

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Virginia





U.S. Department of Education PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Check only one box per Program Office instructions. Annual Performance Report Final Performance Report

General Information

1. PR/Award #: S419B150010 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: 51

3. Project Title: 84.419B Preschool Development Grants - Expansion

4. Grantee Name: Virginia Department of Education

5. Grantee Address: P. O. Box 2120

City: Richmond State: Virginia Zip: 23218-2120

6. Project Director Name: Cheryl P. Strobel

Title: Project Director

Phone #: 804-371-7578 Ext.: _____ Fax #: 804-786-1587

Email Address: cheryl.strobel@doe.virginia.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2015 To: 12/31/2015

8. Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period		
b. Current Budget Period	\$1,609,679.42	\$3,204,550.71
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

9. Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No

b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No

c. If yes, provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2015 To: 06/30/2016

Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____

Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____

d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? _____



U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: VA

PR/Award #: S419B150010

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

Overview of Progress

Virginia's receipt of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) has been highly publicized, generating much excitement and discussion across sectors about the value of preschool services. Governor Terry McAuliffe released a [press release announcing the grant award](#), which aligned well with his Executive Orders to create the [Virginia Children's Cabinet](#) and the [Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success](#). Among the priority areas of the Cabinet and the Council is the improvement of early childhood care and education. Additionally, the 2015 General Assembly established a joint subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative to consider increasing accountability, flexibility, and innovation related to providing preschool for economically disadvantaged children, and to further develop partnerships between school divisions and private providers for the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Legislation has been introduced in the 2016 General Assembly related to improving the skills of the early education work force and to expanding opportunities for mixed-delivery preschool services in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Secretary of Education and the state Superintendent of Public Instruction also continue to make preschool education a priority and participate frequently in meetings and press events to maintain visibility of early learning, especially for at-risk children.

- Increase in the Number of VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

As a result of the PDG, Virginia has been successful in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs. Since VPI+ (Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus, the name Virginia gave to its Preschool Expansion Grant) augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), the number of additional slots available for at-risk four-year-olds in a preschool setting has increased by 1,230 *new* slots across 65 newly-opened high-quality preschool classrooms for Year 1 of the grant (2015-2016). One hundred thirty-five (135) Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) classrooms with 1,574 eligible children have been *improved* by providing additional comprehensive services to children and families and by providing high-quality professional development to teachers and assistants. The total 2,804 new and improved preschool slots served by PDG funds represents an increase of 5 percent over Virginia's original goal of 2,683 new and improved preschool slots. As of December 2015, the following data are of interest:

Enrollment Totals

Goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 2,683 new and improved slots

Actual Enrollment as of December 2015 - 2,804 new and improved slots

Percentage of new and improved slots filled as of December 2015 - 105%

Gender

Male - 49%

Female - 49%

Gender Not Specified - 1%

Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic children - 18%

Black or African American children - 63%

White children - 11%

Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 3%

American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report

Children from two or more races - 2%

Children with race not specified - 3%

Home Language

English - 80%

Spanish - 14%

Arabic - 1%

Other language - 3%

Language not specified - 1%

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 98%

Children in private programs - 2%

Children with disabilities - 4%

Children from military families - 1%

Children from migrant families - Too small to report

Children from homeless families - 2%

Children from foster families - 1%

Detailed enrollment data are available in the Annual Performance Report Excel workbook that accompanies this report.

- Development of a Statewide Infrastructure for Early Childhood Education in Virginia

In addition to the focus on increasing preschool enrollment, the most significant efforts and accomplishments in the implementation of VPI+ occurred largely in the development of a statewide infrastructure that will ensure implementation of a high-quality preschool program in Virginia's VPI+ classrooms, with options for school divisions to use many of the features (professional development, curriculum, assessments, etc.) in their non-VPI+ preschool programs as well. Thus the stage is set for enhancing the quality of all early childhood programs in the Commonwealth. Significant elements of this infrastructure are described below.

- Development of the VPI+ Implementation Team

An integrated management team to oversee Virginia's preschool program has been established. The VPI+ Implementation Team consists of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, to intentionally integrate the components of high-quality preschool programs to provide supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children.

- Provision of Professional Development Opportunities

Virginia has provided broad technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ subgrantees in a number of ways. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has conducted a series of webinars and meetings on numerous topics related to early childhood development and education. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia has provided technical assistance to subgrantees in the development of an individualized professional development plan for each VPI+ teacher, and teachers will record the professional development they received in a professional development registry maintained by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Additionally, through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Virginia established a menu of approved professional development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education that subgrantees may purchase for use in the individualized professional development plans being developed for each VPI+ teacher.

- Selection of an Early Childhood Curriculum

Through a competitive RFP process, Virginia selected a curriculum and formative assessment system to be implemented in its VPI+ classrooms. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a comprehensive set of resources that assists teachers as they plan content-rich programs for children with diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. Accompanying *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, an observation-based system for assessing the development and learning of children from birth through kindergarten.

- Procurement of a Rigorous Program Evaluation (Including Formative Measures, Summative Assessments, and Cost-Effectiveness)

- Integration of Early Childhood Data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System

Through a competitive RFP process, Virginia selected SRI International (SRI) to provide evaluation services that will support the implementation of VPI+. SRI has subcontracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to assist with this work. SRI and SRC will collect and use formative program measures, summative child assessments, cost-effectiveness data, and data from the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) to provide feedback for continuous improvement of instruction and program implementation, administer predictive tests and analyze results to answer pressing questions, and communicate results with VDOE, school divisions, and teachers. Additionally, new VPI+ classrooms were rated with the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in fall 2015 as a baseline measure for future improvement.

- Additional Positive Outcomes of VPI+ Implementation

In addition to major organizational and procurement accomplishments associated with Virginia's PDG grant, other successes have occurred:

Increased Interest in and Use of Early Learning and Development Standards and High-Quality Preschool Program Standards - The focus on high-quality preschool resulting from implementation of VPI+ has encouraged renewed attention to [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds](#) and [Milestones of Child Development](#). These two documents, developed respectively by the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Social Services, serve as Virginia's early learning standards and preschool program standards. Both documents were revised in 2013.

Increased Interest in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) The implementation of VPI+ has expanded awareness and understanding of Virginia's QRIS with a variety of partners and stakeholders. For example, some subgrantees have asked to have their state VPI programs rated as participants in QRIS.

Expanded Comprehensive Services - Subgrantees are identifying more ways to provide services to children with disabilities, English learners, and others in need as they identify Family Engagement Coordinators and develop strategies for family engagement in their annual plans to serve these children and families.

Opportunities and Lessons Learned

Describe any broad setbacks, such as unanticipated delays or changes in scope. Explain the factors that contributed to the situation, your response and the net effect your efforts had on improving the situation.

- Recruiting Children for Participation in VPI+ and Accuracy in Enrollment Reporting by Subgrantees

Subgrantees reported VPI+ student enrollment numbers (new and improved slots) weekly to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) beginning in October 2015, using an Excel spreadsheet. Subgrantees were required to report to the VDOE on a regular basis the number of filled VPI+ slots and how they were making progress in addressing the unfilled slots. Phone conferences and site visits by VDOE staff throughout fall 2015 provided the opportunity for discussions with each subgrantee on progress made in engaging at-risk families and children for the VPI+ program and strategizing ways to fill empty VPI+ slots.

As some subgrantees continued to struggle with filling their VPI+ slots, the VDOE conducted a webinar devoted specifically to recruitment of at-risk preschool children to offer school, division-level, and community strategies to identify and recruit children eligible for VPI+ into the program. VDOE staff also conducted targeted assistance in the development of recruitment plans for some subgrantees.

While the weekly enrollment reports showed increasing VPI+ enrollments in December 2015, subgrantees were required to submit detailed student demographic information for all enrolled children. During the data review, it became clear that there were challenges with some of the data submitted - data entry errors with birthdates of children, missing income levels, missing children as compared with enrollment numbers submitted via the weekly Excel spreadsheet, and other missing or unspecified data elements. The VDOE worked with subgrantees throughout January 2016 to correct entry errors and to submit missing data elements. These corrections revealed that the number of eligible (200 percent of poverty level, age requirement) children in new VPI+ classrooms was lower in some school divisions than had been submitted weekly through the first week of December.

Resolution: The VDOE will continue to provide assistance with recruitment, and Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, will assist in providing ideas for the recruitment plans and in making phone calls to engage support. In terms of enrollment reporting, two large subgrantees are taking steps to automate the VPI+ registration and enrollment process to improve communication between the schools and central office. All subgrantees will be required to verify that weekly enrollment data submitted from July 2016 to December 2016 are only for children who are eligible for PDG services. Any subgrantees with 2015-2016 student enrollments falling below their revised Statement of Work (SOW) target enrollment numbers will be required to provide a plan for reaching their enrollment targets in the 2016-2017 school year.

- Meeting the Goal for Inclusion of Eligible Children with Disabilities

The current national average of eligible children with disabilities served by part B, Section 619 of IDEA is 6.4 percent. This target for VPI+ participation is higher than the average of 5.4 percent in Virginia, and considerably higher than that found in some of the VPI+ subgrantees. All subgrantees indicate they are working toward meeting the target for inclusion of children with disabilities in their VPI+ programs. School divisions indicate that children are being screened and observed for possible disabilities. It is reported that there are children going through the formal identification process but eligibility for special education services had not been determined by early December. In addition, due to the timing of this first year of grant implementation there were classroom placements made for some children with disabilities in advance of VPI+ classrooms opening.

Resolution: Subgrantees and the VDOE will continue to collaborate on ways to recruit more children with disabilities into the VPI+ program. With the enrollment and family engagement supports already in place for the 2016-2017 school year, subgrantees will be able to start the identification process earlier. Also, there will be a continued focus on including children with disabilities in VPI+ classrooms in professional development offerings.

- Recruiting Private Providers

The complexity of cost allocation and keeping funding streams separate has been one barrier to the ability to recruit private providers to serve at-risk preschool children in Virginia. Private providers may find it difficult to fill an entire classroom of children with VPI+ eligible children (200 percent of the poverty level or below and

four years old). In order to add children served by other programs or who are funded through tuition payments into the same classroom, they must be able to cost-allocate funds for all expenditures, and private providers may not have the back-office fiscal staff to keep tight records of this nature.

Resolution: The VDOE, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and other grant partners have provided technical assistance on ways to blend classrooms and braid funding to support a mixed delivery of preschool services to maximize the number of children served. Recent legislation introduced in the 2016 General Assembly, if approved, would provide incentives to field-test innovative strategies and evidence-based practices that support a system of mixed-delivery preschool services in Virginia.

Conclusion

The work resulting from Year 1 of Virginia's Preschool Development Grant serves as a strong foundation for improved and expanded preschool services in Virginia. The VPI+ Cross-Organizational Data Team has begun to address issues such as increased collection and reporting of data on preschool children, teachers, and programs. Increased availability of data on preschool participants and programs will inform decisions about program development and offerings, professional development for teachers, and the effectiveness of preschool for all children. Data-driven professional development plans developed for VPI+ teachers will serve as a model for future professional development and upskilling of preschool teachers. The high-quality preschool curriculum, summative assessments, and professional development selected for use in the VPI+ program can also be used by other preschool programs statewide, thus contributing to improved program quality. The results of summative assessments administered to children in the VPI+ program will help to inform work around standards or thresholds for kindergarten readiness. The increased use of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to evaluate preschool program effectiveness will offer information and data that can be used on a broader scale for general statewide program improvement. Greater connections with local partners stand to identify local funding sources, such as educational foundations and business partnerships, to provide additional funding as needed to support programs, comprehensive services, and family engagement activities.

Lessons learned include the importance of clear and constant communication among all grant partners, but especially with subgrantees around issues such as recruitment of eligible children, data collection and reporting and fidelity of program implementation. With so many partners and so many moving parts among the required grant activities, it has been useful to establish timelines and deadlines and to designate a primary point of contact for each component to ensure that success is being made and measured for each activity.

Virginia looks forward to receiving the results of the summative assessments for its VPI+ children, which will serve as the baseline measure for progress in Years 2 through 4. With most of the start-up effort now completed, subgrantees and the state partners can turn their attention to effective program implementation, and they are already making plans for recruitment and training for the 2016-2017 school year.



**U.S. Department of Education
PDG Annual Performance Report
Grant Status Form
Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: VA PR/Award #: S419B150010

Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)

1. Project Objective

1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant. Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2015.

Describe what you did to increase enrollment of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant in 2015. Describe or list the most influential factors that contributed to your success.

(To open Web links, right-click on the link, and then select "Open Hyperlink.")

Increase in the Number of VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

Virginia has been successful in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant. Since VPI+ (Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus, the name Virginia gave to its Preschool Expansion Grant) augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), the number of additional VPI+ slots available for at-risk four-year-olds in a preschool setting has increased by 1,230 *new* slots for Year 1 of the grant (2015-2016), with 1,574 *improved* slots as part of the VPI program, for a total of 2,804 slots served by the Preschool Expansion Grant funds. This represents an increase of 5 percent over Virginia's original goal of 2,683 new and improved preschool slots. As of December 2015, the following data are of interest:

VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

Enrollment Totals

- Goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 2,683 new and improved slots
- Actual Enrollment as of December 2015 - 2,804 new and improved slots
- Percentage of new and improved slots filled as of December 2015 - 105%

Gender

- Male - 49%
- Female - 49%
- Gender Not Specified - 1%

Race/Ethnicity

- Hispanic children - 18%
- Black or African American children - 63%
- White children - 11%
- Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 3%
- American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report
- Children from two or more races - 2%
- Children with race not specified - 3%

Home Language

English - 80%
Spanish - 14%
Arabic - 1%
Other language - 3%
Language not specified - 1%

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 98%
Children in private programs - 2%
Children with disabilities - 4%
Children from military families - 1%
Children from migrant families - Too small to report
Children from homeless families - 2%
Children from foster families - 1%

Detailed enrollment data are available in the Annual Performance Report Excel workbook that accompanies this report.

Virginia has been successful in meeting the Year 1 enrollment goals for the grant. However, it must be noted that there has been confusion over eligibility for VPI+ as well as challenges in reporting data, despite the fact that federal eligibility requirements for both new VPI+ and improved VPI slots were communicated to subgrantees via webinars, meetings, e-mails, and phone calls.

Subgrantees reported VPI+ new student enrollment numbers and VPI improved slots to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on a weekly basis beginning in October 2015, using an Excel spreadsheet. However, these enrollment numbers did not include student demographics.

In December 2015, subgrantees were required to submit detailed student demographic information for all enrolled children. As the data were reviewed in January 2016, it became clear that there were challenges with some of the data submitted - entry errors with birthdates of children, missing income levels, missing children as compared with enrollment numbers submitted via the weekly Excel spreadsheet, and other missing or unspecified data elements. The VDOE worked with subgrantees throughout the month of January to correct entry errors and to submit missing data elements.

Data revealed that the number of eligible children (200 percent of poverty level and age requirement) in new VPI+ classrooms was lower in some school divisions compared to the enrollment numbers that had been submitted weekly through the first week of December. Subgrantees with lower enrollment numbers for new VPI+ classrooms indicated various reasons for the discrepancy including: the transient nature of the at-risk population, resulting in frequent drops and adds of children; errors in registration paperwork; errors in income verification paperwork; a cumbersome paper-driven registration and enrollment system that was not automated at the central office level; and a registration system that first began at the central office staff level, with later transfer of registration forms to schools to process and enroll children.

Resolution: The VDOE will continue to provide assistance with recruitment and Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, will assist in providing ideas for the recruitment plans and in making phone calls to engage support. In terms of enrollment reporting, two large subgrantees are taking steps to automate the VPI+ registration and enrollment process to improve communication between the schools and central office. All subgrantees will be required to verify that weekly enrollment data submitted from July 2016 to December 2016 are only for children who are eligible for PDG services. Any subgrantees with 2015-2016 student enrollments falling below their target enrollment numbers will be required to provide action steps for reaching their enrollment targets in the 2016-2017 school year.

A variance in the number of eligible children in VPI+ improved classrooms can be attributed to the difference in the federal eligibility requirements and the state VPI eligibility requirements. The [2015 General Assembly took action to change the eligibility requirements for VPI](#), with further changes implemented during summer 2015 resulting from concerns expressed by school divisions. The issue became complex as VPI children were being

enrolled in the participating VPI+ school divisions in the midst of the changes. Further details about these criteria changes are found in the response to GPRA Performance Measure 1(b).

News Coverage

Virginia's receipt of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), was highly publicized, beginning with a [press release from Governor Terry McAuliffe's Office](#) on December 10, 2014. The lead agency on the grant, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), immediately notified the 11 participating school divisions and apprised them of the upcoming work required in early 2015 in order to ensure that VPI+ classrooms were fully operational in fall 2015 for the 2015-2016 school year. With the identification of the grant coordinator at the state level at the end of February 2015, work began in earnest to communicate more specific actions required of the subgrantees.

On March 6 and 25, May 20-21, July 30, and August 4, 2015, the VDOE conducted informational webinars with the subgrantees, during which recruitment was a topic. The grant and some of the subgrantees were highlighted in news articles about recruitment of children eligible for VPI+. Examples include:

- [Virginia education secretary in Norfolk to advocate for early education](#), September 10, 2015

- [Ramey, Ramey and Pianta: Innovation in pre-K classrooms](#), November 2, 2015

The additional focus on preschool in the subgrantee school divisions has also encouraged discussion about expanding preschool programs in non-subgrantee school divisions as highlighted in other news articles:

- [\[Charlottesville\] City School Board further mulls reconfiguration, expanded pre-K](#), December 2, 2015

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia was contracted to provide technical assistance and professional development for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and teachers. In this capacity, CASTL staff members visited each subgrantee and provided ongoing technical assistance to address issues, which included help with recruitment efforts.

Subgrantees were required to report to the VDOE on a regular basis the number of filled VPI+ slots and how they were making progress in addressing the unfilled slots. Phone calls and site visits by VDOE staff throughout fall 2015 provided the opportunity for discussions with each subgrantee on progress made in engaging at-risk families and children for the VPI+ program and strategizing ways to fill empty VPI+ slots.

As some subgrantees continued to struggle with filling their VPI+ slots, on October 15-16, 2015, the VDOE conducted a webinar devoted specifically to recruitment of at-risk preschool children to offer school, division-level, and community strategies to identify and recruit children eligible for VPI+ into the program. Also, ideas on how to tap into external community and corporate partnerships to promote the program were presented, and lessons learned from the [Illinois Hard to Reach Families](#) project evaluation were shared.

During the October recruitment webinar, subgrantees shared information about specific strategies they had found to be successful. Of particular interest was a [video](#) created by one of the subgrantees, Henrico County Public Schools, to be used as a recruitment tool with various community groups and in other settings.

The VDOE also provided technical assistance to two subgrantees, Norfolk City and Petersburg City, in the development of recruitment plans for VPI+. It offered webinars to private providers in these school divisions to increase interest, and Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, assisted in providing ideas for the recruitment plans and in making phone calls to engage support.

Policy Implementation

Virginia has also established several practices that contributed to successful recruitment of at-risk four-year-olds for its VPI and VPI+ programs. Among these are the opportunities for subgrantees to blend classrooms (for example, including children from Title I, Head Start, Part B of 619 IDEA, VPI, and VPI+ in the same classroom as long as funding is cost-allocated). Also available is the use of a single point of entry for registration of four-year-olds for preschool programs, meaning that a uniform registration form is used across programs, and program administrators collaborate when holding registration events. After an eligibility review, children are placed in the program that best meets their needs, which maximizes the number of children that a

subgrantee can serve. Eight subgrantees offer a single point of entry for child enrollment in preschool - Chesterfield County, Fairfax County, Giles County, Henrico County, Petersburg City, Prince William County, Richmond City, and Sussex County Public Schools. Brunswick County Public Schools will begin a single point of entry system next year (2016-2017). Winchester City Public Schools and Norfolk City Public Schools are beginning discussions with Head Start to attempt a collaboration for enrollment.

It bears mentioning that the complexity of cost allocation and keeping funding streams separate has been one barrier to the ability to recruit private providers to serve at-risk preschool children in Virginia. Private providers may find it difficult to fill an entire classroom of children with VPI+ eligible children (200 percent of the poverty level or below and four years old). In order to add children served by other programs or who are funded through tuition payments into the same classroom, they must be able to cost-allocate funds for all expenditures, and private providers may not have the back-office fiscal staff to keep tight records of this nature.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

Describe at a high level the efforts that you made to set the expectation for subgrantees to intentionally plan for including within each of its centers, programs, and/or classrooms.

In the development of their annual plans, subgrantees were required to address the following question:

“Describe how the school division has established policies and procedures to ensure that the percentage of eligible children with disabilities served by VPI+ is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through Part B, Section 619 of IDEA, or the current national average, whichever is greater. Further within each VPI+ program the inclusion of eligible children with disabilities should be in proportion to their presence in the population.”

The VDOE set 6 percent as the minimum percentage of eligible children with disabilities to be enrolled in VPI+ by each subgrantee. This target for VPI+ participation is higher than the average of 5.4 percent in Virginia, and considerably higher than that found in some of the VPI+ subgrantees. All subgrantees committed to meeting either the 6 percent target or inclusion of eligible children with disabilities in proportion to their student population.

The VDOE and its partners in early childhood education are keenly aware of the grant requirement to enroll a target percentage of children with disabilities, and the early identification and inclusion of children with disabilities in the VPI+ programs will be an increased focus of technical assistance, professional development, and monitoring.

All subgrantees indicate they are working toward meeting the target for inclusion of children with disabilities in their VPI+ programs. School divisions indicate that children are being screened and observed for possible disabilities. It is reported that there are children going through the formal identification process, but eligibility for special education services had not been determined by early December. In addition, due to the timing of this first year of grant implementation, there were classroom placements made for some children with disabilities in advance of VPI+ classrooms opening.

Describe more specifically your efforts to support full inclusion of in the high-quality preschool program.

All subgrantees certified in their annual plans that eligible children with disabilities would be included and supported in VPI+ activities. Site visits during fall 2015 corroborated these certifications, and monitoring

during spring 2016 will offer the opportunity to gather additional evidence. Selected examples of inclusion and support of children with disabilities in Virginia's VPI+ programs include:

- The VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities) serves on Virginia's VPI+ Implementation Team, and she attended the U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services annual PDG grantee meeting as part of Virginia's team. As attention turns to recruitment needs for the 2016-2017 school year, the 619 specialist will co-present with VPI+ staff at a professional development webinar for subgrantees and their 619 coordinators in April 2016. Additionally, staff from Virginia's IDEA-funded [Training and Technical Assistance Centers \(T-TACs\)](#) will be invited to the April webinar to assist with professional development and technical assistance, with further direct contact with subgrantees throughout the spring and summer 2016.

- Virginia has procured at the state level a menu of professional development opportunities to assist subgrantees in meeting the needs of children with disabilities. This procurement was conducted with an eye to including ample resources to support inclusion of children with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to: Early Intervention: Children with Disabilities, Teaching Along a Developmental Trajectory, Inclusive and Respectful Classroom Communities, Developmentally Appropriate Practice - Guiding and Supporting Your Curriculum, and Challenging Behavior - Prevention and Intervention.

- In its Preschool Development Grant application, Virginia committed to a comprehensive program of professional development for VPI+ teachers. Specifically, each VPI+ teacher must complete at least 30 hours of professional development focused on early learning environments and receive up to 40 hours of coaching. Additionally, an individualized professional development plan will be developed for each teacher, and teachers will record the professional development they received in a professional development registry. The VDOE has partnered with the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) to facilitate this professional development. CASTL conducted a two-day Leadership Academy in January 2016 that provided clear guidance on the approach to be used in developing the individualized professional development plans for teachers, including the inclusion of specific support for children with disabilities where needed.

- Virginia's evaluation contractor, SRI, will collect extensive data on VPI+ teachers and the children they serve. These data will include results from the summative assessments administered to all VPI+ children, which will be disaggregated by subgroups, including children with disabilities. The data will be available through Virginia's State Longitudinal Data System, which will allow extensive linkages of children's results to teachers, classrooms, schools/sites, and school divisions. SRI has already established data agreements with each subgrantee and with the Virginia Department of Education to ensure successful data reporting and disaggregation.

- See description of blended classrooms, cost allocation, and single point of entry enrollment described in the response to the question above. These options provide maximum flexibility and opportunity for inclusion of children with disabilities in VPI+ classes.

- In developing their annual plans, subgrantees were required to explain their approach to offering comprehensive services, including ways they would maximize resources available to support children in Title I, Parts B and C of Section 619 of IDEA, Head Start and those who are homeless, migrant, English language learners, and/or in foster care. Some specific examples from subgrantees include:

Petersburg City Public Schools

The special education director and VPI+ coordinator collaborate to:

- Provide VPI+ with the referral procedures and applicable forms;
- Follow through with the school-based Child Study Referral process and evaluate according to federal regulations, if warranted;
- Inform parents of their due process rights and special education procedures and obtain written consent to conduct evaluations, if warranted;
- Provide VPI+ staff training on recognizing "red flags" that may warrant a school-based team meeting to discuss possible strategies/interventions and/or referral for a full evaluation for special education services under IDEA;

- Ensure development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in compliance with all federal and state regulations; and

- Provide appropriate services in the least restrictive environment.

To ensure inclusion of eligible children with disabilities, the school division:

- Provides VPI+ staff training on recognizing “red flags” that may warrant a school-based team meeting to discuss possible strategies/interventions and/or referral for a full evaluation for Special Education Services under IDEA;

- Require VPI+ staff to participate in IEP meetings of children who have been found eligible to receive services;

- Involve VPI+ staff with the annual Child Find process;

- Complete speech and language screenings on VPI+ children within 45 days from the date of entry into the program;

- Complete all evaluations in compliance with federal and state regulations;

- Place eligible children in the least restrictive environment; and

- Utilize assessment data and knowledge of service capabilities to determine placement of each eligible child.

Prince William County Public Schools

A Memorandum of Agreement has been established between the VPI+ programs and Child Find to include the referral process, services for children, and collaborative professional development. The school division intends to serve all VPI+ eligible children, even if the number of children with disabilities exceeds the target set for the grant.

Sussex County Public Schools

During the establishment of the VPI+ program, a Preschool Advisory Committee was established that includes agencies that can assist with Child Find. These include the local Department of Social Services, Smart Beginnings, the school division, Head Start, local child care providers, and the local Board of Supervisors. In addition, the preschool application inquires about the presence of the following student indicators: physical health concerns, mental health concerns, developmental delays, low birth weight, aggressive behavior, and a diagnosed disability. If these are present, support services are put in place.

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

Describe your efforts to increase the overall number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant in 2015. Describe or list the most influential factors that contributed to creating new and/or improving existing state preschool program slots.

Virginia has been successful in increasing the number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant. Since VPI+ augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), the number of additional VPI+ slots available for at-risk four-year-olds in a preschool setting has increased by 1,230 new slots for Year 1 of the grant (2015-2016), with 1,574 improved slots as part of the VPI program, for a total of 2,804 combined new and improved slots.

The response to the previous two questions outlines actions and policies that Virginia and its subgrantees have taken to increase the number and percentage of eligible children served by the grant. As of December 2015, data indicate that 105 percent of the state's new and improved VPI slots were filled. Despite the fact that in April 2015, Virginia revised its goals for new and improved preschool slots based on revised data from the subgrantees, Virginia did, in fact, meet all of the original goals as stated in the grant application submitted in October 2014.

Subgrantees are required to meet the VPI+ enrollment targets to which they committed in their annual plans, and to describe in their continuous improvement plans on how they will meet any unfulfilled targets. Monitoring conducted by the VDOE in spring 2016 will also focus on filling remaining vacant slots for the 2015-2016 school year and increased attention to recruitment for the 2016-2017 school year.

A number of policy and partnership actions have contributed to Virginia's success in bringing attention to preschool options in the Commonwealth, leading to new and/or improving existing state preschool program slots.

Virginia's Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Order a cabinet solely dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children and youth. The [Children's Cabinet](#), chaired by Secretary of Education Anne Holton and Secretary of Health and Human Resources William Hazel, is working to develop and implement a policy agenda that will help better serve Virginia's children and will also foster collaboration between state and local agencies. One of its five priority areas is to improve early childhood care and education. As a part of the effort, the Governor also signed a second Executive Order establishing the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success. This Council is chaired by Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam and focuses on improving the health, education, and well-being of Virginia's youngest children.

The [2015 annual report](#) of the Children's Cabinet and the Council on Childhood Success made the following recommendations related to school readiness:

1. Increase support for Virginia Preschool Initiative programs, including the development and promotion of mixed delivery systems;
2. Modernize Virginia Preschool Initiative funding and formulas; and
3. Ensure that children most in need can benefit from the Virginia Preschool Initiative in all communities.

Legislative Interest in Preschool Opportunities

The 2015 Virginia General Assembly requested a review of the Virginia Preschool Initiative and recommendations for reforming it:

Chapter 665, 2015 Acts of Assembly (Item 1, Paragraph Q)

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. 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.

The Virginia Preschool Initiative Joint Subcommittee met four times during 2015, receiving presentations on various aspects of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (funding, eligibility, requirements, etc.) and on Virginia's Preschool Development Grant (VPI+). At the end of 2015, its recommendation was to continue its work into 2016, and it offered the [materials from its four 2015 meetings](#) as its preliminary report.

Two bills related to preschool have been introduced into the 2016 Virginia General Assembly, which convened on January 13, 2016:

[House Bill 46 - Early Education Workforce Committee; Secretary of Education to establish](#)

Directs the Secretary of Education to establish a 21-member Early Education Workforce Committee with the key goal of ensuring an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education work force in the Commonwealth.

[HB 47 Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program; established, report.](#)

Establishes the Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis to urban, suburban, and rural community applicants to field-test innovative strategies and evidence-based practices that support a robust system of mixed-delivery preschool services in the Commonwealth.

Collaboration among Partners in Early Childhood Services

Building from the communication opportunities provided by the Children's Cabinet and the Council on Childhood Success, state agencies that serve young children (Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Department of Social Services, and Virginia Department of Health) and other partners have improved their communication and collaboration as a result of Virginia's Preschool Development Grant (PDG), particularly through the regular meetings of the VPI+ Implementation Team. The team meets at least quarterly to discuss the roles of each partner in the grant implementation. Of note are the following grant partners and a brief description of their roles. More information about these roles is available later in this Annual Performance Report.

- **Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)** - administers the VPI and VPI+ programs and serves as the PDG grant lead agency; also administers Virginia's Title I preschool program, Parts B and C of Section 619 of IDEA, and programs for homeless, migrant, and foster children as well as for English learners.

- **Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)** - provides collaboration and leadership with Virginia's Head Start program; has developed and maintains the [Virginia Early Childhood Professional Development Registry \(IMPACT\)](#), a voluntary, statewide tool to document and recognize the professional achievements of practitioners and trainers who work in early childhood education in Virginia. The IMPACT Registry gathers and maintains data submitted by individuals and reviewed by Registry staff. It awards a Professional Development Certificate designating an individual's placement level on the Career Pathways for Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time Practitioners. Each level represents increased training and education, indicating a commitment to early childhood education and creating a pathway to career growth. Representatives from the VDSS serve on the VPI+ Cross-Organizational Data team to improve statewide preschool data.

- **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** - provides guidance to subgrantees in funding opportunities for required daily snacks and other nutritional and well-being needs as part of comprehensive services. Representatives from the VDH serve on the VPI+ Cross-Organizational Data team to improve statewide preschool data.

- **Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF)** - serves as the lead on the implementation of Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which establishes quality ratings of early childhood programs for parents and families and provides support so that programs can voluntarily improve the quality of the services they provide. VECF also supports Virginia's [Smart Beginnings](#) network, which brings public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for young children. Representatives from the VECF serve on the VPI+ Cross-Organizational Data Team to improve statewide preschool data.

- **Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia** - provides support to subgrantees through a process of continuous quality improvement, including setting goals with a focus on professional development, and using data to inform changes at the program-, teacher-, and classroom-levels. CASTL provides ongoing technical assistance and professional development for VPI+ coaches.

- **SRI International** - conducts the evaluation of the VPI+ program providing for quality improvement planning and also administers the direct summative assessments.

1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program. Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2015-16 school year.

Describe what you did that led to an increase in the number and percentage of children served overall in the state preschool program. Describe the most influential factors that contributed to your success.

Virginia's state preschool program, the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), has been in existence since 1996, beginning with an appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly in FY 1995. At that time, VPI served 30 percent of unserved at-risk four-year-olds (i.e., not in Head Start, Title I preschool, Early Childhood Special Education, or other programs for at-risk four-year-olds) as determined by locally established risk factors.

By 2006, 100 percent of eligible at-risk four-year-olds were included in the funding formula. Beginning in FY 2009, the General Assembly funded an increase in the per pupil rate from \$5,700 to \$6,000, and effective in FY 2010, the local required match was capped at 0.5000, whereas previously it had been based solely on the composite index of local-ability-to pay, which resulted in a sizeable match from more affluent school divisions.

The state appropriation has increased steadily from \$9.3 million in FY 1995 to \$68.6 million in FY 2016 (an increase of \$.3 million over the previous year). As a result, the number of budgeted VPI slots has also increased from 7,938 in FY 2002 (earliest available data) to 23,466 in FY 2016. The actual number of VPI slots used in FY 2016 is 18,356, an increase of 106 slots over the previous year. Based on the VPI funding formula, some school divisions do not receive enough slots to support all of their unserved at-risk children while others do not use all their slots. School divisions cite the following reasons for not using all their VPI slots:

- Difficulty or inability to meet the required local match;
- Insufficient space to house additional preschool classrooms in school facilities; and/or
- A minimal number of children eligible for the program by state allocation formula, resulting in a program that may not be cost effective.

Virginia's participation in the Preschool Development Grant has helped remove some of these barriers to participation by eliminating a local cash match required by subgrantees, and facilitating options to offer preschool in locations outside of school facilities.

For the 2015-2016 school year, 118 of 128 eligible divisions participated in VPI. Six of Virginia's 134 school divisions are not eligible for funding under the state formula. Of those participating, 63 used 100 percent of their VPI slot allocation; 27 divisions used 76 - 99 percent of their slot allocation; 13 divisions used 50 - 75 percent of their slot allocation; and 15 divisions used less than 50 percent of their slot allocation.

The 2006 General Assembly also added new language to the Appropriation Act that authorized the Department of Education to use unexpended balances of state VPI funding each year to provide grants to qualifying divisions/localities for one-time expenses, other than capital, related to the start-up or expansion of their VPI programs. This provision was modified by the 2015 General Assembly for FY 2016 to give priority for such

grants to VPI programs expanding the use of private partnerships.

Beginning in FY2015, the number of unserved at-risk four-year-olds in each school division is based on the projected number of kindergarten children. The division-level free lunch eligibility percentage is used as the at-risk criterion in the funding formula.

The 2015 General Assembly also adopted new eligibility criteria for children participating in the VPI program and new reporting requirements for school year (SY) 2015-2016. Whereas previously school divisions could establish their own at-risk criteria for VPI participation, the new eligibility criteria are: 1) family income at or below 200 percent of poverty, 2) homelessness, 3) student's parents or guardians are school dropouts, or 4) family income is less than 350 percent of federal poverty guidelines in the case of children with special needs or disabilities. Given the increased rigor and sudden implementation requirements of these criteria, legislative language allowed flexibility for SY 2015-2016 only, to allow a one-year transition:

- Children meeting one of the four new criteria must be given priority for enrollment in approved VPI slots.
- School divisions may continue to use locally selected at-risk criteria as a transition to the new eligibility criteria.
- Beginning with SY 2015-2016, school divisions must use the new eligibility criteria.

As a condition of this flexibility, school divisions are required to collect and report data related to the new criteria:

- Income at or below 200 percent of poverty
- Homelessness
- Student's parents or guardians are high school dropouts
- Family income is less than 350 percent of federal poverty guidelines in the case of children with special needs or disabilities
- Local criteria (SY 2015-2016 only)

School divisions must also provide the total number of VPI slots used in each of the following income brackets:

- At or below 130 percent of federal poverty level
- 131 percent - 200 percent
- 201 percent - 350 percent
- 351 percent and above (SY 2015-2016 only)

At a high level, describe your efforts to improve the quality of existing preschool programs that receive state funding and by what methods.

Virginia's Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Orders a Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. Their [2015 annual report](#) made the following recommendations related to school readiness:

1. Increase support for Virginia Preschool Initiative programs, including the development and promotion of mixed-delivery systems;
2. Modernize Virginia Preschool Initiative funding and formulas; and
3. Ensure that children most in need can benefit from the Virginia Preschool Initiative in all communities.

Legislative Interest in Preschool Opportunities

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Two bills related to preschool have been introduced into the 2016 Virginia General Assembly, which convened on January 13, 2016:

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[HB 47 Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program; established, report.](#)

Establishes the Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis to urban, suburban, and rural community applicants to field-test innovative strategies and evidence-based practices that support a robust system of mixed-delivery preschool services in the Commonwealth.

Creation of Virginia's VPI+ Implementation Team

An integrated management team to oversee Virginia's preschool program has been established. The VPI+ Implementation Team consists of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, to intentionally integrate the components of high-quality preschool programs to provide supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children.

Increased Interest in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation's (VECF) VPI+ quality coordinator serves as a member of the state's QRIS hub team, to assist and provide input on all aspects of Virginia's QRIS implementation. This includes meeting monthly with the eight QRIS regional coordinators and assisting with statewide QRIS training needs. CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) results and trends from VPI+ ratings are being used to inform statewide quality improvement efforts at existing preschool programs.

Involvement in VPI+ has also expanded awareness and understanding of Virginia's QRIS with a variety of partners and stakeholders. For example, some participating subgrantees (including Brunswick, Richmond City, and Winchester) have asked to have their state VPI programs rated as participants in QRIS. These ratings would serve as baseline measures for continuous improvement.

1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.

In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 1 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
 - Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
 - School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

Opening Paragraph

The Virginia Board of Education has set the expectations for the school readiness of children at kindergarten entry by adopting the following definition of school readiness:

“School readiness” describes the capabilities of **children**, their **families**, **schools**, and **communities** that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component - children, families, schools, and communities - plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. No one component can stand on its own.

Ready Children. A ready child is prepared socially, personally, physically, and intellectually within the developmental domains addressed in Virginia's six *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*: literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, physical and motor development, and personal and social development. Children develop holistically; growth and development in one area depends upon development in other areas.

Ready Families. A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in the

child's life and take responsibility for the child's school readiness through direct, frequent, and positive involvement and interest in the child. Adults recognize their role as the child's first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning, determination, and self-control.

Ready Schools. A ready school accepts all children and provides a seamless transition to a high-quality learning environment by engaging the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers, who recognize, reinforce, and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences.

Ready Communities. A ready community plays a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children's readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long-term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

Additional indicators for each component are available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/school_readiness/va_school_readiness_definition.pdf.

As set forth in Virginia's PDG application, Virginia has established the following VPI+ goals for the school readiness of children who attended new VPI + classrooms at their entry to kindergarten:

- Literacy/Language Development

Percent of VPI+ children in PALS*-PreK Spring Developmental Range and PALS*-K Readiness Benchmark (85 percent in Year 1, 90 percent in Year 2, 92 percent in Year 3, 95 percent in Year 4)

* Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

- Cognition and General Knowledge; Approaches toward Learning; Social and Emotional Development; and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Percent of VPI+ children who meet or exceed normative average in each domain (85 percent in Year 1, 90 percent in Year 2, 92 percent in Year 3, 95 percent in Year 4)

Virginia has adopted a number of systems and supports for VPI+ that create a framework to assess children's school readiness:

- A standardized preschool curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*) and access to formative assessments (*Teaching Strategies GOLD*);
- Professional development and coaching to support implementation of the curriculum and assessments;
- A comprehensive summative assessment system and evaluation; and
- Data-use agreements and collection of summative data to be integrated into Virginia's Statewide Longitudinal Data System for use in measuring success and trends over time.

Assessments and Instruments

In collaboration with its VPI+ evaluator, SRI International, Virginia has selected assessment instruments to assess the five Essential Domains of School Readiness aligned with [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning](#). All assessments will be administered to preschool children in new VPI+ classrooms in the fall and spring, and again in the fall when they enter kindergarten. The threshold for school readiness for each assessment will be determined by state or national norms on the assessment when available. The selected assessments must be used by the subgrantees participating in the VPI+ grant program. Subgrantees may choose to use them in other preschool classes they offer. The Essential Domains will be assessed as follows:

1. Language and literacy development

Classroom teachers will administer the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) to assess children's phonological awareness, print and word awareness, name writing ability, and alphabet recognition.

2. Cognition and general knowledge

The Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement Revised (Applied Problems Subtest) will be administered by field assessors to assess numeracy and counting, and they will also administer the Dimensional Change Card Sort (DCCS) to assess cognitive flexibility and attention shifting.

3. Approaches toward learning

Classroom teachers will complete the task orientation subscales of the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS-2) to rate children's approaches toward learning.

4. Social and emotional development

Field assessors will administer the Head Toes Knees Shoulders (HTKS) Task to assess self-regulation. Additionally, the peer social skills and behavior control subscales of the T-CRS-2 will be used to assess the children's skills and abilities in peer relations and behavior.

5. Physical well-being and motor development

For the first year of the grant, teachers were asked to rate children's motor development across eight skills (running, jumping, hopping, catching, kicking, throwing, bouncing a ball, holding a pencil). These motor skills were selected based on use in national surveys and/or motor assessments. Teachers were asked to note whether the child could or could not perform these skills. They could also use a rating of "don't know."

However, there were challenges in collecting complete data for all eight skills on all VPI+ children in new classrooms. Based on the completeness of data received, abilities in only three skills will be reported for the first year: holding a pencil properly, running without difficulty, and jumping up with both feet and landing on both feet.

Virginia continues to explore physical well-being and motor development assessment options at this time, including possible use of the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* Early Childhood Indicators of Progress in Physical and Motor Development and the [state mandated kindergarten screening list for fine and gross motor skills](#).

Training and Test Quality

- VPI+ Evaluation Advisory Board

Virginia's evaluator, SRI International, has engaged an Evaluation Advisory Board (EAB) to provide advice and guidance to the VPI+ project. The members bring diverse perspectives to ensure a high-quality evaluation design to ensure the success of the VPI+ program.

- The Woodcock Johnson III, Dimensional Change Card Sort, and Head Toes Knees Shoulders (HTKS)

For validity and reliability of assessment results, SRI International has hired and trained the child assessment team to conduct the assessments. All assessors have been trained and achieved at least 80 percent reliability to be ready to go into the field. Data collection supervisors for each region have also been identified to schedule the assessments, conduct fidelity checks, and manage the on-site process for gathering consent.

- The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)

As required by Virginia's Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI), in kindergarten through grade 3, all school divisions in the state must use the nationally validated PALS instrument as the diagnostic literacy screening instrument. Additionally, school divisions that participate in the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI and VPI+) are required to use the PALS-PreK assessment for literacy screening in preschool classes during the fall and spring of each school year. The PALS office at the University of Virginia, in collaboration with the VDOE, provides

training to Virginia teachers (including VPI+ teachers) on the administration of PALS-PreK and the submission of data.

- The Teacher-Child Rating Scale (TCRS)

The Teacher-Child Rating Scale (TCRS) items ask about the child's behavior and social skills, including how well he/she gets along with other children and how well he/she can pay attention and persist in classroom activities. Teachers are asked how much they agree that each item describes the child. They are asked to trust their first thoughts, work quickly, choose only one response for each item, and to complete every item.

Data and Usage

SRI International has established data sharing and usage agreements with the VDOE and all subgrantees. Summative data resulting from student assessments will be entered into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System and will be available for use in measuring success and trends over time. Data will be disaggregated by ethnicity (Hispanic), race (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African-American, White, Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander), gender, and for children with disabilities, limited English proficient children, and economically disadvantaged children.

Plans for Year Two Reporting

Virginia's Cross-Organization Data Team meets regularly to review progress on collecting the data for VPI+ and on designing reports that offer the disaggregated data in a format useful to stakeholders. It is anticipated that Virginia will be able to report disaggregated data for all subgroups in new VPI+ classrooms by February 2017.

For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:

1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Not applicable to Virginia.

Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.

The following preschool infrastructure supports in Virginia have benefitted or will benefit from Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funds:

- The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assess and improve the quality of preschool classrooms;
- Selection of summative assessments to measure preschool children's kindergarten readiness;
- Expanded services to children with disabilities, English learners, and others in need as subgrantees develop family engagement plans to serve these children and families;
- Improved professional development for educators as a result of support offered by grant partners and an approved list of professional development providers; and
- Improvements to Virginia's State Longitudinal Data System (VSLDS) to accommodate increased data on preschool programs.

Investment in the Structural Elements of Quality

(a) Early learning and development standards

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has developed, and the Virginia Board of Education has reviewed [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds \(2013\)](#), which serve as Virginia's early learning and development standards and are required as the curricular basis for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) and Virginia's enhanced VPI+ program. The *Foundation Blocks* are aligned with Virginia's Kindergarten *Standards of Learning* and Virginia's Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) in the following areas: literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, health and physical development, personal and social development, music, and the visual arts.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has developed [Milestones of Child Development \(2013\)](#), a guide for adults working with young children. This document offers milestones of child development in the areas of social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, fine arts, and physical development and health.

(b) Program standards that are consistent with a high-quality preschool program

Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) was created to provide a consistent way to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings. It is implemented by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), one of the partners in Virginia's PDG. All new VPI+ programs must be QRIS rated, which has generated interest by the state-funded VPI programs in seeking this rating as well.

The QRIS awards quality levels to child care and preschool programs based on four standards as outlined in the [Standards for Classroom-Based Programs \(November 2011\)](#): education, qualifications, and training; interactions; structure; and environment and instruction.

(c) Programs for children with disabilities and English learners, including work force development for support of those programs

Each subgrantee's annual plan contains a comprehensive services plan that addresses its preschool services to children with disabilities and English learners and their families. For English learners, in particular, several school divisions reference services to adult family members who need English language classes as well as other support services.

(d) Methods to determine the availability of high-quality preschool programs

Many school divisions in Virginia offer a single point of entry registration process for public preschool, which maximizes the preschool slots available in public schools and in private or faith-based providers contracted to serve preschool children on behalf of the public school.

The VECF maintains an [online list of QRIS-rated child care providers](#). The list is sorted by locality for ease of reference, and includes public school programs as well as private, faith-based, and Head Start programs.

The VDSS maintains a [registry of child day care programs](#) in the Commonwealth, which includes a [listing of preschool programs operated by Virginia's school divisions](#).

The Virginia Head Start Association, Inc., offers an [online Head Start Locator](#) that allows a user to locate a nearby Head Start program.

(e) Preschool teacher education and inclusion of early childhood education and development in teacher certification and/or requirements for licensure

Virginia issues the following teaching licenses that permit a teacher to teach preschool: Early/Primary Education PreK-3 and Elementary Education PreK-6. Teachers with these licenses must have completed an approved teacher preparation program in one of these areas or have a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university majoring in the liberal arts and sciences (or equivalent) and fulfill specific requirements related to the endorsement area, i.e., PreK-3 or PreK-6.

(f) Improvement to teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development

A significant component of Virginia's Preschool Development Grant is the development of high-quality professional development for VPI+ teachers, coaches, and administrators, provided by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. Responses to other questions in this Annual Performance Report provide greater detail about this component. As such, an infrastructure is being developed to provide improved professional development for all Virginia preschool teachers, including the selection in summer 2015 of a single preschool curriculum and the accompanying professional development and support tools to assess the learning and development of young children.

Additionally, the VDOE established, through a competitive RFP in summer 2015, a list of approved professional development offerings that all preschool providers in the Commonwealth may use in the continuing education of preschool teachers. The complete list is available online at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/procurement/early_learning_providers_pd/rfp_doe-pdo-2015-11_summary_of_awards.pdf.

Also, all stakeholders are carefully watching [House Bill 46](#), introduced into the 2016 General Assembly to establish an Early Education Workforce Committee “with the key goal of ensuring an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce in the Commonwealth.”

(g) Use of a Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team and contracted with a data consultant to facilitate the addition of required preschool data fields into the VSLDS. Membership on the Data Team consists of representatives from the VECF; the Virginia Departments of Health, Social Services, and Education; SRI International, the evaluator for Virginia's Preschool Development Grant; the data consultant; and others as

needed. The Cross-Organizational Data Team met three times during 2015. Currently, the Data Team is working to establish key action steps and a timeline to complete the integration of preschool data into the VLDS by the end of the grant period.

(h) A comprehensive early learning assessment system

As a part of a comprehensive assessment system, summative assessments are being administered to examine changes in the five Essential Domains of School Readiness and later school and academic outcomes for children in new VPI+ classrooms. Details about the summative assessments are available in other sections of this Annual Performance Report. The participation of non-VPI+ children as comparison groups in this evaluation begins to promote the use of summative assessments statewide. The results of the assessment system stand to influence future participation of Virginia's preschool classrooms in the summative assessments as well.

(i) Building preschool programs' capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home

Each subgrantee's annual plan contains a family engagement plan that addresses culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and orientation meetings, home visits, parent/teacher conferences, logs of family engagement activities, an annual family survey, and creation of a Family Access Consortium.

VPI+ subgrantees have been connected to Smart Beginnings partners to provide for at-risk children and families at the local level. Subgrantees have been able to access varied resources and make important connections such as assisting family engagement coordinators in communicating with a wide network of family-serving organizations.

(j) Building state- and community-level support for high-quality preschool programs through linkages to other early learning programs and resources for families, including child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Orders a Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. Their [2015 annual report](#) made recommendations related to school readiness in the areas of mixed-delivery systems and funding formulas. More details about the Cabinet and Council are available in other sections of the Annual Performance Report.

VPI+'s priority for ensuring a continuum of supports for at-risk families is aligned with the work of the Children's Cabinet and the Council. As a result, Governor McAuliffe included \$15.5 million for home visiting services in high-need communities in the introduced budget under consideration in the 2016 General Assembly.

Additionally, with assistance from the VECF, 104 cities/counties in Virginia have benefited from Virginia's [Smart Beginnings](#) network, which helps public and private leaders collaborate on priorities for their youngest citizens.

2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

Opening Paragraph

Describe at a high level the most significant efforts or activities that you did in 2015 to implement high-quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more high-need communities.

Virginia's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) application noted in Section (C)(1) that it would use PDG momentum and funding to enhance the elements of its existing statewide preschool program, called the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). The enhanced model being implemented with PDG funds in 11 participating school divisions (subgrantees) is called VPI+.

Major accomplishments in the implementation of VPI+ for 2015 include:

- Development of a Statewide Infrastructure for Early Childhood Education in Virginia

The most significant efforts and accomplishments in the implementation of VPI+ occurred largely in the development of a statewide infrastructure that will ensure implementation of a high-quality preschool program in Virginia's VPI+ classrooms, with options for school divisions to use many of the features (professional development, curriculum, assessments, etc.) in their non-VPI+ preschool programs as well. Thus the stage is set for enhancing the quality of all early childhood programs in the Commonwealth. Significant elements of this infrastructure are described below.

Virginia is creating a cross-agency and cross-sector system at the state level that will support cohesive implementation and endurance of high-quality state preschool programs in Virginia. The VPI+ Implementation Team, Virginia's grant management team, is led by a representative of the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Humanities and Early Childhood and includes the Director of the Division of Child Care and Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services (who is also the state's Child Care Administrator), a senior representative of Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), the Director and Associate Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, the Director of the Office of Family Health Services at Virginia's Department of Health, and each of the subgrantees' VPI+ Coordinators. The objective of including a team of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, is to more intentionally integrate the components of a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children. The representatives and agencies assigned to the VPI+ Implementation Team have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum, including the Home Visiting Consortium, the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Virginia, Child Care Resource and Referral, Smart Beginnings, Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and Part B services.

- Provision of Professional Development Opportunities

Virginia has provided broad technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ subgrantees in a number of ways. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has conducted a series of webinars and meetings on topics, including: curriculum and formative assessment, family engagement, comprehensive services, practice-based coaching strategies, recruitment of children from hard-to-reach families, providing high-quality professional development and coaching, public libraries as partners, grant budgets and reimbursement requests, subgrantees' annual plans for grant implementation, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), grant data collection (student, teacher, program), and VDOE monitoring of program and fiscal grant activities, and required data and information for Virginia's Annual Performance Report for the PDG.

The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia has also provided technical assistance to subgrantees in the development of an individualized professional development plan for each VPI+ teacher, and teachers will record the professional development they received in a professional development registry maintained by the Virginia Department of Social Services. CASTL and VECF have begun assisting VPI+ programs on how to use the results from fall 2015 QRIS ratings to inform teachers' individualized professional development plans, particularly in the area of improving quality of teacher-child interactions as

measured by CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System).

Additionally, through a competitive RFP (Request for Proposals) process, Virginia established a menu of approved professional development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education that subgrantees may purchase for use in the individualized professional development plans being developed for each VPI+ teacher. (See #2 below for additional information.)

- Selection of an Early Childhood Curriculum

Through a competitive RFP process, Virginia selected a single curriculum and formative assessment system to be implemented in its VPI+ classrooms. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a comprehensive set of resources that assists teachers at all levels of experience as they plan and offer content-rich programs for children with diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. Accompanying *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, an authentic, observation-based system for assessing the development and learning of children from birth through kindergarten. (See #7 below for additional information.)

- Procurement of a Rigorous Program Evaluation (Including Formative Measures, Summative Assessments, and Cost-Effectiveness)

- Integration of Early Childhood Data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System

Through a competitive RFP process, Virginia selected SRI International (SRI) to provide evaluation services that will support the implementation of VPI+. SRI has subcontracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to assist with this work. SRI and SRC will collect and use formative program measures, summative child assessments, cost-effectiveness data, and data from the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) to provide feedback for continuous improvement of instruction and program implementation, administer predictive tests and analyze results to answer pressing questions, and communicate results with VDOE, school divisions, and teachers. Additionally, VPI+ classrooms were QRIS rated in fall 2015 as a baseline measure for future improvement. (See #10 below for additional information.)

Description of Progress on Each Structural Element

1 - High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a state-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials

In order to obtain a teaching license in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a teacher must have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree. Additionally, Section 22.1-299 of the *Code of Virginia* states, "No teacher shall be regularly employed by a school board or paid from public funds unless such teacher holds a license or provisional license issued by the Board of Education." Thus, all preschool teachers who are paid with public state or federal funds must have a bachelor's degree.

Virginia issues the following teaching licenses that permit a teacher to teach preschool: Early/Primary Education PreK-3 and Elementary Education PreK-6. Teachers with these licenses must have completed an approved teacher preparation program in one of these areas or have a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university majoring in the liberal arts and sciences (or equivalent) and fulfill specific requirements related to the endorsement area, i.e., PreK-3 or PreK-6. Thus publicly funded preschool teachers have a bachelor's degree and have completed an approved early childhood teacher preparation program or state-approved alternate route to licensure.

In addition, Virginia issues the following add-on endorsement: Early childhood for three- and four-year-olds. An individual who holds a Virginia teaching license with an endorsement in early education (PreK-3 or PreK-6) must complete nine semester hours of graduate-level coursework in early childhood education and a supervised practicum in a preschool setting. This endorsement recognizes the candidate's additional preparation in early childhood education.

Qualifications for preschool teaching assistants are determined at the local level. Subgrantees may expend VPI+ funds to help pay for additional professional development or course work for preschool teaching assistants.

2 - High-quality professional development for all staff

Preparation for and Implementation of VPI+

Throughout the spring and summer of 2015, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted or facilitated a number of webinars, meetings, and phone conferences with the subgrantees in preparation for the startup of VPI+ classrooms in late summer/early fall 2015. The VDOE also conducted technical assistance site visits to each subgrantee during fall 2015 and has planned site visits for each subgrantee in spring 2016.

A description of technical assistance and professional development provided by the VDOE and other grant partners follows:

- March 6, 2015 - VPI+ Program Federal Preschool Expansion Grant Informational Webinar (VDOE)

Reviewed information required for the Memorandum of Understanding, Scope of Work, budget, student recruitment, and data collection requirements for each subgrantee.

- March 19, 2015 - A webinar on how to effectively engage private partners in Virginia's Preschool Initiative was provided for all Virginia's subgrantees. The webinar was presented in collaboration between the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Humanities and Early Childhood and the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.

- March 25, 2015 - VPI+ Program Federal Preschool Expansion Grant Informational Webinar (VDOE)

Provided information on VPI+ student eligibility and recruitment, definitions of new and improved slots, and the four-year budget framework

- April 30, 2015 - VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting

Served as the organizational meeting of Virginia's VPI+ Implementation Team, introducing the partners and reviewing the role each would play in implementation of the grant.

- May 20 and 21, 2015 - VPI+ Program Federal Preschool Expansion Grant Informational Webinar (VDOE)

Provided assistance on development of the subgrantee VPI+ budget narrative, use of the VDOE's electronic financial system (OMEGA), a discussion of the data elements required for VPI+, and information on development and revisions to each subgrantee's VPI+ annual plan, including recruiting eligible children.

- July 21, 2015 - VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting via Webinar

Provided an opportunity for each of the grant implementation partners to give an update on their accomplishments to date and as well as discuss issues and potential obstacles; also included a group presentation on *Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies GOLD*, the curriculum and formative assessment system selected for use in VPI+ classrooms.

- July 30 and August 4, 2015 - VPI+ Monitoring Webinar (VDOE)

Provided updates on the status of VPI+ implementation by subgrantees and work in progress at the state level to staff the VPI+ office and procure the curriculum, summative assessments/evaluation, and professional development menu for use by subgrantees; reviewed the need for student recruitment, the monitoring requirements and process for the grant, and the schedule for site visits.

- August 17 and 18, 2015

CASTL provided VPI+ coaches initial training focused on the Practice-Based Coaching framework and also introduced models of quality teaching practice and quality professional development.

- August/September 2015

VPI+ school division leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants participated in professional development specific to curriculum implementation and formative assessments. Five of the VPI+ subgrantees hosted face-to-face professional development sessions focused on use of the *Creative Curriculum* and *GOLD* formative assessments to individualize instruction to meet all children's needs.

- VPI+ school division leaders were provided with an orientation to Virginia's QRIS standards provided by VECF.

- CASTL created a list of free online professional development resources that were mapped onto areas of needs, such as school readiness domains. This curated list was shared with coaches and coordinators to use in professional development planning.

- September 10 and 11, 2015 - VPI+ Evaluation and Data Collection Overview Provided by SRI (Evaluator)

Explained the purpose of the evaluation; the areas of evaluation (formative evaluation, summative assessment evaluation, and cost-effectiveness analysis); the data collection and schedule; the summative evaluation design; the direct assessments and teacher rating scale to be used; the reports to be provided; and data security and sharing.

- September 29, 2015 - VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting and Professional Development

Provided an opportunity for all the statewide partners (including representatives from the Virginia Secretary of Education's office and the executive level of the Virginia Department of Education) and subgrantees to meet in one central location to discuss the vision and outcomes for the grant and how they would be achieved through successful grant implementation; included VPI+ updates and presentations on public libraries as partners, comprehensive services, family engagement, and the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* formative assessments; provided an opportunity for individuals from the subgrantees with like jobs to meet, share information, and ask questions, i.e., VPI+ coordinators, family engagement coordinators, and VPI+ coaches.

- October 2015

During October, VPI+ school division leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants participated in more intensive professional development specific to linking the curriculum and formative assessments to meet children's needs. In addition, teachers and coaches are currently participating in ongoing online professional development related to curriculum planning, assessing the needs of children, and maximizing available curriculum and formative assessment resources.

- October 15 and 16, 2015 - Recruitment of At-Risk Pre-K Children (VDOE)

Offered school, division-level, and community strategies to identify and recruit children eligible for VPI+ into the program; discussed ideas on how to tap into external community and corporate partnerships to promote the program; and reviewed lessons learned from the *Illinois Hard to Reach Families* project evaluation.

- October 21, 2015 - VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting

Provided a status update to all VPI+ partners; discussed tasks and timelines within the statement of work for each subgrantee as well as the data agreements required from each subgrantee; explained the roll-out of planned professional development with CASTL; and addressed the most critical needs of the subgrantees at that time.

- Ongoing through late October and ending in mid-December, VECF coordinated QRIS in new VPI+ classrooms.

- November 5 and 9, 2015 - Year 1 Professional Development Implementation and Planning (CASTL)

Reviewed the professional development requirements for the grant and shared CASTL's role in assisting subgrantees in determining the professional development needed by the VPI+ teachers and staff, helping subgrantees develop individualized professional development plans for VPI+ teachers, and securing the professional development to meet those needs.

- December 3, 2015 - Leadership Academies: Overview and Preparation (CASTL)

Reviewed the role of CASTL in supporting subgrantees' implementation of the preschool curricula, formative assessments, professional development, coaching, and continuous improvement efforts; defined the objectives of the upcoming Leadership Academies (January 2016) as 1) increase knowledge and practice related to effective data use to plan program improvement through continuous improvement plans and plan classroom improvement through individualized teacher professional development plans and 2) build a community of learning among VPI+ subgrantees; discussed actions subgrantees needed to take and data required in preparation for the Leadership Academies.

- December 11, 2015 - Federal Preschool Expansion Grant Update for School Division Superintendents (VDOE)

Provided an overview to the superintendents of the 11 VPI+ school divisions and their staff on VPI+ accomplishments and updates; explained the role of the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) in providing professional development and support to VPI+ teachers; identified the other partners in the implementation of VPI+, including the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)), SRI International (evaluation and summative assessments), and the Virginia Department of Social Services (Virginia Early Childhood Professional Development Registry (IMPACT)); outlined the topics covered in technical assistance and professional development provided to the subgrantees: curriculum and formative assessment, family engagement, comprehensive services, practice-based coaching strategies, recruitment of children from hard-to-reach families, providing high-quality professional development and coaching, public libraries as partners, grant budgets and reimbursement requests, subgrantees' annual plans for grant implementation, Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), grant data collection (student, teacher, program), and VDOE monitoring of program and fiscal grant activities; and required data and information for Virginia's Annual Performance Report for the PDG.

- December 2015 - VECF reviewed and finalized QRIS rating results. All VPI+ divisions were provided with a detailed summary report of CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) results for each VPI+ classroom. VECF also provided a webinar to assist division leaders with understanding the QRIS summary report for the purpose of setting professional development goals. QRIS results and trends were also shared with CASTL to help inform planning for VPI+ Leadership Academies.

- January 2016 Technical Assistance and Professional Development Meetings

January 7 - VPI+ Implementation Meeting

January 13-14 - VPI+ Leadership Academy

Partnership with CASTL to Provide Professional Development to VPI+ Teachers, Coaches, and Administrators

In its PDG grant application, Virginia committed to a comprehensive program of professional development for VPI+ teachers. Specifically, each VPI+ teacher must complete at least 30 hours of professional development focused on early learning environments, and receive up to 40 hours of coaching. Additionally, an individualized professional development plan will be developed for each teacher, and teachers will record the professional development they received in a professional development registry. The VDOE has partnered with the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) to facilitate this professional development.

Professional development in 2015 focused primarily on implementation of the VPI+ preschool curriculum and formative assessments selected for use in all VPI+ classrooms, *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool and Teaching Strategies GOLD*; and on how to provide the summative assessment data and other information to the evaluator, SRI, that will be needed to complete the Year 1 (2015-2016 school year) evaluation. While three subgrantees have been approved to implement a preschool curriculum other than *The Creative Curriculum*, all subgrantees will use *GOLD* as the summative assessment. (See #7 below.)

During spring 2015, CASTL conducted initial visits with each subgrantee to accomplish three main goals: 1) start building relationships, 2) gather information about division needs and strengths, and 3) begin joint planning. Visits lasted two to three hours, including a meeting with the local division team and an optional classroom visit. Personnel attending the meetings typically included the VPI+ coordinator and an administrator; occasionally, program partners, teachers, or coaches joined as well. Meeting agendas included general introductions, an overview of CASTL's consultation role and annual activities, divisions sharing information related to consultation areas, and joint planning for the next visit. CASTL followed up with divisions that had additional questions at the meeting.

Many subgrantees reported using some data to determine what teachers' professional development needs were at the program level. Some divisions (primarily those that had participated in the QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System)) reported using CLASS data in some or all of their PreK programs to determine teachers' instructional weaknesses needing remediation through professional development (Henrico, Fairfax, Prince William, Giles). Few subgrantees individualize professional development to a large extent; thus, the VPI+

individualized professional development plans are new for most subgrantees.

For most subgrantees, formalized, ongoing, and nonevaluative coaching has not been widely available until this grant and is one means to individualize support to teachers. Informal coaching, mentoring, or evaluative supervision has typically been a part of other staff's roles, such as lead teachers and education/disability specialists. Coaches' roles will likely vary by the amount of time allotted to coaching and the coach-to-teacher/classroom ratio. Divisions will have the autonomy to devote coaches' time only to new VPI+ classrooms or to both new and improved VPI+ classrooms.

Divisions are trying to determine how to leverage professional development resources in the VPI+ grant to serve a larger population of their preschool teachers (within grant restrictions) to enable consistent professional development offerings. The logistics of offering different professional development to different teachers across different programs is challenging to some of the larger divisions.

Throughout fall 2015, the CASTL Implementation Support Specialists visited each subgrantee to discuss ongoing implementation support issues. They met with VPI+ coaches, administrators, and teachers to collect qualitative information about successes and challenges related to curriculum, assessments, and professional development. They also conducted monthly calls with each subgrantee. Information from these visits and phone calls is included in quarterly phone briefings as well as in CASTL's annual report to the VDOE.

In January 2016, CASTL convened a VPI+ Leadership Academy that brought together teams from each subgrantee to focus on supporting effective implementation of VPI+. Recommended team members included the VPI+ coordinator, the VPI+ coach, the VPI+ family engagement coordinator, the individual responsible for data management in the school division, and other administrators as determined by the school division.

The two-day Academy was action oriented, with teams leaving with initial continuous improvement plans as well as clear guidance on completing individualized professional development plans for teachers. School division teams used their QRIS classroom summary reports to identify areas of strength and needs related to the quality of the learning environment and teacher-child interactions. VECF's VPI+ Quality Coordinator provided support for this component of the discussion and planning. The Academy is the beginning of an ongoing process of continuous improvement and the development of a community of learning that will continue in future leadership academies and/or CASTL consultation visits.

CASTL's training to subgrantees on professional development planning has included elements of high-quality professional development identified by Zaslow (2013): specific professional development objectives, practice-focused, involves shared experience with colleagues, intensity and duration match objectives, tied to formative assessments, and aligned with standards of practice. A few examples provided below show how professional development for teachers has included many of these elements.

Chesterfield County Public Schools

The VPI+ Coordinator developed and delivered workshops that focused on practices around using formative assessment data (PALS, TS-GOLD) to individualize literacy and mathematics instruction. VPI+ coaches then followed-up individually with teachers to ensure that they were using data to plan and to effectively implement small group mathematics and literacy instruction. Beyond the intensity and duration matching objectives, and strong practice focus, these workshops included teachers across preschool programs in their division (Head Start, VPI+, Title I), thus enhancing alignment.

Winchester City Public Schools

The VPI+ Coordinator and coach collaborated on providing VPI+ teachers an inservice training on social-emotional (emotion regulation) strategies using high-quality free online professional development (webinar + free handouts) from the Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), included in the free online professional development list provided by CASTL. This small group training was highly interactive and included take-away materials to guide practice implementation. The coach followed up with teachers to assist implementation of these strategies, and teachers reported use back to the whole group.

Communities of Learning to Help Teachers Implement New Curricula and Assessments

To provide ongoing follow-up to curriculum and assessment training (live and online), many subgrantees (including Norfolk, Giles, and Petersburg) hold regular group meetings with VPI+ teachers in which teachers

share implementation successes and solve problems around challenges. Staff report that these activities are building learning communities that engage teachers, build motivation, and help teachers implement new curriculum and assessments with greater fidelity.

Menu of Approved Professional Development Opportunities for Individualized Professional Development Plans

Notably, through a competitive RFP process, the state has established a menu of approved professional development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education that subgrantees may purchase for use by teachers in their individualized professional development plans. The list of ten approved providers offers a total of 82 professional development opportunities on topics including, but not limited to literacy, family engagement, cultural competency, children with disabilities, English language learners, coaching, kindergarten transition programs, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), My Teaching Partner, teacher-child classroom interactions, children's behaviors, etc. The complete list is available online at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/procurement/early_learning_providers_pd/rfp_doe-pdo-2015-11_summary_of_awards.pdf.

3 - A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1

4 - A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications

All subgrantees are required to meet class size and child-to-teacher ratios. Virginia's pupil-to-instructional staff ratio and class size requirements are more stringent than those required by the PDG. The *Virginia Preschool Initiative Guidelines* state: "The program will comply with the staffing standards required by Section 22.1-199.1C, *Code of Virginia*. The maximum class size will be 18 children. One teacher will be employed for any class of nine children or less. If the average daily membership in any class exceeds nine children but does not exceed 18, a full-time teacher's aide will be assigned to the class." (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/preschool_initiative/guidelines.pdf)

5 - A full-day program

All subgrantees have certified in their annual plans that they offer VPI+ as a full-day program. Fall site technical assistance visits confirmed this fact.

6 - Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities

A major focus of the work conducted by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and its partners in early childhood education has been on early identification and inclusion of children with disabilities into the VPI+ programs. This emphasis has been evident in professional development and the Leadership Academies conducted by the VDOE, training provided to the VPI+ coaches and instructional improvement plans facilitated by CASTL, and the annual plans developed by each subgrantee.

- The VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities) serves on Virginia's VPI+ Implementation Team, and she attended the U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services annual PDG grantee meeting as part of Virginia's team.

- A number of the professional development topics available from the state's professional development menu (see #2 above) address children with learning disabilities, including, but not limited to: Guiding Children's Behaviors, Early Intervention: Children with Disabilities, Teaching Along a Developmental Trajectory, Inclusive and Respectful Classroom Communities, Developmentally Appropriate Practice - Guiding and Supporting Your Curriculum, and Challenging Behavior - Prevention and Intervention.

- All subgrantees certified in their annual plans that eligible children with disabilities have access to and participate in VPI+ activities. Selected examples of ways subgrantees ensure access to and full participation of children with disabilities in VPI+ programs include:

Brunswick County Public Schools

The school division partners with the Southside Community Services Board to coordinate the transition from Part C to Part B of IDEA for eligible children. The family engagement coordinator serves as the point of contact for this partnership.

Henrico County Public Schools

Collaborative classrooms are offered throughout Henrico County's federal preschool programs to ensure a proportionate number of special education children are guaranteed participation in the program. Additionally, Henrico County special education staff work with children and families served by IDEA, Part C, to ensure transition from Part C to Part B.

Norfolk City Public Schools

The director of early childhood special education (ECSE) and the preschool assessment team work closely with the VPI+ coordinator to coordinate services for identified children who are eligible for VPI+. These children are placed in VPI+ inclusion classes where the support of an inclusion teacher and an additional specially trained paraprofessional has been assigned. The ECSE team conducts training and offers support to general education VPI+ classroom teachers to ensure that each child's learning and developmental needs are addressed. Transportation is also provided to ensure that identified children are placed in inclusive PreK settings with appropriate and necessary teaching and support resources.

Winchester City Public Schools

The director of special education collaborates with the VPI+ coordinator and the regional program director to ensure children with disabilities receive the required therapies as delineated in the student's IEP. All services are in place before the second week in September. The department of special education also provides training for paraprofessionals working with VPI+ children with disabilities. Procedures are also in place to ensure that the percentage of children with disabilities served in an inclusive setting through VPI+ meets the requirements of the PDG. To reach families who may have children with disabilities, the VPI+ coordinator participated in an Early Childhood Community Information Session at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum on February 26, 2016.

Chesterfield County Public Schools

The VPI+ Grant Coordinator attends the IEP and 504 meetings for children identified and those being identified for special education services in VPI improved and VPI+ classrooms. Children spend time with their teachers in the VPI+ and VPI improved classrooms. Also, VPI improved and VPI+ children spend time together with the early childhood special education children during: recess, resource, and meal times. All children attend field trips together as well.

7 - Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the state early learning and development standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry

Virginia issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) outlining the need for a preschool curriculum and formative assessment system to be used in its VPI+ classrooms. The rigorous competitive procurement process included a review of the alignment of the offered curricula with the Essential Domains of School Readiness as well as with Virginia's *Milestones of Child Development*; Virginia's *Standards of Learning* for Kindergarten through Grade 3 in English, mathematics, science, history and social science, fine arts, health, and physical education; and Virginia's *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four Year Olds*.

Virginia selected *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, a comprehensive set of resources that assists teachers at all levels of experience as they plan and offer content-rich programs for children with diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. The combination of knowledge-building resources and daily practice resources helps teachers know not only what and how to teach children but also why particular practices are effective. Five carefully researched volumes provide the knowledge base of the curriculum, and a variety of daily practice resources offers step-by-step guidance through teaching guides and additional teaching tools. Individual teachers require different kinds of support at different points in their careers, so all resources offer choices.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, observation-based system for assessing the development and learning of children from birth through kindergarten. Items to extend the system through third grade are currently being field tested. The instrument helps teachers document children's development and learning at particular points in time and over time, use that information to inform instruction, and communicate findings to families and other stakeholders.

GOLDplus is a suite of digital resources that strengthen practical links between assessment and instruction. Flexible planning tools are linked directly with assessment data; content from the Teaching Guides; and Intentional Teaching experiences, which are electronic versions of the curriculum's Intentional Teaching Cards.

Three subgrantees requested to use a preschool curriculum other than *Creative Curriculum*. These subgrantees submitted their proposed curricula to the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia for review of alignment with the curriculum selected for use in the state. The following curricula were approved as follows:

- Fairfax County Public Schools - Locally-developed curriculum
- Henrico County Public Schools - Houghton Mifflin PreK Program
- Prince William County Public Schools - High Scope

All three of these subgrantees will use *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as the summative assessment.

8 - Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities

Extensive research has shown *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* and *Teaching Strategies GOLD* to be highly valid and reliable for children of diverse cultures, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They can be used with all children, including children who are developing typically, children with disabilities, and children who demonstrate competencies beyond typical developmental expectations. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* meets the National Research Council's indicators for appropriate assessment, and its comprehensiveness supports strong understanding of children's progress toward school readiness, their developmental status at kindergarten entry, and their continued learning.

All Virginia subgrantees have addressed ways they accommodate the needs of and support all children to allow full participation in learning activities. Selected examples from specific subgrantees include:

Chesterfield County Public Schools

For children with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) who are enrolled in VPI+, the special education teacher and/or speech/language pathologist collaborates with the VPI+ teacher on how to address each child's goals and objectives during instruction. Children are not removed from the VPI+ classroom to receive specialized instruction. Specialized strategies, visual supports, behavior management techniques, etc., are shared with the VPI+ teacher. Special education and general education programs share staff development opportunities related to modifying the curriculum, working with children with special needs, and managing challenging behaviors.

Giles County Public Schools

VPI+ teachers have participated in all state-directed professional development related to children with disabilities. The school division has also facilitated effective practices to meet student needs. The VPI+ coordinator is the special education director for the school division and ensures that children eligible for Part B services are provided required services and that teachers receive the training required to meet student needs. This individual also schedules and conducts transition meetings from Part C to Part B with the Part C provider. Evaluation and eligibility/IEP are completed prior to the child's third birthday. VPI+ options are discussed as a consideration at age four for children who meet the criteria.

Richmond City Public Schools

The VPI+ coordinator and the director of exceptional education work closely together to coordinate services for children with disabilities. Schedules are developed for those who need services during the day. Teachers receive appropriate coaching and training to meet each child's learning and developmental needs.

Richmond City Public Schools also works with Exceptional Education and Infant/Toddler Connection to coordinate transition from Part C to Part B of IDEA. Monthly contact is made to determine which children are VPI+ eligible and which services best meet the needs of the child.

9 - Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff

Since Virginia's subgrantees are all school divisions, preschool teachers who teach in preschool programs operated by school divisions are paid salaries comparable to K-12 instructional staff, i.e., according to the school division's pay scale. Several school divisions contract with one or more private providers to provide preschool services and all have indicated this requirement will be met. This fact will be confirmed by monitoring visits in spring 2016.

10 - Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement

Virginia issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) outlining the need for an evaluation of the VPI+ program that was rigorous and comprehensive, including summative assessments of the Five Essential Domains of School Readiness. After reviewing proposals from a number of offerors, Virginia contracted with SRI International (SRI) to provide evaluation services that will support the implementation of VPI+. SRI has subcontracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC) to assist with this work. SRI and SRC will collect and use formative program measures, summative child assessments, cost-effectiveness data, and data from the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), to provide feedback to improve instruction and program implementation, administer predictive tests and analyze results to answer pressing questions, and communicate results to the VDOE, school divisions, and teachers.

The *formative evaluation* will examine changes in student access to high-quality preschool and comprehensive services, teacher access to state-sponsored and division-sponsored professional development, classroom quality, and factors that influence implementation. Data collection methods will include coaching logs, annual teacher surveys, division coordinator interviews and surveys, site visits, and data exports of QRIS classroom environmental and quality ratings, and VPI+/VPI administrative data (teacher and program characteristics). All VPI+ divisions will receive a report summarizing formative findings for their individual division twice each year to help them further strengthen their high-quality preschool program implementation.

The *summative evaluation* will examine changes in the five Essential Domains of School Readiness and later school and academic outcomes for children in new VPI+ classrooms compared to similar children who receive no formal preschool. The evaluation also will examine variations in child outcomes by child and program characteristics. Data collection will include direct assessments and a brief teacher checklist of all children in new VPI+ classrooms during the fall and spring of preschool, the same assessments of the same children in fall of kindergarten (and a sample of other kindergarten children who did not receive formal preschool), and data exports of student testing identifier, demographics, assessment results (PALS), attendance, grade promotion, disciplinary actions, and receipt of special education and reading supports. All 11 participating divisions will receive child-level, classroom-level, and division-level reports with summative assessment results twice each year to support instruction and continuous program improvements.

The *cost-effectiveness evaluation* will examine financial savings realized based on child outcomes compared to program costs. Data collection will include exports of administrative data and a cost survey for program costs not captured in administrative data. Findings from the cost-effectiveness evaluation will be included in annual reports to VDOE.

11 - On-site or accessible comprehensive services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development

All subgrantees were required to outline their approach to comprehensive services in the development of their annual plan, including Title I of ESEA; Part B of IDEA; Part C of IDEA; Head Start; and programs for homeless children, foster children, migrant children, and English Learners. Implementation of each subgrantee's annual plan for comprehensive services is monitored through quarterly phone calls and will be confirmed during the spring 2016 site visit. Examples of how subgrantees approached this requirement for Parts B and C of IDEA are included in #6 and #8 above. Additional selected examples include:

Chesterfield County Public Schools - English Learners

Chesterfield has a collaborative agreement with Chesterfield County Public Schools Adult Education Department to offer VPI Improved and VPI+ classroom parents classes in Spanish. Parents can also take classes in order to obtain their GED. These classes and the books are provided to families at no cost.

The English as a Second Language Department offers PEP classes (Parents as Educational Partners) to VPI+ and

VPI families. While the parents are in class, the children are offered high-quality childcare.

Fairfax County Public Schools - Homeless Children, Foster Children, English Learners

Children who are homeless and/or in foster care are given a high priority for acceptance into the VPI+ programs. Fairfax County uses a point system for all qualified applications for PreK programs. Families with more risk factors are identified, and the family engagement staff works with families to identify additional services through the Department of Family Services or other nonprofit services in the community.

The majority of the children in Fairfax County's PreK programs are dual language learners. The curriculum supports a rich program that immerses the child in English while also providing support to adults in the family who often speak the home language. Teaching teams will regularly gather data on each child and input them into the TS GOLD online system and develop lesson plans that meet the individual needs of each student while also scaffolding their development to the next level.

Fairfax County also has a cadre of highly trained interpreters and translators that teacher teams can access if they do not speak the home language of the family. If information is not translated in writing, it will be orally translated for families. Parents interested in acquiring English language skills are referred to resources in Fairfax County, including access to Adult Education classes. Information is also available on less cost prohibitive alternative resources within the County.

Sussex County Public Schools - Homeless Children, Foster Children, Migrant Children

During the VPI+ enrollment period, parents are asked to complete all demographic information and counselors carefully assess the needs of the family. If children and/or families are determined to need comprehensive services, an eligible child is enrolled in VPI+ and support services are put in place, for example:

- Homeless Children - Services include school supplies, clothing, referrals to support services, transportation, immunizations/medical support, and the child receives priority enrollment.

- Foster Children - Foster children are identified by foster parents and placement agencies during the enrollment period. Once identified, the child is enrolled and all supporting documentation is collected and forwarded to the special education department before the first day of school. If a full evaluation is needed, timely contact is made with the family and a meeting is conducted.

- Migrant Children - In addition to general education services, the support of the following individuals is offered: school counselor, school social worker, school nurse, family engagement coordinator, and director of pupil personnel. School counselors also implement timely student record transfer if the student must exit the program due to family mobility.

Petersburg City Public Schools - Head Start

The Head Start Program, VPI, and VPI+ programs established an annual collaboration agreement to better coordinate mutually beneficial activities and provide better services for children and their families. The agreement provides for a centralized process through which families can register children in the preschool program at the Early Childhood Education Center. Parties involved will meet every January to jointly develop a timeline for joint recruitment and conduct a community assessment for the purpose of planning recruitment and enrollment, targeting services based on need, identifying children not being served, and developing a plan to provide services to those underserved.

This agreement also provides for ongoing professional development, which will enable staff to support children's optimal development and readiness for school entry and success by addressing the strengths and needs of the local population, such as homeless and non-English speaking families. Collaboration also involves shared use of pupil transportation, facilities, and other resources. All parties involved work closely to coordinate a comprehensive system of family engagement activities, staff and parent trainings, and uniform policies and procedures that will guide and support the delivery of services to children and families.

Prince William County Public Schools - English Learners

VPI+ has developed a Dual Language Learner Instructional Policy Plan. Teachers develop IEPs for each child and update the plans based on assessments, anecdotal records, observations, and parental input. Parents will have one home visit and three teacher/parent conferences throughout the year. Family Service Workers will

connect parents to ESOL classes during the establishment of the family partnership agreements. Professional development is provided to all teachers and teacher assistants, and they receive training on the Dual Language Learner Instructional Policy Plan.

12 - Evidence-based health and safety standards

All of Virginia's PDG subgrantees are public school divisions. Preschool programs operated by public school divisions in Virginia must adhere to school health and safety standards as required by the *Code of Virginia* and other regulations. Three subgrantees (Fairfax County, Norfolk City, and Richmond City) are partnering with state-licensed community-based organizations or private providers. All state-licensed preschool providers must comply with [health and safety standards](#).

Health

Virginia school divisions have annual requirements for school health. School health programs support the physical and emotional well-being of children through school nursing services, health education covering a range of developmentally appropriate topics and other services that promote a healthy learning environment. Below are the topics addressed in the *Virginia School Health Guidelines*. Included in the health guidelines are specific health requirements dictated by the *Code of Virginia*.

Virginia School Health Guidelines Manual (by chapter)

- [Forward - School Health Guidelines](#) (PDF)
- School Health Programs
 - [The Components of a School Health Program](#) (PDF)
 - [Developing a Program: Infrastructure and the Planning Process](#) (PDF)
 - [Parent and Community Involvement](#) (PDF)
- School Health Services
 - [Overview](#) (PDF)
 - [Conducting Health Assessments](#) (PDF)
 - [Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment \(EPSDT\) and Medicaid/CMSIP](#) (PDF)
 - [Implementing Special Education: Students with Special Needs](#) (PDF)
 - [General Guidelines for Administering Medication in School](#) (PDF)
 - [Infectious Disease Control](#) (PDF)
 - [Other School Health Services](#) (PDF)
 - [Health Education](#) (PDF)
 - [Healthful Environment](#) (PDF)
- Appendices
 - Appendix A: [Code of Virginia](#) (PDF); [Superintendent's Memos and etc.](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix B: First Aid Guide for School Emergencies](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix C: Universal Precautions and Infectious Diseases](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix D: Required Forms](#) (PDF)
 - [Appendix E: Sample Forms](#) (PDF)
 - [Index to the School Health Guidelines](#) (PDF)

Safety

Virginia school divisions have annual requirements for school safety as required by the *Code of Virginia*. The following [reports](#) are required:

- Designate a Divisionwide Emergency Manager;
- Appoint a Divisionwide Safety Audit Committee;
- Establish Threat Assessment Teams;
- Update the school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plan;
- Conduct school safety building inspection walk-through (3 year cycle);
- Complete the School Safety Audit Survey; and
- Complete the Division Level Safety Audit Survey (3 year cycle).

Table 6 - Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot. Please explain if *Year 1 Target* from the application and *Year 1 Actual* in **Table 6** differ, and any approved changes in targets for Years 2-4.

Explain your efforts to provide high-quality preschool program slots for the eligible children you are reporting in Table 6, and a brief description of expenses that contribute to the cost per slot.

Shortly after Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding was awarded, efforts began in Virginia to establish the new VPI+ program. State spending began in February 2015 when the state VPI+ coordinator was hired and, shortly thereafter, funds were awarded to eleven (11) VPI+ subgrantees. The State Education Agency (SEA) led procurement efforts on behalf of the subgrantees to procure the curriculum and formative assessments, program evaluation and summative assessments and professional development options. Following state procurement procedures, the final procurement effort was completed in October 2015.

Throughout the summer 2015, subgrantees incurred costs to recruit eligible VPI+ children, hire qualified staff, and order supplies and equipment to open new classrooms in August and September 2015. By the last quarter of calendar year 2015, classrooms were open and subgrantees were incurring costs for staff travel and training, meals for eligible children (breakfast, lunch and snacks), formative and summative assessment costs, *Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum* costs, indirect costs, etc.

As of December 2015, 2,804 eligible children (1,230 new and 1,574 improved slots) were being served under the VPI+ program. Year 1 subgrantee reimbursements as of December 31, 2015, totaled \$1,139,388.50.

Virginia calculated the cost per slot by using actual slots as of December 2015 (1,230 new and 1,574 improved, 44 percent and 56 percent, respectively). The total actual Year 1 subgrantee reimbursements (\$1,139,388.50) were multiplied by the new and improved percentages of total slots, resulting in a new slot cost of \$407.59 ($.44 \times \$1,139,388.50 \div 1,230$) and an improved slot of \$405.37 ($.56 \times \$1,139,388.50 \div 1,574$). This cost estimate was rejected because division budgets clearly included substantially more funding for staffing and equipping the new classrooms.

Virginia also calculated a weighted cost per slot. In the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), Estimated Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE) per Slot from Part III Selection Criterion (D)(4), Virginia estimated the cost per slot at \$12,600 new and \$900 improved (93 percent and 7 percent, respectively). To arrive at a weighted per slot cost, the total actual Year 1 subgrantee reimbursements (\$1,139,388.50) were multiplied by the percentages mentioned above, resulting in a new slot cost of \$864.58 ($.93 \times \$1,139,388.50 \div 1,230$) and an improved slot cost of \$48.26 ($.07 \times \$1,139,388.50 \div 1,574$). Virginia's Year 1 Annual Progress Report (APR) uses this cost per slot because it better reflects start-up costs of classrooms to serve new slots. However, the cost per slot fails to consider a very low disbursement rate (only 7 of the 11 subgrantees received any reimbursement as of December 31, 2015) and amounts varied widely. Subgrantee reimbursements, as recorded in the GRADS360 system, primarily consisted of salary and benefit costs of VPI+ staff, meals for VPI+ children, travel costs for meetings

and training, student and family engagement activities, rental of classroom space and classroom and professional staff equipment and supplies.

Explain any differences between your Year 1 Actuals and the Target for Year 1 that you reported in your application.

Year 1 targets assumed a full, 12-month cycle; however, program implementation highlighted the difference between the SEA funding need (beginning in February 2015) and the subgrantee needs (July 2015 through June 2016). Throughout the planning/budgeting process, subgrantees focused on the school year, not the grant performance period that started in January 2015.

Actual Year 1 costs reflect classrooms opening in August and September (when almost three-fourths of Year 1 had passed), the fact that subgrantee billing staff were out due to school holiday closures in November and December, as well as the initial subgrantee concentration on recruitment and start-up activities.

If there is a significant difference between your Year 1 Actuals and Year 1 Target, describe the contributing factors and how you will address issues that impeded progress in 2015.

Several factors contributed to Virginia's expenditures being lower than expected as of December 31, 2015. For example, subgrantee budgets for Year 1 were developed based on the school year, not the calendar year. At December 31, 2015, only one-third of the school year had passed. Prior to opening new classrooms in August and September 2015, subgrantees focused on equipping and setting up new classrooms, recruiting and hiring qualified staff, and recruiting and enrolling eligible VPI+ children. Some subgrantees had difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff and VPI+ eligible children. In addition to expected start-up work, VPI+ subgrantees also implemented new curriculum, attended professional training, implemented a new formative assessment system, etc. A key policy decision of counting new slots funded with PDG and Head Start funds and PDG and Title I funds was not made until January 2016. This resulted in no reimbursement to Henrico County Public Schools, a subgrantee with a very large number of new and improved slots.

While focused efforts resulted in Virginia exceeding the enrollment goal (application), the pace of reimbursement requests was lower than expected. This issue was noted, monitored, and reimbursement requests reviewed during January 2016 and indicate the pace has increased dramatically - \$1.7M as compared to \$1.2M during calendar year 2015.

In January 2016, the SEA and Henrico County collaborated with the U. S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and approval was granted to count Henrico's Title I and Head Start slots as new VPI+ slots. Henrico has an innovative, blended funding (Title I, Head Start, state VPI, local, private, etc.) model. All preschool children in Henrico receive the same high-quality preschool program without regard to the funding stream. Henrico strategically used VPI+ funding to enhance the existing preschool program in multiple ways including, but not limited to, professional development tailored to each teacher, coaching support in a nonevaluative way, enhanced family engagement (increase in number of family advocates and family activities), enhanced translation services (hired staff and garnered outside support) to help families be more engaged in children's learning, and expanded health services with an additional health coordinator that has reached out to advocates to connect services. Other VPI+ funded enhancements include program evaluation improvements including certification in CLASS for four additional coordinators and formative and summative assessments (provided *Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment* and implemented in all 54 classrooms).

Virginia made noteworthy progress in opening classrooms to serve 1,230 new children and improving the preschool experience for 1,574 children and in use of private/community-based providers (one in Norfolk, two in Fairfax, and two in Richmond). Virginia plans to build on existing accomplishments and infrastructure and successes. Likewise, efforts will continue to coach, educate, and motivate subgrantees to have the best high-quality preschool program possible with available resources. Given the accelerated pace of reimbursement requests and resolution of the key policy issue in January 2016, Virginia expects Year 1 funding to be fully utilized.

3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

Overview

Each agency/organizational member of Virginia's VPI+ Implementation Team has maintained contact with each subgrantee during the first year of the grant. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has served as the lead agency, providing guidance, coordination, and infrastructure support with subgrantees on reviewing and approving their annual plans and budgets; convening the VPI+ Implementation Team; conducting the required state procurement processes; and coordinating data collection and reporting. The VDOE has had close communication with the subgrantees to ensure implementation of the intended grant terms. Other agencies/organizations have interacted regularly with the subgrantees, maintaining communication to discuss any required mid-course corrections as the end of the first school year approaches. A monitoring protocol has been developed that is based on the annual planning process. The monitoring protocol includes the same areas as those in the annual plan, with indicators in each area that reflect those in Virginia's PDG statement of work approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The monitoring protocol will be used for the first time in spring 2016.

Progress by Topic

(1) Establishment of roles and responsibilities of the state and subgrantee

Virginia has defined clear roles for the state and subgrantees in detailed Memoranda of Understanding that the state Superintendent of Public Instruction and each school division's superintendent signed. Additionally, the VPI+ Implementation Team meets quarterly to discuss the progress of each partner. The member agencies/organizations of the Implementation Team are the VDOE, Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia, and SRI International. More information about the team members and their roles is available in other sections of this report.

(2) Increasing organizational capacity and infrastructure of the subgrantee to provide high-quality preschool programs

Prior to selection as a participant in Virginia's Preschool Development Grant (PDG), each subgrantee's organizational capacity was reviewed and confirmed. The state's close contact with each subgrantee through site visits, regular phone calls, individualized support, connections to community support systems, webinars, and meetings, and monitoring in spring 2016 have helped to maintain capacity and provide support in areas where needed. Additionally, each VPI+ Implementation Team agency/organization maintains regular contact with the subgrantees, receiving formal and informal updates, and apprising the lead agency, VDOE, of the subgrantees' progress. The VDOE is then able to provide direction and assistance as needed or signal to another grant partner how its help is required.

(3) Ensuring that each subgrantee minimizes administrative costs

Prior to grant implementation, the VDOE worked with each subgrantee to determine a budget for the grant. Attention was devoted to ways subgrantees would use in-kind staff and resources; existing transportation and facilities resources; and existing health, social services, and private partner resources. The VDOE maintains regular contact with subgrantees on these issues through phone calls, webinars, and site visits. The spring 2016 monitoring process will include a review of budget implementation in three selected school divisions.

(4) Monitoring Early Learning Providers to ensure they are delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs

Virginia has designed a VPI+ monitoring protocol that is based on the annual planning process for each

subgrantee. Each subgrantee was required to submit a VPI+ annual plan to the VDOE for approval that addressed the following areas:

- Increase division-level (subgrantee) capacity to administer the VPI+ grant program;
- Implement early learning curriculum;
- Plan for professional development for teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators;
- Provide professional development to support VPI+ eligible children with disabilities, English learners, and children in need of additional support;
- Participate in assessments and report data;
- Participate in Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) assessment;
- Align VPI+ with kindergarten through grade 3;
- Promote partnerships between preschool and kindergarten teachers;
- Address the elements of a high-quality preschool program;
- Address the use of private providers;
- Coordinate services in rural communities and/or in military communities, where applicable;
- VPI+ Family Engagement Plan;
- VPI+ Comprehensive Services Plan; and
- VPI+ Sustainability Plan.

The monitoring protocol includes the same areas as those in the annual plan, with detailed indicators in each area that reflect the tasks and activities in Virginia's PDG statement of work approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The monitoring protocol will be used for the first time in spring 2016.

(5) Coordination of plans related to assessments, data sharing, instructional tools, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts, professional development, and work force and leadership development

The VDOE serves as the lead agency on Virginia's PDG, and as such, provides leadership and direction in the coordination of the work of all partners. At the time the grant proposal was written, VECF was identified as the QRIS coordinator, and CASTL was identified as a consultant to subgrantees around their selection of professional development services based on formative and summative assessments and to provide technical support to VPI+ coaches and coordinators. It was also predetermined that the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) would become the repository for additional data collected on VPI+ children and teachers since it already housed some preschool data as well as K-12 and work force data, enabling data sharing and analysis among stakeholders.

The preschool curriculum for VPI+ classes, the professional development options for subgrantees, and the summative assessments used for VPI+ classes were all selected using a RFP process that included representation from some members of the VPI+ Implementation Team, as appropriate. The VPI+ Implementation Team continues to serve as the organizational and communication forum for Virginia's PDG partners.

(6) Coordination and delivery of high-quality preschool programs funded under this grant with existing services for preschool-aged children

Each subgrantee's annual plan, as well as the monitoring process, addresses the approach to comprehensive services, including Title I, IDEA, McKinney-Vento, Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. During the budget development process, the VDOE worked with each subgrantee on ways to coordinate with but not supplant existing public funding in order to maximize services provided to high-need children and their families. If questions or other issues arise, the VPI+ Implementation Team works to develop strategies to

support the ability of local communities to make the best use of existing funding.

(7) Integration of high-quality preschool programs for eligible children within economically diverse, inclusive settings, including those that serve children from families with incomes above 200 percent of the federal poverty line

Per PDG requirements, Virginia has set a threshold of VPI+ participation for children from families with an income at or below 200 percent of poverty in new VPI+ classrooms. Due to the federal income threshold for VPI+ families, providing an economically diverse VPI+ classroom setting presents challenges. The complexity of cost allocation is a barrier for school divisions and private providers to serve children from higher income families alongside at-risk preschool children in VPI+ classrooms. Some of Virginia's improved VPI classrooms may include children above 200 percent of the federal poverty level, since the 2015-2016 state eligibility requirements permit the use of local eligibility requirements for VPI children.

(8) Delivery of high-quality preschool programs to eligible children in need of additional supports

Each subgrantee's annual plan, as well as the monitoring process, addresses the approach to services provided to children who need additional supports. These plans indicated that as part of the enrollment process in VPI+, school division personnel assess each family's needs and develop plans to meet the needs of children and families, especially in the case of children with learning disabilities or learning delays; English learners; migrant, homeless, or foster children; and children from rural or military communities.

(9) Subgrantees will implement culturally and linguistically responsive outreach efforts to enroll children from families with eligible children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families; help families build protective factors; and engage parents and families

As part of its annual plan, each subgrantee has developed a family engagement plan that addresses implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication to recruit and serve children from non-English-speaking families, and isolated or otherwise hard-to-reach families. These plans have been reviewed and approved by the VDOE, and progress will be gauged during the spring 2016 monitoring process.

Each subgrantee has also designated a family engagement coordinator to recruit children; implement the plan; work with community partners; and help families build protective factors and serve as decision makers related to their children's education. Each subgrantee has convened a Family Access Consortium to plan events, engage family participation and solicit feedback on the degree to which VPI+ is meeting family needs.

4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

Overview

During the first year of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Virginia's work to align its grant-funded VPI+ program with programs and systems that serve children from birth to grade 3 have largely centered on:

- Establishment of the VPI+ Implementation Team to ensure grant implementation and coordination of services that merge seamlessly with those children and families receive as they advance into kindergarten and beyond;
- Creation of a Cross-Organizational Data Team and the development of a data framework to track the outcomes of children who enroll in preschool through third grade and beyond;
- Selection of a preschool curriculum and summative assessments that are aligned with Virginia's *Standards of Learning* for kindergarten through grade 3; and
- Work with [Smart Beginnings](#), Virginia's preschool network of public and private stakeholders who

collaborate on priorities for young children.

Additional opportunities for communication and alignment have occurred with increased gubernatorial and legislative interest in preschools, specifically:

- Development of Virginia's Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success; and
- Legislation related to preschool that was proposed in the 2015 and 2016 Virginia Assembly.

1. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Five

(a) Indicate the key activities for alignment of birth through age-five programs

Prior to receipt of the PDG grant, Virginia already had in place several important components that laid the foundation for alignment of services for children from birth through age five, including:

- Early Learning and Development Standards

[Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds \(2013\)](#) offer standards for early learning aligned with Virginia's Kindergarten *Standards of Learning* in the following areas: literacy, mathematics, science, history and social science, health and physical development, personal and social development, music, and the visual arts.

- Comprehensive Services

There is active collaboration at the state level and between state agencies and school divisions to offer comprehensive services to preschool children as needed, including Title I preschool; 619 of IDEA; Head Start; and support for English learners, and foster, migrant and homeless children.

- State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

Virginia's SLDS already serves as a robust source of data related to children in kindergarten through grade 12 and their teachers, with the ability to connect to databases maintained by higher education agencies and the Virginia Employment Commission.

Virginia's infrastructure for improved communication between and coordination of early education and care programs has been further strengthened as a result of opportunities provided by the PDG grant as well as interest in preschool options demonstrated by Governor Terry McAuliffe and the Virginia General Assembly.

- Virginia's Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Orders a Children's Cabinet and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. Their [2015 annual report](#) made the following recommendations related to school readiness:

1. Increase support for Virginia Preschool Initiative programs, including the development and promotion of mixed-delivery systems;
2. Modernize Virginia Preschool Initiative funding and formulas; and
3. Ensure that children most in need can benefit from the Virginia Preschool Initiative in all communities.

- Legislative Interest in Preschool Opportunities

The 2015 Virginia General Assembly requested a review of the Virginia Preschool Initiative and offered recommendations for reforming it:

[Chapter 665, 2015 Acts of Assembly \(Item 1, Paragraph Q\)](#)

Established a Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative to consider increasing accountability, flexibility, innovation, clarification of the state's role and policy relating to providing a preschool for economically disadvantaged children.

Two bills related to preschool have been introduced into the 2016 Virginia General Assembly:

[House Bill 46 - Early Education Workforce Committee; Secretary of Education to establish](#)

Directs the Secretary of Education to establish an Early Education Workforce Committee with the key goal of ensuring an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education work force in the Commonwealth.

[HB 47 Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program; established, report.](#)

Establishes the Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis to applicants to field-test innovative strategies and evidence-based practices that support a robust system of mixed-delivery preschool services in the Commonwealth.

- VPI+ Implementation Team

Virginia is creating a cross-agency and cross-sector system at the state level to support cohesive implementation and endurance of high-quality state preschool programs in Virginia. The VPI+ Implementation Team, Virginia's grant management team, is led by a representative of the Virginia Department of Education and includes the Director of the Division of Child Care and Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services (who is also the state's Child Care Administrator), a senior representative of Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), the Director and Associate Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, the Director of the Office of Family Health Services at Virginia's Department of Health, and each of the divisions' VPI+ Coordinators. The objective of including a team of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, is to more intentionally integrate the components of a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children. The representatives and agencies assigned to the VPI+ Implementation Team have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum, including the Home Visiting Consortium, the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Virginia, Child Care Resource and Referral, Smart Beginnings, Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and Part B services.

- Cross-Organizational Data Team

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team consisting of representatives from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation; the Virginia Departments of Health, Social Services, and Education; SRI International, the evaluator for Virginia's Preschool Development Grant; a data consultant; and others as needed. The inclusion of preschool data in the VSLDS will enable Virginia to track the outcomes of children who enroll in preschool through third grade and beyond.

- Preschool Curriculum and Summative Assessments

Through a RFP process, Virginia selected a single curriculum and formative assessment system, aligned to the *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*, to be implemented in its VPI+ classrooms. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a comprehensive set of resources that assists teachers as they plan and offer programs for preschool children. Additionally, summative assessments will assess the Essential Domains of School Readiness to ensure that preschool children are ready for kindergarten.

(b) Indicate how the state is working to ensure that high-quality preschool programs will not diminish services or increase costs to families for other programs serving children from birth through age five.

Virginia's current VPI program prevents diminution of other services and controls cost through its slot allocation and funding formulas and through its support for a mixed-delivery system, which encourages collaboration between schools, Head Starts, and private providers. The VPI+ initiative maintains this approach and utilizes three key strategies to ensure this commitment:

- Technical assistance for layering funding and coordinating efficiencies;
- Establishing integrated enrollment processes for families who qualify for multiple services; and
- Leveraging comprehensive services.

2. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Kindergarten to Grade 3

The selection of a preschool curriculum and summative assessments aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning in kindergarten through grade 3 is a first step in ensuring that children served by VPI+ will be ready for kindergarten. Additional professional development provided to teachers and encouragement of collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers supports a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. Increased data collection on the progress of children in preschool will provide data for continuous improvement of preschool programs to ensure that even more children are ready to enter school successfully.

In addition to the VPI+ summative assessments being administered, Virginia is exploring other kindergarten readiness assessments. In fiscal year 2015-2016, the Virginia state legislature allocated funds for the University of Virginia (UVA) to work with VDOE on moving toward expanded use of kindergarten readiness assessments. In fall 2015, UVA partnered with 21 school divisions on a voluntary basis to implement the expanded assessments in over 500 kindergarten classrooms. Reports will be generated for all participating teachers that provide information about children's' strengths and challenges across readiness domains. In addition, teachers will be provided with recommended teaching practices that map onto the needs of their children, as identified in an integrated report. The graduated rollout will allow continued input from stakeholders to enhance expanded kindergarten entry assessments for teachers, schools, and school divisions.

Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 1 Target* differs from the *Year 1 Actual*.

Describe whether you were successful at obtaining the matching funds from state, local and philanthropic resources that you reported in your application.

Include updates made to your plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of your plan during the grant period.

Virginia's PDG application proposed \$4,318,790 in match for Year 1. After the application was submitted, Virginia increased the match proposal to \$5,133,618. The APR reports 63 percent attainment (\$3,234,250.71) of the match goal, including state, local, and philanthropic resources.

Unspent Year 1 funds were carried forward from 2015 and subgrantees will continue to execute Year 1 plans through most of 2016. It is anticipated that in the coming months, matching funds will be reported to fully meet the Year 1 goal with no impact on Years 2 through 4 goals.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Virginia's vision and plan for VPI+ included a number of partnerships and strategies that provide a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade. Several of the strategies and partnerships noted in Virginia's response to Competitive Preference Priority #2 are outlined below, with an indication of progress made or anticipated by the end of the grant term, including:

- An integrated management structure;
- Smart Beginnings; and
- Health/education policy opportunities.

Integrated Management Team to Oversee Virginia's Preschool Program

Virginia has galvanized a cross-agency and cross-sector system at the state level that supports cohesive implementation and endurance of high-quality state preschool programs in Virginia. The VPI+ Implementation Team is led by the Virginia Department of Education's Early Childhood Expansion Grant (VPI+) Coordinator and includes:

- The Director of the Division of Child Care and Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), who is also the state's Child Care Administrator;
- A senior representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF);
- The Director and Associate Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia;

- The Director of the Office of Family Health Services at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH); -The VDOE early childhood special education (619) specialist; and

- Each of the subgrantees' VPI+ Coordinators.

The objective for moving the oversight of Virginia's VPI+ program from solely VDOE to a team of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, is to more intentionally integrate the components of a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children. The representatives and agencies assigned to the VPI+ Implementation Team have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum, including the Home Visiting Consortium, the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Virginia, Child Care Resource and Referral, Smart Beginnings, Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and Part B services.

Smart Beginnings

VPI+ subgrantees have been connected to Smart Beginnings partners to provide assistance in fully realizing and connecting with the progression of supports and interventions needed for at-risk children and families at the local level. Because Smart Beginnings networks at the local level include a diverse set of partners covering the range of programs and services supporting at-risk children and families, VPI+ subgrantees have been able to tap into varied resources and these important connections:

- The private child care community to explore potential partnership for delivery of services.

Example: Smart Beginnings partners have assisted with making connections to private child care providers for VPI+ subgrantees, including Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk Cities; and to Head Start partners for collaboration, including Petersburg, Brunswick and Giles Counties.

- Organizations and partnerships to ensure the full range of comprehensive services for VPI+ children and their families, including home visiting services, mental health services, and special needs interventions.

Example: VECF and Smart Beginnings partners have been working with Petersburg's interim superintendent to identify home visiting/parent education services for pregnant and parenting mothers in Petersburg's high schools.

- Assistance to subgrantee family engagement coordinators with a wide network of family-serving organizations and institutions of higher education, for outreach and recruitment assistance to VPI+, and other programs ready to support at-risk families.

Examples: VDOE staff and Smart Beginnings partners assisted Norfolk and Petersburg with their pressing recruitment challenges. Smart Beginnings partners in Greater Richmond host a common Early Kindergarten Registration Day each year in April to assist 14 regional school divisions - including several VPI+ subgrantees - in communicating with and engaging families as they transition from home to child care to elementary schools. A barrier to full utilization of connections with family engagement coordinators was the delay in hiring this position among some VPI+ subgrantees. With these positions and representatives now in place, recruitment and engagement strategies and partnerships should proceed more smoothly.

- Assistance to Family Access Consortia among VPI+ Subgrantees.

One barrier to success was the compressed timeline for start-up and hiring by the VPI+ subgrantees in the first year of the grant, which precluded full implementation of the Consortium strategy. With positions in place and implementation in progress, Smart Beginnings assistance with intentional Family Access Consortia planning will see stronger progress in the months to come. VDOE and VECF have agreed to include partners more intentionally in VPI+ Implementation Team planning and discussions to ensure incorporation of these strategies and resources. Strong connections between VPI+ subgrantees and Smart Beginnings can enable learning from each other about birth to third grade supports and interventions, increase awareness and understanding across the state, and potentially lead to improved and expanded services in other communities.

Health/Education Policy Improvements

VPI+'s priority for ensuring a continuum of supports for at-risk families is aligned with that of Virginia's Children's Cabinet and its subgroup, the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, chaired by Virginia's

Lieutenant Governor. Leadership, staff, and members of the Council have stayed in tune with the implementation of VPI+ and the lessons learned.

Examples: Recommendations from the Council regarding the need for greater access to home visiting services for at-risk families have led to Governor McAuliffe's inclusion of an increase in funding of \$15.5 million for home visiting services in high-need communities in the introduced budget now being considered in the 2016 General Assembly session. Lessons learned from VPI+, for example the need for a stronger system of professional development supports for the early education work force as well as local strategies for implementation of mixed delivery for preschool services, have also informed additional policy and budget items in consideration in the current legislative session.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Describe your progress to add new state preschool program slots in 2015 that meet the definition of high-quality preschool programs.

Virginia's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) application estimated subgrantees would use \$15,283,800 for new slots and \$1,323,000 to improve slots, for a total of \$16,606,800. Virginia awarded 95.21 percent (\$16,661,897) of the \$17,500,000 PDG award to subgrantees to support 1,230 new slots and 1,574 improved slots. All of Virginia's eleven VPI+ subgrantees implemented or expanded high-quality preschool programs in the following ways:

- Employed highly qualified instructional staff (teachers with at least a bachelor's degree);
- Provided high-quality professional development for staff;
- Ensured a child-to-instructional ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- Limited class size to no more than 20 with a teacher;
- Provided a full-day program;
- Included children with disabilities;
- Provided developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricular and learning environments aligned with the state Early Learning and Development standards;
- Provided individualized accommodations and supports for equal access and participation;
- Compensated instructional staff comparable to salaries of other local K-12 instructional staff;
- Implemented program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- Provided on-site comprehensive services for children and family engagement activities to support child learning and development; and
- Provided evidenced-based health and safety standards.

Total Year 1 expenses totaled \$1,600,060.69, consisting of \$470,290.32 (29 percent) in state education agency expenses and \$1,139,388.50 (71 percent) in subgrantee costs. Data reported in Table 6 were a calculated, weighted cost per slot. In the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), Estimated Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE) per Slot from Part III Selection Criterion (D)(4), Virginia estimated the cost per slot at \$12,600 new and \$900 improved (93 percent and 7 percent, respectively). To arrive at a weighted per slot cost, the total actual Year 1 subgrantee reimbursements (\$1,139,388.50) were multiplied by the percentages mentioned above, resulting in

a new slot cost of \$864.58 (.93 x \$1,139,388.50 ÷ 1,230) and an improved slot cost of \$48.26 (.07 x \$1,139,388.50 ÷ 1,574). Using this method, clearly 93 percent of expenses were attributed to new slots (far surpassing the 50 percent goal).

Provide specific examples for the structural elements of a high-quality program as listed in (2) above, and in the NIA, Selection Criteria D.

All eleven subgrantees budgeted specific strategies to support the structural elements of a high-quality program. Several examples are provided below and additional examples are included in Section A: Part B, #1 of this report.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted solicited competitive vendor proposals to secure curriculum and formative assessments, curriculum training, summative assessments, and a program evaluation for the eleven subgrantees. Additionally, a menu of professional development options was procured and information provided to the subgrantees to support staff development of preschool educators and VPI+ team members.

Brunswick County Public Schools

Brunswick budgeted for a VPI+ coach, part-time family engagement support, college classwork support for guardians of VPI+ children, and comprehensive services to include medical, dental, vision, mental health, and nutrition for families of VPI+ children.

Chesterfield County Public Schools

Chesterfield hired part-time translators and interpreters, a VPI+ coach, a part-time instructional coach, a family engagement coordinator, and a VPI+ coordinator. Other noteworthy budget line items include a mathematics curriculum supplement to extend learning, summer reading support packets matched to student needs, PALS kits and data sheets to assess children properly, materials for parent workshops (resource books, manipulatives, learning tools), breakfast and lunch for each student, field trips for exposure to first-hand experience and develop background knowledge and understanding, contractor to provide health, vision, hearing and mental health and speech support, adult education coursework in need of English language or GED prep classes, parent workshops on nutrition, health and literacy.

Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax hired a VPI+ coach, early childhood family services and family engagement support specialist, community based VPI+ service coordinator, and provided funding for hearing tests, interpreter services, resources to prevent blindness, CPR First Aid training, field trips for children, transportation for community child care, breakfast, lunch and snacks, and family wellness activities.

Section B: Budget Information

Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

Virginia's Year 1 Preschool Development Grant (PDG) totaled \$17,500,000. Unspent Year 1 funds, as of December 31, 2015, were requested and approved for carryforward into 2016. Year 1 program implementation and expenditures continued from 2015 into 2016 uninterrupted. Virginia has committed and fully expects to expend all VPI+ funding on eligible VPI+ activities.

Describe how you are defining actual expenditures, and indicate whether you are tracking your expenditures by the calendar year or by another basis.

Virginia's state fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30, and expenditures and revenue are recorded in the agency's accounting system as they are realized. Expenditures and revenue recorded in the accounting system January 1 through December 2015 (the original Year 1 grant period) totaled \$1,609,679.42, including State Education Agency (SEA) expenses of \$470,290.92 and Local Education Agency (subgrantees) expenses of \$1,139,388.50.

Subgrantees implemented a detailed, line item budget. Each subgrantee reimbursement request is submitted on a spreadsheet that includes the approved budget line item (description and amount) along with the reimbursement request (description and amount). Use of this document ensures only approved, eligible costs are reimbursed and both the SEA and subgrantees have a tool to track expenditures to date and the available balance. Subgrantee reimbursement requests are reviewed upon receipt and approvals are databased. SEA expenditures are likewise databased as they become known. Expenditure data are reconciled at least monthly. The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) accounting system and VPI+ databases allow reporting on the state fiscal year, grant year, or a periodic basis (daily, monthly, quarterly, etc.).

For budget expenditures made with Federal grant funds, you must provide an explanation if funds have not been drawn down from the G5 System to pay for the budget expenditure amounts reported in budget tables.

VDOE recorded Year 1 receipts totaling \$1,600,060.69. At December 31, 2015, VDOE had not drawn \$9,618.73, which would have balanced the account. The difference is not an oversight, simply an issue of state and federal processing deadlines. The GRADS360 system included disbursements totaling \$1,517,839.33 (differs from the VDOE accounting system by \$82,221.36). The difference relates to disbursements made to Virginia and documented in the accounting system during March through June 2015 that were not recorded in the GRADS360 system. A list of transaction dates, amounts, and deposit certificate numbers is available, upon request.

Provide an explanation if you did not expend funds at the expected rate during the reporting period.

Virginia's subgrantees budgeted Year 1 funds to staff, equip, and support new VPI+ classrooms that opened September 2015. The Year 1 grant cycle began January 2015 and funds were expended by the SEA to staff and established the new VPI+ infrastructure. Subgrantees began incurring costs in June-August to open the new classrooms in September 2015. During the last quarter of the Year 1 period, most subgrantees began seeking reimbursement of costs incurred. Disbursements authorized in January 2016, exceeded \$1.7M (as compared to \$1.2M in calendar year 2015) - a significant, escalated rate that indicates course correction.

If you expect to have any unexpended funds at the end of the current budget period, provide an estimate and indicate how you plan to use the unexpended funds (carryover) in the next budget period.

Virginia's unspent Year 1 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2015 into 2016, and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Both the SEA and subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 1 funds for approved grant activities. The carryforward authorization did not have an end date. When Year 1 activities cease, Virginia will determine if there are any remaining balances and redirect those funds to cover unmet needs. When the Year 1 funds are exhausted, use of Year 2 funding will begin. The carryforward authorization from the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services provided Virginia with the flexibility to respect the grant period and the subgrantees' operating needs to budget and expend based on the school year (versus calendar year).

The financial activities of the VPI+ grant are reviewed closely. Subgrantees with low reimbursement rates and/or programming issues have been coached for months, provided training, and subgrantee leadership has been involved in telephone calls, meetings and e-mails. Virginia's spending in January 2016 was significantly higher than previous months and analysis and discussions will occur in February 2016 to help subgrantees identify budgetary issues prior to the end of the school year. Line item budget adjustments may result from this effort but Virginia does not foresee any substantive budget requests for the next budget period at this time.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016).

Describe any anticipated changes in your budget for the next budget period that require prior approval from the Department (see EDGAR, 34 CFR 74.25 and 80.30, as applicable). Include an explanation of any substantive budget changes that you anticipate in future years.

At this time Virginia does not foresee any substantive budget requests for the next budget period.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.

Describe how you will sustain programs and activities at the end of the grant period to maintain or increase service levels for eligible children to access high-quality preschool programs in the high-need communities. Explain whether your sustainability plan includes extension of services to other high-need communities.

Virginia had several stated sustainability goals in its Preschool Development Grant application and has made progress toward those ends.

- Governor Terry McAuliffe's Governor's Children's Cabinet has prioritized preschool expansion as a major initiative to turn around underperforming school divisions and reduce economic disparities in educational outcomes in the Commonwealth.

- The 2015 Virginia General Assembly created the Virginia Preschool Initiative Joint Subcommittee to consider increasing accountability, flexibility, innovation, clarification of the state's role and policy related 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. This joint subcommittee has been continued into 2016.

- Two bills related to preschool, introduced into the 2016 Virginia General Assembly, would, if passed, have an impact on the preschool teacher work force and delivery of preschool programs in the Commonwealth:

[House Bill 46 - Early Education Workforce Committee; Secretary of Education to establish](#)

Directs the Secretary of Education to establish a 21-member Early Education Workforce Committee with the key goal of ensuring an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood

education work force in the Commonwealth.

[HB 47 Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program; established, report.](#)

Establishes the Mixed-Delivery Preschool Services Fund and Grant Program for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis to urban, suburban, and rural community applicants to field-test innovative strategies and evidence-based practices that support a robust system of mixed-delivery preschool services in the Commonwealth.

- The cross-sector, cross-agency VPI+ data team is operational and has begun to address issues such as increased collection and reporting of data on preschool children, teachers, and programs.
- Increased availability of data on preschool participants and programs will inform decisions about program development and offerings, professional development for teachers, and the effectiveness of preschool for all children.
- The data-driven professional development plans developed for VPI+ teachers will serve as a model for future professional development and upskilling of preschool teachers.
- Through a competitive procurement process, Virginia has selected a high-quality preschool curriculum, summative assessments, and professional development for use in the VPI+ program that can also be used by other preschool programs statewide, thus contributing to improved program quality in other preschool programs statewide, such as Title I and Head Start.
- The results of summative assessments administered to children in the VPI+ program will help to inform work around setting standards or thresholds for kindergarten readiness.
- The broader use of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to evaluate preschool program effectiveness will offer information and data that can be used on a broader scale for general statewide program improvement.
- Assistance provided to subgrantees on how to maximize comprehensive services, braid funding sources, and blend classrooms stand to serve as models to sustain long-term services to at-risk preschool children.
- Greater connections with local partners stand to identify local funding sources, such as educational foundations and business partnerships, to provide additional funding as needed.

Many of the lessons learned from the implementation of VPI+ will be transferable and available to other high-need communities in the implementation of high-quality preschool programs.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

For budget expenditures made with federal grant funds, you must provide an explanation if funds have not been drawn down from the G5 System to pay for the budget expenditure amounts reported in budget tables.

Virginia is on track to meet the grant spending timeline for Year 1. This report, which includes accounting transactions through December 31, 2015, reflects slower spending due to carefully designing and setting up the VPI+ program during this first year. As noted elsewhere in this report, 95 percent of Virginia's award was passed through to subgrantees, which budgeted for the school year (August/September through June), versus on a calendar year basis. At December 31, 2015, schools had been open less than one-third of the school year. During the period January through June 2016, subgrantees are expected to expend their remaining balances. During the expenditure approval process, Virginia has not noted discrepancies between the subgrantees' spending and their budgets (which were merged into one document to enhance controls and expedite the process).

Provide an explanation if you did not expend funds at the expected rate during the reporting period.

Several factors contributed to Virginia's expenditure rate being lower than expected for Year 1. Actual

subgrantee Year 1 budgets were based on the school year (not calendar year). At the end of the Year 1 grant period (December 31, 2015), approximately one-third of the school year had passed. Most subgrantees focused efforts on equipping, staffing and starting new classrooms in August and September 2015. Subgrantees experienced difficulty recruiting qualified staff and eligible children, staff turnover, staff learning curve related to this new grant, staff absences due to holidays, implementation of new curriculum, professional staff training, and implementation of a new formative assessment system along with facilitation of administering summative assessments. The state education agency (SEA) experienced prolonged procurement efforts to procure the curriculum and formative assessments, program evaluation and summative assessments and professional development options, which in turn delayed subgrantee efforts.

Although Virginia exceeded the enrollment goal (application), the low expenditure/reimbursement level reflects challenges with regard to start-up (equipping, staffing, and recruiting eligible children). The SEA worked closely with each subgrantee, and they successfully addressed necessary start-up activities and recruited and trained key VPI+ staff. Starting in January 2016, the SEA noted an escalated pace of subgrantee reimbursement requests (\$1.7M in January 2016, as compared to \$1.2M during calendar year 2015), so the expected course correction is now beginning to occur.

Describe any changes to your budget that affected your ability to achieve your approved project activities and/or project objectives.

Virginia's budget remained unchanged throughout the Year 1 cycle. Accordingly, there were no budget-related impediments to project success.

If you expect to have any unexpended funds at the end of the current budget period, provide an estimate and indicate how you plan to use the unexpended funds (carryover) in the next budget period.

Virginia's unspent Year 1 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2015 into 2016, and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Both the SEA and subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 1 funds for approved activities. The carryforward authorization did not have an end date. When Year 1 activities cease, Virginia will assess to determine if there are any remaining balances and redirect those funds to cover unmet needs. When the Year 1 funds are exhausted, use of Year 2 funding will begin. The authorization from the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to carry forward funds provided Virginia with the flexibility to respect the grant period and the subgrantees' operating needs to budget and expend based on the school year (versus calendar year).