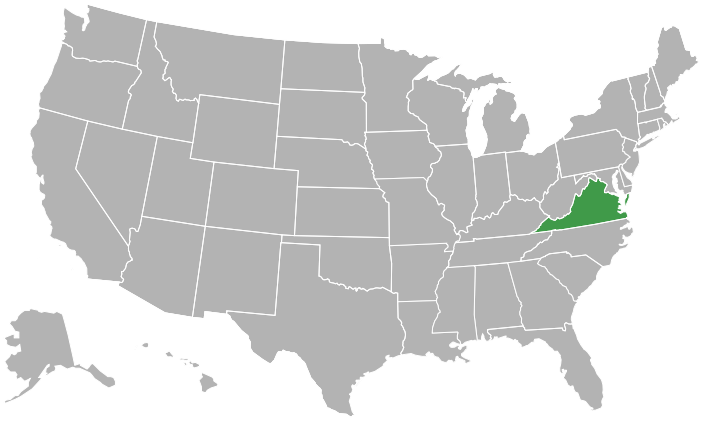
PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Virginia



Preschool Development Grants

AUGUST **2018**

U.S. Department of Education
PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet
Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 08/31/2020

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: 01/01/2017 To: 12/31/2017

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	$17,499,999.97	$9,085,016.00
b. Current Budget Period	$16,836,179.97	$2,165,061.00
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: 06/30/2018

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. 08/31/2020

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

As a result of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Virginia has had continued success in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs. At the national level, Virginia has been featured as a PDG Spark State on a national webinar and at a joint early learning meeting of PDG grantees. Virginia's evaluator, SRI, has also used Virginia as a sample case in making national presentations on the value and methods of the cost study it is conducting as part of Virginia's PDG.

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 with implementation in 2017 and beyond. Examples include:

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

- Increased early intervention (Part C) services to keep pace with referrals;

- Increased 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 pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships; and

- Provided funding for 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 Committee to make recommendations around issues of innovation in early childhood; and

- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee a study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia to determine the best strategy for future early childhood development investments.

Outgoing Governor Terry McAuliffe's administration, including retired Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven Staples and outgoing Secretary of Education Dietra Trent, consistently demonstrated an interest in early childhood development. Incoming Governor Ralph Northam has voiced support for expanding early childhood

education, and First Lady Pam Northam has declared early childhood development to be one of her major interests. The 2018 Virginia General Assembly has several bills and language amendments related to early childhood under consideration, including:

- Proposed new Appropriation Act language that would allow, subject to available funds each year, allocation of additional VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) slots to school divisions that have utilized 100 percent of their calculated slots from the previous year and have a waiting list of unserved children as certified on the Department of Education's October 1 Fall Verification Report in the previous year; and

- HJ 108, which would ask the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the funding required to expand the Virginia Preschool Initiative to all four-year-olds in the Commonwealth.

Key Highlights and Accomplishments

- Increase in the Number of Children Served in VPI+

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 3 (2017-2018) target of 1,637 *new* slots and 1,470 *improved* slots, for a combined total of 3,107 VPI+ children to be served *above* those children already being served by the state-funded VPI program. The actual 2017-2018 VPI+ enrollment as of December 1, 2017, shows 1,445 children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2,009 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,454 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant. This represents an increase of 11 percent above Virginia's original goal of 3,107 new and improved preschool slots. As of December 1, 2016, the following data are of interest:

VPI+ Combined New and Improved Slots

Enrollment Totals (Note: Due to rounding, the totals may not equal 100%)

Year 3 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 3,107 new and improved slots

Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2017 - 3,454 new and improved slots

Gender

Male - 50%

Female - 50%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 55%

Hispanic children - 24%

White children - 13%

Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 4%

American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report

Two or more races - 3%

Race not specified - Too small to report

Home Language

English - 73%

Spanish - 20%

Arabic - 3%

Other languages - 4%

Language not specified - Too small to report

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 97%

Children in private programs - 3%

Children with disabilities - 5%

Children from military families - 3%

Children from migrant families - None

Children from homeless families - 1%

Children from foster families - Too small to report

VPI+ New Slots

Enrollment Totals

Year 3 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 1,637 *new* slots

Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2017 - 1,445 *new* slots

Gender

Male - 52%

Female - 48%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 46%

Hispanic children - 28%

White children - 19%

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

American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report

Two or more races - 3%

Race not specified - Too small to report

Home Language

English - 69%

Spanish - 23%

Arabic - 3%

Other languages - 4%

Language not specified - Too small to report

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 94%

Children in private programs - 6%

Children with disabilities - 8%

Children from military families - 4%

Children from migrant families - None

Children from homeless families - 2%

Children from foster families - 1%

VPI+ Improved Slots

Enrollment Totals

Year 3 goal at point of grant proposal submission (October 2014) - 1,470 improved slots

Actual Enrollment as of December 1, 2017 - 2,009 improved slots

Gender

Male - 48%

Female - 52%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 62%

Hispanic children - 22%

White children - 9%

Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 4%

American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report

Two or more races - 3%

Race not specified - None

Home Language

English - 76%

Spanish - 17%

Arabic - 2%

Other languages - 4%

Language not specified - Too small to report

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 100%

Children in private programs - None

Children with disabilities - 3%

Children from military families - 3%

Children from migrant families - None

Children from homeless families - 1%

Children from foster families - Too small to report

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

- Addition of two new Subgrantees, resulting in increased preschool access for underserved children

Virginia received permission to add two new Subgrantees, Frederick County Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, to its PDG in Year 3. They were identified early enough in 2017 to participate in effective planning for operation in the 2017-2018 school year. Coach training and teacher professional development have been differentiated for new and returning teachers and coaches in all VPI+ school divisions. As a result of the participation of additional Subgrantees, Virginia exceeded its original overall VPI+ enrollment goals.

- Successful coordination of grant partners in support of a statewide infrastructure for early childhood education in Virginia

Virginia's PDG has many partners that each play critical roles in delivery of instructional, professional development, and quality control aspects of the Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (VPI+). The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) serves as the lead grant administrator, coordinating the services of all partners to ensure they meet the needs of the Subgrantees, and it provides technical assistance to VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provides training on the use of Virginia's QRIS, including the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised) to guide program improvement efforts. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provides 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. SRI International (SRI), assisted by School Readiness Consulting (SRC) and RAND Corporation, is conducting comprehensive evaluations of VPI+ and a cost analysis (still in progress) to determine investments needed for desired outcomes. To date, Virginia has been successful in maintaining the effectiveness of all partners, which have met or exceeded the expectations outlined in the grant application.

- Improved Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ratings

As part of Virginia's tiered quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), *Virginia Quality*, the VECF conducted observations of VPI+ classrooms using CLASS and ECERS-R in Years 1 and 3 of the PDG. A full CLASS and ECERS-R rating is required for Virginia's QRIS in one out of three classrooms at each site. Any VPI+ classroom not selected for the full Virginia's QRIS rating was provided with a CLASS-only rating so that every VPI+ classroom teacher had CLASS results. In 2017-2018, 58 schools (program sites) received full CLASS and ECERS-R ratings.

The remaining 12 VPI+ classrooms received only a CLASS rating (for a total of 70 VPI+ classrooms with CLASS ratings by December 2017).

Virginia's QRIS awards quality levels from 1 to 5 based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. VPI+ classrooms showed substantial improvement in their QRIS ratings from Year 1 to Year 3, with the number of classrooms rated at Quality Level 4 or 5 increasing from 20 in Fall 2015 to 30 in Fall 2017.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Scores

CLASS is a tool that measures the daily interactions between teachers and students and among students in three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Almost all VPI+ classrooms met the thresholds established in the original PDG application for all three domains. In fact, VPI+ classrooms, on average, exceeded the minimum thresholds set by the Virginia QRIS in every domain, by 1.2 points in emotional support, .86 point in classroom organization, and .12 point in instructional support. Most notable is grant wide progress in the area of instructional support, moving from an average below the threshold in Year 1 to above the threshold in Year 3. All 11 Subgrantees increased their CLASS averages in at least one domain, and 9 of the 11 saw averages increase in all three CLASS domains.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R) Scores

The ECERS-R is an observation tool that is designed to measure the process quality of early childhood classrooms, which focuses on interactions between children and staff, parents, other children, and the materials and activities in the learning environment. It also looks at features such as space, schedule, and materials that relate to these interactions.

Overall, VPI+ program sites received a good quality rating when the ECERS-R dimensions were averaged together. Most program sites met the Virginia QRIS thresholds for all dimensions. Again, on average, VPI+ classrooms exceeded the minimum thresholds set by the Virginia QRIS in every dimension, with particularly strong performance in language-reasoning and interaction (1.33 and 2.15 points, respectively, above the threshold). Of the 11 original Subgrantees, 10 increased their ECERS-R average in at least one dimension, and 7 of the 11 divisions saw averages increase in all four ECERS-R dimensions.

- Children who are ready for school

There is very little consensus on the exact definition of kindergarten readiness. To inform reporting of 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 summative assessment measures 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) Task Orientation Subscales

4. Social and emotional development - Head Toes Knees Shoulders (HTKS) Task and T-CRS-2.1 Peer Social Skills and Behavior Control Subscales

5. Physical well-being and motor development - A Teacher Survey and a Preschool Motor Development Direct Assessment

Children were considered kindergarten ready if they were in the expected developmental range in the two domains of 1) language and literacy development (literacy); and 2) general knowledge and cognition (mathematics); and at least one of the following domains: approaches to learning and social and emotional development. Although motor development is critical for children to be ready for kindergarten, delays in these areas are less common and not 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 2 - Children who participated in the VPI+ program during the 2016-2017 school year and started kindergarten in fall 2017

Overall - 67%

Gender

Male - 63%

Female - 71%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 67%

Hispanic children - 63%

White children - 71%

Other Subgroups

Children with disabilities - 42%

English learners - 60%

Opportunities and Lessons Learned

- Integration of preschool data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS)

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team to facilitate its original grant goal to onboard Virginia's preschool data into the VLDS. During the last two years, the Data Team guided Virginia's efforts to merge preschool data with K-12 school data. After many hours of discussion and exploration of the requirements to do so, it was determined that the changes required in the data architecture to connect multiple exposures (parent-child-teacher-school) would be cost-prohibitive with current funds.

Resolution:

Virginia sought and received permission from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to adjust the PDG-supported tasks related to data. Rather than continue efforts to merge preschool and K-12 data, the new plan calls for including preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). As a result of this change, the Cross-Organizational Data Team will be replaced by a new committee, the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, facilitated by the VECF, to continue to advocate for and work towards

greater usability and integration of early childhood data. Additionally, Virginia hopes to use some of its recently awarded supplemental grant funds to address the data system architecture required to connect individual records (teacher to student, parent to child, student to school characteristics, etc.)

- 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. Virginia exceeded the target in Years 1 and 2 of the grant, with 7 percent of VPI+ children identified with a disability by spring of 2016 and 8 percent by spring of 2017. For Year 3, enrollments as of December 1, 2017, indicate that 5 percent of VPI+ children have been identified with a disability (8 percent of children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 3 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. The VDOE's instructional specialist for Section 619 of IDEA (Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities) and the VDOE's early childhood team have collaborated to support inclusion through activities such as the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program Administrator Spring Institute in April 2017, the Early Childhood Education Leaders Collaborative Institutes in fall 2017, and the creation of a website dedicated to early childhood special education.

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 still being screened and observed for possible disabilities, and eligibility for special education services had not been completed by early December. It is anticipated that the end-of-school-year data reports will show increased participation of children with disabilities.

- Preparation for sustained services to preschool children beyond the PDG grant period

As Virginia Subgrantees and the state begin planning for the 2018-2019 school year, they are naturally concerned about sustaining their preschool models beyond the end of the grant period for Virginia's PDG. As such, Virginia is beginning to take steps to sustain the accomplishments of the PDG.

Resolution:

The topic of sustainability is being included in the agendas for leadership academies and teacher conferences. VPI+ staff have worked with the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) to provide technical assistance and communication toolkits to Subgrantees as they seek increased local and state support to maintain the success of their preschool programs. A new monthly VPI+ Administrator blog was launched in May 2017 as a tool to inform and engage more participation by local school administrators and leaders. The VPI+ website provides resources that are available to all Subgrantees as they begin to transition to locally-provided professional development and coaching for teachers.

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 with excellent results. Lessons learned include the importance of establishing effective strategies to identify children with disabilities for participation in VPI+, the value of developing solid approaches to sustain the accomplishments of VPI+ beyond the grant period, and ways to address the data architecture of the longitudinal data system in order to connect multiple exposures (parent-child-teacher-

school).

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. 08/31/2020

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, 2017.

As a result of the PDG, Virginia has had continued success in increasing the number of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). 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 3 (2017-2018) target of 1,637 *new* slots and 1,470 *improved* slots, for a combined total of 3,107 VPI+ children to be served *above* those children already being served by the state-funded VPI program. The actual 2017-2018 VPI+ enrollment as of December 1, 2017, shows 1,445 children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2,009 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,454 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant. This represents an increase of 11 percent above Virginia's original goal of 3,107 new and improved preschool slots. As of December 1, 2017, the following data are of interest:

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Race/Ethnicity

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Hispanic children - 24%

White children - 13%

Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children - 4%

American Indian/Alaska Native children - Too small to report

Children from two or more races - 3%

Race not specified - Too small to report

Home Language

English - 73%

Spanish - 20%

Arabic - 3%

Other languages - 4%

Language not specified - Too small to report

Other Demographic Data

Children in public programs - 97%

Children in private programs - 3%

Children with disabilities - 5%

Children from military families - 3%

Children from homeless families - 1%

Children from foster families - Too small to report

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 3 enrollment goals for the grant. In Year 2, two Subgrantees, Fairfax County and Prince William County, added a total of four unplanned VPI+ classrooms. In Year 3, VPI+ was expanded to two additional Subgrantees, Frederick County and Virginia Beach City, thus adding 6 VPI+ classrooms serving 108 children. All Subgrantees have made progress in meeting their targets, however, some are still having difficulty recruiting eligible children for participation in the VPI+ program. Difficulties include inconsistent transportation services, declining kindergarten enrollments, and lack of classroom space in the areas of the locality where the eligible children live. While there has been interest in collaboration from private partners, several of these private providers are faith-based organizations and Virginia's constitution prohibits public funds to flow to such entities.

In Year 2, some Subgrantees that met their enrollment targets were slow to spend down their funds, resulting in unused grant funds. VDOE staff members have continued to provide technical assistance to Subgrantees - both statewide and on an individual basis - regarding effective spending strategies. In January 2017, the two new Subgrantees were approached and subsequently submitted documentation to support their intent to participate in VPI+. Visits to these divisions followed in March 2017 to share the Memorandum of Understanding, provide details surrounding grant requirements, and build an annual plan and related budget. Frederick County and Virginia Beach City launched their VPI+ classes in fall 2017. This strategy increased the number of students served in additional high-need communities and ensures 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 on the local, state, and national levels.

At the national level, Virginia was featured as a PDG Spark State on a national webinar on April 25, 2017,

highlighting successful strategies Virginia is using to recruit and enroll children from hard-to-reach families for its VPI+ program.

At the October 17-19, 2017 Joint Early Learning Meeting of the Preschool Development Grantees and Early Learning Challenge Grantees, *Celebrating Innovations and Building on Successes*, VPI+ state partners presented at sessions on sustainability and on creating equity in preschool programs.

Virginia's evaluator, SRI, has also used Virginia as a sample case in making national presentations on the value and methods of the cost study it is conducting as part of Virginia's PDG.

Examples of state and local coverage include:

- Governor McAuliffe Announces Second Round of Preschool Grants, January 16, 2017

Governor McAuliffe announced that the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF), in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), would award five grants to local communities that have proposed innovative approaches to ensure all children eligible for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) are able to access programs. The funding for the grants was included in the 2016-2018 biennial budget that was introduced by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly.

- Cameron invests in Sussex Schools through family engagement programming and gifted education curriculum, February 16, 2017

Sussex County Public Schools is building on its recent academic gains with new support from The Cameron Foundation whose Board approved a grant of $37,700 to the school system to introduce two new resources to its offerings for students and family engagement.

- Petersburg classrooms to incorporate performing arts, March 23, 2017

A staff member from the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts spent a week as a teaching artist-in-residence at Westview Elementary School to show Petersburg teachers how to incorporate the performing arts into early-childhood education.

- A league of their own: WPS starts prekindergarten soccer program, March 27, 2017

The family coordinator for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Program (VPI) noticed parents of prekindergarten children asking for more programs, including sports, so she organized a free soccer league for nearly 40 prekindergarten children to learn the fundamentals of the game.

- Shawn Brann Visits VPI+ at Victory Elementary, March 31, 2017

The Prince William County Brentsville District School Board representative visited a VPI+ classroom at Victory Elementary School and shared how the program is benefiting the youngest students.

- Frederick County Preschool Initiative, September 29, 2017

Staff from Frederick County Public Schools discuss their new preschool program, launched in the 2017-18 school year.

- Governor McAuliffe to visit a VPI+ preschool program serving at-risk four-year olds, October 4, 2017

Governor McAuliffe visited a VPI+ program in Richmond City to show his support for early learning.

- Prince William County Board Brief Video Highlighting VPI+, October 4, 2017

The Woodbridge District School Board representative highlights the VPI+ program at Featherstone Elementary School and other success stories with the help of its principal and other staff.

- Frederick revotes, approves preschool program grant, October 26, 2017

After a groundswell of public support, the Frederick County Board of Supervisors reversed an earlier vote and accepted grant funds to expand a preschool program aimed at at-risk four-year-olds.

Outgoing Governor Terry McAuliffe's administration, including retired Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Steven Staples and outgoing Secretary of Education Dietra Trent, consistently demonstrated an interest in and support for early childhood development. Examples include:

- Governor McAuliffe Unveils New Child Care Website

- Governor McAuliffe Announces Mixed Delivery Preschool Grants

- Governor McAuliffe Announces Establishment of Early Childhood Development Institute, in Partnership with Community College System

Incoming Governor Ralph Northam has voiced support for expanding early childhood education, and First Lady Pam Northam has declared early childhood development to be one of her major areas of interest.

The 2018 Virginia General Assembly has several bills and language amendments related to early childhood under consideration, including:

- Proposed new Appropriation Act language, which would allow, subject to available funds each year, allocation of additional VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) slots to school divisions that have utilized 100 percent of their calculated slots from the previous year and have a waiting list of unserved children as certified on the Department of Education's October 1 Fall Verification Report in the previous year; and

- HJ 108, which would ask the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the amount of funds required to make preschool available to all four-year-olds in the Commonwealth through the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

In addition to its legislative and fiscal support for early childhood programs, the Virginia General Assembly also passed legislation designating the Friday before Mother's Day each year as a day to recognize early childhood professionals

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

The VDOE has maintained close contact with Subgrantees, communicating regularly with each of the 13 VPI+ Subgrantee school divisions. In spring 2017, 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 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 several 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 supporting children eligible for the VPI+ program and their families. Selected examples include:

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.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

FCPS has formal recruitment/outreach protocols that target families who meet the income guidelines. Flyers are sent home with families at identified schools and "feeder schools." Relationships have been developed between family service staff and school staff, such as parent liaisons and registrars. Family service technicians also work closely with the FCPS Homeless Liaisons Office and the four local family shelters to identify potential children who are eligible for VPI+ and are in high need of quality preschool. Along with working with the Fairfax County Child Care Assistant and Referral Program, community programs recruit eligible children through a variety of methods including distribution of program information, open house events, and word of mouth. All families are invited to the Family Orientation at their center prior to the start of the school year. All families are given a schedule of family events throughout the year, to include: Orientation (fall), Transition to Kindergarten (spring). Regularly scheduled parent center meetings are provided on a variety of topics, based on parent interests (e.g., curriculum implementation and healthy eating).

Petersburg City Public Schools

The VPI+ Team develops a recruitment plan of action. Attention is given to advertising (radio, television, Blackboard robocalls, newspaper ads, flyers, banners, door hangers), connecting with community stakeholders, and off-site recruitment. Preschool orientations are held several times prior to the start of school. The Family Engagement Coordinator, VPI+ Coordinator, and School Principal share information about the VPI+ program and collect information about parent goals. Curriculum, activities, and parent involvement activities are also addressed once a month (3rd Tuesday of the month).

Prince William County Public Schools

The VPI+ program provides summer health fairs and parent orientations. Children receive developmental and health/nutrition screenings, and parents/guardians are provided with information on community resources (adult education, Medicaid providers, hospitals, dental providers, community health centers, as well as information on parents' roles and responsibilities, curriculum, and parent engagement activities. The following family engagement activities are offered throughout the school year: parent/child field trip to the public library, planetarium, and fire station; parenting classes; ESOL/GED classes; holiday assistance (food, toys, coats); and information on financial literacy and stress management. Parents also participate on advisory committees and policy council meetings.

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

Several 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, VPI+, 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 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 located at the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Child Care Center, the YWCA-Richmond, and the Imani Learning Center.

Early Childhood Mixed-Delivery Pilots

With funding from the Virginia General Assembly, Virginia has awarded two rounds of mixed-delivery pilot grants to localities that proposed innovative approaches to ensure all children eligible for VPI are able to access programs. Two of the VPI+ Subgrantees (Fairfax and Chesterfield Counties) received $250,000 grants. Overall, the pilot program has increased the number of preschool slots in private programs, helped stabilize participating small businesses that provide child care, and provided a work support to families through access to preschool in private settings with flexible and longer hours, thus preventing the need to transport children from one provider to another.

Policy Implementation

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

Future Plans

Virginia is pleased to have received a supplemental Preschool Development Grant award in 2017 to augment the funds originally awarded. With these additional resources, Virginia intends to expand VPI+ in a number of ways, including:

- Work on the preschool data system architecture that would enable individual records (teacher to student, parent to child, student to school) to be connected;

- Online classes for teachers on improving quality interactions with children;

- Addressing disparities in resources between VPI+ new and improved classrooms; and

- Additional part-time VDOE staff to assist with communications and web development modifications and project management.

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+ programs is a continuing focus of technical assistance, professional development, and monitoring.

Virginia exceeded the target in Years 1 and 2 of the grant, with 7 percent of VPI+ children identified with a disability by spring of 2016, and 8 percent by spring of 2017. 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 1, 2017, enrollments for 2017-2018 (Year 3) indicate that 5 percent of VPI+ children have been identified with a disability (8 percent of children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 3 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 completed 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 2017 and enrollment data corroborate these certifications.

At the state level, 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 (ECSE) Program Administrator Spring Institute in April 2017, the Early Childhood Education Leaders Collaborative Institutes in fall 2017, and the creation of a website dedicated to early childhood special education.

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.

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 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 meets monthly. Attendees use 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 (VCPD) 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.

In 2017, the VCPD hosted its biannual early childhood birth through five conference, “Creating Connections to Shining Stars.” The conference was a collaborative effort between many state agencies and early childhood programs in Virginia. It focused on promoting and supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices in inclusive settings for young children, both with and without disabilities. At the 2017 conference, members of the VPI+ Implementation Team and other staff members made presentations on Virginia Quality (Virginia's QRIS) and innovative professional development formats used in implementation of Virginia's PDG.

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 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.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

The Disabilities Specialist (DS) works closely with Special Education staff to identify children who meet the income qualification of VPI+. Once the children are enrolled, the DS works with the teacher and Family Engagement coordinators to support the families. Children with identified disabilities continue to receive services on-site in partnership with their family and the community-based VPI+ program. Special accommodations are made available when needed. Families are invited to attend all the program's and FCPS Department of Special Services' events.

Henrico County Public Schools

Five collaborative model classrooms serve 40 children identified with developmental delays along with 50 typically developing peers. These classrooms are staffed with an ECSE teacher, a licensed PK-Early Elementary teacher, and an instructional assistant. In addition to IEP objectives, children with disabilities participate in all aspects of the preschool educational, family engagement, and comprehensive services program. In 2017-2018, a push-in model of inclusion is being piloted at one school, which will serve 8-10 additional identified students in typical preschool classrooms. An ECSE teacher will push in services for support, case management of the IEPs, as will all related service providers (Speech, OT, PT, Visual Impairment, Audiological Services, etc.). During recruitment, families are encouraged to share information related to developmental concerns (Child Find) or if their child is currently being seen by Early Intervention services in the community. Family Advocates provide a personal contact during the recruitment process. A licensed school psychologist reviews all developmental checklists prior to the beginning of school and Health Coordinators review all physicals to determine if physicians have indicated an area of need/concern. Students who are identified as potentially facing a developmental delay or learning challenge are monitored closely. Results of 45-day sensory screenings are also reviewed, and teachers are contacted to talk with family members/observe students who potentially may need to participate in the Child Study Process.

Sussex City Public Schools

The Director of Pupil Personnel is actively involved in PreK registration and seeks to identify student applications that fit VPI+ requirements in terms of income, age, and students with disabilities. As applications are reviewed, students in need of early intervention services are provided an opportunity to enroll in the program to ensure that they are prepared as much as possible to enter kindergarten. Registration information is sent out to the community, in both English and Spanish, using the media such as the newspaper and flyers. The need for services is captured and caught using the parental informational input on the VPI+ application.

Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS)

The VPI+ program works in collaboration with the VBCPS Child Find office. The Child Find office refers children to the VPI+ program. Students enrolled in the VPI+ program are screened following the VBCPS student response team process. Children who needed further screenings for speech, language, or developmental delays are referred 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.

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 2017. 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. As of December 1, 2017, Virginia has added 1,445 slots in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2,009 in *improved* classrooms, above those supported by the already existing state-funded VPI program. To date, Virginia's PDG grant is serving 3,454 children, exceeding by 11 percent the original Year 3 target of 3,107 children.

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. VDOE staff members provide targeted technical assistance to Subgrantees that struggle to meet their targets. Virginia has also expanded VPI+ to two new Subgrantees for Year 3 (2017-2018), thus increasing the number of children served by the PDG.

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 recommendations related to strengthening 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. The Cabinet's 2017 Annual Report established a fiscal map of children's services to ensure long-term investments in children's programs. It recommended greater state-local partnerships to enhance educational outcomes in challenged school divisions such as Petersburg and Richmond (two VPI+ Subgrantees). It also recommended increased state investment in services for children that are currently funded by vulnerable or expiring funding streams, particularly noting the expiration of VPI+ federal funding in 2019.

Legislative Interest in Preschool

The following is a summary of support for early childhood education taken during the 2016 Virginia General Assembly, with implementation continuing in 2017 and beyond.

Budget Items - Invested a total of $25.4 million in early childhood education over the 2016-2018 biennium.

- Expansion of home visiting parent and health education services;

- Increase to early intervention services to keep pace with referrals;

- Increase to the VPI 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 Committee (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 (JLARC) 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 (see outcome below);

- 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.

In particular, the School Readiness Committee and JLARC's report on early childhood programs in Virginia have brought increased attention to preschool programs. The School Readiness Committee 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 met regularly over the last year, and its 2017 report summarized its goals, findings, and recommendations. In November 2017, Virginia's deputy secretary of education delivered a report on the Committee's work to the Virginia Board of Education. The first recommendation of the Committee was to update Virginia's Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, with attention to teacher-child interactions; social and emotional development; special education inclusion; support for English learners; diverse family engagement; and cultural and linguistic competencies.

In December 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee presented the results of its report, *Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs*, requested by the 2016 Virginia General Assembly. Its findings suggest that more than one-third of Virginia children are not ready for kindergarten. Included among the recommendations of the report are:

- Require more comprehensive assessments of kindergarten readiness and more useful data about children at risk for poor developmental outcomes.

- Improve the design, quality, and performance data of early childhood programs to ensure efficient and effective use of funds.

- Require and provide sufficient resources for the Virginia Department of Education to have a more meaningful role in ensuring the quality of VPI implementation.

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. The registry offers the option for members to apply for a Professional Development Certificate designating their 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 professional development, and creating a pathway to career growth. Representatives from the VDSS serve on the VPI+ data team to improve access to statewide preschool data. The agency also serves as the lead on the 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+ data team to improve access to 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. Beginning in 2018, this team will be reorganized as the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, and it will work to include preschool data on Virginia's School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). VECF will provide leadership for the committee.

- *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 2017-18 school year.

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

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

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

The 2016 General Assembly funded an increase in the per pupil rate from $6,000 to $6,125 in FY 2017, and it remains the same in FY 2018.

The state appropriation has increased steadily from $9.3 million in FY 1995 to $69.1 million in FY 2018. As a result, the number of budgeted VPI slots has also increased from 7,938 in FY 2002 (earliest available data) to 24,847 in FY 2018. The actual number of VPI slots used in FY 2018 is 17,959. 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 (PDG) 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. One of the 2017-2018 PDG Subgrantees, Frederick County, is offering public preschool for the first time as a result of support from the PDG.

For the 2017-2018 school year, 124 of 128 eligible divisions participate in VPI. Of those participating, 72 use 100 percent of their VPI slot allocation (an increase of six divisions over the previous year); 20 divisions use 76-99 percent of their slot allocation; 16 divisions use 50-75 percent of their slot allocation; and 16 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 new language to the Appropriation Act that authorized the Department of Education to use unexpended balances of state VPI funding each year to provide grants to qualifying divisions/localities for one-time expenses, other than capital, related to the start-up or expansion of their VPI programs. The 2015 General Assembly modified this provision for FY 2016 to give priority for such grants to VPI programs expanding the use of private partnerships. Due to a budget shortfall, these funds were not awarded in FY 2018.

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 2017-2018 report from school divisions indicates that almost 95 percent of the children served in VPI met at least one of the eligibility criteria prescribed by the General Assembly. A little over 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.

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 recommendations

related to strengthening 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. The Cabinet's 2017 Annual Report established a fiscal map of children's services to ensure long-term investments in children's programs. It recommended greater state-local partnerships to enhance educational outcomes in challenged school divisions such as Petersburg and Richmond (two VPI+ Subgrantees). It also recommended increased state investment in services for children that are currently funded by vulnerable or expiring funding streams, particularly noting the expiration of VPI+ federal funding in 2019.

Legislative Interest in Preschool

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly made a total investment of $25.4 million to support early childhood education over the 2016-2018 biennium. This included

- Expansion of home visiting services;

- Increase to early intervention services;

- Increase to the VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) per pupil amount;

- Creation of a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships; and

- Providing funding for Project Pathfinders to fund scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Committee (HB46) comprised of legislators, business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around issues 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 (JLARC) a study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia, prenatal to age five (SJ88);

- 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 a Joint Subcommittee (HJR112) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

In particular, the School Readiness Committee and the JLARC report on early childhood programs in Virginia have brought increased attention to preschool programs. The School Readiness Committee 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 met regularly over the last year, and its 2017 report summarized its goals, findings, and recommendations. In November 2017, Virginia's deputy secretary of education delivered a report on the Committee's work to the Virginia Board of Education.

In December 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee presented the results of its report, Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs, requested by the 2016 Virginia General Assembly. Its findings suggest that more than one-third of Virginia children are not ready for kindergarten. Included among the recommendations of the report are:

- Require more comprehensive assessments of kindergarten readiness and more useful data about children at risk for poor developmental outcomes.

- Improve the design, quality, and performance data of early childhood programs to ensure efficient

and effective use of funds.

- Require and provide sufficient resources for the Virginia Department of Education to have a more meaningful role in ensuring the quality of VPI implementation.

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, state policy proposals, and technical assistance to Subgrantees.

Data Collection and Reporting

Preschool data have been brought into Virginia's Master Schedule Collection (MSC) and the Student Record Collection (SRC). Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions participating in the VPI program were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier (STI) to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students. Additionally, plans are in place to include preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards).

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 3 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children enrolled and served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children enrolled and received services by the grant during the 2016-17 preschool year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 3 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 . . . 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

- Inclusion of preschool data on Virginia's School Quality Profiles (School Report Cards).

VPI+ Evaluation Advisory Board (EAB)

An EAB was established to provide guidance on Virginia's VPI+ PDG. The group has met five times, with a set of recommendations that guide the evaluation design and implementation. 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 are required to be administered to preschool children in new VPI+ classrooms in the fall and spring and again in the fall when they enter kindergarten.

The domains are 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.) School divisions participating 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 provides training to Virginia teachers (including VPI+ teachers) on the administration of PALS-PreK and the submission of data.

Classroom teachers administer the PALS-PreK to assess children's phonological awareness, print and word awareness, name writing ability, and alphabet recognition. Starting in fall 2017, assessments of lower-case alphabet recognition and letter sounds were added. Also beginning in fall 2017, trained assessors administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4) to measure receptive language development.

2. General knowledge and cognition - Woodcock-Johnson 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 complete 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 administer the HTKS Task to assess self-regulation. The peer social skills and behavior control subscales of the T-CRS-2 are 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 is not considered an outcome of VPI+ but is used as a measure of risk.

Preschool Motor Development Direct Assessment

To assess fine motor skills, trained assessors ask children to copy a line and copy a circle. During these tasks, assessors also record whether the child holds a pencil properly and demonstrates control from the wrist and fingers. To assess gross motor skills, children are 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.

The assessor records whether or not the child successfully completes each fine and gross motor skill. Children who pass all four fine motor task are identified as proficient in fine motor skills. Children who pass all three gross motor tasks are identified as proficient in gross motors skills. This process provides an assessment of children's developing motor skills.

Cut-Points for School Readiness

There is very little consensus on the exact definition of kindergarten readiness. To inform reporting of 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 uses a comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness that combines results across school readiness domains into a single index. VPI+ children are considered “kindergarten ready” if they are in 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

- **at least one** of the following:

    - approaches to learning;

    - social and emotional development.

Cut-points denoting “within or above 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 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 Peer 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 is 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. The percentage of children who passed all fine and gross motor tasks is used to describe the level of proficiency in motor development at preschool entry. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of VPI+ children passed the kindergarten motor development screener.

Sampling

For Virginia's kindergarten readiness calculations, exclusively for the purpose of the APR, Cohort 2 students were included in the calculations if they:

- were enrolled in a VPI+ classroom during the 2016-2017 school year, AND

- were enrolled in a kindergarten classroom in the same school division in fall 2017, AND

- had scores for all four domains.

(Fairfax County uses different measures for assessing literacy skills in kindergarten - the iReady screener and the word analysis task of the DRA. Thus, VPI+ Cohort 2 participants from 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 1,325 students.

Child Outcomes

Using the criteria described above, the following percentages of Cohort 2 VPI+ children were identified as ready for school.

- VPI+ Cohort 2

Children who participated in the VPI+ program during the 2016-2017 school year and started kindergarten in fall 2017

***Overall* - 67%**

Gender

Male - 63%

Female - 71%

Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American children - 67%

Hispanic children - 63%

White children - 77%

Other Subgroups

Children with disabilities - 42%

English learners - 60%

By Domain

Language Development and Literacy - 87%

Cognition and General Knowledge (Mathematics) - 82%

Social and Emotional Development - 69%

Approaches to learning - 82%

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.

For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY: N/A for Virginia

Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

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

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

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

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

The following preschool infrastructure elements benefit from Virginia's Preschool Development (PDG) funds:

- Approved preschool curriculum with aligned formative and summative assessments;

- Increased availability of instructional materials, including a website, VPIplus.org, with videos showcasing best practices in early childhood instruction, other professional development resources, and a blog for PreK-3 administrators and their teaching teams with the best content on high-quality preschool;

- Evaluation and monitoring from the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS);

- Intensive coaching and professional development;

- Expanded comprehensive services and family engagement;

- Development of guidelines for the prevention of suspension/expulsion of children in early childhood settings; and

- Improvements to preschool data quality and availability.

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 the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds in 2013, which serve as Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards. PDG funds are supporting work with an expert consultant to revise the *Foundation Blocks* with an added focus on adaptations for children with disabilities and English learners.

b. Program Standards that are 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 the level of quality in early care and education settings. All VPI+ programs received a baseline Virginia Quality rating during the 2015-2016 school year and a followup rating in 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 helped provided 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.

d. Methods to determine the availability of High-Quality Preschool Programs

Many school divisions in Virginia offer a single point of entry registration for public preschool, allowing school divisions to maximize the preschool slots available. In 2016, a new website, www.childcareva.com, was created to provide information to parents on child care options. VECF maintains a web site to search for quality rated early childhood facilities in Virginia. The Virginia Head Start Association, 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 certification and/or requirements for licensure

Virginia issues several teaching licenses related to preschool: Early/Primary Education PreK-3 and Elementary Education PreK-6. Teachers with these licenses have completed an approved teacher preparation program or have a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university in the liberal arts and sciences and fulfill specific requirements related to PreK-3 or PreK-6. Licensed elementary teachers may add an Early Childhood for Three- and Four-Year-Olds endorsement by completing nine semester hours of graduate-level coursework in early childhood education and completing a supervised practicum in a preschool setting.

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. In 2015, the VDOE established a list of approved professional development offerings that all preschool providers in the Commonwealth may use in continuing education for preschool teachers.

A VPI+ website, VPIplus.org, was launched in fall 2016. It houses an extensive library of videos showcasing best practices in early childhood instruction and other high-quality print and multimedia professional development resources. In 2017, an administrator blog was added as a tool to engage more school administrators in an effort to improve PreK-Grade 3 alignment by sharing information about quality PreK and alignment with older grades. Responses to other questions in this APR provide greater detail about professional development supported by the PDG.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 46, creating the School Readiness Committee, which has as a goal “the development . . . of an effective professional development and credentialing system for the early childhood education workforce in the Commonwealth.” The Committee met regularly over the last year, and its 2017 report summarized its goals, findings, and recommendations. In November 2017, Virginia's deputy secretary of education delivered a report on the Committee's work to the Virginia Board of Education.

Three subcommittees were created to facilitate the work of the Committee: state priorities, workforce pathways, and professional development standards. The first recommendation of the Committee was to update Virginia's Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, last revised in 2012, with specific attention to effective teacher-child interactions; social and emotional development; special education inclusion; support for English learners; diverse family engagement; and cultural and linguistic competencies. Additionally, the VECF funded a research report - *Pathways and Competencies for Early Educational Professionals* - to further inform work in this area.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly appropriated funding for Project Pathfinders, which offers current child care and preschool teachers and providers financial support to pursue credentials and degrees through

Virginia's Community College System.

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). During the last two years, the Data Team guided Virginia's efforts to merge preschool data with K-12 school data. After hours of discussion and exploration of the requirements to do so, it was determined that the changes required in the data architecture to connect multiple exposures (parent-child-teacher-school) would be cost-prohibitive with current funds. Virginia sought and received permission from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to adjust the PDG-supported tasks related to data. Rather than continue efforts to merge preschool and K-12 data, the new plan calls for including preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). As a result of this change, the Cross-Organizational Data Team will be replaced by a new committee, the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, facilitated by the VECF, to continue to advocate for and work towards greater usability and integration of early childhood data.

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. The 2017 VPI+ Leadership Academies featured peer-to-peer breakout groups where successful family engagement strategies and resources were shared. Additionally, VDOE VPI+ staff facilitated a family engagement coordinator training day in the fall.

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

Additionally, the VDOE conducts an annual survey of VPI+ parents each spring. Results indicate that a majority of families received information about health care and nutrition options, insurance, parenting skills, adult education, mental health and social services, and emergency housing.

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's Executive Order created a Children's Cabinet dedicated to the education, health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's children. The Cabinet's 2017 Annual Report established a fiscal map of children's services to ensure long-term investments in children's programs. The 2017 report recommended an increased state investment in services for children that are currently funded by vulnerable or expiring funding streams, noting the expiration of VPI+ federal funding in 2019.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly established the School Readiness Committee to address the development and alignment of an effective professional development and credentialing system for Virginia's early childhood education workforce and make recommendations to policymakers.

In December 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee presented the results of its report, Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs, requested by the 2016 Virginia General Assembly. Its findings suggest that more than one-third of Virginia children are not ready for kindergarten. Included among the recommendations of the report are:

- Require more comprehensive assessments of kindergarten readiness and more useful data about children at risk for poor developmental outcomes;

- Improve the design, quality, and performance data of early childhood programs to ensure efficient and effective use of funds; and

- Provide sufficient resources for the Virginia Department of Education to have a more meaningful role in ensuring the quality of VPI implementation.

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 2017 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) in 2016-2017 is called VPI+. Two additional Subgrantees were added beginning in 2017-2018.

Major accomplishments in the implementation of VPI+ for 2017 included:

- Increase in the Number of Children Served in VPI+

VPI+ augments the already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). Virginia's original PDG application stated a Year 3 (2017-2018) target of 1,637 *new* slots and 1,470 *improved* slots, for a combined total of 3,107 VPI+ children to be served *above* those children already being served by the state-funded VPI program. The actual 2017-2018 VPI+ enrollment as of December 1, 2017, shows 1,445 children in *new* VPI+ classrooms and 2,009 in *improved* classrooms, for a combined total of 3,454 children being served by Virginia's PDG grant. This represents an increase of 11 percent above Virginia's original goal of 3,107 new and improved preschool slots.

- Addition of two new Subgrantees, resulting in increased preschool access for underserved children

Virginia received permission to add two new Subgrantees, Frederick County Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, to its PDG in Year 3. They were identified early enough in 2017 to participate in effective planning for operation in the 2017-2018 school year. Coach training and teacher professional development have been differentiated for new and returning teachers and coaches in all VPI+ school divisions. As a result of the participation of additional Subgrantees, Virginia exceeded its overall VPI+ enrollment goals not only in the original grant application but also in the proposed Scope of Work enrollment targets.

- Successful coordination of grant partners in support of a statewide infrastructure for early childhood education in Virginia

Virginia's PDG has many partners that each play critical roles in delivery of instructional, professional development, and quality control aspects of the Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (VPI+). The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) serves as the lead grant administrator, coordinating the services of all partners to ensure they run smoothly and meet the needs of the Subgrantees. The VDOE provides technical assistance to VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators on all components of grant implementation. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provides training on the use of Virginia's QRIS, including the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment

Rating Scale - Revised), to guide program improvement efforts. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provides 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. SRI International (SRI), assisted by School Readiness Consulting (SRC) and RAND Corporation, is conducting 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 (still in progress) to determine investments needed for desired outcomes. To date, Virginia has been successful in maintaining the effectiveness of all partners, which have met or exceeded the expectations outlined in the grant application.

- Improved Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ratings

As part of Virginia's tiered quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), called *Virginia Quality*, the VECF conducted observations of VPI+ classrooms using CLASS and ECERS-R in Years 1 and 3 of the PDG. A full CLASS and ECERS-R rating is required for Virginia's QRIS in one out of three classrooms at each site. If there is more than one VPI+ classroom at a site, classrooms are randomly selected on the day of the observation. To guide teacher-level professional development, any VPI+ classroom that was not selected for the full Virginia's QRIS rating was provided with a CLASS-only rating so that every VPI+ classroom teacher had CLASS results. In 2017-2018, 58 schools (program sites) received full CLASS and ECERS-R ratings. The remaining 12 VPI+ classrooms received only a CLASS rating (for a total of 70 VPI+ classrooms with CLASS ratings by December 2017).

Virginia's QRIS awards quality levels from 1 to 5 based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. VPI+ classrooms showed substantial improvement in their QRIS ratings from Year 1 to Year 3, with the number of classrooms rated at Quality Level 4 or 5 increasing from 20 in Fall 2015 to 30 in Fall 2017.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Scores

CLASS is a tool that measures the daily interactions between teachers and students and among students in three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. CLASS scores range from 1 to 7, grouped into three ranges: low-range scores fall between 1.00 and 2.99; mid-range scores fall between 3.00 and 5.99; and high-range scores fall between 6.00 and 7.00. The Virginia QRIS set thresholds at 5.00 or higher in the Emotional Support/Classroom Organization domains and 3.25 or higher in the Instructional Support domain for programs to receive a Level 4 rating (the minimum goal for VPI+ programs).

Almost all VPI+ classrooms met the established thresholds for the emotional support and classroom organization domains (96% and 91%, respectively), and 59% of classrooms met the threshold for the instructional support domain. In fact, VPI+ classrooms, on average, exceeded the minimum thresholds set by the Virginia QRIS in every domain. They received high quality ratings on the emotional support domain, with an average score of 6.20, and moderate quality ratings on the classroom organization and instructional support domains (5.86 and 3.37, respectively).

Most notable is grant wide progress in the area of instructional support, moving from an average below the threshold in Year 1 to above the threshold in Year 3. All 11 Subgrantees increased their CLASS averages in at least one domain, and 9 of the 11 saw averages increase in all three CLASS domains.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R) Scores

The ECERS-R is an observation tool that is designed to measure the process quality of early childhood classrooms serving children ages 2 through 5. Process quality focuses on the interactions that happen in a classroom between children and staff, parents, other children, and the materials and activities in the learning environment. Process quality also looks at features such as space, schedule, and materials that relate to these interactions.

The ECERS-R has seven subscales, however, only four were used for the purposes of the Virginia QRIS: Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure. ECERS-R scores range from 1.00 to 7.00, grouped into four ranges: scores that fall between 1.00 and 1.99 are considered “inadequate”; those between 2.00 and 3.99 are considered “minimal”; those between 4.00 and 5.99 are considered “good”; and scores that fall between 6.00 and 7.00 are considered “excellent.” The Virginia QRIS set minimum thresholds at 4.00 or higher across the four ECERS-R subscales.

Overall, VPI+ program sites received a good quality rating (5.06) when the four ECERS-R dimensions were averaged together. Program sites received good quality scores for language reasoning (5.33), activities (4.23), and program structure (4.52), and they received an excellent quality score (6.15) for the interaction dimension. Most program sites met the Virginia QRIS thresholds for language reasoning and interaction dimensions (90% and 93%, respectively). Just under three-fourths of program sites met the threshold for the activity dimension (72%), and about two-thirds of program sites met the threshold for the program structure dimension (68%).

Again, on average, VPI+ classrooms exceeded the minimum thresholds set by the Virginia QRIS in every dimension, with particularly strong performance in language-reasoning and interaction (1.33 and 2.15 points, respectively, above the threshold). Of the 11 original Subgrantees, 10 increased their ECERS-R average in at least one dimension, and 7 of the 11 divisions saw averages increase in all four ECERS-R dimensions.

- Use of evaluation data to inform professional development and coaching

As a result of assessment data analysis and by teacher request, more emphasis in professional development and coaching has been placed on promoting social-emotional skills of young children and preventing/reducing challenging behaviors. The topic was included across all major meetings and activities, including VPI+ Implementation Team meetings, monthly learning community calls conducted by CASTL with the Subgrantees, training for coaches, and other professional development activities. Additionally, CASTL is developing a series of online learning modules for teachers that target early childhood development and education for free public use in 2018.

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 2016-2017 noted that all VPI+ teachers held a bachelor's degree, and over half (53%) held a master's degree. Nearly all VPI+ teachers (97%) had prior experience teaching preschool and most (84%) had taught in a VPI+ class during the prior year.

2 - High-quality professional development for all staff

January-May 2017

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) provided technical assistance to VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators on all components of grant implementation. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided training on use of Virginia's QRIS, including the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised) to guide program improvement efforts. 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.

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for Year 2 summarized the following technical assistance and professional development Subgrantees received from state partners from January-May 2017.

Technical Assistance from the VDOE

Throughout the year, the VDOE engaged in in-person meetings, webinars, phone calls, visits, and emails with school divisions' VPI+ teams. Several examples are cited below.

Meetings - In May 2017, the VDOE hosted a day-long implementation team meeting focused on a variety of topics, including family engagement, CLASS and QRIS data, behavior and social-emotional needs, executive functioning, mathematics, and meeting the needs of English learners. Presenters included representatives from eight school divisions, the VDOE, T*eaching Strategies - GOLD*, and the VECF.

Webinars - The VDOE held a webinar providing updates on the grant and reviewed evaluation activities and results. The VDOE also sponsored webinars on topics such as professional-family partnerships, family engagement, inclusion, curriculum fidelity, and mental health resources. In addition, technical assistance was provided on fiscal requirements for the grant.

Phone calls and site visits - VDOE staff also conducted quarterly phone calls and annual site visits with each school division. These contacts provided opportunities to discuss divisions' progress in engaging at-risk families and children for the VPI+ program, recruitment of children for available VPI+ classroom slots, grant and budget compliance, and plans for Year 2 of VPI+.

Email updates - VDOE also regularly (twice a month) provided information to divisions through an email update on other relevant opportunities for professional development including conferences and institutes (i.e., Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Institute, Virginia Head Start Institute, and National Early Childhood Inclusion 2017 Institute).

Technical Assistance from CASTL

CASTL's Year 2 activities were developed based on observations during division site visits, communication with VPI+ division leadership and coaches, and the formative and summative VPI+ reports developed by SRI in Year

1. CASTL provided technical assistance to school division leaders on planning for Year 2, including using their evaluation data, developing continuous improvement plans, and identifying division-specific coaching priorities. CASTL staff members also provided professional development for coaches. These activities included regional consultation meetings, on-site visits to VPI+ school divisions, and individual and group phone calls.

School division consultation and technical assistance - School division VPI+ coordinators received consultation and technical assistance from CASTL, which included:

- Two regional VPI+ Leadership Academies for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators (each division team attended one) in February 2017. The Academies focused on planning, both in division teams and by roles across divisions (e.g., coaches, VPI+ coordinators, family engagement coordinators). Topics included reviewing and interpreting data sources using data to support transitions, and reflecting on strengths and challenges with creating sustainable, high-quality preschool programming.

- Several consultation calls across the preschool year with each division's VPI+ team to discuss progress and challenges with continuous improvement plans; review fall 2016 SRI evaluation data and *GOLD* data; get feedback about Leadership Academies; discuss the plans for each division for supporting transition to kindergarten; and identify areas in which divisions wanted to build sustainability.

Coach Training and Support from CASTL - CASTL provided professional development to VPI+ coaches, with three objectives: 1) promoting coaching intensity (contact frequency and use of intensive support strategies), 2) supporting ongoing coaching focus on effective teacher-child interactions and content area practices aligned with divisions' continuous improvement plans, and 3) building a community of learning among coaches across VPI+ divisions. These activities included:

- Monthly learning community calls focused on math and social-emotional practice;

- Coaching calls for each division's coach or coaches to discuss coaching focus and intensity through case studies and databased feedback, motivational interviewing strategies, and coaching models for some divisions; and

- Special training for new coaches in three divisions that introduced them to practice-based coaching and professional development planning.

Professional Development Resources from CASTL - Based on Year 1 Implementation findings, CASTL developed several tools to improve the focus and intensity of coaching including one-page briefs on teaching practices for specific content and observational tools to use when observing certain content domains (e.g., language, literacy, mathematics) and a website (www.vpiplus.org) that includes a searchable database of professional development resources and videos. A new monthly VPI+ Administrator blog was launched in May 2017 as a tool to engage more participation by school administrators in an effort to improve PreK-Grade 3 alignment by sharing information about quality PreK and alignment with older grades. The initial subscriber lists (May-June 2017) were generated from 1) lists of building administrators (i.e., opting in every principal and assistant principal with a VPI+ classroom in their building), 2) Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) specialists, and 3) lists of VPI+ core division team members (coordinators, coaches, family engagement coordinators). Blog participation has increased from 314 at the time of the May 2017 launch to 409 in January 2018.

Technical Assistance from VECF

VECF staff built the capacity of VPI+ coordinators and coaches to use data from classroom observations for improving program quality. VECF staff members provided support to VPI+ coordinators and coaches through trainings on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R). At coaching training, VECF partnered with CASTL to present on: 1) ways teachers can maximize learning opportunities during transition times (an area of concern on quality ratings); 2) ways to get children thinking and moving more in their learning centers; and 3) how to observe and assess change in teacher-child interactions through video review. At the spring 2017 VDOE implementation meeting, VECF presented on using the CLASS to measure and improve academic rigor.

At the request of divisions, VECF held ten individual or regional trainings for VPI+ coaches and teachers about the use of quality rating scales for program improvement: five trainings on ECERS-R; two trainings on the CLASS domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and three trainings on the CLASS PreK observation tool (one for teachers and one for teaching assistants).

VECF also held a one-hour call with VPI+ coordinators, family engagement coordinators, and Smart Beginnings to discuss how VECF can support divisions with birth to third grade alignment and division successes, challenges, and strategies or assistance needed to be successful in their work related to birth to third grade alignment.

Other State Partner Training

In spring 2017, VPI+ staff had access to Preschool Development Grant webinar presentations on family engagement by the Center for the Study of Social Policy; supporting English Learners by the National Institute for Early Education Research and AEM Corporation; supporting children with incarcerated parents by Missouri Department of Corrections; and language and literacy development by various state representatives. They also received an introduction to the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration's *Toolbox for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation* by the Early Childhood Mental Health Institute, and a Health and Human Service resource, *Enhancing Trusting Partnerships at the Systems and Practice Levels: Reciprocal Opportunities for Professionals and Families*. In addition, they had opportunities to participate in the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute Conference, the Early Childhood Mental Health Institute Conference, the Virginia ASCD PreK-Kindergarten conference on creating age-appropriate classrooms, and a webinar sponsored by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center on family engagement.

Local Coaching and Professional Development

To help VPI+ classrooms achieve implementation of all the components of a high-quality preschool program, VPI+ coaches are tasked to help teachers implement evidence-based curricula to target learning in the five essential domains of school readiness, engage in effective teacher-child interactions, and individualize instruction based on formative assessments.

<u>Professional Development</u>

Local school divisions offered professional development through a procured list of options or through other vendors approved by VDOE and through local VPI+ coaches. These opportunities included local in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching.

The Creative Curriculum and *GOLD* - Four different curricula have been adopted and implemented across the 11 VPI+ school divisions participating in the PDG in 2016-2017. (See #7 below.) Most teachers (80%) reported receiving some professional development on the use of their respective curricula during 2015-2016 and/or 2016-2017. Teachers using *The Creative Curriculum* received an average of 18.7 hours of professional development across the two years of implementation. Teachers using the other curricula received an average of 7.6 hours of professional development on their respective curricula during the same time period.

Almost all (98%) teachers received some professional development on *GOLD*, receiving an average of 16.3 hours of professional development on *GOLD* over the two years combined.

Instructional Content and Strategies - Most VPI+ teachers received professional development on the content areas of literacy and language combined (89%) and mathematics (74%). Fewer teachers received professional development in the content areas of approaches to learning (53%), science (52%), arts (38%), and physical health and motor development (24%).

Overall, a similar percentage of teachers reported receiving professional development on various content areas and domains in 2016-2017 as in 2015-2016. However, there was an increase in the percent of teachers receiving professional development on social and emotional development and a decrease in those receiving it on physical and motor development.

More teachers reported receiving professional development on a variety of instructional strategies in 2016-2017 compared to the previous year, especially strategies related to social and emotional development. In 2016-2017, almost all VPI+ teachers received professional development on supportive environments (95%), teacher-child interactions (92%), classroom organization and management (87%), and supporting children with challenging behaviors (73%). The emphasis on social-emotional well-being and skills increased between the first and second years of implementation. Also, in 2016-2017, about two-thirds of VPI+ teachers received professional development on incorporating learning into transition activities (65%) and collecting and using formative assessment data (65%). About half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on family engagement (60%) and supporting the transition to kindergarten (48%). About a third received professional development on working with dual language learners (39%) and children with special needs (29%).

Coaching

In 2016-2017, 13 (11.6 FTE) coaches supported 118 VPI+ teachers. On average, each coach FTE was responsible for 10.2 VPI+ teachers (including both new and Improved VPI+ classrooms), but this varied considerably by school division (ranging from 2 to 32 VPI+ teachers per coach). Some coaches played other roles in their divisions, as well.

In 2016-2017, coaches served 98% of teachers in the 118 VPI+ classrooms compared to 88% of teachers in the 110 VPI+ classrooms in the previous year. In 2016-2017, VPI+ teachers, on average, received 28.6 coaching contacts totaling 21.1 hours of coaching between mid-August 2016 and May 31, 2017. Coaching intensity was greater for the 18 teachers who joined VPI+ in 2016-2017 than for the 100 teachers who also taught for VPI+ the previous year.

Coaches supported VPI+ teachers using three types of contacts: 1) working with them in classrooms with students present, 2) holding individualized coaching sessions in person or by phone, and 3) facilitating group trainings. The emphasis on group training increased from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, and the focus on

individualized coaching sessions conversely decreased.

According to VPI+ coordinators and coaches, coaching often was tailored to meet individual teachers' needs, and a given contact could include work on more than one focus area. In most of their contacts in 2016-2017, coaches addressed teacher-child interactions and domain-specific content related to the five essential domains of school readiness. More than a third of coaching contacts in 2016-2017 addressed supportive environments, and there was an increase in the emphasis on assisting English learners and children with special needs from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017.

June-December 2017

PDG grant partners continued to provide professional development and technical assistance during the summer and into the 2017-2018 school year. Examples are provided below:

- June 19, 2017 - VASCD's Annual PreK-Kindergarten Conference, Newport News, VA

Age-Appropriate Classrooms for Young Learners: Sessions addressed ways in which classroom environments, instructional design, approaches to solving problems, and other factors influence children's abilities to manage their behaviors and their learning.

- July 25-26, 2017 - Training on CLASS for PreK

The VECF provided training toward certification as a rater for CLASS, pending a passing score on the certification exam.

- Summer Phone Interviews Related to Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in VPI+

The VDOE conducted technical assistance phone interviews with Subgrantees that had not served the required 6.4 percent of children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in their VPI+ classrooms. The purpose of the interviews was to discuss expectations of the Preschool Development Grant, identify unique barriers to inclusion, and identify resources and strategies to support improved inclusive practices.

- August 23 or 24, 2017 - Virginia's Year 3 PDG Kickoff Webinar

Participants received program updates and reminders, fiscal notes, monitoring timelines, evaluation updates, and reminders of future activities.

- October 18-20, 2017 - VPI+ Coach Training

As a result of assessment data analysis, activities focused on promoting social-emotional skills of young children and preventing/reducing challenging behaviors. Separate sessions were held for new coaches and returning coaches.

- October 26, November 6, and November 9, 2017 - Early Childhood Education Leaders Collaborative Institutes

These regional institutes targeted technical assistance and professional development to leaders in early childhood programs who act as 1) the program administrator for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs, 2) the program coordinator for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) or the Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (VPI+) programs, and/or 3) the Disabilities Specialist for Head Start programs.

- October 30, 2017 - Family Engagement Strategies Professional Development

Dr. Steven Constantino, recognized internationally for his work in family engagement, presented his research and strategies for successful family engagement. Dr. Constantino is the Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction at the VDOE. The results of the Year 2 family engagement survey were also presented to participants, along with a discussion on how to use the data to improve services.

- December 7, 2017 - Technical Assistance Webinar on Sustainability

CASTL facilitated a technical assistance webinar featuring Dr. Lori Connors-Tadros of the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO), who shared a sustainability model applicable to VPI+ as well as a self-assessment tool designed to guide sustainability planning priorities.

- December 2017 - STEM in Early Childhood

Preschool Development Grant Technical Assistance and AEM Corporation offered an 11-module series featuring national experts' webinar recordings, suggested research readings and practical application experiences/activities, designed to enhance professionals' confidence in supporting young children's higher order thinking, and STEM learning.

- Monthly emails to VPI+ Administrator Blog Subscribers

These emails apprised subscribers of the topic of the monthly blog entry, outlined the main points of the article, and provided additional resources related to the topic. As of January 2018, topics included the importance of investing in preschool, what to look for and how to support a quality preschool program, fostering active engagement for young learners, things to start off the year right in preschool, early literacy, do's and don'ts of using kindergarten readiness data, preschoolers' self-regulation and challenging behaviors, and the top 10 high-quality preschool resources of 2017.

- *TS GOLD* online course

Participants in this online course practice applying learning to typical classroom scenarios, build knowledge about child development and developmentally appropriate practice, and engage in short tutorials that enable interaction with the material in new ways. They may earn 10 continuing education units (CEU) for successful completion of the course.

Plans for 2018

- VPI+ Coach Training

This three-day training in January 2018 will assist VPI+ coaches as they continue to deliver support to VPI+ teachers.

- CLASS PreK Training

Participants at this two-day January 2018 training will be trained on the CLASS PreK observational tool, with the potential to achieve reliability on the tool, translating to certification as a rater.

- Early Childhood Communities of Learning

Five online sessions will be held in January, February, March, May, and October 2018. Two additional live events will occur: 1) a one-day funding workshop in April on braiding funding to support early childhood programs, and 2) a two-day summer institute in July designed to apply what has been learned through the online sessions.

- VPI+ Leadership Academy

Planned for April 2018, the Academy will focus on how to successfully communicate the value of high-quality preschool programming to key stakeholders in preparation for sustaining an effective preschool program beyond the period of the PDG grant.

- Showcase PreK in VA Pilot

The showcase planned for July 2018 will 1) cultivate a model for regional peer learning and networking, 2) share best practices that demonstrate the elements of high-quality preschool, and 3) recognize success to garner attention for local sustainability. Approximately six VPI+ sites will host two visiting days in Year 4 with curated experiential professional development for a wide audience, including day care providers, teachers, elementary leaders, center directors, superintendents, etc.

- Statewide PreK Teachers' Institute

This two-day Institute for PreK teachers, focused on social-emotional learning and mathematics, is tentatively scheduled for July 2018 in Williamsburg, VA.

- Development of Video Resources

CASTL is developing a series of learning modules on a variety of high-need topics, including the social-emotional development of young learners. They will be accompanied by PowerPoint presentations for VPI+ coaches and others to use, especially as they begin to transition away from the federal support provided by the preschool development grant funds.

- Development of Sustainability Resources

CASTL is also developing a three-part set of sustainability resources: 1) conceptual model of key components for successful sustainability; 2) an accompanying Sustainability Needs Assessment; and 3) a set of linked high-quality sustainability resources aligned to the needs assessment areas.

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 2016-2017 confirmed that the average child-to-instructional staff ratio in VPI+ classes was 8.5 children to 1 teacher or assistant teacher. Nearly all classes had 18 or fewer children, averaging 17.3 children.

5 - A full-day program

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2016-2017 confirmed that all VPI+ programs offer a full-day schedule. Seven Subgrantees extended the full-day VPI+ program through summer 2017, 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 of 6.4 percent. As a result, by spring 2017, 8 percent of children served in Virginia's VPI+ programs were identified as children with disabilities, exceeding the national average. 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. As of December 1, 2017, 5 percent of the 2017-2018 VPI+ children had been identified as having a disability; however, Subgrantees indicated that the identification process was ongoing. It is anticipated that this number will increase by the end of school year 2017-2018.

Collaboration with Section 619 of IDEA

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 development of a website dedicated to early childhood special education and attention to several legislative actions that have an impact on early childhood special education such as the creation of the School Readiness Committee and the Mixed Delivery Pilots.

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.

Professional development examples include:

- April 26, 2017 - Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program Administrator Spring Institute

The Institute targeted technical assistance and professional development to school division leaders who act as the program administrator for ECSE programs. The LEADS (Leadership in Effective and Developmentally-Appropriate Services) spring institute provided support to school division leaders in the implementation of programs for preschool children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the collection, reporting, and use of ECSE indicator data. Participants increased their knowledge and skills about recommendations for developing and refining a consistent process to collect preschool outcomes data; ways to increase accuracy of the collection and reporting of preschool outcomes data; strategies to use the process and preschool outcomes data to improve ECSE programs; and resources that support increased data quality.

- July 19-21, 2017 - Creating Connections to Shining Stars: Virginia's Collaborative Early Childhood Birth through Five Conference

This Conference was a collaborative effort between many state agencies and early childhood programs in Virginia, including VDOE's early childhood team. The conference focused on promoting and supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices in inclusive settings for young children, both with and without disabilities. At the 2017 conference, members of the VPI+ Implementation Team and other staff members made presentations on *Virginia Quality* (Virginia's QRIS) and innovative professional development formats used in implementation of Virginia's PDG.

- October 26, November 6, and November 9, 2017 - Early Childhood Education Leaders Collaborative Institutes

The Institutes focused on building and leading high-quality early childhood inclusive programs, including regulations and state initiatives related to increasing and improving inclusive practices for children with disabilities; key challenges and solutions to implementing inclusive programs; successful strategies and peer-to-peer discussions about quality inclusive programs; and tools and resources to support the development of policies and procedures that promote preschool inclusion.

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 regularly in 2017. 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.

Norfolk City Public Schools

The VPI+ staff work in partnership with parents, teachers, the Learning Support-Special Education Services, and other educational agencies to ensure that families of children with disabilities are provided the opportunity to be active participants on the Student Assessment Team. The Student Assessment Team ensures that students with disabilities are placed in the least restrictive environment. The VPI+ staff work with parents to identify resources in the community that will provide services for students with disabilities. The VPI+ program

maintains a positive dialogue with collaborative agencies. In addition, the VPI+ program manager works closely with the Senior Coordinator of Early Childhood Special Education and the Preschool Assessment Team to ensure students with disabilities have full participation in the VPI+ program. The program has priority eligibility criteria that ensure the most vulnerable children are served, including children with disabilities.

Petersburg City Public Schools

VPI+ staff meet quarterly to discuss integration of special education services into the regular education classroom. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) defines the support for students on an individual basis. The special education teacher and/or speech/language pathologist collaborates with the VPI+ teacher to address the child's goals and objectives during regular instruction. Children are not removed from the VPI+ classroom to receive specialized instruction. Special education staff share individualized strategies, visual supports, and/or behavior management techniques with the VPI+ teacher. Programs share any staff development opportunities related to modifying the curriculum, working with students with special needs, and managing challenging behaviors. VPI+ (new and improved) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classes participate in activities together throughout the school day. Activities include field trips, resource time such as library, outdoor recess, eating lunch together, and instructional time that promotes social interaction. When applicable, IEPs are in effect prior to preschool. Representatives meet with families for transition planning of available services, the eligibility process, and to discuss the preschool years.

Prince William County Public Schools

The VPI+ program works in collaboration with the Prince William County (PWC) Child Find office, which then refers children to the VPI+ program. Students enrolled in the VPI+ program are screened, and children who fail screenings for speech, language, or development are referred to Child Find for further 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 regional program serving students with disabilities is asked for referrals. Staff members follow up on those referrals and register eligible students. As new students are screened and/or found eligible, they are contacted, and staff share eligibility requirements for the VPI+ program. Speech services 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 they involve VPI+ staff, as well. Transportation for families is provided or arranged, as necessary.

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 original 11 Subgrantees and one new Subgrantee use *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 original Subgrantees and one new Subgrantee 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

- Prince William County Public Schools - High Scope

- Virginia Beach City Public Schools - Locally-developed curriculum

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report for 2016-2017 noted that across Virginia's Subgrantees, in contrast to Year 1 of implementation, when fewer than one-third (32%) of teachers had prior experience with their division's curriculum, in Year 2, a large majority (88%) of VPI+ teachers were using a curriculum they had used the past year. A large majority (93%) of VPI+ teachers reported their classrooms had the materials to support their curriculum, and they were confident in their ability to teach the curriculum (93%).

VPI+ teachers reported allocating similar amounts of instructional time to child-directed (34%) and teacher-directed (37%) activities. They reported that children engaged in lessons or projects in the areas of language, literacy, and physical education more often than in other areas. Most VPI+ teachers also reported that their children participated daily in projects or lessons focused on mathematics, dance or creative movement, music, and art.

All 13 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 2016-2017 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

SRI's comprehensive evaluation report found that VPI+ children in 2016-2017 made statistically significant gains from fall 2016 to spring 2017 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) - VPI+ children in Year 2 made statistically significant gains over the course of their preschool year. In fall 2016, VPI+ children's average scores for all PALS-PreK skills (uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, name writing, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness) were below the expected developmental thresholds for the spring of preschool. By the spring 2017, VPI+ children's average scores for all PALS-PreK skills met or exceeded the expected

developmental thresholds.

General knowledge and cognition - To measure general knowledge and cognition, the evaluation examined growth in early mathematics skills using the Woodcock-Johnson III Applied Problems subtest. VPI+ children in Year 2 experienced significant gains on the Applied Problems subtest of early mathematics skills between fall and spring based on W scores, which consider both the child's ability as well as the difficulty of each item. Children increased an average of 8.9 W units from fall to spring. These data suggest children are entering the VPI+ program with at least some basic knowledge of counting, and are showing small but statistically significant 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. Statistically significant gains occurred overall for VPI+ children in Year 2, from a 55.8 percentile rank in the fall to a 59.3 percentile rank in the spring. These mean rank scores are within or above the developmental ranges for these scales.

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 in Year 2 experienced small but significant increases in their peer social skills from fall to spring. They had small but statistically significant increases in their behavior control skills, and they made statistically significant improvements in their self-regulation scores as measured by the HTKS from fall to spring.

Motor skills - Based on direct assessment of children's motor skills, most children were able to perform gross motor, fine motor, and balance/coordination tasks in the spring of preschool. Most children (69%) could jump, land on both feet, and clap while airborne, over half (56%) could balance on one foot and then the other, and nearly all children (98%) were able to copy a circle at the end of preschool.

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 the formative assessment product 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 Disabilities Specialist (DS) or special education teacher assigned to community programs provides professional development training and ongoing supports to VPI+ coach and teaching teams on the

administration of the program's developmental screening tool. This includes on-site support and program-wide trainings using videos and voice-over PowerPoint presentations posted in the program's online system (Blackboard). Direct and Turn-Around training is provided to VPI+ coach and central office staff that target specific developmental delays and concerns that include identification, strategies and interventions, data collection, and outcomes in order to target specific individual needs. The DS team, VPI+ coach, VPI+ teaching team and early childhood special education teacher (if appropriate) conduct professional development trainings at support-team meetings that target individual students needs to include modeling of strategy, sharing of information, and providing resources appropriate to needs. Other targeted professional development trainings for staff include monthly leadership meetings, coaching meetings, webinars, and resources available through the local and state educational associations.

Giles County Public Schools

IEP teams consider placement of students with disabilities who meet the age requirement and 200 percent poverty requirement in VPI+ slots. Additional funding has been budgeted for part-time staff to provide the supports needed for students with disabilities who exhibit significant behavioral challenges that impact the student's ability to access and progress in the curriculum and interfere with the other preschool students' access to instruction. Families are supported by preschool staff special education case managers, related service providers, and preschool staff.

Henrico County Public Schools

Each classroom is provided with a Family Advocate who acts as both a support for families as well as a gateway to resources. Family advocates assist families that are in need of additional help and/or resources such as clothing, medical assistance, transportation services, employment information, etc. Families and family advocates work together on an individual Family Needs Assessment in order to identify needs and goals. Families define the level of support/information and what is helpful to them. Translators are available for home visits, school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and whenever needed. English learners are provided for and welcomed into all classrooms, as classrooms all utilize visuals and culturally rich materials (books, literature, puzzles, toys, and other items representative of a variety of cultures). English language webinars and staff development sessions are provided by the County and also by community resources. All families who enter the school system who speak another language are provided information and support by the Henrico County Public Schools "Welcome Center," which supports families as they navigate signing children up for school, access adult language courses (English), and need pairing with community resources.

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 2016-2017 found that VPI+ teacher salaries averaged $48,463, and ranged from $34,445 to $88,127. The average salary of K-12 teachers in Virginia was $54,486, and VPI+ teachers' annual salary was $6,000 lower, despite being paid on the same scale as K-12 division staff. 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.

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) and RAND Corporation, 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 (still in progress) to determine investments needed for desired outcomes. The spring 2017 Formative Evaluation Report was delivered on June 30, 2017. SRI's Annual Report was finalized on August 31, 2017.

Additionally, in July 2017, the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) provided a Year 2 Implementation Report on the technical assistance and professional development it provided for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators. Data and information from these implementation and 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 Language Learners (ELLs). 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 in spring 2017 found that 64 percent of parents reported receiving information about dental care, medical health care, parenting skills, where to receive healthy food, adult education classes or job training, and health insurance.

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

Brunswick County Public Schools - Head Start

VPI+ staff work collaboratively with Head Start since the division has a VPI+/Head Start classroom in which students are dually enrolled. VPI+ funds provide the salary match for the classroom teacher. The two programs share professional development activities and family engagement events. Staff meet at least twice a year, and the programs hold joint registrations.

Chesterfield County Public Schools - Title I, Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education

The VPI+ program conducts a spring transition workshop for parents of all students in Head Start, VPI, VPI+, early childhood special education, and Title I preschool. The preschool teachers at each site conduct the workshop for parents to receive information pertinent to their home schools. Parents are given materials to help with transitioning, early literacy, and mathematics in preparation for kindergarten.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) - English Learners

The VPI+ program follows the English Language Learner policy and procedures for supporting children in their

acquisition of English. The VPI+ Coordinator/Coach works with the ESOL Coordinator, the teachers, the Family Engagement Specialist, and the Preschool Advisory Council at the elementary schools to provide support for students, training for teachers, communication with parents, and coordination of services for the families of the students across the division. VPI+ surveys families during the application process on the extent of language acquisition that the applicant may have and the probability of support needed for their child. Information about the prekindergarten programs and the services available are shared with families at that time. Interpreters are on-site for all events to provide support to ensure families fully understand the process, the programs, and general information. Once a determination is made, necessary interpreters and translators are provided for all parent events: open house, orientation, conferences, home visits, etc., as well as written translation of documents in home languages for clarity of understanding. The FCPS ESOL Department provides assistance with this process especially when an uncommon language is needed.

Richmond City Public Schools - Foster Children

VPI+ works closely with the Department of Social Services and foster parents to develop a family plan to meet the individual needs of each child and family. The family engagement coordinator assists with biological reunification when needed by meeting with the biological parents to explain the program and offer any assistance with community resources. The family engagement coordinator also provides support services as needed for changes in foster care homes and/or adoption.

Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) - Health Screenings and Nutrition

Health screenings took place during summer health fairs in August 2017. For families that did not attend summer health fairs, children were screened during the first 60 days of the program year. The program works with each family to obtain a physical and dental examination for their child that is needed. The school division food service department provides breakfast, snacks, and lunch to children in new VPI+ classrooms. The VPI+ classes are in a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision program, and program leaders work with VBCPS Department of Food Services to have the snacks provided at no cost to the families.

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 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

- 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.

Explain your efforts to provide High-Quality Preschool Program Slots for the Eligible Children and a brief description of expenses that contribute to the cost per slot.

In total, for the 2017-2018 school year as of December 2017, 1,445 eligible students (41.8%) were served in VPI+ new classrooms, and 2,009 eligible students (58.2%) were served in VPI+ improved classrooms for a total of 3,454 students. This compares to December 2015 (2015-2016 school year), where 2,804 students were

served (1,230 new and 1,574 improved), and to December 2016 (2016-2017 school year, where 3,297 were served (1,406 new and 1,891 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). In Year 1, Virginia estimated the cost per slot at $12,600 new and $900 improved (93% and 7%, respectively). For the Year 3 school year, annual slot costs were projected to the end of school year 2017-2018 by using Subgrantee approved Year 3 budgets. Given the total costs and student counts, for Year 3, the cost per slot equates to $10,654 ($15,395,643 ÷ 1,445) for new slots and $577 ($1,158,812 ÷ 2,009) for improved slots - or across both types of slots - $4,793 per slot. Virginia's cost per new slot has decreased since Year 1, and it remains higher than for improved slots, reflecting start-up costs of new classrooms and a broader spectrum of allowable costs to eligible VPI+ funded students. Additionally, 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.

Explain any differences between your Year 2 Actuals and Year 2 Target that you reported in your application.

Not applicable.

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 that you have made in 2017 to strengthen partnerships 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 the grant period. 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 interact regularly with the Subgrantees to discuss any required corrections as the second school year (2016-2017) 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 VDOE conducted site visits to all 11 Subgrantees in 2016-2017 to monitor grant compliance and discuss VPI+ implementation.

Progress by Topic

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

Virginia has defined clear roles for the state and Subgrantees in detailed Memoranda of Understanding that the 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 and potential for sustainability beyond the PDG period. 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 each grant year. 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; 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 most VPI+ classes, the professional development options for Subgrantees, and the formative assessment used for VPI+ classes were all selected using a RFP process.

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.

Additionally, CASTL developed a Continuous Improvement Plan 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 the VDOE, with great potential for researchers and subsequent cross-sector work in data integration. 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 annual 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 Consortia 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 spring 2016 and 2017 in English and Spanish, both on paper and electronically, with a response rate of over 60 percent. Response reports were created at the Subgrantee and state levels, along with a framework for reflecting on lessons learned. The VDOE uses the reports and framework as the basis for training for VPI+ and family engagement coordinators. Follow-up questions are 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

Virginia continues to make progress in aligning programs that serve children from birth to third grade 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 Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, which replaced the Cross-

Organizational Data Team - to develop a means to report the outcomes of students who enroll in preschool through third grade and beyond;

- VPI+ teachers, coaches, and administrators - to implement the preschool curriculum and assessments that are aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning for kindergarten through grade 3;

- The VPI+ Administrator Blog - to provide PreK-Grade 3 administrators and their teaching teams with the best content on high-quality preschool and transitions into K-3; and

- Smart Beginnings, Virginia's preschool network of public and private stakeholders - to collaborate on priorities for young children, 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 preschool, 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.

Prior to receipt of 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 interest in preschool options demonstrated by outgoing Governor Terry McAuliffe, incoming Governor Ralph Northam and First Lady Pam Northam, who has declared early childhood development as one of her major interest areas, and the Virginia General Assembly.

(b) Indicate how the State is working to ensure that High-Quality Preschool Programs will not diminish services or increase costs to families.

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 recommendations related to strengthening 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. The Cabinet's 2017 annual report established a fiscal map of children's services to ensure long-term investments in children's programs. It recommended greater state-local partnerships to enhance educational outcomes in

challenged school divisions such as Petersburg and Richmond (two VPI+ Subgrantees). It also recommended increased state investment in services for children that are currently funded by vulnerable or expiring funding streams, particularly noting the expiration of VPI+ federal funding in 2019.

Legislative Interest in Preschool

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly made a total investment of $25.4 million to support early childhood education over the 2016-2018 biennium. This included

- Expansion of home visiting services;

- Increase to early intervention services;

- Increase to the VPI per pupil amount;

- Creation of a pilot to test new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool; and

- Funding for Project Pathfinders to fund scholarships for the child care workforce and a competency-based credentialing system.

Studies and governance

- Established the School Readiness Committee (HB46) to make recommendations around issues in early childhood;

- Created a DSS 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 study of the early childhood programs in Virginia (SJ88);

- 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 a Joint Subcommittee (HJR112) to look at the future of public education in Virginia.

VPI+ Implementation Team

Virginia's state-level cross-agency VPI+ Implementation Team supports alignment of high-quality state preschool programs in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Education leads the team, which includes representatives from the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, and the Virginia Department of Health. This team of agency partners works to create a seamless progression of supports and services for Virginia's at-risk children, and they 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 to third grade.

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee (Formerly the Cross-Organizational Data Team)

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team to facilitate the addition of preschool data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). During the last two years, the Data Team guided Virginia's efforts to merge preschool data with K-12 school data. After hours of discussion and exploration of the requirements to do so, it was determined that the changes required in the data architecture to connect multiple exposures (parent-child-teacher-school) would be cost-prohibitive with current funds. Virginia sought and received permission from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to adjust the PDG-supported tasks related to data. Rather than continue efforts to merge preschool and K-12 data, the new plan calls for including preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). As a result of this change, the Cross-Organizational Data Team will be replaced by a new committee, the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, facilitated by the VECF to continue to advocate for and

work towards greater usability and integration of early childhood data.

Preschool Curriculum and Assessments

Through a RFP process, Virginia selected a single curriculum and formative assessment system, aligned to *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*, for 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.

Development of Resources to Engage and Inform PreK-Grade 3 Administrators

In 2017, an Administrator Blog was added to the VPI+ website as a tool to engage more participation by preschool/elementary school administrators in an effort to improve PreK-Grade 3 alignment. This blog shares the best content and resources on high-quality preschool and transitions into K-3. Topics included the importance of investing in preschool, how to support a quality preschool program, fostering active engagement for young learners, rigor in elements of rigorous preschool, and preschoolers' self-regulation and challenging behaviors.

(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 by utilizing three key strategies:

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

A preschool curriculum and formative assessments aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning in kindergarten through grade 3 help to ensure that preschool children 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. Each Subgrantee's annual plan addresses how it will facilitate connections and promote partnership between VPI+ and kindergarten programs.

In addition to the VPI+ summative assessments, the Virginia General Assembly allocated funds for The University of Virginia (UVA) to pilot a kindergarten readiness assessment. The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program offers a set of coordinated assessments in literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills to provide preschool teachers with a more comprehensive picture of students' skills at the beginning of kindergarten. In fall 2014, UVA partnered with 16 school divisions on a voluntary basis to implement the expanded assessments. The number of participating divisions has increased each year, with 64 divisions participating in 2017. The graduated rollout permits continued input from stakeholders to enhance feasibility and utility of the assessment. The results will inform public policy and funding decisions related to early childhood education.

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 3 Target* differs from the *Year 3 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, $6,689,193 for Year 2, and $3,090,549 for Year 3. After the application was submitted, Virginia increased the match proposal to $5,133,618 in Year 1, $7,653,086 in Year 2, and $4,060,534 in Year 3.

In Year 1, Virginia attained $5,742,528, exceeding the match goal by $608,910. In Year 2, Virginia attained $9,085,016, exceeding the match goal by $1,431,930. Thus far in Year 3, this APR reports $2,165,061 or 53 percent attainment of the Year 3 match goal, including state, local, and philanthropic resources.

Unspent Year 3 funds were carried forward from 2017 and Subgrantees will continue to execute Year 3 plans through the school year ending in June 2018. It is anticipated that by June 30, 2018, matching funds will be reported to fully meet and exceed the Year 3 goal. Virginia is forecasting to meet or exceed the match goals in Years 3 and 4 and is projecting a final match after Year 4 that will exceed 33 percent.

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 to third grade. Several of the strategies and partnerships noted in Virginia's PDG grant application response to Competitive Preference Priority #2 are outlined below:

- 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 collection

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 Humanities and Early Childhood office and 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 to third grade, 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.

Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems Committee (Formerly, the Cross-Organizational Data Team)

Virginia established a Cross-Organizational Data Team to facilitate the addition of preschool data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). It consists of representatives from the VDOE, VDSS, VDH, VECF, and SRI International (the evaluator for Virginia's PDG), and others as needed. During the last two years, the Data Team guided Virginia's efforts to merge preschool data with K-12 school data. After many hours of discussion and exploration of the requirements to do so, it was determined that the changes required in the data architecture to connect multiple exposures (parent-child-teacher-school) would be cost-prohibitive with current funds. Virginia sought and received permission from the U. S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to adjust the PDG-supported tasks related to data. Rather than continue efforts to merge preschool and K-12 data, the new plan calls for including preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). As a result of this change, the Cross-Organizational Data Team will be replaced by a new committee, the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee, facilitated by the VECF to continue to advocate for and work towards greater usability and integration of early childhood data.

Preschool data also have been brought into Virginia's Master Schedule Collection (MSC) and the Student Record Collection (SRC). Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions participating in the VPI program were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier (STI) to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students.

- Smart Beginnings

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:

Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond

Chesterfield County: The School Readiness Coalition meetings (convened by Smart Beginnings) have provided a multitude of networking opportunities. The Chesterfield County library staff has shared many activities and experiences available to families including "Play Smart with Toddlers" and story-telling events. Two libraries are partnering to host two PreK application events in the spring. The VPI+ coordinator was invited to speak with the entire group of librarians and shared information about upcoming application events. The librarians help engage all Chesterfield families by promoting the events. Smart Beginnings has also connected the VPI+ coordinator to the Children's Museum of Richmond for services including Book Buggy and free family memberships for at-risk families. Community Idea Stations has facilitated family workshops where families walk away with many fantastic resources, including books.

Fairfax County Office for Children (Smart Beginnings): The Family Engagement Coordinators in Fairfax have made progress in engaging families whose children are enrolled in VPI+. They continue to participate on neighborhood school readiness teams and support the implementation of the Fairfax County Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan, both of which focus on the importance of establishing meaningful partnerships with families as they support their children's optimal development.

Three examples of how the coordinators facilitate family learning opportunities include:

- Parent orientations and ongoing parent meetings that have focused on how to support children's successful transition to kindergarten; curriculum implementation experiences that support children's school readiness; healthy nutrition; and social and emotional competence.

- Parent coffees, which offer a variety of topics and presenters; and

- Special events that provide opportunities for parents and children to have enriching experiences together.

Smart Beginnings Southeast

Brunswick VPI+: Smart Beginnings attended the VPI+ quarterly Community Engagement meetings. And provided family engagement materials and *Jumpstart Read for the Record* books and materials. Smart Beginnings Southeast provided a "Working with Challenging Behaviors" training for teachers and staff in October.

Petersburg VPI: Smart Beginnings Southeast is in the process of scheduling ASQ SE (Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional) training for Petersburg VPI teachers as well as providing Al's Pals training, which is dedicated to developing young children's social-emotional skills, problem-solving abilities, and healthy decision-making.

- 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. The Cabinet's 2017 Annual Report established a fiscal map of children's services to ensure long-term investments in children's programs. It recommended greater state-local partnerships to enhance educational outcomes in challenged school divisions. It also recommended increased state investment

in services for children that are currently funded by vulnerable or expiring funding streams, particularly noting the expiration of VPI+ federal funding in 2019.

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, and 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.

An appropriation from the General Assembly also funded a two-year pilot for testing new approaches to mixed-delivery public-private preschool partnerships to provide preschool education. As of September 2017, ten localities have received grants of $250,000 each to ensure all children eligible for VPI are able to access the programs.

The General Assembly also provided funding for training scholarships for the child care workforce. Project Pathfinders provides financial support for current child care and preschool teachers to pursue credentials, certificates, and degrees through Virginia's Community College System. As of September 2017, 934 scholarships have been awarded for participation in 1,946 courses.

Several committees and workgroups were created to support seamless services to Virginia's children, including the School Readiness Committee (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 a report from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) on a two-year study of the early childhood programs in place in Virginia (SJ88). In December 2017, JLARC presented the results of Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs. Its findings suggest that more than one-third of Virginia children are not ready for kindergarten. Included among the recommendations of the report are:

- Require more comprehensive assessments of kindergarten readiness and more useful data about children at risk for poor developmental outcomes;

- Improve the design, quality, and performance data of early childhood programs to ensure efficient and effective use of funds; and

- Require and provide sufficient resources for the Virginia Department of Education to have a more meaningful role in ensuring the quality of VPI implementation.

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 VPI+ slots and $1,323,000 for improved VPI+ 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 VPI+ slots and $1,366,320 for improved VPI+ slots, for a Subgrantee award of $16,658,648 or 95.2 percent of the total $17,500,000 award. This Subgrantee award supported 1,406 new slots and 1,891 improved slots.

In Year 3, it was estimated Subgrantees would use $15,395,643 for new VPI+ slots and $1,158,812 for improved VPI+ slots, for a Subgrantee award of $16,554,455 or 94.6 percent of the $17,500,000. This Subgrantee award supported 1,445 new slots and 2,009 improved slots.

All of Virginia's 13 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 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 13 Subgrantees budgeted specific strategies to support the structural elements of a high-quality program. Several examples are provided below and additional examples are included in Section A: Part B, #1 of this report.

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 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, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

Virginia's Year 3 Preschool Development Grant (PDG) totaled $17,500,000. Unspent Year 3 funds, as of December 31, 2017, were requested and approved for carryforward into 2018. Year 3 program implementation and expenditures continued from 2017 into 2018 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 2017 (Year 3 grant period) totaled $16,836,180. The state approved Year 3 budget includes Subgrantee detailed line item budgets approved by the SEA. The detailed Year 3 budget is used to monitor grant expenditures and ensure only approved, eligible costs are reimbursed. Tracking of Subgrantee expenditures is performed with an online program (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.

Going into Year 4 of the grant, the PDG grant authorization was $71,375,218 and VDOE recorded expenditures totaling $37,458,985.54 as of January 2018. The G5 system showed a total of $37,445,898.35, indicating VDOE had not drawn $13,087.19. Pending items will correct this difference, which 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 2017, Virginia's Subgrantees (LEAs) budgeted Year 3 funds and remaining Year 2 carryforward funds. Based on actual expenditures in Year 2 and remaining funds, expended funds were somewhat less than originally projected. VDOE addressed this issue by reprogramming excess LEA funds to two new school divisions, which added a total of six new VPI+ classrooms.

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 3 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2017 into 2018, and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Both the SEA and Subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 3 funds for approved grant activities in school year 2017-2018. The carryforward authorization did not

have an end date. When Year 3 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 3 funds are exhausted, use of Year 4 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 20 percent below their expected spend target may have those unspent funds reprogrammed in grant Year 4, 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 2018.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018).

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.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) does not anticipate any major budget changes in future years. VDOE staff have provided technical assistance - statewide to Subgrantees and individualized to each Subgrantee regarding effective spending strategies - throughout 2017. Subgrantees have been informed of the possibility of reallocating money based on any unspent funds in excess of 20 percent of their Year 3 grant award as of May 31, 2018 - both for Year 3 as well as Year 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 3 funds and reducing or increasing grant awards for some Subgrantees in Year 4, so that additional students may be served elsewhere in high-need areas of the Commonwealth. In addition, the spending plan for Virginia's supplemental award in Year 4 is currently on track to meet spending deadlines.

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 has taken steps to prepare for sustained preschool services beyond the terms of the PDG grant in a number of ways:

- Outgoing Governor Terry McAuliffe's Children's Cabinet prioritized preschool expansion as a major initiative to turn around underperforming school divisions and reduce economic disparities in educational outcomes in the Commonwealth. Incoming Governor Ralph Northam has voiced his support for preschool education, and First Lady Pam Northam has declared early childhood development to be one of her major areas of interest.

- The 2016 Virginia General Assembly took significant legislative action to ensure the continuation of public preschool programs in the Commonwealth into 2017 and beyond. Among its actions are:

Budget Items - Invested a total of $25.4 million in early childhood education over the 2016-2018 biennium, including:

- Increased the VPI 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

- Funded 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 Committee (HB46), an early learning council comprised of legislators, business leaders, and stakeholders to make recommendations around cross-cutting issues of innovation in early childhood.

The School Readiness Committee 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 met regularly over the last year, and in its 2017 report, the first recommendation was to update Virginia's Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

- Requested of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) 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.

In December 2017, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee presented the results of its report, Improving Virginia's Early Childhood Development Programs. Its findings suggest that more than one-third of Virginia children are not ready for kindergarten. Included among the recommendations of the report are:

- Require more comprehensive assessments of kindergarten readiness and more useful data about children at risk for poor developmental outcomes.

- Improve the design, quality, and performance data of early childhood programs to ensure efficient and effective use of funds.

- Require and provide sufficient resources for the Virginia Department of Education to have a more meaningful role in ensuring the quality of VPI implementation.

- The 2018 Virginia General Assembly has several bills and language amendments related to early childhood under consideration, including:

- Proposed new Appropriation Act language, which would allow, subject to available funds each year, allocation of additional VPI (Virginia Preschool Initiative) slots to school divisions that have utilized 100 percent of their calculated slots from the previous year and have a waiting list of unserved children as certified on the Department of Education's October 1 Fall Verification Report in the previous year; and

- HJ 108, which would ask the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the amount of funds required to make preschool available to all four-year-olds in the Commonwealth through the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

- The topic of sustainability is being included in the agendas for PDG leadership academies and teacher conferences. VPI+ staff members have worked with the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) to provide technical assistance and communication toolkits to Subgrantees as they seek increased local and state support to maintain the success of their preschool programs.

- A new monthly VPI+ Administrator blog was launched in May 2017 as a tool to inform and engage more participation by local school administrators and leaders. The VPI+ website also provides resources that are available to all Subgrantees as they begin to transition to locally-provided professional development and coaching for teachers.

- CASTL is developing a three-part set of sustainability resources to use with school divisions: 1) conceptual model of key components for successful sustainability; 2) an accompanying Sustainability Needs Assessment, and 3) a set of linked high-quality sustainability resources aligned to the needs assessment areas.

- The restructuring of the VPI+ Data Team into the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Committee provides the opportunity to include preschool data on Virginia's K-12 School Quality Profiles (formerly, the School Report Cards). This cross-agency team, facilitated by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, will continue to advocate for and work towards greater usability and integration of early childhood data.

- Beginning in fall 2016, school divisions were required to assign a Student Testing Identifier to publicly funded and enrolled preschool students in the Master Schedule Collection (MSC) and report them in the Student Record Collection (SRC).

- The data-driven professional development plans created for VPI+ teachers serve as a model for future professional development and upskilling of preschool teachers.

- Virginia's selected high-quality preschool curriculum, formative assessments, and professional development for use in the VPI+ program can also be used by other preschool programs statewide, thus contributing to improved program quality in other preschool programs statewide.

- In January 2018, the Virginia Board of Education adopted *Guidelines for the Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion of Young Children: Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Settings*, which provide guidance regarding policies and best practice in implementing developmentally appropriate experiences for children in early care and education programs (0-5 years), that can prevent suspension and expulsion.

- Virginia's statewide early childhood professional development registry, IMPACT, provides the means to document and recognize the professional achievements of practitioners and trainers who work in early childhood education in Virginia.

- 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 offers information and data that can be used on a broader scale for general statewide program improvement. Training to earn a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) rater certification is now being offered to a wider audience than just the VPI+ teachers.

- 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+ are transferable and available to other high-need communities in the implementation of high-quality preschool programs.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

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

As of December 31, 2017, Virginia's Subgrantee budgets remain unchanged for Year 3. Close monitoring will continue as Year 3 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 3 balance was authorized and carried forward from 2017 into 2018 and spending and program activities continued uninterrupted. Subgrantees will continue to utilize available Year 3 funds for approved grant activities in school year 2017-2018. The carryforward authorization did not have an end date. When Year 3 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 3 funds are exhausted, use of Year 4 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 grant funds 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 20 percent below their expected spend target may have those unspent funds reprogrammed in Year 4, 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 2018. See Response #2 above for the plan to reallocate and use unexpended funds.