

DISCUSSION

Staff Presentation to the 2015 Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Goals and Objectives

- “The goals and objectives of the Joint Subcommittee will be to consider increasing **accountability, flexibility, innovation, clarification of the state's role and policy relating to providing a preschool for economically disadvantaged children**, and to further develop the facilitation of **partnerships between school divisions and private providers** for the Virginia Preschool Initiative.
- The Subcommittee will also review and consider possible recommendations regarding the development of a **competency-based professional development framework for early childhood teachers in public schools and early learning practitioners in private early learning settings.**”

Summary of Meetings To Date

☑ June 11

- VPI State PreK Program Overview (HAC and SFC staff)
- Review of 2007 JLARC Study
- Approaches to State PreK Eligibility Policies: High Need Children
- First Virginia-specific Longitudinal Study: Predicting On-Time Promotions
- Review of Federal VPI+ Expansion Grant

☑ July 24

- Current Status of Mixed Delivery in Virginia (ex. Fairfax and Alexandria)
- Other Updates (Upskilling Early Learning Workforce, Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success) and Stakeholder Input (Virginia Child Care Association, Southwest Virginia Group, Alliance for Virginia's Students, others)

☑ August 25

- Summary of Selected States with Mixed Delivery
- NIEER *State of Preschool Yearbook/Benchmarks* and *Birth Thru 8 Workforce* Report
- AEI on Implications of Science of Early Learning on State Strategies
- VPI Program Detail from VDOE
- Virginia's Kindergarten Readiness Project

Proposed Work Plan and Future Meetings for 2015

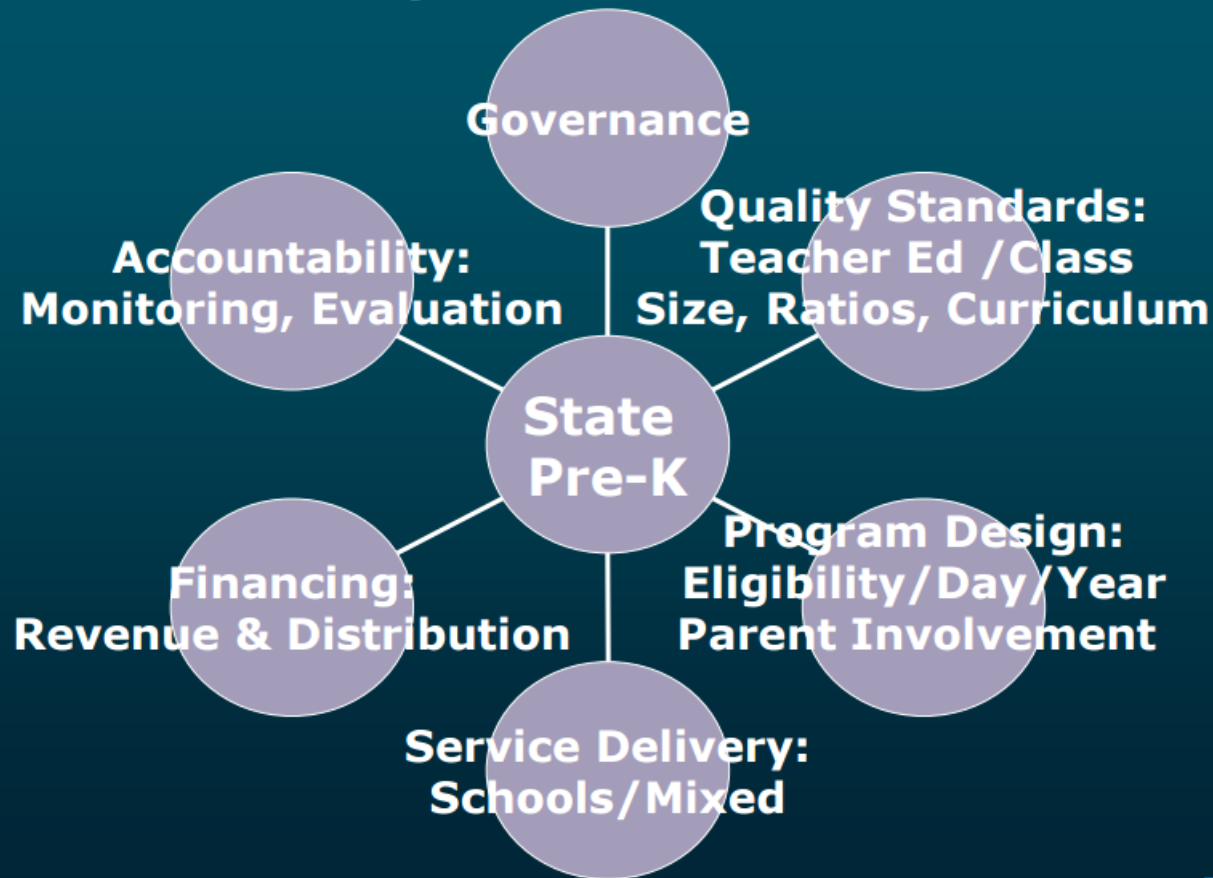
▪ Tentative Date: October 7

- Any additional briefings this year?
 - Child care subsidy, home visiting program, other Dept. of Social Services (DSS) programs?
 - Other researchers – Pianta/Ramey/Armor?
 - Other topics/groups?

- Discussion (*or review of preliminary draft?*) of November 1, 2015 report of preliminary consensus findings and recommendations
 - First, focus on mixed delivery and student eligibility
 - Doesn't mixed delivery issue necessarily draw in the question of quality and teacher qualifications? Pilot in one or more school divisions not yet using all VPI slots?
 - Re-affirm targeted (rather than universal) state program for neediest students?

 - Areas of further study/recommend extending group an additional year
 - Now that challenges and principles have been clarified, task certain other entities (VDOE, JLARC, VECF, etc.), with certain “assignments” and report back to the Joint Subcommittee in 2016 with findings, options, best practices?
 - Next steps for data/research
 - ✓ Improve prior enrollment (preschool experience) information in student records
 - ✓ Priority amongst: additional analyses to address limitations of 2005-06 cohort study, design study to follow cohort through high school, examine influence of additional factors, replicate with additional cohorts, use trajectory models to understand approaches to sustaining gains, create data working group?

Pre-K Policy Decisions for States



Current , Stated Legislative Intent of VPI:

“to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds...to be ready to successfully enter kindergarten...”

Quality Standards

- What is quality, and what is the right balance with cost and access?
- What are the current program standards and why? How did the current licensure landscape evolve? Are current teacher qualifications, class size standards, and other requirements appropriate?

Program Design

- What does/should at-risk mean in terms of student eligibility?

Service Delivery

- What are the barriers to more mixed delivery than we have right now? (inertia, Lottery funding, cost?) What can the subcommittee do to promote a stronger partnership between the public and private sector Pre-K programs?

Current , Stated Legislative Intent of VPI:

“to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds...to be ready to successfully enter kindergarten...” (continued)

Financing, Accountability, and Governance

- Is the current formula a good match for local need? What are the barriers to some localities using all slots while others have wait lists?
- Are refinements needed/desired to the intent statement (such as inserting “access to affordable” quality programs, specifically reference varied settings?) and/or to funding and/or accountability requirements in order to enhance confidence in fidelity to those goals?
- What are the next steps for research?
- Does increased kindergarten readiness also benefit non-VPI students by raising the skills and behavior of entering children to allow teachers to instruct all students in the classroom to a higher standard?
- What is kindergarten readiness today? And why aren't children ready?
 - Although previous generations may not have attended PreK (or kindergarten), globalization/technology and brain research (along with standardized testing) have contributed to increased expectations, now balanced with increasing re-emphasis on developmentally appropriate approaches. At the same time, gaps start even earlier than age four.

To Successfully Enter Kindergarten and... Graduate College and Career Ready

- What should be the balance/priority amongst such PreK-related components as:
 - 1) Outreach to locate harder to find/enroll income-eligible families and students,
 - 2) Program evaluation, research/data, assessment,
 - 3) State technical assistance to local programs and private settings,
 - 4) Improving quality via support for early childhood educators' professional development and workforce skills,
 - 5) Access (students served) – expand use of private providers, private schools, etc,
 - 6) Summer bridge or other programs (community-based drop-in) to reach remaining students entering kindergarten with no formal PreK,
 - 7) Funded per pupil cost and/or state's share (currently minimum of 50%)?
- Or, are there related early childhood programs the subcommittee should also consider, such as child care subsidy, reducing teen pregnancy, home visiting, post-secondary savings incentives (match family contributions to 529 accounts), family reading programs, music instruction, elementary school foreign language, etc.?
- Should the Commonwealth consider ways to re-align 12th grade (dual enrollment, industry/career certification) to allow more front-loading of educational investments?
- Should we consider/encourage earlier kindergarten entry age if appropriate to minimize gaps?
- What else?