

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW

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Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative Summary Overview

- ☑ Historical Overview of State Statute, Funding & Budget Language up to the 2018 Special Session I
- ☐ Overview of Joint Subcommittee, its Legislative Charge, Work and Accomplishments
- ☐ 2018 Special Session I Budget Actions Related to PreK
- ☐ Proposed Work Plan and Future Meetings

Establishment of an At-Risk Four-Old Program* that was Rebranded as the Virginia Preschool Initiative

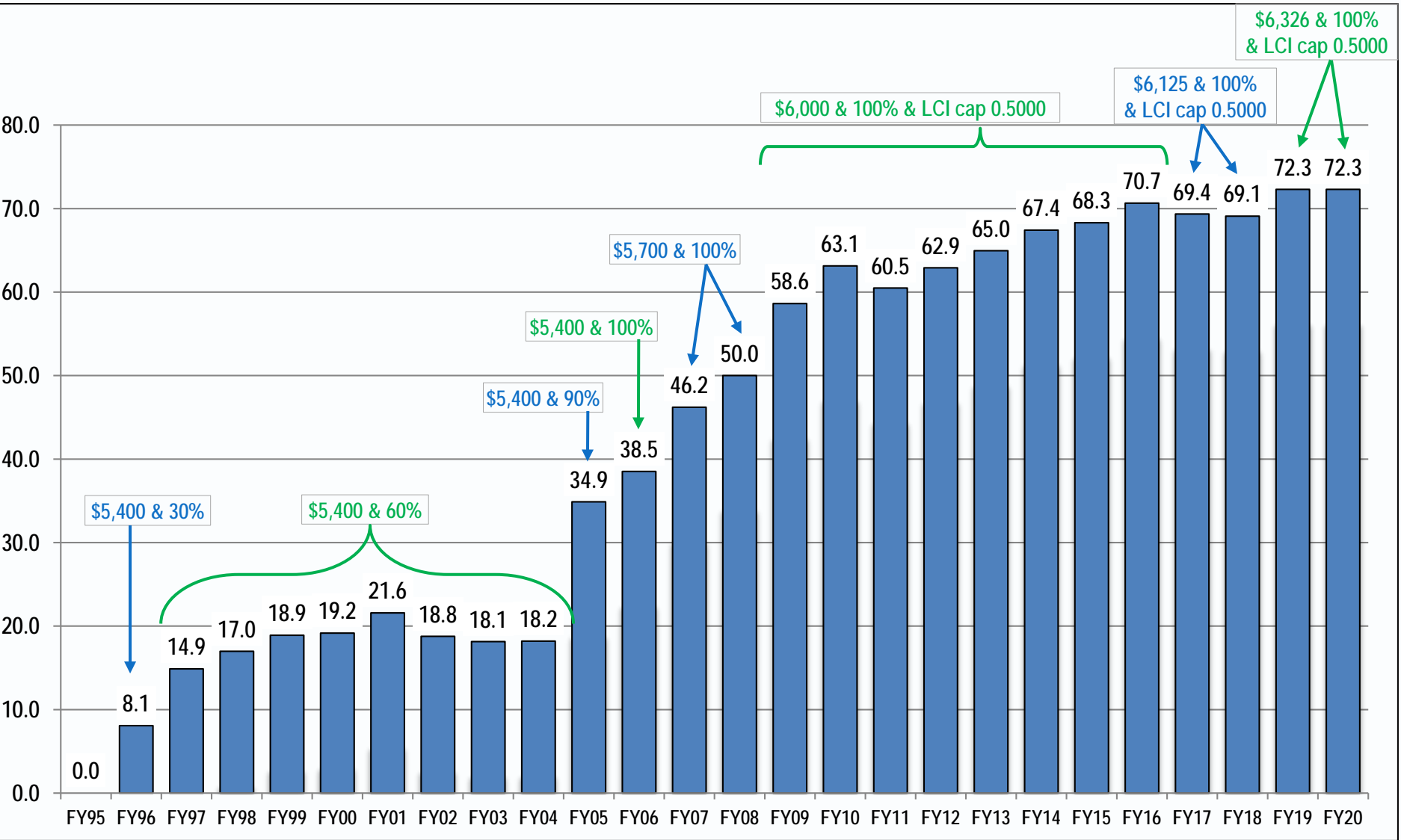
Omnibus Education Act of 1995 Session, HB 2542 (Chapter 852), enacted a new section of *Code*, under § 22.1-199.1, that specifically addressed education for At-Risk 4-Yr-Olds, which became the starting point for the Virginia Preschool Initiative

- Language reflected provisions for the framework of the program to provide quality preschool education, health services, social services, parental involvement and transportation
- Required to be a full-day, full school-year program – later legislation permitted for a half-day program
- Had to adhere to established guidelines adopted by Board of Education
- Legislation passed in 2000 Session defined specific teacher to pupil ratios: 9 students to 1 teacher and 10-18 students to teacher and 1 aide

**Appendix A provides more specific details of the legislative action for the program*

FY95-FY18 Final Adopted 'Caboose' Budgets & FY19-FY20 Budget*

(\$ in millions)



* Budgeted amounts subject to change during 2019 and 2020 General Assembly Sessions

Summary of PreK Budget Action up to 2015

- As a result of action in the 1995 session, FY 1996 was the first year that an allocation was included in the Budget and provided funding for 30% of the unserved at-risk 4-yr-olds @ \$5,400 ppa
- The next fiscal year, FY 1997, funding was increased to support 60% of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds, and maintained the \$5,400 ppa – that same level of funding continued through FY 2004
- Funding increased as the program grew to support more at-risk children, and by FY 2006, 100% of eligible at-risk four-year-olds were included in the funding formula
 - FY 2005 - funding was increased to support 90%
 - FY 2006 - funding was increased to support 100%
- For FY 2007 and FY 2008, the per pupil amount was increased to \$5,700, for all unserved at-risk four-year-olds

Summary of PreK Budget Action up to 2015*

- In FY 2008, a new 1-year pilot funding was offered to divisions with existing partnership with private or non-profit providers to expand enrollments
- For FY 2009 and FY 2010, the per pupil amount (PPA) was increased to \$6,000, the LCI match was capped at 0.5000, and the previous biennium's pilot was eliminated
- Going forward up until FY 2015, the budget continued to reflect the preschool initiative funding at \$6,000 PPA with the LCI 0.5000 cap

* *Appendix B provides more specific details of the budgetary action that was approved up to 2015 for the program*

Summary of Budget Action Since 2015 & the Establishment of the Joint Subcommittee on PreK

2015 Session – HB1400 - Chapter 665 - FY 2015 and FY 2016

During the 2015 Session, new budget language established this Joint Subcommittee within the General Assembly's scope of responsibilities

- For FY 2015 and FY 2016, the VPI budget continued to reflect the \$6,000 PPA along with the LCI cap @ 0.5000
- That year, the local definition of what was considered 'at-risk' for enrollment was replaced with new language for a single consistent statewide definition for at-risk criteria which was to be effective in FY 2016
 - Going forward, eligibility would be based on: (i) family income at or below 200% of poverty, (ii) homelessness, (iii) student's parents or guardians are school dropouts, or (iv) family income is less than 350% of federal poverty guidelines in the case of students with special needs or disabilities
- However, due to the timing of the spring applications for the preschool program, a separate agreement was reached after Session to provide for a one-year transition to the new eligibility criteria and deferred the newly adopted enrollment eligibility criteria until FY 2017 (see *Appendix C for additional details*)

Summary of Budget Action Since 2015 & the Establishment of the Joint Subcommittee on PreK

2015 Session – HB1400 - Chapter 665 - FY 2015 and FY 2016

- DOE was directed to compile information from the school divisions on the number of enrolled students and whose families were (i) at or below 130% of FPL, and (ii) above 130% but below 200% of FPL
 - Compiled summary data was required to be posted and maintained on the Department's website in keeping with student privacy policies and report the same information annually to the Chairmen of House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees after the spring application and fall participation reports are submitted to the Department
- Eliminated DOE authorization to spend any unobligated PreK balances and instead directed DOE to communicate to divisions of any potential supplemental grants that they were apply for in the fall or following spring
- Began a pilot kindergarten readiness assessment in 16 school divisions and allocated \$1.0 million GF in FY 2016 for initial planning
- Appropriated \$17.5 million NGF in FY 2016 (first of a four year award) for the federal VPI+ expansion grant
- Expanded preschool related workforce and professional development efforts and allocated \$250,000 in FY 2016 to VECF to administer

Summary of Budget Action Since 2015 & the Establishment of the Joint Subcommittee on PreK

2016 Session – HB30 - Chapter 780 - FY 2017 and FY 2018

- Increased the per student slot amount from \$6,000 to \$6,125 for FY 2017 and FY 2018
- While maintaining the prior year's adoption of a statewide definition for enrollment eligibility into the VPI program, new language allowed for up to 15% of VPI slots to be filled using locally-established eligibility criteria for at-risk students
- New language was added to clarify that only residents of Virginia are eligible to enroll in the VPI program
- Added \$600,000 GF in FY 2017 and \$1.0 million GF in FY 2018 for VECF to operate a tuition scholarship grant program to increase the skills of early education workforce through scholarships and support for completion of high-quality coursework through the community colleges in Virginia – *proposed recommendation from subcommittee**
- Included an estimated \$125,000 each year for an early childhood education specialist in DOE
- Provided \$197,000 each year in DOE's budget for PALS contract with UVA, which previously had been paid with federal funds
 - UVA collect data, provide analysis and report scores for the Pre-K PALS diagnostic
 - These screenings support the required student evaluations that divisions must perform to be eligible to receive VPI funding

**Appendix D provides more specific details of the eight proposed recommendation from the subcommittee*

Summary of Budget Action Since 2015 & the Establishment of the Joint Subcommittee on PreK

2016 Session – HB30 - Chapter 780 - FY 2017 and FY 2018

- Language in Item 1, extended this Joint Subcommittee
- Added \$1.5 million GF each year for a new pilot program to allow the VECF to administer and award grants that incentivize local-area based options for public-private or 'mixed' delivery of PreK services to at-risk four-year-olds, pursuant to Chapter 738 of the 2016 Acts of Assembly (HB 47/Chapter 738) – *proposed recommendation from subcommittee**
- Legislation established the on-going School Readiness Committee (HB 46/Chapter 652) to focus on developing and aligning effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce – *topic/issue discussed by subcommittee**
- SJ 88 directed JLARC to study early childhood development programs, scheduled to be briefed in 2017 – *topic/issue discussed by subcommittee**

**Appendix D provides more specific details of the eight proposed recommendation from the subcommittee*

Summary of Budget Action Since 2015 & the Establishment of the Joint Subcommittee on PreK

2017 Session – HB1500 - Chapter 836 - FY 2017 and FY 2018

- New language exempted the mixed-delivery recipients from all regulatory and statutory provisions related to teacher licensure requirements and qualifications when paid with state funds within the scope of the Mixed-Delivery Preschool Pilot initiative – enhancement of subcommittee’s proposed recommendation*
- Added clarifying language that beginning in FY 2018, the public-private or ‘mixed’ delivery PreK grants shall only be awarded to recipients that offer high quality preschool experience to participating enrolled to at-risk four-year-olds – enhancement of subcommittee’s proposed recommendation*

**Appendix D provides more specific details of the eight proposed recommendation from the subcommittee*

Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative Summary Overview

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- ❑ Proposed Work Plan and Future Meetings

Overview of Joint Subcommittee and it's Legislative Charge

- The Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative was established and set out in language in the Legislative Department under the General Assembly during the 2015 Session
 - Legislative Membership selection
 - Joint Subcommittee's Charge - Goals and Objectives
 - Staffing and Reporting

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Initial Money Committees Membership

2015 Session Acts of Assembly– HB1400 – Chapter 665 Item 1: General Assembly of Virginia

- “Q.1. The Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees shall each appoint up to five members from their respective committees to a Joint Subcommittee to provide recommendations for reforming the Virginia Preschool Initiative.”

House Appropriations Committee

- Delegate Cox
- Delegate Landes
- Delegate Massie
- Delegate Greason
- Delegate Torian

Senate Finance Committee

- Senator Stosch
- Senator Howell
- Senator Hanger
- Senator Ruff
- Senator McDougale

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Changes to Membership

2016 Membership changes:

House Appropriations

- Delegate Landes, Co-Chair
- Delegate Cox
- Delegate Massie
- Delegate Greason
- Delegate Torian

Senate Finance

- Senator Hanger, Co-Chair
- Senator Howell
- [Senator Newman](#)
- Senator Ruff
- Senator McDougale

2018 Membership changes:

House Appropriations

- Delegate Landes, Co-Chair
- [Delegate Peace](#)
- [Delegate Knight](#)
- [Delegate Pillion](#)
- Delegate Torian

Senate Finance

- Senator Hanger, Co-Chair
- Senator Howell
- Senator Newman
- Senator Ruff
- Senator McDougale

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Original Language as Adopted in the 2015 Session

Initial 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.**”

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Initial Staffing and Report

"2. The staff of the elementary and secondary Education subcommittees for the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and the Department of Education will help with facilitating the scope of work to be completed by the Joint Subcommittee. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation will provide support and resources to the members and staff of the Joint Subcommittee.

Other stakeholders, such as those from the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Community College System, local school divisions, private and faith-based child day-care providers, accredited organizations, education associations and businesses may provide additional information if requested.

3. A report of **any preliminary findings and recommendations** shall be submitted to the Chairmen of House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees **by November 1, 2015.**"

Summary of 2015 Meetings

- The Joint Subcommittee met four times in 2015 and recommended extending its work into 2016
- Key themes and recommendations included (*see Appendix D for specific list of proposed recommendations*):
 - Reforming student income eligibility criteria to ensure that in all school divisions the neediest students are served first and are the target of limited state dollars
 - Understanding the barriers to expanding a “mixed delivery” model, rather than primarily serving young children in public school settings
 - Re-examining minimum VPI teacher qualifications (B.A. or other) and addressing related workforce issues
 - Looking broadly at the continuum of early childhood (birth through age four)
 - Improving data, evaluation, and research; and
 - State capacity

Summary of Topics/Discussions 2016 Meeting

During the second year, the Subcommittee met in the fall to receive updates from several initiatives that had been before the membership from the prior year, implementation of new initiatives adopted during the 2016 Session and to hear from the Attorney General's office regarding a legislator's request

- Virginia Early Childhood Foundation updated the subcommittee on three topics:
 1. Selection of the first cohort of grantees in the new pilot for six mixed-delivery grants established by legislation (HB 47) and funded in the budget
 2. Overview of the new Upskilling initiative 'Project Pathfinders – Scholarship for the Early Educator Workforce' and the current Professional Development Pathway in Virginia and funded in the budget
 3. Summary of initial steps taken by the newly established School Readiness Committee (HB 46)
- Elevate Early Education (E3) and Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program Assessment Updates – joint presentation of the assessment tool, the four domains (math, literacy, social skills and self-regulation) and its success at the E3 School
- VDOE reviewed how the VPI funding formula calculates state allocations and also gave an update on federal VPI+ grant

Summary of Topics/Discussions 2016 Meeting

- Virginia Office of the Attorney General staff presented two issues:
 1. Applicability of VDOE licensure requirements to preschool teachers in private day care facilities – specifically, whether early childhood teachers in private child care facilities must be licensed as teachers by the VDOE – official advisory opinion: “So long as they are paid solely from private funds, early childhood teachers in private child care facilities are not required to have a teacher license. If they are paid from public funds, the *Code of Virginia* [§ 22.1-299] requires that they have a teacher license.”
 2. Use of Lottery Funds to help fund the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) - whether Lottery funds that are distributed to localities may be used to help fund VPI – official advisory opinion: “Funding the Virginia Preschool Initiative with the Lottery Proceeds Fund is legally permissible because it is a form of public education

Summary of Topics/Discussions 2017 Meeting

At the last meeting of the Subcommittee, September 2017, several on-going major initiatives that have helped shape and direct the landscape for developing and expanding early childhood education across the Commonwealth were presented

- UVA's Curry School of Education - Research Professor gave an update on the growth and development of Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Program
- Deputy Secretary of Education presented on the continuing work of the School Readiness Committee's activities and reported recommendations
- Update Second Cohort for Mixed Delivery Grantee as well as the *Project Pathfinders* Early Childhood Educator Scholarships
- Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts presented on their Early Childhood Model Program for STEM Through the Arts model

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Overview of 2018 Budget Actions

2018 Special Session I – HB5002 - Chapter 2 - FY 2019 and FY 2020

- Increased the per student slot amount from \$6,125 to \$6,326 for both years in the biennium - added \$4.6 million over the biennium, an increase of \$201 per student
- Added \$4.6 million over the biennium to provide support to school divisions assist provisionally licensed preschool teachers to complete and obtain their license
- Included \$1.0 million over the biennium to provide professional development and training for VPI classroom teachers to ensure supports are in place for high quality experience for preschoolers
- Provided \$700,000 over the biennium for classroom assessments to be conducted in all VPI classrooms by the end of the second year
- Reflected \$100,000 for DOE to resume site visits to VPI classrooms and expand technical assistance the early childhood preschool teachers
- **Added \$75,000 the first year for DOE to develop a plan that establishes specific methodology for classroom observations and assessments in all VPI classrooms, and requires the plan to be submitted to the Chairmen of Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees by November 1, 2018**

Overview of 2018 Budget Actions *(continued)*

2018 Special Session I – HB5002 - Chapter 2 - FY 2019 and FY 2020

- Added \$175,000 GF each year, for a revised total of \$1.35 million annually, to the University of Virginia (UVA) to continue the rollout toward a statewide implementation of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)
- Provided \$100,000 GF each year to UVA's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) to provide training to school divisions annually on how to effectively use the VKRP data to improve instructional practices and student learning
 - The teacher-focused professional development and training is prioritized for the divisions that would most benefit from state assistance in order to provide more time for classroom instruction
- New language:
 - Clarified that the intent is to conduct a pre-assessment in the fall and also to develop and implement a post-assessment at the end of the kindergarten year
 - Directed DOE to coordinate with UVA's CASTL to ensure that all school divisions have their kindergarten students assessed during the school year using the developed kindergarten readiness assessment model
 - All school divisions shall be required to have their kindergarteners assessed no later than by the end of the school year 2019-2020, and then annually thereafter
 - Directed DOE & CASTL to use the results of the VKRP to determine how well VPI promotes readiness in all key developmental domains assessed: literacy, math social skills, and self-regulation
 - DOE is further directed to submit the comparative data analysis using data from the prior year's fall assessment to the Chairmen of HAC and SFC no later than October 1, 2019, and annually thereafter

Overview of 2018 Budget Actions *(continued)*

2018 Special Session I – HB5002 - Chapter 2 - FY 2019 and FY 2020

- Prioritized Mixed-Delivery preschool grant award for a private-provider that partners with Richmond City and submits a high quality competitive application
- Clarified that match requirements for VPI can be met with non-governmental funds
- Clarified the language in the introduced budget regarding the availability and possible distribution of prior year fund balance toward a one-time allocation of VPI slots

Overview of 2018 Budget Actions *(continued)*

2018 Special Session I – HB5002 - Chapter 2 - FY 2019 and FY 2020

- “I. The Department of Education, in cooperation with the Departments of Health, Social Services, and Planning & Budget, shall convene a workgroup facilitated by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, to examine opportunities including, but not limited to, leveraging existing funds targeted to early childhood development with the goal of identifying strategies and mechanisms for developing an Integrated Early Childhood Fund.

The findings of the workgroup shall be provided by October 15, 2018, to the Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative, and shall articulate the potential for existing but underutilized appropriations including, but not limited to, unused Virginia Preschool Initiative funds and TANF, and other funds to support administrative costs that would assist with more fully drawing down federal CACFP funds.

The purpose of the Integrated Early Childhood Fund shall be to more feasibly implement the cohesive and efficient administration of early childhood resources, increasing access to quality early childhood services for at-risk children with little additional fiscal impact on the Commonwealth's budget.”

Overview of 2018 Budget Actions *(continued)*

2018 Special Session I – HB5002 - Chapter 2 - FY 2019 and FY 2020

New language expands the Joint Subcommittee's charge to also review & consider possible recommendations regarding:

- 1) further enhancements to the Quality Ratings System;
 - 2) other recommendations and options included in the 2017 JLARC report on Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs;
 - 3) opportunities for the state to leverage improvements in federal Head Start programs;
 - 4) an integrated early childhood fund to pool and leverage funds for maximum performance and efficiency; and
 - 5) mandating a minimum percentage of VPI slots be in private settings
- 2018 Special Session I legislative action also added a reporting date of October 1, 2018, for any findings and recommendations that the subcommittee may consider to submit by then

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Proposed Work Plan and Future Meeting(s)

☑ Today's September 19, 2018 Meeting Agenda

- Staff Review of Prior Actions
- New Chief School Readiness Officer
- Head Start – opportunities for the state to leverage improvements in federal Head Start programs (*new charge*)
- Va. Quality Rating and Improvement System – *possible further enhancements to the QRIS (new charge)*
- Discussion for Next Steps and possible meeting in December
- Need for an optional October 1 report, consideration for possible future date for a report of any findings and possible recommendations
 - *Note: although the new budget language calls for a report of any findings and recommendations be submitted by October 1, several key updates will not be available until later in the fall and another reporting timeline may be considered if such findings and recommendations are to be submitted*

Proposed Work Plan and Future Meeting(s)

- **December 2018* – Possible Presentation / Discussion Topics**
 - Update from VDOE - Nov. 1 report for VPI
 - Federal VPI+ Program
 - Mixed-Delivery update from VECF
 - Integrated Financing Workgroup October 15th Report / Recommendations
 - UVA updates on progress for CLASS training and classroom observations
 - Follow-up for further enhancements to the QRIS
 - JLARC report on Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs
 - Impact of considerations for mandating a minimum percentage of VPI slots be in private settings
 - Other items?

VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE REVIEW

Presentation to the 2018 Joint Subcommittee

Susan Hogge, House Appropriations Committee Staff

Sarah Herzog, Senate Finance Committee Staff

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

APPENDICES

1995 Session:

HB 2542 (Chapter 852), was adopted and established a new section of code specifically addressing education for **At-Risk 4-Yr-Olds**, which was the starting point for the Virginia Preschool Initiative

“§ 22.1-199.1. Programs designed to promote educational opportunities.

C. The General Assembly finds that effective prevention programs designed to assist children at risk of school failure and dropout are practical mechanisms for reducing violent and criminal activity and for ensuring that Virginia's children will reach adulthood with the skills necessary to succeed in the twenty-first century; to this end, the following program is hereby established.

- With such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, the General Assembly hereby establishes a grant program to be disbursed by the Department of Education to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are unserved by another such program.
- The grants shall be used to provide full-day and at least school-year programs for at-risk four-year-old children that include quality preschool education, health services, social services, parental involvement, and transportation.
- The Department of Education, in cooperation with such other state agencies which may coordinate child day care and early childhood programs, shall establish guidelines for quality preschool education and criteria for the service components, consistent with the findings of the November 1993 study by the Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs.

- During the **1995-96 fiscal year**, the Board of Education shall, with such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, distribute grants, based on an allocation formula providing the state share of the grant per child, as specified in the appropriations act, for **thirty percent of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds** in the Commonwealth pursuant to the funding provided in the appropriations act.
- During the **1996-97 fiscal year**, grants shall be distributed, with such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, based on an allocation formula providing the state share of the grant per child, as specified in the appropriations act, for **sixty percent of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds** in the Commonwealth, such sixty percent to be calculated by adding services for thirty percent more of the unserved at-risk children to the thirty percent of unserved at-risk children in each locality provided funding in the appropriations act.
- In order for a locality to qualify for these grants, the local governing body shall commit to providing the **required matching funds, based on the composite index of local ability to pay**.
- Localities may use, for the purposes of meeting the local match, local expenditures for existing qualifying programs and shall also continue to pursue and coordinate other funding sources, including child care subsidies.
- Funds received through this program shall be used to supplement, not supplant, any funds currently provided for preschool programs within the locality."

1997 Session

HB2312 (Chapter 394) - Legislation expanded the use of the grant funds to include activities that promoted family literacy:

- "The grants shall be used to provide full-day and at least school-year programs for at-risk four-year-old children that include quality preschool education, health services, social services, parental involvement *including activities to promote family literacy*, and transportation."

HB2465 (Chapter 617) - Legislation expanded the local options for those divisions that elected to serve more than sixty percent of the unserved at-risk students with either local or federal funds, such divisions were also permitted to request additional state funding if available in the Direct Aid budget for the initiative:

- *"...Local school boards may elect to serve more than sixty percent of the at-risk four-year-olds and may use federal funds or local funds for this expansion or may seek funding through this grant program for such purposes. Grants may be awarded, if funds are available in excess of the funding for the sixty percent allocation, to expand services to at-risk four-year-olds beyond the sixty percent goal...."*

1998 Session

HB471 (Chapter 828) – Legislation clarified eligibility of children served, allowed for a half-day program, allowed divisions to request a waiver from 1993 Study Report, and also clarified definition of local match to include any 'non-state' related resource

- Children unserved by Head Start or are 5 years old but eligible for kindergarten are eligible
- Allow for a half-day program
- Allow divisions to apply for a waiver from the guidelines reflected in November 1993 study completed by BOE, DOE and Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs
- Clarifies definition of local match to include any 'non-state' related resource

2000 Session

SB170 (Chapter 506) – Legislation defined specific teacher to pupil ratios for program administered through the state but recognized that the program's guidelines may be differentiated according to the agency delivering the services in order to comply with various federal and state requirements:

- Any preschool program administered through the state, but may use an outside service provider, the teacher to pupil ratio has to be the same as in a school
 - ✓ Classroom with 1-9 students must have 1 teacher and those classrooms with 10-18 students must have 1 teacher and 1 aide with a maximum of 18 students per classroom
- Federal Head Start program allows for a maximum of 19 students per classroom

The Program was created during the 1994 Session – HB30 - Chapter 966 - FY 1995 and FY 1996

- Who receives grants: Provide additional state payment to schools and community-based organizations to provide preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds unserved by another program
- Program services: The PreK program should include: 1) quality preschool education, 2) health services, 3) social services, 4) parental involvement, and 5) transportation
- Program Length: Program must be full day and at least a full school year (180 days)
- Program Curriculum: DOE, in coordination with Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs, shall establish guidelines for a quality preschool education; and will provide assistance to localities to develop their preschool plan; will also provide a pre-application work session to assist localities in completing their grant proposals
- Program Funding: Grants are based on DOE formula to determine the number of funded slots: (VEC estimate of four-year-olds multiplied by the percentage of students in school division eligible for free lunch multiplied by thirty percent, then minus the number of students served in Head Start) and at \$5,400 per slot
- Local match, based on the LCI is required; may use local expenditures for existing qualifying program; use PreK grant funding to supplement, not supplant any funds currently provided for preschool programs within the locality
- Program Application Process: Proposal submitted through the locality's chief administrator by May 15, 1995; Division Superintendent determines lead agency who will develop and execute the local plan
- Local plans should include methods for combining and coordinating services from multiple available sources to maximize the number of students served and minimize per child costs for services
- Must indicate the number of children served and the criteria for the determination of at-risk assessment

1995 Session – HB1450 - Chapter 853 - FY 1995 and FY 1996

- New language allowed school divisions to use the state and local PreK funding to backfill reduced funding associated with Title I program for at-risk students
 - Divisions required to request approval from the State Superintendent for such funding change

1996 Session – HB30 - Chapter 912 - FY 1997 and FY 1998

- Changed the state's funding formula from 30% to 60% of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds at \$5,400 per student slot
- Expanded the scope for redirecting state & local PreK funds to go toward backfilling Title I program a due to a reduction in a locality's percentage allocation
- Changed the date for the application deadline from "May 15, 1995" to say "May 15 of each year"

1998 Session – HB30 - Chapter 464 - FY 1999 and FY 2000

- New language to allow DOE to expend any unobligated balances in Direct Aid if participation in the PreK program is greater than projected

2004 Special Session I - HB5001- Chapter 4 - FY 2005 and FY 2006

- Expanded program to include half-day class and pro-rated state funding
- Changed state funding of \$5,400 per slot for unserved student from 60% in FY2004 to 90% in FY 2005 & 100% in FY 2006
- Division Superintendents now required to certify program compliance to receive state funding
- Changed language to prohibit divisions from using PreK funding to supplant local funding for any programs (previously, the language limited the prohibition to just other preschool programs other than Title I)
- Changed language used to direct DOE to develop “guidelines” to a more comprehensive set of academic standards to prepare students for kindergarten and be measurable for achievement and success
- New requirement for students to be evaluated at specific times as determined by DOE
- Changed the application deadline from May 15 in FY 2004 to June 15 in FY 2005 and then May 15 in FY 2006

2005 Session – HB1500- Chapter 951 - FY 2005 and FY 2006

- New language allowed a prorated portion of state funding for the first year of implementation to divisions that began a new PreK program after the school year begins; based on 180 school days
- Technical update to section of language that referred to redirecting the PreK funding for changes in the Title I federal funding, and the students served in it, to reflect the reauthorization of ESEA in 2001 as the NCLB Act, which was previously referred to as the Improving America’s School Act of 1994

2006 Special Session I – HB5002/ 5032 - Chapter 3/10 - FY 2007 and FY 2008

- Increased the per student slot amount from \$5,400 in FY 2006 of 100% of unserved students to \$5,700 in FY 2007 and FY 2008 for 100% unserved
- New language that allowed DOE to expend any unobligated balances in the PreK program for grants to qualifying schools and community-based groups for one-time expenses, other than capital, related to start-up or expansion of programs
- Changed the application deadline from “June 15 the first year and May 15 the second year” to “May 15 each year”

2007 Session – HB1650 - Chapter 847 - FY 2007 and FY 2008

- Changed the program name from “At-Risk Four-Year-Olds Preschool Payments” to “Virginia Preschool Initiative”
- Added \$2.6 million in FY 2008 in new funding for DOE to offer grants to those school divisions that had existing partnerships with private and/or non-profit providers. The grants would fund a pilot to expand the availability of early childhood education programs for at-risk students not already served in those divisions.
- Participating divisions would be required to evaluate the providers using the Quality Standards checklist recommended by the National Institute for Early Education Research. DOE was directed to compile and submit an interim report by December 1, 2007, to the Governor, and the Chairmen of House Appropriations & Education, and Senate Finance and Health and Education that included the number of divisions participating, number of students served, and the benchmarks used to evaluate the pilot; and the final findings of these evaluations shall be submitted within 90 days after the completion of the school year

2008 Session – HB29 - Chapter 847 - FY 2007 and FY 2008

- Updated funding allocated for the pilot from \$2.6 million to \$1.7 million in FY 2008, due to less participation of eligible school divisions

2008 Session – HB30 - Chapter 879 - FY 2009 and FY 2010

- Updated the language to reflect budgeted amount for each of the two years of the biennium using Lottery Funds – previous budgets did not reflect specific budget amounts
- New language to clarify that no Lottery funding for the PreK program would be directly paid out to community-based or private providers (as prohibited by the Constitution, Article X, Section 7-A)
- Language changed the student evaluation from “at specific times as determined appropriate by the Department of Education, Superintendents, or their designee, of” to be given “in the fall and in the spring”
- Increased the per student slot amount from \$5,700 (in FY 2007 and FY 2008) to \$6,000 in FY 2009 and FY 2010 per student slot
- Changed the local match requirement to be capped at 0.5000 LCI
- Changed DOE authority of using unobligated balances in Direct Aid for PreK costs that exceed the budgeted allocation to using only available unspent Lottery revenues to cover such costs
- Funding and language for the previous year’s PreK Pilot Initiative was eliminated

2009 Session – HB1600 - Chapter 781 - FY 2009 and FY 2010

- Eliminated the language that authorized DOE to use available Lottery balances to cover increased participation and costs for the program if over budget

2010 Session – HB30 - Chapter 874 - FY 2011 and FY 2012

- New language defined the specific number of hours for a half-day of instructional classroom time to be a minimum of 3.0 hours and a full-day to be a minimum of 5.5 hours – and subsequently used for calculating state funding
- New language further clarified that no additional state funding would be allocated for an instructional day that was more than 3.0 hours but less than 5.5 hours
- New language also clarified that at least 75% of a local required match will be cash and that no more than 25% can be an in-kind match

2011 Session – HB1500 - Chapter 890 - FY 2011 and FY 2012

- New language clarifies the state policy that both the state and required local match funding cannot be used for capital outlay costs associated with the PreK program

2012 Special Session I – HB1301 - Chapter 3 - FY 2013 and FY 2014

- Changed funding formula to reflect the use of the estimated number of kindergarten students as the beginning proxy for the number of four-year-olds used in the PreK program
- New language restricted updating the kindergarten estimate to just the beginning of a new biennium for Governor's introduced budget
- New language also provided a two year transition from the previous methodology of determining student slots to fund in each school division: as the higher of either the calculated slots based on projected kindergarten enrollments or the lesser of the calculated slots using projections of four-year-olds from the Virginia Employment Commission or the actual number of slots utilized in FY 2012

2013 Session – HB1500 - Chapter 806 - FY 2013 and FY 2014

- Changed the application deadline from May 15 each year to June 15 each year

2014 Special Session I – HB5002/HB5010 - Chapter 2/3 - FY 2015 and FY 2016

- New language and funding added for extending the 2 year transition period another 2 years for additional slots that were calculated from the change in the funding formula methodology in the 2012 Session budget (Chapter 3 for FY 2013 & FY 2014)
- The third year extension, FY 2015, \$1.0 million was added and about 1/3 of the additional slots were prorated accordingly
- The fourth year extension, FY 2016, \$3.6 million was added and funded 100% of the transitional slots



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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March 25, 2015

The Honorable Walter A. Stosch
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Virginia General Assembly
Innsbrook Centre
4551 Cox Road
Suite 110
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060-6740

The Honorable Charles J. Colgan
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Virginia General Assembly
10660 Aviation Lane
Manassas, Virginia 20110-2701

The Honorable S. Chris Jones
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Virginia General Assembly
P. O. Box 5059
Suffolk, Virginia 23435-0059

Dear Sirs:

As you know, the 2015 General Assembly adopted, in Item 136 C.14.d.1) of House Bill 1400 as enrolled, budget language further specifying eligibility criteria for student participation in the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). These criteria are family income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for students or less than 350 percent of the poverty guidelines for students with disabilities, homelessness, or the student's parents or guardians are school dropouts. The adopted language further states that these criteria "be consistent" with the risk factors stated in the 2014-2015 VPI program guidelines, suggesting they not place an absolute exclusion on other criteria that might be used locally for enrolling students in VPI programs.

At this point in the spring, school divisions have begun the process to enroll students in their VPI programs for the 2015-2016 school year. Accordingly, the Department of Education is planning to provide school divisions guidance to give priority to the eligibility criteria referenced above in enrolling students in their VPI programs, but also allow school divisions to continue to use locally selected at-risk criteria.

The Honorable Walter A. Stosch
The Honorable Charles J. Colgan
The Honorable S. Chris Jones
March 25, 2015
Page 2

Such guidance would be communicated to school divisions, and would help ensure the continuity of student enrollment in local VPI programs for the 2015-2016 school year as the General Assembly continues to examine VPI eligibility criteria. It would be communicated to school divisions that this flexibility in interpretation would apply to fiscal year 2016 only. Further, the reporting requirement contained in Item 136 C.14.d.2) of the enrolled budget bill relating to enrollment of students at the specified income levels would be communicated to school divisions, as well as a request to submit data indicating the number of student slots filled during 2015-2016 based on the eligibility criteria referenced above and those filled using existing local at-risk criteria.

Your concurrence with this approach would be greatly appreciated. We believe this approach will facilitate continuation of VPI services locally during 2015-2016, while gathering the information needed by the General Assembly to further study the policies associated with the VPI program.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SRS/KCD/cle



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 26, 2015

Dr. Steven R. Staples, Ed.D
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Dr. Staples:

Thank you for your letter dated March 25, 2015, regarding the budget language revision to the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) program that was adopted during the 2015 General Assembly Session.

As you know, the respective staff from the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees met earlier this week with the Secretaries of Finance and Education and a number of staff from the Administration to discuss a smooth process for school divisions to transition from the existing student eligibility language in the VPI program to that of implementing the newly adopted language.

During the course of the meeting several issues were discussed. Across the state, some school divisions have already begun their student pre-registration process for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year for VPI enrollment using the current program language guidelines set out in the Appropriation Act, Chapter 3.

We agree with your concern that the newly adopted language may potentially impact the student enrollment process if it were implemented for this coming school year without any transition to the new criteria. Therefore, it may be more prudent to provide school divisions with the guidance outlined in your letter: give priority to the eligibility criteria in enrolling students, but also allow school divisions to continue to use locally selected at-risk criteria for only the 2015-2016 school year.

However, we do have the expectation that the new language adopted by the 2015 General Assembly, pursuant to Item 136. 14, d.1, of House Bill 1400, will be implemented during the 2016-2017 school year. This extended period for the transition will provide sufficient time for school divisions to plan in advance for a full school year. It is the intent that the new language criteria be implemented at that time and will allow school divisions to incorporate the changes into their respective VPI program's pre-registration process for student enrollment.

Dr. Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education

Thank you again for addressing this issue and we look forward to continuing to collaborate together regarding this program.

With Best Regards,

S. Chris Jones, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

Charles J. Colgan, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee

Walter A. Stosch, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee

Cc: The Honorable Richard D. Brown, Secretary of Finance
The Honorable Anne B. Holton, Secretary of Education
Mr. Robert P. Vaughn, Staff Director, House Appropriations Committee
Ms. Elizabeth B. Daley, Staff Director, Senate Finance Committee
Mr. Daniel S. Timberlake, Director, Planning and Budget

Recommendation 1:

Mixed Delivery Pilot – With acknowledgement that the new federal VPI+ expansion grant includes private partnerships as one required component among others, there also appears to be broad support in Virginia for encouraging more high quality mixed delivery models with private providers.

As a result, the Joint Subcommittee recommends and strongly supports the development of a state-initiated Preschool pilot program in order to address possible participation barriers for private providers and at the same time to pursue efforts of expanding enrollment of at-risk students in preschool.

The pilot would be designed for up to five school divisions to begin new partnerships with interested private non-profit and/or for-profit providers to estimate preschool classrooms for at-risk eligible four-year old children in low-income families at or below 200% of poverty. (Additional funding may be needed to support a new pilot plan)

Recommendation 2:

Student Eligibility – A. While many other states include specific income criteria they also consider other risk factors. Furthermore, national research findings have determined that in addition to living in poverty, children living with teen parents, or with mothers who have a low education attainment tend to benefit the most from enrollment in a preschool program.

In support of those findings, the members of the Joint Subcommittee affirm its efforts to ensure that the neediest low-income students, those who benefit the most, are served first by Virginia preschool efforts. Furthermore, the Joint Subcommittee recognizes that gathering reliable data and to develop and then provide outreach to hard-to-find families may be a multi-year effort.

Student Eligibility and Program Access – B. The Joint Subcommittee recommends that existing collaboration efforts between state agencies with other similar programs, those that support at-risk four-year old children and their families such as those enrolled for SNAP or TANF services, continue to work together to help ensure a consolidation of resources to effectively reach out to hard-to-find eligible students for enrollment in VPI.

Recommendation 3:

Data/Evaluation/Research – A. The Joint Subcommittee recommends the state take next steps to continue to analyze and improve the data collection efforts, including getting a better picture of “prior enrollment” setting of kindergarteners.

In particular, the Joint Subcommittee recommends that VDOE improve and streamline the preschool enrollment related data for all students entering kindergarten. Specifically, VDOE should pre-populate the ‘PK Experience Code’ field with the known enrollment data for those students who were previously enrolled in a public school prekindergarten program (such as VPI, Head Start, Title I, Special Education) prior to enrolling into kindergarten.

Data/Evaluation/Research – B. The Joint Subcommittee further recommends directing Evaluate Early Education and University of Virginia staff, contracted with the state, to present the testing results of the next phase of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) along with a complete report of the project from its beginning. The presentation should specifically address the project deliverables and tangible evidence to validate the continuation of any future state support.

Participating cohort of kindergarten students should be assessed and evaluated through upper grades to determine any lasting effectiveness of any preschool program experience via a combination of PALS, VKRP and SOL assessments

Recommendation 4:

VDOE Capacity – The Joint Subcommittee heard from multiple sources about the need for more capacity at the state level, in particular to assist with implementing student eligibility changes and working with private providers.

The Subcommittee requests VDOE to prepare a six-year plan for state capacity and technical assistance, including a dedicated point- person to assist with center-based programs. (Additional funding needed).

Request VDOE to develop an annual academic performance assessment report of preschool cohort & submit to General Assembly. (Additional funding needed)

Recommendation 5:

Early Childhood Workforce/Teacher Qualifications –

- A. The Joint Subcommittee recommends the VECF be directed to continue its work with all stakeholders, exploring steps toward a more cohesive pathway, specifically focusing on how to ensure high quality programs and teachers; efficient means to deliver high quality program; and effective ways to target services to Prek students (classroom/ community-based); improving outreach efforts to hard-to-find economically disadvantaged children, and report back by June 30, 2016.

- B. The Joint Subcommittee recommends the State Board of Education be requested to review the PreK-3 and PreK-6 teaching license endorsements. Further, directs VDOE to evaluate the need for a specific level of licensure/endorsement relative to teaching preschool. (May have a budgetary impact if the VDOE would not be able to work within its current resources)

Recommendation 6:

Early Childhood and Child Care –

The Joint Subcommittee heard from multiple sources about the importance of all the early years to school readiness and success and recommends the continuation of efforts to catalogue and assess early childhood needs in Virginia by those agencies responsible for providing preschool related programs and services.

Recommendation 7: Funding Formula –

The Joint Subcommittee recommended that the VDOE review and report the findings from such a review to the Joint Subcommittee in 2016, for the state and local costs of only the Virginia preschool program relative to the costs of kindergarten through grade twelve programs and shall exclude all federal revenues and expenditures.

Key cost drivers and policy levers include the number of state-funded slots per school division, per pupil funding levels, and state and local shares. (Depending on a potential change, additional funding would be needed)

Recommendation 8:

Extend Joint Subcommittee/Areas for Further Study –

A. The Joint Subcommittee recommends continuing its work through at least 2016.

Areas for Further Study –

B. The Joint Subcommittee directs the staff to determine the feasibility and possible scheduling to visit several Virginia preschool public schools and mixed delivery sites during 2016. (Additional funding may be needed to facilitate the travel and site visits to the selected locations.)