

**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP**  
**Budget Questions & Answers**

**April 8, 2022**

**Question:** Can you provide the fiscal impact if the City were to fully maximize the spots available to us under the Virginia Preschool Initiative so that all three and four year olds could have access to high quality childcare at least 4 days a week?

**Response:**

**Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Budget Managed by Alexandria City Public Schools**  
**Number of Children Enrolled FY 2022: 343**  
**FY 2022 Budget: \$1,541,442 (Local Match)**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) has oversight and receives state funds for VPI in the ACPS budget. To obtain state funding, the locality must ensure the provision of a quality preschool education, health services, family engagement, facilitation of comprehensive services and a plan for transportation. In FY 2022, 192 children are being served in twelve ACPS classrooms and 151 children are served in three community-based child care centers.

Funds provided for both community-based child care centers and ACPS VPI classrooms are significantly below the actual cost of \$19,000 to fully support a VPI slot. Additional City funding of \$1,091,505 (in addition to the local match) in FY 2022 helps offset the difference between the actual cost and the funded amount.

While the City currently serves 343 children in the VPI program, the City is allocated 569 full-time VPI slots for FY 2023. In addition to the funding barriers described above, there currently are not enough providers in the City to expand beyond serving 343 VPI students. Providers are reluctant to participate in VPI because of the unfunded requirements and the significant gap between true cost and the funded amount that is provided. For community providers, they must fill a gap of \$6,512 per enrolled VPI student. The few community partners who participate in VPI meet this gap through braiding funds from additional local dollars including the Alexandria Fund for Human Services.

The funding required by the City to support 569 slots would be \$6,262,414, which include both the required local match and additional City funding to help offset the difference between the actual cost and the funded amount. The State share would be \$4,548,586, which assumes that the State would provide a community add on of \$3,500 per enrolled child in community-based child care centers.

Space capacity has long been discussed as a barrier to increasing child care capacity in the city. If seventy-three (73) providers in the City each committed to holding 7 VPI slots, it is feasible

that physical space needs would not be a barrier. Currently there are 3 VPI providers serving 151 students, with one program serving 126 of that number.

The birth to five demographics is another consideration for expansion plausibility and or necessity. We will learn more about this as population data is explored within the landscape study that is in progress. Early indications are that there is a decline in birth to eight year olds in the City.

Beginning school year 2023-2024, all publicly funded programs will be required to participate in Uniform Measurement and Improvement System (VQB5) and have their ratings shared publicly in the fall of 2024. This will increase the per student VPI cost. The extent of that increase is not fully known at this time.

Service expansion plausibility efforts must consider the additional unfunded impacts to meet VQB5 requirements for:

1. Meeting required licensing, professional development and training for teachers
2. Implementation of Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS)
3. Provision of Comprehensive Services
4. Consideration of costs for extended day hours and summer learning
5. Increasing the number of VPI classrooms through recruitment of additional providers

At this time, a review of the data and of the funding needs related to the additional VPI requirements is taking place in preparation for on-going budget and capacity discussions.