

2024 - 2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

## LYNCHBURG COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP HEAD START



## **Preamble**

At Lynchburg Community Action Group Head Start (Lyn-CAG HS), we are committed to delivering high-quality, comprehensive services to preschool children, school aged students and their families across Amherst, Bedford, Lynchburg City, and Lynchburg County, Virginia. Our program operates from three center-based locations in Central Virginia, providing educational opportunities that meet the developmental needs of young children. During the 2024–2025 fiscal year, we continued to serve income-eligible children and their families across our service area. This work is made possible through funding from the federal Office of Head Start.

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to share data and updates to the program during the program year. This document is made available to the public via the Agency's website, LynCAGKidz.org. Parents may also request this report at any time and a copy will be made available to them.

## Purpose

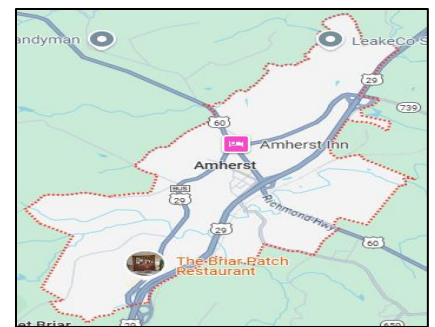
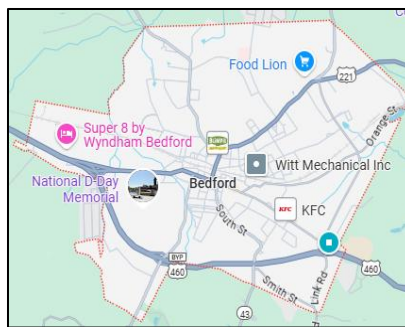
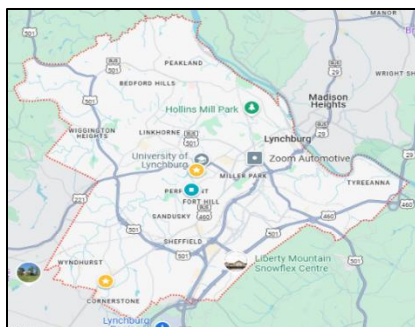
Being a major part of a Community Action Agency and Federal Head Start Grantee, LYN-CAG Head Start is responsible for understanding the changing needs of the communities and people it serves. For that purpose, LYN-CAG Head Start undertakes this Annual Report and

Community Needs Assessment and significant additional planning, research, and parent engagement to best meet the needs of our community.

## Service Area

LYN-CAG Head Start operates Head Start programming in Amherst and Bedford counties as well as the City of Lynchburg.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the total cumulative enrollment in LYN-CAG Head Start was 217. The total funded enrollment was 290. The greatest number of children attended Head Start programming in the city of Lynchburg. Head Start sites are located in Lynchburg at Thomas Road Center, Diamond Hill, Amherst County at Madison Heights Elementary and Amherst Elementary and in Bedford County at American Way Business Complex, Big Island Elementary and Stewartsville Elementary.

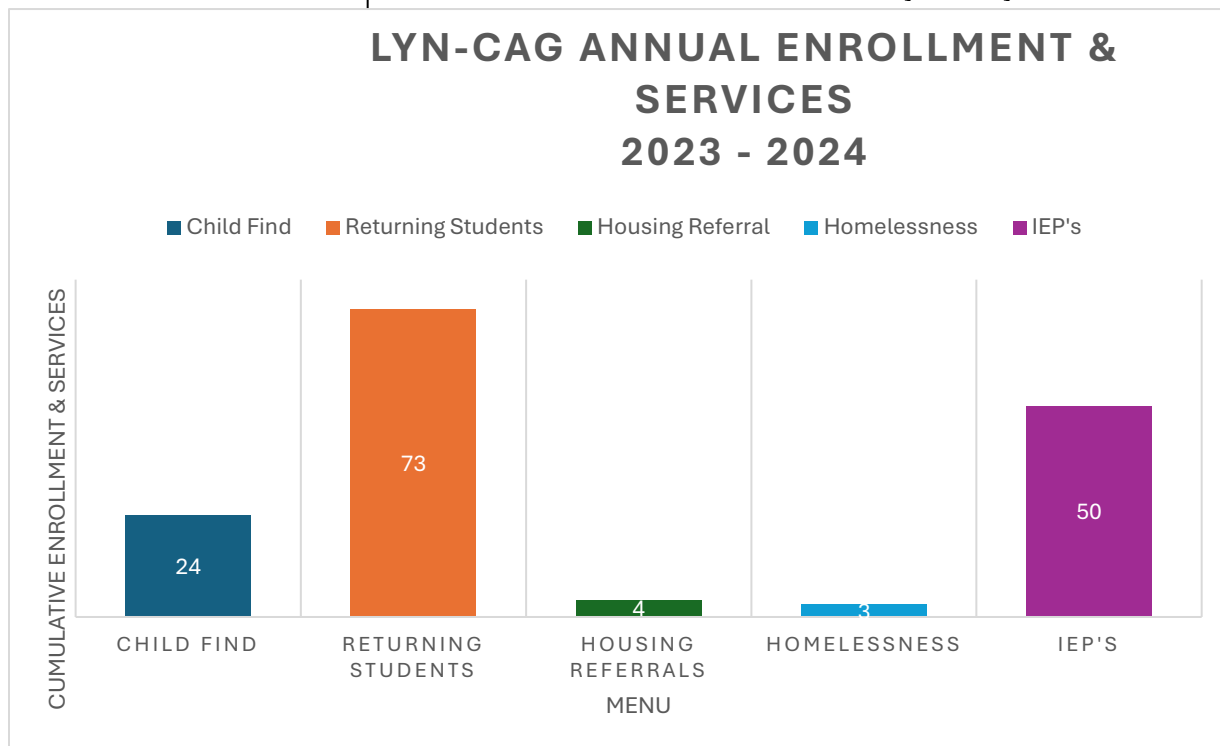


## ERSEA/Enrollment

Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families

According to the 2024 American Community Survey, there are 2,704 Head Start eligible children enrolled in school in Amherst and Bedford counties and the City of Lynchburg. That number also represents (number of students) children under 5 years of age living below 125%

▪ **Resource:** American Community Survey 2025



## Classroom Size and Student Distribution by Location

This chart outlines the number of classrooms and student capacity within each demographic area we serve. Our dedicated staff play a vital role in delivering high-quality care and education across all jurisdictions. Through ongoing partnerships, we continue to offer programming that meets the diverse needs of all students in our program. We consistently strive to meet licensing ratio requirements as well as the Head Start Performance Standards, ensuring compliance and high-quality care across our classrooms. But, due to a temporary teacher shortage, we had to combine two classes, and we utilized the assistant from the affected classroom to support the transition. This approach allowed us to maintain a stable learning environment, keeping all students in the classroom without disruption to their education or the need for them to stay at

home.

School / Location	Number of Classrooms	Classroom Capacity	Number of Teachers	Demographic Area
Amherst County Elementary School	1	17	2	Amherst County
Bedford	1	17	2	Bedford County
Diamond Hill	1	17	2	Lynchburg City
Madison Heights Elementary	2	34	4	Amherst County
Big Island Elementary School	1	17	2	Bedford County
Stewartsville Elementary School	1	17	2	Bedford County
Ramp Building	5	98	11	Lynchburg City
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>25</b>	

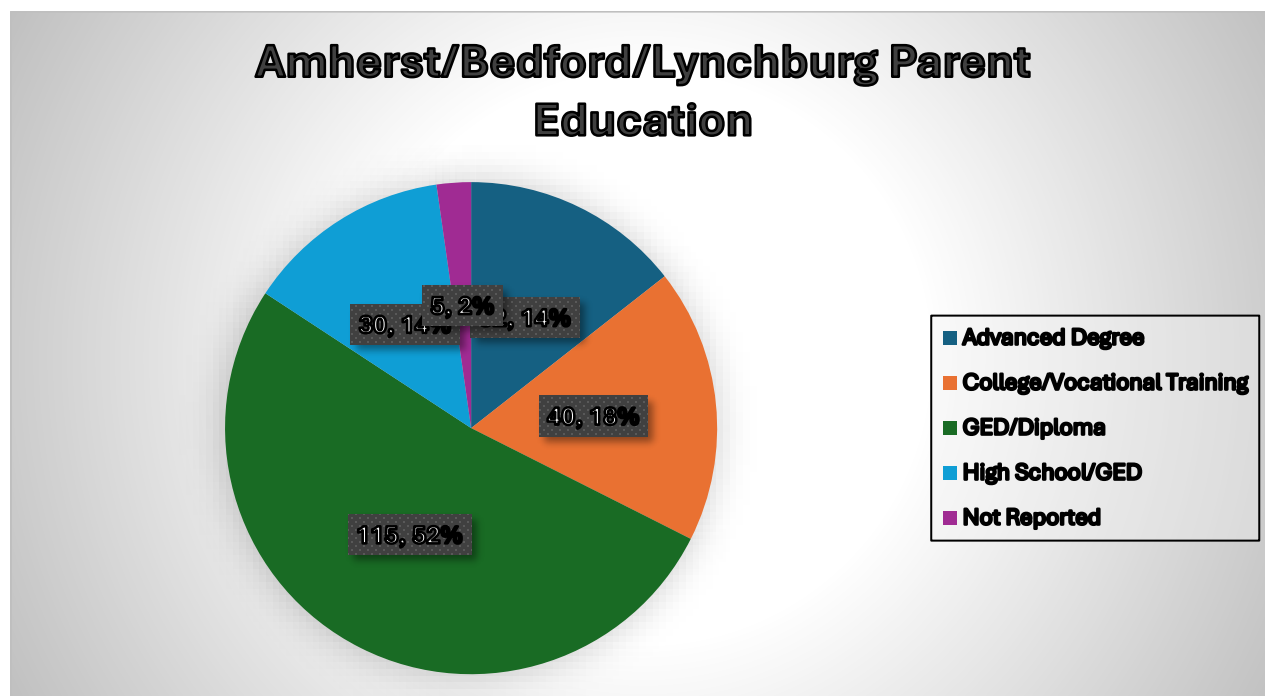
"The data presented in the Racial Census Summary (**below**) reflects the diverse student population that was enrolled in our program across the counties we served during the 2024 – 2025 school year."

#### Racial Census Summary – All Locations

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Black	106	48.8%
White	67	30.9%
Indian/Alaskan	0	0.0%
Pacific Islander	1	0.5%
Asian	5	2.3%
Other	3	1.4%
Multiracial	35	16.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Community Resources/ Jobs, Training and Education for families

- CVCC Work Force
- Region 2000
- Goodwill
- Lynchburg Community Action Group Inc
- Ace of Central Va
- Virginia Career Works
- Centra College
- Liberty University
- University of Lynchburg
- Virginia University of Lynchburg
- Susie G Gibson Science and Technology Center
- Runk and Pratt School of Nursing
- VCOS: Virginia Cosmetology Occupational Center



## Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

One of our core objectives at Lyn-CAG HS is to ensure that children are well-prepared for a successful transition into kindergarten. We actively collaborate with public schools, families, and parent/teacher organizations to support this transition and maintain a consistent, child-centered approach. Our efforts are grounded in strong communication, cooperation, and coordination between all involved parties.

To support this transition, we implement a range of intentional activities, including:

- Informing parents of their school district’s kindergarten registration dates and emphasizing the importance of attending related district activities.
- Hosting kindergarten transition workshops for parents to help them understand what to expect in the public school system.
- Coordinating special events where kindergarten teachers visit our classrooms to build familiarity with our students and prepare for their arrival.
- Offering our facilities to district personnel, providing them opportunities to meet with families, including those with children who have special needs.
- Tracking annual review appointments and facilitating the involvement of special education staff in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children engaged with the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).
- Completing and sharing a kindergarten readiness checklist for each child with both the parents and the local school district.
- Establishing formal Letters of Agreement each year with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure a smooth and coordinated transition process.

### **Curriculum and School Readiness**

To support school readiness during the critical preschool years, we implement the *Teaching Strategies GOLD Creative Curriculum*, a comprehensive, research-based early childhood education framework. This curriculum is grounded in child development theory and is designed to support learning across all domains, including social-emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, science, and physical development.

We have found that the *Creative Curriculum* provides both flexibility and structure, allowing us to tailor learning experiences that are culturally and developmentally appropriate while still aligning with state and federal early learning standards. Through ongoing observation and assessment using the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment tool, we can track each child’s progress, identify areas of strength and need, and inform individualized lesson planning. This ensures that each child receives the support they need to thrive academically and socially.

The curriculum’s emphasis on active, hands-on learning encourages children to explore, ask questions, and develop critical thinking skills, building a strong foundation for future academic success. For our Head Start children, many of whom face economic or developmental

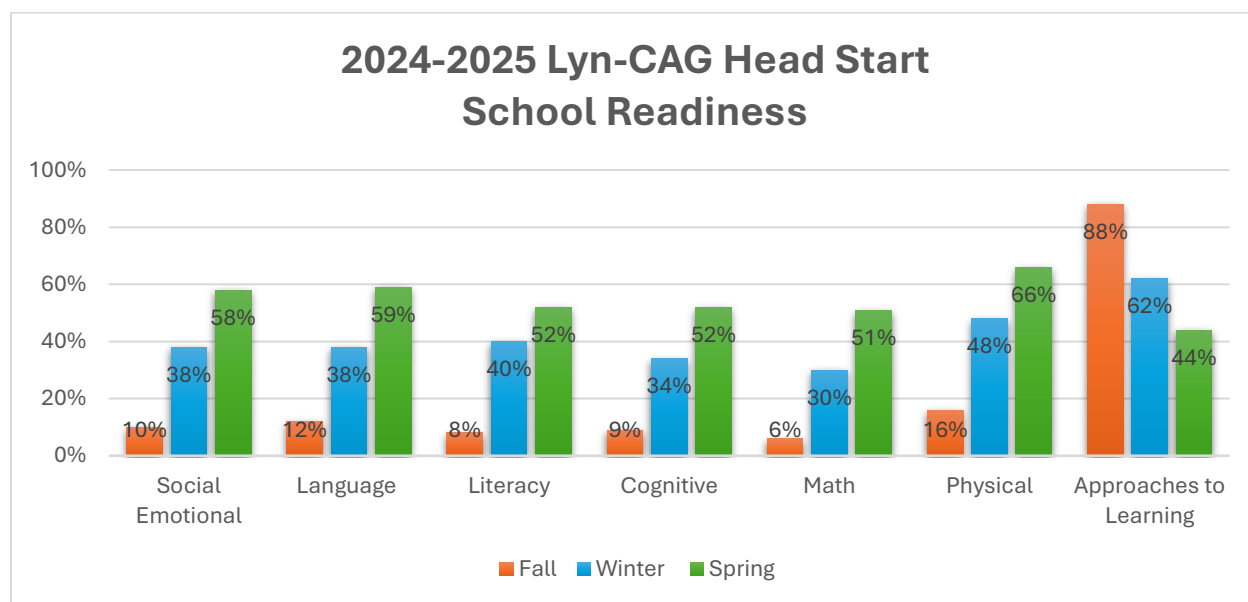
challenges, this approach helps bridge the gap and prepares them not only for kindergarten but for a lifetime of learning.

As children transition from our program into public school, we remain committed to supporting families and strengthening relationships with school districts and other service providers. We actively share our school readiness goals and outcomes with families and community stakeholders, ensuring transparency and collaboration. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that every child is ready for school—and that schools are equally ready to support the unique strengths and needs of our Head Start graduates.

During the 2024–2025 program year, Lyn-CAG Head Start teachers conducted a total of 151 home visits in the fall, with the majority completed prior to students’ first day of school. In the spring, an additional 118 home visits were completed.

Parent-teacher conferences were also held throughout the year, with 106 conferences conducted in the fall and 118 in the spring. Across the service areas of Amherst County, Bedford County, and the City of Lynchburg, 50 students were identified with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). By the end of the school year, 14 students had been referred to the Local Education Agency (LEA) for further evaluation and support.

A total of 78 students has transitioned into kindergarten programs within the school districts of Amherst County, Bedford County, Campbell County, and the City of Lynchburg.



Each year, Lyn-CAG Head Start’s Practice-Based Coach and CLASS observer conducts CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) observations for each classroom during both the Fall



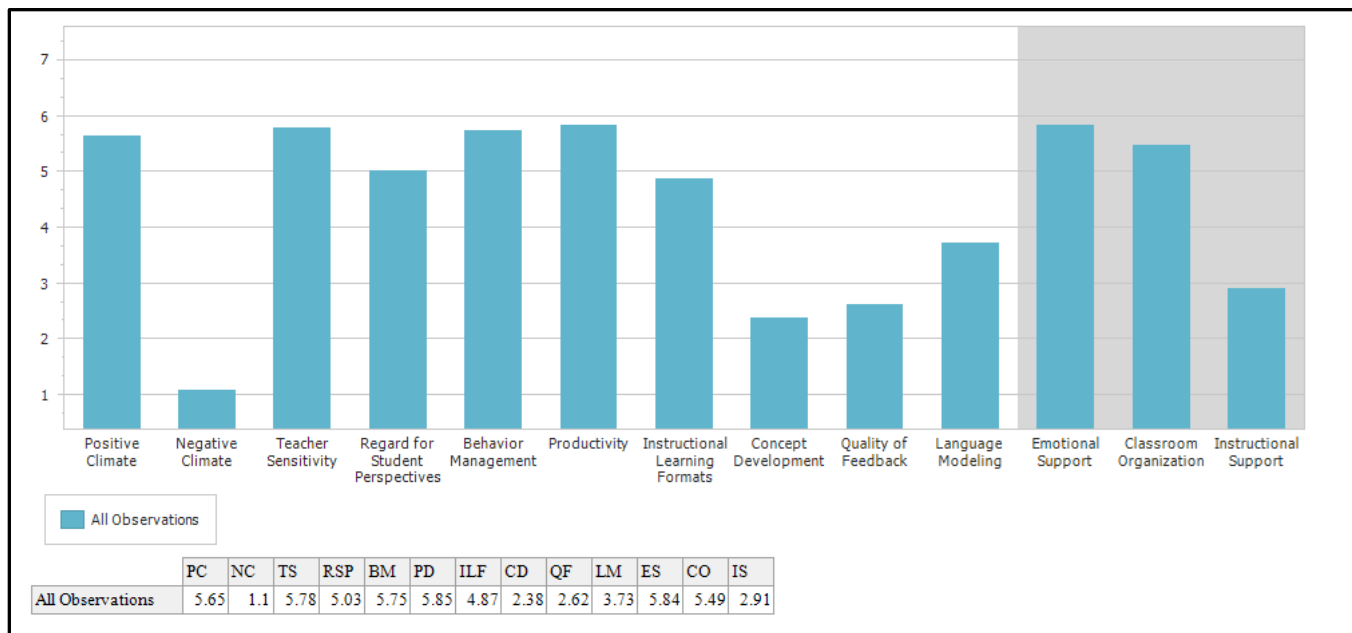
and Spring seasons. For the 2023–2024 school year, the Virginia state average CLASS scores were as follows:

- **Positive Climate:** 5.88
- **Negative Climate:** 1.11
- **Teacher Sensitivity:** 5.85
- **Regard for Student Perspectives:** 5.14
- **Behavior Management:** 5.73
- **Productivity:** 5.83
- **Instructional Learning Formats:** 5.02
- **Concept Development:** 2.29
- **Quality of Feedback:** 2.63
- **Language Modeling:** 3.41

Lyn-CAG Head Start’s CLASS scores for 2023–2024 largely met or exceeded these state averages, reflecting a strong commitment to high-quality teacher-child interactions and effective classroom practices.



**Lynchburg Community Action Group**  
5630 - Pre-K CLASS® Average Score Charts



## Family Engagement

Lyn-CAG Takes Pride in Family Engagement. At Lyn-CAG Head Start, we believe that the parent or guardian, are their child's first and most important teacher. Their involvement is not only welcomed—it's essential to the success of our program. We encourage all parents to participate in every aspect of the Head Start experience, from volunteering in the classroom to helping shape program policies.

Parent engagement directly impacts their child's educational journey. Research shows that children thrive—both academically and socially—when their families are actively involved in their learning. That's why we offer a variety of meaningful opportunities for families/parents to take part in their child's development leading to their success.

As a Lyn-CAG Head Start parent, they are welcome to get involved in several ways, including:

- Serving on the Policy Council to help guide program decisions
- Attending Parent Committee Meetings at your child's center
- Volunteering in the classroom or administrative offices
- Participating in parent training and educational workshops
- Offering input on the curriculum and learning activities
- Meeting with their child's teacher during parent/teacher conferences
- Joining our Mother's Groups or Father's Groups for peer support
- Welcoming staff into your home for personalized home visits
- Engaging in take-home activities that extend learning beyond the classroom
- Exploring educational resources through our Lending Library
- Joining the Education Advisory Committee to contribute their perspective

Every opportunity we offer is designed to empower families/parents and to strengthen their connection to their child's education. When they engage with our program, they're not just supporting their children, they are shaping the future of our community.

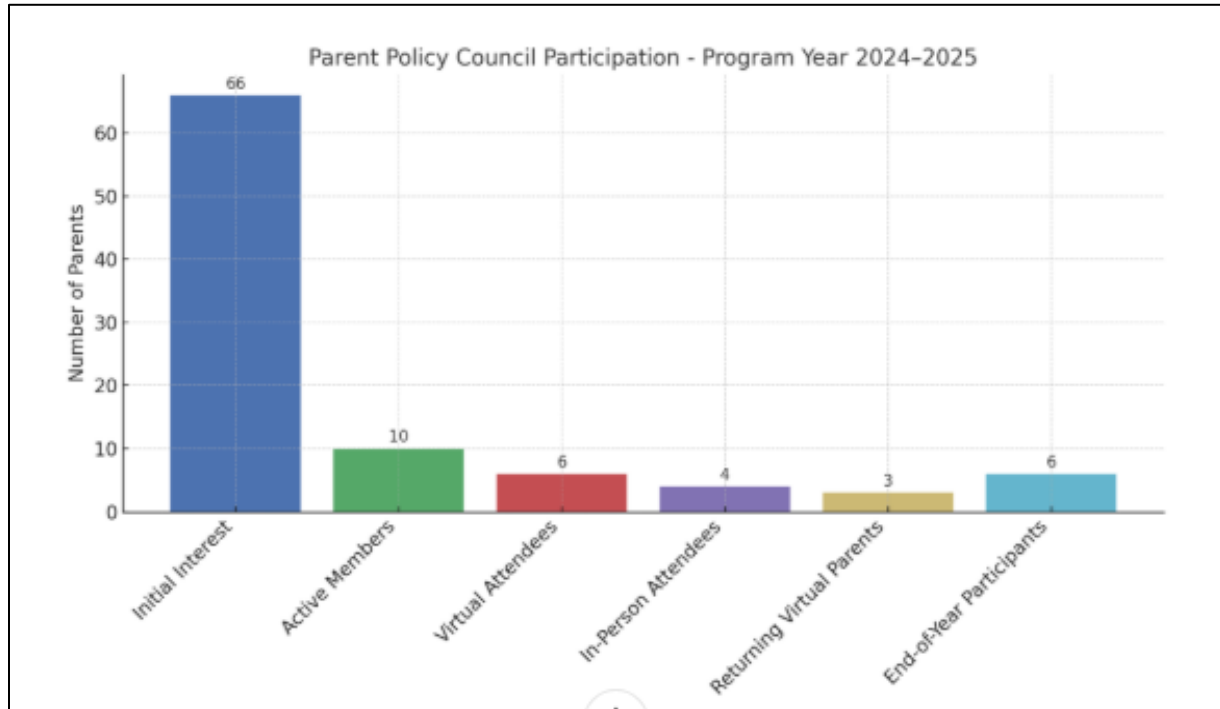
## **Parent Policy Council Report: Program Year: 2024–2025**

### **Participation Overview**

At the start of the year, 66 parents expressed interest in serving on the Parent Policy Council. Over time, participation decreased:

- 66 parents initially showed interest

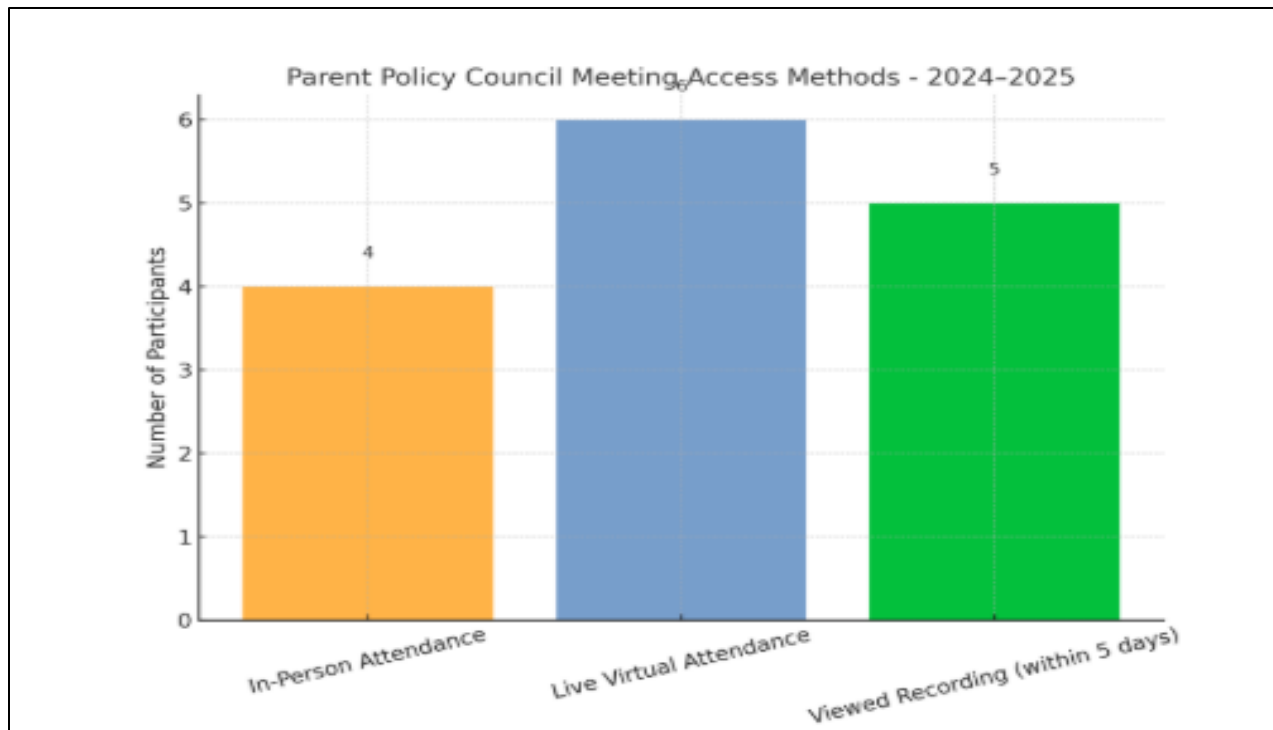
- 10 became active members
- 6 attended virtually (including 3 returning parents)
- 4 attended in person
- 6 remained active by the end of the year, with inconsistent attendance



### Meeting Access Options

To make participation more flexible and inclusive, meetings were offered in three formats:

- In-person attendance
- Live virtual attendance via video conferencing
- On-demand viewing: Parents who could not attend live had up to 5 days to view the recorded meeting and submit their votes, comments, and concerns through a secure digital portal.



This allowed parents with busy schedules or barriers like transportation and childcare to still stay informed and have their voices heard.

### **Barriers to Participation**

Despite flexible options, participation declined due to:

- Transportation difficulties
- Lack of childcare
- Work schedule conflicts
- Decreased interest or competing priorities

### **Improvement Plan for 2025–2026**

- Continue hybrid meeting options
- Offer childcare during in-person meetings
- Provide transportation assistance or stipends
- Vary meeting times and dates
- Incentivize consistent participation
- Strengthening outreach and personal invitations to families

### Family & Community Engagement (Department Collaborations)

Department	Parent Committee	Policy Council	Community Events
<b>FSW's</b>	Facilitate committee agenda and support PFCE focus areas.	Provide reports on family needs & service utilization to FCES.	Coordinate outreach, support logistics, recruit volunteers.
<b>Education Manager &amp; Teachers</b>	Offer classroom updates, model strategies in the classrooms.	Share data on child outcomes & transitions	Co-lead or assist with family workshops or events.
<b>Health &amp; Nutrition</b>	Provide presentations on nutrition and wellness topics, monthly.	Report on health/nutrition status of enrolled children.	Participate in and set up resource tables, do cooking demos or health fairs.
<b>ERSEA Team</b>	Share enrollment data or trends	Advising on recruitment, attendance policy	Support registration drives and summer recruitment events
<b>Administration Team</b>	Provide PFCE framework guidance and ensure cross-departmental input	Facilitate shared governance, ensure compliance and documentation	Emcee events, coordinate external partnerships, and support funding

These improvements are designed to re-engage families and strengthen the shared leadership that supports Head Start's mission.

## Program Highlights

- **Child Development and Curriculum Implementation:**

Children continue to demonstrate significant gains across all developmental areas, reflecting the program's strong commitment to fostering school readiness and developing lifelong learners. To ensure curriculum fidelity and implementation of current, developmentally appropriate practices, all education staff utilize the *Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TSG) Creative Curriculum*.

- **Strategic Planning and Goal Alignment:**

The leadership team dedicated time to thoroughly reviewing the Annual Report, Self-Assessment, Community Assessment, and Child Outcomes. Staff and families collaborated to brainstorm and develop action plans aligned with Lyn-CAG Head Start's long-term program goals. A review of short-term objectives, baseline data, and action plans indicates that the program remains on track during the fifth year of the current grant cycle.

- **Community and School Collaborations:**

The program has continued to foster successful partnerships with Lynchburg City Schools, Bedford City Schools, and Amherst County Schools. Additional community collaborations are being identified and will be incorporated into future planning.

- United Way of Greater Lynchburg – Early childhood and family stability funding and Grant Received.
- Virginia Career Works (Region 5) – Vocational training, ESL, GED services
- Bedford/Farmville/Fort Defiance Community Action – Energy and job assistance
- Amherst County DSS – SNAP, TANF, child welfare
- Lynchburg Public Library System – Literacy and educational programming
- Virginia Cooperative Extension – Nutrition, parenting support
- Central Virginia Community College / Lynchburg College – Adult education and technical credentials

- **Expansion of Preschool Services:**

Community assessment data has revealed a growing need for infant and preschool childcare. In response, the program opened an additional preschool classroom at the Diamond Hill location to help address this need.

- **United Way Funding Support:**

The program received funding from the United Way to support the purchase of additional supplies, materials, and training resources. These contributions benefit students, families, and staff across multiple service areas.

- **Support for Homeless Families:**

An increasing number of homeless children within our service area has highlighted the need for targeted support. The program has partnered with local institutions to assist families in crisis, helping them access safe and stable housing. Consistent school attendance during housing instability has proven to provide children with critical structure and support.

- **Proposed Change in Scope:**

A request has been submitted to reduce the program's student population from 290 to 178. This adjustment will enable staff to provide more individualized attention, with class sizes decreasing from 17 to 14 students per classroom.

- **Family Service Workers Credentialing:**

All Family Services Workers have completed the necessary credentialing to provide high-quality support and care to students and their families.

- **Child Development Associate (CDA):**

All Assistant Teachers have completed the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentialing requirements and are in the process of completing verification and preparing for licensure testing.

- **Baseline Grant**

The five-year baseline grant applications have been successfully completed.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

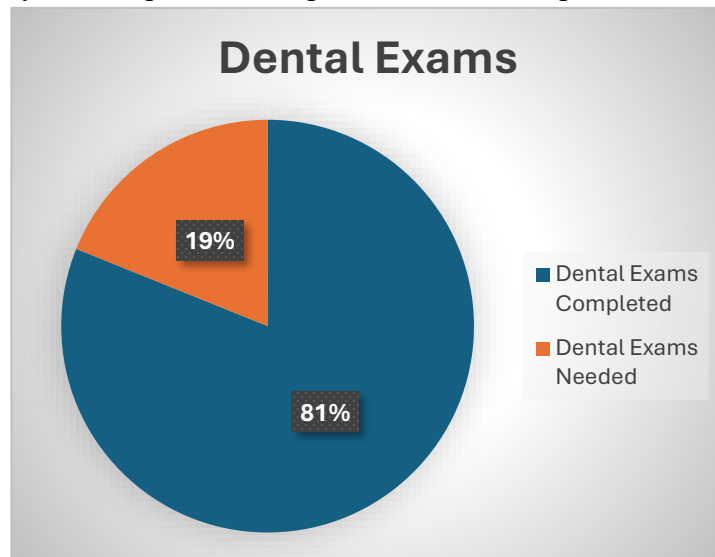
### **Nutrition Report**

- Lyn-CAG Head Starts comprehensive health services ensures children are up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary medical and oral health care. All enrolled children must have an up-to-date physical exam within 30 days of starting the program. Vision and hearing screenings are obtained or performed within 45 days to ensure each child's learning and development are not affected and the program can facilitate referrals and further testing when needed. During 2024-2025 95% of enrolled

children received vision and hearing screenings within the required time. The 5% that did not receive screenings is attributed to children that dropped from the program, frequent absences or could not obtain the screening.

- During the 2024-2025 program year new policies and procedures were implemented to address the small number of

children receiving dental exams. With the new policies and procedures in place, the number of children receiving dental exams increased from 32% last year to 81% for 2024-2025. Strong collaboration with families and providers



allowed the program to ensure children received the preventative oral health care that is vital to a child's overall health. Children that dropped from the program and dental appointments scheduled for a future date after the program ended contributed to the 19% of dental exams needed.

#### IMMUNIZATION



**92% of Head Start children have up-to-date immunizations.**

#### VISION & HEARING SCREENINGS



**98.6% of Children received Vision screening and**

**97% of the children received hearing screening.**



## **Staff Manual**

Additionally, we launched updated manuals—including an **Employee Manual**, a **Family Services Worker Manual**, and are revising our **Education Department Manual**—to provide clear procedural guidance for all staff roles. These resources are intended to help staff fully understand the policies, procedures, and responsibilities relevant to their roles.

## Program Updates

### New Facility

Lyn-CAG Head Start is actively seeking a permanent facility for the program that is both financially sustainable and better suited to support long-term operations. The goal is to ensure the program can allocate resources more efficiently, enhancing services for students, staff, and families.

### Incidents Reports

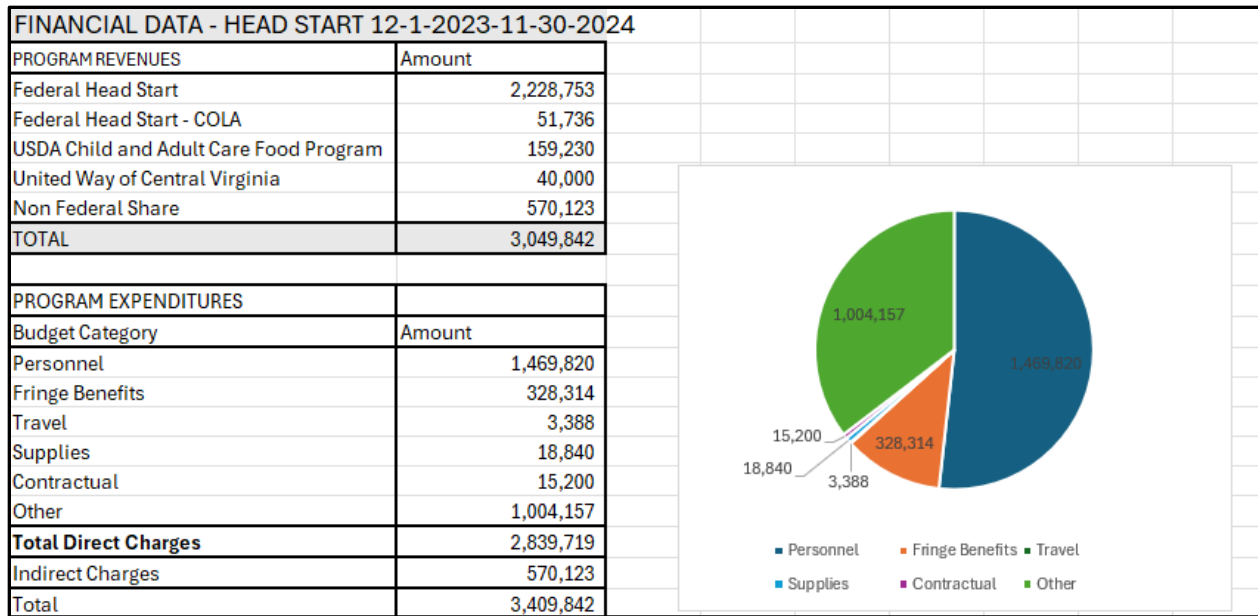
Incident reports were filed and reported to Child Protective Services, OHS and the Department of Licensing of Children's Programs; all were **deemed unfounded**, reflecting our strong compliance protocols. We continue to strive to ensure that all students, family members, employees, and visitors are safe and healthy within the confines of our facility.

### Change in Scope (CIS) & De Minimis Rate Election

Our updated **Change in Scope (CIS)** application was completed on **May 29, 2025**, following an initial review that highlighted a lack of cost savings. We will further evaluate CIS **after** the special review to determine whether any related monitoring findings should impact the final decision. We are seeking to reduce our total enrollment from 290 to 178 students. This would allow us to keep staff and offer more support within the classroom for our children with behavioral, emotional, or cognitive issues.

Per **Uniform Guidance 2 CFR § 200.414(f)** (effective October 1, 2024), we now utilize a **de minimis 15% MTDC indirect cost rate**. This election requires:

- Clear delineation of direct vs. indirect costs
- Exclusion of equipment, capital expenditures, large subawards, etc.
- Consistent application across all federal awards
- This is also captured and documented in the Board minutes.



### Head Start Program: Facilities, Operations & Mobile Classrooms

In parallel, we have been approved to convert **four buses into themed mobile classrooms** (science, literacy, dramatic play, music/movement) to expand both in-center and community-based programming for potential students who could become students of Head Start. This endeavor has been completed, and each bus will be strategically placed at one of our HS sites.

### Licensing, Compliance & Credentialing

- Dr. Brenda Farmer currently serves as the Board Chair, bringing strong leadership to Head Start through her guidance of the Board of Directors in areas of governance, fiscal oversight, and strategic planning. Her role is essential in ensuring full compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. In close collaboration with Head Start Director Dr. Stanley A. Cobbs and the Policy Council, Dr. Farmer promotes shared decision-making, financial accountability, and alignment of the program's goals with the needs of the community. Her leadership is reflected in the Board's key accomplishments, including the approval of major initiatives, budget oversight, and support for ongoing board training. Dr. Farmer's commitment to transparency strengthens public trust and reinforces the program's dedication to delivering high-quality early childhood education.

## Community Resource Partnerships

### Community Strengths & Assets

We have identified the following strengths based on the most recent data:

1. **High educational attainment** — over 92% of adults at least graduated high school; one-third hold bachelor's degrees.
2. **Broad internet access** — with more than 86% of households online, supporting remote learning and telehealth.
3. **Economic stability** — median household incomes around \$77,600 in Bedford County contribute to program sustainability.
4. **Robust civic infrastructure** — a wide network of nonprofits and agencies offers comprehensive support.
5. **Cultural diversity** — significant Black (17–27%) and Hispanic/multiracial populations enrich inclusive programming.
6. **Modest population growth** — the Lynchburg metro has seen steady growth since 2020, coinciding with downtown revitalization.

### Compliance Report Compliance Manager

During 2024 - 2025, we worked diligently to ensure that all Head Start operations are in full compliance with federal and state regulations. The role of the Compliance Manager continues to be instrumental in supporting our program's integrity and success. With the addition of another site at Diamond Hill which occupied 10 students, it allowed our compliance efforts to expand, and we have proactively adjusted our internal procedures to maintain consistency and accountability across all locations. A recent example of our commitment to regulatory adherence includes the temporary combination of two classrooms due to a brief teacher shortage. By leveraging the support of the assistant from the affected classroom, we were able to continue uninterrupted services for children, avoiding the need for them to stay home and ensuring a stable learning environment.

The Compliance Manager's responsibilities—ranging from implementing policies and procedures to conducting internal audits and risk assessments—directly impact the quality and accuracy of our yearly self-assessment. These ongoing efforts allow us to monitor and evaluate our adherence to the Head Start Performance Standards, identify areas of strength and improvement, and demonstrate a clear commitment to program excellence.

Through these processes, we continue to build a culture of compliance, transparency, and continuous improvement that supports long-term program sustainability and positive outcomes for children and families.

### **Family Services Team Report**

Our Family Services Team is composed of the Family Services Manager (FSM), the Family and Community Engagement Specialist (FCES), and a dedicated group of Family Services Workers (FSWs) who support our center-based program. This team plays a vital, hands-on role in promoting family well-being and ensuring children are prepared for school success.

FSWs are consistently present at their assigned centers, serving as accessible points of contact for families while working closely with classroom staff. Early in the program year, their primary responsibilities include conducting new family intakes, updating Family Partnership Agreements (FPAs), and following up on missing documentation or attendance concerns. They also collaborate with teachers to identify and support children with behavioral, health, or developmental needs, engaging families in any necessary follow-up.

Throughout the year, FSWs provide individualized support to families by connecting them with community resources such as food assistance, housing, transportation, and mental health services. They assist families in navigating applications and completing required documentation for services like dental, vision, and physical exams. The FCES enhances these efforts by organizing parent education workshops, while the FSM partners with FSWs and the Health Manager to ensure timely health screenings and form completion.

The team maintains detailed records by entering case notes and updating family data in the ChildPlus system. They work collaboratively to track progress toward family goals and meet regularly to align on child and family outcomes. In addition to their daytime responsibilities, the team actively supports evening events such as family literacy nights and parent-teacher conferences.

The role of the Family Services Team—particularly the FSWs—is dynamic, fast-paced, and deeply rooted in fostering strong, supportive relationships with families to ensure long-term success for both children and caregivers.

### Lyn-CAG Head Start Referral Chart (2024–2025)

Need	Resource(s)	Service Area
<b>Early Child Care &amp; EHS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HumanKind EHS</li> <li>- Growing Learners Early Learning Center</li> <li>- RAMP Early Learning Academy</li> </ul>	All Regions
<b>Developmental Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blue Ridge Therapy Associates</li> <li>- Infant &amp; Toddler Connection</li> <li>- Peace of Mind Counseling &amp; Consulting</li> <li>- Max Health ABA Services</li> </ul>	All Regions
<b>Food / Financial Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SNAP, TANF, Childcare Subsidy (via DSS)</li> <li>- Park View Community Mission</li> <li>- Blue Ridge Area Food Bank</li> <li>- Solid Rock Church Food Bank</li> <li>- Neighbors Helping Neighbors</li> <li>- Bedford Christian Ministries</li> <li>- Tree of Life Ministry Midtown</li> <li>- The Daily Bread</li> </ul>	All Regions
<b>Housing Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lynchburg Community Action Group (Lyn-CAG)</li> <li>- Interfaith Outreach Association</li> <li>- Covenant Fellowship</li> <li>- Salvation Army</li> <li>- Heart to Heart Ministries</li> </ul>	Lynchburg & Amherst
<b>Mental Health Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bedford Health Center</li> <li>- Centra Crisis Services</li> <li>- Peace of Mind Counseling &amp; Consulting</li> <li>- The Nest Counseling</li> </ul>	Bedford & Lynchburg
<b>Legal Advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS)</li> </ul>	Lynchburg
<b>Parenting Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-House at Lyn-CAG Head Start</li> <li>- Project HOPE</li> <li>- HumanKind</li> <li>- The Nest Counseling</li> <li>- Peace of Mind Counseling &amp; Consulting</li> </ul>	All Regions

## Recommendations & Next Steps for 2025–2026

1. **Finalize our CIS decision:** Document whether we're electing the de minimis rate or pursuing a NICRA extension.
2. **Secure a permanent Head Start site:** Conduct comparative analysis for new facility options.
3. **Launch mobile classrooms:** Track family engagement and educational outcomes.
4. **Administer a parent education survey:** Gather data to enhance workforce and educational support programming.
5. **Formalize partnership agreements:** Establish MOUs with United Way, Career Works, and Extension programs.
6. **Maintain demographic alignment:** Ensure our enrollment reflects community diversity trends.
7. **Support digital equity efforts:** Collaborate with providers to boost broadband access.
8. **Evaluate staff manuals:** Use mid-year surveys to assess effectiveness and clarity.