

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2016 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: Dr. Mark R. Allan

Title: Early Childhood Education Project Manager

Phone #: (804) 225-3665 Ext.: _____ Fax #: (804) 786-1587

Email Address: mark.allan@doe.virginia.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2016 To: 12/31/2016

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	\$17,499,999.50	\$5,742,528.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$17,055,276.78	\$6,443,698.69
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: 07/01/2014 To: 12/31/2016

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 continued participation in the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) was well-received and widely reported. Shortly after Virginia heard that it would have funding for Year 3, Governor Terry McAuliffe's office released a [press release](#) announcing the award. The activities of the PDG are well aligned with the work of the [Governor's Children's Cabinet](#), whose recommendations to advance policy promoting early childhood programs resulted in significant support from the 2016 Virginia General Assembly including:

Budget Items - Invested a total of \$25.4 million in early childhood education over the biennium.

- Expansion of home visiting parent and health education services;
- Increase to early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals;
- Increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount by 2 percent, from \$6,000 per pupil to \$6,125;
- Established VPI income eligibility at or below 200 percent of poverty, while allowing school divisions to enroll up to 15 percent of their VPI students above the income cut-off if they meet locally established risk factors;
- Established a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education; and
- Provided funding for the creation of training scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Council ([HB46](#)), an early learning council comprised of legislators, business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood;
- Created a Department of Social Services workgroup to review the health and safety standards of license-exempt child care programs ([SJ63](#));
- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia, prenatal to age five ([SJ88](#)), to determine the best strategy for future early childhood development investments;
- Asked the Department of Health to prepare a report on the best methods for improving birth outcomes, low birth weight, and out-of-wedlock births ([HB30](#)); and
- Established the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

Virginia's PDG has also helped to launch an increased focus on preschool activity in the Commonwealth, resulting in other news coverage and activities related to services for preschool children and support for their teachers. Examples include:

- [Governor McAuliffe Unveils New Child Care Website](#), March 11, 2016
- [Early Childhood Professionals Day 2016](#), May 6, 2016
- [Governor McAuliffe Announces Mixed Delivery Preschool Grants](#), August 4, 2016
- [Governor McAuliffe Announces Establishment of Early Childhood Development Institute, in Partnership with Community College System](#), October 17, 2016

The Virginia Secretary of Education, Dr. Dietra Trent, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Steven Staples, 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.

Key Highlights and Accomplishments

- Increase in the Number of Children Served in VPI+

As a result of the PDG, Virginia has had continued success in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs. VPI+ (Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus, the name Virginia gave to its Preschool Expansion Grant) augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). Virginia's original PDG application stated a Year 2 (2016-2017) target of 1,515 *new* slots and 1,470 *improved* slots, for a combined total of 2,985 VPI+ children to be served *above* those children already being served by the state-funded VPI program. The actual 2016-2017 VPI+ enrollment as of December 1, 2016, shows 1,406 children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 1,891 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,297 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant. This represents an increase of over 10 percent above Virginia's original goal of 2,985 new and improved preschool slots.

VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

Enrollment Totals (note, due to rounding, the totals may not equal 100%)

Year 2 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 2,985 *new and improved* slots
 Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2016 - 3,297 *new and improved* slots

Gender

Male - 50%
 Female - 50%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 57%
 Hispanic children - 19%
 White children - 15%
 Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 3%
 American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report
 Children from two or more races - 3%
 Children with race not specified - 1%

Home Language

English - 81%
 Spanish - 14%
 Arabic - 1%
 Other languages - 3%
 Language not specified - 1%

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 97%
 Children in private programs - 3%

Children with disabilities - 3%
Children from military families - 3%
Children from migrant families - Too small to report
Children from homeless families - 2%
Children from foster families - 1%

VPI+ New Slots

Enrollment Totals

Year 2 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 1,515 *new slots*
Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2016 - 1,406 *new slots*

Gender

Male - 51%
Female - 49%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 49%
Hispanic children - 26%
White children - 16%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 4%
American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report
Children from two or more races - 4%
Children with race not specified - 1%

Home Language

English - 75%
Spanish - 19%
Arabic - 2%
Other languages - 3%
Language not specified - 1%

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 93%
Children in private programs - 7%
Children with disabilities - 5%
Children from military families - 5%
Children from migrant families - Too small to report
Children from homeless families - 1%
Children from foster families - 1%

VPI+ Improved Slots

Enrollment Totals

Year 2 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 1,470 *improved slots*
Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2016 - 1,891 *improved slots*

Gender

Male - 50%
Female - 50%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 63%

Hispanic children - 14%
White children - 15%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 3%
American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report
Children from two or more races - 3%
Children with race not specified - 2%

Home Language

English - 85%
Spanish - 11%
Arabic - 1%
Other languages - 2%
Language not specified - Too small to report

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 100%
Children with disabilities - 2%
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

Virginia has continued to strengthen its infrastructure to support early childhood programs. 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+ Core Planning Team and the Cross Organizational Data Team, which meet at least quarterly to discuss the roles of each partner in the grant implementation. The launch of VPIplus.org, with its extensive multimedia resource library, was a key infrastructure improvement, serving as a one-stop-shop for free, high-quality professional development resources for early childhood education professionals.

- Successful Implementation of All Components of VPI+

Virginia has been successful in implementing the many components of its PDG. The selected preschool curricula were effectively implemented. Summative assessments were administered to children in new VPI+ classes to measure the impact of VPI+ on student outcomes, resulting in baseline data for further program improvement. All new VPI+ classes received a QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System) rating to assess and improve their quality. Teachers and other school personnel received significant professional development and coaching from all grant partners in all areas of VPI+, including curriculum implementation; supporting at-risk children; administration and effective use of formative assessments; use of QRIS results for program improvement; and data collection, reporting, and use. Progress has been made in bringing state agencies and organizations together to plan for the consolidation of preschool data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). Subgrantees have expanded their services to children with disabilities, English learners, and others in need. Finally, a stakeholder workgroup has been created to develop guidelines for the prevention of suspension/expulsion of children in early childhood settings.

- Increased Number of Children Who are Ready for School

There is very little consensus on the exact definition of kindergarten readiness. For purposes of reporting kindergarten readiness for the PDG annual report, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) received input from its VPI+ evaluator, SRI, and early childhood assessment experts from the VPI+ Evaluation Advisory Board

(EAB). For the exclusive purpose of VPI+ annual progress reporting, the VDOE used a comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness that combined results across school readiness domains into a single index.

The Essential Domains of School Readiness were assessed as follows:

1. Language and literacy development - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)
2. General knowledge and cognition - Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement Revised (Applied Problems Subtest to assess numeracy and counting)
3. Approaches to learning - Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS-2.1)
4. Social and emotional development - Head Toes Knees Shoulders (HTKS) Task and T-CRS-2.1
5. Physical well-being and motor development - A Teacher Survey, Preschool Motor Development Direct Assessment, Virginia Fine/Gross Motor Screening at Kindergarten Measure

VPI+ children were considered "kindergarten ready" if they scored within the expected developmental range in at least three of four identified domains:

- language and literacy development (literacy); AND
- general knowledge and cognition (mathematics); AND

One OR both of the following:

- approaches to learning;
- social and emotional development.

See narrative 1(c) GPRA for specific cut points.

Note: Although motor development is important for children to be ready for kindergarten, delays in these areas are less common and not necessarily the primary focus of the VPI+ program. Therefore, based on consensus from a subcommittee of the EAB, motor development is not included in the criteria for kindergarten readiness.

Children Ready for School

Using the criteria described above, the following percentages of children were identified as ready for school.

VPI+ Cohort 1 - Children who participated in the VPI+ program during the 2015 -2016 school year and started kindergarten in fall 2016

Overall - 70%

Gender

- Male - 66%
- Female - 74%

Race/Ethnicity

- Black or African American children - 69%
- Hispanic children - 64%
- White children - 81%

Other Subgroups

- Children with disabilities - 52%
- English learners - 65%

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+

Virginia has been successful in meeting, and in fact exceeding, the Year 2 enrollment goals for the grant. Two Subgrantees, Fairfax and Prince William, added a total of four unplanned VPI+ classrooms. However, some Subgrantees are still having difficulty recruiting children for participation in the VPI+ program. Two challenged urban Subgrantees experienced persistent difficulties recruiting eligible children due to a variety of factors, including inconsistent transportation services, declining kindergarten enrollments, and lack of classroom space. While there has been interest in collaboration from private partners, a majority of these private providers are faith-based organizations, and Virginia's constitution prohibits public funds to flow to such entities.

Resolution:

The VDOE has maintained close contact with Subgrantees, communicating regularly with each of the 11 VPI+ school divisions. In March 2016, a letter was sent to each division superintendent outlining monitoring, data collections, and reporting that would occur in the spring; and reviewing recruiting commitments, budget activity, the VPI+ Memorandum of Understanding, and the Year 3 grant award process.

Subgrantees are required to report to the VDOE on a regular basis the number of filled VPI+ slots and how they are making progress in addressing the unfilled slots. Phone calls and site visits by VDOE staff provide 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.

The VDOE also provided individualized technical assistance to two Subgrantees, including face-to-face meetings with school division leadership teams to address the challenges and develop strategies to improve enrollment. Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, has also assisted in providing ideas for recruitment plans and in making phone calls to engage support.

- 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. Virginia exceeded the target in Year 1 of the grant, with 7 percent of VPI+ children identified with a disability by spring 2016. For Year 2, however, enrollments as of December 2016 indicate that 3 percent of VPI+ children have been identified with a disability (5 percent of children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2 percent in *improved* VPI+ classrooms).

Resolution:

The VDOE continues to work closely with Subgrantees to help them increase their services to preschool children with disabilities. One barrier, in particular, has been the transportation of early childhood special education children to VPI+ classrooms, which are not always in the same location as other preschool programs. As Subgrantees are planning for the next school year, they are being encouraged to consider proximity in determining VPI+ classroom locations.

The VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities) and the VDOE's early childhood team have also collaborated carefully to support inclusion through activities such as the [Early Childhood Special Education Curriculum Framework Content Teaching Academy](#) in June 2016, development of a [website dedicated to early childhood special education](#), and the [Early Childhood Special Education Program Administrator Summer Institute](#) in August 2016.

All Subgrantees indicate they are working toward meeting the target for inclusion of children with disabilities in their VPI+ programs in partnership with their special education staff, by facilitating transition from early childhood special education settings to VPI+ classrooms. School divisions indicate that children are being screened and observed for possible disabilities. It is reported that

still going through the formal identification process, and eligibility for special education services had not been determined by early December. It is anticipated that the end-of-school-year data reports will show increased participation of children with disabilities.

Additionally, VDOE staff have provided technical assistance, and PDG funds have been used to send division teams to the National Inclusion Conference.

- Ensuring Effective Use of Funds by Subgrantees

Some Subgrantees that have met their enrollment targets have been slow to spend down their funds, resulting in unused grant funds. VDOE staff have provided technical assistance to Subgrantees - both statewide and on an individual basis - regarding effective spending strategies. Since fall 2016, and weekly since December 2016, Subgrantees have been apprised of the possibility of reallocation of monies based on unspent funds in excess of 15 percent of their Year 2 grant award as of May 31, 2017 - both for Year 2, as well as for Years 3 and 4, so that additional students may be served elsewhere in high-need areas of the Commonwealth.

Resolution:

Given that the goal of the PDG is to increase access and improve quality of services to preschool children in the Commonwealth, the state proposes to reevaluate its plans for spending to achieve these goals. Virginia proposes to seek approval from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to reallocate unused funding from the 11 current Subgrantees in order to add two or three VPI+ Subgrantees in Years 3 and 4 (2017-2018 and 2018-2019), for a total of 13 or 14 Subgrantees.

As of January 18, 2017, two school divisions were approached and subsequently submitted documentation of their intent to participate in VPI+. Visits to these divisions will follow in late February and early March to work through next steps, including sharing the Memorandum of Understanding, providing details surrounding grant requirements, and building an annual plan and related budget. A third school division may be approached in upcoming weeks, as the picture of spending for the current Subgrantees becomes clearer. Additional details of this proposal are found in Section B - Budget Information of this APR. This strategy would increase the number of students served in additional high-need communities, as well as ensure efficient and effective spending for quality improvement.

Conclusion

The VPI+ program in Virginia has been successful in providing increased services to at-risk four-year-olds in the Commonwealth as well as improved support to preschool teachers and other school personnel. Several components of an effective preschool program are now available as models to school divisions - both those participating in VPI+ as well as those not participating - such as a research-based preschool curriculum, data-driven professional development plans and coaching opportunities for teachers, and summative assessments that can be used as one measure of school readiness. The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is being used more widely, and progress is being made in bringing preschool data elements into Virginia's Longitudinal Data System, leading to more comprehensive and effective use of data for program improvement, professional development needs, and services to young children.

Lessons learned include the importance of developing effective strategies to identify at-risk children for participation, especially the early identification of children with disabilities and among families that may be hard to find, such as homeless families and migrant families where English is not the home language. Also, some Subgrantees continue to need help with budget development and spend-down strategies, with the understanding that if funds are not used effectively, they may be redirected to benefit other Subgrantees.

Virginia's VPI+ program is benefitting from the results of the midyear and summative program evaluations and looks forward to continued improvement in the areas of professional development, program implementation, and summative results for children.



**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, 2016.

As a result of the PDG, Virginia has had continued success in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs. VPI+ (Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus, the name Virginia gave to its Preschool Expansion Grant) augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). Virginia's original PDG application stated a Year 2 (2016-2017) target of 1,515 *new* slots and 1,470 *improved* slots, for a combined total of 2,985 VPI+ children to be served *above* those children already being served by the state-funded VPI program. The actual 2016-2017 VPI+ enrollment as of December 1, 2016, shows 1,406 children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 1,891 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,297 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant. This represents an increase of over 10 percent above Virginia's original goal of 2,985 new and improved preschool slots. As of December 1, 2016, the following data are of interest:

VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

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Female - 50%

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Hispanic children - 19%
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Children from two or more races - 3%
Children with race not specified - 1%

Home Language

English - 81%
Spanish - 14%
Arabic - 1%
Other languages - 3%

Language not specified - 1%

Other Demographic Data

- Children in public programs - 97%
- Children in private programs - 3%
- Children with disabilities - 3%
- Children from military families - 3%
- 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, and in fact exceeding, the Year 2 enrollment goals for the grant. Two Subgrantees, Fairfax and Prince William, added a total of four unplanned VPI+ classrooms. However, some Subgrantees are still having difficulty recruiting children for participation in the VPI+ program. Two challenged urban Subgrantees have experienced persistent difficulties recruiting eligible children due to a variety of factors, including inconsistent transportation services, declining kindergarten enrollments, and lack of classroom space in the areas of the city where the eligible children live. While there has been interest in collaboration from private partners, a majority of these private providers are faith-based organizations, and Virginia's constitution prohibits public funds to flow to such entities.

Additionally, some Subgrantees that have met their enrollment targets have been slow to spend down their funds, resulting in unused grant funds. VDOE staff have provided technical assistance to Subgrantees - both statewide and on an individual basis - regarding effective spending strategies. Since fall 2016, and weekly since December 2016, Subgrantees have been apprised of the possibility of reallocation of monies based on unspent funds in excess of 15 percent of their Year 2 grant award as of May 31, 2017 - both for Year 2 as well as for Years 3 and 4, so that additional students may be served elsewhere in high-need areas of the Commonwealth. Subgrantees have been reminded of spend down balances during each quarterly monitoring visit, during each VDOE webinar, at Implementation Team meetings twice a year, and individually as necessary.

Given that the goal of the PDG is to increase access and improve quality of services to preschool children in the Commonwealth, the state proposes to reevaluate its plans for spending to achieve these goals. Virginia proposes to seek approval from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to reallocate unused funding from the 11 current Subgrantees in order to add two or three VPI+ Subgrantees in Years 3 and 4 (2017-2018 and 2018-2019), for a total of 13 or 14 Subgrantees.

As of January 18, 2017, two school divisions were approached and subsequently submitted documentation of their intent to participate in VPI+. Visits to these divisions will follow in late February and early March to work through next steps, including sharing the Memorandum of Understanding, providing details surrounding grant requirements, and building an annual plan and related budget. A third school division may be approached in upcoming weeks, as the picture of spending for the current Subgrantees becomes clearer. Additional details of this proposal are found in Section B - Budget Information of this APR. This strategy would increase the number of students served in additional high-need communities, as well as ensure efficient and effective spending for quality improvement.

News Coverage

Virginia's continued participation in the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) has been widely reported and well-received, both on the local and state levels. Examples of local coverage include:

- [The Preschool Program at Winchester Public Schools](#), April 17, 2016 - A promotional video on the impact the PDG has had in the school division. It highlights some unique connections between preschool and higher education and the PDG coordinator who was a preschool teacher.
- [U.S. Secretary of Education gets inside look at Norfolk preschool](#), May 5, 2016

Shortly after Virginia heard that it would receive funding for Year 3, the Governor's Office and several media outlets announced the award, promoting the favorable PDG work in Virginia. Examples of statewide news coverage include:

- [Governor McAuliffe Announces Third Round of Federal Preschool Expansion Grants](#), November 30, 2016
- [Virginia receives \\$17.5 million grant funding for preschool growth](#), December 1, 2016
- [Federal grant money to help Virginia and Richmond-area schools expand preschool for disadvantaged children](#), December 4, 2017

Virginia's PDG has also helped to launch an increased focus on preschool activity in the Commonwealth, resulting in other news coverage related to services for preschool children and support for their teachers. Examples include:

- [Governor McAuliffe Unveils New Child Care Website](#), March 11, 2016
- [Early Childhood Professionals Day 2016](#), May 6, 2016
- [Governor McAuliffe Announces Mixed Delivery Preschool Grants](#), August 4, 2016
- [Governor McAuliffe Announces Establishment of Early Childhood Development Institute, in Partnership with Community College System](#), October 17, 2016

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

The VDOE has maintained close contact with Subgrantees, communicating regularly with each of the 11 VPI+ Subgrantee school divisions. In March 2016, a letter was sent to each division superintendent outlining monitoring, data collections, and reporting that would occur in the spring; and reviewing recruiting commitments, budget activity, the VPI+ Memorandum of Understanding, and the Year 3 grant award process.

Subgrantees are required to report to the VDOE on a regular basis the number of filled VPI+ slots and how they are making progress in addressing the unfilled slots. Phone calls and site visits by VDOE staff provide 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.

The VDOE also provided individualized technical assistance to two Subgrantees, including face-to-face meetings with school division leadership teams to address the challenges and develop strategies to improve enrollment. Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, has also assisted in providing ideas for recruitment plans and in making phone calls to engage support.

Expansion of Family Outreach Services

Virginia's PDG has promoted and enabled expanded family outreach services to assist in identifying and recruiting eligible children into the VPI+ program. Selected examples include:

Brunswick County Public Schools

Brunswick offers a PreK Orientation Camp in August to share the details of the VPI+ program, curriculum, activities, and parent engagement activities. It also sends out a newsletter and a Family Engagement calendar for parents with information about developmentally appropriate activities at home. Brunswick will expand its family outreach by offering Summer Fun for current VPI and VPI+ students, two weeks of instruction where parents are invited to volunteer on field trips and in daily activities, with 5 1/2 hours of instruction, over and above time for meals and recess. All VPI and VPI+ students will receive take-home book bags with activities to foster family interaction.

Chesterfield County Public Schools

Each Chesterfield VPI+ classroom holds an orientation meeting during the week before school starts. VPI+ families are notified by a letter and a phone call from the teacher inviting them to the event. Materials are translated into the language of need. At the orientation, the calendar of family events is shared. Meals and

snacks, field trips and transportation are addressed. Translators and interpreters are available. There are two parent teacher conferences, one in the fall and one in the spring.

Giles County Public Schools

Giles County's family engagement coordinator plans family events, orientation, home visits, etc., to facilitate parent involvement and provide information about the VPI+ program and its curriculum. Family engagement parent education includes a "How to Read to your Child" event. Each family is provided information on nutrition, health, and preschool readiness through newsletters, family activities/meetings, parent training on school readiness and transition to kindergarten, and individual family needs addressed through parent conferences and home visits.

Sussex County Public Schools

The Sussex VPI+ program has four layers of providing information and support to VPI+ families: 1) Preschool Advisory Committee, 2) Family Access Consortium, 3) PTA, and 4) family home visits conducted by the parent engagement coordinator. Information is disseminated to families during "K Camp" for incoming students and parents in August at the beginning of the school year. During home visits, the parent engagement coordinator reviews this information, explains the curriculum, discusses the calendar of family engagement events, and provides other information about the VPI+ program.

Public-Private Partnerships

Some Subgrantees have made effective use of public-private partnerships to increase their VPI+ enrollments and to promote their preschool work to a wider audience. Selected examples include:

Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax has two community partners, Main Street Child Development Center (MSCD) and the Creative Learning School (CLS). MSCD houses several preschool classrooms for the school division including VPI, 32 VPI+ students, early childhood special education, and local preschool classes. A unique feature of the MSCD center is the senior center located just down the hall. They share common spaces in the facility and some of the seniors volunteer in the preschool classrooms. Opportunities for collaboration at MSCD positively impact the preschoolers. The director coordinates events for the preschoolers with the seniors because they enjoy shared special events. For example, preschoolers perform for the seniors and attend the senior talent shows. CLS occupies a converted house shared with VPI and 32 VPI+ students. CLS offers wrap around services including before/after school care and a summer program.

Norfolk City Public Schools

Norfolk has a partnership with Norfolk State University (NSU) and its Child Development Lab (CDL) to host a class. Eligible VPI+ children are enrolled from the community. The CDL offers a preschool class for three-year-old children in the center as well as a class for four-year-old children. The center is bright and spacious with ample room for young children to explore and learn with the bonus of welcoming NSU students into the classroom in various supportive capacities.

Richmond City Public Schools

Richmond has three VPI+ partnerships in the community. One partnership is located at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Health System Child Care Center. The VCU classroom is bright and cheerful with a preschool playground located right outside the door. The second partnership is located at the YWCA-Richmond, which houses two classes. The third partnership, new this year, is the Imani Learning Center.

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

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. Most Subgrantees now offer a single point of entry for child enrollment in preschool, and others are exploring collaborative enrollment strategies where multiple programs exist.

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 children with disabilities within each of its centers, programs, and/or classrooms.

In their annual plans, Subgrantees are required to address the following question:

Describe how the division's VPI+ program will maximize inclusion of students with disabilities in VPI+ classrooms and how families of these students will be engaged and supported.

The VDOE and its grant partners 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+ program is a continuing focus of technical assistance, professional development, and monitoring.

Virginia exceeded the target in Year 1 of the grant, with 7 percent of VPI+ children identified with a disability by spring 2016. 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. As of December 2016, enrollments for 2016-2017 (Year 2) indicate that 3 percent of VPI+ children have been identified with a disability (5 percent of children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2 percent in *improved* VPI+ classrooms). It is reported that children are still going through the formal identification process, and eligibility for special education services had not been determined by early December. It is anticipated that the end-of-school-year data reports will show increased participation of children with disabilities.

Describe more specifically your efforts to support full inclusion of eligible children with disabilities 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. Monitoring visits during spring 2016 and enrollment data corroborate these certifications. Selected examples of inclusion and support of children with disabilities in Virginia's VPI+ programs include:

- The VPI+ Core Planning Team, Virginia's grant management team, includes the VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities). She and the VDOE's early childhood team have collaborated carefully to support inclusion through activities such as the [Early Childhood Special Education Curriculum Framework Content Teaching Academy](#) in June 2016, development of a [website dedicated to early childhood special education](#), the [Early Childhood Special Education Program Administrator Summer Institute](#) in August 2016, and attention to several legislative actions that have an impact on early childhood special education such as the [School Readiness Committee](#) and the [Mixed Delivery Pilots](#).
- VPI+ staff members and the 619 instructional specialist also participated as a team in professional learning communities across the PDG states, including a conference call in June 2016 to share professional development strategies that support inclusion in PDG programs.
- The 619 instructional specialist and VDOE VPI+ staff have been instrumental in providing guidance to

Subgrantees on ways to ensure that children with disabilities and their families have access to and are able to fully participate in the VPI+ program. Virginia's Special Education [Training and Technical Assistance Centers \(TTACs\)](#) often participate in or assist with professional development in this area. Examples of this professional development are provided elsewhere in this APR.

- In addition to the technical assistance provided to Subgrantees, members of the VPI+ Implementation Team participate in the following agency and statewide groups that promote access to and provide services for children with disabilities:

The Early Childhood Special Education Network, created by the VDOE, has four goals:

- To create a system of partnerships with leaders in early childhood special education;
- To promote collection and use of valid, reliable, and accurate data;
- To promote the use of quality curriculum-based assessment practices; and
- To explore how preschool VTSS (Virginia Tiered Systems of Support) will be implemented and connected to K-12 VTSS. (VTSS is a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student to be successful in academics and behavior.)

Membership consists of representatives from stakeholders that serve Virginia's special education population, including education, social services, mental health, professional development consortia, special education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs) housed in Virginia colleges and universities, and entities that serve specific populations such as homeless, autistic, deaf, and blind students. The network met twice in 2016. Attendees used the opportunity to share resources and voice needs that might be met through collaborative work. VPI and VPI+ representatives are part of this network.

The Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Team promotes planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of professional development to ensure coordination of all early childhood professional development in Virginia. VCPD team members are committed to building a unified system to support families and their children (prenatal to age 5) in Virginia. This includes but is not limited to infants, toddlers and preschoolers who may experience risk factors for school readiness, economic disadvantages, and cultural and linguistic differences; English learners; and young children with disabilities and special health needs. Members provide professional development to early childhood practitioners who serve children and families in home, school, and community settings. VPI and VPI+ representatives serve on this team.

The Virginia Department of Education's Inclusive Practices Workgroup was formed as a workgroup within the *Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Team* to focus on four goals:

- To provide a common understanding of the definitions, laws, and regulations governing students with disabilities as they relate to least restrictive environment and inclusion;
- To identify barriers to more inclusive practices;
- To review state and division policies and procedures for support of students with disabilities in regular classrooms and more inclusive settings; and
- To recommend strategies, accommodations, and instructional practices that increase access to more inclusive settings.

Additional Subgrantee Efforts to Promote Participation of Children with Disabilities

The VDOE continues to work closely with Subgrantees to help them increase their services to preschool children with disabilities. One barrier, in particular, has been the transportation of early childhood special education children to VPI+ classrooms, which are not always in the same location as other preschool programs. As Subgrantees are planning for the next school year, they are being encouraged to consider proximity in determining VPI+ classroom locations. A review of Subgrantee annual plans provides several examples of ways they ensure that children with disabilities are included in the VPI+ program.

Henrico County Public Schools

Henrico offers collaborative classrooms that integrate students with IEPs into a classroom environment alongside students without disabilities. The collaborative classrooms provide the supports of a special

education teacher, general education teacher, and instructional assistant. The three adults work together to maximize inclusion of students with disabilities. The families of these students are engaged and supported through the participation in Child Study meetings, frequent communication exchanges with teachers, contact with and resources provided by family advocates, opportunities to partake in family engagement events, and numerous occasions to volunteer and interact with the classroom.

Petersburg City Public Schools

The Petersburg VPI+ staff, school principal, and early childhood special education staff collectively determine the best classroom placement fit for the child's needs. VPI+ Coordinator, Family Engagement Coordinator, and teachers create a plan that will include the family of the student.

Prince William County Public Schools

Prince William students enrolled in the VPI+ program are screened for speech, language, or developmental delays and referred, as needed, to Child Find for screening and/or full evaluations. Enrollment priority is given to children with IEPs. Children with IEPs are supported in the classroom by special education resource teachers who work in collaboration with the VPI+ teacher to implement the goals of the IEP.

Winchester City Public Schools

The Winchester VPI+ coordinator, along with the school division's special education director, meets with the regional program that coordinates special education services for preschool children to determine needs and the best course of service delivery.

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 2016. 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), Virginia has added 1,406 slots in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 1,891 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,297 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant, exceeding the Year 2 target of 2,985 children by over 10 percent.

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. 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 how they will meet any unfulfilled targets.

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

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Order a [Children's Cabinet](#) dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. Its [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.
3. Ensure that children most in need can benefit from the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

The [2016 Annual Report](#) highlighted accomplishments of the Children's Cabinet, including advancing policy to enable greater access to early childhood programs. Evidence of that success is outlined below.

Legislative Interest in Preschool

The following is a summary of support for early childhood education resulting from action taken during the 2016 Virginia General Assembly.

Budget Items - Invested a total of \$25.4 million in early childhood education over the biennium.

- Expansion of home visiting parent and health education services;
- Increase to early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals;
- Increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount by 2 percent, from \$6,000 per pupil to \$6,125;
- Established VPI income eligibility at or below 200 percent of poverty while allowing school divisions to enroll up to 15 percent of their VPI students above the income cut-off if they meet locally established risk factors;
- Established a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education; and
- Provided funding for the creation of training scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Council ([HB46](#)), an early learning council comprised of legislators,

business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood;

- Created a Department of Social Services workgroup to review the health and safety standards of license-exempt child care programs ([SJ63](#));
- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia, prenatal to age five ([SJ88](#)), to determine the best strategy for future early childhood development investments;
- Asked the Department of Health to prepare a report on the best methods for improving birth outcomes, low birth weight, and out-of-wedlock births ([HB30](#)); and
- Established the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

Collaboration among Partners in Early Childhood Services

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+ Core Planning 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.

- *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, Part B 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. The agency also serves as the lead on a new state website, www.childcareva.com, which provides information on child care options, requirements and benefits of licensed providers, and guidance for selecting quality child care.
- *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), [Virginia Quality](#), 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 2016-17 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. 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 2016 General Assembly funded an increase in the per pupil rate from \$6,000 to \$6,125 beginning in FY 2017.

The state appropriation has increased steadily from \$9.3 million in FY 1995 to \$69.3 million in FY 2017 (an increase of \$.7 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 24,724 in FY 2017. The actual number of VPI slots used in FY 2017 is 18,023. 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 2016-2017 school year, 120 of 128 eligible divisions participate in VPI. Of those participating, 66 use 100 percent of their VPI slot allocation; 25 divisions use 76 - 99 percent of their slot allocation; 15 divisions use 50 - 75 percent of their slot allocation; and 14 divisions use less than 50 percent of their slot allocation. Seven of Virginia's 135 school divisions are not eligible for funding under the state formula.

The 2006 General Assembly also added 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. Due to a budget shortfall, these funds were not awarded in FY 2017.

Beginning in FY 2015, 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 beginning in 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. Up to 15 percent of a division's slots may be filled based on locally established eligibility criteria so as to meet the unique needs of at-risk children in the community. The 2016-2017 report from school

divisions indicates that over 95 percent of the children served in VPI met at least one of the eligibility criteria prescribed by the General Assembly. Less than 5 percent of the children served were identified as eligible based on local criteria.

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

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- Established the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

The Work of Virginia's VPI+ Core Planning and Implementation Teams

The integrated management team established to oversee Virginia's preschool program 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. This team has been active in all aspects of grant management and implementation, including curriculum implementation, professional development and coaching, assessments, data collection and reporting, VLDS integration, state policy proposals, and technical assistance to Subgrantees.

Data Collection and Reporting

In April 2016, [Virginia school divisions were notified of changes to the preschool data collection](#) that will link preschool data to Virginia's K-12 data. Through May 2016, VPI data were collected through a Single Sign-on for Web System (SSWS) and stored in a separate database. Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier (STI) to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students in the [Master Schedule Collection \(MSC\)](#) and report them in the [Student Record Collection \(SRC\)](#). These changes will bring the preschool students into the VLDS, and will serve as the counts for funding the VPI program in Virginia localities in the near future.

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 2 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.

Virginia's Definition of School Readiness

The Virginia Board of Education has adopted a definition of school readiness. An abbreviated version follows:

"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. . . .

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. . . .

Ready Schools. A ready school accepts all children and provides a seamless transition to a high-quality learning environment by engaging the whole community. . . .

Ready Communities. . . . Ready communities . . . 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.

The full definition and additional indicators for each component are available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/school_readiness/va_school_readiness_definition.pdf.

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

- A standardized preschool curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*) aligned with [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning](#) and the [Kindergarten Standards of Learning](#) 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
- Integration of preschool data into Virginia's Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) for use in measuring success and trends over time.

VPI+ Evaluation Advisory Board (EAB)

An EAB was established to provide guidance on Virginia's VPI+ PDG. The group met twice in 2016, with discussions about data collection and reporting, evaluation design, and assessments to measure child outcomes.

For purposes of the PDG and on the recommendation of the EAB, Virginia operationalized its definition of school readiness by setting cut-points on each of the summative assessments. More information on the cut-points is provided below.

Assessments

Assessment instruments were selected to assess the five Essential Domains of School Readiness. All assessments were required to be administered to preschool children in new VPI+ classrooms in the fall and spring, and again in the fall when they entered kindergarten.

The domains were assessed as follows:

1. Language and literacy development - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)

In kindergarten through grade 3, Virginia school divisions must use the nationally validated PALS instrument as the diagnostic literacy screening instrument. (Fairfax County requested and received approval from the VDOE to use the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in lieu of PALS.) 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.

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

2. General knowledge and cognition - Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement Revised (Applied Problems Subtest)

For validity and reliability of assessment results, trained field assessors conduct this assessment of numeracy and counting.

3. Approaches toward learning - Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS-2.1)

The T-CRS-2.1 items ask about a 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. Classroom teachers completed the task orientation subscales T-CRS-2.1 to rate the children's enjoyment in learning, task persistence, and curiosity levels, especially when confronted with new skills or tasks.

4. Social and emotional development - Head Toes Knees Shoulders (HTKS) Task and T-CRS-2.1

Trained field assessors administered the HTKS Task to assess self-regulation. The peer social skills and behavior control subscales of the T-CRS-2.1 were used to assess children's skills and abilities in peer relations and behavior.

5. Physical well-being and motor development

Teacher Survey

Teachers completed ratings of children's health in the fall and spring through an online survey. Children's health rating was not considered an outcome of VPI+ but was used as a measure of risk.

Preschool Motor Development Direct Assessment

To assess fine motor skills, trained field assessors asked the preschoolers to copy a line and a circle. Assessors also recorded whether the child held a pencil properly and demonstrated control from his/her wrist and fingers. To assess gross motor skills, children were asked to hold each foot off the ground for five seconds, hop three times on each foot, and jump in the air and clap their hands while airborne five times consecutively.

Virginia Fine/Gross Motor Screening at Kindergarten Measure

For fine motor skills, teachers asked the kindergarteners to copy a circle and make predominantly circular lines, and place five pegs into a pegboard within 30 seconds using only one hand. Children were also asked to demonstrate three gross motor skills: hold each foot off the ground for five seconds, jump in the air and clap their hands while airborne five times consecutively, and toss a playground ball in the air and catch it five times consecutively. Each child could attempt each skill twice.

These two assessments contain three skills that are common across both measures: copy a circle, hold each foot off the ground for five seconds, and jump in the air and clap hands while airborne five times consecutively. Thus the progress of a child's motor development skills can be viewed from preschool to kindergarten and across cohorts.

Cut-Points for School Readiness

There is very little consensus on the exact definition of kindergarten readiness. For purposes of reporting kindergarten readiness for the PDG annual report, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) received input from its VPI+ evaluator, SRI, and early childhood assessment experts from the VPI+ EAB. For the exclusive purpose of VPI+ annual progress reporting, the VDOE used a comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness that combined results across school readiness domains into a single index. VPI+ children were considered "kindergarten ready" if they scored within the expected developmental range in at least three of the four identified domains:

- language and literacy development (literacy); AND
- general knowledge and cognition (mathematics); AND

One OR both of the following:

- approaches to learning;
- social and emotional development.

Cut points denoting "within developmental range" for each domain and assessment are as follows:

- Language and literacy development (Literacy) - PALS-K Summed Score that is at or above the benchmark score for fall of kindergarten (i.e., 29 or above)
- Cognition and general knowledge (Numeracy and Counting) - Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III Applied Problems subtest standard score that is within or above the developmental range (i.e., 90 or above)
- Social and emotional development - Both T-CRS 2.1 Social Skills subscale and Behavior Control subscale scores are within or above the developmental range (i.e., 26th percentile or higher)

- Approaches to learning - T-CRS 2.1 Task Orientation subscale score within or above the developmental range (i.e., 26th percentile or higher)

Although motor development is critical for children to be ready for kindergarten, delays in these areas are less common and not necessarily the primary focus of the VPI+ program. Based on consensus from a subcommittee of the EAB, motor development is not included in the criteria for kindergarten readiness.

Sampling

For Virginia's kindergarten readiness calculations, exclusively for the purpose of the APR, Cohort 1 students were included in the calculations if they:

- Were enrolled in a VPI+ new classroom during the 2015-2016 school year, AND
- Were enrolled in a kindergarten classroom in any elementary school in the same division in fall 2016, AND
- Had scores for all four domains.

Fairfax County uses a different measure for assessing literacy in kindergarten - DRA. Thus, VPI+ Cohort 1 participants for Fairfax do not have data for literacy at kindergarten entry and do not have data for overall kindergarten readiness because they are missing data on one of the two required domains.

The resulting sample is 1,146 students.

Child Outcomes

Using the criteria described above, the following percentages of children were identified as ready for school.

- VPI+ Cohort 1

Children who participated in the VPI+ program during the 2015 -2016 school year and started kindergarten in fall 2016

Overall - 70%

Gender

- Male - 66%
- Female - 74%

Race/Ethnicity

- Black or African American children - 69%
- Hispanic children - 64%
- White children - 81%

Other Subgroups

- Children with disabilities - 52%
- English learners - 65%

By Domain

Language Development and Literacy - 90%

Cognition and General Knowledge (Mathematics) - 83%

Social and Emotional Development - 72%

Approaches to learning - 84%

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.

N/A - Virginia did not receive a Development Grant.

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.

Opening Paragraph

Describe how funds for infrastructure supports will be used to improve the quality of State Preschool Programs.

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

- The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assess and improve the quality of preschool classrooms;
- Summative assessments to measure preschool children's kindergarten readiness;
- Expanded services to children with disabilities, English learners, and others in need;
- Improved professional development from grant partners;
- A website, VPIplus.org, housing information about the grant and its partners, evaluation and partner reports, an extensive vetted library of videos showcasing best practices in early childhood instruction, other high-quality print and multimedia professional development resources, and news releases;
- Improvements to preschool data quality; and
- A stakeholder workgroup to create guidelines for the prevention of suspension/expulsion of children in early childhood settings.

Investment in the Structural Elements of Quality

Describe how funds will be applied to the structural elements listed below.

a. Early Learning and Development Standards

Virginia fully implemented its [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds](#) in 2013. These standards were developed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and reviewed by the Virginia Board of Education. The *Foundation Blocks* serve as Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards. They are required as the curricular basis for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) and Virginia's enhanced VPI+ program and are aligned with Virginia's Kindergarten Standards of Learning. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has developed [Milestones of Child Development \(2013\)](#), a reference guide for adults working with young children with emotional, cognitive, and physical needs.

b. Program Standards consistent with a High-Quality Preschool Program

Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), called [Virginia Quality](#), was created to provide a consistent way to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings. It is jointly administered by the VDSS and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF). Virginia Quality awards

quality levels from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) to early childhood programs based on the four standards in the [Summary of the Virginia Quality Standards and Levels \(2015\)](#): Education and Qualifications; Curriculum and Assessment; Environment; and Interactions. All VPI+ programs received a baseline Virginia Quality rating during the 2015-2016 school year and will receive another in Year 3 of the grant (2017-2018).

c. Programs for children with disabilities and English learners

The VPI+ Implementation Team includes the VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool for Children with Disabilities). Her work and assistance from Virginia's Special Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs) have strengthened services to children with disabilities. Additionally, Virginia's English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist offered assistance in providing services to English learners.

Specific examples are provided elsewhere in this Annual Performance Report (APR).

Also, each Subgrantee's Annual Plan contains a Comprehensive Services Plan that addresses how it provides preschool services to children with disabilities and English learners and their families. Seven (7) percent of the children served in VPI+ in 2015-2016 were identified with a disability, and over one-fourth came from homes where a language other than English was spoken.

d. Methods to determine the availability of High-Quality Preschool Programs, including private and faith-based providers and Head Start programs

Many school divisions in Virginia offer a single point of entry registration process for public preschool, allowing school divisions to maximize the preschool slots available. In March 2016, Governor McAuliffe launched a new website, www.childcareva.com, which provides information on child care options, requirements and benefits of licensed providers, and guidance for selecting quality child care.

VECF maintains a [list of quality rated child care centers, preschools, and family child care homes in Virginia](#). The Virginia Head Start Association, Inc., offers a [Head Start Locator](#) that allows users to locate a nearby Head Start program.

e. Preschool teacher education and early childhood education in teacher requirements for licensure

Virginia issues the following teaching licenses that permit teaching in preschool: Early/Primary Education PreK-3 and Elementary Education PreK-6. Teachers with these licenses 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 in the liberal arts and sciences (or equivalent) and fulfill specific requirements related to PreK-3 or PreK-6.

f. Improvement to teacher and administrator early education professional development

A significant component of Virginia's PDG is the development of high-quality professional development for VPI+ teachers, coaches, and administrators provided by the VDOE, the Center for Advanced Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia, the VECF, Teaching Strategies, and other providers contracted by the Subgrantees. In 2015, the VDOE established a [list of approved professional development offerings](#) that all preschool providers in the Commonwealth may use in the continuing education of preschool teachers. Additionally, a website was launched in fall 2016 by CASTL, VPIplus.org, which houses an extensive vetted library of videos showcasing best practices in early childhood instruction and other high-quality print and multimedia professional development resources. The video library, in particular, is actively used by VPI+ coaches in their work with teachers in new and improved classrooms. Responses to other questions in this APR provide greater detail about professional development.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly passed [HB 46](#), creating the [School Readiness Committee](#), which has as a goal "the development and alignment of an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce in the Commonwealth." The committee reviews the goals and priorities within the early childhood care and education systems and makes recommendations to various policymakers. The VECF facilitates the work of the committee under the direction of the Secretary of Education. The committee met four times in 2016. No public reports had been presented at the time of this APR.

g. Use of a Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and K-12 school data

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team to facilitate the addition of preschool data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). The Data Team has guided the process to merge Virginia's preschool data with K-12 school data. VDOE VPI+ staff facilitate team meetings, data sharing agreements and collections, and communications with Subgrantees.

A considerable amount of work has occurred to onboard Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) data into the VLDS, including 1) information from [IMPACT](#), Virginia's early childhood professional development registry; and 2) ratings from the QRIS, Virginia Quality. Work is ongoing to identify the data elements, design architecture, and specifications for databases to be enhanced or developed.

In April 2016, [Virginia school divisions were notified of changes to the preschool data collection](#) that will link preschool data to Virginia's K-12 data. These changes will bring the preschool students into the VLDS and will serve as the counts for funding the VPI program in Virginia localities in the near future.

h. A Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System

Summative assessments were administered to examine changes in the five Essential Domains of School Readiness for children in new VPI+ classrooms. Details about the assessments and their outcomes are available in other sections of this APR.

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

Each Subgrantee's Annual Plan contains a Family Engagement Plan that addresses culturally and linguistically responsive outreach, home visits, parent conferences, logs of family activities, and a Family Access Consortium.

VPI+ Subgrantees work with Smart Beginnings partners to assist at-risk children and families at the local level. Subgrantees are able to access resources and make important connections to assist family engagement coordinators in communicating with a wide network of family-serving organizations.

The VDOE VPI+ staff facilitated a family engagement coordinator training day in the fall, which included expert presentations from Virginia's Head Start and Home Visiting Consortium, as well as networking opportunities and strategy sharing for engaging parents to serve as advocates for their children.

j. Building State- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe issued an [Executive Order](#) to create a Children's Cabinet dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. The Cabinet's [2016 Annual Report](#) noted that its recommendations were reflected in Virginia's approved biennial budget, described elsewhere in this APR.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly established the [School Readiness Committee](#) to review the goals and priorities within the early childhood care and education systems and make recommendations to policymakers. Additionally, with assistance from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, 104 cities/counties in Virginia benefit from Virginia's [Smart Beginnings](#) network, which helps community leaders collaborate on priorities for young children.

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 2016 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 2016 include:

- A comprehensive evaluation of Year 1 progress

To measure impact and support program improvement, in August 2015 Virginia contracted with SRI International (SRI), assisted by School Readiness Consulting (SRC), to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of VPI+, including a formative evaluation of VPI+ implementation, a summative evaluation of VPI+ impact on children's school readiness, and a cost analysis to determine investments needed for desired outcomes. The Spring 2016 Formative Evaluation Report was delivered in July 2016. The SRI Annual Report was finalized in August 31, 2016. Data and information from these reports have been provided in related sections of this APR report. The results from SRI formative and summative reports are used by state partners and subgrantees to inform program implementation and data driven decision making. Examples of this practical use of evaluation data include: CASTL meeting with subgrantees to discuss student assessment results that, in turn, drive their Continuous Improvement Plans; Core Planning Team identifies technical assistance needed and plans future grant-wide meetings around these needs.

- Successful implementation of the preschool curriculum and assessments in VPI+ classrooms

Eight of Virginia's 11 Subgrantees have successfully implemented *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, which includes resources to assist teachers to plan and deliver content-rich programs for children from diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. 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. These 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 11 Subgrantees use *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as a formative assessment.

In terms of summative assessments, SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 found that VPI+ children made significant gains from fall 2015 to spring 2016 across all domains: literacy, mathematics, approaches to learning, and social and emotional development, as well as in assessment of gross and fine motor skills. Additional details are provided in Item #7 of this APR section.

- Provision of professional development

Extensive professional development opportunities were provided to VPI+ teachers, coaches, and administrators in 2016. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted and endorsed a series of webinars, meetings, and conferences on numerous topics related to early childhood development and education, and VPI+ implementation. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided training on PreK CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), on actionably using CLASS data, and becoming a certified

observer. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provided coach training and support and technical assistance to school division leaders on the development of continuous improvement plans, improving teacher practices, and selecting coaching models. Finally, relevant divisions received training on The Creative Curriculum, and all divisions received training on the GOLD Formative Assessment. These efforts are outlined in Item #2 of this APR section.

- Efforts to ensure access and participation by children with disabilities

Virginia has made a strong effort to identify and include children with disabilities in its VPI+ program in order to meet the PDG commitment to enroll a percentage of children with disabilities not less than the current national average. At the state level, a large part of this work has been achieved through collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that the features and availability of VPI+ are known, accessible, and can be replicated. As a result, by spring 2016, 7 percent of children served in Virginia's VPI+ programs were identified as children with disabilities, exceeding the national target of 6.4 percent.

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

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 noted that all VPI+ teachers held a bachelor's degree, and nearly half (47%) held a master's degree. The vast majority of teachers had an elementary teaching license endorsement that included preschool.

2. High-quality professional development for all staff

January - May 2016

Virginia state agencies and partners provided technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ Subgrantees in a number of ways. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted and endorsed a series of webinars, meetings, and conferences on numerous topics related to early childhood development and education, and VPI+ implementation. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided training on PreK CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), on using CLASS data, and becoming a certified observer. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provided coach training and support and technical assistance to school division leaders on the development of continuous improvement plans, improving teacher practices, and selecting coaching models. Finally, relevant divisions received training on The Creative Curriculum, and all divisions received training on the GOLD Formative Assessment. SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for Year 1 summarized the following technical assistance and professional development Subgrantees received from state partners from January through May 2016.

Technical Assistance from the VDOE

From January through May 2016, the VDOE conducted quarterly phone conferences, webinars, a conference, and individual meetings with VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators to provide technical assistance and monitoring of grant implementation. Webinar topics included recruiting low-income and hard-to-access families; supporting children's social-emotional development; strategies and resources for inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms; outreach and services for homeless children and families; connecting with the Child Find process to support early identification of disabilities; and planning and budgeting for Year 2 VPI+ implementation. The VDOE also offered webinars to private preschool programs. The VDOE conducted site visits to all 11 divisions in April and June 2016 to monitor grant and budget compliance and discuss Year 2 VPI+ implementation plans. In addition, VDOE's Special Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACS) held a conference in April focused on promoting social and emotional growth in early childhood. Finally, VDOE supported sending two school division teams to the National Inclusion Institute in North Carolina.

Through a competitive Request for Proposals process, Virginia established a menu of approved professional

development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education (54 different professional development options provided by nine vendors) that school divisions may purchase for use in the individualized professional development plans being developed for each VPI+ teacher.

Technical Assistance from CASTL

CASTL provided technical assistance and professional development for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators. Specific activities were developed based on a needs assessment conducted with divisions by CASTL.

VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators attended one of two VPI+ Leadership Academies (two-day trainings held in January and March 2016) led by CASTL staff. The Academy focused on data use for continuous improvement and professional development planning.

CASTL provided additional support for coaches, including a two-day coach training, a webinar on using video to support teacher reflection, monthly group coach calls, and monthly individual calls with coaches. The coach training focused on working effectively with teachers (i.e., isolating teacher behaviors, motivational interviewing, and dealing with teacher resistance) and the use of video and audio for enhancing teacher practices. Three monthly calls focused on motivating teacher change, audio review, and video review. Individual calls with coaches covered improving coaching focus and intensity, implementing strategies for motivating teacher change, and planning professional development. Other topics, which varied by division, covered following up on coaching models for Year 2, planning a scope and sequence of professional development for teachers and coaches, and engaging school division administrators.

VPI+ coordinators, together with their family engagement coordinators and coaches, also received one to three phone consultations with CASTL staff on developing continuous improvement plans and identifying coaching models for Year 2.

Technical Assistance from VECF

At the VPI+ Leadership Academies, VECF provided VPI+ coaches with an overview of the quality rating results for the 64 VPI+ classrooms that were rated using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) in fall 2015. At the CASTL two-day coaching training, VECF presented information about the ECERS-R subscales and how average subscale scores were determined.

VECF also provided an in-person, two-day PreK CLASS training to support coaches and other division staff in becoming certified CLASS observers so they could continue to observe and provide feedback to VPI+ teachers on classroom quality. Teams of staff from five VPI+ divisions attended the training, which included small and large group activities and watching and scoring CLASS PreK videos. After the training, participants had eight weeks to complete and pass the online CLASS reliability exam to complete their certification.

Training on The Creative Curriculum and GOLD

Of the 108 VPI+ teachers responding to a teacher survey, 44 had implemented *The Creative Curriculum* and 64 had implemented a curriculum other than *The Creative Curriculum*. All VPI+ teachers who implemented *The Creative Curriculum* reported having received professional development on the curriculum (e.g., in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching). Of the VPI+ teachers implementing a different curriculum, 72 percent reported having received professional development on their curriculum. The majority of VPI+ teachers, regardless of curriculum, perceived the training to be moderately or very useful.

Nearly all VPI+ teachers (98 percent) also reported having received professional development on *GOLD*, including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching. Most VPI+ teachers who received at least eight hours of *GOLD* professional development found it to be very useful.

Other State Partner Training

Additional trainings and conferences endorsed by VDOE were offered by entities outside of VDOE, VECF, and CASTL, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Virginia Department of Social

Services (VDSS), other centers at the University of Virginia, the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD), and the Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Central Regional Consortium. For example, the HHS Preschool Development Grant Dual Language Learner Community of Practice hosted a national webinar on an assessment tool to increase awareness of practices with English Learners. The PALS program at the University of Virginia offered four webinars (1.5 hours each) to VPI+ teachers to review PALS-PreK midyear assessment data, PALS PreK resources, effective preschool instructional practices, and age-appropriate classrooms for PreK and kindergarten teachers. Finally, VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and teachers attended the third annual Summit for Early Childhood Professional Development Providers which provided information on new early learning legislation, federal regulations on Child Care Block Grants, and how special education and preschool programs can work together.

Local Coaching and Professional Development

To help VPI+ classrooms achieve implementation of all the components of a high-quality preschool program, local school divisions offered professional development on subject content and instructional strategies, and coaches supported continuous improvement and teaching excellence. VPI+ teachers received professional development through local in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching. VPI+ coaches helped teachers implement evidence-based curricula to target learning in all five essential domains of school readiness (language and literacy, early mathematics, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development), and to engage in effective teacher-child interactions and individualize instruction based on formative assessments.

The grant requires that each VPI+ teacher complete at least 30 hours of professional development focused on early learning environments, and receive up to 40 hours of coaching. School divisions provide the professional development through a procured list of options or through other vendors approved by VDOE. Local coaches provided coaching and completed logs to track their activities.

Professional Development on Instructional Subjects and Domains

VPI+ teachers reported on a spring 2016 survey having received local professional development (including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and/or coaching) on several instructional subject areas. Almost all VPI+ teachers received professional development on literacy and language. A majority of VPI+ teachers also received professional development on children's social-emotional development and mathematics. About half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on supporting children's approaches to learning and science. Fewer than half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on children's physical and motor development. Almost all VPI+ teachers found the professional development across all the subject areas to be very or moderately useful.

VPI+ teachers also received locally provided professional development on several instructional strategies. The majority of VPI+ teachers received professional development on teacher-child interactions, supportive environments, classroom organization, and family engagement and support. Almost all VPI+ teachers found the professional development across all the instructional strategies to be very or moderately useful.

Coaching

Fourteen VPI+ coaches supported the 115 teachers in new VPI+ classrooms and the 91 teachers in improved VPI+ classrooms. Ten coaches were full time, and four were part time.

Coaches worked with teachers through three types of contacts: (1) working with them in classrooms, (2) holding individualized coaching sessions in person or by phone, and (3) facilitating group trainings. Coaches documented in a coaching log their use of a variety of coaching strategies when working individually with teachers. Most common were coach observations and discussion. Coaches also provided resources and materials, made connections to the curriculum and materials, spent time reviewing data, and conducted video review (teachers reflecting on videos of classroom footage).

Coaches most often addressed domain-specific topics (i.e., addressing the five essential domains of school readiness) during their contacts with VPI+ teachers. More than a third of coaching contacts with VPI+ teachers

focused on teacher-child interactions, and nearly a third of coaching contacts focused on supportive environments. Other topics included conducting and using formative assessments and engaging families.

Based on the spring 2016 teacher survey, most VPI+ teachers were positive about the support they had received from their VPI+ coaches. The vast majority of VPI+ teachers either strongly or somewhat agreed that they had a positive relationship with their coaches. Their coaches were available when they needed help, were knowledgeable about priority areas, and provided useful resources and practical suggestions for improving teaching. These same views were expressed in an optional teacher survey conducted in January 2017, with comments such as:

- My coach is always positive!! She gives feedback in an open, honest, yet professional, non-judgmental manner, works co-operatively with me valuing and understanding my concerns and always helping me grow by providing advice, resources, and support. Her leadership and support helps me become a better teacher for our students! She is outstanding!

- [My coach] has helped me understand how I can help myself and my children by being more intentional in my teaching. We can be serious yet enjoy this learning process in a respectful and encouraging way. The best way to put it is that she understands me and helps me be the best I can be. She has embraced the challenge of helping implement a new program within the district which helps those working with her embrace the challenges also.

June - December 2016

PDG grant partners continued to provide professional development and technical assistance into the 2016-2017 school year. Examples are provided below:

- September 12 and 27, 2016 - The PALS-PreK Assessment: Administering, Scoring, and Entering Scores

Participants learned to administer and score PALS-PreK and explore the online score-entry system.

- September 14 and October 26, 2016 - Effective Preschool Instructional Practices: Drawing Children's Attention to Print

Participants learned effective strategies to draw children's attention to print while reading aloud to them. Many examples of teacher talk were provided as well as a discussion of book features that lend themselves to using this practice.

- September 21-23, 2016 - VPI+ Coaches Training (CASTL On-Site Training)

Participants reviewed information from Year 1 related to quality classroom practices, practice-based coaching, and motivational interviewing. They built shared knowledge around content areas of most common focus, including language, mathematics, and social-emotional development. Participants also learned how to use the new video clip directory, online professional development resources, and a content area checklist to focus and intensify coaching.

- September 21 and 28, 2016 - Effective Preschool Instructional Practices: Scaffolding Preschoolers' Early Writing Skills

Participants learned how early writing develops and ways to increase writing opportunities for preschool children. The Early Writing Framework was introduced as a way teachers can support children's writing attempts.

- October 18 and 19, 2016 - Effective Preschool Instructional Practices: Improving Children's Oral Language Skills

Participants learned how to improve vocabulary instruction while reading aloud to preschoolers. Topics discussed included choosing words to teach and providing child-friendly definitions.

Plans for 2017

Planning is already underway for continued professional development and technical assistance for 2017. At the

time this APR was prepared, the following webinar had been announced.

- February 1, 9, and 15, 2017 - Examining PALS-PreK Midyear Assessment Data

Participants will 1) learn the purpose for examining midyear data; 2) examine class summaries; 3) examine data summaries; and 4) explore available resources.

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

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 confirmed that the average child-to-instructional staff ratio in VPI+ classes was 8.5 children to one teacher or assistant teacher. All classes had fewer than 20 children, averaging 17.3 children.

5. A Full-Day program

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 confirmed that all VPI+ programs offer a full-day schedule. Seven Subgrantees extended the full-day VPI+ program through summer 2016, implementing all 12 elements of a high-quality preschool program.

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

Virginia has made a strong effort to identify and include children with disabilities in its VPI+ program in order to meet the PDG commitment to enroll a percentage of children with disabilities not less than the current national average. As a result, by spring 2016, 7 percent of children served in Virginia's VPI+ programs were identified as children with disabilities, exceeding the national average of 6.4 percent. At the state level, a large part of this work was achieved through collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that the features and availability of VPI+ are known, accessible, and can be replicated.

The VPI+ Implementation Team, Virginia's grant management team, includes the VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities). She and the VDOE's early childhood team have collaborated carefully to support inclusion through activities such as the [Early Childhood Special Education Curriculum Framework Content Teaching Academy](#) in June 2016, development of a [website dedicated to early childhood special education](#), the [Early Childhood Special Education Program Administrator Summer Institute](#) in August 2016, and attention to several legislative actions that have an impact on early childhood special education such as the [School Readiness Committee](#) and the [Mixed Delivery Pilots](#).

VPI+ staff members and the 619 instructional specialist also participated as a team in professional learning communities across the PDG states, including a conference call in June 2016 to share professional development strategies that support inclusion in PDG programs.

The 619 instructional specialist and VDOE VPI+ staff have been instrumental in providing guidance to Subgrantees on ways to ensure that children with disabilities and their families have access to and are able to fully participate in the VPI+ program. [Virginia's Special Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers \(T/TACS\)](#) often participate in or assist with professional development in this area.

Examples include:

- April 21, 2016 - Early Childhood Webinar: Serving Students with Disabilities in VPI+ New and Improved Classrooms

The VDOE early childhood special education specialist and a T/TAC staff member shared strategies for purposefully including students with disabilities in classrooms and making connections to the Child Find process; and provided resources for serving students with disabilities.

- May 10-12, 2016 - National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, Chapel Hill, NC

Virginia supported the participation of four VPI+ staff members from Subgrantees and the VDOE 619 specialist to attend this national institute with the goals of promoting collaboration within school divisions between preschool/VPI+ staff and early childhood special education staff and increasing the number of children with

disabilities served in VPI/VPI+. Virginia attendees have shared information learned with the VPI+ Implementation Team for further dissemination to Subgrantees.

- August 2-3, 2016 - Session on T/TAC Resources during a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) Training

T/TAC staff from Old Dominion University shared special education resources provided by the centers with CLASS training participants, which included VPI+ coaches, family specialists, early childhood coordinators, and RTI (Response to Intervention) specialists.

- September 20, 2016 - VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting Breakout Session on Serving Students with Disabilities in VPI+ Classrooms: Inclusion Data and Summative Assessment Data

The VDOE early childhood special education specialist and T/TAC staff members shared best practices for inclusion of students with disabilities in regular preschool classrooms. Participants reviewed the Year 1 summative assessment data during the session and planned strategies for program improvements in Year 2.

Agency and Statewide Efforts to Promote Inclusion

In addition to the technical assistance provided to Subgrantees, members of the VPI+ Implementation Team participate in the following agency and statewide groups that promote access to and provide services for children with disabilities.

The Early Childhood Special Education Network, created by the VDOE, has four goals:

- To create a system of partnerships with leaders in early childhood special education;
- To promote collection and use of valid, reliable, and accurate data;
- To promote the use of quality curriculum-based assessment practices; and
- To explore how preschool VTSS (Virginia Tiered Systems of Support) will be implemented and connected to K-12 VTSS. (VTSS is a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student to be successful in academics and behavior.)

Membership consists of representatives from stakeholders that serve Virginia's special education population, including education, social services, mental health, professional development consortia, special education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACS) housed in Virginia colleges and universities, and entities that serve specific populations such as homeless, autistic, deaf, and blind students. The network met twice in 2016. Attendees used the opportunity to share resources and voice needs that might be met through collaborative work. VPI and VPI+ representatives are part of this network.

The Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Team promotes planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of professional development to ensure coordination of all early childhood professional development in Virginia. VCPD team members are committed to building a unified system to support families and their children (prenatal to age 5) in Virginia. This includes but is not limited to infants, toddlers and preschoolers who may experience risk factors for school readiness, economic disadvantages, and cultural and linguistic differences; English learners; and young children with disabilities and special health needs. Members provide professional development to early childhood practitioners who serve children and families in home, school, and community settings. VPI and VPI+ representatives serve on this team.

The Virginia Department of Education's Inclusive Practices Workgroup was formed as a workgroup within the *Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Team* to focus on four goals:

- To provide a common understanding of the definitions, laws, and regulations governing students with disabilities as they relate to least restrictive environment and inclusion;
- To identify barriers to more inclusive practices;
- To review state and division policies and procedures for support of students with disabilities in regular classrooms and more inclusive settings; and
- To recommend strategies, accommodations, and instructional practices that increase access to more inclusive settings.

Subgrantee Efforts to Promote Participation of Children with Disabilities

A review of Subgrantee annual plans provides several examples of ways they ensure that children with disabilities are included in the VPI+ program.

Giles County Public Schools

The VPI+ coordinator is the special education director for the school division and ensures that students eligible for Part B services receive those services and teachers receive the training required to meet student needs.

Students receive accommodations and services based on their IEPs. The VPI+ coordinator/special education director 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+ preschool is discussed as a consideration at age four for students who meet the criteria.

Sussex County Public Schools

The Director of Pupil Personnel is actively involved in preschool registration and seeks to identify student applications that meet the VPI+ requirements in terms of income, age, and students with disabilities. As applications are reviewed, students who need early intervention services are invited to enroll in the program to ensure their preparation for kindergarten success. Registration is sent out to the community in both English and Spanish via flyers and the newspaper.

Winchester City Public Schools

The regional program serving students with disabilities provides referrals for students eligible for VPI+. Speech and occupational therapy services for eligible students are provided during school hours. Child Study and eligibility meetings are scheduled and held at times convenient for parents and also involve VPI+ staff. Transportation is provided or arranged for family participation.

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

Curriculum Implementation

Eight of Virginia's 11 Subgrantees are using *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, which includes resources to assist teachers to plan and deliver content-rich programs for children from diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. 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. These 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

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 noted that across Virginia's Subgrantees, the majority of VPI+ teachers (68%) were implementing their program's curriculum for the first time. Survey results revealed that most VPI+ teachers felt prepared to use their curriculum. Almost all VPI+ teachers (91%) reported that children in their classes usually worked daily on lessons or projects involving reading and language arts, and these activities typically consumed more instruction time than activities in other content areas. Most VPI+ teachers also reported that their children participated daily in projects or lessons focused on mathematics, music, dance and movement, and art.

All 11 Subgrantees use *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as a formative assessment. *GOLD* is an observation-based system for assessing the development and learning of children from birth through kindergarten. The instrument helps teachers document children's development and learning at particular points in time, use that information to inform instruction, and communicate findings to families and other stakeholders.

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 found that over 90 percent of VPI+ teachers felt confident collecting data using the *GOLD* formative assessment and interpreting the results. The majority of VPI+ teachers also felt that *GOLD* was useful for informing curricular and lesson planning, individualizing instruction for students, and evaluating the effectiveness of their practice.

Child Outcomes from Fall to Spring

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 found that VPI+ children made significant gains from fall 2015 to spring 2016 across all domains: literacy, mathematics, approaches to learning, and social and emotional development, as well as in assessment of gross and fine motor skills.

Literacy skills (PALS-PreK) - More than 80 percent of four-year-old children entered their VPI+ preschool year with limited early literacy skills and finished the year within expected developmental ranges across all the skills: upper-case alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, name writing, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness.

General knowledge and cognition - To measure cognition, the evaluation examined growth in early mathematics skills using the Woodcock-Johnson III Applied Problems subtest. VPI+ children experienced significant gains on the Applied Problems subtest of early mathematics skills between fall and spring based on raw sum scores (although the gains are small), but not based on standard scores that adjusted results based on children's age. These data suggest children are entering the VPI+ program with at least some basic knowledge of counting, and are showing small gains in their knowledge across the year.

Approaches to learning - The teacher-reported *task orientation* subscale of the T-CRS 2.1 (Teacher-Child Rating Scale) was used to assess gains in the approaches to learning domain. Teachers were asked to rate the children's enjoyment in learning, task persistence, and curiosity levels, especially when confronted with new skills or tasks. Significant gains occurred in the average percentile rank from the fall to the spring.

Social and emotional development - The teacher-reported T-CRS 2.1 was also used to measure gains in children's social and emotional development, i.e., their ability to get along with others (Peer Social Skills subscale) and their ability to regulate their emotions and frustrations (Behavior Control subscale). The HTKS (Head, Toes, Knees, Shoulders) task was used to measure self-regulation. VPI+ children experienced small but significant increases in their peer social skills from fall to spring, with the exception of children in poor or fair health, who did not demonstrate statistically significant gains. VPI+ children's behavioral control skills and their self-regulation skills on the HTKS task increased significantly from fall to spring overall.

Motor skills - Based on teacher reports of gross and fine motor skills, very few children were rated as not proficient in gross motor skills. Teachers reported that almost all their VPI+ children ran, jumped, and held a pencil properly by the end of the year. In the fall, teachers rated about three-fourths of children as proficient on all three motor skills, whereas by spring nine out of 10 children were proficient on all three skills.

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

Research conducted for *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* and *Teaching Strategies GOLD* has shown them to be valid and reliable for children of diverse cultures, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They have been used successfully 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 understanding of children's progress toward school readiness and their developmental status at kindergarten entry.

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:

Fairfax County Public Schools

The majority of preschool children in Fairfax County Public Schools and community programs are English learners. The curriculum supports a rich program that immerses the child in English while also providing adult

support. Many program staff are bilingual in most of the common languages. Teaching teams regularly gather data on each child and input them into the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* online system and develop lesson plans that meet the individual needs of each student while also scaffolding their development to the next level (including using suggested plans from *GOLD*).

Henrico County Public Schools

Professional development sessions are held throughout the school year and summer. Topics covered in the curriculum training include, but are not limited to, teacher-child interactions, classroom organization, and developmentally appropriate practices. During the school year, staff development sessions include how to differentiate instruction based on individual student assessment data. Program-wide data are used to determine professional development sessions that will be most beneficial to teachers and staff.

Richmond City Public Schools

Each teacher is trained to develop an individualized child plan based on assessments and observations. Teachers meet with coaches to ensure the child's individual needs are being met. Professional development is focused on individualization in the classroom. Through observation, coaching, and teacher report, professional development is individualized for specific teachers as needed.

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 according to the school division's pay scale. SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2015-2016 found that VPI+ teacher salaries averaged \$47,487, and ranged from \$29,965 to \$82,234. The average VPI+ teacher's annual salary was \$5,000 lower than that of K-12 teachers in Virginia, whose average salary was \$54,486. The report noted that this may have been due to VPI+ teachers having fewer years of experience, thus being placed lower on their school divisions' salary scales. Preschool and kindergarten teachers have salary parity, as they are paid on the same scale as K-12 division staff.

Subgrantees that contract with private providers indicate that salaries of teachers who work in private provider settings are comparable to those working within public school settings.

10. Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;

To measure impact and support program improvement, in August 2015 Virginia contracted with SRI International (SRI), assisted by School Readiness Consulting (SRC), to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of VPI+, including a formative evaluation of VPI+ implementation, a summative evaluation of VPI+ impact on children's school readiness, and a cost analysis to determine investments needed for desired outcomes (still in the works). The Spring 2016 Formative Evaluation Report was delivered in July 2016. SRI's Annual Report was finalized on August 31, 2016.

Additionally, the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) provided a Year 1 Implementation Report on the technical assistance and professional development it provided for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators.

Data and information from these evaluation reports have been used to complete this Annual Performance Report.

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 outlined 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. SRI's comprehensive evaluation report noted that VPI+ coordinators reported that large majorities of children enrolled in VPI+ programs and their families had readily available access to a wide range of local services and supports. Results of a survey conducted by the VDOE of VPI+ parents in spring 2016 found that many families accessed needed supports as a result of their participation in VPI+:

- 68 percent of parents reported that their child or other family members had received health screenings (hearing, vision, speech, medical or dental checks);
- More than 40 percent reported that their child or family members received medical or dental treatment; and
- About 15 percent reported that their child or family members became connected to health insurance as a result of their VPI+ experience.

Examples of how Subgrantees approached this requirement for Parts B and C of IDEA are included in Items #6 and #8 above. Additional selected examples include:

Brunswick County Public Schools - Health Screenings, Meals and Snacks

VPI+ students participate in vision screenings through Conexus Vision Screenings. A mobile unit examines all students free of charge and provides free eyeglasses if needed. The Smile Mobile Dentists visit each school to examine children's teeth. The federal school nutrition program provides meals/snacks for VPI+ classrooms.

Chesterfield County Public Schools - English Learners

VPI+ surveys the language needs of families during the VPI+ application process. Information about prekindergarten options and other services available is shared with families at that time. Interpreters are on-site for all events to ensure families fully understand the process, the programs, and the general information. Interpreters and translators are provided, as needed, for all subsequent parent events: open house, orientation, conferences, home visits, etc. Also, VPI+ collaborates with the school division's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department to prepare written translations of documents in home languages as needed.

Norfolk City Public Schools - Title I

All VPI+ classes are housed within Title I schools, except the Norfolk State University Child Development Lab and Easton Preschool. Because of these strategic locations, all teachers and students assigned to these schools benefit from Title I enhancements including, but not limited to, family engagement activities, additional educational resources, and additional professional development.

Petersburg City Public Schools - Health Screenings, English Learners, Physical Activity

Vision, hearing, height, and weight screenings are conducted by the Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) nurse and professional community volunteers. In collaboration with Head Start, Conexus Vision Screenings and the Petersburg Lions Club assist with vision screenings at no charge. PCPS provides speech screenings and has a Memorandum of Understanding with the [District 19 Community Services Board](#) to conduct mental health screenings twice a year. Petersburg VPI+ contracts with [LanguageLine](#) for translation services. All students are eligible for free lunch and snacks provided by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Appropriate indoor and outdoor equipment is available, and VPI+ classes participate in fitness classes once a week with the [STARZ Program](#), a children's fitness educational enrichment program.

Prince William County Public Schools - Homeless and Foster Children

Homeless and foster children are given priority for enrollment in the VPI+ program. The school division receives referrals from homeless shelters, and transportation is provided for the children from their night-time residence to school. VPI+ works in collaboration with the Department of Social Services to identify foster families and provide a full range of services.

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 [state health and safety standards](#) that were revised in October 2016.

Health

Virginia school divisions have annual requirements for school health. School health programs support the physical and emotional well-being of students 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;
- Complete the Division-Level Safety Audit Survey (3 year cycle);
- Complete the School Safety Audit Written Assessment Template; and
- Complete the Division-Level Safety Audit Written Assessment.

Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot.

In total, for the 2016-2017 school year as of December 2016, 1,406 eligible students (43%) were served in VPI+ *new* classrooms, and 1,891 eligible students (57%) were served in VPI+ *improved* classrooms for a total of 3,297 students. This compares to December 2015 (2015-2016 school year), where 2,804 students were served (1,230 *new* and 1,574 *improved*).

Virginia calculated a weighted cost per slot based on a similar methodology as in Year 1, from 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% and 7%, respectively). For the full school year (Year 2), annual slot costs were projected to the end of school year 2016-2017 by using Subgrantee approved Year 2 budgets. Utilizing these planned costs, the weighted percentage of Table 8 costs between new and improved decreased slightly to 92 percent and 8 percent, respectively. Given the total costs and student counts, for Year 2, the cost per slot equates to \$10,876 ($\$15,292,328 \div 1,406$) for *new* slots and \$723 ($\$1,366,320 \div 1,891$) for *improved* slots - or across both types of slots - \$5,053 per slot. Virginia's Year 1 Annual Progress Report (APR) used this cost per slot because it better reflects start-up costs of classrooms to serve new slots. The slight decrease in Year 2 reflects the loss of one-time expenditures needed to open new classrooms. Improved classroom rates are expected to remain low, since prior to the VPI+ program, Virginia's (state-funded) preschool programs already met most of the VPI+ elements of a high-quality preschool program.

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

Provide a high-level description of the key activities and efforts made in 2016 to strengthen partnership with each Subgrantee. Explain the extent to which you are able to monitor the current status of each Subgrantee's Preschool Programs.

Each agency/organizational member of Virginia's VPI+ Core Planning Team has maintained close contact with each Subgrantee during Year 2 of the grant. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has served as the lead agency, providing guidance by reviewing and approving Subgrantees' annual plans and budgets; convening the Implementation Team; and coordinating data collection and reporting. Other agencies/organizations interacted regularly with the Subgrantees to discuss any required corrections as the first school year ended. The VDOE implemented a monitoring protocol based on the annual planning process. The protocol includes the same areas as those in the annual plan, with indicators in each area that align with those in Virginia's PDG Statement of Work approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The monitoring protocol was used for the first time in spring 2016 when the VDOE conducted site visits to all 11 Subgrantees to monitor grant compliance and discuss Year 2 VPI+ implementation.

Progress by Topic

(1) Establishment of roles and responsibilities of the State and Subgrantee;

Virginia defined clear roles for the state and Subgrantees in detailed Memoranda of Understanding that the Superintendent of Public Instruction and each school division's superintendent signed. Additionally, the VPI+ Core Planning team meets regularly 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;

The state's close contact with each Subgrantee through site visits and monitoring, regular phone calls, individualized support, and meetings helps build capacity. Additionally, each VPI+ Implementation Team agency/organization maintains regular contact with the Subgrantees, receiving formal and informal updates, and apprising the VDOE of the Subgrantees' progress. The VDOE is then able to provide direction and technical assistance as needed or signal to another grant partner how its help is required.

(3) Ensuring that each Subgrantee minimizes administrative costs;

The VDOE has 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, site visits, and monitoring.

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

Virginia designed a VPI+ monitoring protocol based on the annual planning process for each Subgrantee. Each Subgrantee is required to submit a VPI+ Annual Plan to the VDOE for approval that addresses its

capacity to

administer the VPI+ grant program; implement the VPI+ early learning curriculum; support professional development for teachers and staff; provide for children with disabilities, English learners, and other children in need; identify and recruit eligible children to fill VPI+ slots; provide comprehensive services; participate in assessments and report data; facilitate connections between VPI+ and kindergarten teachers and programs; coordinate services in rural and military communities, if applicable; participate in the QRIS (new VPI+ classrooms in Year 2); ensure the health and safety of students; and support the goals of VPI+ beyond the grant period.

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

The VDOE serves as the lead agency on Virginia's PDG and coordinates the work of all partners. VECF is the QRIS coordinator, and CASTL assists school divisions on their selection of professional development services based on formative and summative assessments and provides technical support to VPI+ coaches and coordinators. The preschool curriculum for VPI+ classes, the professional development options for Subgrantees, and the formative assessment used for VPI+ classes were all selected using a RFP process that included representation from members of the VPI+ Implementation Team, as appropriate.

A great strength of the PDG leadership structure is in the interagency Core Planning Team that meets regularly and communicates even more frequently to ensure alignment across agency efforts. Key events are planned collaboratively for the broader implementation team that includes Subgrantee leadership, and this year, the overall theme was improving data use skills. This theme permeated sessions offered at the Implementation Team meeting in the fall, coach training, leadership academies in the winter, and Implementation Team and family engagement days in the spring.

Additionally, CASTL developed a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) template to focus Subgrantees' efforts around school readiness goals, sustainability, and PK - grade 3 alignment. This document is completed at the Subgrantee level, collaboratively with CASTL's support, and fully integrates formative and summative data sources.

At large scale, PDG funds have enabled compilation of a rich, extensive data set on VPI+ students, housed at VDOE, with great potential for researchers and subsequent cross-sector work in data integration - and professional development and technical assistance efforts have focused on building Subgrantees' capacity to utilize these data.

(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 budget development, the VDOE works with each Subgrantee on ways to supplement, not supplant, public funding in order to maximize services provided to high-need children and their families. If issues arise, the VPI+ Implementation Team works to develop strategies to support the ability of local communities in effective use of existing funding.

(7) Integration (to the extent practicable) 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;

Virginia's team is committed to ensuring that VPI+ addresses the needs of children with disabilities, with a strong focus on inclusion and individualized instruction in the professional development and technical assistance offered to Subgrantees. A strong partnership exists with the VDOE's Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator as well as multiple Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs), and VPI+ leaders actively participate in the Early Childhood Special Education Network.

With regard to economic diversity, some of Virginia's improved VPI+ classrooms may include students above 200 percent of the federal poverty level, since the state eligibility requirements permit the use of local

eligibility requirements for up to 15 percent of a school division's regular VPI slots.

(8) Delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports;

The annual plans and monitoring process address the approach to services provided to children who need additional supports. As part of the enrollment process in VPI+, school division personnel assess 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 families.

(9) Subgrantees will implement culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication efforts to enroll children from families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families; helps families build protective factors; and engages parents and families;

As part of their annual plan, Subgrantees address how they will engage with families to identify and recruit VPI + eligible children, and they collect extensive documentation of their efforts. Examples of responsive outreach and communication efforts include:

- Conducting at least one home visit per child each year and logging topics discussed (in addition to parent conferences on the school site);
- Hosting families on school sites;
- Meeting with Family Access Consortium and leveraging resources to serve families;
- Utilizing social media, such as Facebook pages and groups, to share classroom happenings and connect families with each other; and
- Sending reminders and invitations to family events to parents via text message.

Each Subgrantee has designated a Family Engagement Coordinator to provide leadership for and serve as a contact for these activities.

Additionally, a parent survey was administered in May 2016, in English and Spanish, both on paper and electronically, with a response rate of approximately 60 percent. Response reports were created at the Subgrantee and state levels, along with a framework for reflecting on lessons learned. The VDOE used the reports and framework as the basis for training for VPI+ and family engagement coordinators in June. Follow up questions were used to ensure Subgrantees are planning actions based on information from parents at the local level.

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

Describe at a high level your progress to develop/implement an achievable plan to align high-quality preschool programs supported by this grant with programs and systems that serve children from birth through third grade.

Virginia continues to make progress in aligning programs and systems that serve children from birth to grade 3 through the work of:

- The VPI+ Implementation Team - to maximize grant implementation and ensure coordination of services that merge seamlessly as children advance into kindergarten and beyond;
- The Cross-Organizational Data Team - to develop a data framework to track the outcomes of students who enroll in preschool through third grade and beyond;

- VPI+ teachers, coaches, and administrators - to implement the preschool curriculum and summative assessments that are aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning for kindergarten through grade 3; and
- [Smart Beginnings](#), Virginia's network of public and private stakeholders - that collaborates on priorities for young children, to review existing partnerships and community learning resources and identify areas for improvement.

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

- The work of Virginia's Children's Cabinet and School Readiness Committee; and
- Legislation and budget support for preschool.

Provide examples of your efforts to improve transitions for children as follows:

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

(a) Indicate the key activities for alignment of birth through age-five programs that include coordination of early education and care programs and child care family service providers.

Prior to the PDG grant, Virginia 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.
- Comprehensive Services
There is active collaboration between state agencies and school divisions to offer comprehensive services to preschool children as needed, including Title I preschool; IDEA 619; Head Start; and support for English learners, and foster, migrant and homeless children.
- Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS)
The VLDS serves as a robust source of data related to students in kindergarten through grade 12 and their teachers.

Virginia's infrastructure for improved 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

In August 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe created by Executive Order a [Children's Cabinet](#) dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. Its [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.
3. Ensure that children most in need can benefit from the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

The [2016 annual report](#) highlighted accomplishments of the Children's Cabinet, including advancing policy to enable greater access to early childhood programs. Evidence of that success is outlined below.

Legislative Interest in Preschool

The following is a summary of support for early childhood education resulting from action taken during the 2016 Virginia General Assembly.

Budget Items - Invested a total of \$25.4 million in early childhood education over the biennium.

- Expansion of home visiting parent and health education services;
- Increase to early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals;
- Increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount by 2 percent, from \$6,000 per pupil to \$6,125;
- Established VPI income eligibility at or below 200 percent of poverty while allowing school divisions to enroll up to 15 percent of their VPI students above the income cut-off if they meet locally established risk factors;
- Established a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education; and
- Provided funding for the creation of training scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Council ([HB46](#)), an early learning council comprised of legislators, business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood;
- Created a Department of Social Services workgroup to review the health and safety standards of license-exempt child care programs ([SJ63](#));
- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia, prenatal to age five ([SJ88](#)), to determine the best strategy for future early childhood development investments;
- Asked the Department of Health to prepare a report on the best methods for improving birth outcomes, low birth weight, and out-of-wedlock births ([HB30](#)); and
- Established the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

VPI+ Implementation Team

Virginia's cross-agency and cross-sector VPI+ Implementation Team supports implementation and alignment of high-quality state preschool programs in Virginia. Virginia's grant team is led by the Virginia Department of Education and includes the Director of the Division of Child Care and Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services, a representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, staff members of the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of the Office of Family Health Services at Virginia's Department of Health. This team of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, works to integrate the components of a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children. These representatives and agencies have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum for services for children from birth through grade 3.

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; and others as needed. The inclusion of preschool data in VLDS will provide researchers and analysts the ability to study the outcomes of students who enroll in preschool programs as they are affected and influenced by educational, social, and health programs. Longitudinal studies on cohorts of students enrolled in public preschool programs can include outcomes from preschool to K-12, postsecondary, and into the workforce.

Preschool Curriculum and 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 in planning developmentally-appropriate instruction for preschool children. Additionally, summative assessments have been administered to 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 support for collaboration between schools, Head Start, Smart Beginnings, community resource providers, 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

Indicate your progress during the reporting year for activities supporting children from kindergarten through third grade.

The selection of a preschool curriculum and formative assessment aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning in kindergarten through grade 3 helps to ensure 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 children are ready to enter school successfully.

In addition to the VPI+ summative assessments, the Virginia General Assembly allocated funds in 2015-2016 for The University of Virginia (UVA) to pilot a kindergarten readiness assessment. In fall 2015, UVA partnered with 21 school divisions on a voluntary basis to implement the expanded assessments, and in fall 2016, 45 of Virginia's 132 school divisions implemented the expanded assessments. The graduated rollout will allow for continued input from stakeholders across the Commonwealth to enhance feasibility and utility of the expanded kindergarten entry assessments for teachers, schools, and divisions. The results will inform public policy and funding decisions related to early childhood education.

Note: To clarify and highlight differences, the VPI+ summative assessment battery includes direct and teacher-administered assessments across all five school readiness domains, whereas VKRP is teacher-administered in three school readiness domains.

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 2 Target* differs from the *Year 2 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 and \$6,689,193 for Year 2. After the application was submitted, Virginia increased the match proposal to \$5,133,618 in Year 1 and \$7,653,086 in Year 2. In Year 1, Virginia attained \$5,742,528 in matching funds, exceeding the match goal by \$608,910. In Year 2, this APR reports \$6,443,699 or 84 percent attainment of the Year 2 match goal, including state, local, and philanthropic resources.

Unspent Year 2 funds were carried forward from 2016, and Subgrantees will continue to execute Year 2 plans through the school year in 2017. It is anticipated that in the coming months, matching funds will be reported to fully meet and exceed the Year 2 goal. As of Decemeber 2016, two-thirds of subgrantees reported exceeding match requirements. Virginia is forecasting to meet or exceed the match goals in Years 3 and 4.

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.

Describe your progress to Integrate high-quality preschool programs within a broader continuum of comprehensive supports and services to create smooth transitions for children and families.

Virginia's preschool program implementation includes 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 PDG grant application 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 and data structure;
- Smart Beginnings; and
- Health and education funding and policy improvements.

- Integrated management and data teams to oversee Virginia's preschool program and data system

VPI+ Implementation Team

Virginia's state-level cross-agency and cross-sector system 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 (VDOE) Early Childhood Expansion Grant (VPI+) Coordinator and includes representation from the VDOE's early childhood special education office, the Virginia Department of Social

Services (VDSS), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia, and each of the Subgrantees' VPI+ coordinators.

This team of agency partners, both public and private and state and local, works to integrate the components of a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children. These representatives and agencies have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum for services for children from birth through grade 3, 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 IDEA Part B services.

Cross-Organizational Data Team

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team consisting of representatives from the VDOE, VDSS, VDH, VECF, SRI International (the evaluator for Virginia's Preschool Development Grant), and others as needed. The inclusion of preschool data in the VLDS will enable Virginia to track the outcomes of students who enroll in preschool through third grade and beyond.

Examples:

A considerable amount of work has occurred to onboard Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) data into the VLDS, including 1) information from [IMPACT](#), Virginia's early childhood professional development registry; and 2) ratings from Virginia Quality, the Quality Rating and Improvement System. Work is ongoing to identify the design architecture and specifications for databases to be enhanced or developed and to develop a data catalog, including elements and constructs required.

In April 2016, [Virginia school divisions were notified of changes to the preschool data collection](#) that will link preschool data to Virginia's K-12 data. Through May 2016, VPI data were collected through a Single Sign-on for Web System (SSWS) and stored in a separate database. Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier (STI) to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students in the [Master Schedule Collection \(MSC\)](#) and report them using an STI in the [Student Record Collection \(SRC\)](#). These changes will not only bring the preschool students into the VLDS, but these data also will serve as the counts for funding the VPI program in Virginia localities in the near future.

- Smart Beginnings

Additionally, with assistance from the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, Virginia's PDG Subgrantees benefit from Virginia's [Smart Beginnings](#) network, which brings public and private leaders together to collaborate on priorities for their youngest citizens. Smart Beginnings partners provide assistance in connecting Subgrantees to supports and interventions needed for at-risk children and families at the local level. As a result, VPI+ Subgrantees have been able to tap into varied resources such as the following:

- *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:

Through Smart Beginnings in Fairfax, Neighborhood School Readiness Teams consist of representatives from the community, the schools, and the county who work together for children's successful transition to kindergarten. Partnering with families is a large part of this work. Information is translated into many languages and is disseminated throughout the community, including the Health Department, public libraries, recreation centers and places of worship. Families are regularly engaged in their child's early education experience.

In Henrico County, the VPI+ Family Engagement Coordinator attends the quarterly Smart Beginnings coalition meetings. Smart Beginnings serves as a partner in designing and implementing resources to

effectively engage families.

- *Family Access Consortia* - As part of the effort to improve alignment across different early childhood education systems, most VPI+ Subgrantees, in partnership with local Smart Beginnings partners, have convened Family Access Consortia. The purpose of these consortia is to strengthen community partnerships and leverage resources to provide better services to families.

Examples:

Three VPI+ Subgrantees (Chesterfield, Fairfax and Sussex) have fully developed Family Access Consortium groups that have met several times. Smart Beginnings partners are a regular part of these community meetings. In fact, in Chesterfield County, the Smart Beginnings Regional Council serves as the VPI+ Family Engagement Consortium for that division.

Three VPI+ Subgrantees (Brunswick, Henrico, Prince William) have had one initial meeting with their Family Access Consortium group, and have additional meetings scheduled for 2017. Smart Beginnings partners have been included in these initial meetings and will be working with these groups in 2017.

Five VPI+ Subgrantees have developed the structure for their Family Access Consortia and are in the process of scheduling the first meetings. Smart Beginnings partners have participated in development discussions in Giles, Petersburg, and Richmond. Norfolk and Winchester have noted that they are working with early childhood partners in their communities, where there is not a formal Smart Beginnings initiative).

- **Health and Education Funding and 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. Many of the 2015 recommendations from the Children's Cabinet were funded by the 2016 Virginia General Assembly. Other supportive actions occurred through committees and workgroups.

Examples:

The 2016 General Assembly appropriated \$25.4 million for childhood education over the biennium, which included expansion of home visiting parent and health education services, an increase to early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals, an increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount by 2 percent, from \$6,000 per pupil to \$6,125, establishment of VPI income eligibility at below 200 percent of poverty while allowing school divisions to enroll up to 15 percent of their VPI students above the income cut-off if they meet locally established risk factors, creation of a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education, and funding for the creation of training scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation. Several councils and workgroups were created to support seamless services to Virginia's children, including the School Readiness Council ([HB46](#)) to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood, a VDSS workgroup to review the health and safety standards of license-exempt child care programs ([SJ63](#)), and the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia. Additionally, the General Assembly requested information from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee in a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia ([SJ88](#)) and a report from the Virginia Department of Health on the best methods for improving birth outcomes, low birth weight, and out-of-wedlock births ([HB30](#)).

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 2016 that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

In Year 1, 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. In Year 2, it was estimated Subgrantees would use \$15,292,328 for new slots and \$1,366,320 to improve slots, for a total of \$16,658,648 or 95.2 percent of the \$17,500,000. This covers the reported 1,406 new slots and 1,891 improved slots for a total of 3,297 supported 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.

As the costs above and Table 8 demonstrate, costs far surpass the 50 percent goal. The relatively small investment for improved VPI+ classrooms is attributed to Virginia's (state funded) preschool programs, which already met most of the elements of a high-quality preschool program. Therefore, the cost to improve a classroom to meet the VPI+ standards was significantly lower than the cost to open a new VPI+ classroom.

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 11 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, Item #1 of this report.

Norfolk City Public Schools

As a part of comprehensive services, Norfolk budgeted to provide backpacks filled with nutritional items for students to take home over winter and spring breaks.

Richmond City Public Schools

Richmond has budgeted to extend the high-quality VPI+ into the summer while continuing to provide all

elements of a high-quality program.

Winchester City Public Schools

Winchester is providing family engagement activities supported through its budget, including literacy activities, educational software, cooking supplies, and a lending library for students and families.

Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax is targeting improvement of students' executive functioning skills and has budgeted to provide families with training to support skill development in this area.

Petersburg City Public Schools

Petersburg is providing children with learning experiences that include trips to the theatre, museum, farm, zoo, and fitness center.

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, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

Virginia's Year 2 Preschool Development Grant (PDG) totaled \$17,500,000. Unspent Year 2 funds, as of December 31, 2016, were requested and approved for carryforward into 2017. Year 2 program implementation and expenditures continued from 2016 into 2017 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 are recorded in the agency's accounting system as realized. Expenditures and obligations recorded in the accounting system January 1 through December 2016 (Year 2 grant period) totaled \$17,055,276.78. The state approved Year 2 budget, includes Subgrantee detailed, line item budgets approved by the SEA. The detailed Year 2 budget is used to monitor grant expenditures and ensure only approved, eligible costs are reimbursed. Tracking of Subgrantee expenditures is performed with an on-line tool (OMEGA - Online Management of Education Grant Awards) showing details and available balances of expenditures against the budget. Subgrantee reimbursement requests are reviewed and approved at designated LEA and SEA levels. Tracking of SEA expenditures is managed directly using the agency's financial system, with available reports to support further reporting and reconciliation requirements. The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) accounting system, OMEGA and custom 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.

Through Year 2, VDOE recorded expenditures totaling \$17,128,756.45. As of January 2017, VDOE had not drawn \$81,076.85. Two pending items totaling \$81,763.44 are scheduled to be drawn on February 7, 2017, and February 23, 2017, to correct this difference. The difference is attributed to a timing issue between state expenditure submission and receipt of federal reimbursement drawdown.

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

To start the school year in September 2016, Virginia's Subgrantees (LEAs) budgeted Year 2 funds and remaining Year 1 carryforward funds. Based on actual expenditures in Year 1 and Year 2 LEA projected budgets, expended funds have been somewhat less than originally projected. VDOE will be addressing the expenditure rate, to include actions for adding VPI+ classrooms in additional LEA locations, as described below.

For more discussion on this challenge, please see Executive Summary section "Opportunities and Lessons Learned."

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 2 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2016 into 2017, and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Both the SEA and subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 2 funds for approved grant activities in school year 2016-2017. The carryforward authorization did not have an end date. When Year 2 activities cease or the unexpended amount can be estimated by LEA, Virginia will determine if there are any remaining balances and redirect those funds to cover unmet needs. When Year 2 funds are exhausted, use of Year 3 funding will begin. The carryforward authorization from the U.S.

Departments of Education (USED) and Health and Human (HHS) 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 the 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 email correspondence. Based on LEA spending for the remainder of the school year, LEAs with more than 15 percent below their expected spend target may have those unspent funds reprogrammed in subsequent budget periods, along with adjusting underperforming LEA budgets to actual spend rates. As the school year is completed, this unspent estimate will be firmly established by June 2017.

For more discussion on this challenge, please see Executive Summary section "Opportunities and Lessons Learned."

See the next paragraph for the plan to reallocate and use the unexpended funds.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017).

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.

Overview of Anticipated Changes

In Virginia's approved application for the federal Preschool Development Grant, the Commonwealth's two-pronged focus was on increasing access to preschool for underserved, at-risk populations, as well as elevating the quality of the pre-existing state preschool programming. Initially, 11 school divisions (LEAs - Local Education Agencies) were chosen as Subgrantees, based on a number of risk factor criteria. Upon review of fiscal data and reflection on the lessons learned in Year 1 and thus far in Year 2 of implementation, two factors emerged that lead to a request for an amendment to Virginia's grant application:

1. Significant recruitment challenges in filling new slots in some LEAs; and
2. An overall challenge of utilizing grant funds by LEAs.

Given that the goals of the grant are to increase access and improve quality, good stewardship dictates reevaluation of the plan for spending to achieve said goals. As a result, the VDOE proposes reallocating a percentage of the grant award to new subgrantees, increasing the number of Subgrantees from 11 to either 13 or 14. This will increase the number of at-risk students served in additional high-need communities, as well as ensure strategic spending for quality program improvement.

Based on guidance provided from USED, this APR is being used as the vehicle to share details of the reallocation plan in as much detail as possible at this juncture.

- Recruitment challenges in Two LEAs

Two of Virginia's challenged urban school divisions have experienced persistent difficulties recruiting eligible students due to a variety of factors, including inconsistent transportation services (due to a shortage of bus drivers division-wide), declining kindergarten enrollments (indicating migration elsewhere), and despite an interest in private partnerships, facility limitations (Virginia's Constitution prohibits public funds to flow to faith-based organizations, which comprise a large share of the private partnerships in these urban settings).

Beyond challenges in filling their slots, one of these divisions was slated to open additional classrooms in the 2017-2018 school year, which may be unrealistic.

- Utilization of Grant Funds by LEAs

LEAs utilize their grant funds in accordance with SEA-approved budgets established with expense (object) code limits that cannot be exceeded without a SEA-approved budget transfer. LEA-submitted budgets have generally been fairly accurate, as indicated by relatively few budget transfer requests. However, because of recruitment challenges described above and some costs coming in less than budgeted, a few LEAs may have a carryforward amount they cannot spend locally.

VDOE staff have provided technical assistance - statewide to Subgrantees and individualized to each Subgrantee regarding effective spending strategies - since the fall of 2016 and weekly since December. Subgrantees have been informed of the possibility of reallocating money based on any unspent funds in excess of 15 percent of their Year 2 grant award as of May 31, 2017 - both for Year 2 as well as future grant awards (Years 3 and 4). Given the technical assistance provided and the ample notice of implications for unspent funds, VDOE VPI+ staff feel comfortable recouping and reallocating unspent Year 2 funds and reducing grant awards for some subgrantees in Years 3 and 4, so that additional students may be served elsewhere in high-need areas of the Commonwealth.

Plans Moving Forward: Significant Change Expected

- Criteria for selection of new divisions

In deciding which school divisions to invite to participate in VPI+ at this juncture, the VDOE returned to the original metrics for initial eligibility as described in Virginia's grant application and examined updated data sources, where available. Specifically, risk factors were operationalized as LEAs with:

- High poverty concentration, measured as percentage of students receiving Free/Reduced Price meals and/or the Community Eligibility Provision from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA);
- High poverty magnitude, measured by the number of Title I schools;
- Unmet need, defined as the number of unfilled state preschool (VPI) slots; and
- Low achievement, defined as the percentage of students not meeting the PALS-K benchmark.

After tallying risk factors and choosing the top tier, LEAs were approached in order based on the number of unclaimed state preschool (VPI) slots, as this signaled a large unmet need to serve at-risk four year-olds in the community.

- Potential list of divisions to onboard, number of classrooms, and slots

As of January 18, 2017, two LEAs were approached, and they subsequently submitted documentation of their intent to participate in VPI+. Visits to these divisions will follow in late February and early March to work through next steps, including sharing the VPI+ Memorandum of Understanding, providing details surrounding grant requirements, and building an annual plan and related budget.

One LEA, located in northwest Virginia, plans to open three classrooms (54 slots) in the 2017-2018 school year, with VPI+ providing a unique opportunity to build its local capacity and infrastructure for the locality to sustain high-quality preschool classrooms in the future.

The second LEA, located in eastern Tidewater, has participated in VPI for many years, but has left many state-funded VPI slots on the table. It would greatly benefit from the expertise the VPI+ network would provide. This LEA also intends to open three new classrooms (54 slots) in the 2017-2018 school year; and in 2018-2019, it intends to improve one existing VPI classroom (18 slots).

A third division has not yet been approached, but may be in upcoming weeks, as the picture of spending by the current Subgrantees becomes clearer.

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.

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

- Governor Terry McAuliffe'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 2016 Virginia General Assembly took significant legislative action to ensure the continuation of public preschool programs in the Commonwealth, through funding investments, studies, and governance.

- A gubernatorial election in 2017 will bring a change in the Governor's office, however early childhood education receives bipartisan support in the Commonwealth.

Budget Items - Invested a total of \$25.4 million in early childhood education over the biennium.

- Expansion of home visiting parent and health education services;
- Increase to early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals;
- Increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount by 2 percent, from \$6,000 per pupil to \$6,125;
- Established VPI income eligibility at or below 200 percent of poverty while allowing school divisions to enroll up to 15 percent of their VPI students above the income cut-off if they meet locally established risk factors;
- Established a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education; and
- Provided funding for the creation of training scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Council ([HB46](#)), an early learning council comprised of legislators, business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood;
- Created a Department of Social Services workgroup to review the health and safety standards of license-exempt child care programs ([SJ63](#));
- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia, prenatal to age five ([SJ88](#)), to determine the best strategy for future early childhood development investments;
- Asked the Department of Health to prepare a report on the best methods for improving birth outcomes, low birth weight, and out-of-wedlock births ([HB30](#)); and
- Established the Joint Subcommittee on Public Education/Standards of Quality ([HJR112](#)) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

- The cross-sector, cross-agency VPI+ data team is addressing issues such as increased collection and reporting of data on preschool children, teachers, and programs. These data will inform decisions about program development and offerings, professional development for teachers, and the effectiveness of preschool for all children. A considerable amount of work has occurred to onboard Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) data into the VLDS, including 1) information from [IMPACT](#), Virginia's early childhood professional development registry; and 2) ratings from the QRIS, Virginia Quality. Work is ongoing to identify the data elements, design architecture, and specifications for databases to be enhanced or developed in the future, pending further

investment.

In April 2016, [Virginia school divisions were notified of changes to the preschool data collection](#) that will link preschool data to Virginia's K-12 data. Through May 2016, VPI data were collected through a Single Sign-on for Web System (SSWS) and stored in a separate database. Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier (STI) to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students in the [Master Schedule Collection \(MSC\)](#) and report them in the [Student Record Collection \(SRC\)](#). These changes will bring the preschool students into the VLDS, and will serve as the counts for funding the VPI program in Virginia localities in the near future.

- 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, formative 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 wider 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 stands to serve as a model 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.
- Subgrantees' annual plans must address ways they intend to support the goals of VPI+ beyond the grant period. Some examples of ways they intend to continue services to at-risk preschool children include:
 - Use of local and Title I funds to support preschool for high-need children;
 - Close collaboration among staff members and programs that provide services to children, including Title I, Head Start, special education programs, and programs for English learners;
 - Development of capacity of school division staff to continue to provide professional development and coaching to preschool teachers;
 - Joint professional development activities for preschool and kindergarten teachers; and
 - Continued meetings of the Family Access Consortium to promote community partnerships in support of young children and their families.

Many of the lessons learned from the implementation of VPI+ will be transferable and available to other high-

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, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

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.

For G5 System drawdown differences, see response in paragraph 1 above. Virginia Subgrantees continue to spend as reported on budget tables and SEA-approved budget transfers that are within USED/HHS PDG guidelines. Spending timelines follow the school year. This APR includes accounting transactions through December 31, 2016, with Year 2 spending to continue through the end of the school year including those divisions with summer school. As reported previously, Year 1 reflected slower spending due to carefully

designing and setting up the VPI+ program during this first year, including human resource identification and recruitment. As noted elsewhere in this APR, 95 percent of Virginia's award was passed through to Subgrantees, which budgeted for the school year (August/September through June, or through summer school as applicable to the LEA), versus on a calendar-year basis. For Year 2, Subgrantees reprogrammed Year 1 remaining funds into Year 2 budgets with guidance they needed to spend down all Year 1 funds first, then utilize Year 2 funds by the end of school year 2016-2017. During the expenditure approval process, Virginia has not noted discrepancies between the Subgrantees' spending and their budgets, as expenditure approvals are based on approved budgets/cost categories or approved exceptions.

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

Virginia's Subgrantee expenditure rate is slightly lower than expected for the reporting period. Actual Subgrantee expenditures lag the budget year since they are based on the school year (not calendar year). At the end of the Year 1 grant period (December 31, 2016), approximately one-third of the school year had passed and many Subgrantees were spending down remaining Year 1 funds before utilizing Year 2 funds. As described elsewhere, some Subgrantees continue to experience difficulty in recruiting qualified staff and eligible children, as well as staff turnover.

The SEA worked closely with each Subgrantee to set up Year 2 budgets that would fully utilize all Year 1 carryover and Year 2 funds. LEA budget execution is being monitored closely, and a plan for any remaining Year 2 funds and for outyears is outlined above.

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

As of December 31, 2016, Virginia's Subgrantee budgets remain unchanged for Year 2. Close monitoring will continue as Year 2 funds are expended. Accordingly, at this point, 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 2 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2016 into 2017 and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 2 funds for approved grant activities in school year 2016-2017. The carryforward authorization did not have an end date. When Year 2 activities cease or the unexpended amount can be estimated by LEAs, Virginia will determine if there are any remaining balances and redirect those funds to cover unmet needs. When Year 2 funds are exhausted, use of Year 3 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 email correspondence. Based on LEA spending for the remainder of the school year, LEAs with more than 15 percent below their expected spend target may have those unspent funds reprogrammed in subsequent budget periods, along with adjusting underperforming LEA budgets to actual spend rates. As the school year is completed, this unspent estimate will be firmly established by June 2017. See paragraph 2 above for the plan to reallocate and use unexpended funds.

