

Update on Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilots and Upskilling the Early Education Workforce

**Joint Subcommittee on VPI
September 7, 2016**

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What we learned:

During the deliberations of this committee last year, several priorities and concerns became clear:

- Long-standing barriers to effective utilization of the Virginia Preschool Initiative
- Opportunities for partnerships with private child care centers for preschool delivery
- Importance of cohesive career and education pathways for the early childhood workforce in order to ensure quality of early childhood services

How we responded:

- Concept of competitive grants for local communities to design and model preschool systems that work for their families
 - Field test innovations, within a time-limited pilot initiative, for robust mixed delivery preschool systems, utilizing partnerships between public schools and private child care centers
 - Local decision-making strategies
- Tailored supports, built on existing networks and resources, for elevating and supporting the early educator workforce

Legislative Action – 2016 Session

- Mixed-Delivery Preschool Pilots
 - VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY
 - An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1 – 199.6, relating to the establishment of the Mixed Delivery Preschool Fund and Grant Program (HB 47)
 - Budget Item #138T.3 (Chapter 780)
 - “to pilot an initiative to promote public-private delivery of pre-kindergarten services to high-risk children and communities”
 - Funding of \$1.5 million each year for FY2017 and FY2018
- Project Pathfinders: Scholarships for the Early Educator Workforce
 - Budget Item #138T.2 (Chapter 780)
 - “to operate a scholarship program to increase the skills of Virginia's early education workforce”

Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilot and Fund

- Barriers to the success of effective deployment of VPI are structural and include financial challenges and limited partnerships between public and private preschool and child care programs.
- VECF to administer a competitive RFP process.
- Up to 6 grants of approximately \$250,000 each for a July 2016-June 2018 project period to be awarded to local communities, with a second cohort of grantees awarded for a July 2017-June 2019 project period.
- Grant recipients to field test replicable innovative strategies that support a public/private system of preschool delivery with a focus on expanding the numbers of children served in private settings and opportunities for private providers to participate.

Mixed Delivery Pilots Timeline and Statistics

- Community and stakeholder engagement shaped the design of the competitive process and pilot initiative
- Funding announcement released April 8, 2016
- Letters of interest requested by April 26, 2016 (38 received)
- RFP released April 28, 2016
- Proposals were due June 30, 2016 (15 received)
- Review and scoring of applications
- Notification of awards August 4, 2016

United Way - Thomas Jefferson Area (*Albemarle County & City of Charlottesville*)

Increase the number of at-risk four-year olds served by partnering with community-based child care programs, while supporting program and teacher quality through intensive on-site coaching and professional development. (grant award: \$250,000 over 2 years)

James Madison University (*Harrisonburg*)

Embed consistent professional development supports for community-based preschool programs serving four-year-olds enrolled in VPI, including access to a credentialing pathway and training focused on supporting dual-language learners. (\$242,082 over 2 years)

United Way Roanoke Valley (*Roanoke City*)

Partnership with a neighborhood-based private child care center will provide new access to preschool services for three- and four- year olds living in low-income housing communities, aligning with Roanoke City Public Schools for teacher training and consistent curriculum. (\$250,000 over 2 years)

Smart Beginnings Rappahannock Area (*Spotsylvania & Stafford Counties*)

Purchases slots in participating private child care centers to serve at-risk four-year-olds, creating classrooms that serve children from diverse socio-economic households. (\$248,830 over 2 years)

Wythe County Public Schools (*Wythe County*)

In partnership with a private foundation, a coordinated system of professional development and quality enhancement will elevate a culture of quality for all preschool providers in the county, both private and school-based. (\$234,500 over 2 years)

- *Charlottesville/Albemarle*: Decision-making by a collaboration across two school divisions, human service agencies, and philanthropy; leveraging diverse revenue streams to create sustainable classroom cost models.
- *Harrisonburg*: Partnership between higher education and public school division for delivery of high-quality preschool services; creation of a “Center Director Roundtable,” a peer learning community for early childhood administrators hosted by JMU.
- *Roanoke*: Data sharing agreements across school division, Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, and community agencies enable longitudinal tracking of student progress into elementary school.
- *Spotsylvania/Stafford*: Piloting of a micro-credentialing program designed by UVA that focuses on specific skills for teachers in classrooms of children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- *Wythe Co*: Community-wide commitment to consistent curriculum, teacher development, and a focus on quality improvement; partnership between public school division and philanthropy.
- *Waivers for flexibility to field-test strategies to tackle stubborn barriers.*

2nd cohort of Mixed Delivery Preschool Pilot grants – FY17-19

- Competitive process spring of 2017 for grant awards

Overall program evaluation FY17-19

- Competitive process under way; letters of interest were due Sept. 5; interviews with finalists Sept. 9; selection anticipated by Sept. 23, 2016
- Evaluation partner to address these legislative priorities:
 - Successful models of local governance that promote the successful mixed delivery of preschool services
 - Comparison of classroom and child outcomes among teachers with different credentials and qualifications
 - Utilization of strategic assessment to discern student outcomes

Overview of the Upskilling Initiative

“The most important factor in school success and learning outcomes for young children is the capabilities of the adults who support their growth and learning.”

– Upskilling Virginia’s Early Learning Workforce working paper

- Upskilling Initiative was launched at the Federal Reserve Bank July 2015; co-hosted by VECF and Virginia Chamber
- Brought high level and multi-sector attention to the importance of the early learning workforce and the need for a cohesive system of professional development supports
- Highlighted current barriers to PD pathways and credentialing

The current PD pathway in Virginia

Career Studies Certificate

Not offered at every community college but available online.
Content and credit requirements vary (range from 12 to 27 credit hours).

Associate's Degree in Early Childhood

Not offered at every community college.
Most programs are Associate's of Applied Science (AAS).

BA Degree

AAS is not designed to articulate with 4-year degree requirements.
Few BA/BS programs in VA specific to EC; don't lead to a license.

License/EC endorsement

Requires BA/BS degree.
License content not specific to EC.
Year of supervised teaching must be sponsored by public school or accredited private school.

High school completer



Outcomes from Upskilling Discussion

1. Kellogg-funded participation for VA Team in National Academy initiative
2. Establishment of School Readiness Committee starting in FY17 to bring focused attention to supporting the EC workforce
3. Scholarship and credentialing initiative funded through General Assembly:



Virginia's Core Team

National Academies Initiative

- One of 5 states selected
- Access to national resources
- Focus on career and education pathways in Virginia's institutions of higher education
- Team composition
- Principles
- Position Statement and Recommendations*
 - Ensure EC Associate Degree availability statewide
 - Pilot BA programs supporting EC competencies with seamless articulation from EC Associate Degree programs
 - Refine PK-3 teacher licensure to address EC competencies

* Handout included in members' meeting materials

School Readiness Committee

- HB 46 (Patron: Greason)
- Building from discussions of Joint Subcommittee on VPI
- Recognition of the importance of teacher capabilities on the learning outcomes of young children and the need for an effective competency-based pathway for early education workforce.
- Opportunity to engage high-level cross-sector leadership to address important workforce issue.

School Readiness Committee

- Charged with developing and aligning a competency-based professional development pathway and credentialing system for early educators
- Composed of business, SCHEV, higher education (2 & 4 year), private and public early educators, K-12 educators, school boards, legislators, Commissioner of Social Services, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Chaired by business executive.
- Guided by steering subcommittee including Secretary of Education, Secretary of HHR, legislator, business representative, VECF, private early education provider.
- Meetings: August 4, September 8, November 10
- Understand national perspective, research base, assessment of competencies, existing resources, employer demand, skills gap analysis



- Budget Item #138 T.2 in the FY17-18 biennial budget provides funding (\$600,000 in FY2017 and \$1 .0 million in FY2018) for a scholarship program to increase the skills of Virginia's early education workforce.
- In partnership with the Virginia Community College System, VECF is administering **Project Pathfinders** – a scholarship program for EC professionals in preschool and child care settings by accessing community college coursework and credentials.
- Input from diverse stakeholders informed strategies.
- Application materials were made available summer 2016 to allow interested scholarship recipients to begin coursework now - fall semester 2016.

- EC professionals seeking to complete a credential in ECE or child development through the Virginia Community College System.
- Currently employed in a Virginia preschool or child care setting working directly with young children.
- Priority will be given for individuals working with at-risk children based on socioeconomic factors, and for individuals not already receiving other scholarship funds.
- Applicants will identify a specific credentialing goal as part of the application process.
- Applicants must have a letter of support from their employer.

- Pathfinders may enroll in up to two courses per semester, aligned with their individual professional development goals
- Support for cost of books and fees
- Individual applications + cohort applications (convened by employers or by community college faculty)
- Working in sync with other programs

More than just a scholarship program...

Project Pathfinders

- partnership with VCCS
- will include efforts to smooth the career pathway for early educators by making credentials more stackable and accessible
- will leverage other workforce development opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeships
- will enhance quality assurance of community college coursework and Associate Degree programs
- will explore employer needs and strategies
- will promote the value of the early education workforce

Status and Next Steps

- “Soft launch” - Fall semester application window (7/18 – 8/26)
- Interest – 137 initiated applications
- Pathfinders: 81 awarded recipients, 100 courses at 9 community colleges
- Observations
 - Enrollment (NVCC, TNCC, TCC – most attended by Pathfinders)
 - Completion goals (60% - EC associate degree; 40% EC CSC)
 - Largest number of recipients are employed at private centers
 - Opportunities to begin career pathway in high schools
- Employer interest, support, and strategies
 - Registered apprenticeships

Questions or Comments?

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