

Voluntary Prekindergarten Estimating Conference

Executive Summary

December 10, 2020

The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Estimating Conference met on December 10, 2020, to adopt a revised forecast through Fiscal Year 2025-26. As part of its analysis, the Conference reviewed the latest administrative policies relating to the Coronavirus outbreak that affect VPK enrollment, as well as weekly data collected from the EFS Modernization portal by the Office of Early Learning through December 7, 2020. The school year data from the EFS Modernization system for 2020-21 through October 2020 provided a snapshot of recent enrollment and payment activity. Other new information included final 2019-20 data, final summer 2020 data, and a revised birth forecast consistent with the latest Demographic Estimating Conference.

Overall, the 2019-20 fiscal year enrollment was 17.31 FTE higher than estimated at the August 2020 Conference. Summer VPK enrollment was particularly affected by the Coronavirus outbreak, with just 1,433.20 FTE for the full 2020 summer program, a decline of 2,932.43 FTE relative to the full 2019 summer program. For summer 2020, July and August FTE were overall higher than May and June FTE, increasing from 521.09 FTE to 912.11 FTE.

The October 2020 and December 7th 2020-21 data indicate a significant decline in recent enrollment. To estimate the 2020-21 school year enrollment, a comparison of projected end of year enrollments based on both data points relative to the same time period a year ago were analyzed. Using the maximum of these results by district resulted in a 2020-21 school year enrollment of 113,935.67. Slightly stronger May and June enrollment is forecast relative to 2020, resulting in a forecast of 115,930.11 FTE for the entire 2020-21 fiscal year, or 28,123.58 FTE lower than the previously adopted forecast.

Policy changes affecting the 2020-21 school year include a “VPK Flex” option. This virtual option for delivering VPK instruction mirrors local school districts’ reopening plans. VPK Flex was initially authorized through December 31, 2020; however, providers who applied to participate in this option in August and September may now offer VPK Flex through the remainder of the school year. As of December 7th, there were 13,399 enrollments in the program, which are included in the current enrollment totals for the school year.

To restore normal trends in tandem with the distribution of a vaccine, the Conference assumes that summer 2021 enrollment will be an average of 2019 and 2020 summer enrollment, with July and August enrollment higher than May and June. This bifurcated effect is in keeping with vaccine availability becoming more widespread as summer progresses. Going forward into 2021-22, expectations regarding program growth continue to be shaped by annual growth in births from the four years prior to potential enrollment. The forecast uses an alternative 2020-21 enrollment base, one that is based on growth in births absent any impacts from the pandemic. Overall, the enrollment forecast grows from 157,100.77 FTE in 2021-22 to 159,139.25 FTE in the outermost year, with some downward fluctuation throughout the horizon due to decreases in births. The new forecast produces a participation rate of 73.7% in the outermost year, increasing from 53.5% in the current year.

Forecasted FTE Student Enrollment for the VPK Program			
<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>VPK Estimating Conference</i>		
	<i>Change</i>	<i>Dec. 10, 2020 Conference</i>	<i>August 4, 2020 Conference</i>
<i>2019-20 Final</i>	<i>17.31</i>	<i>156,973.65</i>	<i>156,956.34</i>
<i>2020-21 Forecast</i>	<i>-28,123.58</i>	<i>115,930.11</i>	<i>144,053.69</i>
<i>2021-22 Forecast</i>	<i>-291.15</i>	<i>157,100.77</i>	<i>157,391.92</i>
<i>2022-23 Forecast</i>	<i>487.73</i>	<i>157,680.88</i>	<i>157,193.15</i>
<i>2023-24 Forecast</i>	<i>480.15</i>	<i>156,955.34</i>	<i>156,475.19</i>
<i>2024-25 Forecast</i>	<i>-1,191.76</i>	<i>156,424.87</i>	<i>157,616.63</i>
<i>2025-26 Forecast</i>	<i>-1,336.30</i>	<i>159,139.25</i>	<i>160,475.55</i>