

# **Virginia School Readiness Committee**

**Report on Activities: August 2016 - July 2017**

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## Background

Virginia's School Readiness Committee ("SRC" or "the Committee") was formed by HB 46 (Patron: Greason) passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor McAuliffe in 2016. The function of the SRC is to build a highly competent early childhood workforce through advancing policy and programmatic recommendations for an effective professional development and credentialing system in order to positively impact Virginia's young children birth to age 5. The SRC accomplishes its mission and initial focus by considering the Commonwealth's early childhood education systems and making relevant recommendations, given the crucial impact high-quality early childhood professionals have on children's school readiness. **The SRC's bold initial goal is making sure that Virginia has a well-trained early childhood workforce.** The legislative mandate reads:

### Initial Charge of the School Readiness Committee (Code of Virginia § 2.2-208.1)

C. In recognition of the fact that one of the most important factors in learning outcomes for young children is the capabilities of the adults who support their growth and learning, the first goal of the Committee is to address the development and alignment of an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce in the Commonwealth, including:

- (i) The development of a competency-based professional development pathway for practitioners who teach children from birth to age five in both public and private early childhood education programs;
- (ii) Consideration of articulation agreements between associate and baccalaureate degree programs;
- (iii) Review of teacher licensure and education programs, including programs offered at comprehensive community colleges in the Commonwealth, to address competencies specific to early childhood development;
- (iv) Alignment of existing professional development funding streams; and
- (v) Development of innovative approaches to increasing accessibility, availability, affordability, and accountability of the Commonwealth's workforce development system for early childhood education teachers and providers.

Responding to this charge, the School Readiness Committee has met regularly over the last year and has benefited from accessing numerous resources and expertise. This report is intended to summarize the goals, structure, due diligence, findings, and recommendations of the SRC in order to provide additional depth and context to the formal recommendations considered for approval in July 2017.

### A Note on Terminology

The early childhood field does not have a well-established lexicon of terms, particularly with a richly varied array of types of settings in which children receive early care and education. This is a growing conversation within the field and one touched on by the School Readiness Committee, especially as modern research on childhood brain development has cast doubt on the artificial segmentation between 'care' and 'education.' For the purposes of this report, the following terms are used:

"Early childhood education" – This term is used to refer to the field as a whole and generally connotes the period of birth through 3rd grade or age 8. Other terms sometimes used for the same field and time period are early care and education, early learning, and/or P (or preschool) to 3rd grade. Per HB 46 language, the SRC has been tasked with a particular focus on birth to age five, while still holding in mind the broader early childhood education field of birth through age 8 (3rd grade, considered by researchers to be a critical developmental pivot point).

“Birth to Five or 0-5” – This term is used to refer to the period of life between birth and kindergarten entry, and generally includes infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children. During this period of time, children may have early education experiences either informally from a parent/guardian or family/friend/neighbor caregiver, or in a variety of formal settings regulated by the Department of Social Services including Family Day Homes, centers, faith institutions (which may be exempted from licensing), and private schools and/or settings in Head Start sites or public school classrooms (including Virginia Preschool Initiative and Title I preschools administered by local school divisions).

“Pre-K” – This term (as well as similar terms including preschool and pre-kindergarten) is often used to refer to the subset of early childhood settings and services for children ages 3 and 4 and with a formal or structured instructional curriculum. As practice and policy begin to catch up with brain science and the understanding of this continuum of time (from birth to kindergarten entry), this term is frequently misleading, since it is often used narrowly to the exclusion of infants and toddlers, while both research and practice more and more is clear that early childhood education is a continuous process beginning at birth; however, when referring to the PreK-to-3rd grade or PreK-to-6th grade Virginia teaching license, Pre-K can refer to any age prior to kindergarten entry, starting at birth.

“Early childhood practitioner” – This term is used to refer to individuals whose primary work responsibility is to support the growth and development of young children, regardless of their employment setting. Practitioners lead the instructional activities in classrooms of all types, and are sometimes variously referred to as child care providers or preschool teachers. In some cases (in VPI classrooms in public elementary schools for example), these practitioners hold a teacher license; in the majority of cases across early childhood practitioners in Virginia, they do not.

## Overarching Goals

The north-star goal of the SRC is to give at-risk children in Virginia the opportunity to receive an early childhood education that sets them up for future success. Research is clear that the single greatest factor in high-quality early childhood education is the skill level of early childhood professionals who interact with children.<sup>1</sup> As Virginia’s Core Team to the National Academy of Medicine wrote in a position statement endorsed by the SRC, “A primary determinant of young children’s learning and development is the capabilities of the adults who interact with and care for them. Since the majority of Virginia’s children ages 0-5 are in households where all parents work, early childhood practitioners are key partners for families in supporting young children’s healthy development during these most formative and foundational years. Young children – especially those at risk – must have access to high quality early learning experiences, led by highly competent teachers, to have the academic and social-emotional foundations to succeed in school.”<sup>2</sup>

The SRC envisions a system where all early childhood professionals have the means and opportunity to acquire the skills to provide this kind of quality early education, requiring updated and in some cases altogether new pathways and professional standards. The Committee’s work is carried forward by a desire to simultaneously make needed reform to the current professional development and credentialing system while laying the groundwork for bolder change to follow. When successful, Virginia should have, as a Committee document puts it, “a cohesive continuum of stackable, affordable, high-quality professional development and credentials for the profession to both facilitate recruitment of new professionals and enhance skills of incumbent practitioners.”<sup>3</sup>

The SRC understands that a system which prepares all early childhood professionals to a high level of competency will necessarily look quite different than the system Virginia has today. The SRC also understands that the way to get from point A to point B is through deliberate, thoughtful, stepwise policy recommendations, guided by a productive dissatisfaction with a status quo that underserves too many children and families.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Pianta, et. al. “Measures of Classroom Quality in Prekindergarten and Children’s Development of Academic, Language, and Social Skills” (2008), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18489424>

<sup>2</sup> Glazer, K., et. al. “Bridging the Divide: Higher Education and Early Childhood Leaders’ Position Statement on Early Childhood Teacher Preparation,” from “Bridging the Divide: Implementation Plan for the Virginia Core Team developed through participation in the National Academy of Medicine’s Innovation to Incubation B-8 Initiative 2015-2016,” 2016

<sup>3</sup> Internal SRC document

## The Importance of Early Childhood Professionals

It is difficult to overstate the potential impact high-quality early childhood professionals can have on children's life trajectories. Early childhood is a time of explosive brain development – in the earliest years of life, more than one million neural connections are being made every second.<sup>4</sup> That brain development is mediated, for better or for worse, by child-adult relationships. As the touchstone National Academy of Medicine report *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8* puts it, “Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and responsive to their individual progress.”<sup>5</sup> Early childhood professionals are quite literally brain builders.

Yet, despite this, the report goes on to note that “Despite their shared objective of nurturing and securing the future success of young children, these professionals are not acknowledged as a cohesive workforce, unified by their shared contributions and the common knowledge base and competencies needed to do their jobs well.” Indeed, as a whole, the early childhood workforce tends to have relatively few relevant credentials that suggest they have gained the complex skills needed to maximize their effectiveness. Although Virginia-specific data is still being collected, national estimates suggest that among center-based professionals – who serve the largest proportion of children – a full 20% have only a high school diploma and another 30% have some college experience but no degree.<sup>6</sup>

The problem becomes additionally thorny with the recognition that simply focusing on attainment of credentials, as lofty as that goal may be, still will not guarantee that the practitioners have greater competencies in supporting young children. Current preparation programs in higher education are not finely tuned to the skills and competencies for teaching children from birth to five, but rather focused on those for practitioners teaching in early elementary grades. In order to ensure that Virginia's early educator workforce is “upskilled,” we need to “upskill” Virginia's early childhood workforce development system as well.

Certain themes ran throughout the varied aspects of the Committee's work and informing the Committee's discussion and decisions. Those themes included:

- A desire to elevate the respect, standing, and well-being of the early childhood profession, included but not limited to the issue of compensation;
- An understanding that the early childhood sector in Virginia is extremely diffuse. There is no singular governance structure or authority charged with implementing early childhood priorities, particularly around the workforce. Instead, early childhood responsibility crosses multiple sectors and state agencies, which poses unique challenges and opportunities;
- Recognition that simply focusing on attainment of degrees, without deliberately bolstering the professional development system and quality/intentionality of the certifications available to Virginia's early educators, will not help us achieve the goal of a highly competent early educator workforce;
- An understanding that improving the early childhood sector is inherently a two-generation strategy that has major implications for Virginia's economy. Improving school readiness prepares Virginia's next generation of workers, reaps short- and medium-term savings from reducing the need for interventions, and helps families by providing them with sources of secure child care, allowing them to find and focus on work; and
- A desire for equitable opportunities for all Virginia children and families, particularly those populations who may struggle more to access and benefit the most from high-quality early childhood education.

<sup>4</sup> Harvard University Center on the Developing Child

<sup>5</sup> Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) “*Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*,” 2015

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, “*Number and Characteristics of Early Care and Education (ECE) Teachers and Caregivers: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*,” 2013

## Target Population

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The SRC affirmed that its recommendations would be aimed, initially, at a priority subset of the early childhood education sector. Specifically, the SRC is working to ensure quality among early childhood professionals who are:

- serving at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (ages 0 to age 5)
- employed in center-, faith-, and school-based early education programs
- providing services funded in part or in whole with public funds (state and/or federal) including child care subsidy, Head Start, Title I, and VPI
- serving as lead teacher, assistant teacher, and/or administrator in an early childhood program

These criteria shape an initial focus on teachers serving at-risk children (including those in families who are low-income and/or with special needs) who are spending the majority of their time (full days, full weeks, either school year or full calendar year) in early education settings that receive public funds. Notably, work on improving the skills of family members, friends, and neighbors who serve children (sometimes known as “kith and kin care”) was declared important but deferred due the highly informal nature of these arrangements.

The rationale behind targeting the described population is that:

- These settings reach a reasonable percentage of Virginia’s young children and, based on eligibility criteria for the public funding, a disproportionate number of at-risk children.
- These settings therefore include a large but manageable percentage of the birth to 5 workforce.
- These more formal settings may already have requirements for certain levels or increasingly rigorous levels of staff training and education, which position them well for participation in a focused professional development initiative through the recommendations of the School Readiness Committee.
- These more formal settings receive public funding, which can be used as an accountability lever for setting and achieving goals for the workforce.
- These programs may be more likely to already be focused on quality, and have access to accreditation and/or Virginia Quality, the Commonwealth’s quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

## Identified Barriers

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Through consideration of research as well as presentations from top experts in the field (evidentiary sources are detailed later in this report), the SRC identified the following nine priority barriers that are currently preventing Virginia from having an effective early childhood workforce system:

- **State Priorities barriers:**

1) There is an urgent need to increase the number of highly competent early childhood practitioners as quickly and efficiently as possible, which is difficult due to a lack of cohesive continuum of stackable, affordable, high quality professional development and credentials for the profession to both facilitate recruitment of new professionals and enhance skills of incumbent practitioners.

2) The issue of low compensation remains a stubborn challenge when attempting to increase the number of practitioners with competencies and skills that research demonstrates support brain development of young children.

3) Programs, policies, funding and regulations governing early childhood care and learning at the state level are fragmented across multiple agencies and secretariats.

- **Workforce Pathway barriers:**

4) Not all early childhood education practitioners have the skills and competencies that research demonstrates improve student outcomes of young children.

5) Virginia's Community College System is well-positioned to provide affordable, targeted, and stackable experiences for early childhood practitioners; but barriers still exist for students trying to access programs statewide and translate Childhood Development Associate credential (CDA) experience into community college coursework.

6) There are few baccalaureate programs in Virginia that are specific to preparing teachers with the skills needed to support the development of children ages birth to 5, and few of these lead to teacher licensure.

7) The cost of pursuing academic credentials is prohibitively expensive and time consuming for individuals working for minimal wages. Few early childhood education practitioners have the means to pursue higher levels of education.

- **Professional Standards barriers:**

8) The lack of current and consistent professional competencies drives fragmented practice depending on the setting and specific skills of the practitioner. Additionally, existing professional standards for Virginia have not been updated to reflect most current, research-based practice.

9) Content included in credential and degree bearing programs and in ongoing professional development and training is not aligned to a shared set of standards for the profession.

# Logic Model & Timeline of Activities

After considering its charge, barriers, and the key components of an effective workforce system, the SRC adopted the following logic model as a way of visualizing the flow and impact of its work:

## School Readiness Committee Transforming Virginia's Early Childhood Workforce March 2017

**Collaboration and Engagement**

Through School Readiness Committee, engage key systems representatives of:

**Common Definitions and Agreements**

Develop common definitions, language, and terminology

Establish core agreements on:

- The vital importance of the early childhood workforce
- Assets and challenges faced by the early childhood workforce
- The steps needed on a "route-to-competency" for the workforce

Define and establish competencies for early childhood educators that align with national standards

Design standards for competency measurement and data collection

**Systems Alignment and Integration**

Establish coordination across regulatory agencies

Integrate competencies into 2- and 4-year credential and degree-granting curricula

Align credentialing with competencies

Match systems and policies with the aims of high quality practice

Scan agency and programmatic budgets to identify efficiencies for supporting workforce development among early childhood practitioners

**Alignment of Professional Pathways**

Make ongoing education affordable and accessible

Raise qualifications using "route-to-competency" goals

Pilot and develop articulation agreements between 2- and 4-year institutions to allow for seamless transitions

Build out degree and licensure opportunities, e.g. EC-focused baccalaureate, B-8 teacher licensure

Utilize coaching, mentorship, registered apprenticeships, etc. to support competency-building

**Quality of Professional Development & Continuous Improvement Opportunities**

Support community colleges in achieving NAEYC accreditation for associate degree programs

Utilize evaluation tools to help practitioners identify areas of strength and develop plans for improving specific skills

Promote Virginia Quality (QRIS) to bring more practitioners into a supportive system

**Supportive Professional Environment**

Enhance professional stature of early childhood workforce

Ensure administrative leaders have early childhood knowledge

Use innovative methods to raise wages to more competitive levels, and tie them to career/competency advancement

Explore strategic financing mechanisms for delivery of high quality ECE in the private sector, including for example shared services alliances and/or tax credits

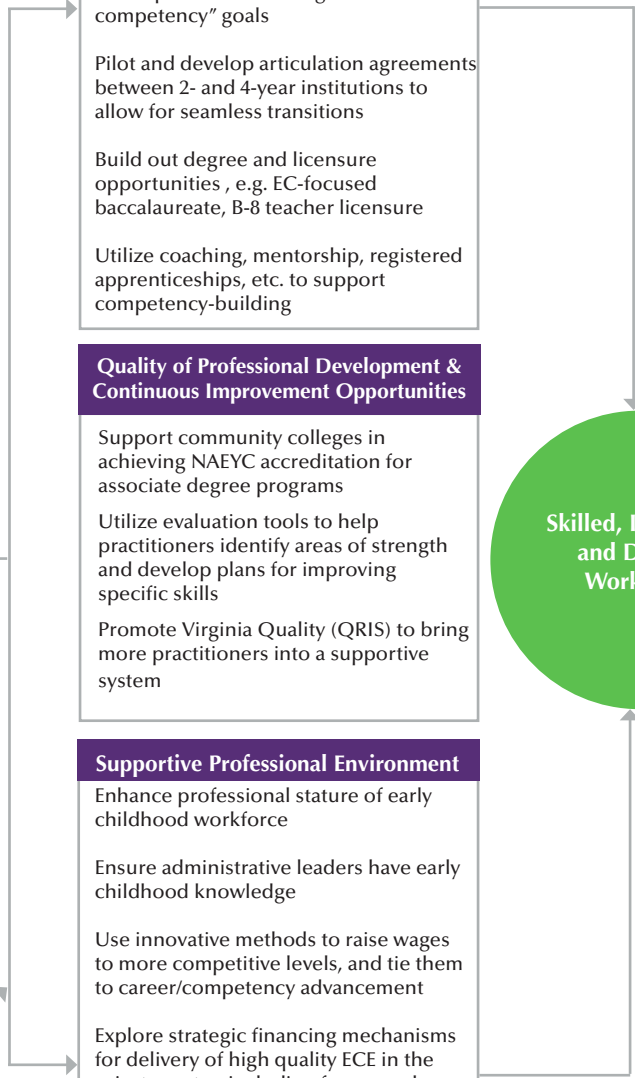
Explore related financing opportunities, for example through WIOA and ESSA, that may be applicable to EC system

Stimulate communications campaigns to attract highly qualified, diverse professionals into field



**Data-Driven Decision-Making**

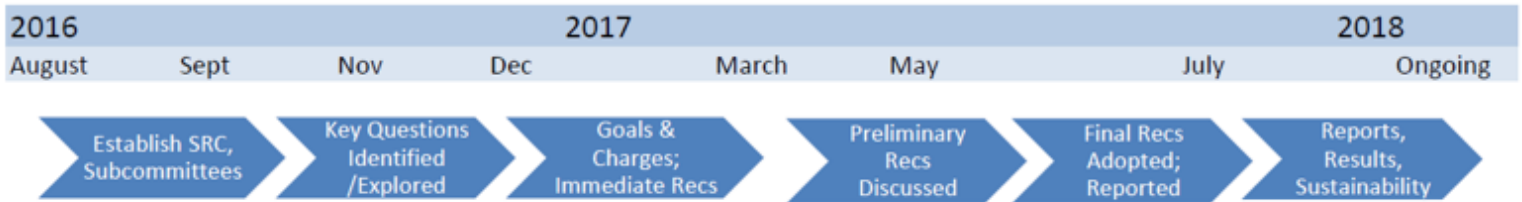
- Conduct workforce survey for baseline insights; regularly update to discern impact of focus on workforce development
- Build data system capacity among all relevant agencies and stakeholders
- Develop data sharing agreements and put necessary regulations/policies in place
- Utilize data innovations to push workforce transformation efforts forward in a continuous cycle of evaluation and improvement
- Ensure at-risk populations are being served equitably





Additionally, the SRC adopted the following initial timeline for its work:

### School Readiness Committee Activity Timeline



## Subcommittee Structure & Goals

The SRC quickly determined that due to the size of the Committee, subcommittees were needed in order to function effectively. Three subcommittees were formed, corresponding to the critical elements of the workforce system: State Priorities, Workforce Pathways, and Professional Standards. The goals and guiding questions for the subcommittees are as follows:

#### ◇ Subcommittee on State Priorities:

- Description: This subcommittee focuses on big picture questions of what actions the Commonwealth should be taking to cultivate a strong, healthy early childhood care & education profession.
- Key question(s): What are Virginia's state priorities for the early education workforce? What stakeholders have the power and will to make critical changes and improvements?

#### ◇ Subcommittee on Workforce Pathways:

- Description: This subcommittee focuses on aligning higher education training pathways so that practitioners have multiple points of entry to gain additional skills and credentials and are able to seamlessly move between community college and four-year institutions.
- Key question(s): To what extent do professional development options provide a clear, stackable, affordable continuum for the early childhood workforce?

#### ◇ Subcommittee on Professional Development Standards:

- Description: This subcommittee focuses on aligning professional development and training offerings with nationally established standards and best practices, ensuring that skill-building opportunities for early childhood professionals are of high quality and make a meaningful impact on their practice.
- Key question(s): To what extent do Virginia's professional development standards and structures reflect current research and knowledge?

## Proposed Recommendations

After much deliberation, each subcommittee determined a set of recommendations to be surfaced to the full SRC for a vote, as laid out in the legislative mandate. The proposed recommendations are as follows:

**STATE PRIORITIES SUBCOMMITTEE**

Identified Barriers	Subcommittee Recommendations
<p>1) There is an urgent need to increase the number of highly competent early childhood practitioners as quickly and efficiently as possible, which is difficult due to a lack of cohesive continuum of stackable, affordable, high quality professional development and credentials for the profession to both facilitate recruitment of new professionals and enhance skills of incumbent practitioners.</p>	<p>A) Virginia should focus on building and maintaining a cohesive continuum of stackable, affordable, high quality PD and credentials for the profession to both facilitate recruitment of new professionals and enhance skills of incumbent practitioners.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i) To attract individuals into the field, Virginia should strengthen recruitment and marketing strategies (including through existing resources such as career coaches and high school guidance counselors sharing information about available career pathways and financial supports with potential students at all entry points).</p> <p>B) Virginia should utilize the results and analysis of the <i>2017 Early Childhood Workforce Survey</i> now underway (anticipated completion fall of 2017) to set a measurable, ambitious goal for the number and type of credentialed early childhood practitioners to be phased in over a proposed period of time. (Very similar to Pathways Recommendation A)</p> <p>C) Virginia should discern and advance policies that incentivize parents, providers and businesses to select, encourage, and promote high quality early childhood practitioners and settings serving children from birth to age 5, particularly children most at risk of not being ready for kindergarten.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i) Specifically, Virginia should expand the definition of eligible students for the Education Improvement Scholarship Program to students attending high quality early childhood education settings (requires either VCPE accreditation <u>or</u> at least level 3 in VA Quality).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii) Virginia should consider implementing a program standard (requirement) for any setting receiving public monies (as measured either by VA Quality or recognized high quality accrediting organization (i.e. NAEYC, VCPE).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii) Following ii, Virginia should consider developing financial incentives based on tiers of quality across all systems and settings (potential budget impact.)</p> <p>D) The Virginia Preschool Initiative Joint Subcommittee should consider a recommendation that VPI funds can be spent in private settings on teacher salaries, even if the individual does not have a baccalaureate degree, as is presently required. Exceptions should be prioritized for individuals who hold a relevant early childhood AA/AAS degree and for programs in which at last one lead teacher or administrative leader on site has an EC-related baccalaureate credential. The allowance could be provided for a defined period of time that would allow for professionals to reach the goal of a baccalaureate degree once EC-related BAs are more accessible. <b>No budget impact expected.</b></p>

<p>2) The issue of low compensation remains a stubborn challenge when attempting to increase the number of practitioners with competencies and skills that research demonstrates support brain development of young children.</p>	<p>E) The School Readiness Committee should create a subcommittee to examine and make recommendations about parity in compensation as related to the relevant early childhood credentials. These recommendations should consider regional differences inside Virginia as well as promising strategies underway in other states and communities. The preliminary recommendations from National Academy committee on ECE financing, the 2017 Workforce Survey, and census, retirement and workforce projections should help inform this discussion. Recommendations should be delivered by June 30, 2018, and should include strategies around recruitment, retention and advancement opportunities. The group should include expert resources outside the Committee’s membership. With VECF providing for the facilitation of the subcommittee, no budget impact expected.</p>
<p>3) Programs, policies, funding and regulations governing early childhood care and learning at the state level are fragmented across multiple agencies and secretariats.</p>	<p>F) The School Readiness Committee should create a subcommittee to examine governance of early childhood programs in the Commonwealth, and make recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) alternative governance models that better align policies driving early childhood programs, funds and regulations to support high quality practitioners and quality settings to increase the school readiness of children;</li> <li>ii) quality standards alignment across agencies; and</li> <li>iii) any necessary cross-secretariat or cross-agency staffing changes that would be required to implement such recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations should be delivered by December 31, 2017. The group should include expert resources outside the Committee’s membership. With VECF providing for the facilitation of the subcommittee, no budget impact expected.</p>

## **WORKFORCE PATHWAYS SUBCOMMITTEE**

<b>Identified Barriers</b>	<b>Subcommittee Recommendations</b>
<p>1) Not all early childhood education practitioners have the skills and competencies that research demonstrates improve student outcomes of young children.</p>	<p>A) By December 30, 2017, the School Readiness Committee should utilize the results and analysis of the 2017 Early Childhood Workforce Survey now underway (anticipated completion fall of 2017) to set a measurable, ambitious goal for the number and type of credentialed early childhood practitioners to be phased in over a proposed period of time. In developing such a goal, consideration should be given to prioritizing the attainment of early childhood associate degrees.</p>
<p>2) Virginia’s Community College System is well-positioned to provide affordable, targeted, and stackable experiences for early childhood practitioners; but barriers still exist for students trying to access programs statewide and translate CDA experience into community college coursework.</p>	<p>B) VCCS, SCHEV, and VDOE should promote existing programs and expansion of early childhood education dual enrollment programs at the high school level.</p> <p>C) VECF should provide and promote support to community colleges to pursue the National Association for the Education of Young Children - Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (NAEYC ECADA) to ensure quality of the degree programs via external review.</p> <p>D) VCCS should ensure that students receive 3 college credit hours for a current Childhood Development Associate (CDA) at any Virginia community college.</p> <p>E) VCCS should explore expansion of the early childhood certificates and early childhood associate degree programs to every community college or region, and report back to the SRC about expansion options by September 15, 2017.</p>

<p>3) There are few baccalaureate programs in Virginia that are specific to preparing teachers with the skills needed to support the development of children ages birth to 5, and few of these lead to teacher licensure.</p>	<p>F) The Early Childhood Articulation Workgroup should continue to take steps to ensure that the community college AAS in Early Childhood articulates seamlessly to baccalaureate programs at Virginia universities in early childhood; and should share findings and recommendations, including resources required to support participating institutions, with the SRC by September 15, 2017.</p> <p>G) The VBOE should explore necessary regulatory changes to ensure that students at Virginia universities have the ability to major in early childhood education and early childhood special education at the undergraduate level, and to earn PK-3 teacher licensure.</p> <p>H) Additionally, universities should be encouraged to increase competencies specific to early childhood (birth to 5) within preparation programs leading to PK-3 teacher licensure.</p>
<p>4) The cost of pursuing academic credentials is prohibitively expensive and time consuming for individuals working for minimal wages. Few early childhood education practitioners have the means to pursue higher levels of education.</p>	<p>I) Virginia should continue to provide financial assistance for additional educational attainment, like the VDSS and Project Pathfinders scholarship programs. It should also support innovative approaches through apprenticeships, educational programs, and workforce systems to support individuals and providers whose staffs are working to attain higher level credentials, certificates and degrees.</p>

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SUBCOMMITTEE**

<p><b>Identified Barriers</b></p>	<p><b>Proposed Recommendations</b></p>
<p>1) The lack of current and consistent professional competencies drives fragmented practice depending on the setting and specific skills of the practitioner. Additionally, existing professional standards for Virginia have not been updated to reflect most current, research-based practice.</p>	<p>A) An interagency and stakeholder workgroup should update the Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals in order to create consistent professional competencies for all early childhood practitioners serving children from birth to kindergarten entry, in settings receiving public funding. VECF should provide for expert facilitation of this workgroup and it should include, at a minimum, VDSS, VDOE, higher education institutions, and an inclusive array of public and private providers, practitioners and stakeholders. These updates should reflect research and evidence-based practice, and should include, but not be limited to, the following: effective teacher-child interactions, trauma informed care, social-emotional development, special education inclusion, support for dual language learners, targeted instructional practices, diverse family engagement, and cultural and linguistic competencies. Draft standards should be provided to the SRC by December 31, 2017, with final consideration and adoption by the Virginia state boards of education and social services by March 1, 2018.</p>

<p>2) Content included in credential and degree bearing programs and in ongoing professional development and training is not aligned to a shared set of standards for the profession.</p>	<p>B) Preservice and inservice professional development offerings, for the previously specified practitioners, will be aligned with these updated competencies. This should include alignment with existing requirements for ongoing annual training for VDSS licensing and VDOE teacher licensure and recertification.</p> <p>C) The updated professional competencies will serve as the foundational content of a cohesive career pathway composed of stackable and portable credentials accessible to any adults in the workforce.</p> <p>D) Virginia’s professional development systems, built on the revised competencies, should have the capacity to support coaching and other evidence-based inservice supports for the workforce. Following the fiscal analysis underway by VECF, Virginia should consider repurposing and augmenting existing, relevant public funding to prioritize these supports which research has shown to be of primary importance to teacher effectiveness</p>
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## Tabled Recommendations

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Several recommendations were identified as important but tabled either because responsive efforts are already underway or because the recommendations were considered a lower priority than the ones listed above. These recommendations were:

- Virginia should conduct an analysis of the private and public funding landscape in early childhood, with an eye towards identifying and better aligning funding streams that are or may be used for professional development activities for early childhood practitioners. (This goal is being addressed initially through VECF’s inventory of Virginia budget items relevant to children birth through age 4.)
- The updated Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals should be cross-walked with the relevant competencies for teachers K-3 following their development; and subsequently both sets of competencies should be revised and aligned.
- Steps should be taken to ensure students transferring from AAS into BA programs are aware of the Two-Year College Transfer Grant program.
- Virginia should ensure that financial aid is available for students on this career pathway for whom English is not their first language.
- Virginia should explore grants or other financial supports for institutions participating in process to increase competencies specific to early childhood with in preparation programs for PK-3 teaching license.
- Virginia’s Pathfinders grant program should be expanded to provide resources to individuals pursuing undergraduate degrees in early childhood after attaining their AAS in early childhood.

## Summary of Evidentiary Base

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In the course of its work, the Committee relied on a wide evidence base to guide its decisions and ensure they were in line with established best practices and research-backed knowledge.

### ◇ Expert Presentations:

- Rhian Allvin Evans, Executive Director, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- [Dr. Robert Pianta, Dean, University of Virginia Curry School of Education](#)
- [Marilyn Rice, VPI+ Quality Coordinator, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation](#)
- Alison Lutton, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Consultant
- Experts from Georgia & North Carolina:
  - Christi Moore, Director of Professional Learning, Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning
  - Bentley Ponder, Director of Research and Senior Policy Advisor, Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning
  - Cindy Wheeler, Senior Manager, Early Education Branch, North Carolina Division of Child Development
  - Erin Smith, Program Director for Early Childhood Education, Johnston Community College (NC)

### ◇ Documents:

- [“Upskilling Virginia’s Early Learning Workforce”](#) working paper (Virginia Early Childhood Foundation)
- [“Bridging the Divide: Implementation Plan for the Virginia Core Team developed through participation in the National Academy of Medicine’s Innovation to Incubation B-8 Initiative 2015-2016”](#) (Virginia Core Team to NAM)
- [“Connecting Stakeholders to Bridge the Divide: Upskilling Virginia’s Early Childhood Educators”](#) (Virginia Core Team to NAM)
- [“Build it Better”](#) inventory of professional development system components (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC])
- [“Early Learning: The New Fact Base and Cost Sustainability”](#) (Jim Minervino, Ready On Day One & Dr. Robert Pianta, University of Virginia)
- [“Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8”](#) (National Academy of Medicine)
- [“Virginia Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016”](#) (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment)
- [“Building a Strong Foundation: State Policy for Early Childhood Education,”](#) Southern Regional Education Board
- [“Power to the Profession,”](#) NAEYC

## Appendix A: Affirmed Documents & Efforts

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The following documents and efforts were affirmed by general consensus of the School Readiness Committee as important documents for consideration during ongoing work on Virginia's early childhood sector (no formal vote was taken):

- Bridging the Divide: Virginia NAM Core Team Report – The Committee provided feedback on and endorsed the principles and recommendations produced in a report by the Virginia Core Team, which represented the state in working on follow-up to the National Academy of Medicine's keystone Transforming the Workforce report.
- Build it Better – The Committee provided feedback on and endorsed the recommendations from a survey of stakeholders utilizing the Build it Better professional development systems rubric.
- Virginia Chamber of Commerce Statement – The State Priorities Subcommittee provided feedback on and endorsed a set of recommendations to the Virginia Chamber of Commerce for including early childhood education in their ongoing Blueprint Virginia 2025 drafting process.
- Workforce Survey – the Subcommittee recommended that the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and Virginia Community College System co-lead a workforce survey to establish baseline information about the credentials held, wages/benefits, and professional development needs of professionals working with children aged birth through 5. A report/analysis will be completed by fall 2017.
- Funding Landscape Analysis – The Subcommittee recommended the execution of an analysis of all available discretionary funding streams within state government that can be marshaled for the purposes of developing the early childhood workforce; the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is implementing this recommendation through the second iteration of its Children's Budget project, to be completed by fall 2017.

## Appendix B: Committee Membership

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### School Readiness Committee Members

**Chair:** Mark Gordon of Richmond, CEO, Memorial Regional Medical Center, Richmond Community Hospital, and Rappahannock General Hospital, Bon Secours Health System

**Vice-Chair:** Gail Johnson of Richmond, President and CEO, Rainbow Station

#### Members of House of Delegates:

- Delegate John Bell (D-87th)
- Delegate Mark Dudenhefer (R-2nd)
- Delegate Tag Greason (R-32nd)
- Delegate Roxann Robinson (R-27th)

#### Members of Senate:

- Senator Siobhan Dunnavant (R-12th)
- Senator Adam Ebbin (D-30th)
- Senator David Suetterlein (R-19th)

#### Ex Officio Members:

- Dr. Steven Staples, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Margaret Schultze, Virginia Department of Social Services
- Dr. William Hazel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources
- Dr. Dietra Trent, Secretary of Education

**Other Members:**

- Maritsa Alger of Newport News, Principal, Norfolk Public Schools
- Dr. Rosemary Burton of Woodbridge, Vice President of Accreditation and Industry Relations, Merit Academy
- Dr. Irene Carney of Richmond, Executive Director, Sabot at Stony Point (co-chair, Standards Subcommittee)
- Dr. Christopher Chin of Moseley, Director of Community Partnerships, Robins Foundation (co-chair, Standards Subcommittee)
- Dr. Walter Clemons of Gloucester, Superintendent, Gloucester County Public Schools
- Navine Fortune of Virginia Beach, Assistant Program Director and Instructor, Norfolk State University
- Kathy Glazer of Richmond, President, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
- Mark Gordon of Richmond, CEO, Memorial Regional Medical Center, Richmond Community Hospital, and Rappahannock General Hospital, Bon Secours Health System
- Dr. Bonnie Graham of Dublin, Professor and Program Head, Human Services and Early Childhood, New River Community College
- Phillip Hawkins, Jr. of Norfolk, Teacher, Norfolk Public Schools
- Lisa Howard of Norfolk, President and CEO, Elevate Early Education
- Andrew Ko of Loudoun, Managing Director, Global Education- Amazon Web Services
- Rob Krupicka of Alexandria, former Delegate, Virginia House of Delegates (co-chair, State Priorities Subcommittee)
- Henry Light of Norfolk, Member, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
- Shelley Lingamfelter of Woodbridge, retired teacher, Prince William County Public Schools
- Toni Marchese of Arlington, Preschool Director and Teacher, St. Ann Catholic School
- Dr. Sara Miller of Moseley, Assistant Professor, Longwood University (co-chair, Pathways Subcommittee)
- Laurie Moran of Danville, President, Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce (deceased)
- Dr. Craig Ramey of Roanoke, Professor of Human Development, Psychology and Pediatrics, Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute
- Kim Scheeler, President & CEO, Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Christine Schull of Fairfax, Professor, Northern Virginia Community College (co-chair, Pathways Subcommittee)
- Walter Stosch of Glen Allen, former Senator, Senate of Virginia (co-chair, State Priorities Subcommittee) Gary Thomson of Richmond, Regional Managing Partner, Mid-Atlantic, Dixon Hughes Goodman
- Janet Turner-Giles of Afton, Member, Nelson County School Board
- Anne-Marie Twohie of Reston, Director, Fairfax County Office for Children
- Barry Weinstein of Fairfax, retired teacher, Fairfax County Public Schools

## Appendix C: Committee Meetings

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**Full Committee Meetings:**

- August 4, 2016
- September 8, 2016
- November 10, 2016
- February 3, 2017
- May 17, 2017
- July 26, 2017

**Subcommittee Meetings:**

- December 8, 2016
- March 23, 2017
- May 8-12, 2017
- June 22-30, 2017



## Appendix D: Full Text of HB 46

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[H 46]  
Approved April 1, 2016

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-208.1 as follows:

§ 2.2-208.1. School Readiness Committee; Secretary to establish.

A. In recognition of the fact that early care and education of young children is linked to academic success and workforce readiness, the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and upon receiving recommendations for appointments from the Virginia Education Association, the Virginia School Boards Association, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, the Virginia Council for Private Education, the Virginia Child Care Association, the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, shall establish and appoint members to the School Readiness Committee (the Committee).

B. The Committee shall have a total membership of no fewer than 27 members that shall consist of seven legislative members, no fewer than 16 nonlegislative citizen members, and four ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules on the recommendation of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and Health; and no fewer than 16 nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Secretary of Education. Nonlegislative citizen members shall include at least three representatives of the office of the Secretary of Education, one representative of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, one representative of a four-year public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth with a teacher education program, one representative of a two-year public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth with a teacher education program, one representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, one representative of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, four representatives of the private business sector, one early childhood education teacher from a public early childhood education program, one early childhood education teacher from a private early childhood education program, one administrator from a public early childhood education program, and one administrator from a private early childhood education program. The Commissioner of Social Services or his designee, the Secretary of Education or his designee, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources or his designee, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges.

C. In recognition of the fact that one of the most important factors in learning outcomes for young children is the capabilities of the adults who support their growth and learning, the first goal of the Committee is to address the development and alignment of an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce in the Commonwealth, including the (i) development of a competency-based professional development pathway for practitioners who teach children from birth to age five in both public and private early childhood education programs; (ii) consideration of articulation agreements between associate and baccalaureate degree programs; (iii) review of teacher licensure and education programs, including programs offered at comprehensive community colleges in the Commonwealth, to address competencies specific to early childhood development; (iv) alignment of existing professional development funding streams; and (v) development of innovative approaches to increasing accessibility, availability, affordability, and accountability of the Commonwealth's workforce development system for early childhood education teachers and providers. The Committee shall periodically review the goals set forth in this subsection and other priorities within the early childhood care and education systems and make recommendations to the Board of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Department of Social Services, and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions, and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services. An affirmative vote by a majority of the legislative members in attendance and a majority of nonlegislative members in attendance shall be required for the Committee to adopt any recommendations. The Board of Education shall review the recommendations of the Committee and submit to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health, in advance of the next regular session of the General

D. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All legislative members and nonlegislative citizen members may be reappointed.

E. After the initial staggering of terms, legislative members and nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for terms of three years.

F. No legislative member or nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment.

G. The Committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Committee shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

H. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation shall provide for the facilitation of the work of the Committee under the direction of the Secretary of Education or his designee and with the guidance of a steering subcommittee that includes the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, one legislative member, one representative of the private business sector, one representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and one early childhood education teacher or administrator from a private early childhood education program.

I. The chairman may request and access the expertise of additional representatives and organizations relating to the Committee's goals and priorities. In order to meet the federally mandated requirements for early childhood advisory councils, the chairman may establish and appoint additional members to advisory subcommittees to address areas of special concern and priority.

J. The Department of Education and the Department of Social Services shall provide staff support to the Committee. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Committee, upon request.

2. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members of the School Readiness Committee shall be staggered as follows: at least six members for a term of four years, at least five members for a term of three years, and at least five members for a term of two years.