

REVIEW OF 2015 ACTIVITIES AND 2016 SESSION ACTIONS

2016 Joint Subcommittee for the Virginia Preschool Initiative

Susan Hogge, House Appropriations Committee Staff

Sarah Herzog, Senate Finance Committee Staff

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

Overview

Update on Virginia Preschool Initiative

- **Background: 2015 Session Budget Actions**
- **Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge and Summary of 2015 Meetings**
- **2016 Session Budget Actions Related to PreK**
- **Today's Agenda and Next Steps**

2015 Session Budget Actions Related to PreK

- Appropriated \$17.5 million NGF in FY 2016 (first of four years) for the federal VPI+ expansion grant
- Allocated \$1.0 million in FY 2016 for the implementation of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program pilot assessment in 16 school divisions
- Allocated \$250,000 in FY 2016 to VECF for workforce and professional development efforts
- Captured \$2.9 million in FY 2016 from technical update of kindergarten enrollment data: for an updated total of \$72.0 million, up from the FY 2015 adjusted amount of \$68.3 million
 - Included \$3.5 million (fourth year transition) from previous formula that used VEC estimated data to using prior year's kindergarten enrollment as PreK proxy
 - Transition funding was originally budgeted as a one-time allocation

2015 Session Budget Actions Related to PreK

- Revised language regarding student eligibility for VPI – statewide consistent program criteria guidelines: (i) family income of not more than 200% FPL; (ii) homelessness; (iii) parents/guardians are school dropouts; or (iv) 350% FPL for students with special education disabilities
- Language directed any available unobligated balances to grants for one-time expenses, other than capital, related to start-up or expansion, with priority to partnerships with either nonprofit or for-profit providers
- Language established this 2015 Joint Subcommittee

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

Membership from Money Committees

2015 Appropriation Act, 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 Landes, Co-Chair
- Delegate Cox
- Delegate Massie
- Delegate Greason
- Delegate Torian

Senate Finance Committee

- Senator Hanger, Co-Chair
- Senator Howell
- Senator Stosch (2015)/
Senator Newman (2016)
- Senator Ruff
- Senator McDougle

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.**”

Joint Subcommittee's Legislative Charge

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 A 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

2016 Session Budget & Study Actions Related to PreK

- Added \$1.4 million in FY 2017 and \$1.5 million in FY 2018 to increase the per pupil amount (PPA) from \$6,000 to \$6,125 -- for a 2.1% increase (see Appendix B for prior years' funding history)
 - \$70.7 million in FY 2017, \$70.9 million in FY 2018
- Added \$1.5 million per year for a new pilot initiative for public-private partnership mixed delivery of prekindergarten services to children and communities (in support of HB47/Chapter 738 Greason) – up to 6 grants of \$250,000 each
 - Administered by Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
- Provided \$600,000 in FY 2017 and \$1.0 million in FY 2018 for community college tuition scholarships for early childhood workforce
 - Administered by Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
- Adjusted the PreK student eligibility criteria to allow up to 15% of slots to be filled based on locally-established eligibility criteria for at-risk, rather than on the income-only criteria adopted in 2015
- New language clarified that only four-year children who are residents of Virginia are eligible to enroll in program

2016 Session Budget & Study Actions Related to PreK

- 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
- Language in Item 1, extended this Joint Subcommittee by two years to 2017
- Legislation established the on-going School Readiness Committee (HB 46/Chapter 652, Greason) to focus on developing and aligning effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce
- SJ 88 (Norment) directed JLARC to study early childhood development programs, scheduled to be briefed in 2017

Today's Agenda

September 7, 2016

- Staff Review of 2015 and 2016
- AG Letter
- Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Updates
- E3 and Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program Assessment Updates
- Review of VPI Funding Formula and Update on VPI+ Federal Grant
- Discussion of Next Steps

Discussion of Next Steps

- 2017 Session: Possible remaining outstanding recommendations from prior subcommittee meetings held in 2015
 - DOE capacity for field work
 - Outreach to hard-to-find eligible families
 - Data, research, and evaluation needs, especially “prior enrollment” information on kindergarteners
 - Quality indicators and improvement
 - Other data needs to get underway in order to have information by next Spring
 - Coordinate VKRP and other tools to improve instructional delivery

- 2017 Interim: Possible presentation/discussion topics
 - Site visits (as a whole, or in small groups locally) to observe classroom assessment system
 - Kindergarten teachers’ perspectives
 - School division outreach to their early childhood “feeders”
 - Parental involvement, child development, and brain research
 - Assessment of program quality, economics/return on investment
 - Other states’ experiences and divisions in Virginia
 - Stakeholder input opportunities
 - Additional topics

ADDENDICES

Potential Recommendations

from the Joint Subcommittee for Preschool for the 2015 Report

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.

Potential Recommendations

from the Joint Subcommittee for Preschool for the 2015 Report

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)

Potential Recommendations from the Joint Subcommittee for Preschool for the 2015 Report

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.

Early Childhood Workforce/Teacher Qualifications (continued) – 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.

Potential Recommendations from the Joint Subcommittee for Preschool for the 2015 Report

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.)

History of State Funding for PreK

Final Adopted Budgets – Caboose Bills
(\$ in millions)

