
WHAT’S NEW
The Virginia Department of Education was awarded a renewal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award in 2019 for $11.1 million annually through 2022 to continue the work that began in 2018. These funds will support Virginia to build local community networks of all publicly-funded birth-five providers across the state. These networks will collaborate to increase access to care for families as well as measure and support quality experiences.

Additionally, in July 2019, the Governor established Executive Directive Four, which directed Virginia to establish a state leadership team to accomplish four goals: 1) conduct a series of listening sessions around the state, 2) develop a proposal to increase access for all at-risk threes and fours, 3) develop a uniform measurement and improvement system for all B–5 programs taking public funds, and 4) propose a plan for consolidation of state oversight of B–5 programs. These recommendations are resulted in proposed legislation and budget proposal for the 2020 legislative session. The proposed legislation will establish a unified public-private early care and education system that is administered by the VDOE and the Board of Education, including the creation of a uniform quality measurement and improvement system. The budget proposal includes over $94.8 million over the biennium to increase access to quality programs for 3- and 4-year-olds and support early educator wages.

BACKGROUND
The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) began in 1995 to serve at-risk 4-year-olds not enrolled in existing preschool programs. During the 2018-2019 school year, VPI programs operated in 96% of eligible school divisions. Programs are required to operate for a minimum of three hours per day, though 97% of children attend full-day programs throughout the school year. VPI is funded by state lottery revenues as well as a required local match. Funding for VPI is available to school divisions where there are at-risk 4-year-olds who are not served by Head Start.

Virginia’s federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program, VPI+, expands services to 4-year-olds in high needs communities. The state served an additional 1,485 students in 2018-2019 through this program. PDG funding was also used to enhance the quality of 2,285 VPI slots during the same year. The General Assembly provided $6,139,559 to sustain PDG funded slots during the 2019-2020 school year, after the grant ends.

VPI eligibility has always been based on risk factors including, but not limited to: family income at or below 200% FPL, family income at or below 350% FPL for students with special needs or disabilities, homelessness, or parent(s) with limited education. A total of 15% of slots can be filled using locally determined eligibility criteria.

In 2011, VPI was evaluated for both program quality and child outcomes by the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. VPI programs participate in a state-directed Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Process. This process includes a two-year period involving a self-study, goal setting, and monitoring by the Virginia Department of Education (first year desk review with improvement plan, second year onsite visit with follow-up from year one). VPI programs participate in this process once every four years.
**ACCESS**

Total state pre-K enrollment .................................................. 17,657
School districts that offer state program ................. 91% (school divisions)
Income requirement ................................................................. 200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation .................................. 3 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule ......................................................... School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............... 10,794
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ...... 11,579
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............. 0

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>VA PRE-K REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA (public); HSD (nonpublic)</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE, CD, or CDA</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD (public); None (nonpublic)</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>15 hours/year</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>18 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:9 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more; Referrals not required</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

**RESOURCES**

Total state pre-K spending .......................................... $70,049,572
Local match required? .......................................................... Yes
State Head Start spending .................................................. $0
State spending per child enrolled .................................. $3,967
All reported spending per child enrolled* ....................... $6,299

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

**SNAPSHOTS**

- **PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE**
  - **3-YEAR-OLD**
    - Pre-K: 6%
    - Head Start: 3%
    - Special Ed††: 91%
  - **4-YEAR-OLD**
    - Pre-K: 17%
    - Head Start: 6%
    - Special Ed††: 4%
  - Other/None: 73%

†† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

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