



## **VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH**

### **2014 LEGISLATIVE STUDY DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – WORKGROUP ON QUALITY & STUDY OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT IN SCHOOLS**

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – WORKGROUP ON QUALITY**

The Commission on Youth convened a workgroup to assess methods for improving quality in Virginia's early childhood education programs. The workgroup met on June 17 at the Capitol. An update on the progress of the workgroup was reported to the Commission on Youth at the September 16, 2014 meeting.

#### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **A. Establish a coordinating council to convene stakeholders/decision makers**

1. Introduce legislation establishing a statewide early childhood advisory council to improve the quality, availability, and coordination of funding and services for children from birth to school entry. Membership shall include all impacted state agencies, institutions of higher education, local early childhood providers, business representatives, parents, Head Start agencies, the Department of Veteran Services, and members of the Virginia General Assembly. The Council, under the direction of the Secretary of Education shall make recommendations to the Board of Education and the General Assembly on (a) quality early childhood education programming, (b) availability of high-quality early childhood programs, (c) opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among programs and agencies responsible for early childhood education, and (d) professional development for early childhood educators.

2. Request the Governor's Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success to assess and make recommendations to improve the quality, availability, and coordination of funding and services for children from birth to school entry.

**B. Build quality by linking training/supports to teachers which emphasize their interactions with children**

1. Introduce legislation requiring individuals seeking initial licensure with an endorsement in early childhood/Pre-K education and persons seeking licensure renewal as teachers who have not completed such study to complete coursework in effective teacher-child interactions and social and instructional supports based on evidence-based curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Social Services, relevant to the specific teacher licensure routes.

- or -

2. Request VDOE review professional support and in-service training programs for early childhood educators to ensure that such requirements include focus on teacher-child interactions that promote gains in children's social and academic development. Such a review will include the use of technology in delivering professional support and in-service training.
3. Request VDOE/VDSS re-assess licensure requirements to ensure the structural/physical plant requirements are not overemphasized over teacher licensure/training requirements that are proven to enhance quality.
4. Request VDOE review *Virginia's Quality Indicators for Responsive Teaching: Creating a High Quality Preschool Learning Environment* to ensure that quality of teacher-child interactions and social and instructional supports are utilized as core competencies for early childhood educators.
5. Support VDOE's efforts to build capacity with private partners that emphasize hiring teachers with training on the importance of quality teacher-child interactions and social and instructional supports.
6. Support the proposed revisions to Virginia's Star Quality Standards which emphasizes those elements that best demonstrate success such as teacher preparation/professional development versus structural and/or physical plant components.

**C. Improve Access and Quality to the Virginia Preschool Initiative**

1. Request the Board of Education to review the funding formula and cost-per-child for VPI and make recommendations to address barriers to access such as local match and facility space to achieve a balance between program quality and easing access for children in all regions across the Commonwealth.

- or -

2. Request JLARC follow up on the previous study of VPI and review the funding formula and cost-per-child for VPI and make recommendations to address barriers to access such as local match and facility space to achieve a balance between program quality and easing access for children in all regions across the Commonwealth.

- or -

3. Direct/Request the Board of Education to develop a quality framework for any childhood program that receives VPI funding.
4. Allow private providers that meet the requirements for quality (QRIS and or the Quality Framework described above) to access VPI money.

**D. Improve Awareness of Gaps in Virginia’s High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs**

1. Request VDSS, in cooperation with VECF, to map all of the quality ratings for the participating early care programs across the state. Such mapping may help show regional gaps and help communicate the benefits of licensure to providers.

**E. Address the lack of high-quality community-based early childhood education programs for geographically dispersed reserve and active-duty families.**

1. Request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Public Safety include access to high-quality early childhood education for Virginia’s military families in all efforts seeking to improve services and programs for Virginia’s military families.

**USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS**

HB 1106 (Hope) directed the Commission on Youth, in consultation with the Department of Education and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to review statewide policies and regulations related to seclusion and restraint in public and private elementary and secondary schools and methods used in other states to reduce and eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint. The Commission received the preliminary findings and draft recommendations from this study at the September 16, 2014 meeting.

**A. Finalize the *Proposed Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities***

1. Request that the Governor finalize Virginia's *Proposed Regulations Governing the Operation of Private Day Schools for Students with Disabilities*.

**B. Regulate the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Virginia's Public Schools**

1. Introduce legislation requiring the Board of Education to promulgate regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools. These regulations will be consistent with the 2009 DOE Guidelines and the U.S. DOE 15 Principles on Seclusion & Restraint and address definitions, criteria for use, restrictions for use, training, notification requirements, reporting, and follow-up.

-or-

2. Request BOE promulgate regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools. These regulations will be consistent with the 2009 DOE Guidelines and the U.S. DOE 15 Principles on Seclusion & Restraint. These regulations will address definitions, criteria for use, restrictions for use, training, notification requirements, reporting, and follow-up.

-or-

3. Introduce legislation for the Board of Education to establish guidelines and model policies for the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools. The guidelines and model policies shall include definitions, criteria for use, restrictions for use, training, notification requirements, reporting, and follow-up. School boards shall adopt and revise policies on the use of seclusion and restraint consistent with, but may be more stringent than, the guidelines of the Board of Education.

-or-

4. Introduce legislation requiring local school boards to establish guidelines and model policies for the use of seclusion and restraint in Virginia's public schools.

**C. Encourage Training Efforts**

1. Support DCJS efforts in training appropriate parties, including SROs and SSOs, in student development, de-escalation, and conflict mediation in the school setting.
2. Request DOE support local school divisions by providing resources and training on research-based appropriate behavioral management, prevention, de-escalation techniques to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint