Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Expansion and Enhancement Question and Answer Webinar Series

Webinar 1: Enrollment and Eligibility

February 6, 2020
Objectives and Agenda

This webinar will provide information on eligibility guidelines and the new waiver process for increasing slots funded through local eligibility criteria. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions related to VPI Proposed Expansion and Enhancements.

Agenda:

- Overview of Proposed Changes for VPI
- Determining Eligibility in VPI
- Applying for a Local Eligibility Waiver
- Question and Answer
Overview of Proposed Changes for VPI
Virginia’s Challenge

All Virginia children are capable of and deserve to enter school ready. Yet more than 38,000 children entered Virginia kindergarten classrooms this fall not ready to fulfill their potential.

• According to the 2019 Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), 44% of Virginia children started school without the key literacy, math, and social-emotional skills needed to be successful in school. Most concerning is that 55% of children from economically disadvantaged families and 66% of children with special needs did not enter school fully prepared for success.

• Virginia ranks 33rd nationally in preschool funding; as a result, 1 in 4 economically disadvantaged four-year-olds and 3 out of 4 economically disadvantaged three-year-olds lack access to quality preschool.

• 75% of Virginia’s early childhood programs that receive public funding do not participate in the state’s voluntary quality measurement system; vulnerable families as well as policymakers, practitioners and community leaders do not have uniform information on quality.

• Virginia ranks 37th nationally in early childhood governance and lacks a uniform oversight and regulatory framework, making it difficult for communities to strengthen their local systems.
At-risk children who experience VPI are ~1.5 times more likely to enter school ready than their at-risk peers who do not participate in any preschool. And Mixed Delivery in Virginia has demonstrated similar gains to VPI. Offering a quality option to the 5,000+ children who would otherwise be on VPI wait lists can increase school readiness in Virginia.

2019 Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) Results for At-Risk Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public Preschool</th>
<th>No Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 VKRP</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gains in Child Assessment Scores Among Children in Mixed Delivery and Public School VPI Classrooms, Fall 2017-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Revisions for VPI

The Governor’s budget includes significant financial investments to increase access for at-risk three- and four-year-olds that will affect all school divisions.

Divisions should begin planning for these proposed changes now:

• May 15 Spring VPI Application must include plan for additional funding.
• Spring recruitment for the 2020-2021 school year should reflect all plans to serve more at-risk four- and three-year-olds.
• Communities must begin coordinating with partners (e.g., Head Start, child care) to discuss how to serve more at-risk children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Addition</th>
<th>What this would mean for Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase VPI per-pupil amount 10%</td>
<td>• Additional funding will be allocated for each VPI seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver for increased local criteria</td>
<td>• Seek a waiver to serve more than 15% of slots through local criteria to meet the needs of more at-risk children in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Provider Add-On</td>
<td>• Add-on grant (proposed at $2,500) for each slot served in a community-provider setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Must include projected number of community provider seats in May 15 VPI Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Year-Old VPI Pilot</td>
<td>• Three-year-olds may be served in same or separate classrooms from four-year-olds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This will be a pilot program. Three-year-olds will not be added to the VPI allocation formula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There will be a separate paper application due on May 15 for divisions interested in participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Addition</td>
<td>What this would mean for Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increased ratio                              | • VPI Programs that meet or exceed quality benchmarks will be permitted a 1 to 10 ratio (not to exceed 20).  
  • For 2020-21, quality benchmark will be meeting VPI Program Guidelines.                                                                                     |
| Reduce waitlists through seat reallocation   | • Indicating a waitlist on the May 15 VPI Plan may result in additional state-allocated seats.  
  • Divisions who do not project to use all of their allocated seats may have them reallocated to other divisions (seats may be no longer available after July 1, 2020)  
  • Divisions will learn results of reallocation by July 1, 2020.                                                                                           |
| Increase in in-kind                          | • Up to 50% of local match can be in-kind contributions                                                                                                                                          |
| CLASS Observations and PD                    | • All school-based preschool classrooms (VPI, Title I, ECSE, local) will receive external CLASS observations once every two years.  
  • VPI Programs should also receive two local CLASS observations  
  • All school-based preschool classrooms will be included in CASTL professional development supports.                                                 |
The VDOE will host a biweekly webinars to assist divisions in planning for the proposed revisions to VPI. Each webinar will include new information on specific topics as well as offer general Q&A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 6 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Enrollment and Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, February 21 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Community Partner Add-On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 5 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Three-Year-Old Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, March 20 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 2 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 17 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, May 1 at 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determining Eligibility in VPI
Guidelines

This document will be sent to VPI Coordinators after this webinar and contains the 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines. The document also provides information on the following:

• VA General Assembly Appropriation Act language related to student eligibility for VPI
• Poverty Levels of Income
• Definition of Family Income and What to Include
• Process for Verification of Family Income
• Using Locally Determined At-Risk Criteria
• Best Practices for Implementing a Local Eligibility Process for VPI
The Appropriation Act includes language addressing specific student eligibility criteria for participation in the state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI).

- Four-Years Old (by September 30 of school year)
- Resident of Virginia
- Unserved by Head Start
- At-risk five-year olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten.
- Family income at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines,
- Homelessness, or
- Student's parents or guardians are school dropouts, or
- Family income is above 200 percent but at or below 350 percent of federal poverty guidelines in the case of students with special needs or disabilities.
2020 Proposed Appropriation Act changes and additions, pending final approval by the General Assembly and Governor.

Three-Year-Olds Pilot

- Three-years-old (by September 30 of school year)
- Same income eligibility as for four-year-olds
- Use of locally established eligibility criteria for 15% of slots unless approved for a waiver to use more than 15%
Key Questions & Recommended Actions

Three-Year-Olds Pilot

✓ How many 3s are not being served by Head Start and/or subsidy an how can we best serve them?
✓ What would it take to offer single-age or mixed-age classrooms or both?
✓ What will it take to open new slots for at-risk 3s in 2020-2021? Note that new classrooms can be pro-rated for a portion of the first year.

• Apply for the three-year-old pilot. Three-year-old slots will be awarded in addition to divisions VPI allocated slots.
• Additional information about the pilot application will shared during the March 5 (11 a.m.) VPI Enhancements and Expansions Webinar and in a future Superintendent’s Memo.
2020 Proposed Appropriation Act changes and additions, pending final approval by the General Assembly and Governor.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities – Local VPI Proposal (Local VPI Plan)

Local VPI Plans must demonstrate a plan for supporting inclusive practices for children with identified special needs
Key Questions & Recommended Actions

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities – Local VPI Proposal (Local VPI Plan)

- During spring/summer recruitment how are children with disabilities sought after to be included in VPI classrooms?
- What barriers in your community are preventing you from increasing the number of children with disabilities who are fully included in VPI classrooms? How can they be eliminated?
- How might determining that a child’s disability status is one of your local criteria for eligibility assist with including more children with disabilities in VPI classrooms?
- How could the pilot for three-year-olds provide new opportunities for inclusive practices for three-year-olds?

- Develop a Local VPI Plan supporting inclusive practices for children with identified special needs
- Apply for the three-year-old pilot.
- Include having a identified disability as one of your local eligibility criteria.
Waiver to Increase Slots using Local Eligibility Criteria
Locally Established Eligibility Criteria Waiver

The proposed revisions enable divisions to apply for a waiver to fill more than 15% of slots using locally established eligibility criteria.

• Currently, localities can fill up to 15% of their allocated VPI slots using locally-determined eligibility criteria. This is true for all VPI Programs.
  • 4% of VPI slots are filled across the state using locally-determined criteria.
• The waiver can be requested by localities that can demonstrate that more than 15% of slots are needed to meet the needs of at-risk children in their community.
• Localities must ensure that expanding eligibility will enable the maximization of federal funds and will not have a negative impact on access for other individuals currently being served.
Localities should assess the needs of their community to determine if there are needs beyond typical VPI eligibility criteria.

There is not a limited set of rationales for local eligibility criteria. Localities should consider the unique needs of their community. Some considerations might be:

• Does your community have a particular population whose needs are not being met?
• Is your community currently using the full 15% of local eligibility criteria slots?
• Does your locality typically have VPI slots that are not being used? Are there families who would benefit from VPI based on the needs of their child?
Reasons to Apply for the Waiver

Any locality is able to submit a waiver related to their locally established eligibility criteria if a need is determined.

The option to increase the number of slots filled using local eligibility criteria might be particularly helpful for divisions that:

- Higher income level qualifies as being at-risk within your community
- A child demonstrates a special need or disability
- A family member suffers from abuse including all forms of trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences
- Single parent home
- Child is in foster care or at risk based on involvement in the child welfare system
- Child is Dual Language Learner
- A parent is incarcerated
- A parent is on military deployment
- Child is raised by relatives other than parents
**Process for the Waiver**

*Localities are encourage to complete the waiver prior to the May 15 Spring Application.*

| Release of Local Criteria Waiver Form *(early February)* | The VDOE will release the Local Criteria Waiver form via a Superintendent Memo.  
• The form will request rationale for waiver, as well as estimated number of slots that would be impacted.  
• Form will need to be signed by division superintendent. |
|---|---|
| Submit Local Criteria Waiver Form to VDOE | Mail or email signed copy of form to VDOE Office of Early Childhood.  
• Localities are strongly encouraged to submit by March 31 in order to learn results prior to May 15 Spring VPI Application. |
| Receive Notification from VDOE | VDOE will send notification to localities once the waiver has been reviewed. |
| Include Local Criteria Eligible Slots in Fall SRC | Localities will continue to indicate how many VPI state-funded slots were filled using local eligibility criteria in fall student record collection (SRC) |
Questions and Answers

Mark Allan – Mark.Allan@doe.Virginia.gov
Erin Carroll – Erin.Carroll@doe.Virginia.gov
Resources for VPI Programs

The VDOE will continue to collect resources that will be helpful to VPI Programs as they plan to expand their programs.

• **Guidelines for Student Eligibility** – These will be emailed to PreK coordinators following this webinar.

• **VPI Enhancement and Expansion FAQ** - These were emailed to PreK coordinators on Jan 29 and will be included following this webinar.

• **VPI Guidelines** – Guidelines apply to 2019-2020 school year. They will be updated early this spring for 2020-2021.

• **Recording of January 8 VPI Updates Webinar** – These slides were shared with all PreK coordinators via email.

• **Guidance for Local CLASS Observations** - Information on how to plan for and conduct local CLASS observations in preschool classrooms.