



MURIEL BOWSER  
MAYOR

September 8, 2023

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I am pleased to submit to the Council of the District of Columbia the enclosed report titled “Fiscal Year 2022 Pre-K Report,” which was prepared by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”) pursuant to section 105 of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 (D.C. Law 17-202; D.C. Official Code § 38-271.05).

This report provides an annual update on the quality and capacity of the District’s mixed delivery system of pre-kindergarten (“pre-K”) education, describes the challenge COVID-19 presented for measuring the quality of pre-K delivery and the steps taken to surmount this challenge, provides a detailed breakdown of pre-K enrollment and capacity by sector and demographic background, and describes observation findings for pre-K quality in Fiscal Year 2022 (school year 2021-22). While enrollment declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changing demographics, Fiscal Year 2022 observation data show that disruptions caused by the pandemic did not harm the quality of children’s learning experiences. In fact, observation scores continue a trend of improvement that was under way prior to the pandemic.

My administration is available to discuss any questions you may have regarding this report. In order to facilitate a response to your questions, please have your staff contact Andrew Gall, Deputy Chief of Staff, OSSE, at (202) 478-9202.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser



District of Columbia  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

# FISCAL YEAR 2022 PRE-K REPORT

August, 2023

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Overview of Pre-K in the District of Columbia .....	4
Funding for Universal Pre-K.....	5
Enrollment and Capacity of Universal Pre-K Programs in the District .....	7
Enrollment.....	7
Capacity .....	9
Utilization .....	10
Pre-K by Ward.....	10
Demographics of Children Served in Universal Pre-K Programs in DC.....	11
The Quality of Pre-K Programming.....	13
Overview of CLASS® .....	13
Observed Classrooms .....	15
2021-22 CLASS® Observation Findings.....	16
Conclusion .....	23
Appendix.....	24

## Executive Summary

The District of Columbia leads the nation in pre-kindergarten (pre-K) access and per-pupil funding. Of the estimated 16,171 3- and 4-year-olds in the District of Columbia, 12,310 (76 percent) were enrolled in publicly funded pre-K in school year 2021-22 (FY22). The District delivers publicly funded pre-K through a mixed delivery system that includes classrooms operated by DC Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools (PCS) and community-based organizations (CBOs) participating in the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP), ensuring broad access across diverse communities and providing a robust variety of choices to meet families' needs and aspirations for their children's learning.

Research indicates that high-quality early care and educational experiences for young children can improve outcomes in nearly every aspect of life, from better social and working relationships to higher earnings and better health outcomes. Quality, universal pre-K is an important component of the District's strategy for improving educational outcomes, particularly for children and families furthest from opportunity. In FY22, 46 percent of children enrolled in public pre-K programs in the District were identified as at-risk.<sup>1</sup>

But equitable access alone is not enough—improving educational and development outcomes requires quality pre-K programs. To support quality pre-K programming across the mixed delivery system, the District adopted the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS), a research-based observational tool, as a common measure of quality across all publicly funded pre-K programs. CLASS® captures the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms across three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The District uses CLASS® data as a measure of pre-K quality in three accountability systems for public schools and child development facilities: the School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) for DCPS and PCS; the Public Charter School Board's Performance Management Framework for PCS and Capital Quality, the District's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) administered by OSSE for child development facilities.<sup>2</sup> In addition, CLASS® data is used by DCPS, PCS and CBOs to inform professional development and improvement efforts and by OSSE and DCPS at the systems level to inform policy and system-level continuous improvement. OSSE oversees administration of CLASS® across all sectors of the District's mixed delivery pre-K program.

In the 2021-2022 school year, OSSE contracted with Teachstone Training, LLC, to conduct CLASS® observations in 840 pre-K classrooms, located within 231 programs operated by DCPS, PCS or CBOs. In addition to PKEEP CBOs, community-based child development facilities that accept child care subsidies and serve preschool-aged children also received CLASS® observations through Teachstone. Although the District has used CLASS® as a common measure of pre-K quality for over a decade, the coronavirus (COVID-

---

<sup>1</sup> D.C. Code § 38-2901(2A) 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.

<sup>2</sup> A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) measures program quality and focuses on continuous quality improvement of child development facilities. See <https://osse.dc.gov/page/capital-quality-qris>.

19) pandemic disrupted CLASS® observations during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years (FY20 and FY21); FY22 marks the first time in three years that the District has had updated CLASS® observation data for all publicly funded pre-K programs. As such, data collected in FY22, and presented in this report, can help policymakers, early childhood program leaders, early educators and families to better understand whether or how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the quality of pre-K programs in the District.

The results are encouraging. In FY22, 65.2 percent of the District's pre-K classrooms met or exceeded evidence-based targets in the Emotional Support domain, 55.5 percent of classrooms met or exceeded targets for Classroom Organization, and 11 percent met or exceed targets for Instructional Support. Overall, CLASS® scores increased between FY19 (the last year for which CLASS® data was collected for all programs) and FY22, with improvements in both the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains, and stable performance in the Instructional Support domain. FY22 CLASS® data suggests that the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the FY22 school year did not significantly decrease the quality of children's learning experiences (even though children and teachers in most classrooms were still masked at the time observations were conducted). In fact, FY22 CLASS® scores continue a trend of improvement that was under way prior to the pandemic. The Instructional Support domain, however, remains an area for growth and improvement. While there are modest differences in domain-level CLASS® averages across sectors, variations in performance among classrooms within each sector are much greater than variations between sectors, and each sector—DCPS, PCS and CBOs with the PKEEP designation—has programs that are providing high-quality early learning experiences for children.

Quality pre-K is part of the District's larger early learning strategy that seeks to expand access, quality and affordability of early learning experiences for young children across the District, beginning at birth. The District has invested in several other initiatives to improve access to quality early learning for young children, including Capital Quality, the District's QRIS; professional development and postsecondary education opportunities for early childhood educators and leaders, including scholarship programs for Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials and the DC Leading Educator toward Advanced Degrees (DC LEAD) program, which expands access to scholarships for associate and bachelor's degrees; and the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, which seeks to provide early childhood educators employed at OSSE-licensed child development facilities compensation parity with educators in DC Public Schools. The District has also invested significant resources in COVID-19 relief and recovery for early learning programs, including those that are part of the public pre-K system and those outside of it.

By continuing to support quality early learning and continuous improvement for programs serving children birth to five across the mixed delivery care and education system, the District can continue to lead the nation in quality early learning and improve early childhood outcomes for our youngest learners.

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

For nearly 15 years, the District of Columbia has made free, universal pre-K available to all 3- and 4-year-olds residing within the District. With universal pre-K and innovative efforts to expand access, quality and affordability of early care and education for infants and toddlers, the District of Columbia has positioned itself as a national leader in early learning opportunities for young children and made early childhood a centerpiece of its education reform agenda.

In school year 2021-22 (FY22), the District served 69 percent of all 3-year-olds and 83 percent of all 4-year-olds, far higher than the national averages of 5 percent and 29 percent, respectively.<sup>3</sup> The District also invested far more in pre-K education than the national average. DC spent \$19,228 per child enrolled in state-funded pre-K, compared to a national average of just \$8,129 per child.<sup>4</sup>

The District provides publicly funded pre-K through a mixed-delivery system that includes DCPS, PCS and CBOs that have been designated as high-quality through the PKEEP. Additionally, Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided in some DCPS, PCS and CBOs, many of which also participate in the state-funded pre-K program. Finally, some community-based child development facilities that are not part of the universal pre-K system provide early child care and education services to 3- and 4-year-olds funded through parent tuition and child care subsidies. This report provides information on publicly funded pre-K programs operated by DCPS, PCS and PKEEP CBOs, as well as preschool-aged children who are not enrolled in public pre-K but receive child care subsidies and community-based child development facilities that serve preschool-aged children and participate in Capital Quality. Table 1 provides an overview of publicly funded preschool programs in the District.

---

<sup>3</sup> Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., Gardiner, B. A., & Jost, T. M., *The State of Preschool 2021: State Preschool Yearbook*. National Institute for Early Education Research (2022). Retrieved from: [https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021_Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Table 1. Publicly-funded preschool programs at-a-glance**

Setting	Universal Pre-K Program	Delivery System Overview	Funding Source	Number of Children Served in FY22
<b>Traditional Public Schools</b>	Yes	DCPS is the public school district for the District of Columbia and provides publicly-funded pre-K open to age-eligible District residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSFF for students enrolled in pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>• Federal Title I funds in eligible schools.</li> <li>• Federal Head Start funding in six DCPS schools.</li> </ul>	5,291
<b>PCS</b>	Yes	PCS schools provide publicly funded pre-K open to all age-eligible District residents. Charter schools that are oversubscribed admit students by lottery. PCS operate independently of the traditional public school system and are authorized and monitored by the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSFF for students enrolled in pre-K classrooms.</li> <li>• Federal Title I funds in eligible schools.</li> </ul>	6,109
<b>CBOs with PKEEP</b>	Yes	CBOs that achieve and maintain a high-quality designation under the PKEEP provide publicly-funded pre-K open to all District residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding equivalent to UPSFF for eligible students enrolled in PKEEP classrooms.</li> <li>• Public funding for eligible children through the District’s subsidized child care program.</li> <li>• Federal Head Start funding in three CBOs.</li> </ul>	910
<b>Community-Based Child Development Facilities (without PKEEP funding)</b>	No	Child development facilities that offer full-day, year-round early care and education services that include pre-K-aged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent tuition.</li> <li>• Public funding for eligible children through the District’s subsidized child care program.</li> <li>• Some programs receive Early Head Start funding through the federal Head Start program.</li> </ul>	434

## Funding for Universal Pre-K

Funding for public pre-K is provided to programs through the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) or grants to programs. The UPSFF provides per pupil funding to DCPS and PCS based on student enrollment. The formula incorporates weights based on the age of students and whether students meet criteria for being identified as at-risk, English Language Learners and/or receiving special education

services (see Table 2). While CBOs providing public pre-K do not receive funding through the USPF directly, they receive funding equivalent to the USPF through a combination of grants and child care subsidy payments (for eligible children) and receive an added weight for children meeting the at-risk criteria.

**Table 2. USPF FY22 Allocations**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Per Pupil Allocation</b>
Pre-K 3	\$15,718
Pre-K 4	\$15,249
English Learners	\$5,865
At-risk	\$2,815
Special Education	\$13,724



## Enrollment and 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. In FY22, enrollment in public pre-K was high across the District and across all sectors. A total of 12,310 students, 76 percent of all 3- and 4-year-old children in the District, were served by public pre-K programs. The District served 69 percent of 3-year-olds, an increase of two percentage points from FY21, and 83 percent of 4-year-olds, a decrease of four percentage points from FY21 (see Table 3).

**Table 3. 3 and 4 year olds served in universal pre-K in DC in FY21 & FY22**

Age	Census Data <sup>5</sup>	FY21		Census Data	FY22	
		Number Enrolled	Percent Served		Number Enrolled	Percent Served
3-year-olds	8,419	5,604	67%	8,083	5,562	69%
4-year-olds	8,390	7,319	87%	8,088	6,748	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,809</b>	<b>12,923</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>16,171</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>76%</b>

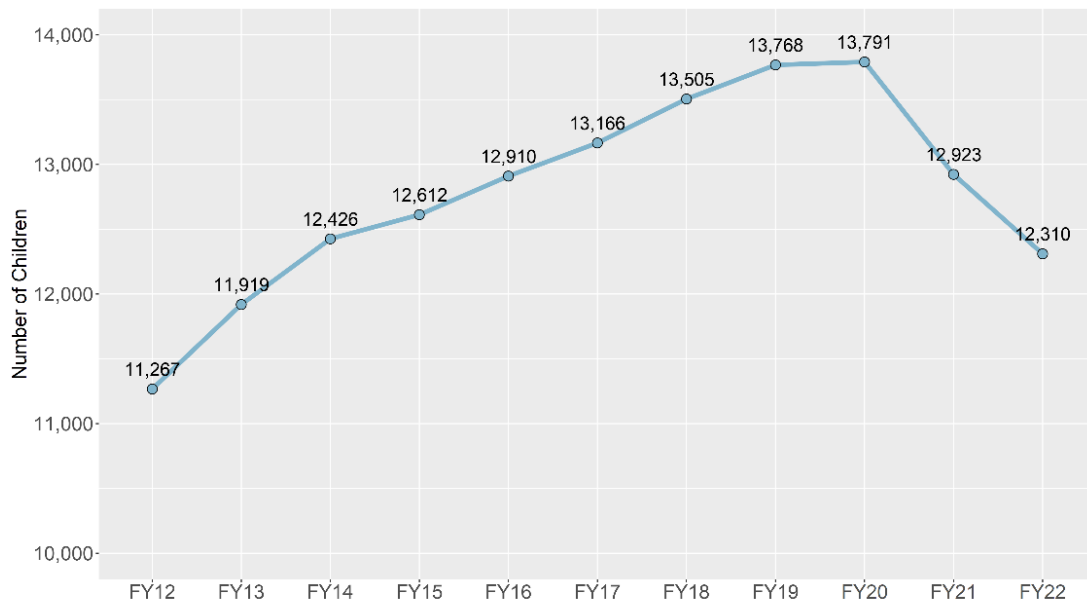
---

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. (July 2021) State Population by Characteristics:2020-2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-state-detail.html>. Population estimates by age are not available for July 1, 2022. Note: Population estimates use the most recently available data and differ from previous pre-K reports as population data has been updated.

**Enrollment over time.** From FY12 through FY20, public pre-K enrollment grew steadily in the District across all sectors, from 11,267 to 13,791 enrolled students. Since FY20, the number of children enrolled in pre-K in the District has declined by 11.4 percent (see Figure 1). This decline corresponds with a decline in the District’s preschool-age population and aligns with a national trend in reduced pre-K enrollment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup>

In 2021, there were approximately 16,171 3- and 4-year-old children residing in the District, compared to 17,515 in 2019, a decline of eight percent. The decline in the young child population is contributing to the decline in public pre-K enrollment. While the District served fewer children overall in pre-K in FY22, compared to the previous school year, the total share of children enrolled stayed relatively flat.

**Figure 1. Universal pre-K enrollment from FY12 to FY22**

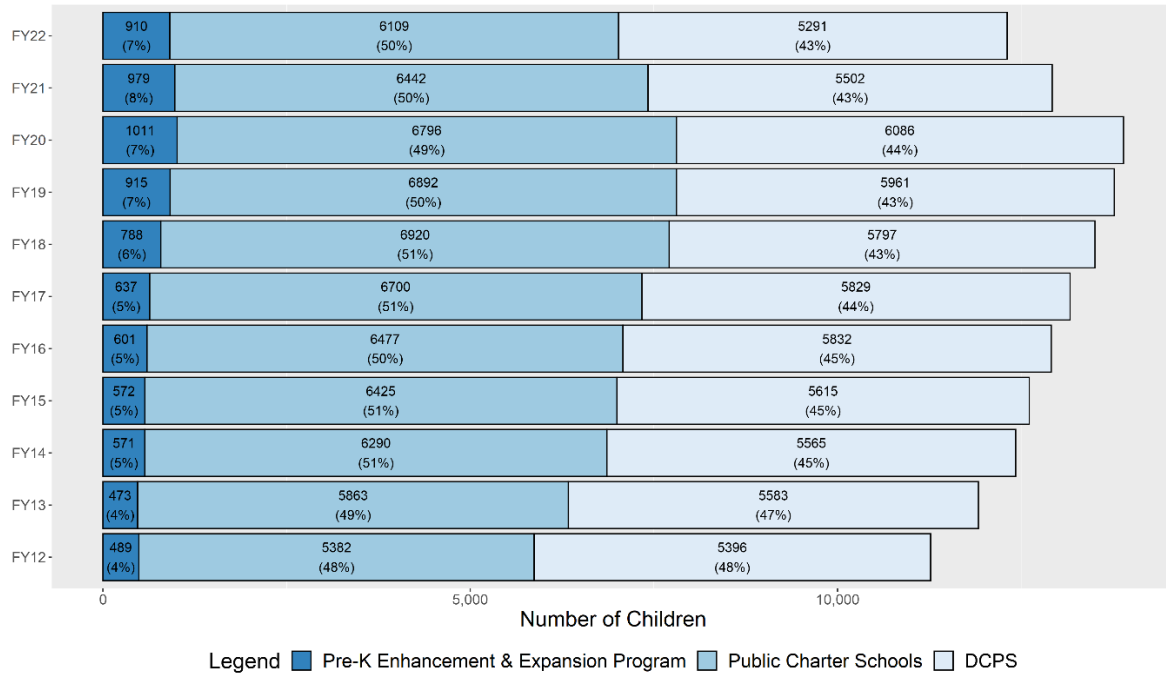



---

<sup>6</sup> Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., Gardiner, B. A., & Jost, T. M. (2022). The State of Preschool 2021: State Preschool Yearbook. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from: [https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021_Full_Report.pdf).

Yearly changes in enrollment were consistent across sectors. From FY20 to FY22, DCPS pre-K enrollment declined 14 percent, PCS pre-K enrollment declined 11 percent and PKEEP CBO enrollment declined 11 percent (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Universal pre-K enrollment by sector from FY12 to FY22**



## Capacity

Across the mixed delivery system, universal pre-K was offered at 174 sites in FY22. DCPS operated pre-K classrooms in 80 schools (one more than FY21), 66 public charter schools offered pre-K classrooms (three more than FY21) and 28 CBOs with PKEEP provided public pre-K. The District’s pre-K program had a total capacity of 13,845 seats across 777 classrooms with the greatest enrollment and capacity in PCS (see Table 4).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Actual classroom capacity may vary by age, sector and school. For PCS sites, capacity was estimated using classroom configuration data. PKEEP capacity was estimated based on 16 children per classroom. For DCPS classrooms, capacity was calculated using the number of general education seats and does not include seats in classrooms only serving children with disabilities. Self-contained special education classrooms were not included in either the classroom count or in the calculated capacity for DCPS.

## Utilization

Utilization—the extent to which available capacity is occupied by enrolled children—is calculated by dividing the number of enrolled children by estimated capacity. Utilization was high district-wide and across the sectors, although lower than in past years. In FY22, nearly 89 percent of seats district-wide were filled by an enrolled student (see Table 4), down from almost 99 percent in FY20. Utilization across sectors was fairly even with CBOs with PKEEP having the highest utilization rate.

**Table 4. Public pre-K program access by sector FY22**

Sector	Sites	Enrollment	Number of Classrooms	Estimated Capacity	Utilization	Available Slots
DCPS	80	5,291	381	6,173	86%	882
PCS	66	6,109	334	6,680	91%	571
PKEEP	28	910	62	992	92%	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>777<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>13,845</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>1,535</b>

## Pre-K by Ward

Across the District, pre-K enrollment and capacity was highest in Wards 4, 5 and 8. From FY20 to FY22, enrollment declined in every ward except Wards 2 and 3, with the largest declines in Wards 7 and 8 (20 percent and 16 percent, respectively).<sup>9</sup> Ward 8 also experienced the largest decline in the young child population during this time.<sup>10</sup> Utilization is high across Wards with rates ranging from 82 percent in Ward 2 to over 100 percent in Ward 3 (see Table 5). It is possible for utilization to exceed 100 percent over the course of the school year due to student mobility; when a student leaves a pre-K program, they may be replaced by another student. Utilization exceeding 100 percent indicates that all available pre-K slots were filled.

<sup>8</sup> This number does not include CBO classrooms that are not participating in PKEEP (n=57 programs) that also serve pre-K age children.

<sup>9</sup> OSSE, *Fiscal Year 2020 Pre-K Report*, District of Columbia, July 2021, <https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/OSSE%20Annual%20Pre-K%20Report%202020.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Annie. E Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center, *Population by Age Group by Ward in District of Columbia*, <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/6747-population-by-age-group-by-ward?loc=10&loct=3#detailed/3/any/false/2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868/3933,214,838,123,2750/13833>, accessed April 26, 2023.

**Table 5. Universal pre-K program slots and utilization by ward in FY22**

	Total Sites	Enrollment	Number of DCPS Classrooms	Number of Public Charter Classrooms	Number of PKEEP Classrooms	Estimated Capacity	Estimated Utilization
<b>Ward 1</b>	13	961	32	14	18	1,092	88%
<b>Ward 2</b>	8	363	25	0	3	445	82%
<b>Ward 3</b>	9	518	18	0	9	490	106%
<b>Ward 4</b>	29	1,949	74	41	11	2,174	90%
<b>Ward 5</b>	32	2,409	33	104	4	2,648	91%
<b>Ward 6</b>	23	1,826	82	34	2	2,027	90%
<b>Ward 7</b>	24	1,838	54	58	4	2,100	88%
<b>Ward 8</b>	36	2,446	63	83	11	2,869	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>13,845</b>	<b>90%</b>

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

Of the more than 12,310 children served in public pre-K programs in the District in FY22, 46 percent were identified as at-risk.<sup>11</sup> The majority of children enrolled in public pre-K were Black/African American (61 percent), 19 percent of students were White and 15 percent were Hispanic/Latino. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, two or more races, and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian each account for less than five percent of pre-K enrollment. Eight percent of children enrolled in public pre-K (998) received special education services. Table 6 presents the demographics of District pre-K students in further detail, including demographics by sector.

---

<sup>11</sup> A student is identified as economically disadvantaged 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.

**Table 6. Demographic characteristics of children enrolled in universal pre-K by sector**

<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>								
	<b>DCPS</b>		<b>PCS</b>		<b>PKEEP CBO</b>		<b>District-wide</b>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	2,235	42%	3,049	50%	388	43%	5,672	46%
No	3,056	58%	3,060	50%	522	57%	6,638	54%

<b>Gender</b>								
	<b>DCPS</b>		<b>PCS</b>		<b>PKEEP CBO</b>		<b>District-wide</b>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	2,576	49%	3130	51%	446	49%	6,152	50%
Male	2,713	51%	2977	49%	464	51%	6,154	50%
Non-binary <sup>12</sup>							4	<1%

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>								
	<b>DCPS</b>		<b>PCS</b>		<b>PKEEP CBO</b>		<b>District-wide</b>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8	<1%	14	<1%	0	-	22	<1%
Asian	107	2%	68	1%	34	4%	209	2%
Black/African American	2,700	51%	4,328	71%	425	47%	7,453	61%
Hispanic/Latino	936	18%	646	11%	249	27%	1,831	15%
Two or more races	194	4%	246	4%	9	1%	449	4%
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	2	<1%	4	<1%	0	-	6	<1%
White	1,344	25%	803	13%	193	21%	2,340	19%

<b>Special Education</b>								
	<b>DCPS</b>		<b>PCS</b>		<b>PKEEP CBO</b>		<b>District-wide</b>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	637	12%	DS	DS	n<10	n<10	998	8%
No	4,654	88%	DS	DS	DS	DS	11,312	92%

<sup>12</sup> Data is suppressed at the LEA and CBO level to protect personally identifiable information.

## The Quality of Pre-K Programming

Beyond access, quality of pre-K programs is important to support intended outcomes for children. OSSE has oversight responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the quality of pre-K programs in the District.<sup>13</sup> The District has used CLASS<sup>®</sup> as the common measure of quality across all sectors of the mixed delivery pre-K system since 2017. CLASS<sup>®</sup> data is used in three accountability systems for public schools and child development facilities: the STAR Framework administered by OSSE for DCPS and PCS, the Public Charter School Board's Performance Management Framework for PCS and Capital Quality, and the District's QRIS administered by OSSE for child development facilities. These systems, which use multiple indicators to provide a comprehensive picture of school or child development facility quality, use CLASS<sup>®</sup> as one measure of pre-K quality, along with other indicators, to inform public ratings that families can use to make decisions about schools or child development facilities, and that also inform accountability and quality supports for schools and child development facilities.<sup>14</sup>

CLASS<sup>®</sup> observations were disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic and were not conducted for all schools and child development facilities serving pre-K students in FY20 or FY21. FY22 marks the first year since FY19 that CLASS<sup>®</sup> data is again available for all programs across the mixed delivery system. Due to the impacts of the Omicron wave on schools and CBOs in winter 2021-22, as well as feedback from stakeholders, OSSE determined not to use data from CLASS<sup>®</sup> observations conducted in FY22 for program rating purposes, but data were shared with schools and programs to support professional development and ongoing continuous improvement. Aggregate data also provides important insights on the quality of children's learning experiences during the 2021-22 school year.

### Overview of CLASS<sup>®</sup>

CLASS<sup>®</sup> pre-K is a research-based observational measure that captures the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool classrooms.<sup>15</sup> It comprises three domains—Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support—each of which is further divided into three dimensions that capture specific features of teacher-child interactions within these broader domains. By observing and providing feedback within each dimension, CLASS<sup>®</sup> data can provide teachers and program leaders with specific, actionable information for targeting professional development and improvement. Table 7 describes each CLASS<sup>®</sup> domain and dimension.

---

<sup>13</sup> DC Code § 38–271.02(b)(5).

<sup>14</sup> The [DC School Report Card](#) includes assessment of pre-K quality using Class<sup>®</sup>. DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (or PMF) is used to produce the annual [School Quality Report](#) for each public charter school for which it provides oversight. Capital Quality designations are available for each participating child development facility at [My Child Care](#).

<sup>15</sup> Pianta, R.C., LaParo, K.M., & Hamre, B. K., (2008). Classroom Assessment Scoring System Manual: Pre-K. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

**Table 7. CLASS® pre-K domains, dimensions and descriptions**

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

Each dimension is scored on a scale of 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher quality.<sup>16</sup> The dimension scores are then averaged to create a domain score.<sup>17</sup> Research has shown that achieving 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>18</sup> The District has adopted targets and floors

<sup>16</sup> The exception is the Negative Climate dimension, in which a lower score indicates higher quality.

<sup>17</sup> Negative Climate is reverse coded, so higher scores indicate lower negative climate, before averaging to create a domain score.

<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*



for each CLASS® domain that are used to calculate STAR and Capital Quality ratings and support continuous improvement in pre-K programs. Targets for quality are set at a score of 6 for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and a score of 4 for Instructional Support.

## Observed Classrooms

In the 2021-22 school year, OSSE contracted with Teachstone Training, LLC, to conduct classroom quality evaluations in all publicly funded pre-K programs in the District. Each classroom observation was pre-scheduled, lasted approximately three hours, and took place over the course of one morning during a typical instructional day.<sup>19</sup>

All pre-K classrooms in each of the three sectors in the universal pre-K mixed-delivery system (DCPS, PCS and CBOs with PKEEP programs) were observed using the CLASS® measure. Additionally, all CBOs participating in Capital Quality with classrooms serving preschool-aged children were also observed using the CLASS® measure, even if they did not participate in PKEEP.<sup>20</sup> Table 8 shows the number of pre-K classrooms observed in FY22 by sector.

**Table 8. Pre-K classrooms observed by sector**

Type	DCPS	PCS	PKEEP CBOs	Non-PKEEP CBOs	Total
<b>Classrooms</b>	360	333	71	76	<b>840</b>
<b>Programs</b>	79	68	27	57	<b>231</b>

---

Research Quarterly, 25 (2), 166-176.

<sup>19</sup> For more information, see the Quality Observation Data Collection and Quality Assurance Protocols for CBOs and LEAs: <https://osse.dc.gov/page/program-quality-evaluation-and-assessment-class-pre-k>.

<sup>20</sup> Use of the CLASS assessment has not been validated in self-contained special education classrooms; therefore, a small number of self-contained preschool classrooms were not observed.

## 2021-22 CLASS<sup>®</sup> Observation Findings

**Finding 1:** District-wide, the majority of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded targets for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization while fewer classrooms (11 percent) met or exceeded the target for Instructional Support.

**Table 9: 2021-22 pre-K classroom level CLASS<sup>®</sup> scores**

CLASS <sup>®</sup> Domain	Number of Classrooms meeting/exceeding target	Percent of classrooms meeting/exceeding target
Emotional Support	548	65.2%
Classroom Organization	466	55.5%
Instructional Support	92	11%
All Three Domains	74	8.8%

As shown in Table 9, the majority (65.2 percent) of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target in Emotional Support. For the Classroom Organization domain, 55.5 percent of pre-K classrooms met or exceeded the target. Only 11 percent of pre-K classrooms in the District met or exceeded the target in Instructional Support. Additionally, 8.8 percent of classrooms met all three CLASS<sup>®</sup> domain targets.

Consistent with national averages, Emotional Support and Classroom Organization have remained areas of strength for District programs. The majority of classrooms (65.2%) met or exceeded the target for Emotional Support, which measures teacher interactions with children that support the social and emotional functioning of children in their classrooms. District-wide, across 231 programs, the average score for this domain was 6.1.<sup>21</sup> Classrooms scoring at or above the target in this domain are those that typically exhibit warm, positive and respectful relationships between teachers and children. There are also few instances of negative interactions or disrespect between teachers and children in these programs. Teachers in these classrooms are sometimes aware of children’s needs and are sometimes responsive and able to help children address problems that arise. 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.

Over half of classrooms (55.5%) met or exceeded the target for Classroom Organization, the domain that measures classroom-level processes that take place throughout the day. District-wide, programs averaged a score of 5.91. Classrooms at or above the target are classrooms in which behavioral expectations are communicated somewhat clearly and methods used to manage challenging behavior are often effective.

---

<sup>21</sup> Classroom-level and program-level ratings were similar in relation to the established floors and targets.

In these classrooms, teachers maximize learning time most of the time and have established some routines that allow the classroom to run efficiently. Further, in these classrooms, teachers sometimes make learning objectives clear and provide children with a range of engagement modalities that enhance learning opportunities. Taken together, these findings suggest that children in the District are experiencing classroom environments that support consistency, intentionally designed learning space, and routines that are sensitive and appropriate to the needs of the children.

An area for growth and improvement across all sectors is the Instructional Support domain where just 11 percent of classrooms met or exceeded the target. District-wide, programs averaged a score of 2.91. 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 may too often focus on instruction based on rote learning techniques focused on repetition during the typical instructional day rather than providing children with opportunities to use higher-order thinking and conversational skills.

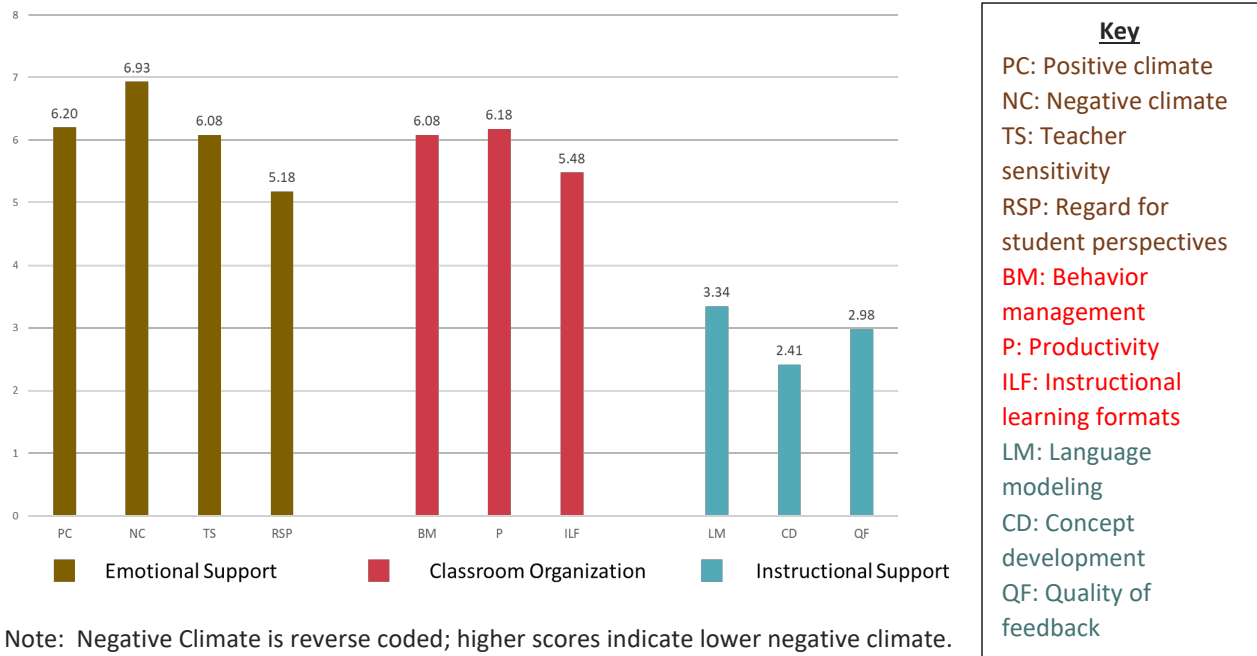
Instructional Support domain scores by dimension (i.e., Language Modeling, Quality of Feedback, Concept Development) provide greater context for assessing the District's strengths and areas in which programs and teachers may need additional support. Relative to other dimensions in this domain, scores on Language Modeling were relatively strong and closer to the established targets, with an average score of 3.34. This finding suggests that there are conversations in the classroom and that teachers ask a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Teachers sometimes repeat or extend student responses and occasionally map their actions and the students' actions through language and description. Additionally, teachers sometimes use advanced language and a variety of words with students. Across all three sectors, there has been a focus on supporting language and language interactions in preschool classrooms. The data suggest that this attention has had positive results and an intentional focus on some of the other dimensions of Instructional Support is also needed.

The District's largest area for growth is the Concept Development (CD) dimension, with an average score of 2.41. The lower scores on this dimension suggest the need to implement 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.

The District had an average score of 2.98 for the Quality of Feedback (QF) dimension. The lower scores on this dimension suggest the need for teacher strategies that 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.

Figure 3 shows the average scores for all dimensions at the program-level.

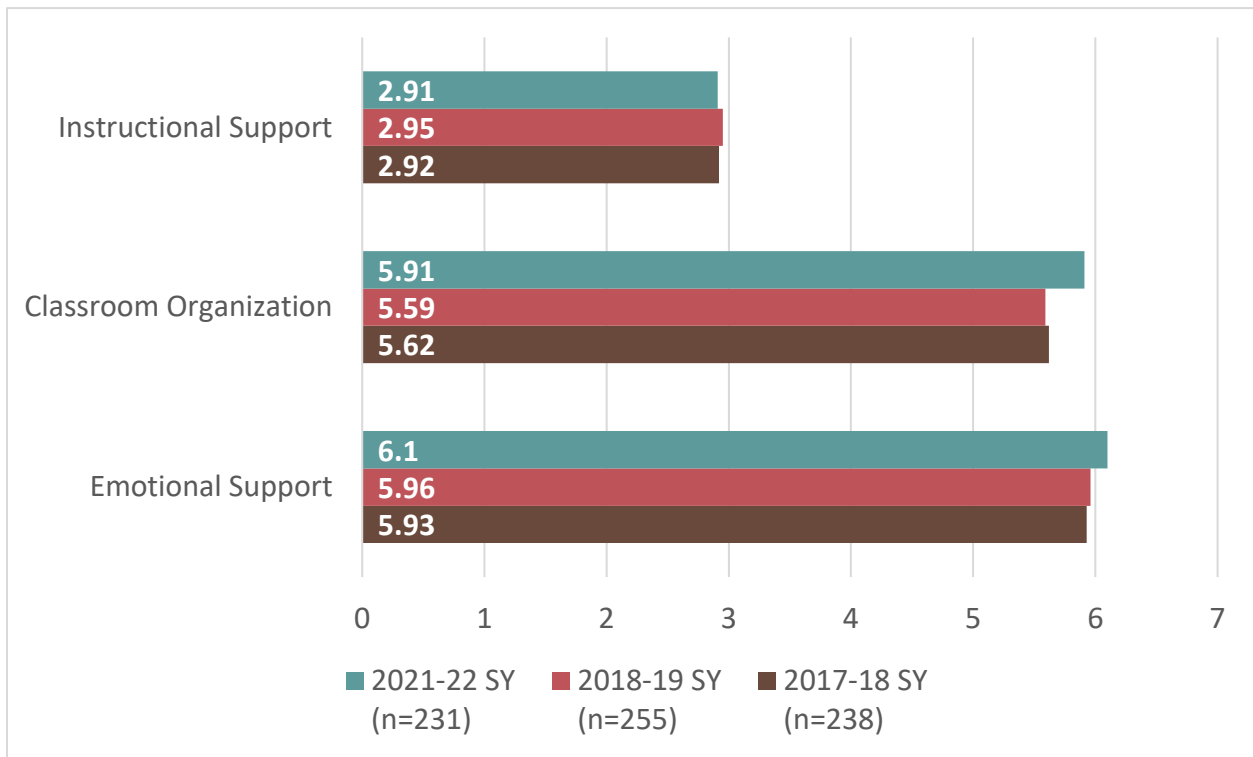
**Figure 3: Program-level district-wide averages across CLASS® dimensions**



**Finding 2:** CLASS® scores for most domains have improved over time and largely remained stable coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Average CLASS® scores in 2021-22 were higher in the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains, and largely unchanged in Instructional Support, as compared to 2017-18 and 2018-19. The fact that observation scores did not fall—and even rose in some areas—is significant and reassuring given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by students, families, schools and child development facilities. The data suggest that classroom quality did not decline following the pandemic, even as mitigation strategies, such as masking, were in place. Moreover, classroom observations show that the District’s trend of quality improvement over time continues. Figure 4 shows a comparison of CLASS® domain averages over time.

**Figure 4: Comparison of CLASS® domain averages over time**



**Finding 3:** Performance on CLASS® varies both across and within sectors.

The data show modest differences in CLASS® domain scores across sectors. PCS programs more commonly met or exceeded targets for all three domains. PCS programs scored higher than CBO programs in Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. Additionally, PCS programs scored higher on Instructional Support than DCPS. However, there were not statistically significant differences in performance in any domain between DCPS and PCS.

While there were differences across sectors, there were also common trends. Programs in each sector, on average, scored higher on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, while scoring lower on Instructional Support. Regardless of sector, all programs met or exceeded the floor for Emotional Support and at least 91 percent met or exceeded the floor for both Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. Nearly all programs (89-99 percent), regardless of sector, met or exceeded all three floors. Table 10 shows the average differences in CLASS® domain by sector.

**Table 10: Average differences with statistical significance in CLASS® domain by sector**

	DCPS (n=79)	PCS (n=68)	CBO (n=84)
<b>Emotional Support</b>	<b>Mean = 6.10</b>	<b>Mean = 6.15</b>	<b>Mean = 6.05</b>
DCPS	-	-	-
PCS	-0.05	-	-
CBO	0.04	0.10	-
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	<b>Mean = 5.94</b>	<b>Mean = 6.05</b>	<b>Mean = 5.77</b>
DCPS	-	-	-
PCS	-0.12	-	-
CBO	0.17	0.28*	-
<b>Instructional Support</b>	<b>Mean = 2.87</b>	<b>Mean = 3.18</b>	<b>Mean = 2.73</b>
DCPS	-	-	-
PCS	-0.31*	-	-
CBO	0.15	0.45*	-

Average CLASS scores varied slightly across wards with no statistically significant differences in any domains (see Table 11).

**Table 11: CLASS® domain averages by Ward**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Emotional Support</b>	<b>Classroom Organization</b>	<b>Instructional Support</b>
<b>1</b>	6.14	6.06	2.83
<b>2</b>	6.00	5.82	2.77
<b>3</b>	6.04	5.89	2.77
<b>4</b>	6.07	5.98	2.86
<b>5</b>	6.05	5.88	2.97
<b>6</b>	6.17	5.91	2.89
<b>7</b>	6.16	5.85	2.97
<b>8</b>	6.12	5.89	2.97

**Finding 4:** *Pre-K classrooms in CBOs with the PKEEP designation had a slightly higher average in the Instructional Support domain than pre-K classrooms in CBOs that do not have the PKEEP designation, but there were no significant differences between CBOs with and without PKEEP designation in other domains.*

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 at a wage that is comparable to the DCPS pay scale. In FY22, CBOs with at least one classroom receiving PKEEP funding had a slightly higher average score in the Instructional Support domain than CBOs without a PKEEP designation (2.91 compared to 2.64). Table 12 includes averages on CLASS® domains based on CBO participation in PKEEP.

**Table 12: Averages on CLASS® domains in CBO participation by PKEEP participation**

Domain	PKEEP (n=27)	Non PKEEP (n=57)	All CBO (n=84)
<b>Emotional Support</b>	6.08	6.04	6.05
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	5.77	5.77	5.77
<b>Instructional Support</b>	2.91	2.64	2.73



## 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 ranks number one in pre-K access and resource commitment compared to all other states.<sup>22</sup> Even with declines in enrollment, the District serves the large majority of its 3- and 4-year-olds (69 and 83 percent, respectively) in publicly funded pre-K. Enrollment and utilization are high across sectors and across wards.

With significant investments made to serve children in a mixed-delivery pre-K system, the District continues to demonstrate a commitment to providing high-quality programming across sectors. Data on classroom quality, observed across all three sectors, shows the District has made progress in achieving and maintaining program quality in publicly funded pre-K classrooms—even through the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the District’s pre-K classrooms met or exceeded targets in the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization with no statistically significant differences across wards. Notably, District pre-K programs scored higher on most observed dimensions than in previous school year observations. This is a significant achievement given the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite this progress, the data show a need for continued growth, particularly in the Instructional Support domain—including concept development, quality of feedback, and teacher practices that support children’s higher level thinking skills. The District will continue to align and leverage resources and professional development to areas where support is most needed.

As the District emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has particularly affected development for young children, OSSE is committed to supporting vibrant and quality early learning environments that prepare young children for their K-12 education. Alongside broader efforts in the District to expand access, quality and affordability of early learning for all young children, universal pre-K remains a key component of this strategy.

---

<sup>22</sup> Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., Gardiner, B. A., & Jost, T. M. (2022). *The State of Preschool 2021: State Preschool Yearbook*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from: [https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/YB2021_Full_Report.pdf).

## Appendix

### Head Start program participation for FY22

Program	Participates in Public Pre-K	Funded Slots
<b>Early Head Start Home-Based</b>		
Bright Beginnings, Inc.	Y	64
CentroNia	Y	48
Healthy Babies (pregnant moms)	N	24
Home-Based Program	N	93
Rosemount	Y	112
<b>Total</b>		<b>341</b>
<b>Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership</b>		
<b>Educare of Washington, DC</b>	Y	144
First Rock Baptist Child Development Center	N	
Kiddies, Inc.	N	
National Children’s Center	Y	
St. Philip’s Child Development Center	Y	
St. Timothy’s Episcopal Child Development Center	N	
<b>OSSE, Quality Improvement Network (QIN)</b>	N	366
Bell Teen Parent & Child Development Center	N	
Big Mama’s Children Center	N	
Board of Child Care	N	
Community Educational Research Group	N	
Community Educational Research Group	N	
House of Ruth Kidspace Child and Family Development Center	N	
Jubilee Jumpstart	Y	
Kennedy Child Development Center	N	
Kids Are People Too V	N	
Kids Are Us Learning Center	N	
Love and Care Child Development Center	N	
Love First Child Development Center	Y	
Loving Care Day Nursery, Inc.		
National Children’s Center	Y	
Sunshine Early Learning Center	Y	
<b>Total</b>		

<b>Early Head Start Direct Grantees</b>		
Bright Beginnings, Inc.	Y	32
CentroNia	Y	24
Educare	Y	184
Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc.	Y	107
Martha's Table	N	76
Rosemount	Y	51
UPO	N	612
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,086</b>
<b>Head Start Direct Grantees</b>		
Bright Beginnings, Inc.	Y	112
DCPS	Y	250
Educare of Washington, DC	Y	60
Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc.	N	20
Martha's Table	N	54
Rosemount	N	29
<b>Total</b>		<b>525</b>

## SY 2021-22 Sites and Enrollment for Pre-K Programs – DCPS

School Name	Total Pre-K Enrollment
Aiton Elementary School	33
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School	63
Bancroft Elementary School	104
Barnard Elementary School	133
Beers Elementary School	76
Brent Elementary School	64
Brightwood Elementary School	104
Browne Education Campus	58
Bruce-Monroe Elementary School @ Park View	81
Bunker Hill Elementary School	40
Burroughs Elementary School	68
Burrville Elementary School	58
C.W. Harris Elementary School	43
Capitol Hill Montessori School @ Logan	104
Cleveland Elementary School	62
Dorothy I. Height Elementary School	99
Drew Elementary School	44
Eaton Elementary School	39
Excel Academy	46
Garfield Elementary School	46
Garrison Elementary School	79
H.D. Cooke Elementary School	74
Hearst Elementary School	40
Hendley Elementary School	37
Houston Elementary School	64
Hyde-Addison Elementary School	51
J.O. Wilson Elementary School	102
Janney Elementary School	75
Ketcham Elementary School	59
Key Elementary School	36
Kimball Elementary School	74
King Elementary School	44
LaSalle-Backus Elementary School	60
Lafayette Elementary School	55
Langdon Elementary School	80
Langley Elementary School	85
Lawrence E. Boone Elementary School	94
Leckie Education Campus	51
Ludlow-Taylor Elementary School	94

School Name	Total Pre-K Enrollment
Malcolm X Elementary School @ Green	31
Mann Elementary School	36
Marie Reed Elementary School	96
Maury Elementary School	84
Military Road Early Learning Center	45
Miner Elementary School	96
Moten Elementary School	48
Murch Elementary School	57
Nalle Elementary School	64
Noyes Elementary School	44
Oyster-Adams Bilingual School	40
Patterson Elementary School	53
Payne Elementary School	73
Peabody Elementary School (Capitol Hill Cluster)	132
Plummer Elementary School	64
Powell Elementary School	76
Randle Highlands Elementary School	54
Raymond Elementary School	63
Ross Elementary School	20
Savoy Elementary School	50
School Without Walls @ Francis-Stevens	57
School-Within-School @ Goding	73
Seaton Elementary School	96
Shepherd Elementary School	65
Simon Elementary School	40
Smothers Elementary School	39
Stanton Elementary School	69
Stoddert Elementary School	19
Takoma Elementary School	95
Thaddeus Stevens Early Learning Center	61
Thomas Elementary School	59
Thomson Elementary School	63
Truesdell Elementary School	103
Tubman Elementary School	67
Turner Elementary School	71
Tyler Elementary School	125
Van Ness Elementary School	68
Walker-Jones Education Campus	49
West Elementary School	96
Wheatley Education Campus	56
Whittier Elementary School	75
<b>Total DCPS Enrollment</b>	<b>5,291</b>

**SY 2021-22 Sites and Enrollment for Pre-K programs – PCS**

School Name	Total Pre-K Enrollment
Achievement Preparatory Academy PCS - Wahler Place Elementary School	68
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Columbia Heights	111
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Douglas Knoll	52
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Lincoln Park	58
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Oklahoma Avenue	78
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Parklands at THEARC	99
AppleTree Early Learning Center PCS - Southwest	77
Breakthrough Montessori PCS	116
Bridges PCS	87
Briya PCS	49
Capital City PCS - Lower School	75
Cedar Tree Academy PCS	174
Center City PCS - Brightwood	40
Center City PCS - Capitol Hill	37
Center City PCS - Congress Heights	42
Center City PCS - Petworth	40
Center City PCS - Shaw	17
Center City PCS - Trinidad	14
Creative Minds International PCS	112
DC Bilingual PCS	115
DC Prep PCS - Anacostia Elementary School	139
DC Prep PCS - Benning Elementary School	151
DC Prep PCS - Edgewood Elementary School	148
DC Scholars PCS	66
E.L. Haynes PCS - Elementary School	95
Eagle Academy PCS - Capitol Riverfront	36
Eagle Academy PCS - Congress Heights	85
Early Childhood Academy PCS	69
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS - Brookland	76
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS - East End	94
Friendship PCS - Armstrong Elementary	77
Friendship PCS - Blow Pierce Elementary	64
Friendship PCS - Chamberlain Elementary	85
Friendship PCS - Ideal Elementary	73
Friendship PCS - Southeast Elementary	111
Friendship PCS - Woodridge International Elementary	83

School Name	Total Pre-K Enrollment
Global Citizens PCS	60
Harmony DC PCS - School of Excellence	31
Hope Community PCS - Tolson	36
I Dream PCS	26
Ingenuity Prep PCS	138
Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS	87
KIPP DC - Arts and Technology Academy PCS	203
KIPP DC - Connect Academy PCS	189
KIPP DC - Discover Academy PCS	189
KIPP DC - Grow Academy PCS	174
KIPP DC - LEAP Academy PCS	201
KIPP DC - Pride Academy PCS	70
LEARN DC PCS	85
Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS	175
Lee Montessori PCS - Brookland	82
Lee Montessori PCS - East End	97
Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS	61
Meridian PCS	93
Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS - Calle Ocho	135
Mundo Verde Bilingual PCS - J.F. Cook	89
Perry Street Preparatory PCS	84
Rocketship PCS - Infinity Community Prep	70
Rocketship PCS - Legacy Prep	155
Rocketship PCS - Rise Academy	134
Roots PCS	26
Sela PCS	105
Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS	78
Two Rivers PCS - 4th Street	94
Two Rivers PCS - Young Elementary School	79
Washington Yu Ying PCS	150
<b>Total Charter Enrollment</b>	<b>6,109</b>

**SY 2021-22 Sites and Enrollment for CBOS with PKEEP Designation**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Total Pre-K Enrollment</b>
Associates for Renewal in Education, Inc	10
Barbara Chambers Children's Center	111
Big Mamas Children Center	9
Bright Beginnings	25
Bright Start Early Care & Preschool	8
Centronia	93
Children's Hut	28
Christian Tabernacle Child Development Center	10
CommuniKids Preschool and Children's Language Center	176
Dawn to Dusk Child Development Center	17
Easter Seals Serving DC MD VA	10
Educare of Washington	64
Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc.	10
Estrellitas Montessori School	41
GAP Community Child Development Center	3
Happy Faces Early Learning Academy, LLC	28
Home Away From Home Child Development Center, Inc.	8
Ideal CDC	10
Jubilee Jumpstart	16
Kiddie Academy of DC West End	22
Kids Are People Too	4
Kuumba Learning Center	11
National Children's Center	42
Paramount Child Development Center	22
Rosemount Center	43
Spanish Education Development (SED) Center	35
St. Phillips Child Development Center	15
Sunshine Early Learning	39
<b>Total CBO enrollment</b>	<b>910</b>