“School Readiness” describes the capabilities of children, their families, schools, and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond.

“Ready Children” describes a child who is prepared for school socially, personally, physically, and intellectually within the developmental domains addressed in Virginia’s *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds.*
Importance of VPI

_Differential Effects of Preschool: Curry School of Education (2011)_

- VPI participation is associated with a **reduced** likelihood of repeating kindergarten.
- Literacy effect is maintained through **first grade** for African American and Hispanic students and students with disabilities.

_Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (2007)_

- Analysis showed **strong association** between VPI participation and PALS (literacy) scores.
- More than 91 percent of principals surveyed cited positive effects of students’ participation in preschool continuing through at least first grade.
Phonological Literacy Awareness Screening (PALS)

• The impact of participation in the VPI program can be seen in results of the fall 2014 PALS that was administered to kindergarten students.

• 93% of the students who participated in a VPI program were ready for kindergarten and did not need intervention services in kindergarten the next school year.

• Conversely, 71.8% of the students who did not participate in any PreK program were ready for kindergarten. Resulting in 28.2% of students in this category needing some type of intervention in kindergarten.
Two types of grants:

- **Development Grants** are for states that currently serve less than 10 percent of *four-year-olds* and have not received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) grant.

- **Expansion Grants** are for states that currently serve 10 percent or more of *four-year-olds* or have received an RTTT-ELC grant. *(Virginia)*
VPI+ Overview

Year 1 Federal Award Amount
• $17,500,000 (3 additional years)
• January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2018

Lead Agency
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

Partnerships and Support
• Eleven Divisions and local public-private partnerships
• Virginia Department of Social Services
• Virginia Early Childhood Foundation/Smart Beginnings
• University of Virginia’s Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL)
• Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success
VPI+ Selection

Criteria for School Division Selection
1. Poverty Concentration: Percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch
2. Poverty Magnitude: Number of Title I schools
3. Unmet Need: Number of unused VPI slots
4. Unmet Need: Percentage of students not meeting the PALS-K benchmark

- Participating School Divisions: Brunswick County, Chesterfield County, Fairfax County, Giles County, Henrico County, Norfolk City, Petersburg City, Prince William County, Richmond City, Sussex County, Winchester City
Model for New VPI+ Classrooms

- Full-day program
- Highly qualified teachers
- Developmentally-appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, evidence-based curricula and formative assessments
- Evidence-based professional development
- Coaching for implementation of best practices for early learning environments
- Partnerships with private preschool providers
Model for New VPI+ Classrooms

• Community partnerships to promote family access to services with targeted outreach for hard-to-reach families

• Accessible comprehensive services provided

• Summative assessments

• Virginia Star Quality Initiative – Virginia’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
Model for Improved PreK Classrooms

An “improved” state preschool program slot is a slot that already existed at the time of Virginia’s grant application and that will be improved by any of the following allowable improvements using grant funds:

• extending programs from half-day to full-day;

• decreasing child-to-staff ratios;

• employing and compensating a teacher with a bachelor’s degree;

• providing evidence-based professional development and coaching; or

• providing comprehensive services.
By the end of the grant, over 13,000 more preschool students will be served in new or improved high-quality preschool slots.
By the end of the grant term, the goal is for VPI+ students to exceed state and national averages on all measures for children who are economically disadvantaged, with a steady increase in meeting each benchmark annually.
VPI+ Accomplishments and Updates

• VPI+ state coordinator, grants and reports manager, and preschool program specialist have been hired.

• VPI+ technical assistance webinars for school divisions were held on January 27, March 2, March 3, March 6, March 25, May 20, and May 21.

• VPI+ Implementation Team has been established and the first quarterly meeting was held on April 30, 2015.

• Virginia’s budget and Statement of Work and school divisions’ budget summaries have been submitted to the United States Departments of Education and Health and Human Services for review.
VPI+ Accomplishments and Updates

• VPI+ grants have been awarded to 11 school divisions through the Notification of Grant Award (NOGA) process.

• Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the VPI+ curriculum and formative assessment was posted on April 10, 2015. Proposals were due to VDOE on May 11, 2015.

• RFPs for the program evaluation and summative assessments was posted on May 8, 2015. Proposals are due to VDOE on June 8, 2015.

• A VPI+ Cross-Organizational Data Team has been established and had its first meeting on April 9, 2015.
### Proposed Number of New and Improved Slots* as Reported by Divisions April 10, 2015

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<td><strong>Total Slots</strong></td>
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*Number of improved slots are estimated and may vary depending on number of VPI+ eligible children in the improved classrooms.
VPI Purpose

- The purpose of the state funded VPI program is to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are unserved by Head Start.

FY2015 Participation

- Calculated Number of VPI slots: 25,746
- Actual Number of VPI slots used: 18,250
- Total Actual State Share of VPI cost: $68.8m
- State funds are paid directly to school divisions or local governments, which have responsibility for the programs.
VPI Challenges

School divisions’/localities’ reasons for partial use of VPI allocation or nonparticipation include:

• difficulty or inability to meet the required local match;
• insufficient space to house additional preschool classrooms in school facilities; and
• minimal number of students eligible for the program by state allocation formula.
VPI+ provides the opportunity to increase preschool access, quality, and impact while providing preschool programs through participating school divisions and in partnerships with private providers.
VDOE Early Childhood Education:

Dr. Billy Haun, Chief Academic Officer
Billy.Haun@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Christine Harris, Director, Office of Humanities and Early Childhood
Christine.Harris@doe.virginia.gov

Mrs. Cheryl Strobel, Associate Director, VPI State Program
Cheryl.Strobel@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Mark Allan, Coordinator, VPI+ Federal Grant Program
Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov