



Pre-Kindergarten Program: Evaluation Readiness Report

By Allison M. Bock, Ph.D., Program Evaluation Specialist and
Heidi L. Janicki, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation

August 2025



Planning, Innovation, and Accountability
Office of Research and Evaluation
Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Table of Contents

Background	5
Program Description and Purpose.....	5
Pre-Kindergarten Program in Virginia Beach City Public Schools	5
Pre-Kindergarten Program Eligibility and Application Process	6
Pre-Kindergarten Program Curriculum and Classroom Quality	7
Selection and Approval of Program for Evaluation.....	8
Overview of Current Goals and Objectives.....	8
Process for Developing Revised Goals and Objectives	9
Revised Goals and Objectives.....	9
Implementation Goal and Objectives	9
Outcome Goals and Objectives	10
Baseline Data	10
Pre-Kindergarten Program Participants and Characteristics	10
Baseline CLASS Results	11
Baseline Survey Results	13
Evaluation Plan and Recommendation	14
Scope and Rationale of Proposed Evaluation	14
Proposed Evaluation Method.....	15
Evaluation Design and Questions.....	15
Summary of the Evaluation Readiness Process	17
Recommendation and Rationale	19
Appendices.....	20
Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of Pre-Kindergarten Program and Kindergarten Students.....	20
Appendix B: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS	21
Appendix C: VBCPS and Virginia Statewide Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS	22
Endnotes	23

Tables

Table 1: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Schools, Classrooms, and Students From 2016-2017 to 2024-2025.....	5
Table 2: Number of Pre-Kindergarten Applications and Eligibility for 2024-2025 Enrollment.....	6
Table 3: CLASS Domains and Dimensions	7
Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Pre-Kindergarten Program Students in 2024-2025	11
Table 5: Pre-Kindergarten Teacher and Teacher Assistant Agreement Regarding Classroom Quality	13
Table 6: Pre-Kindergarten Teacher and Teacher Assistant Agreement Regarding Preparation for Kindergarten Transition	14
Table 7: Data Collection Process for Implementation Objectives.....	17
Table 8: Data Collection Process for Outcome Objectives.....	17

Figures

Figure 1: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS in 2024-2025 Overall and by Domain..... 12

Figure 2: VBCPS and Virginia Statewide Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS in 2023-2024 by Domain 13

Background

Program Description and Purpose

Pre-Kindergarten Program in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

The Pre-Kindergarten program within Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) implements a developmentally-appropriate, hands-on curriculum that engages students in learning literacy, developing numeracy, and growing socially and emotionally.¹ The purpose of the VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program is to prepare students for a successful transition to kindergarten while they become independent, enthusiastic, and self-confident learners. The Pre-Kindergarten program began in VBCPS during the 2016-2017 school year with 40 classrooms across 20 elementary schools and served 704 students. Prior to that time, a separate preschool program called Early Discoveries was offered in some VBCPS school buildings and was provided through the YMCA. Although this program was implemented in VBCPS school buildings, it was run entirely by the YMCA organization, and there was no direct oversight by VBCPS employees. It's also important to note that a separate program, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), is offered for preschool-aged children from age two through five who have an identified disability or developmental delay and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).² IEP teams make the determination of which program is most appropriate considering what is the least restrictive environment (LRE) based on the child's strengths and needs as written in the student's IEP.³

As shown in Table 1, nearly every year since the VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program began in 2016-2017, there have been increases in the number of elementary schools, classrooms, and/or total students served by the program with the exception of the 2019-2020 through 2020-2021 school years. During the 2024-2025 school year, there were 53 classrooms across 30 elementary school sites and 954 students served. School sites had a range of one to four classrooms within the buildings. For each classroom, there was one pre-kindergarten teacher and one teacher assistant. In 2025-2026, there will be an expansion to a total of 36 elementary school sites and 56 classrooms that will serve 1,008 students. Once implemented, this will be the largest increase in the number of elementary school sites with a classroom since the program began with an increase in 7 new school sites.⁴

Table 1: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Schools, Classrooms, and Students From 2016-2017 to 2024-2025

School Year	Pre-K Elementary School Sites	Pre-K Classrooms	Total Students*
2016-2017	20	40	704
2017-2018	24	46	817
2018-2019	26	48	853
2019-2020	26	48	853
2020-2021	27	48	853
2021-2022	27	50	900
2022-2023	27	51	918
2023-2024	27	52	936
2024-2025	30	53	954

*Note: The total students column indicates the total number of students or spots at any one point in time. Due to fluctuations in enrollment, there may have been additional students who were served by the program throughout the entire school year.

The VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program is designed to be an intervention program for those who meet established criteria and is supported by a grant offered through the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). VPI was created in Virginia in 1994 to serve at-risk four-year-old children who were not being served by the federal Head Start program.⁵ The initiative is overseen by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and provides

state funding to quality preschool programs with the purpose of reducing disparities among young children upon formal school entry and reducing or eliminating risk factors that lead to early academic failure. To acquire state funding through VPI, localities must develop and annually submit a written local plan for programs that include provisions for a quality preschool education, health services, family engagement, facilitation of comprehensive services, and a plan for transportation.⁶ The VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program also receives some funding support through federal Title I funds.⁷

Pre-Kindergarten Program Eligibility and Application Process

As part of the VPI, VDOE established eligibility criteria for student participation in Pre-Kindergarten programs which include: having low family income (based on Federal Poverty Guidelines); having a parent who did not complete high school; lacking fixed, regular, or adequate housing (homelessness); and/or having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).⁸ Additional eligibility criteria include being four years old on or before September 30 and having a primary residence in Virginia Beach. Within VBCPS, additional factors, such as having a parent who is active military, may be considered when determining eligibility and priority for placement into the program versus placement on the waitlist.

Families of students must complete an application on the VBSchools.com website, which includes several questions about the student and family. There were 2,023 total applications for placement into the Pre-Kindergarten program for the 2024-2025 school year. As shown in Table 2, 1,435 applications (71%) were for students who were considered eligible for the program based on the criteria listed above. The most common reason students were not eligible for the program was they were too young (10%) or they did not meet one of the criteria established through VPI or additional local factors (10%). Some of the applications were duplicated submissions, while a couple applications were withdrawn from being considered for various reasons (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Pre-Kindergarten Applications and Eligibility for 2024-2025 Enrollment	
Eligibility Determination	Number of Applications
Eligible	1,435 (71%)
Ineligible Total	486 (24%)
Ineligible – Too young	196 (10%)
Ineligible – Too old	75 (4%)
Ineligible – Non-resident	13 (1%)
Ineligible – No VPI or local criteria	202 (10%)
Duplicates	78 (4%)
Withdrawn	24 (1%)
Total Applications	2,023

After the eligibility review, the selection of which students will be enrolled in the Pre-Kindergarten program is determined, which involves several factors. First, students attend the Pre-Kindergarten program at their zoned school or assigned Pre-Kindergarten site (if their zoned school does not have a Pre-Kindergarten classroom). Parents may request a different school based on childcare needs.⁹ Second, as previously noted, because there are a limited number of available seats, students with the greatest level of need at each Pre-Kindergarten school site are prioritized for placement once they are found eligible, as determined by all reported factors. Therefore, not all eligible students are guaranteed placement in the program, and some may be placed on a waitlist if space is not available at their zoned or assigned Pre-Kindergarten site. As previously noted, during the 2024-2025 school year, there were 53 classrooms across 30 school sites and 954 students served at any given point in time. Therefore, at the beginning of the year, a total of 481 students were on the waitlist for participation in the program.

Pre-Kindergarten Program Curriculum and Classroom Quality

To ensure high-quality curriculum in Pre-Kindergarten programs, VDOE released the Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Birth-Five Learning Guidelines in 2020.¹⁰ These guidelines articulate the skills and knowledge young children should develop by the end of preschool to support success in kindergarten. The ELDS focus on five areas of development: approaches to play and learning; social and emotional development; communication, language, and literacy development; health and physical development; and cognitive development (science, social sciences, math, and fine arts). In addition, to support implementation of high-quality instruction aligned with the ELDS, VDOE provides a list of free or low-cost approved curriculum options. The STREAMin3 curriculum is one of the approved curricula and was selected by the VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program beginning in 2023-2024. The digital platform for the STREAMin3 curriculum is available at no cost to school divisions for publicly funded early childhood education programs in Virginia.¹¹ According to the director of Title I programs, although the digital platform is available at no cost, there are multiple costs related to using the STREAMin3 curriculum, including curriculum manuals, teacher books and materials as well as library books and various instructional items for the students.¹²

Another important aspect of Pre-Kindergarten programming monitored through VPI is classroom quality. All publicly funded birth-to-five early childhood programs in Virginia are required to participate annually in the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5).¹³ VQB5 is Virginia’s quality measurement and improvement system that promotes continuous quality improvement and provides publicly-available data about the quality of programs. To measure classroom quality, the VQB5 uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which is an observation tool that assesses the quality of teacher-child classroom interactions.¹⁴ The CLASS is a well-established, research-based tool widely used across the United States and internationally to assess classroom quality and support professional development.¹⁵ The CLASS is the mandated scoring tool required by the state. The CLASS focuses on interactions that have been shown to promote children's social-emotional and academic development. The three broad domains assessed through the CLASS are: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. As shown in Table 3, each of the three domains includes three or four dimensions. The emotional support domain measures how teachers provide a warm, respectful, and supportive climate. The classroom organization domain measures how teachers manage behavior, routines, and transitions for student engagement. The instructional support domain measures how teachers promote cognitive development and language skills through instructional interactions.

Table 3: CLASS Domains and Dimensions

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Positive Climate	Behavior Management	Concept Development
Negative Climate*	Productivity	Quality of Feedback
Teacher Sensitivity	Instructional Learning Formats	Language Modeling
Regard for Student Perspectives		

*Note: The negative climate dimension is reverse scored, lower ratings represent a more favorable classroom climate.

Both local and external observers who are trained and certified in the use of the CLASS conduct observations. Local observers are VBCPS staff, while external observers are coordinated by Teachstone, the organization that publishes, manages, and supports the CLASS tool. Local observers conduct observations for every VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten classroom, while according to VDOE, external CLASS observers conduct observations in at least one classroom at every site once per year.¹⁶ During the 2024-2025 school year, the CLASS observations were conducted for each classroom in the fall and in the spring. The observations in the fall were conducted from September through December, while the observations in the spring were conducted from January through April. In addition, to promote continuous improvement, within seven business days of each classroom observation, feedback sessions were held and feedback emails were sent to the teacher, teacher’s assistant,

and the building principal. Although scores are provided for the fall and spring, averages of scores across observations are summarized by the state. Baseline data for the CLASS for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 are included in the Baseline Data section of this report.

Selection and Approval of Program for Evaluation

The Pre-Kindergarten program was selected and approved for the 2024-2025 Program Evaluation Schedule based on criteria specified in School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board on September 5, 2007. The following excerpt is from School Board Policy 6-26:

Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually. On a yearly basis, the Program Evaluation Committee will present a list of programs recommended for evaluation to the Superintendent and the School Board. This listing will include the rationale for each recommendation based on an approved set of criteria. All programs will be prioritized for evaluation based on the following factors:

1. Alignment with the school division's strategic plan and School Board goals;
2. Program cost;
3. Program scale;
4. Cross-departmental interest;
5. Community/stakeholder interest in the program;
6. Availability of information on the program's effectiveness; and
7. Date of most recent evaluation.

On July 24, 2024, members of the Program Evaluation Committee attended a virtual meeting, which included reviewing a PowerPoint with information about the process for developing the school division's Program Evaluation Schedule and the list of eight existing educational programs to review and rank based on the criteria above. Members who were unable to attend the meeting were emailed the PowerPoint and the list of existing educational programs to review and rank with instructions for returning their rankings.

Rankings were compiled and programs recommended for evaluation were determined and shared with the committee. The Pre-Kindergarten program was selected as one of the top programs for evaluation based on the Program Evaluation Committee members' perceptions that it had the potential to have a large and positive impact on VBCPS reaching its goals and cross-departmental interest with multiple departments being involved in implementation. It was determined that the Pre-Kindergarten program would be scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report to define divisionwide measurable goals and objectives and to develop an evaluation plan. The proposed Program Evaluation Schedule was presented to the School Board on August 27, 2024 and approved on September 10, 2024.

Overview of Current Goals and Objectives

On the VBSchools.com website, the Pre-Kindergarten program is described as implementing a developmentally-appropriate, hands-on curriculum that engages students in learning literacy, developing numeracy, and growing socially and emotionally.¹⁷ In addition, the purpose of the VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program is described as preparing students for a successful transition to kindergarten while they become independent, enthusiastic, and self-confident learners. In addition, the VPI guidelines provide a framework for the work of the Pre-Kindergarten program in VBCPS. As part of the evaluation readiness process, information about the VBCPS program and the VPI were the basis for the development of formal measurable goals for the Pre-Kindergarten program. The next section of this report describes the process for developing goals and objectives for the Pre-Kindergarten program with input from the program managers.

Process for Developing Revised Goals and Objectives

According to School Board Policy 6-26, for programs selected for an Evaluation Readiness Report, Planning, Innovation, and Accountability (PIA) staff will “assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes. An Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and baseline data (if available) will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board ...” The process to complete the Evaluation Readiness Report began during the 2024-2025 school year with a review of existing documentation for the Pre-Kindergarten program by program evaluators from the Office of Research and Evaluation. There was also a review of a Research Brief by PIA staff in July 2013 that detailed a longitudinal study of preschool and kindergarten student experiences. In addition, literature searches were conducted to locate other evaluations of Pre-Kindergarten programs, and those were reviewed to assist with the development of goals.

A committee of seven participants consisting of the chief academic officer, director of Title I services, Title I coordinator, instructional specialist, and program evaluators was formed to develop goals and measurable objectives for the Pre-Kindergarten program as stated in School Board Policy 6-26. Committee members initially met on January 23, 2025 to discuss the evaluation readiness process, the overall evaluation of the Pre-Kindergarten program, and to begin defining the goals and objectives. The discussion also centered on the proposed scope of the evaluation, including the development of the Evaluation Readiness Report. Two questions were considered to frame and focus the discussion:

- If the Pre-Kindergarten program were successful, in general, what would success look like?
- If the Pre-Kindergarten program were successful, what specific outcomes would be expected?

Discussion during the initial meeting also focused on reviewing the available information regarding the Pre-Kindergarten program’s background and purpose and identifying additional components that would provide useful information regarding implementation and student outcomes. Following the initial meeting discussion and review of documents, goals and specific measurable objectives were developed, which focused on key implementation components and student outcomes. In addition, wording for each objective stated explicitly the manner in which the objective would be measured and evaluated during the evaluation process.

A second meeting was held on February 10, 2025 with the committee to review the draft program goals and measurable objectives and obtain any additional feedback about measuring progress toward meeting each goal. The committee provided feedback regarding the goals during this meeting, and on May 30, 2025, a final meeting was held to finalize the updated revised goals and objectives and gather final feedback from the committee. The final version of goals and objectives is included in the next section of this report.

Revised Goals and Objectives

As a result of the evaluation readiness process, there was a total of three goals and eight objectives for the Pre-Kindergarten program evaluation. The first goal and its four objectives focused on program implementation, specifically classroom quality. The remaining two goals and four objectives focused on student outcomes including demonstrating growth and meeting benchmarks for academics, self-regulation, and social skills as well as being prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten.

Implementation Goal and Objectives

Goal 1: The Pre-Kindergarten program will provide a classroom environment that is developmentally-appropriate and student-centered with engaging, hands-on curriculum and positive interactions.

Objective 1: Teachers will establish and promote a positive climate in their classroom through their everyday interactions as measured by average score on the emotional support domain on the CLASS and staff survey responses.

Objective 2: Pre-Kindergarten classrooms will feature consistent schedules, well-designed learning centers, established routines, and sensitive and appropriate guidance strategies as measured by average score on the classroom organization domain on the CLASS and staff survey responses.

Objective 3: Teachers will implement the curriculum effectively to promote cognitive and language development as measured by average score on the instructional support domain on the CLASS and staff survey responses.

Objective 4: Teachers will provide pre-kindergarten students with meaningful academic experiences through the STREAMin3 curriculum as measured by staff and family survey responses.

Outcome Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Students in the Pre-Kindergarten program will demonstrate growth and score in the growing or strong bands for academic performance, self-regulation, and social skills.

Objective 1: Pre-kindergarten students will demonstrate growth in their literacy and language, numeracy, and self-regulation and social skills as measured by the percentage of students who have increases in VKRP scores (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS).

Objective 2: Pre-kindergarten students will score in the growing or strong bands in their literacy and language, numeracy, and self-regulation and social skills as measured by the percentage of students who are in the growing and strong bands on the VKRP (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS).¹⁸

Goal 2: The Pre-Kindergarten program will prepare students for a successful transition to kindergarten based on their academic, self-regulation, and social skills.

Objective 1: Pre-kindergarten students will be prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten as measured by parent survey responses.

Objective 2: Former pre-kindergarten students will be prepared for kindergarten as measured by the percentage of students who meet benchmarks in their literacy and language, numeracy, and self-regulation and social skills on the VKRP in the fall of their kindergarten year (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS).¹⁹

Baseline Data

Pre-Kindergarten Program Participants and Characteristics

While data for the program goals and objectives and evaluation questions will be collected in 2025-2026 as part of the evaluation, this section provides baseline data regarding the students who participated in the Pre-Kindergarten program during the 2024-2025 school year. During the 2024-2025 school year, there was a total of 954 seats for students to be served by the Pre-Kindergarten program. Due to fluctuations in enrollment, there was a total of 987 students who were served by the program at any point during the 2024-2025 school year. There were four students who were enrolled at two separate schools during the school year. Approximately 81 percent of the students were enrolled in the Pre-Kindergarten program for the entire school year (180 days). Table 4 displays demographic data for these students based on information from the VBCPS data warehouse as of the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Pre-Kindergarten Program Students in 2024-2025

Characteristic	Total (N=987)	
	N	%
Gender		
Female	510	52%
Male	477	48%
Ethnicity		
American Indian	<	< 1%
Asian	39	4%
Black/African American	359	36%**
Hispanic	205	21%**
Multiracial	114	12%
White	263	27%*
Economically Disadvantaged	596	60%**
Identified Special Education	154	16%
Military Connected	264	27%

Note: *More than 5 percent **below** the percentage of kindergarten students. ** More than 5 percent **above** the percentage of kindergarten students.

Slightly more than half of the enrolled pre-kindergarten students were female (52%), while 48 percent were male. Approximately 36 percent of the enrolled pre-kindergarten students were Black, 27 percent were White, 21 percent were Hispanic, and 12 percent were Multiracial. A smaller percentage were Asian (4%) or American Indian (< 1%). The majority of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten were economically disadvantaged (60%). Approximately 16 percent were special education students, and 27 percent were military connected.

Given that the Pre-Kindergarten program is an intervention program for students meeting eligibility criteria, it is not necessarily expected that pre-kindergarten students would be representative of the general population of students entering kindergarten in VBCPS. However, for reference purposes, the demographic characteristics of kindergarten students enrolled at any time during 2024-2025 were examined with differences noted in the table. Relative to the kindergarten students, there was a higher percentage of pre-kindergarten students who were economically disadvantaged.²⁰ There were higher percentages of pre-kindergarten students who were Black and Hispanic compared to the kindergarten student population, while there were lower percentages of pre-kindergarten students who were White compared to kindergarten students. See Appendix A for demographic data for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students.

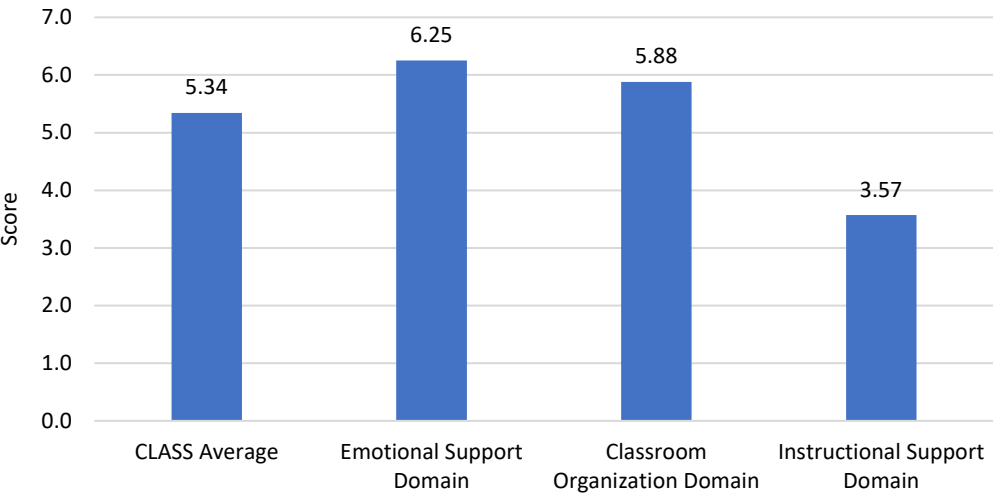
Baseline CLASS Results

Baseline CLASS data for VBCPS are provided for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years as well as comparable statewide CLASS data for Virginia from 2023-2024. According to Teachstone, the organization that publishes, manages, and supports the CLASS tool, scores on the CLASS range from 1 to 7. Internal and external observers assign scores for individual dimensions, and averages can be calculated at the domain and overall levels. If there is a one-point discrepancy between internal and external observation scores, the external observation score is used.²¹ VDOE has established benchmarks for each CLASS domain: a score of 5 for the emotional support and classroom organization domains and 3.25 for the instructional support domain. In addition, Teachstone offers general guidelines for interpreting scores for dimensions: scores of 1 to 2 indicate behaviors were low in quality or rarely present, scores of 3 to 5 indicate behaviors were inconsistent or somewhat present, and scores of 6 to 7 indicate behaviors were high quality, meaningful, and consistent.²² As previously noted, although scores are provided for the fall and spring, averages of scores across both observations are typically summarized by the state. In addition, it is important to note that any CLASS data for

VBCPS sites published publicly by VDOE, such as through the VQB5 dashboard, include both VPI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms and ECSE classrooms. Data provided in this report for VBPCS classrooms include only VPI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms, while state data includes average data for VPI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms, ECSE classrooms, Head Start classrooms, and private childcare settings.

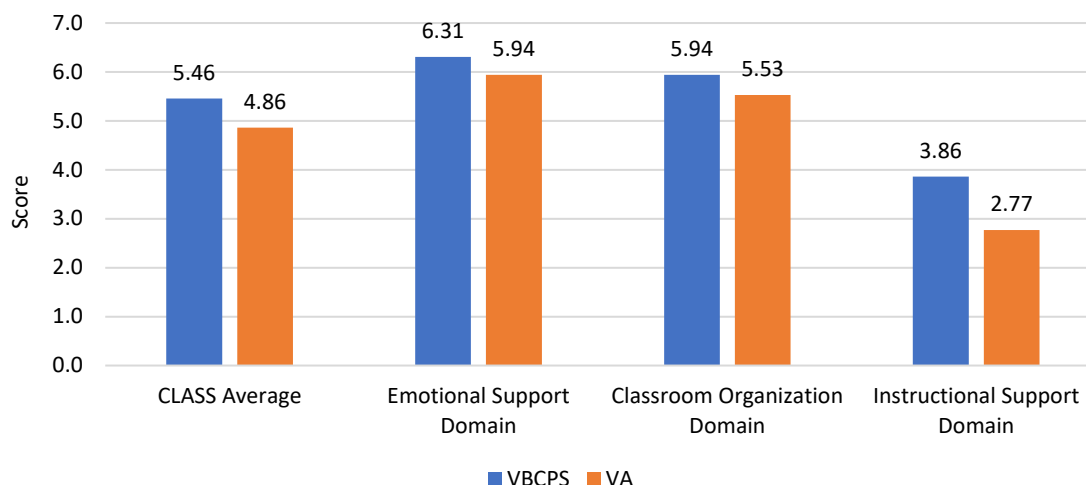
As shown in Figure 1, the overall score on the CLASS across all VBCPS VPI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms was 5.34, which is higher than the benchmark set by VDOE and suggests a mid-range score based on guidelines from Teachstone. Averages within the three domains show a higher average score on the emotional support (6.25) and classroom organization domains (5.88) than the instructional support domain (3.57). According to Teachstone, previous national data from Head Start programs suggest that scores tend to be lower in the instructional support domain.²³ Scores in all three domains are higher than the benchmarks established by VDOE. See Appendix B for additional data by dimension.

Figure 1: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS in 2024-2025 Overall and by Domain



Although data are not yet available statewide for the CLASS for the 2024-2025 school year, data from the 2023-2024 school year show VBCPS VPI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms have higher averages in each domain and dimension as well as the overall score in comparison to the statewide pre-kindergarten averages across different types of pre-kindergarten programs (see Figure 2).²⁴ See Appendix C for additional data by dimension.

Figure 2: VBCPS and Virginia Statewide Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS in 2023-2024 by Domain



Baseline Survey Results

To obtain baseline survey data, survey items regarding the Pre-Kindergarten program were administered from April 21 to May 9 as a supplemental survey linked through the VBCPS Annual Spring Survey. Pre-kindergarten teachers and teacher assistants had the opportunity to continue to these additional survey items at the end of the VBCPS Annual Spring Survey. Of the 104 pre-kindergarten teachers and teacher assistants as of April 2025,²⁵ 34 responded to the survey items regarding the Pre-Kindergarten program, which was an approximate 33 percent response rate. It is important to note that staff were asked to indicate whether they were a pre-kindergarten teacher or teacher assistant who worked with the Virginia Preschool Initiative Pre-Kindergarten program to distinguish them from teachers or teacher assistants who worked with the ECSE program.

When surveyed about the quality of the classroom environment, all teachers and teacher assistants (100%) agreed that the Pre-Kindergarten program provided a classroom environment that had a positive climate during everyday interactions, supportive relationships between teachers and children, consistent schedules and routines, teachers who effectively managed classroom time and transitions between activities, an effective curriculum that promoted cognitive and language development, and teachers who provided specific and constructive feedback to children (see Table 5). As shown in Table 5, at least 76 percent of teachers and teacher assistants indicated *strong* agreement regarding each of these items.

Table 5: Pre-Kindergarten Teacher and Teacher Assistant Agreement Regarding Classroom Quality

The Pre-Kindergarten program provides a classroom environment that has:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
A positive climate during everyday interactions.	88%	12%	100%
Supportive relationships between teachers and children.	88%	12%	100%
Consistent schedules and routines.	82%	18%	100%
Teachers who effectively manage classroom time and transitions between activities.	85%	15%	100%
An effective curriculum that promotes cognitive and language development.	76%	24%	100%
Teachers who provide specific and constructive feedback to children.	76%	24%	100%

When surveyed about the Pre-Kindergarten program preparing students for kindergarten, all teachers and teacher assistants (100%) agreed the program prepared students for a successful transition. Further, 76 percent of teachers and teacher assistants *strongly* agreed with this item (see Table 6).

Table 6: Pre-Kindergarten Teacher and Teacher Assistant Agreement Regarding Preparation for Kindergarten Transition

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
The Pre-Kindergarten program prepares students for a successful transition to kindergarten.	76%	24%	100%

Evaluation Plan and Recommendation

According to School Board Policy 6-26, an Evaluation Readiness Report will focus on the outcomes of the evaluation readiness process and “will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board with a recommendation regarding future evaluation plans for the program. If appropriate based on the evaluation readiness process, the program will be scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation.” In accordance with this policy, a proposed plan of action for the evaluation of the Pre-Kindergarten program is described below.

Scope and Rationale of Proposed Evaluation

The scope of the Pre-Kindergarten program evaluation will include both the implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten program and student outcomes for those served by the Pre-Kindergarten program, including analyzing student outcome data for various student groups. The implementation of the program will include the application and acceptance processes, curriculum and classroom quality aspects, staffing and professional learning, and family engagement and support opportunities. A two-year program evaluation is planned based on the expansion of the Pre-Kindergarten program to seven new elementary school sites in the 2025-2026 school year. Year-one of the evaluation plan during 2025-2026 will focus on the operation and implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten program. Devoting one year of focus to program operation will allow processes to be examined along with any modifications or changes made due to the expansion of the program to additional schools. Baseline student outcome data related to the goals and objectives will be analyzed during the first year. The second year of the evaluation will focus on assessing the program’s effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and the degree to which the program met its goals and objectives. In addition, longitudinal data for the former pre-kindergarten students will be examined during the second-year evaluation as 2025-2026 pre-kindergarten students enter kindergarten in 2026-2027.

For the evaluation during the two years, information will be provided for the following seven areas:

1. Alignment with the Strategic Plan

Rationale: The alignment with the division’s strategic plan, *Compass to 2030*, will be assessed to ensure the program aligns with the division’s broader goals.

2. Operational Components

Rationale: It is standard practice within an evaluation framework to examine issues related to implementation, including implementation goals, to assess program operation and the extent to which the program is being implemented as intended (i.e., implementation fidelity).

3. Characteristics of Pre-Kindergarten Students

Rationale: The purpose of identifying characteristics of students in the Pre-Kindergarten program is to better understand the population of students being served.

4. Meeting Goals and Objectives

Rationale: Progress made toward meeting the outcome goals and objectives will be assessed to determine the extent to which the program is effective, including analyzing data by various student groups.

5. Longitudinal Trends of Former Pre-Kindergarten Students

Rationale: Longitudinal trends through kindergarten will be assessed to examine outcomes of students who participated in the program and comparisons will be made to students who did not participate in the program as appropriate.

6. Stakeholder Perceptions

Rationale: Assessing perceptions of the Pre-Kindergarten program stakeholder groups (i.e., parents, Pre-Kindergarten teachers and teacher assistants, and administrators at schools with Pre-Kindergarten classrooms) will identify strengths and potential areas for improvement, as well as support a general understanding of the Pre-Kindergarten program.

7. Cost

Rationale: The cost of the Pre-Kindergarten program will be determined to provide information about the benefit of the service in relation to its overall cost.

Proposed Evaluation Method

In preparation for this Evaluation Readiness Report, the VBCPS longitudinal Research Brief on preschool and kindergarten student experiences and other literature on Pre-Kindergarten programs were reviewed. The reports provided a resource for planning the current evaluation. To the greatest extent possible, the proposed evaluation methods are aligned with information in the literature about best practices in the evaluation of Pre-Kindergarten programs.

The proposed evaluation will include mixed methodologies to address each of the evaluation questions, including the goals and objectives. Goals and objectives will be evaluated based on multiple measures when possible. Data collection will occur during 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 and include both quantitative (e.g., student demographics, academic performance, behavioral data, etc.) and qualitative data (e.g., open-ended survey questions, interview responses). The majority of quantitative data will be extracted from the VBCPS data warehouse, including student demographic data and assessment data (i.e., VALLSS, VKRP). To gather perception data, surveys will be administered to key stakeholder groups including parents, pre-kindergarten teachers and teacher assistants, and building administrators for schools with Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. Surveys will be conducted near the end of the school year. Qualitative data will be gathered from open-ended survey items and meetings with the Pre-Kindergarten program staff. During the second year of the evaluation, information will be gathered about any actions taken regarding recommendations from the year-one evaluation as needed.

Evaluation Design and Questions

The proposed evaluation questions are listed below.

- 1. How does the Pre-Kindergarten program align with the VBCPS strategic framework, *Compass to 2030*?**
- 2. What are the operational components of the Pre-Kindergarten program, and what progress was made toward meeting key implementation goals and objectives?**
 - a. What is the process for families to apply for their child to attend the Pre-Kindergarten program and what are the eligibility criteria?

- b. How many applications were received for the Pre-Kindergarten program throughout the school year and how many students were eligible and accepted?
 - c. What is the transportation process for the Pre-Kindergarten program?
 - d. What are the Pre-Kindergarten curriculum components and key aspects of Pre-Kindergarten classroom quality (implementation goal area)?
 - i. Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Birth-Five Learning Guidelines
 - ii. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (i.e., emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support)
 - iii. Implementation Goal #1: Developmentally appropriate and student-centered classroom with engaging, hands-on curriculum and positive interactions
 - e. What are the staff characteristics and qualifications (i.e., teachers and teacher assistants) and what professional learning opportunities are provided for Pre-Kindergarten staff?
 - f. What engagement and support opportunities are provided to families of students in the Pre-Kindergarten program?
 - i. Opportunities for families of students in the Pre-Kindergarten program to be engaged in the program
 - ii. Health services and facilitation of comprehensive services provided to students and/or families
 - iii. Community partners involved in the Pre-Kindergarten program
- 3. What are the characteristics of the students attending the Pre-Kindergarten program, as well as characteristics of eligible students on the wait list?**
 - 4. What progress has been made toward meeting the student outcome goals and objectives of the Pre-Kindergarten program?**
 - a. Outcome Goal #1: To what extent are pre-kindergarten students demonstrating growth and scoring in the growing and strong bands for academic performance, self-regulation, and social skills?
 - b. What, if any, comparable data are available for pre-kindergarten students statewide?
 - c. Outcome Goal #2: To what extent are former pre-kindergarten students prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten based on academic, self-regulation, and social skills?
 - 5. What are the longitudinal trends of students who attended the Pre-Kindergarten program into spring of their kindergarten year on the VKRP assessment (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS, and behavioral data)?**
 - a. What percentage of pre-kindergarten students enroll in kindergarten the next year?
 - b. How do former pre-kindergarten students perform compared to other groups of students (e.g., students with other preschool experiences [HeadStart, private preschool], and students with no preschool experience)?
 - 6. What were stakeholders' perceptions of the Pre-Kindergarten program (i.e., school administrators, pre-kindergarten teachers, families of pre-kindergarten students, and kindergarten teachers)?**
 - 7. What is the cost of the Pre-Kindergarten program to the school division?**

Table 7 outlines the process for collecting data to address the implementation goal and objectives covered in Evaluation Question 2D, while Table 8 outlines the process for collecting data to address Evaluation Question 4 focused on student outcome goals and objectives. For reference, the complete list of goals and objectives can be found beginning on page 9.

Table 7: Data Collection Process for Implementation Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	CLASS and staff perception data on teachers establishing and promoting a positive climate in their classroom through their everyday interactions.	CLASS score on emotional support domain. Percentage of respondents agreeing.	CLASS Data Survey
Goal 1 Objective 2	CLASS and staff perception data on Pre-Kindergarten classrooms featuring consistent schedules, well-designed learning centers, established routines, and sensitive and appropriate guidance strategies.	CLASS score classroom organization domain. Percentage of respondents agreeing.	CLASS Data Survey
Goal 1 Objective 3	CLASS and staff perception data on teachers implementing the curriculum effectively to promote cognitive and language development.	CLASS score on instructional support domain. Percentage of respondents agreeing.	CLASS Data Survey
Goal 1 Objective 4	Data regarding staff and parent perceptions of teachers providing pre-kindergarten students with meaningful academic experiences through the STREAM-3 curriculum.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey

Table 8: Data Collection Process for Outcome Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	Data regarding pre-kindergarten students' performance on the VKRP (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS) in the fall and spring.	Percentage of students who have increases in VKRP scores from fall to spring.	VALLSS EMAS CBRS
Goal 1 Objective 2	Data regarding pre-kindergarten students' performance on the VKRP (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS) in the fall and spring.	Percentage of students who score in the growing and strong bands on VKRP in the fall and spring.	VALLSS EMAS CBRS
Goal 2 Objective 1	Data regarding parent perceptions of their pre-kindergarten student being prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 2	Data regarding former pre-kindergarten students' performance on the VKRP (i.e., VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS) in the fall of kindergarten.	Percentage of students who meet the benchmarks on VKRP in the fall of kindergarten.	VALLSS EMAS CBRS

Summary of the Evaluation Readiness Process

The Pre-Kindergarten Evaluation Readiness Committee and staff from the Office of Research and Evaluation met to discuss the evaluation readiness process and to identify measurable divisionwide goals and objectives. As a result, a total of three goals and eight accompanying objectives for the Pre-Kindergarten program evaluation was identified, including one goal for implementation and two goals for outcomes. The implementation goal focused on the classroom environment, including teachers establishing and promoting a positive climate; classrooms featuring sensitive guidance and consistent schedules, centers, and structure; and effective curriculum implementation. The student outcome goals focused on students demonstrating growth and scoring in the growing and strong bands for academic performance, self-regulation, and social skills and students being prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten based on their academic, self-regulation, and social skills. Objectives for these goal areas include demonstrating growth and scoring in the growing and strong bands in literacy and language, numeracy, and self-regulation and social skills in pre-kindergarten and meeting benchmarks in these areas in kindergarten, as well as parent perceptions of students' preparation for the transition to kindergarten.

As part of the evaluation readiness process, an evaluation plan was developed including evaluation questions that will be addressed, the design and methods of the evaluation, and data that will be collected and analyzed. The evaluation plan includes a two-year evaluation of the Pre-Kindergarten program beginning in 2025-2026 and continuing through 2026-2027. The first year of the evaluation will focus on the operation and implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten program, while the second year will focus on student outcomes and the degree to which the program met its goals and objectives. In addition, longitudinal data for the former pre-kindergarten students will be examined during the second-year evaluation as the 2025-2026 pre-kindergarten students enter kindergarten in 2026-2027.

Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation #1: Conduct a two-year evaluation of the Pre-Kindergarten program with reports provided to the School Board during fall 2026 and 2027.

(Responsible Group: Office of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)

Rationale: It is proposed that a two-year evaluation of the Pre-Kindergarten program be conducted during 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. Year one of the evaluation plan during 2025-2026 will focus on the operation and implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten program. Devoting one year of focus to program operation will allow processes to be examined along with any modifications or changes made due to the expansion of the program to additional schools. Student outcome data related to the goals and objectives will be analyzed as baseline data during the first year of the evaluation. The second year of the evaluation will focus on assessing the program's effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and the degree to which the program goals and objectives were met. In addition, longitudinal data for the former pre-kindergarten students will be examined during the second year evaluation as the 2025-2026 pre-kindergarten students enter kindergarten in 2026-2027.

Appendices

Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of Pre-Kindergarten Program and Kindergarten Students

Characteristic	2024-2025 Pre-Kindergarten (N=987)	2024-2025 Kindergarten (N=4,580)
Gender		
Female	52%	48%
Male	48%	52%
Ethnicity		
American Indian	< 1%	< 1%
Asian	4%	6%
Black/African American	36%	24%
Hispanic	21%	15%
Multiracial	12%	12%
White	27%	42%
Economically Disadvantaged	60%	41%
Identified Special Education	16%	15%
Military Connected	27%	25%

Appendix B: VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS

Domain/Dimension	2024-2025 Average Scores (Range 1-7)
CLASS Average	5.34
Emotional Support Domain	6.25
Positive Climate (PC)	6.43
Negative Climate (NC)*	1.04*
Teacher Sensitivity (TS)	6.20
Regard for Student Perspectives (RSP)	5.38
Classroom Organization Domain	5.88
Behavior Management (BM)	6.22
Productivity (PD)	6.12
Instructional Learning Formats (ILF)	5.31
Instructional Support Domain	3.57
Concept Development (CD)	3.08
Quality of Feedback (QF)	3.88
Language Modeling (LM)	3.75

*Note: The negative climate dimension is reverse scored, and lower ratings represent a more favorable classroom climate.

Appendix C: VBCPS and Virginia Statewide Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms Average Scores on the CLASS

Domain/Dimension	2023-2024 VBCPS Average Scores	2023-2024 Virginia Statewide Average Scores
CLASS Average	5.46	4.86
Emotional Support Domain	6.31	5.94
Positive Climate (PC)	6.48	5.88
Negative Climate (NC)*	1.03*	1.11*
Teacher Sensitivity (TS)	6.26	5.85
Regard for Student Perspectives (RSP)	5.53	5.14
Classroom Organization Domain	5.94	5.53
Behavior Management (BM)	6.26	5.73
Productivity (PD)	6.1	5.83
Instructional Learning Formats (ILF)	5.45	5.02
Instructional Support Domain	3.86	2.77
Concept Development (CD)	3.3	2.29
Quality of Feedback (QF)	4.32	2.63
Language Modeling (LM)	3.96	3.41

*Note: The negative climate dimension is reverse scored, and lower ratings represent a more favorable classroom climate.

Endnotes

¹ <https://www.vbschools.com/academics/pre-kindergarten>

² <https://www.vbschools.com/families/special-education/preschool-assessment>

³ L. Silverman, personal communication, July 14, 2025.

⁴ Although numerically, the increase in the number of sites is six, there will be seven new pre-kindergarten elementary school sites starting in 2025-2026 due to the one elementary school no longer having the space and allocations for a pre-kindergarten classroom.

⁵ <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2022/RD336/PDF>

⁶ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/early-childhood-care-education/virginia-preschool-initiative>

⁷ L. Silverman and S. Cooper, personal communication, January 23, 2025.

⁸ <https://www.vbschools.com/academics/pre-kindergarten/sites-eligibility>

⁹ L. Silverman, personal communication, July 14, 2025.

¹⁰ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/early-childhood-care-education/early-childhood-standards-instructional-supports>

¹¹ <https://streamin3.org/streamin%c2%b3-curriculum-model-2/get-the-curriculum/>

¹² L. Silverman, personal communication, July 14, 2025.

¹³ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/early-childhood-care-education/quality-measurement-and-improvement-vqb5>

¹⁴ <https://aeiionline.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/10/CLASS-PK-Summary-for-AEII.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://teachstone.com/class/>

¹⁶ <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/early-childhood-care-education/quality-measurement-and-improvement-vqb5/measuring-quality-interactions>

¹⁷ <https://www.vbschools.com/academics/pre-kindergarten>

¹⁸ The three score bands on the VKRP assessments (VALLSS, EMAS, CBRS) for pre-kindergarten students include beginning, growing, and strong.

¹⁹ At the kindergarten level, there are benchmarks for the VKRP assessments. The VALLSS kindergarten assessment uses three scoring bands based on risk-level: at-risk, some-risk, and low risk. The EMAS and CBRS assessments use three scoring bands based on readiness: below readiness, approaching readiness, and ready.

²⁰ There was a total of 4,580 kindergarten students enrolled at any point during the 2024-2025 school year.

²¹ R. Carter, personal communication, July 15, 2025.

²² <https://info.teachstone.com/blog/2013/09/18/understanding-the-highs-and-lows-of-class-scores?scrllybrkr=3e37665a>

²³ <https://info.teachstone.com/blog/what-were-reading-how-to-structure-a-classroom-schedule>

²⁴ L. Silverman and R. Carter, personal communication, June 17, 2025.

²⁵ In April 2025, Human Resources records indicated there were 53 Pre-Kindergarten teachers and 51 Pre-Kindergarten teacher assistants employed with VBCPS.

Donald E. Robertson Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038

Produced by the Office of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability
For further information, please call (757) 263-1199

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, disability, marital status, age, genetic information or military status in its programs and activities, employment, or enrollment and provides equal access to the Boy or Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and regulations (including but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-4, 5-7, 5-19, 5-20, 5-44, 6-7, 6-33, 7-48, 7-49, 7-57 and Regulations 2-33.1, 4-4.1, 4-4.2, 4-4.3, 5-7.1, 5-44.1, 7-11.1 and 7-57.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, enrollment, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, extracurricular activities, and employment.

Title IX Notice: Complaints or concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual harassment should be addressed to the Title IX Coordinator, at the VBCPS Office of Student Leadership, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, 23452, (757) 263-2020, Robin.Resse@vbschools.com (student complaints) or the VBCPS Department of School Leadership, 2512 George Mason Drive, Municipal Center, Building 6, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456, (757) 263-1088, Robert.Wnukowski@vbschools.com (employee complaints). Additional information regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools' policies regarding discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment, as well as the procedures for filing a formal complaint and related grievance processes, can be found in School Board Policy 5-44 and School Board Regulations 5-44.1 (students), School Board Policy 4-4 and School Board Regulation 4-4.3 (employees) and on the School Division's website at Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Title IX. Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Executive Director of Student Support Services at (757) 263-1980, 2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23456 or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student's school. For students who are eligible or suspected of being eligible for special education or related services under IDEA, please contact the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children at (757) 263-2400, Plaza Annex/Family and Community Engagement Center, 641 Carriage Hill Road, Suite 200, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.

The School Division is committed to providing educational environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Students, staff, parents/legal guardians who have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or bullying should contact the school administration at their school. Promptly reporting concerns will allow the school to take appropriate actions to investigate and resolve issues. School Board Policy 5-7 addresses non-discrimination and anti-harassment, Policy 5-44 addresses sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender. Policy 5-36 and its supporting regulations address other forms of harassment.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Nikki Garmer, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1199 (voice); fax 263-1131; 263-1240 (TDD) or email her at angarmer@vbschools.com.

vbschools.com
your virtual link to Hampton Roads' largest school system



No part of this publication may be produced or shared in any form without giving specific credit to Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

August 2025

Version July 18, 2023