ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
Early Childhood Education

First Class Pre-K Program Updates

Brain development during the first 5 years

90%

75%

25%

Birth

2 years

5 years

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Early Childhood Education

90 by

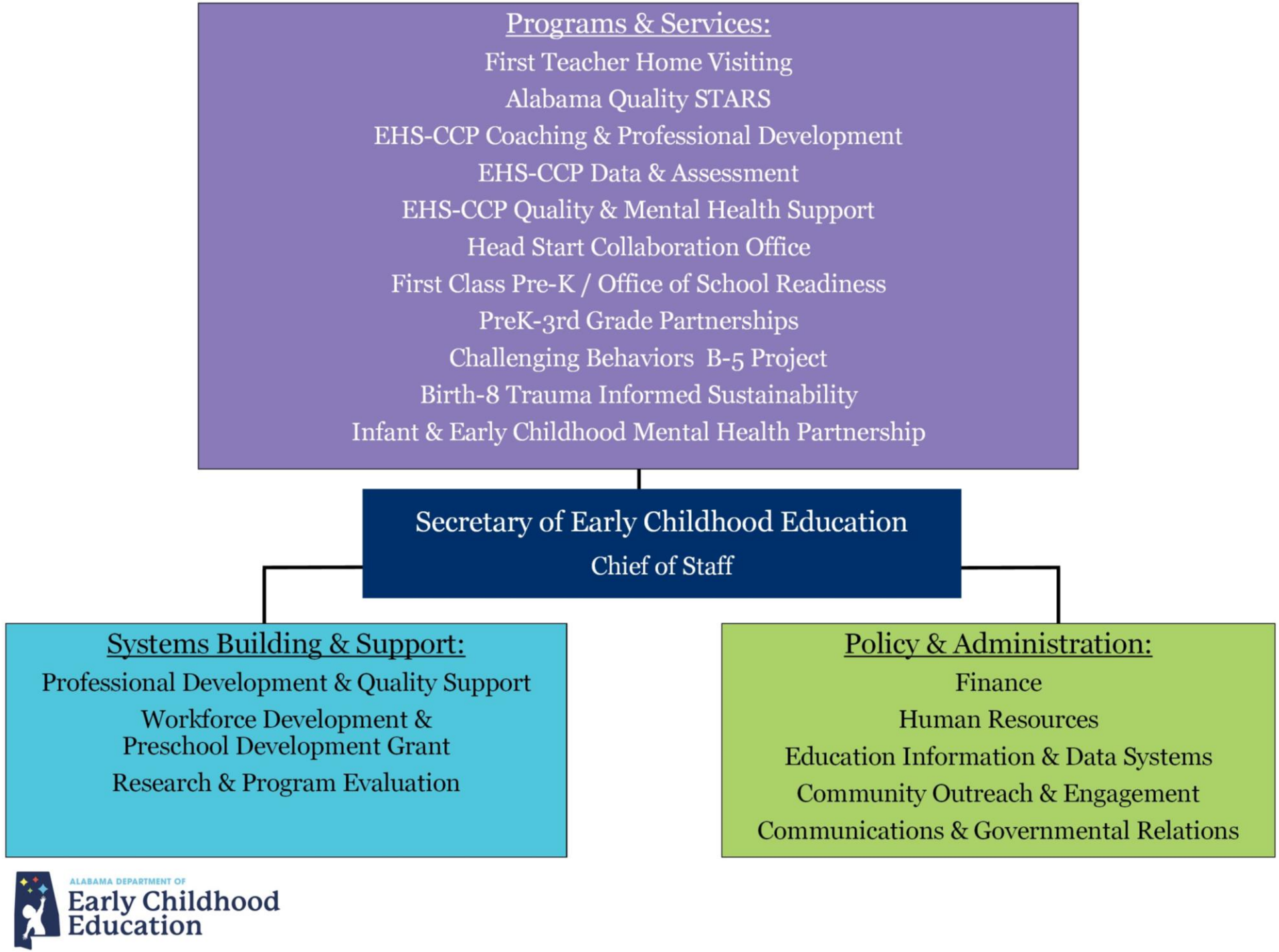
Vision: Every young child in Alabama will have a strong early learning foundation for healthy growth and development.

Mission: To innovate, support, and deliver cohesive, equitable systems of high-quality care and education so that Alabama children and families thrive and learn.

Shared Goals and Priorities

High Quality Programs & Services	Provide accessible, equitable, high-quality early learning and development programs and services to promote school readiness and life-long success
Family Engagement	Partner with families to support, advocate for, and be involved in their children's early care and education needs to create lifelong learners
Workforce Support	Build and develop a workforce that is diverse, professionalized, well-trained and ready to meet the demand for high-quality early care and education programs and services
Organizational Health	Promote a collaborative and respectful culture that prioritizes engagement and belonging, develops leaders, and empowers staff to meet organizational goals

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education


Programs & Services:
First Teacher Home Visiting
Alabama Quality STARS
EHS-CCP Coaching & Professional Development
EHS-CCP Data & Assessment
EHS-CCP Quality & Mental Health Support
Head Start Collaboration Office
First Class Pre-K / Office of School Readiness
PreK-3rd Grade Partnerships
Challenging Behaviors B-5 Project
Birth-8 Trauma Informed Sustainability
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Partnership
Secretary of Early Childhood Education
Chief of Staff
Systems Building & Support:
Professional Development & Quality Support
Workforce Development & Preschool Development Grant
Research & Program Evaluation
Policy & Administration:
Finance
Human Resources
Education Information & Data Systems
Community Outreach & Engagement
Communications & Governmental Relations
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Early Childhood Education

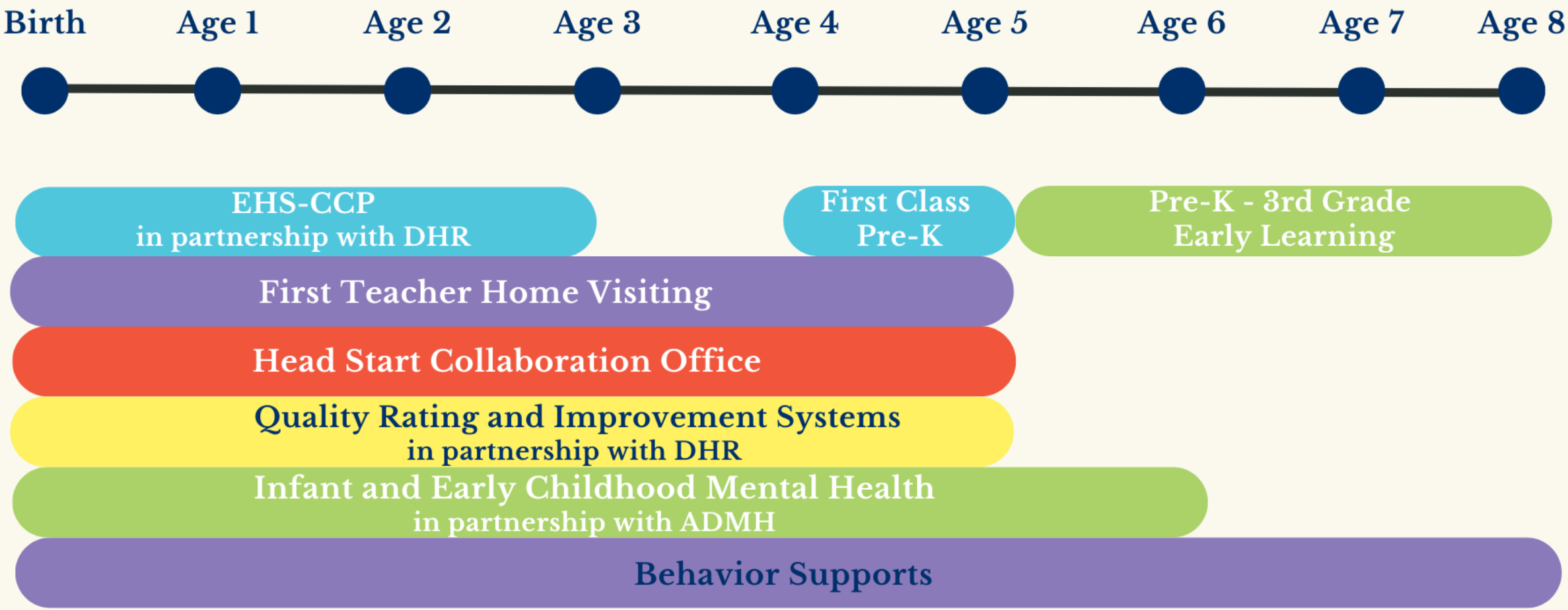
Systems Building and Supports

- **Workforce Development**
  - Apprenticeship, Scholarships
- **Professional Development**
  - ADECE Staff (Coaches, Monitors)
  - Teachers and Program Staff
- **Federal Grants: Preschool Development Grant B-5**
  - State Needs Assessment
  - Systems and Alignment
- **Research and Program Evaluation**

Policy and Administration

- **Finance**
  - Internal accounting
  - Grants administration
- **Human Resources**
- **Education Information and Data Systems**
  - Information technology
  - Data collection and coordination
- **Community Outreach and Engagement**
  - Children's Policy Councils
- **Communications and Government Relations**
  - Special Projects

DEPARTMENT SERVICES



Programs

First Teacher Home Visiting

- HIPPY, Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership

Alabama Department of Human Resource Partnerships

- Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS)
- Challenging Behaviors
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

Programs

Head Start Collaboration Office

- Coordination of Head Start and state services

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- Partnership with the Alabama Department of Mental Health

Pre-K – 3rd Grade Early Learning Continuum

- Includes P-3 Leadership Academy with Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)

Programs

Family Engagement

- Born Ready University

Community Engagement

- First 10 Communities – transition to Kindergarten
- Children's Policy Councils
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

“YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH

BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF ENOUGH CHILDREN”

Dolly

Dolly Parton's IMAGINATION LIBRARY ALABAMA

Full Coverage

Partial Coverage

Coming Soon

Community Partners Needed

First Class Pre-K Program

- High quality early learning and development for 4-year-old children
- All 4-year-old children in the state are eligible

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

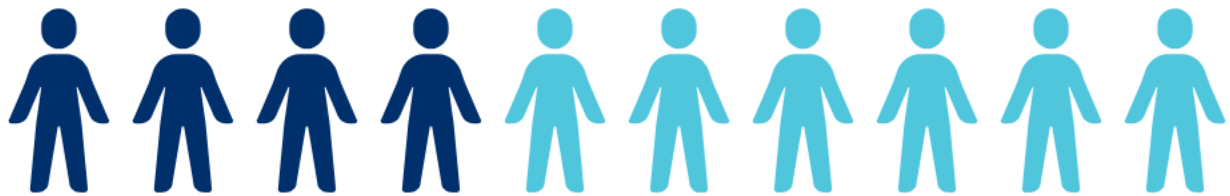
POLICY	AL PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	**Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive**	☑
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	**Approval process & supports**	☑
Teacher degree	BA	**BA**	☑
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	**Specializing in pre-K**	☑
Assistant teacher degree	CDA or 9 ECE/CD credits	**CDA or equivalent**	☑
Staff professional development	30 hours/year (teachers); 20 hours/year (assistants); PD plans; Coaching	**For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching**	☑
Maximum class size	20 (4-year-olds)	**20 or lower**	☑
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (4-year-olds)	**1:10 or better**	☑
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	**Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral**	☑
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	**Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement**	☑

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.
* Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.

Diverse Delivery System

Created with Datawrapper

In the 2023-2024 school year, about **4** out of **10** Kindergartners had **First Class Pre-K**.



41.8% had First Class Pre-K
(22,099 children)

58.2% did not have First Class Pre-K
(30,756 children)

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First Class Pre-K

served a higher percentage of children in poverty and children who are Black, but a lower percentage of children who are Hispanic.

Who We Serve

First Class Pre-K		No First Class Pre-K
73.7%	**Poverty**	64.0%
39.6%	**Black**	25.3%
46.3%	**White**	52.9%
5.8%	**Two or More Races**	5.6%
6.9%	**Hispanic**	14.1%
0.6%	**All Additional Races Combined**	0.6%

How We Serve

- Grants from ADECE to providers
  - Grantees provide 25% match
- Classroom = unit of grant
- Funding of quality benchmarks
- Coaching and monitoring by ADECE staff

You Said:

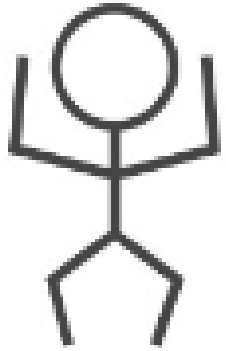
Pay higher percentage of teachers' salary and benefits

Funding Categories 2024-25

- Supplemental: $67,500
- Classroom grant: $114,000+
- Reduced enrollment: $75,000
  - 9 students, 1 teacher
- New Classroom = $135,000
  - 1 year only

Policy Makers and Parents Said:

Why are you charging tuition for a state funded program?



Considerations

- Pushback from families and lawmakers on tuition
  - Sliding scale for tiered grants
  - Full tuition for supplemental grants (Excellence)
  - School systems tell us they need tuition to fund PK
- Teacher salary and benefits
  - Pay on matrix
- Predictabili
- A
p

This slide from presentation to AASBO September 2023

What Did We Do?

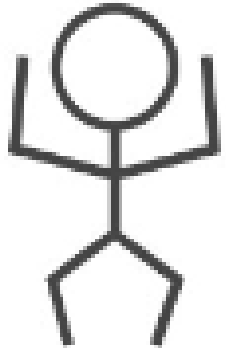
- Provided CSFO access to ECEData budgets
- Asked for actual costs and revenues for FCPK
- Pulled budget reports of tuition collected
- Estimated tuition for budget request
  - Requested and received increase of $2.5 million without expectation of growth in number of classrooms
  - When applications came in, tuition reported was $5.5 million

Additional Steps

- 97% of requests were funded to include request + reported tuition
- Gap Assistance or Tuition Waiver for those who could not open doors without funding

Policy Makers and Our Data Said:

There are not enough qualified teachers in FCPK.



What Are We Doing?

- Established a Credentialing Officer position
  - Retired higher ed and ECE professional
  - Works hand in hand with ALSDE certification
- Enforcing our guidelines
- Apprenticeships and Scholarships
- Measuring progress
- Remembering the research on child outcomes and teacher qualifications

You Said:

New Budget

- Simplified
  - From 167 columns to 3
  - Modeled on ALSDE Budget Exhibits BI and BII

Amendment No.: ___

_____ BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMBINED BUDGET FOR REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
GOVERNMENTAL AND EXPENDABLE TRUST FUNDS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

EXHIBIT B-I-A

FUND TYPES	GOVERNMENTAL				FIDUCIARY	TOTAL
DESCRIPTION	GENERAL	SPECIAL REVENUE	DEBT SERVICE	CAPITAL PROJECTS	EXPENDABLE TRUST	(Memorandum Only)
REVENUES:						
State Revenues						
Federal Revenues						
Local Revenues						
Other Sources						
TOTAL REVENUES						
EXPENDITURES :						
Instructional Services						
Instructional Support Services						
Operation & Maintenance						
Auxiliary Services						
General Administrative Services						
Capital Outlay						
Debt Services						
Other Expenditures						
TOTAL EXPENDITURES						
OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES):						
Other Fund Sources						
Other Fund Uses						
TOTAL OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES)						
EXCESS REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES OVER(UNDER) EXPENDITURES & OTHER FUND USES						
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE - OCT 1						
ENDING FUND BALANCE - SEPT 30						

Revised: June 13, 2024

Expenditure Category	Expenditure Types Included	OSR Funds Expenditures	Other Funds Expenditures	Totals
Instructional Services	* Lead Teacher Salary	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
	* Lead Teacher Benefits	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
	* Auxiliary Teacher Salary	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
	* Auxiliary Teacher Benefits	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Instructional Services Subtotal		**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
Instructional Support Services	* Substitute Teacher(s) * Payroll Taxes * Background Checks * Professional Development Registration * Professional Development Mileage * Professional Development Lodging * Training Stipends * Resource Teachers * Publications and Resources * Instructional Materials * Gross Motor Materials * Classroom Technology and Support * Health Screenings and Referrals * Parent Programs and Involvement * Travel for Home Visits and Family Support * In-State Field Trips (including travel costs)	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Operations and Maintenance	* Health Services and Supplies * Safety Equipment and Supplies * Advertising for Classroom Enrollment ($300) * Daily Student Transportation * Student School-day Meals/Snacks * Administrative Supplies ($500 maximum) * Accounting * Liability Insurance * Classroom Maintenance and Cleaning * Utilities	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Equipment	* Playground Equipment * Classroom Furnishings and Equipment	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Administrative Services	* Administrator (must not exceed 6%)	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total		**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
OSR Grant Amount		**$114,000.00**		

Breakdown of Other Funds Expenditures entered above					
Federal Funds	Total of Federal Funds used for Other Funds Expenditures		$0.00		
Local Funds	Total of Local Funds used for Other Funds Expenditures		$0.00		
Other Funds	Total of Other Funds used for Other Funds Expenditures		$0.00		
Total Federal, Local, and Other Funds	**Calculated Total used for Other Funds Expenditures (must match total in Other Funds Expenditures column above)**		**$0.00**		
Proration					
Reason					
Proration Amount		$0.00			
Adjusted Amount Received		$114,000.00			

You Said:

Communicate with LEA financial staff more!

Communication

- AASBO communication
- CSFO's and LEA financial staff in grant management system
- Require sign off by CFO for grant application
- Budget access in ECEData
- ECE Comms

Themes from AASBO

- Include CSFO's and financial staff
- Increase funding
- Fiscal year 10/1 – 9/30
- Increase funding
- Simplify budget
- Increase funding
- Consistency between ALSDE/ LEA's and ADECE
- Increase funding

Changes 2024-25

- Increase in funding amounts
  - Teacher pay
  - Accommodate for tuition
- Simplified budget
  - Mirror request to ALSDE
- Include LEA Finance Staff in budgets
- ADECE staff with understanding of accounting and grants

Other Changes

- All funding completed prior to 10/1
- Option for 3 payments within 1 fiscal year (not new, but newly publicized and checked)
- Access and requirement for CSFO sign off in grants management system

A few more questions from you

Question	Response
Who pays for special education services? Tuition helped pay for speech services.	…
Can you add a notification feature to the grants system so that CSFO's and finance staff are notified or cc'd?	Great idea!
Is P-3 the same funding code as PK?	No, see ALSDE Accounting Manual OSR Pre-Kindergarten Program 1720 11 Early Childhood ED – ETF Strong Start/Strong Finish 1721 11
Who pays Aug, Sept payroll if funds not received until after Oct 1?	Grant agreement (MOU) spans multiple fiscal years for this purpose.

Two Year Comparison

	2023-24	2024-25
Average Classroom Grant Amount (renewal, full classroom)	$106,394	$114,575
Number of Classrooms	1,524	1,481
Number of Children Enrolled	23,999	24,217
Lead Teacher Waivers (do not meet credential requirements)	250	146
Total Funding Award	$148,658,196	$157,994,205

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- Children who had First Class Pre-K have been **more likely to be ready for kindergarten** over all four years of the AlaKids assessment.
- Children who had First Class Pre-K arrive in **kindergarten ready to learn in higher percentages** than other children who did not participate in the program.
- These differences were **largest during critical time periods** during and following the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine.

Long and Winding Road

What is the true cost of FCPK in Alabama?

What % is considered full access?

Can we talk about the 25% match?!

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | College of Education

Cost of Pre-K Study

- Conducted by the University of Alabama
- Study activities:
  - Conducting online focus groups with a sample of Pre-K directors
  - Analyzing three years of FCPK expenditure data
  - Examining public Pre-K funding structures in other states
- **Want to share your opinions?**
  - https://tinyurl.com/CostofPreK
  - OR email Alison at alhooper2@ua.edu

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www.children.alabama.gov

Thank you