

Alexandria Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Enrollment and Projections

Each year Voices for Virginia’s Children requests the projected Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) enrollment formula from the Virginia Department of Education. These projections are what is used to determine the “slot allocation” and the state funding for VPI in the Governor’s budget.

Over the past few years, the General Assembly has been interested in the formula and took steps to modify various aspects of the formula to determine VPI projections. The most recent formula adjustment (which took place in FY13) changed how the number of 4 year-olds in a community was projected-- from a population estimate determined by the Virginia Employment Commission to an estimate based on actual kindergarten enrollment trends. The current VPI formula is calculated through the following steps:

1. Number of 4 year-olds in a community based on projected kindergarten enrollment
2. Multiply that number by the percent of children enrolled in public elementary school participating in free lunch (below 150% poverty) to get the number of “at-risk” children. (This data is taken from the several years’ previous free lunch participation and only updated once a biennium. For example FY17 & 18 are based on the 14-15 school year.)
3. Subtract the number of 4 year-olds enrolled in Head Start from the number of “at-risk” children. (This figure is taken from the fall enrollment from a previous year.)
4. Funding is based on a per pupil rate of \$6,000 per year with a local match requirement up to 50% of the per pupil rate.

The chart below details how Alexandria’s projected enrollment (slot allocation) dropped significantly when the formula shift to kindergarten enrollment went into effect in FY13, and how the projected enrollment is steadily increasing as the percentage of students participating in free lunch increases in the community:

	Est number of 4 year olds	% Free lunch (<150% poverty)	Number of “at-risk”	4 year-olds in Head Start	Eligible students (slot allocation)	VPI enrollment
FY12	2,337	40.7%	952	90	862	316
FY13*	1,394*	43%	601	227	374	336
FY14	1,427	43%	616	227	389	371
FY15	1,478	46.7%	690	167	523	414
FY16	1,480	46.7%	694	167	527	396
FY17	1,527	50%	764	171	593	
FY18	1,587	50%	794	171	623	

*changed to kindergarten enrollment instead of population estimate

In FY16, Alexandria pulled down \$1,188,000 of state funds for VPI and allocated the same amount of local funding for a state match. To serve all of the eligible students in Alexandria in FY17 the state share and local match is \$1,779,000. The General Assembly is also looking at VPI eligibility policy and Voices for Virginia’s Children has been emphasizing the value of local discretion to meet the needs of families. If the proposed eligibility criteria currently being considered is passed by the legislature, Alexandria could allow for up to 15% of the enrollment to meet a risk criteria other than income, such as ELL status. This would make a difference for Alexandria families.