

# Virginia Preschool Initiative

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# VPI: a proven strategy

- By research and VA data, positive outcomes for participants
  - Increased literacy (only 6% of VPI participants needing reading intervention in K vs. 26% of those with no pre K experience)
  - Reduced early grade repeaters (annual cost of repeaters K-3<sup>rd</sup> in VA is approximately \$80 million)
  - Longer term projections (on-time grade promotion reduces likelihood of dropping out of high school)

# Virginia Preschool Initiative

## Participation Levels in Virginia

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of localities:	136	136	136	136	135
Number of localities eligible for funding:	125	127	127	131	131
Number of participating localities:	112	113	114	119	119
Number of eligible, but not participating localities:	13	14	13	12	12
Number of localities not eligible:	11	9	9	5	4
Number of eligible children based on funding formula:	21,072	23,177	23,443	24,483	24,629
Number of participating children:	14,944	15,881	16,618	17,313	18,021

# Barriers to Utilization of State Funds

- allocation imbalance (unused slots vs. wait lists)
- true cost and local match
- space
- lack of clarity around teacher qualifications in private settings

# What can we learn from other states?

According to NIEER, out of 41 states that have state-funded pre-k programs:

- 29 (70%) do not require local match
- All have mixed delivery system of some sort

# What can we learn from the federal preschool initiative?

- When we issued an announcement about the opportunity to expand access and elevate quality of preschool services, more than 60 (nearly half) of all 130 school divisions responded with interest
- Fervent commitment; challenges with funding under the existing formula
  - When true cost is more than the assumed \$6000, local divisions subsidize to a great extent.
  - Teacher salary/costs are on par with K-12; comprehensive services /costs required.

# Funding Conundrum

- Because of the 7-8 year trend of anticipated savings, the legislative commitment to full funding hasn't been tested.
- The fully funded amount each year is estimated, not appropriated.
- VDOE no longer has the funds to monitor quality in VPI classrooms.

# Potential Solutions to Increased Local Participation in VPI

- allocation imbalance (unused slots vs. wait lists)
- true cost and local match
  - (potential solution: flexibility in formula)
- space
- lack of clarity around teacher qualifications in private settings
  - (potential solution: technical assistance with partnerships with non school providers)

# Testing out Potential Solutions

Federal preschool grant:

- expanded access in high need communities
- potential for \$17.5m per year for 4 years
- flexibility with pupil rate (true cost), match
- promotion of public-private delivery
- intentional quality framework
- building infrastructure and capacity

# VECF Strategies

- Recommend flexibility and intentionality in VPI
- Preschool Puzzle – braiding/blending
- QRIS
  - Demonstrates quality in classrooms across types of settings
  - Assists parents with making informed choices
  - Supports continuous quality improvement in program standards and PD of teachers/providers
- Teacher competencies and curriculum

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