

# Voluntary Prekindergarten Estimating Conference

## Executive Summary

### February 16, 2023

The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Estimating Conference met on February 16, 2023, to adopt a revised forecast through FY 2027-28. The forecast incorporated updated birth and 4-year old population data from the February 2023 Demographic Estimating Conference, final data for 2021-22, and reported 2022-23 enrollment and payment data through December 2022.

#### ***Demographic Data...***

Forecasted growth in enrollment is based on the growth in previous Florida births that align with each cohort entering VPK. Enrollment in the current and upcoming three years have all been colored by a period of declining births; however, the latest birth forecast from the Demographic Estimating Conference indicates that there will be an increase in the number of births eligible to enter VPK beginning in 2026-27. Using this information, the VPK enrollment forecast shifts upward in both FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28.

#### ***Final 2021-22 Data...***

The 2021-22 final enrollment data was 52 lower than estimated in August, mostly due to a lower than estimated May/June summer program. This decline in enrollment was coupled with a higher level of hours completed among those who did enroll, resulting in an overall 244.80 increase in FTE. The final FTE enrollment in the 2021-22 fiscal year was 138,155.27 relative to the estimate of 137,910.47 FTE adopted in August or the originally appropriated level of 158,522.93.

#### ***Forecast...***

Extending reported data through the end of the fiscal year results in an estimate of 140,532.84, or -15,345.23 lower than appropriated. This is the third year that actual enrollment has significantly underperformed expectations.

While participation rates were slowly declining from 2013-14 through 2018-19 (from 81.0% to 74.2%), the decline was exacerbated during the pandemic. Recent forecasts have attempted to snap the participation rate back to the immediate pre-pandemic levels, thereby discounting the longer-term decline. Based on incoming data, this assumption has now been relaxed, with 2022-23 program year participation more closely aligning with the longer-term decline at 65.8%.

The forecast jumps off of 2022-23 as the new base and treats the two pandemic-affected years (2020-21 and 2021-22) as outliers to the declining trend in participation rates. This baseline when combined with growth in births suggests that the historical decline in participation rates will level off and slowly improve over the forecast horizon, while still remaining well below the pre-pandemic level. The new forecast produces a participation rate of 68.4% in the outermost year (2027-28), with both 2026-27 and 2027-28 finally breaking from the longer-term decline.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	VPK Estimating Conference		
	<i>Change</i>	<i>February 16, 2023 Conference</i>	<i>August 10, 2022 Conference</i>
<i>2021-22 Estimate v Final</i>	244.80	138,155.27	137,910.47
<i>2022-23 Forecast</i>	-14,559.90	140,532.84	155,092.74
<i>2023-24 Forecast</i>	-15,288.80	139,874.05	155,162.85
<i>2024-25 Forecast</i>	-15,073.72	137,950.74	153,024.46
<i>2025-26 Forecast</i>	-14,798.64	136,539.83	151,338.47
<i>2026-27 Forecast</i>	-10,685.31	145,346.84	156,032.15
<i>2027-28 Forecast</i>	-9,996.68	147,484.19	157,480.87