



Program Update for the Durham
County Commission February 2026





Enjoy this video of testimonials about Durham PreK!

What is Durham PreK?

Opportunity

Durham County expands access to high-quality, publicly supported preschool

Main Program Goals

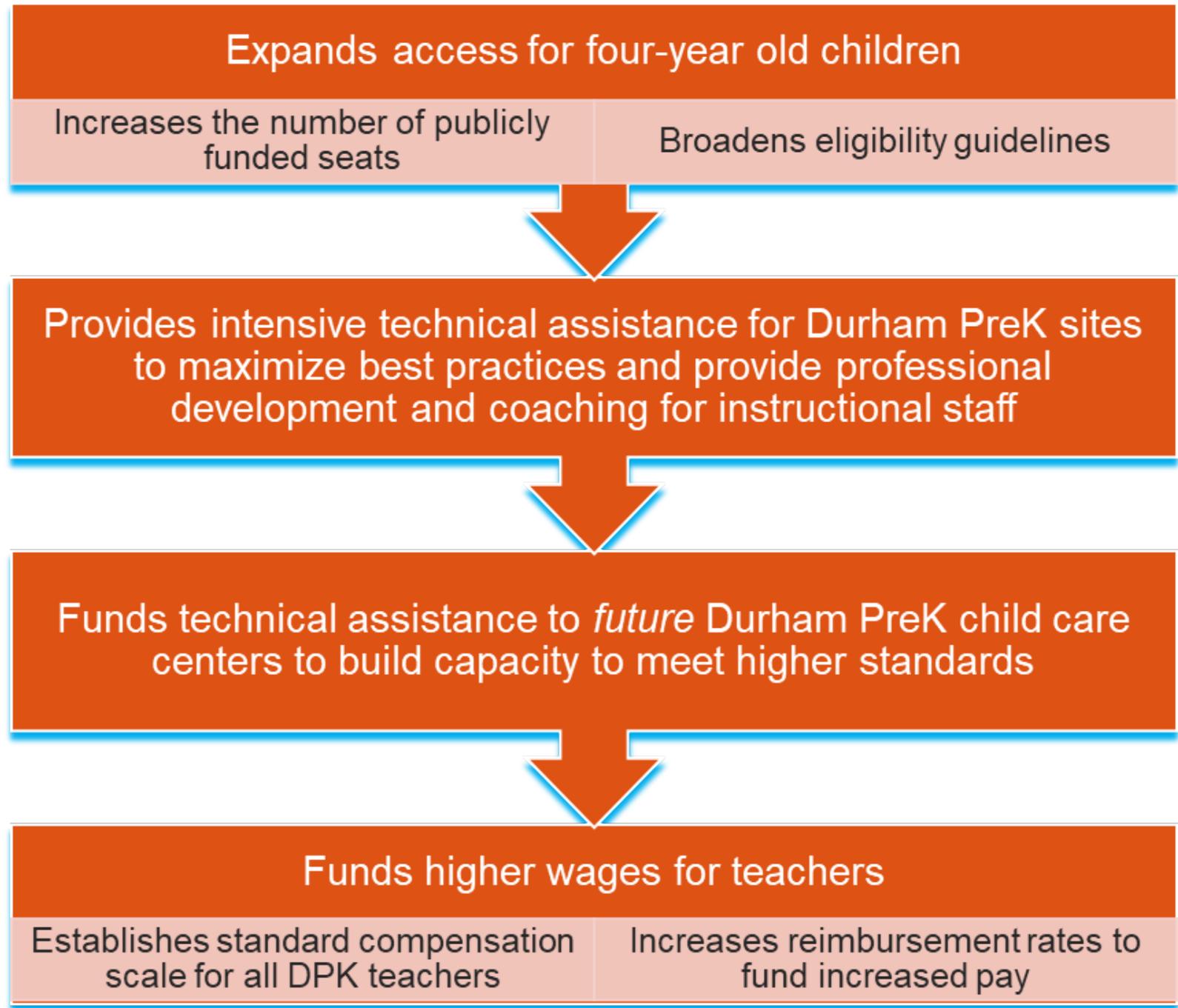
- Prepare Students for Kindergarten
- Improve Classroom Instruction
- Support Family Engagement
- Build Capacity for High Quality



Durham PreK Addresses Equity by Expanding Access and Improving Quality



Durham County's Investment in Universal Preschool

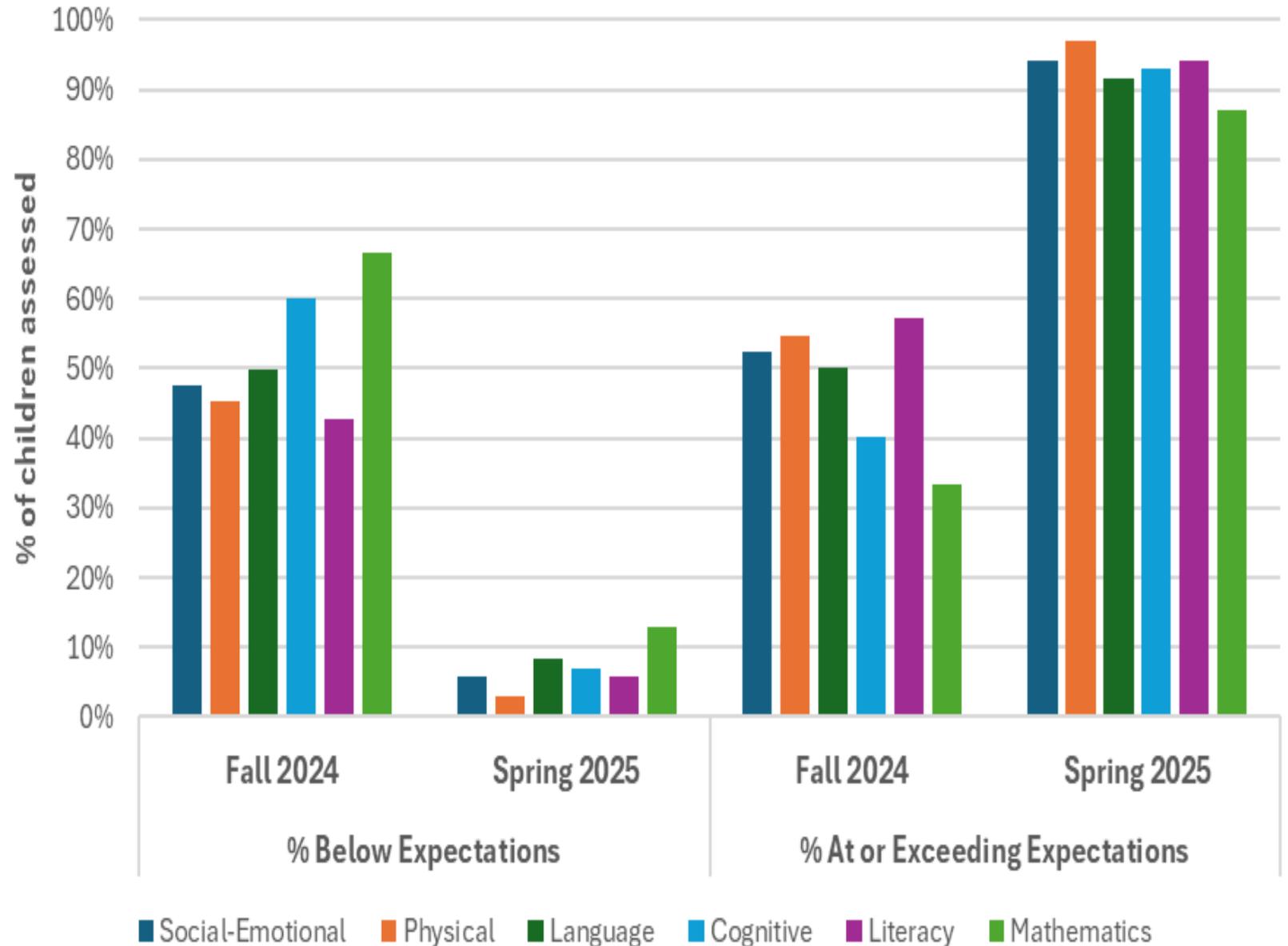


Instructional Impact 2024 – 2025 School Year

TSG report

% of children meeting or exceeding expectations at the end of the school year 2025

- 94% in *social-emotional* development,
- 97% in *physical* development,
- 92% in *language* development,
- 93% in *cognitive* development,
- 94% in *literacy* development
- 87% in *mathematics* development.



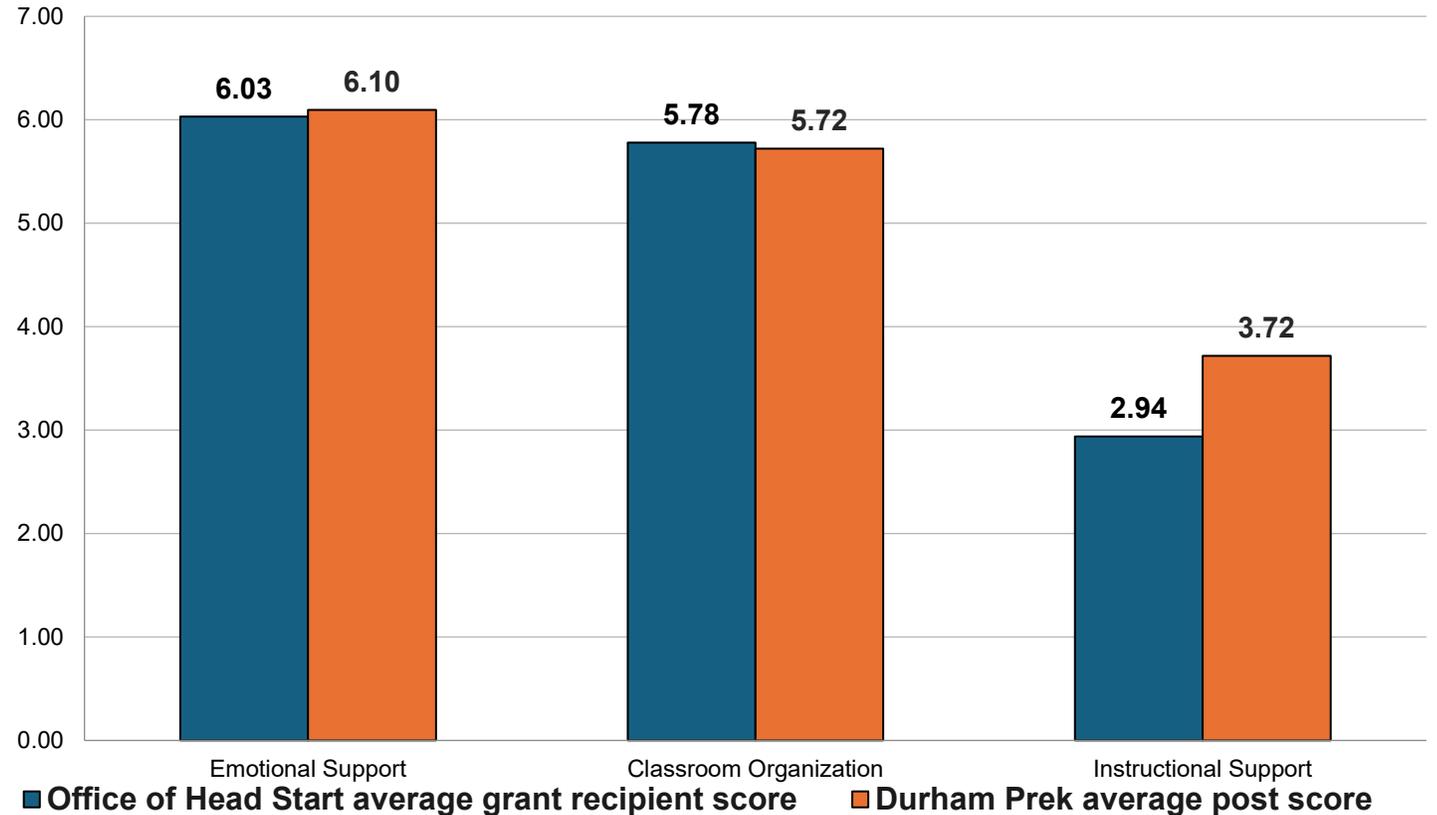
Instructional Impact

2024 – 2025 School Year

To improve instructional practices,
DPK coaches use the research-based
Classroom Scoring System
(CLASS™)

- 5.0 and above in *Emotional Support and Classroom Organization* domains are consistently linked to improved student outcomes, including better math, literacy, and social emotional gains
- *Instructional Support* domain includes concepts such as higher order thinking and quality feedback. 3.3 considered a benchmark for positive outcomes. DPK classrooms exceed that score at 3.72

Durham PreK Compared to National Head Start:
Average CLASS Scores by Domain



Historically due to broad public investments, classrooms in Head Start score much higher than programs without public resources on CLASS™ assessments.



Durham Community Goal - established in 2018 by the Preschool Task Force based upon the Durham Supply and Demand Study: Expand public preschool seats to serve up to 75% of the total four-year-old census



FUNDING IN 2025-2026

Problem

Original
2025-2026
budget of
\$7,373,029

Solution

Due to county
provided
ARPA funds,
Early Years
was able to
reallocate
\$770,000 to
DPK

Outcomes

- No cuts to locally funded seats
- Implemented base salary support payment
- Increased teacher support payments
- Preserved wrap care scholarships for before and after school
- Preserved bonus for instructional staff
- Did **NOT** provide an increase in reimbursement rates

MAINTAINING DPK IN 2026-2027

① Increased cost to pay schools=
\$262,160

Governance committee voted on rate increase to \$1514 per site per month due to inflation

② Increased wrap care rate=
\$31,500

Due to childcare subsidy reimbursement changes

③ Teacher raises =
\$30,242

Estimated cost. Teachers receive raises for years of experience which is linked to higher quality

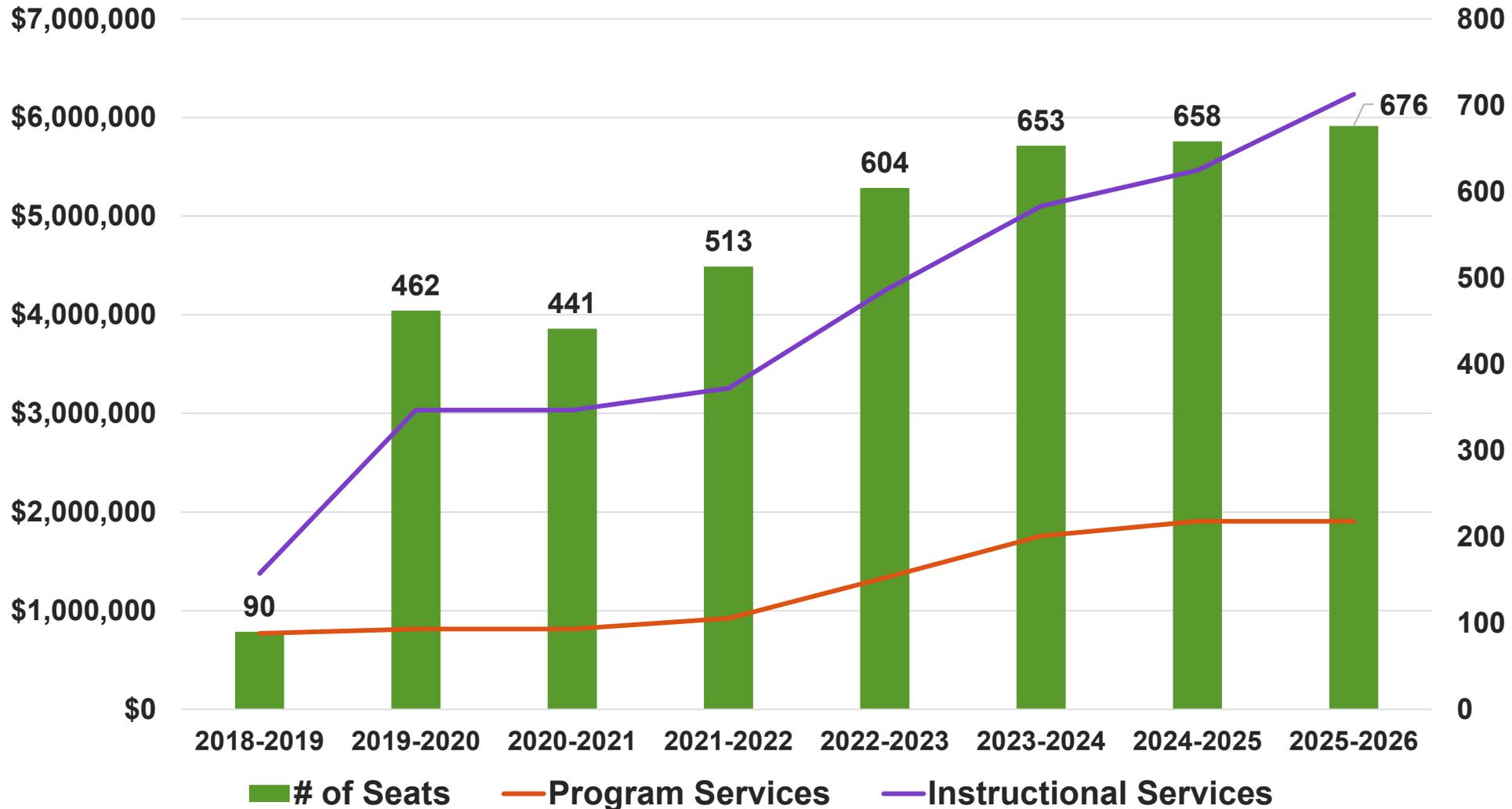
④ Maintaining DPK seats in absence of Early Years ARPA funds=
\$770,000

⑤ Maintaining Murray Massenberg seats in absence of DPS ARPA funds=
\$825,315

Budget increase of \$2.57 million to maintain and expand current seats

[\$650,000 to expand to additional 34-50 new seats]

DPK Budget



2026-2027 Budget Considerations

Request a \$2.57 million increase in DPK funds

➤ **Total estimated additional funding needed to *maintain* current seats \$1,919,217**

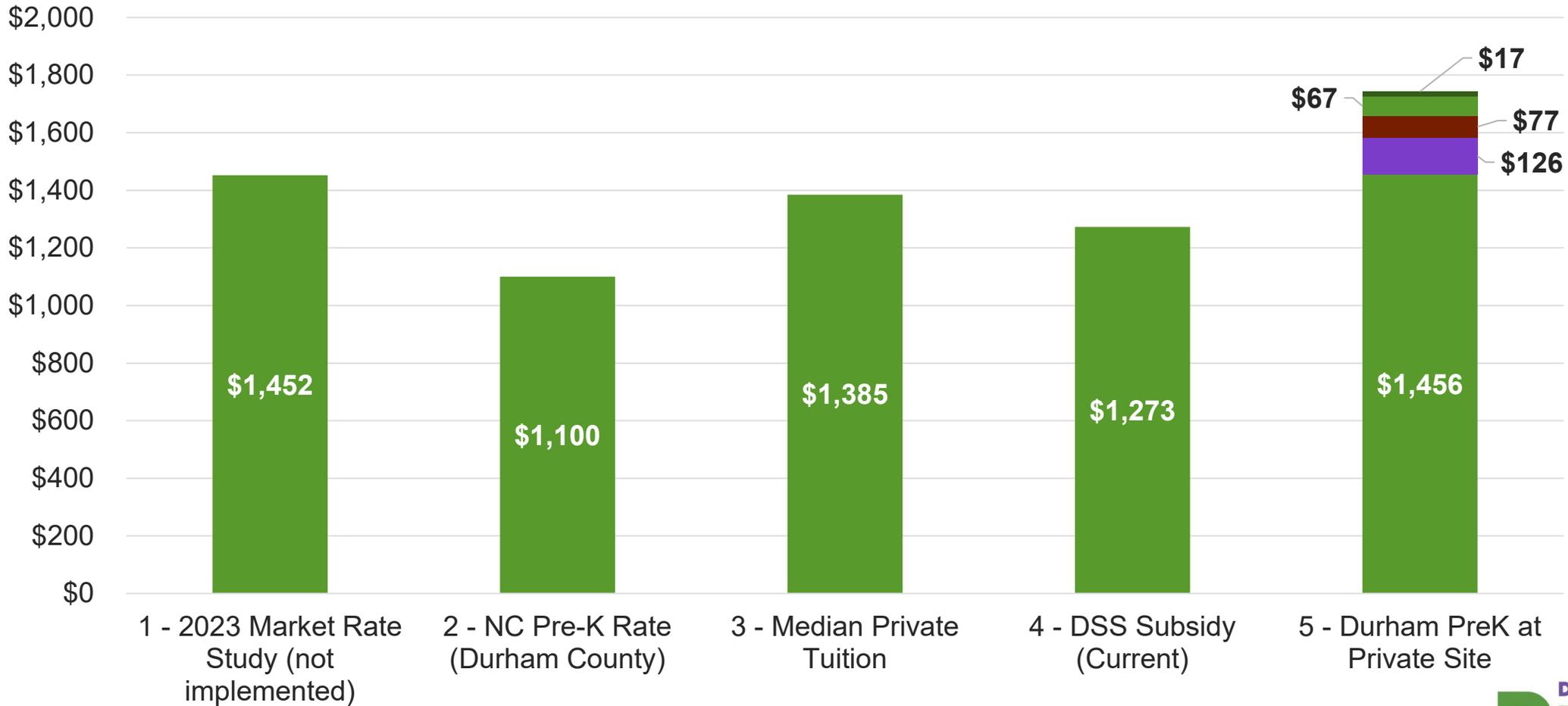
- \$1,919,217 (\$323,902 in increased costs + \$825,315 to fund Murray Massenburg + \$770,000 to replace DPK ARPA)

➤ **Expansion funding request for 34 – 50 *new* seats \$650,000**



2026-2027 Rate Comparison

Per Child Reimbursement Amounts
for 4 year olds in 5 star Durham Centers



- Child Reimbursement Rate
- Preservice Payment
- Teacher Experience Payment
- Teacher Base Payment (Lead)
- Teacher Base Payment (Assistant)



2025-2026 Applications

As of February 13, 2026

- **1,806 Applications** have been received in the online portal that opened in February 2025
- **130 families** are on the waitlist due to a desire for a different school placement than was offered
- Enrollment is ongoing during the school year



2025-2026 Enrollment by Seat Type

	# Seats Allocated	# Seats Filled (January)	Enrollment Rate (January)	Enrollment Rate (October)
NC Pre-K	574	511	89%	85%
Private Sites	376	344	91%	89%
Head Start	142	116	82%	71%
DPS	56	51	91%	91%
DPK Only (All)	360	330	92%	82%
DPK Only at Whitted	80	59	72%	45%
DPK Only	280	271	96%	93%
DPK Enhanced	316	298	94%	91%
Title I Only	228	155	68%	62%

Note: Number of seats filled are for children confirmed to have started, not just those who have accepted their placement, as of the dates below.

Sources for enrollment numbers:

- NC Pre-K at Private Sites as of 12/12/25; DPK Only, and DPK Enhanced – SMA Accepted Seats Report and Site Rosters as of 1/12/26
- NC Pre-K Head Start and NC Pre-K DPS – November NC Pre-K attendance sheets
- Title I Only – Enrollment/Capacity numbers shared from DPS 12/12/25



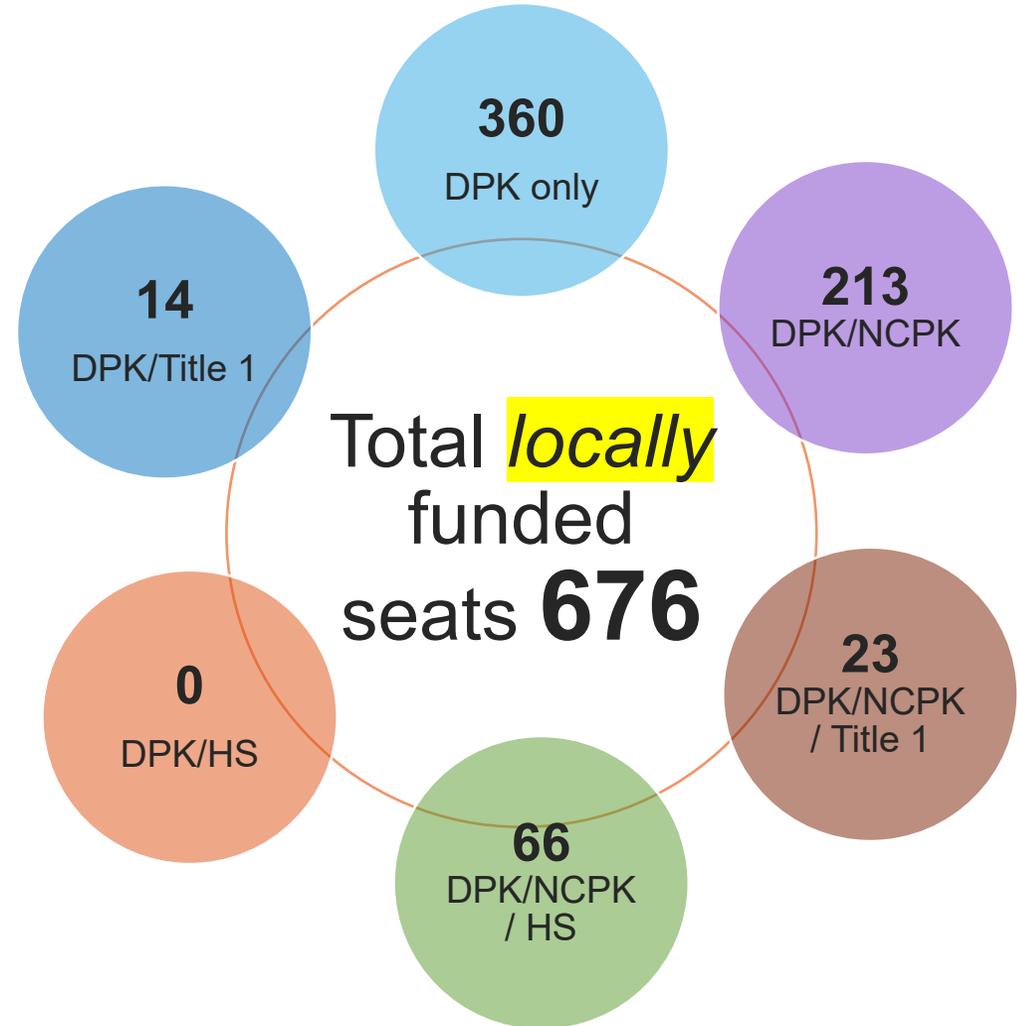
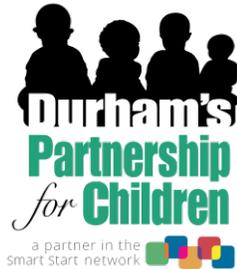
Review of Placement Priority

2024-2025		
Poverty Level	Number	Percent
<130%	650	48%
131-185%	133	10%
186-200%	36	3%
201-250%	105	8%
251-300%	71	5%
301-399%	107	8%
>=400%	257	19%
Total	1,359	

YTD 25-26		
Poverty Level	Number	Percent
<130%	625	44%
131-185%	173	12%
186-200%	43	3%
201-250%	125	9%
251-300%	65	5%
301-399%	78	5%
>=400%	319	22%
Total	1,427	



Durham PreK Partners



Number of seats as of January 15, 2026



SY24-25 Family Survey Results

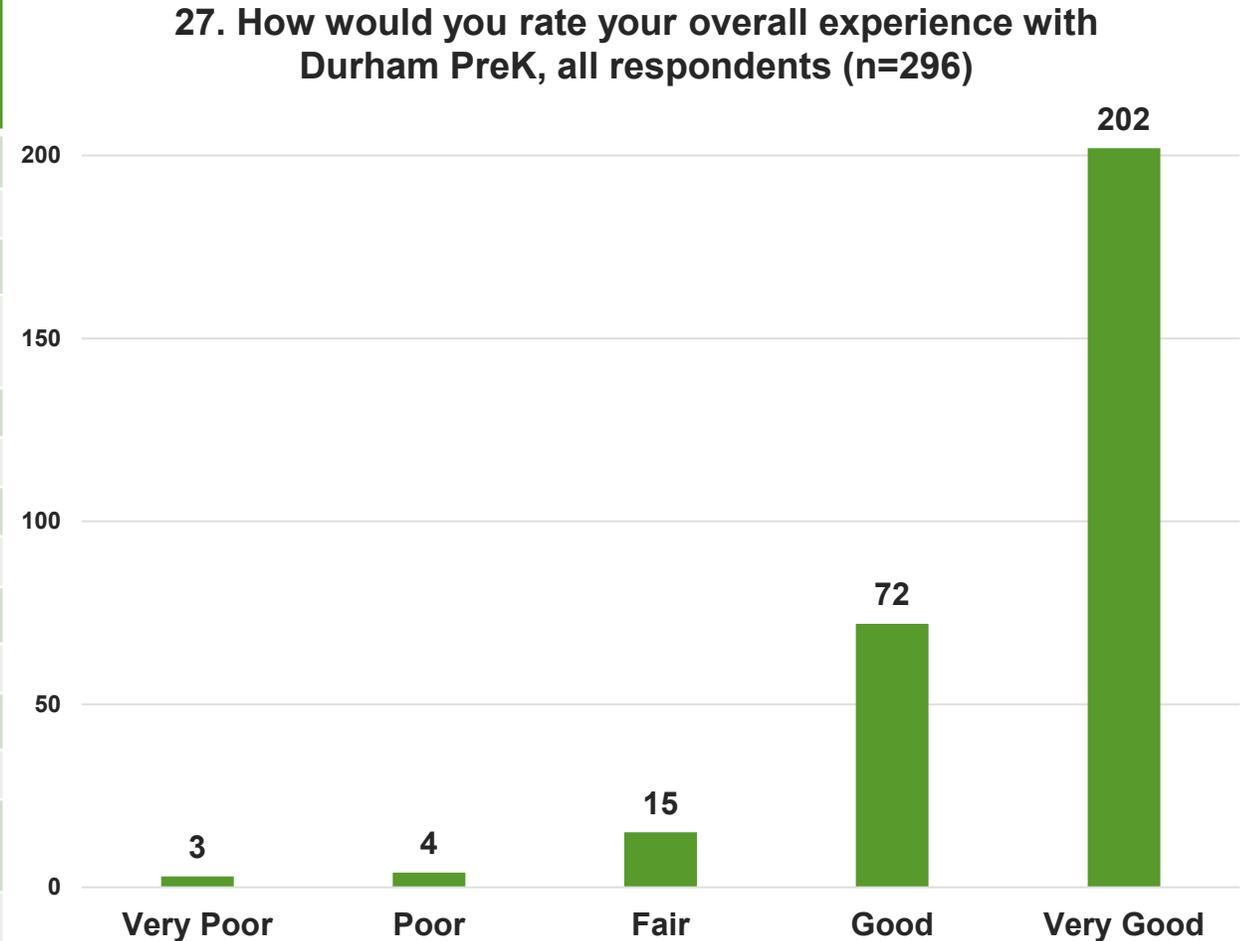
- *Would you recommend Durham PreK to a friend or fellow family?*
 - 95% yes
- **Which aspect of Durham PreK needs to be changed the most?**
 - 30% Pre-K site placement process
 - 26% Transportation
 - 25% Availability of before/after care



SY24-25 Family Survey Results

How would you rate your overall experience with Durham PreK?

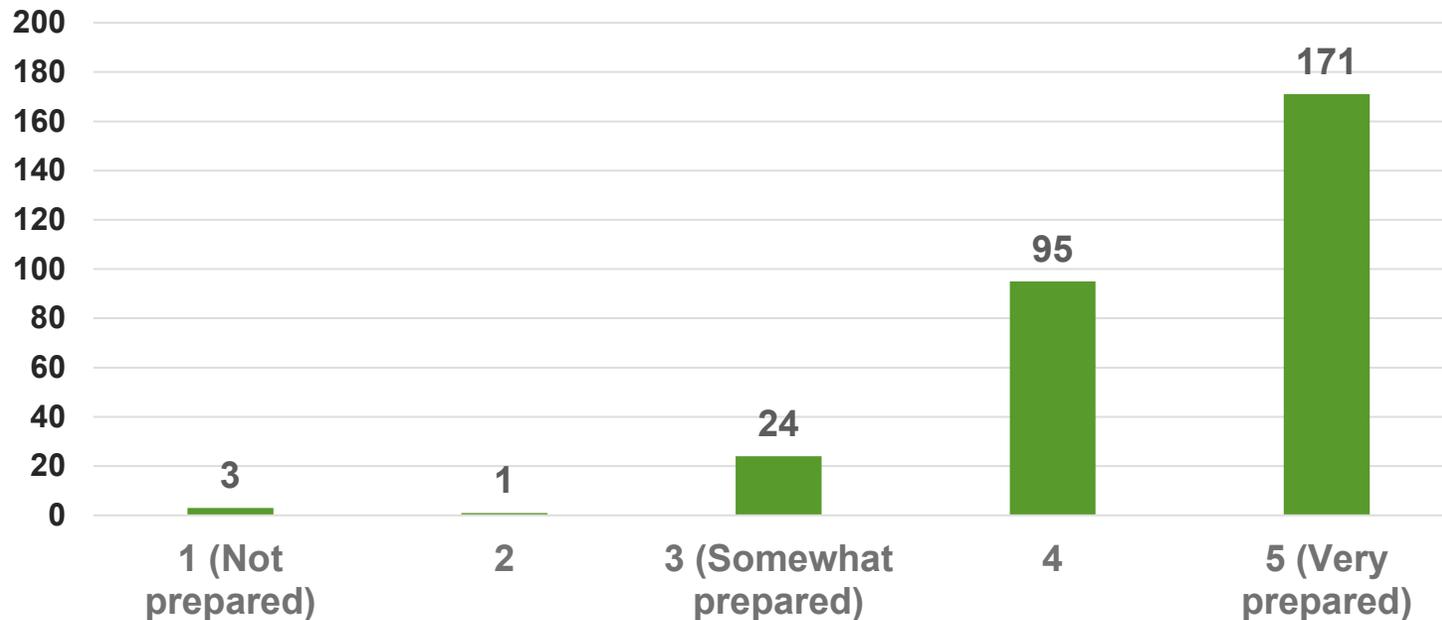
27. How would you rate your overall experience with Durham PreK?		Percent of Respondents Who Selected Good or Very Good
All Respondents (n=296)		92%
By Home Language	English (n=209)	90%
	Spanish (n=49)	98%
	Bilingual English-Spanish (n=12)	100%
	Multi (n=12)	100%
	Other (n=4)	100%
	Blank (n=10)	100%
By Income	<=200% FPL (n=166)	95%
	201-399% FPL (n=68)	91%
	>=400% FPL (n=62)	89%
By Race	Asian (n=23)	96%
	Black (n=153)	91%
	All other People of Color (n=68)	97%
	White, not Latinx (n=52)	90%
By Ethnicity	Latinx (n=81)	96%
	Not Latinx (n=215)	91%



SY24-25 Family Survey Results

- *As a result of participating in Durham PreK, I feel my child is more prepared for Kindergarten.*
 - 93% agree
- *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not prepared," and 5 being "very prepared" how prepared is your child for kindergarten as of today?*

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not prepared," and 5 being "very prepared" how prepared is your child for kindergarten as of today?, all respondents (n=294)



SY24-25 Family Survey Results

- *“The Pre-K program has been incredibly helpful in preparing our child for kindergarten. **It has greatly improved his social and communication skills.** We're truly grateful to the Pre-K organizers—thank you so much!”*
- "As a family who only stayed in the US for the year, we all felt very welcome. My child started speaking English very quickly and her teachers supported her and us in every way they could. **We are forever grateful for the opportunity to be provided with such a prek experience.**"
- *"Durham prek has been a great experience for me and my family. **Very family oriented and the teachers have good communication.**"*



**DPK Workforce
Support
Strategies are
WORKING!**

**How do we
know?**



Teacher Retention Rate from the 2024-25 to the 2025-2026 school year

- **Durham PreK has a much higher retention rate than early education programs typically report**
 - 95% (39 out of 41) Lead Teacher Retention Rate
 - 81% (30 out of 37) Instructional Assistant Retention Rate
- **Three unlicensed teachers last year earned their residency license and are continuing to work towards their initial license.**



Apprenticeship Program

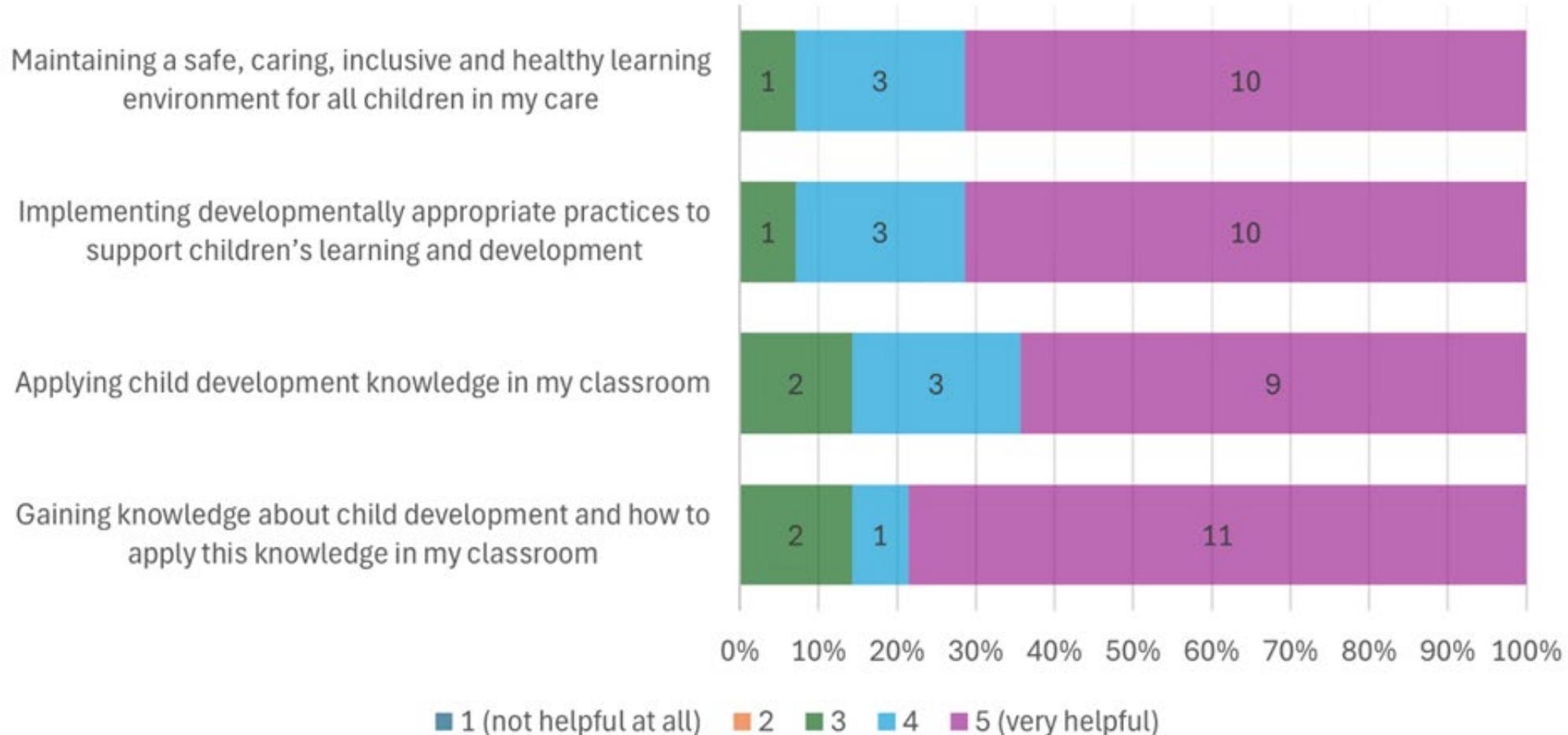
- **Celebrated 28 current apprentices for achievements in the program, including:**
 - 28 obtained NC Early Childhood Credential
 - 18 earned the Infant/Toddler Certificate
 - 19 earned the Preschool Certificate
 - 9 earned the Administration Certificate
 - 2 earned their Associate Degree
- **Welcomed 14 new apprentices**
- **Recognized 24 partnering childcare centers**
- **Early Educator Academy**
 - 20 students in inaugural bilingual cohort, Summer 2025
 - Over 150 applicants for only 20 available spaces



Apprenticeship program - Main findings

Apprentice's confidence in their abilities, knowledge, and skillset.

How helpful has the program been in increasing your knowledge and skills in the following areas?



Workforce Support: Planning Ahead

Collaborating with Durham Tech to support 3 Early Educator Academies in 2026 (Jan-July)

- Durham Tech received a grant from DCDEE to support Academies
- DPK coordinating with Durham Tech to identify / raise resources to fill gaps in program funding
 - Such as funds for transportation/ completion stipends, participants' childcare to attend trainings, background checks



DPK Technical Assistance (TA)

DPK Programs Receive Support to Improve Quality

- In SY2024 - 2025, DPK programs received 540 coaching visits
- Programs enrolled to become future DPK sites received 92 coaching sessions
- Technical assistance provides:
 - Support for professional development and education planning
 - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™)
 - Leadership development
 - Individualized classroom quality improvement plans with measurable goals

Goal: “Empowering emerging programs with the skills, support, and confidence to deliver high-quality PreK experiences for Durham’s youngest learners.”



Elevating Early Math: Focus Areas for Durham PreK Teachers

MONTHLY MATH TOPICS

Math is More Than Just Counting! Each month, we will focus on specific TSG math objectives and dimensions for development and learning. Please share pictures of the math activities happening in your classroom with your Quality Enhancement Coach!

OCTOBER Number Concepts and Operations
TSG: 20 a, b, c



NOVEMBER Spatial Relationships and Shapes
TSG: 21 a, b



DECEMBER Patterns
TSG: 23



JANUARY Patterns
TSG: 23



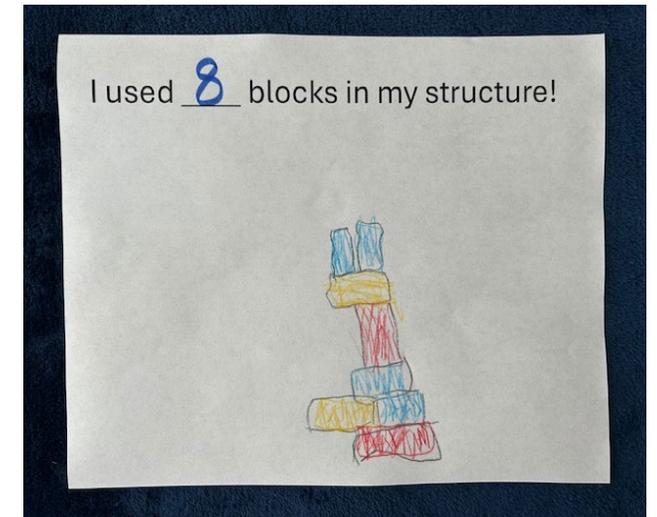
FEBRUARY Measuring Objects, Time, and Money
TSG: 22 a, b, c



MARCH Representing and Analyzing Data
TSG: 22 c



APRIL Math and Books
TSG: 18, 20-23



Communications & Public Engagement

The Durham PreK application for the 2026-2027 school year opens on March 2, 2026!

The Durham PreK Application Opens
March 2, 2026!

Complete an interest form to receive a reminder when the application opens!

SCAN ME

Early Years
A Comprehensive Approach to
Enhancing Early Care and Education

DURHAM
PRE K

Durham Partnership
for Children

FCR FAMILIES & RISING
HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START

DURHAM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DURHAM COUNTY
1881

