the typical instructional day rather than providing children with opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills, although it should be noted that instructional support scores of 3 have been positively associated with child-level outcomes. Because of these positive outcomes, it is important to consider the instructional support domain scores by dimension (i.e., language modeling, quality of feedback, concept development) in comparison to the threshold averages as these can help us understand the District's strengths and areas in which classrooms may need additional support.

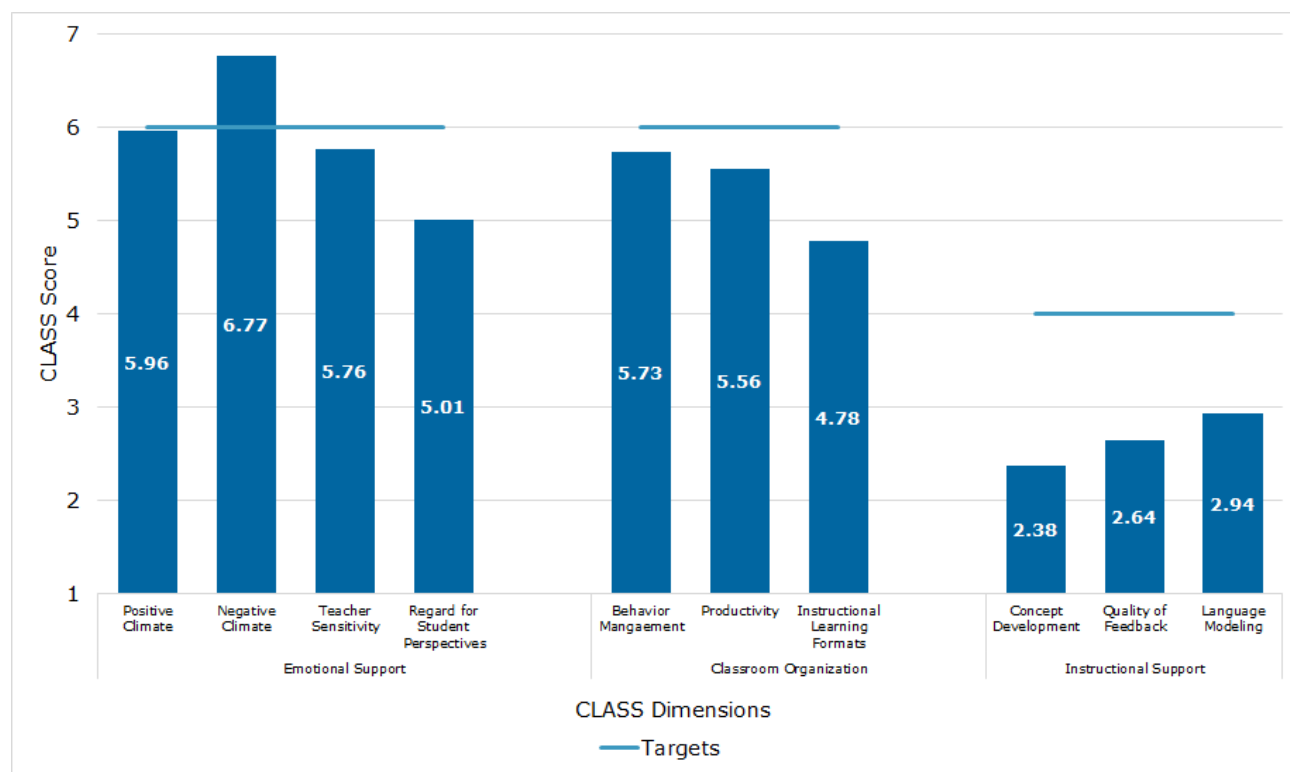
The District's biggest area of growth is the concept development dimension, with an average score of 2.60. This score indicates that teachers only occasionally use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning and seldom provide opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and work during the typical instructional day. When concepts and activities are presented independently, students are not often asked to apply previous learning. In addition, the teachers rarely relate concepts to the students' actual lives. The lower scores on this dimension suggest that the concept development dimension can be improved by implementing strategies that challenge children's thinking on the "hows" and "whys" of learning. Teachers can also use instructional strategies that focus on critical thinking, such as sequencing, comparing and contrasting, and problem-solving activities. Promoting exploration of concepts that link across activities and are applicable to the real world can also improve children's outcomes as they relate to concept development.

The District had an average score of 2.96 for the quality of feedback dimension. This score generally indicates that teachers seldom provide scaffolding to students and may, at times, dismiss responses as incorrect or ignore problems and misunderstandings during the typical instructional day. The teachers may mostly provide perfunctory feedback to students (e.g., simply stating "that is correct" or "that is wrong") and rarely question students or prompt them to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions, which limits the extent to which students can understand why a response is right or wrong and, thus, how to build upon that (mis)understanding. The lower scores on this dimension provide insight as to the types of strategies District pre-K teachers can implement to support students' outcomes, such as asking students to explain thinking more often, having more conversations throughout the day, promoting child-initiated language, repeating and extending children's responses, using advanced language in the classroom and encouraging children to talk to one another.

The language modeling dimension was an area of promise for the District, with an average score of 3.29. This finding suggests that there are conversations in the classroom and that teachers ask a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The teachers sometimes repeat or extend student responses, and

occasionally map their actions and the students’ actions through language and description. Additionally, the teachers sometimes use advanced language and a variety of words with students. Figure 14 shows the average dimension average scores for the instructional support domain at the classroom-level.

**Figure 14: District-wide dimension averages in relationship to targets**



Note: Negative Climate is reverse coded; higher scores at the dimension level (depicted in graph) indicate lower negative climate (and reflect the lower scores described in text).

**Finding 2:** Pre-K classrooms in CBOs with the PKEEP designation were more likely to have higher instructional support scores than pre-K classrooms in CBOs that do not have the PKEEP designation.

PKEEP programs are required to meet several high-quality standards including, but not limited to, providing teacher training opportunities; hiring a lead teacher with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and assistant teachers with associate degrees in early childhood education; and compensating lead teachers comparable to DCPS’ pay scale. During the FY19 CLASS® observation data collection cycle, the data showed that CBOs with at least one classroom receiving PKEEP funding had significantly higher instructional support domain scores than CBOs that did not receive PKEEP funding and only received subsidy funding.

Scores in emotional support were also significantly higher among CBOs with at least one PKEEP funded classroom compared to CBOs that did not have at least one of these participating PKEEP programs. CBOs with at least one classroom receiving PKEEP funding were also higher for classroom organization, but

the difference was not statistically significant. As noted earlier in this report, upon being designated a PKEEP program, CBOs with this designation receive additional public funding to support high-quality pre-K instruction as part of the District’s universal pre-K system. The high-quality standards that Pre-K Enhancement programs are required to meet--as well as the additional funding-- may have contributed to the higher emotional support and instructional support scores observed in PKEEP funded programs, though no causal inferences can be made from this observational data. Figure 15 displays average CLASS® scores for CBOs with a subsidy agreement with and without PKEEP funding. Collectively, these findings suggest the additional resources and supports invested in PKEEPS also benefit classrooms located within the same CBO. The resources seem to have a cumulative positive effect on children enrolled in other classrooms in CBOs that receive PKEEP funding, even if those children do not directly receive services in the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion funded classroom

**Figure 15: Average CLASS scores across domains for CBO programs participating in subsidy with and without a PKEEP designation**

	CBOs w/ PKEEP designation † n=24 Mean (SD)	CBOs n = 78 Mean (SD)
<b>Emotional Support</b>	6.12 (.43)*	5.78 (.77)
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	5.56 (.56)	5.23 (.94)
<b>Instructional Support</b>	2.97 (.52)*	2.53 (.75)

\*Significant at p <.05

†CBOs that have at least one classroom with a PKEEP designation

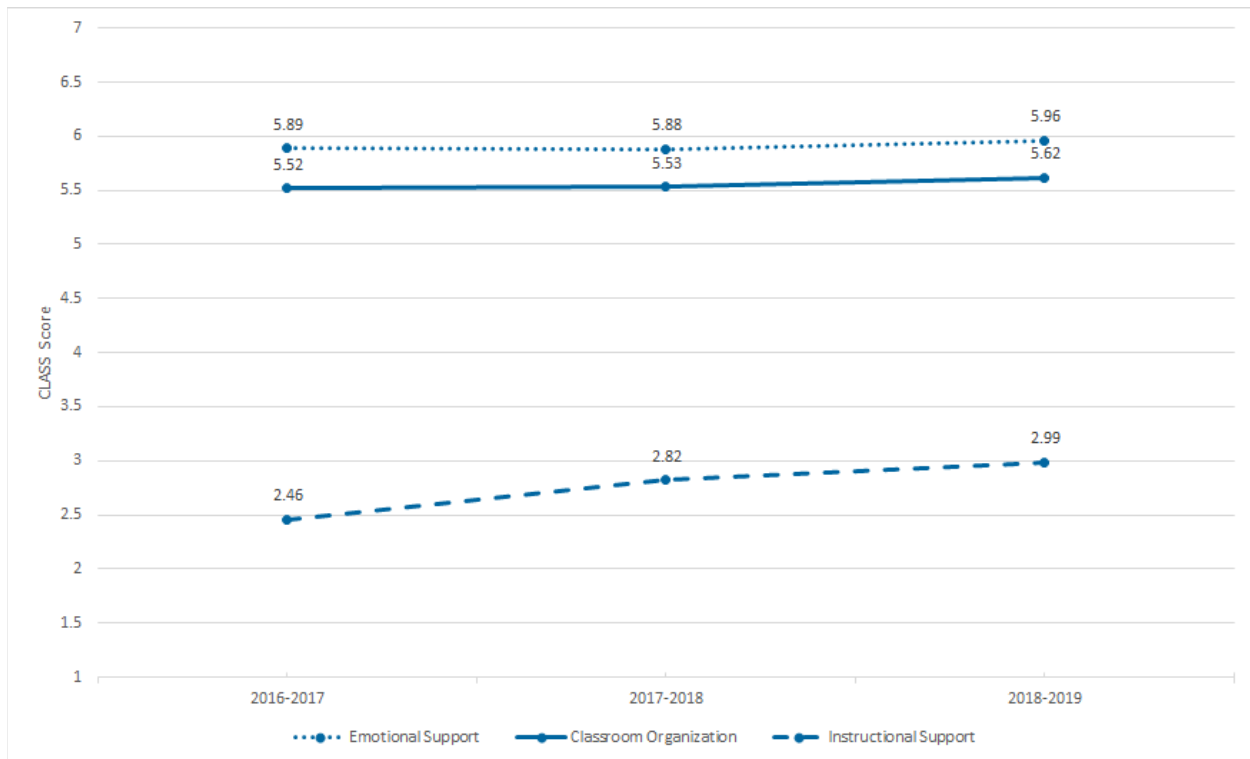
**Finding 3:** *Programs across the District experienced a largely stable trend for all CLASS® domains over the past three years, with slight increases over time in average scores between the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Programs continue to make larger gains in instructional support in comparison to emotional support and classroom organization.*

Across all three CLASS® domains, the program-average scores throughout the District have been fairly consistent over time. Specifically, for both emotional support and classroom organization, domain averages remained stable between the 2016-17 and 2017-18, then increased slightly between the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, though none of these year-to-year changes were statistically significant. Larger gains continue to be made in instructional support in comparison to the emotional support and classroom organization domains. Importantly, instructional support averages increased between the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, and made a statistically significant increase between the 2017-2018

and 2018-2019 school years. Particularly in the instructional support domain, the higher average scores in 2018-2019 suggest more effective interactions over time.

Although no causal claims can be made, the District has made several investments that may have contributed to the recent improvements in instructional support and will continue these efforts. Some of these strategies include expanding professional development offerings that focus on instructional support through communities of practice, professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring and other job-embedded support that has been shown to improve practice. These strategies are aligned with the pre-K program goals detailed in the next section.

**Figure 16: Comparison of CLASS® domain scores across time**



## Conclusion

As a result of strategic efforts made over the last decade, the District of Columbia has positioned itself as a national leader in the provision of high-quality pre-K. By making early childhood a centerpiece of its education reform agenda, DC far outranks all other states in access and per-child spending for 3 and 4



year olds<sup>16</sup>. With significant investments made to increase capacity to serve pre-K-age children in a mixed-delivery system of public schools, public charter schools and CBOs, DC has begun to shift its focus and resources to ensure high-quality programming is achieved and maintained across all educational sectors. As shown in the quality of pre-K Programs in the District section of this report, the District has made progress in achieving and maintaining program quality in pre-K classrooms. With the implementation of the STAR accountability system (DCPS and public charter schools) and Capital Quality (CBOs), there is an opportunity to align and leverage resources where they are most needed.

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<sup>16</sup> Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., & DiCrecchio, N. (2019). The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/2018-2>

## Appendix A

### Head Start program participation for FY19

Program	Early Head Start Home-Based	Early Head Start Center	Head Start Center	Total Enrollment by Grantee
DCPS			5,182	5,182
Bright Beginnings, Inc.	D.S.	104	D.S.	213
CentroNía	48	24		72
Rosemount	77	39		116
Martha's Table	n < 10	27	n < 10	33
Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc.		156		156
United Planning Organization (UPO)				384
Educare of Washington, DC <sup>17</sup>		72		
Atlantic Gardens		16		
Azeeze Bates		16		
Ballou High School		16		
Christian Tabernacle		24		
C.W. Harris Elementary School		16		
Dunbar High School		n < 10		
Edgewood		16		
Fredrick Douglass		24		
Ketcham Elementary School		16		
Luke C. Moore High School		n < 10		

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<sup>17</sup> Educare of Washington, DC is a delegate of UPO.

Program	Early Head Start Home-Based	Early Head Start Center	Head Start Center	Total Enrollment by Grantee
Marie Reed		n < 10		
Roosevelt High School High School		16		
Woodson High School		n < 10		
Spanish Education Development (SED) Center		36		
Anacostia High School		16		
Paradise		16		
Healthy Babies (pregnant moms)		52		
Home-Based Program	84			84
OSSE Quality Improvement Network (QIN)		366		366
<b>Total Enrollment by Model</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>5,231</b>	<b>6,606</b>

**SY 18-19 Sites and Enrollment for Pre-K Programs -DCPS**

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Aiton Elementary School	71
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School	75
Bancroft Elementary School @ Sharpe	105
Barnard Elementary School	148
Beers Elementary School	90
Brent Elementary School	66
Brightwood Education Campus	106
Browne Education Campus	65
Bruce-Monroe Elementary School @ Park View	97
Bunker Hill Elementary School	59
Burroughs Elementary School	76
Burrville Elementary School	96
C.W. Harris Elementary School	44
Capitol Hill Montessori School @ Logan	110
Cleveland Elementary School	73
Dorothy I. Height Elementary School	147
Drew Elementary School	49
Eaton Elementary School	36
Excel Academy	81
Garfield Elementary School	49
Garrison Elementary School	79
H.D. Cooke Elementary School	84
Hearst Elementary School	43
Hendley Elementary School	64

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Houston Elementary School	66
Hyde-Addison Elementary School @ Meyer	54
J.O. Wilson Elementary School	105
Janney Elementary School	60
Ketcham Elementary School	70
Key Elementary School	40
Kimball Elementary School @ Davis	63
King Elementary School	63
LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	52
Lafayette Elementary School	99
Langdon Elementary School	75
Langley Elementary School	87
Leckie Education Campus	98
Ludlow-Taylor Elementary School	108
Malcolm X Elementary School @ Green	53
Mann Elementary School	40
Marie Reed Elementary School	100
Maury Elementary School	85
Miner Elementary School	113
Moten Elementary School	61
Murch Elementary School @ UDC	57
Nalle Elementary School	97
Noyes Elementary School	46
Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	45
Patterson Elementary School	74

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Payne Elementary School	87
Peabody Elementary School (Capitol Hill Cluster)	139
Plummer Elementary School	65
Powell Elementary School	91
Randle Highlands Elementary School	81
Raymond Education Campus	104
Ross Elementary School	35
Savoy Elementary School	40
School Without Walls @ Francis-Stevens	79
School-Within-School @ Goding	77
Seaton Elementary School	97
Shepherd Elementary School	67
Simon Elementary School	43
Smothers Elementary School	67
Stanton Elementary School	84
Stoddert Elementary School	20
Takoma Education Campus	90
Thomas Elementary School	69
Thomson Elementary School	80
Truesdell Education Campus	101
Tubman Elementary School	75
Turner Elementary School	90
Tyler Elementary School	134
Van Ness Elementary School	74
Walker-Jones Education Campus	61

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
West Education Campus	72
Wheatley Education Campus	56
Whittier Education Campus	57
<b>Total DCPS Enrollment</b>	<b>5,961</b>

**SY 2018-19 Sites and Enrollment for Pre-K programs – Public Charter Schools**

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Achievement Preparatory Academy PCS - Wahler Place Elementary School	139
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Columbia Heights	154
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Douglas Knoll	90
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Lincoln Park	60
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Oklahoma Avenue	142
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Parklands at THEARC	92
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Southwest	97
Breakthrough Montessori PCS	102
Bridges PCS	111
Briya PCS	51
Capital City PCS - Lower School	76
Cedar Tree Academy PCS	275
Center City PCS – Brightwood	38
Center City PCS - Capitol Hill	44
Center City PCS - Congress Heights	34
Center City PCS – Petworth	42

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Center City PCS – Shaw	16
Center City PCS – Trinidad	24
City Arts & Prep PCS	79
Creative Minds International PCS	117
DC Bilingual PCS	77
DC Prep PCS - Anacostia Elementary School	154
DC Prep PCS - Benning Elementary School	149
DC Prep PCS - Edgewood Elementary School	154
DC Scholars PCS	120
Democracy Prep Congress Heights PCS	114
E.L. Haynes PCS - Elementary School	93
Eagle Academy PCS - Capitol Riverfront	67
Eagle Academy PCS - Congress Heights	206
Early Childhood Academy PCS	88
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS - Brookland	75
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS - East End	95
Friendship PCS – Armstrong	121
Friendship PCS - Blow Pierce Elementary School	135
Friendship PCS - Chamberlain Elementary School	116
Friendship PCS - Southeast Academy	131
Friendship PCS - Woodridge Elementary School	98
Hope Community PCS – Lamond	101
Hope Community PCS – Tolson	72
Ideal Academy PCS	46
Ingenuity Prep PCS	148



SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS	89
KIPP DC - Arts and Technology Academy PCS	247
KIPP DC - Connect Academy PCS	220
KIPP DC - Discover Academy PCS	236
KIPP DC - Grow Academy PCS	215
KIPP DC - LEAP Academy PCS	195
Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS	155
Lee Montessori PCS	88
Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS	137
Meridian PCS	137
Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS	90
Perry Street Preparatory PCS	90
Rocketship DC PCS - Legacy Prep	160
Rocketship DC PCS - Rise Academy	158
Roots PCS	38
Sela PCS	94
Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS	117
Two Rivers PCS - 4th St	81
Two Rivers PCS – Young	82
Washington Yu Ying PCS	142
<b>Total Charter Enrollment</b>	<b>6,892</b>

**SY 2018-19 Sites and Enrollment for CBOS with PKEEP Designation**

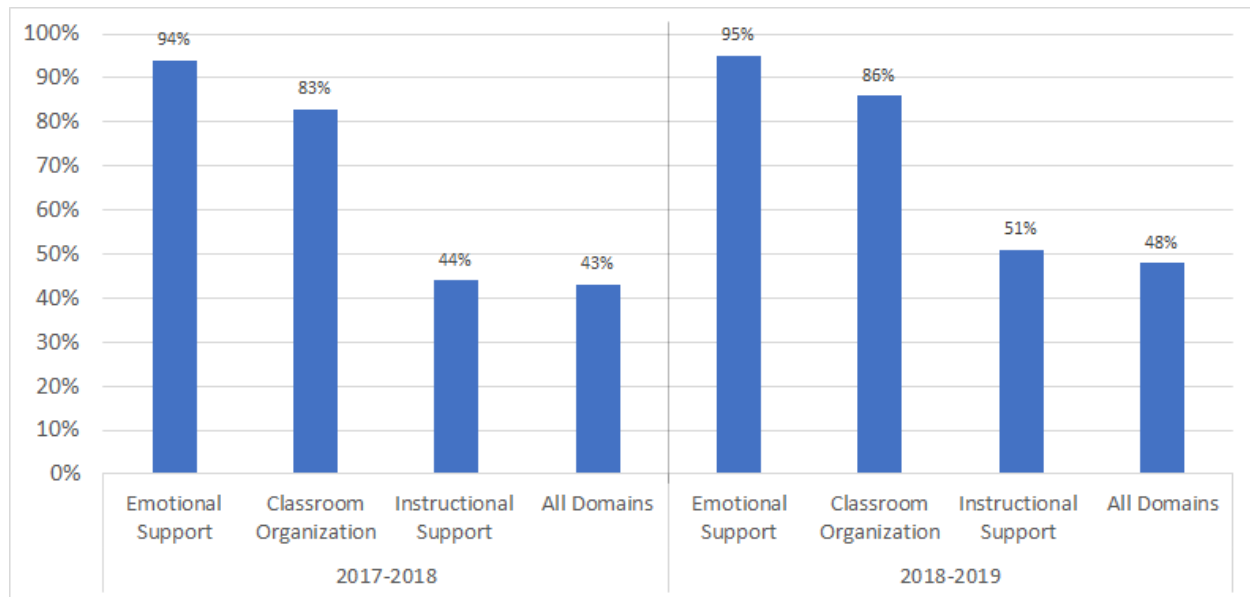
PROGRAM NAME	TOTAL PRE-K ENROLLMENT
Associates for Renewal in Education (ARE)	8
Barbara Chambers Children's Center	112
Big Mama's Children Center	15
Bright Beginnings, Inc.	23
Bright Start Early Care and Preschool	26
CentroNia	104
Children's Hut	32
Christian Tabernacle Child Development Center	15
CommuniKids Preschool and Children's Language Center	79
Dawn to Dusk Child Development Center	16
Easter Seals	16
Educare of Washington	87
Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc.	15
GAP Community Child Development Center	14
Happy Faces Early Learning Academy, LLC	42
Home Away From Home Child Development Center, Inc.	8
Ideal Child Development Center	13
Jubilee Jumpstart	16
Kids Are Us	11
Kuumba Learning Center	19
Nation's Capital Child and Family Development	12
National Children's Center	37
Paramount Community Development Center	28

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Rosemount Center	48
Spanish Education Development (SED) Center	52
Sunshine Early Learning	67
<b>Total CBO enrollment</b>	<b>915</b>

## Appendix B: Comparison of 2017-18 and 2018-19 CLASS<sup>®</sup> scores relative to “thresholds”

Percentage of classrooms meeting or exceeding CLASS<sup>®</sup> pre-K domain thresholds



Threshold scores were previously reported in this annual report as they can provide a useful benchmark of the pre-K experience on a student’s development and learning. Specifically, “threshold” scores of 5 or more in emotional support and classroom organization and three or more in instructional support were used as a comparison point for ascertaining the extent to which pre-K classrooms were meeting or exceeding minimum levels of quality, given some research that has shown these “threshold” scores are associated with better social and academic outcomes for children.<sup>18</sup> In the District’s efforts to continuously improve the quality of pre-K programs throughout the District, the District has now (as of 2018-2019) adopted “targets” for each CLASS<sup>®</sup> domain. The District of Columbia’s targets for quality are set as six for emotional support and classroom organization and four for instructional support. It is important to realize that both the comparison itself (i.e., thresholds to targets) changed in addition to the CLASS<sup>®</sup> scores.

To facilitate a more direct comparison between the CLASS<sup>®</sup> data from the previous school year (2017-2018) and this past school year (2018-2019), the data in this Appendix show the percentage of classrooms meeting or exceeding CLASS<sup>®</sup> Pre-K Domain in comparison to thresholds that were used in

<sup>18</sup> Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R. C., & Mashburn, A. J. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-Kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25 (2), 166-176.

the previous pre-K reports. Comparing 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 CLASS® scores to the thresholds for each CLASS® Domain,<sup>19</sup> the data show considerable stability in the percentage of classrooms meeting or exceeding the threshold for emotional support (one percent increase from 2017-18 to 2018-19) and a slight increase in the percentage of classrooms meeting or exceeding the threshold for classroom organization (three percent increase from 2017-18 to 2018-19). The percentage of classrooms meeting or exceeding instructional support increased most, with a 7 percent increase between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. More classrooms also met or exceeded all thresholds in 2018-19 (48 percent) compared to 43 percent in 2017-2018.

This matches the trends shown in Finding 3 of the report, which shows relative stability in average scores for emotional support and classroom organization and larger gains in instructional support scores.

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<sup>19</sup> CLASS Pre-K domain thresholds were 5 for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and 3 for Instructional Support.