

Early Childhood State Updates

October 28, 2019

Recording of the webinar



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Agenda

This webinar will provide an update on the recommendations submitted as part of Executive Directive Four, issued by Governor Northam in July 2019. It will also provide an overview of the proposed plan for the Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Application.

- Virginia's Challenge
- Findings from Executive Directive 4
 1. *Listening Sessions*
 2. *Maximizing Access*
 3. *Measuring and Improving Quality*
 4. *Consolidating Oversight and Administration*
- Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5)
- What to Expect in 2020



Virginia's Challenge

All children are capable of and deserve to enter school ready.

- Nearly 100,000 students enter kindergarten classrooms in Virginia schools each fall. Only 60% of these children start school with the key literacy, math, and social-emotional skills needed to be successful in school. Most concerning is that only half of children from economically disadvantaged families enter school fully prepared for success.
- Virginia ranks 33rd nationally in preschool funding; as a result, 24% of economically disadvantaged four-year-olds and 72% of economically disadvantaged three-year-olds lack access to quality preschool.
- 75% of Virginia's early childhood programs that receive public funding do not participate in the state's voluntary quality measurement system; vulnerable families as well as policymakers, practitioners and community leaders do not have uniform information on quality.
- Virginia ranks 37th nationally in early childhood governance and lacks a uniform oversight and regulatory framework, making it difficult for communities to strengthen their local systems.



Findings from Executive Directive 4



EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE 4: OVERVIEW

Too many Virginia children enter school unprepared to fulfill their potential. To ensure every child has equitable access to opportunity, Virginia should invest more state resources to increase access to and improve the quality of its early childhood care and education system.

- In response to Executive Directive 4, the Executive Leadership Team conducted listening sessions, analyzed data, collaborated across agencies and developed a comprehensive set of recommendations.
- The public summary of findings outlines the challenges as well as recommended actions. It does not include fiscal impact as the formal recommendations are under review as part of the typical budgeting process.
- New state resources will be needed to increase access for at-risk 3s and 4s as Virginia is generally maximizing available federal resources. It should be noted that an incremental or pilot approach is recommended for serving more at-risk 3s. As relates to quality, Virginia should continue to maximize federal resources first as well as pursue new funding such as the Preschool Development Grant.
- To achieve these ambitious objectives and build the foundation for lasting change, Virginia should establish a single and durable point of accountability for school readiness.



LISTENING SESSIONS

- In partnership with Smart Beginnings, schools, social services, Head Start and child care, the Executive Leadership Team conducted listening sessions in Norfolk, Annandale, Salem, and Chesterfield.
- Attendees were encouraged to make comments, ask questions, complete comment cards and/or submit online feedback.
- More than 300 attendees representing 200+ organizations:
 - State, local, municipal government, elected officials
 - Head Start, Community Action agencies
 - Child care centers and family day home providers
 - Higher education and PreK-12 school systems
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Healthcare, consultants, media
 - Businesses



MAXIMIZE ACCESS FOR AT-RISK 3S AND 4S SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

Too few at-risk children in Virginia have access to early childhood programs. Not only are these children being denied opportunity but Virginia's K-12 system, workforce and economy suffer.

- Two-thirds of children under age 6 have all available parents in the workforce.
- Child care is prohibitively expensive; infant care costs more than in-state college tuition in Virginia at \$14,000/year while four year old preschool costs nearly \$11,000/year in the private sector.
- At risk families rely on a mix of federal, state and local funding. Without these resources, they opt out of the workforce or rely on unlicensed, unregulated family, friend and neighbor care.
- Nearly all the public funding supports at-risk children yet resources are insufficient to meet the need at every age.
- Funding alone will not resolve the problem; ~11,000 families were on Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) and subsidy wait lists last year yet Virginia was not using all of the funding committed. Supply, capacity and operational issues must be addressed.*
- Access matters; at-risk children with no preschool experience are much less ready for kindergarten than their at-risk peers who participate in VPI. Recent research shows similar results for at-risk children served in private settings. Provided quality standards are met, participating in a two-year preschool experience can more fully prepare at-risk children.

*Example: By setting child targets and making other operational changes, Virginia has added more than 5,000 children to child care subsidy since January and reduced the wait list to less than 800.



INCREMENTAL ACTION

The Executive Leadership Team recommends an incremental approach to serving at-risk threes.

- Offering a slot to all at-risk 3s and 4s by 2025 would require adding up to ~47,000 at-risk children, doubling the current capacity for 3s and 4s.
- Based on funding implications and system capacity, the Executive Leadership Team recommends a more incremental approach: use new state funds to expand to at-risk 3s on a pilot basis while also resolving longstanding challenges with VPI.
- By expanding access thoughtfully in partnership with communities and the private sector, Virginia can ensure quality for new slots and preserve much-needed access for infants and toddlers.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ACCESS

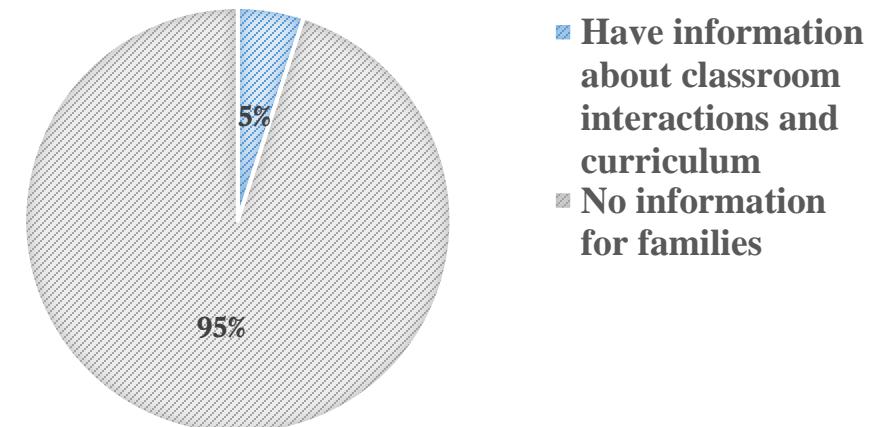
The Executive Leadership Team recommends that Virginia:

1. Preserve and maximize all available federal funding, specifically Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
2. Enhance VPI through four key actions to ensure all families of at-risk 4s have an option:
 - Increase rate and shift to benchmarking to quality requirements;
 - Incent public-private or mixed delivery in private settings;
 - Increase operational flexibility; and
 - Enable same-year reallocation to meet actual need.
3. Pilot the expansion of two existing state programs – VPI and Mixed Delivery – to include at-risk 3s on a small scale basis in both public and private settings. Additional expansion would be contingent on meeting quality thresholds and demonstrating positive outcomes.

QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND IMPROVEMENT SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

The most important aspects of quality in preschool education are stimulating and supportive interactions between educators and children and effective use of curricula. Yet Virginia only measures and provides this information for 5% of publicly-funded early childhood programs.*

Virginia Early Childhood Programs with Classroom Interaction and Curriculum Information for Families



*Note: 5% represents programs at levels 4 and 5 of Virginia Quality. Levels 1-3 do not require both. As of 2018, Virginia now requires both for all VPI programs but information is not available for families.

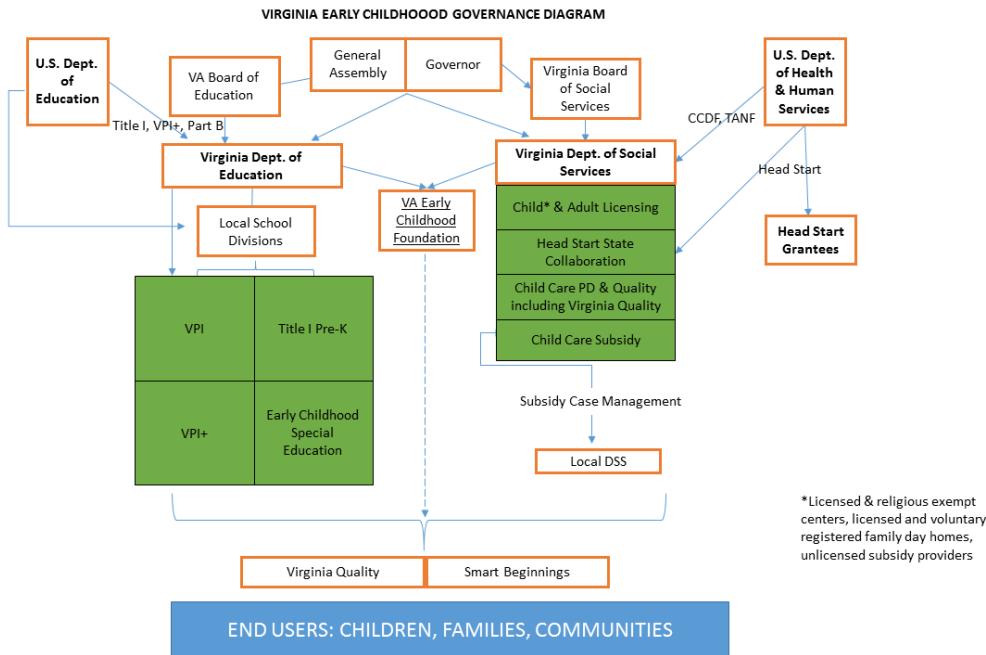
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: QUALITY

The Executive Leadership Team recommends building a uniform measurement and improvement system that is required for all early childhood programs that take public funds. Specifically Virginia should:

1. Require measurement and focus on the quality of teacher-child interactions in all publicly-funded infant, toddler and preschool classrooms.
2. Build pathways to improvement that address the diverse needs of early childhood educators.
3. Support families to choose quality.
4. Build on current quality efforts and better track child outcomes.
5. Align health, safety and quality expectations, measure cost impact and incent private providers to take public funds.
6. Phase in system over three years.

OVERSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

Unifying the fragmented oversight of early childhood care and education out of the home would help Virginia execute Executive Directive 4 and ensure more lasting and sustainable change.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: OVERSIGHT

The Executive Leadership Team recommends that Virginia:

1. Establish one board (Board of Education) and one agency (Virginia Department of Education) as responsible for oversight and administration of early care and education out of the home to create a single point of accountability for school readiness.
2. Transition Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start Collaboration to the VDOE in phases.
3. Have VDOE contract with VDSS to continue certain functions:
 - VDSS to operate child care subsidy program and conduct child care background checks;
 - Local Departments of Social Services to conduct eligibility for families locally and help coordinate local enrollment. Families can continue to apply in-person at 120 local offices.
4. Task VDOE and VDSS to collaboratively design and build a new licensing platform prior to transition of child care licensing to support uniform quality measurement system.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: RECOMMENDATIONS

Here is a summary of the recommended actions to improve school readiness outcomes in Virginia:

Maximize Access for At-Risk 3s and 4s	Build a Uniform Measurement and Improvement System	Consolidate Oversight and Administration
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preserve and maximize all available federal funding, specifically Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).2. Enhance VPI in four ways to ensure all families of at-risk 4s have an option.3. Expand two existing state programs – VPI and Mixed Delivery – to include at-risk 3s on a pilot basis in both public and private settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Require measurement to improve child outcomes.2. Build pathways to improvement that address the diverse educator needs and align with new measurement system.3. Support families to choose quality.4. Build on current quality efforts and better track child outcomes.5. Align expectations, measure cost impact and incent private providers.6. Phase in system over three years to avoid jeopardizing access for infants and toddlers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish one board and one agency as responsible for child care and early learning to create a single point of accountability for school readiness.2. Transition Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start Collaboration to the VDOE.3. Ensure continuity and preserve match by having VDOE contract with VDSS for child care background checks and child care subsidy program so families can easily apply online or be supported at local Social Services offices.4. Task VDOE and VDSS to collaboratively design and build a new licensing platform prior to transition.

Preschool Development Grant B-5



Preschool Development Grant – Birth to Five (PDG B-5)

In January, Virginia received and began to implement a \$9.9 million PDG B-5 grant, focused on 3 key activities:

- 1. A statewide vision, needs assessment and strategic plan**

Process and materials will be a catalyst for strengthening the birth to five early childhood care and education system that will improve outcomes including school readiness.

- 2. Community models ready to scale**

Ten early adopter communities, representing Virginia's diversity, will demonstrate proof of concept with \$6 million in funding and support from state, including \$4 million in recognition grants for teachers.

- 3. A stronger foundation at the state level**

The Commonwealth will be well positioned to scale the efforts statewide, having built the necessary capacity and infrastructure through the grant.



PDG B-5 Accomplishments

Over the last nine months, Virginia's Community Pilots have:

- Recruited new partners and built new relationships in all pilots
- Registered more than 575 sites and 2,500 teachers across family day home, child care, Head Start and schools in 27 jurisdictions
- Collected more than 2,000 survey responses from teachers
- Conducted self-assessments in all pilots to determine how families learn about, apply and enroll in early childhood programs
- Distributed more than \$684,000 in funds via 1,140 checks to teachers and 228 checks to sites
- Collaborated to design, build and launch a new data portal (LinkB5)

Pilots are not only strengthening their own systems but building models to be scaled to other communities. We are already using lessons learned from these efforts to inform policymaking and practice at the state level.



Virginia's Approach to Renewal

Winning a PDG B-5 Renewal grant would enable Virginia to build and expand upon the previous grant work. Virginia can apply for up to \$12.5 million each year for three years to:

- Invest in local capacity building, access and quality measurement, family engagement and coordinated planning and improvement – both supporting first set of 10 pilots to expand their work and bringing new communities on board;
- Build out LinkB5 to gather access and quality data at classroom level, explore ways to better engage families and communities with this information and determine how to link data with other systems and make progress towards an ECIDS;
- Test educator incentive(s) as a strategy to reduce turnover and increase quality;
- Evaluate impact using LinkB5 data, survey data (leader, teacher and family) and other data; and
- Expand on coordinated enrollment efforts, strengthen infant-toddler services and identify ways to support transitions from home to ECCE to early elementary.

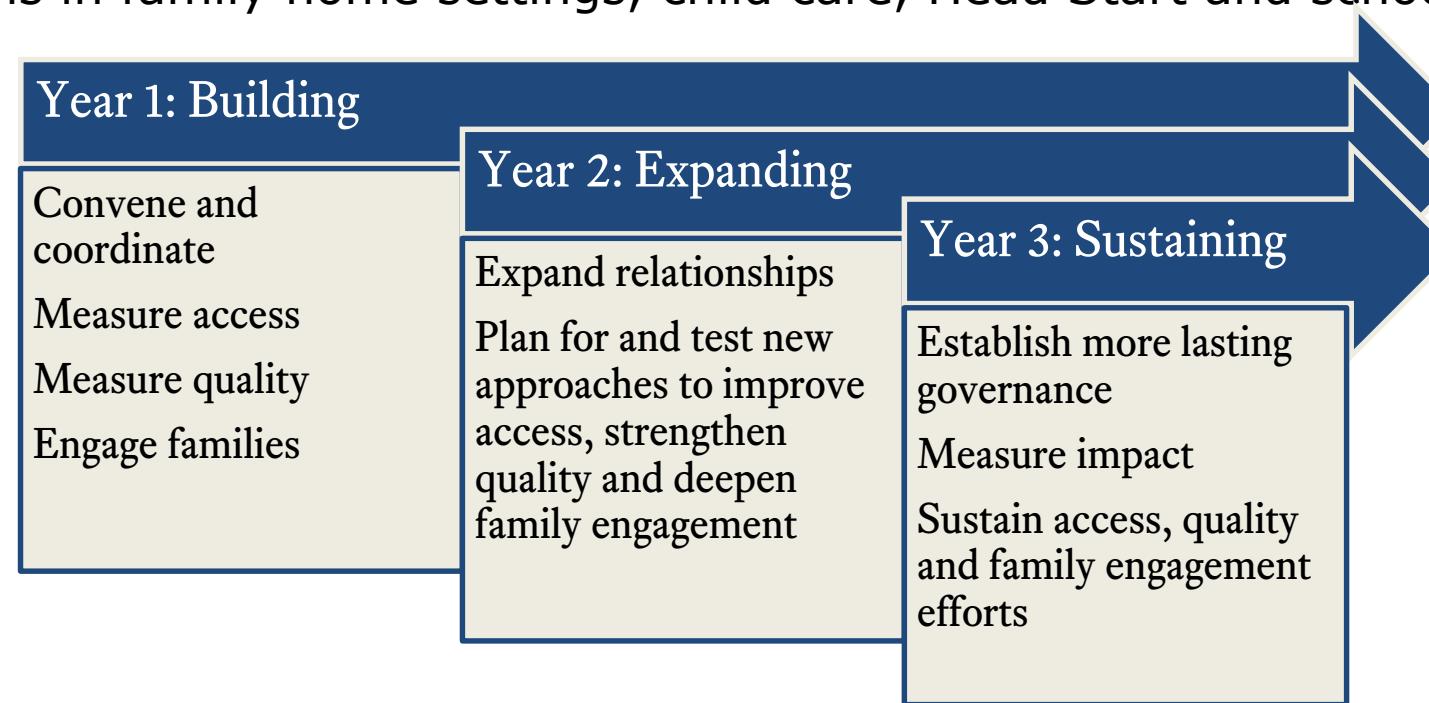
The application for this grant is due November 5, 2019.



What's Next for PDG B-5

With an additional three years of PDG B-5 funding, Virginia proposes to expand current efforts to reach all communities in the Commonwealth.

Communities can apply for funding to partner with all publicly-funded, birth to five early childhood programs in family home settings, child care, Head Start and schools to:



What to Expect in 2020



What to Expect in 2020

2020 will offer opportunities to increase access and improve quality in early childhood in Virginia:

In your classrooms:

- Encourage continuous improvement in use of curriculum, aligned assessment and teacher-child interactions
- Support use of classroom and student data to drive professional development planning and implementation
- Build principal capacity by supporting them to become CLASS reliable
- Support implementation of revised early learning and development standards

In your communities:

- Work with partners to secure additional funding (VPI, Mixed Delivery) and serve more at-risk 3s and 4s
- Collaborate with partners to renew/apply for PDG B-5 to strengthen B-5 system
- Support your team to coordinate enrollment, strengthen classroom quality, offer cross-agency professional development, support transitions and deepen family engagement across the birth to K spectrum

