

A Plan to Ensure High Quality Instruction in all VPI Classrooms

Presentation to Joint Subcommittee
on VPI – December 10, 2018



Objective

This presentation provides an overview of the Plan provided to the General Assembly in November 2018.

1. Define the Opportunity
2. General Assembly's Charge
3. Desired Outcomes and Action Steps for Priority Areas
4. Budget Impact
5. Work Underway



Define the Opportunity

All Virginia children, regardless of background or zip code, are capable of and deserve to enter kindergarten ready.

Yet only 60% of Virginia children enter school fully ready with the literacy, math, self-regulation and social skills needed to thrive in school.

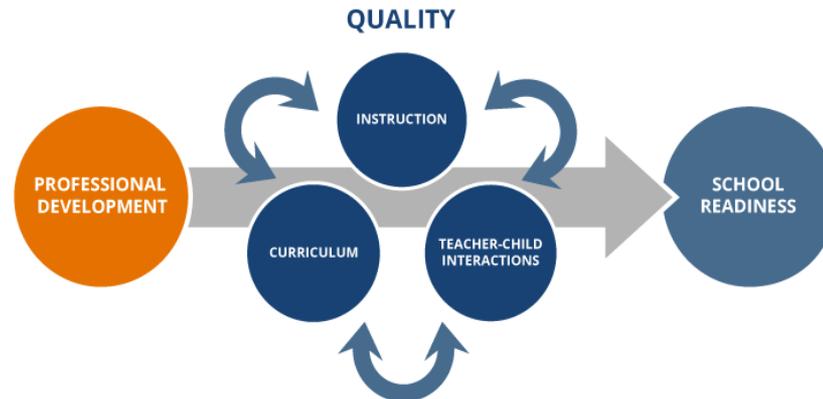
- *70% of disadvantaged children birth to five lack access to an affordable early childhood option.*
- *30% of disadvantaged children are served by publicly-funded programs - PreK, Head Start and Child Care Assistance - but quality varies greatly across programs.*
- *Programs have to navigate different regulations, rating systems and monitoring processes.*
- *Changing demographics mean more vulnerable children – from very low income families, with special needs and Dual Language Learners - who are less likely to access a quality program that prepares them for kindergarten.*



2017 JLARC Study indicated a need to measure and strengthen quality across all 1,300 Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) classrooms to improve school readiness.

2018 General Assembly Charge

- In response, the 2018 General Assembly charged the Virginia Department of Education with creating and implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure VPI provides a high-quality preschool experience for the ~18,000 4-year-olds served annually.
- Plan builds on lessons learned from JLARC, VPI+, Virginia Quality as well as recommendations from University of Virginia (UVA).
- As requested, the plan covers the areas of Curriculum, Teacher-Child Interactions, and Professional Development.



Using Integrated Evidence- Based Curriculum



Curriculum help teachers ensure children are provided opportunities, experiences, and materials that allow them to engage deeply and build school readiness skills.

All VPI teachers will:

- Be supported to use a vetted, integrated and evidence-based curriculum.
- Implement the chosen curriculum with fidelity to promote children's learning and development.
- Use assessments to individualize their instruction to meet the needs of their students.

Action Steps:

1. Adopt a short list of curricula that VPI programs must choose from or request a review of an alternative option.
2. Create checklist to clarify expectations for curriculum implementation, including use of ongoing assessment in addition to PALS Pre-K.
3. Observe curriculum implementation and gather data.
4. Use corrective action where curriculum is not being implemented effectively.

Assessing Teacher- Child Interaction Quality



Children who experience higher observed teacher-child interactions show higher levels of social-emotional and pre-academic development.

All VPI teachers will:

- Be observed at least two times a year with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS[®]), a valid and reliable observation tool that measures the quality of teacher-child interactions, by local observers who will also provide targeted feedback and professional development.
- Also be observed at least every two years with the CLASS[®] by external observers (UVA) to provide a statewide baseline and ensure accuracy of local observers.

Action Steps:

1. Require all VPI classrooms be observed twice annually using the CLASS[®] tool by local observers in addition to external (UVA) observations.
2. Compare local and external results to ensure accuracy and drive improvement.
3. Create a Virginia Observation Protocol Guide.
4. Set initial thresholds based on what is needed to ensure impact on children.
5. Connect VPI quality improvement efforts to the broader early childhood system.

Providing Individualized Professional Development

Teachers need individualized feedback and ongoing professional development to effectively and consistently promote all children's learning and development.

All VPI teachers will:

- Receive high-quality professional development that supports their knowledge, skills, and practice to facilitate effective teacher-child interactions and instruction that promotes children's learning and development towards kindergarten readiness. Professional development will be individualized based on the classroom data (e.g. CLASS® scores or children's assessment data); focus on standards, curriculum and/or improving teacher-child interactions; and be delivered with fidelity.

Action Steps:

1. Ensure access to individualized classroom data.
2. Produce a Professional Development Guide and require divisions to ensure teachers receive individualized feedback and professional development plans.
3. Establish a statewide staffing and a Technical Assistance Network with UVA.
4. Support all VPI teachers to be trained on VKRP (in addition to kindergarten teachers) so that they understand and promote kindergarten readiness.
5. Invest in development of and training on a comprehensive data system that enables stakeholders to examine key data for informing investment decisions.



Budget Impact

The Plan provides an analysis of VPI funding and additional financial investment needed.

- Virginia ranks 29th in spending and access among the 44 states that provided preschool in 2016-2017.
- Survey of VPI administrators in 2018 indicates that average-per-pupil spending is ~\$8,700; much higher than average state spending (~\$3,845) and state-local match combined (~\$6,100).
- Nearly 88% of funding goes towards personnel followed by transportation (5%), curriculum (3%), comprehensive services (1%) and professional development (1%).
- In 2018, General Assembly increased Virginia's investment through increasing per-pupil funding as well as funding specific improvement initiatives, all of which are aligned with this Plan.
- Roughly \$1.7M of this funding, currently dedicated for provisionally-licensed VPI teachers, may be repurposed to more effectively implement this Plan, including supporting divisions to purchase quality curriculum and conduct local CLASS[®] observations.
- Even with additional investments, Virginia's per-pupil expenditures would be less than most other states with high quality preschool programs.



Work Underway

Fifty one programs applied to participate in pilot to receive observations, implement new tools and help inform state approach.

From now through June 2019, participating divisions will:

- Provide input in the development of the initiative's procedures and processes in Winter 2018;
- Pilot CLASS® observations in Spring 2019;
- Participate in professional development during Spring 2019 and beyond; and
- Provide feedback on the entire process to ensure usefulness and scalability as the initiative moves statewide.

Remaining divisions will come on board in 2019-2020 school year.

The VDOE will also continue to work closely with other agencies to coordinate similar early childhood quality improvements focused on curriculum, CLASS® and professional development.



OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ms. Jenna Conway, Chief School Readiness Officer

Jenna.Conway@governor.virginia.gov

Ms. Cheryl Strobel, Associate Director

Cherl.Strobel@doe.virginia.gov



Dr. Mark Allan, Early Childhood Education Project Manager

Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov

Based on national research, VDOE has set domain-level goals for CLASS[®] observations for 2018-2019.

Appendix: Goals for CLASS[®] Thresholds

Domains	Description	Threshold Goal
Emotional Support	Includes warmth, responsiveness of teachers; positivity; regard for children's perspective	5 out of 7
Classroom Organization	Includes use of routines and structures; behavior management; varied instructional formats	5 out of 7
Instructional Support	Includes use of advanced language; prompting children to think critically and build on concepts; providing feedback to children that supports higher-order learning and development	3.25 out of 7*



** Programs generally score much lower in instruction than other domains*