

# CASTL Early Childhood Education Update

Presentation for the Joint Subcommittee on VPI

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Amanda Williford



CURRY SCHOOL  
*of* EDUCATION  
Center for Advanced Study  
of Teaching and Learning

# Overview

1. CLASS & PD
2. VKRP
3. STREAMin<sup>3</sup> Curriculum Pilot

# CLASS & PD

## CLASS

All VPI teachers will be observed at least every two years with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS<sup>®</sup>), a valid and reliable observation tool that measures the quality of teacher-child interactions.

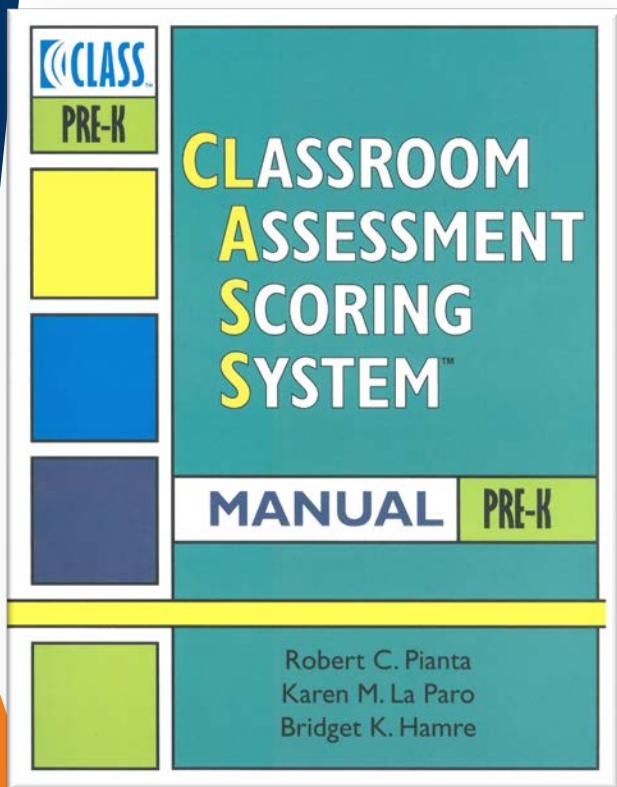
These data will be used to provide targeted feedback to each teacher for ongoing quality improvement purposes, and aggregated to the levels of center, program, and division to gauge the quality of interactions across the state.

## PD

All VPI teachers will receive high-quality professional development (PD) that supports their knowledge, skills, practice to facilitate effective teacher-child interactions.

All PD will be delivered with fidelity at scale with the necessary leadership and the organizational support.

# How CLASS measures high quality teacher-child interactions



# Who can observe using CLASS?

## ▶ Certified CLASS Observers

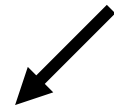
- ▶ Attend all days of an observation training
- ▶ Take and pass reliability test
- ▶ Recertify every year

# Scoring - 20 min obs. cycles

1. Take extensive behavioral notes

2. Read manual

3. Assign a score



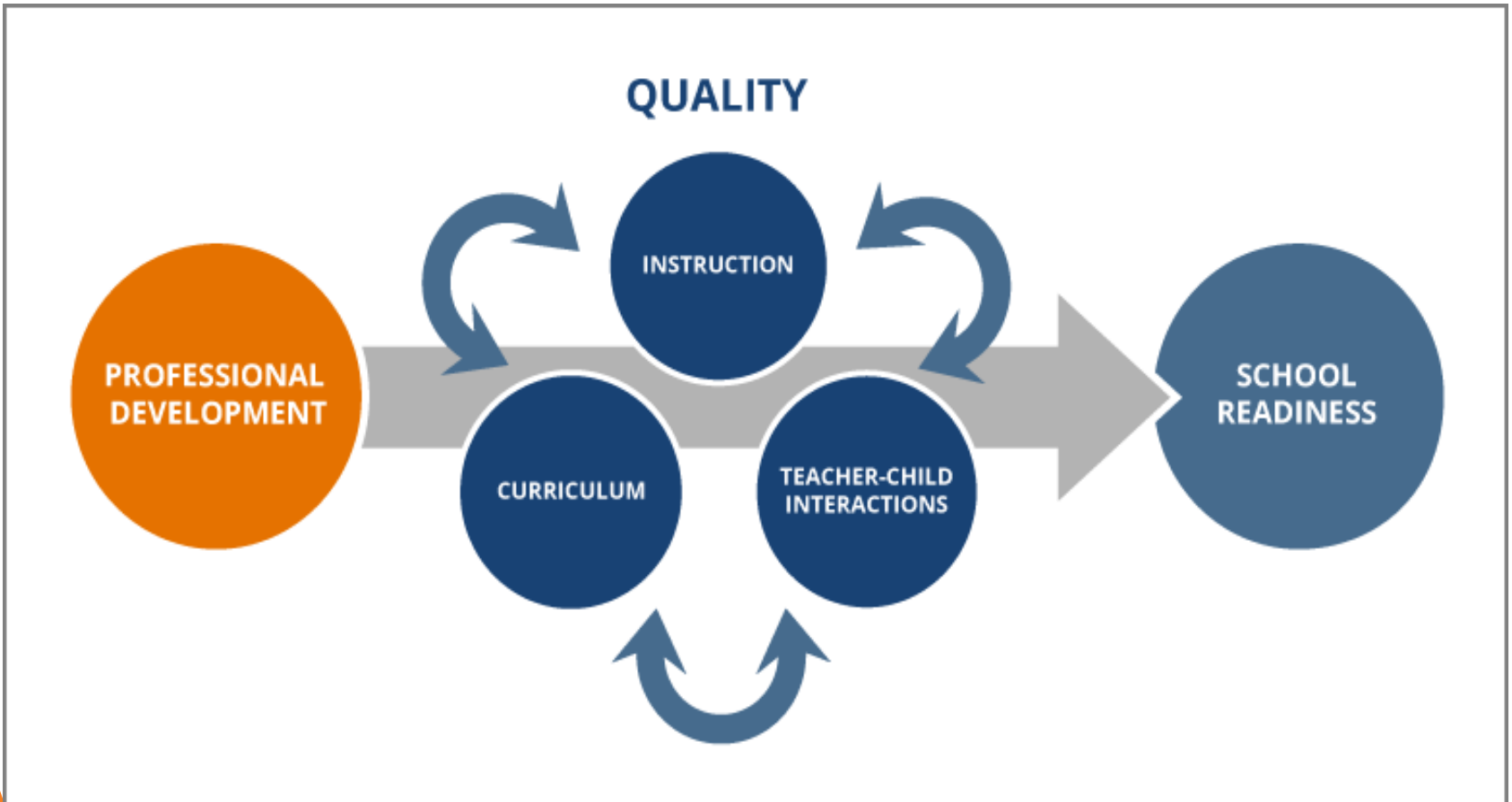
<p><b>Positive Climate</b></p> <p>Teacher smiles occasionally, kids return smile; teacher asks girl about her weekend; kids somewhat flat at beginning; no evidence of peer connections</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><b>Negative Climate</b></p> <p>None observed</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><b>Teacher Sensitivity</b></p> <p>Teacher doesn't notice or respond to child with hand raised; T. helps student having hard time tying shoe; S. seem comfortable – raise hands etc;</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><b>Regard for Student Perspectives</b></p> <p>Very t. directed lesson; teacher gives frequent reminders for s. to sit on squares; T. not flexible when student asks about going outside; few opportunities for children to lead</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Plans for CLASS Observations

## Year 1

- ▶ ALL VPI Programs: Gather information on current knowledge, practices and capacity related to CLASS
- ▶ Partner with a set of early adopters
  - ▶ 51 VPI programs, 612 classrooms
  - ▶ All observed by June 14, 2019
- ▶ Lessons learned from Year 1 will inform procedures for observing in the other VPI programs in Year 2 and subsequent years.

# Professional Development (PD)

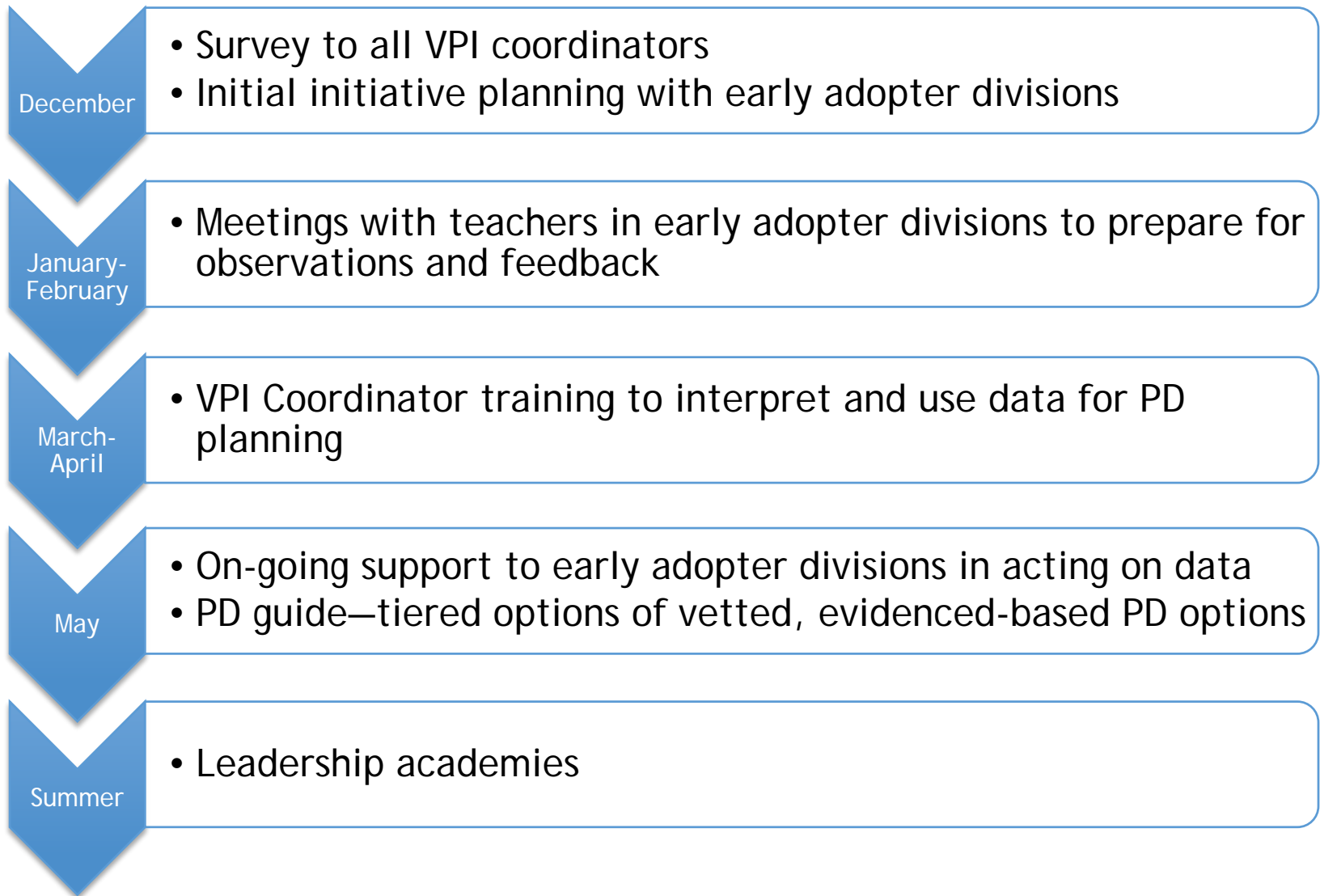




# Evidence-Based PD Principles

Principle	Description
Specific, articulated objectives	Objectives describe the precise knowledge and skills that a teacher will gain from the experience
Data-driven	Data is used to plan the focus of individualized PD and track intended outcomes.
Dosage	The approach and format map onto the level of intensity, duration, and follow-up needed to ensure that the participants gain knowledge and apply new skills in the classroom.
Practice-focused	An explicit emphasis on linking new knowledge to practice in the classroom.
Feedback-Analysis Loop	Teachers given opportunity to adopt and implement a new practice, receive feedback about this implementation, and reflect/analyze this experience.

# Year 1-Assessing and Building Capacity



V K R P

Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program



# How VKRP Measures Kindergarten Readiness



Readiness is defined as having foundational skills in all areas



# 40%

## OF VIRGINIA'S KINDERGARTENERS

ARE UNPREPARED  
IN CRITICAL AREAS



**LITERACY**



**SOCIAL  
SKILLS**



**MATH**

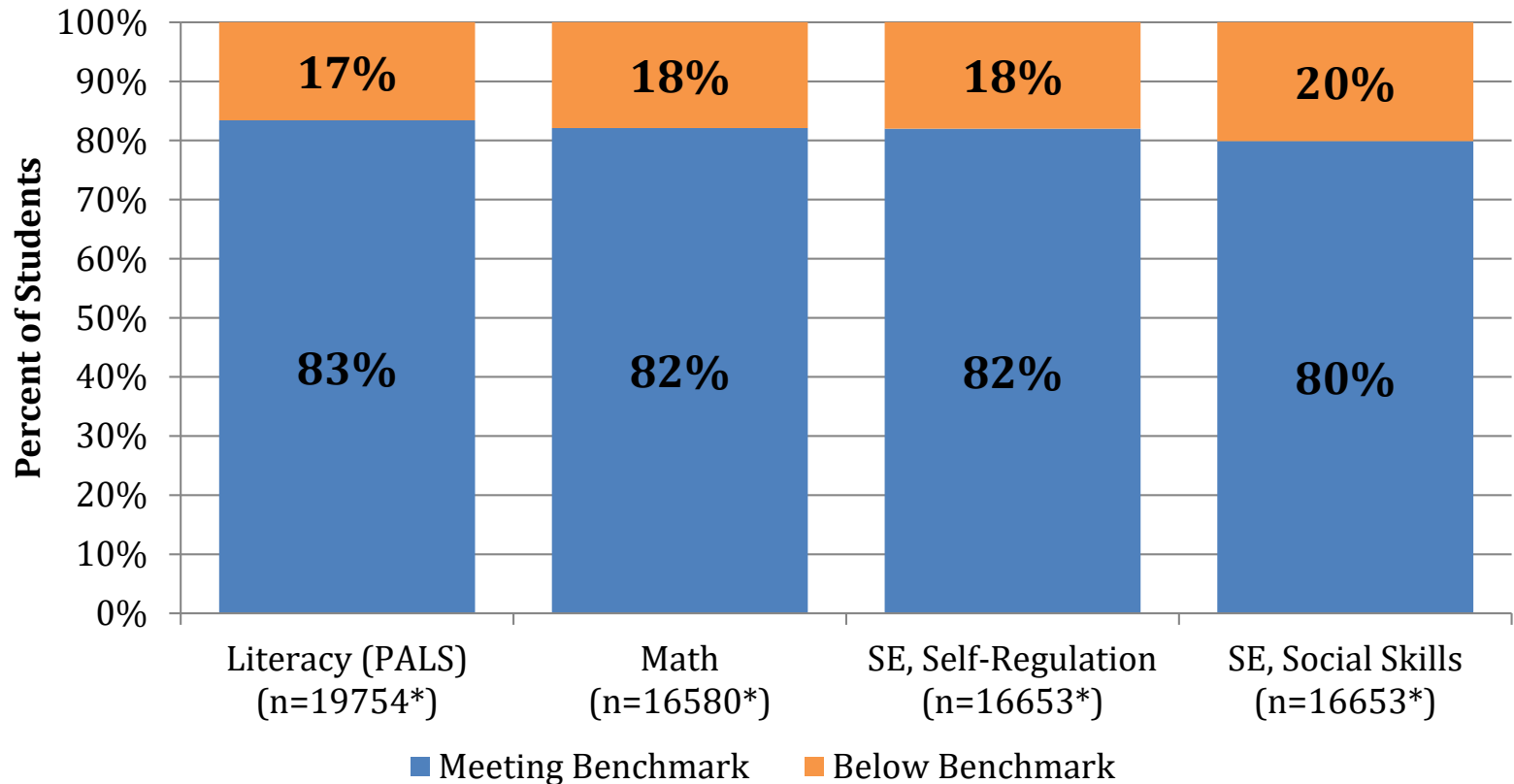


**SELF-  
REGULATION**

*2017 Fall PALS and VKRP Data*

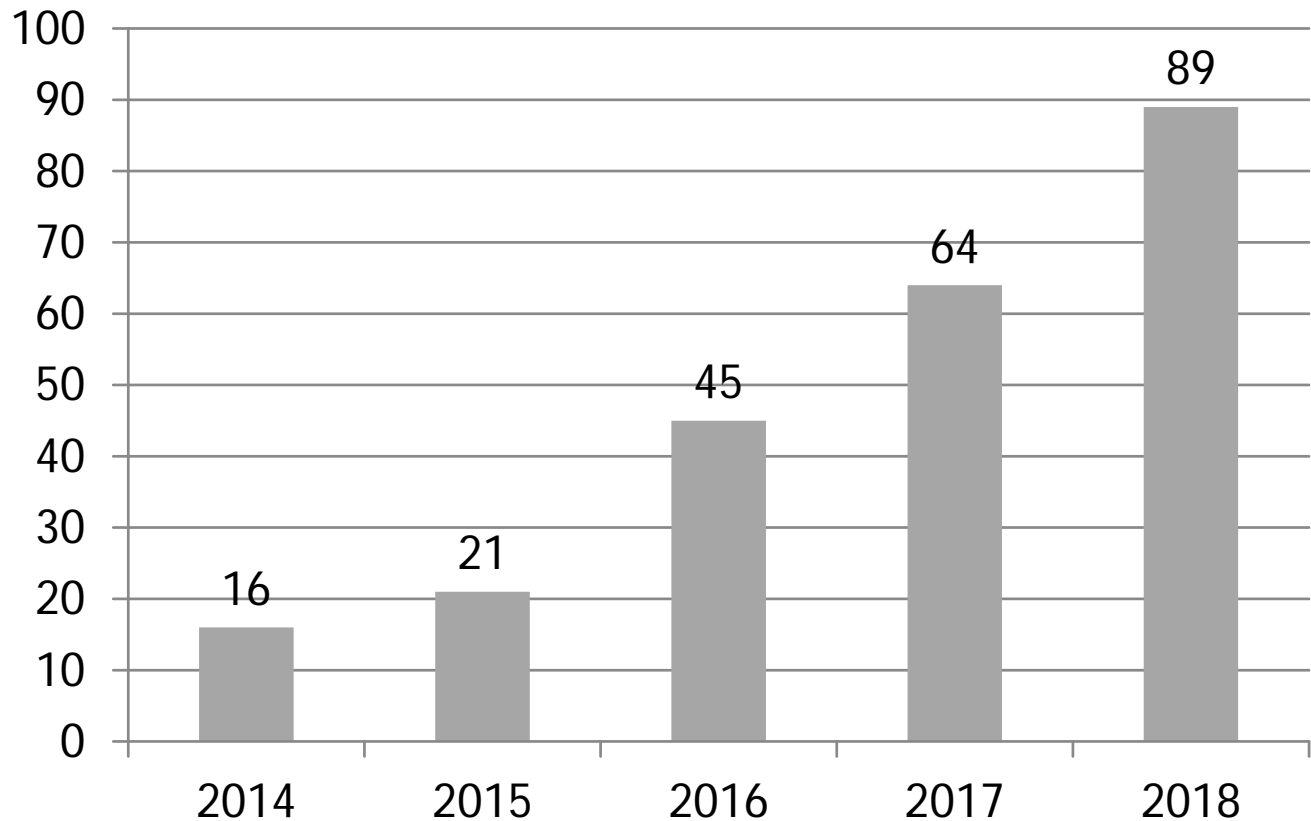
# Readiness Results for 2017-18

Fall 2017



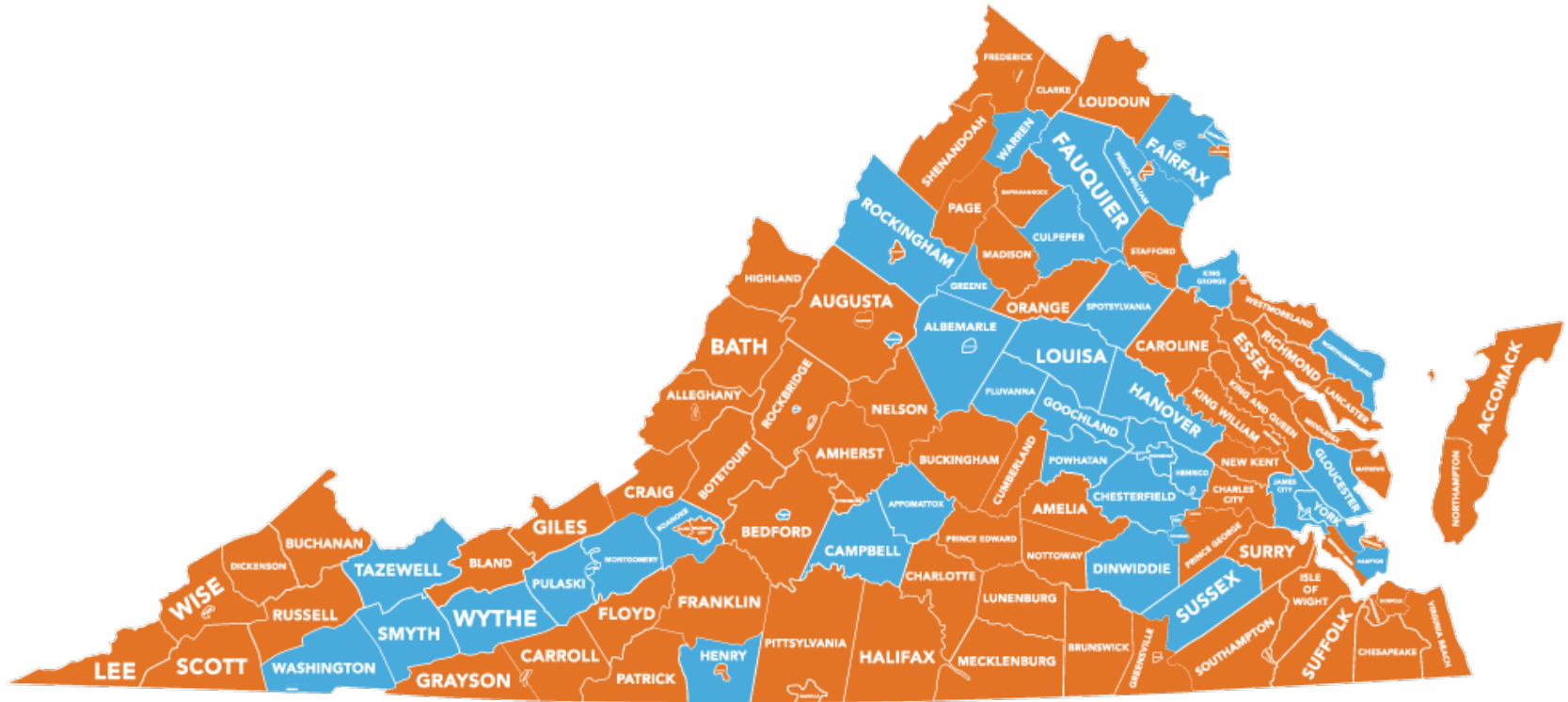
Note. \* = All students who had data on each measure were included to obtain these estimates.

# VKRP Expansion Over Time



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# VKRP Expansion Over Time



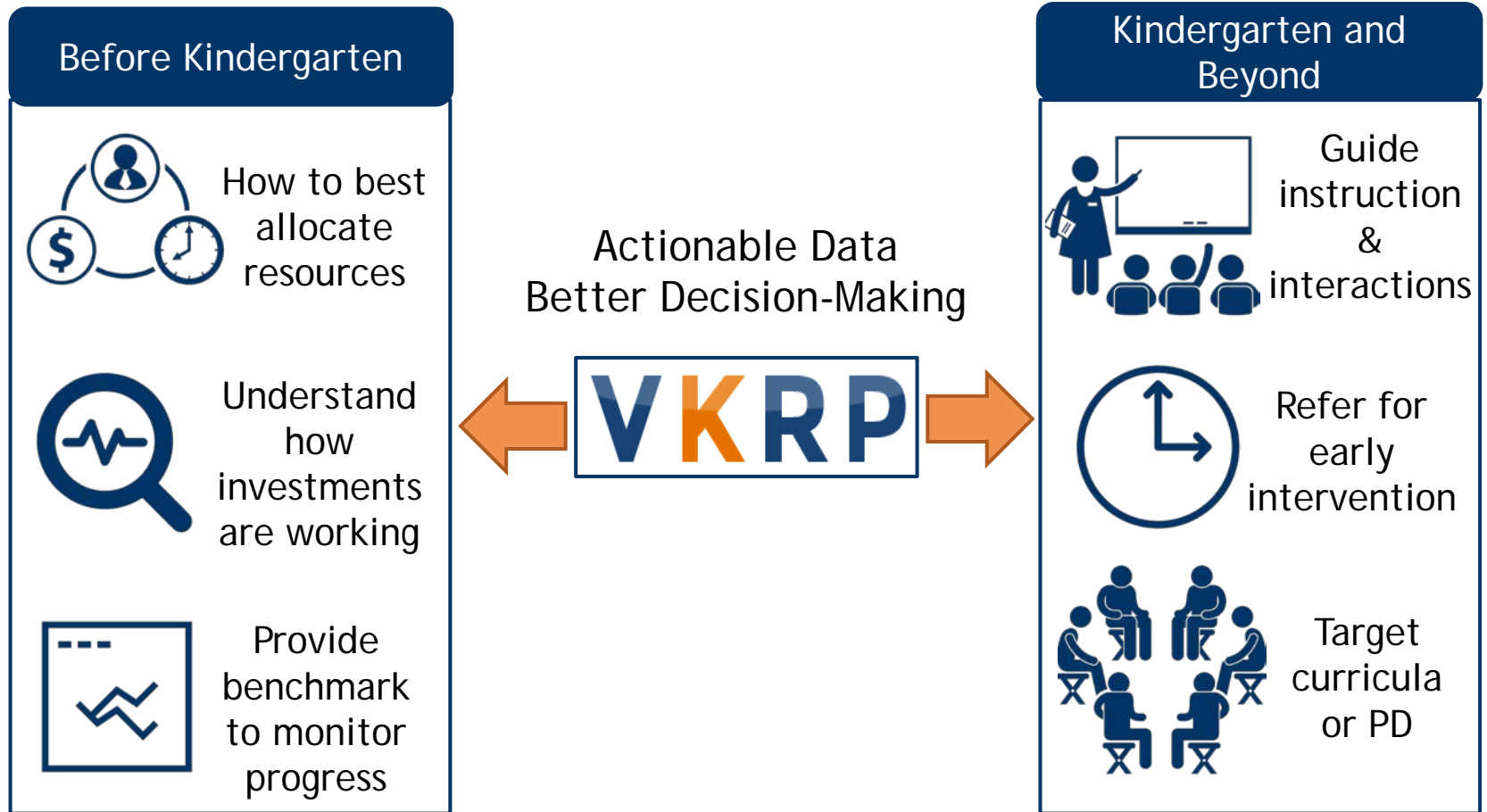
2018 Participating Divisions in Orange



# VKRP in 2018-19

- ▶ Statewide participation in Fall of 2019
- ▶ Measuring growth in math, self-regulation and social skills
  - ▶ Fall and spring of kindergarten
  - ▶ Fall and spring of preschool
  - ▶ Complement PALS which already tracks growth over time in literacy skills
- ▶ Continued collaboration with PALS
- ▶ Refined data reports that are more interactive and show growth across the year in students' skills
- ▶ Expanded resources on how to use data to guide instruction
- ▶ Scalable training

# How Statewide Readiness Data Can be Used in Virginia



# STREAMin<sup>3</sup>

integrated | intentional | interactions



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# STREAMin<sup>3</sup>

integrated | intentional | interactions

The STREAMin3™ Curriculum Model provides:

- ✓ **Daily activities, routines, and games** that maximize the moment-to-moment interactions between children and their teachers and peers and promote connection with families.
- ✓ **Coaching, professional development** designed to support teachers' understanding of child development, and increase their implementation of the curriculum.
- ✓ **Formative assessments and implementation checklists** that guide teachers and directors to use observations to inform teaching and children's development.



# STREAMin<sup>3</sup>

integrated | intentional | interactions

- ▶ Pilot implementation of the curriculum package
  - ▶ Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Covington, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk
  - ▶ 51 classrooms in Virginia (from 12 programs)
    - ▶ 22 faith-based, 28 private
    - ▶ 9 infant, 17 toddler, 25 preschool
  - ▶ ~ 810 children
    - ▶ 90 infants, 270 toddlers, 450 preschoolers
  - ▶ 5 coaches will support these classrooms
  - ▶ Directors begin training in December
  - ▶ Teachers begin working with coaches in February
  - ▶ Implementation evaluation will occur in Year 2
    - ▶ Understand current practices in these ECE programs
    - ▶ How programs uptake the curriculum package
    - ▶ Improvement in quality of teacher-child interactions
    - ▶ Growth in children's readiness skills

# STREAMin<sup>3</sup> Pilot

integrated | intentional | interactions

## Public-private partnership

### ▶ Obici Healthcare Foundation in Suffolk, VA

Made an additional 1M investment after hearing about the State's investment to pilot the curriculum in an additional 50 classrooms and support the other ECE initiatives (i.e., CLASS & PD, VKRP) in Western Tidewater.

▶ Suffolk, Franklin, Surry, Southampton, Isle of Wight VPI programs, Children's Center in Suffolk (Head Start)

▶ 47 preschool, 2 toddler, 1 infant

▶ ~ 860 children

▶ 10 infants, 30 toddlers, 820 preschoolers

▶ 5 additional coaches

### ▶ Opportunity to connect the dots across sectors (Head Start, VPI, faith-based, & private ECE programs) and initiatives in this region of Virginia



What if **every young child** in Virginia had the educational experiences they needed for success in school and life?

The pathway toward achieving this vision combines the power of PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, and POLICY to transform the lives of young children in ways that will have a lasting impact.

## PEOPLE

Children need teachers with the knowledge and skills to support their development and learning.

## PROGRAMS

Teachers need programs that provide stimulating learning experiences, proven to promote school readiness.

## POLICIES

Leaders need actionable data to make informed decisions and know if their investments are working.

Through appropriated funds from the Virginia General Assembly, the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia (UVA), the Virginia Department of Education, and the Virginia Department of Social Services are working in partnership to increase the quality of early childhood education experiences in the Commonwealth.

## Collaborative Initiatives to Improve Early Childhood Education

- ◆ **Wide-Scale Implementation of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program** (VKRP; [www.vkrponline.org](http://www.vkrponline.org))  
Understanding how Virginia children are developing key readiness skills helps us make smart investments that ensure student success. VKRP is a kindergarten readiness assessment that builds from the foundation of PALS to assess children's abilities in math, self-regulation, and social skills. VKRP includes online, interactive reports and instructional resources, and is expanding implementation to all schools. In addition, CASTL will develop a VKRP spring assessment in order to track student growth during kindergarten. The VKRP assessments will also be expanding into preschool to include fall and spring assessments in 4-year-old classrooms.
- ◆ **Observing and Enhancing the Quality of Preschool Classrooms**  
Teacher-child interaction quality is a key component of a valuable early childhood experience. The quality of teacher-child interactions will be assessed using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) at least every two years, and teachers will obtain individualized professional development. Teachers will receive linked professional development to ensure their classroom practices promote child learning and development.
- ◆ **Piloting STREAMin<sup>3</sup> Curriculum**  
In partnership with Elevate Early Education (E3), CASTL created a curriculum model that combines the latest developmental and early education research with our experience working in ECE classrooms and supporting teachers. The integrated, comprehensive model, *Science Technology Reading Engineering Arts & Math – Integrated Intentional Interactions* (STREAMin<sup>3</sup>), includes activities and routines for the classroom, assessments, and professional development designed to support quality implementation and meaningful interactions. We will pilot the STREAMin<sup>3</sup> curriculum package in 50 private and faith-based classrooms (birth-preschool).

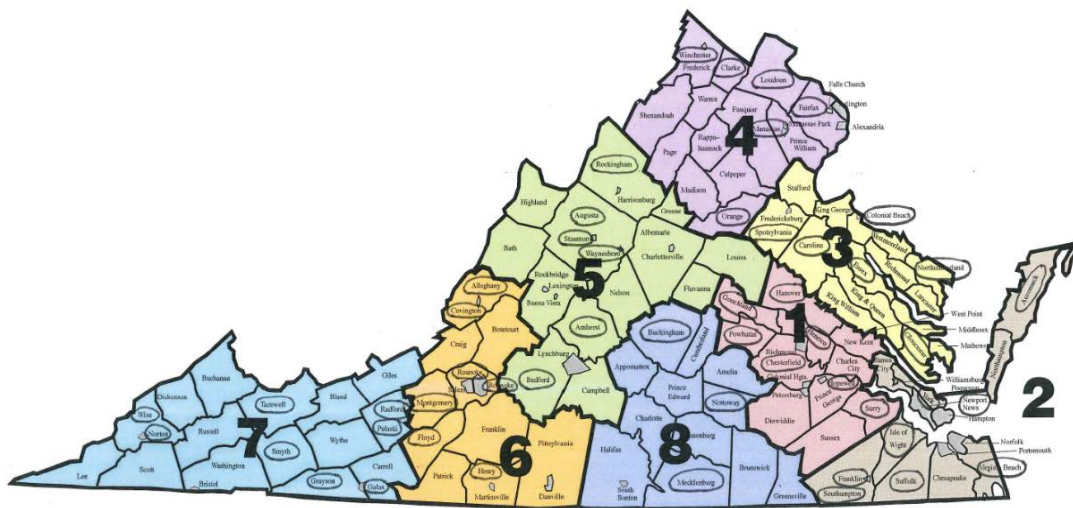
For more information, please contact Amanda Williford, [apw2c@virginia.edu](mailto:apw2c@virginia.edu).

## Virginia Preschool Initiative CLASS™ Observations and Professional Development

Starting in spring of 2019, the **VPI CLASSTM and Professional Development Initiative** will work with 51 divisions around the state in the initiative roll-out. Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) classrooms will be observed using the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** by trained, reliable observers. Teachers will obtain **individualized feedback and professional development supports** to ensure their classroom practices promote child learning and development.

### Who is Participating in 2018-2019?

51 Divisions  
612 Classrooms



### CLASS™

- **THE GOAL:** All children will have access to high-quality interactions that facilitate Kindergarten readiness. All teachers and programs will have information about interactions to continuously grow.
- **THE PLAN:** All classrooms will be observed by trained CLASS™ raters, starting with partner divisions in spring 2019. Remaining VPI classrooms will be observed in fall 2019 through spring 2020.
- **WHY CLASS™?** The CLASS™ is a validated, reliable observation tool that focuses on interactions between teachers and children. Research indicates that children in classrooms with higher CLASS™ scores show more learning and development. The CLASS™ is used to measure and strengthen thousands of early childhood classrooms nationwide. In Virginia, the CLASS™ is already used by all Head Start and VPI+ classrooms.
- **HOW?** Before classroom observations, an introduction to the initiative will be offered to teachers and program teams. After observations, programs will get feedback and data to guide professional development selection.

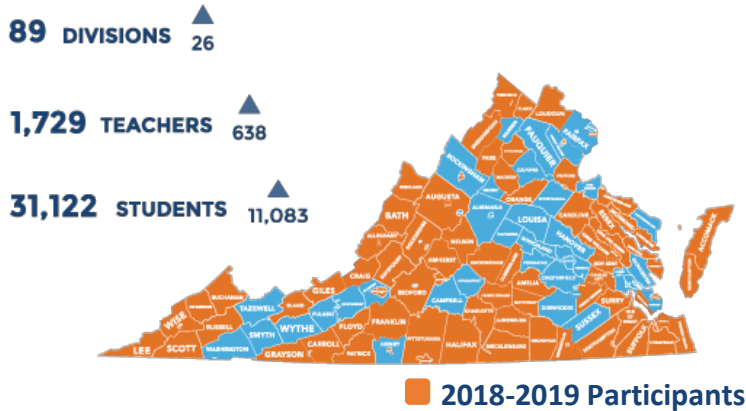
### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **THE GOAL:** All teachers will have access to high-quality professional development, enabling them to provide the quality of interactions and instruction needed to support young learners.
- **THE PLAN:** CASTL will support division leadership teams, ensuring teachers receive individualized feedback and professional development plans and that the professional development provided adheres to research-informed, best practice standards.
- **WHAT is Quality PD?** Research points to five elements of effective professional development, including: well-articulated objectives, data-driven focus, specific focus on practices, sufficient intensity/dosage, and feedback loops.
- **HOW?** CASTL will provide trainings and technical assistance to build local capacity for data use, PD planning, and continuous improvement including:
  - VPI coordinator meetings (March-April 2019)
  - Regional Leadership Academy trainings (piloted summer 2019, ongoing 2019-2020)
  - Ongoing consultation calls with CASTL staff
  - Identifying existing PD that meets best practice standards for divisions to consider.

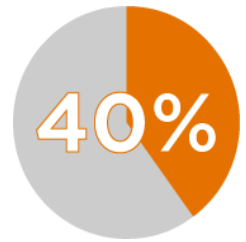


The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) is an initiative focused on building a more comprehensive understanding of school readiness and success. As an assessment system, VKRP adds measures of **math**, **self-regulation**, and **social skills** to complement Virginia’s statewide assessment of **literacy** skills using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS, [www.pals.virginia.edu](http://www.pals.virginia.edu)). All Virginia school divisions will use VKRP beginning in the fall of 2019.

## WHO’S PARTICIPATING IN 2018-19?



Our most recent data<sup>1</sup> shows that **40%** of students in participating divisions entered kindergarten **unprepared** in at least one of the critical learning domains:



- Literacy (PALS)
- Math
- Self-Regulation
- Social Skills

<sup>1</sup> VKRP and PALS 2017 results from kindergarten students in 63 school divisions.

### Did you Know? VKRP is Expanding!

Division leaders, principals, and teachers consistently ask for early learning assessments that, like PALS does for literacy, **measure children’s growth** over time.

In response, VKRP is:

- **Expanding the math, self-regulation, and social skills assessments** from kindergarten entry to include:
  - **Spring of kindergarten**, and
  - **Fall and spring of preschool**
- **Collaborating with PALS** to coordinate a single sign-on portal through which PALS and VKRP can be accessed and that provides integrated reports that show readiness skills across domains.
- **Expanding online and integrating reports** to allow parents, teachers, schools, divisions, and the state to better understand children’s early learning growth during preschool and kindergarten.
- **Creating aligned and developmentally appropriate instructional resources for preschool and kindergarten teachers.**

### Benefits for Teachers, Division Leaders, Policy Makers, and Stakeholders

- Teachers have more comprehensive data to support their **understanding of**:
  - **Students’ skills upon school entry**, and
  - **How students’ skills grow** over the year
- Teachers have online access to instructional resources to **support students’ learning** across domains.
- Teachers and administrators receive **support in interpreting data** through in-person and online data sessions.
- Division leaders have **benchmark data to target interventions and improve student outcomes.**
- Policy makers have **data to align funding and interventions.**

## About the STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Curriculum

The STREAM: Integrated, Intentional, Interactions Curriculum (STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™) was developed at the UVA's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) through funding from Elevate Early Education (E3) using the latest developmental and early childhood education (ECE) research.

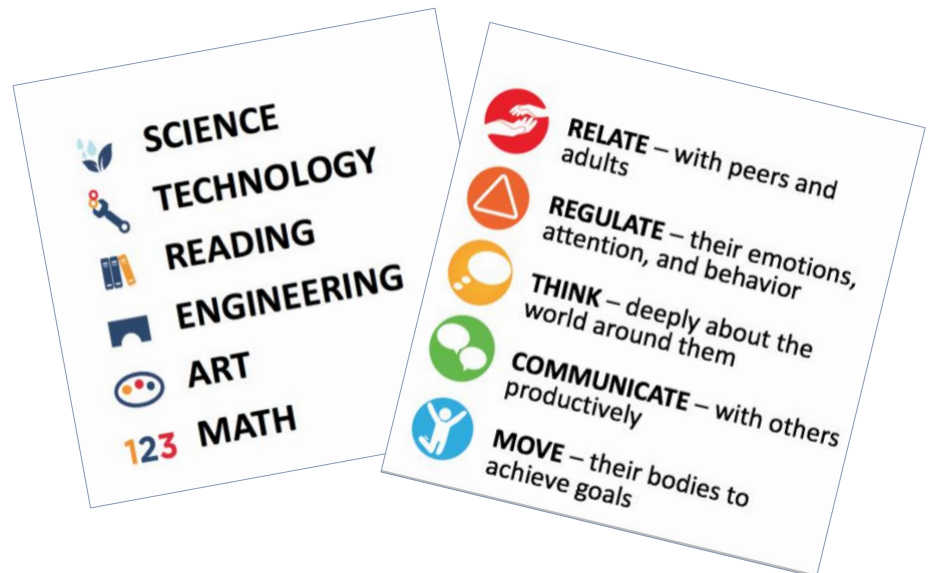
The STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Curriculum Model provides:

- ◆ Daily activities, routines, and games that maximize the moment-to-moment interactions between children and their teachers and peers.
- ◆ Coaching, professional development, and weekly materials designed to support teachers' understanding of child development, and increase the effectiveness of their implementation of the curriculum.
- ◆ Guidance for using observations to inform teaching and to increase the quality of implementation.

## Pilot of the STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Curriculum

With funding appropriated from the Virginia General Assembly to the Virginia Department of Social Services, UVA CASTL is piloting the STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ curriculum package in 50 private and faith-based ECE classrooms (birth-preschool). Programs will receive all materials and will be supported through aligned professional development (PD) and individualized coaching to implement the curriculum. In the second year, UVA CASTL will conduct an implementation evaluation. The goal is to understand how to best support teachers and program leaders throughout their interactions with our youngest learners in ways that are developmentally appropriate, fun, and support children's learning across many domains of readiness.

STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ focuses on **5 Core Skills™** that form the building blocks for later learning, and **6 STREAM Skills™** to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond.



## Components

Teachers receive weekly guides that include daily STREAM and STREAM Story activities, provocations, tips for how to incorporate the Core Skills™, guides for the parts of the day, activity cards, and resources for families.

**All components include a focus on:**

Children's  
Interests &  
Experiences

Active  
Engagement &  
Direct  
Experiences

Being in The  
Context of Play  
(Fun!)

Encouraging  
Problem-Solving  
& Curiosity

## STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Coaching

The STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Coaching Model recasts professional development as an ongoing, individualized process grounded in each teacher's classroom. STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ Coaching pairs individual teachers with a trained coach who observes teachers' classrooms while partnering with teachers to systematically improve classroom processes. They work together throughout the school year observing and analyzing the teachers' interactions with students and their ability to implement the STREAM curriculum to determine how best to increase the beneficial aspects of these practices.

**The ultimate goal for a coach is to help teachers:**

Become better  
**OBSERVERS** and  
**ASSESSORS** of their  
own practice

Increase feelings of  
**SELF-EFFICACY** in  
their interactions  
with students

Increase the quality  
of their  
**IMPLEMENTATION**  
of curriculum

## In-Person Professional Development Sessions

Teachers participate in PD sessions focused on supporting effective implementation of the curriculum and the Core Skills™.

- ◆ Sessions are designed to be **highly interactive**.
- ◆ Teachers leave each session with an **action plan** of the concrete steps they will take to improve their classroom interactions.
- ◆ Coaching sessions include **ongoing follow-up** related to the goals set in these sessions.

## Ongoing Observations and Assessments

The STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ model provides a **formative assessment system** that supports teachers to make intentional, ongoing observations and assessments of children's development across the Core Skills™. This is key to help teachers identify areas where children may need more support and where they are ready for more challenge. Most importantly, teachers are guided through how to use these assessments to inform their teaching so they can provide effective, targeted support to children.

Even the best curriculum can only achieve the desired impact when implemented with high fidelity and quality. The STREAMin<sup>3</sup>™ model includes support for understanding and improving implementation. Administrators systematically complete classroom observations using the provided **implementation checklists** designed to highlight and assess the most critical elements of the curriculum activities and routines. They use this information to guide the feedback and support they provide to teachers.

