

**Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success**  
**January 15, 2015 Meeting Agenda**

- I. Welcome and Updates
- II. Briefing on the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant (VDOE Team) and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion Awards (Aleta Lawson, DSS)
- III. Presentation and Discussion of Preliminary Findings and Recommendations from Workgroups
  - a. School Readiness Workgroup
    - i. Virginia Preschool Initiative Subgroup
    - ii. Access to and Quality of Child Care and Preschool Subgroup
    - iii. Early Elementary Subgroup
  - b. Health and Well Being Workgroup
  - c. Data and Governance Workgroup
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Next Steps

**Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success**  
**January 15, 2015**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** The Honorable Ralph S. Northam, William R. Ermatinger, Margaret Schultze, Lisa Specter-Dunaway, Dr. Marissa Levine, John Purnell, Anne-Marie Twohie, The Honorable Rob Krupicka, The Honorable John Miller, Angelica D. Light, Dr. Pianta, Catherine Hancock, Selena Childress-Mayo, Karla Blasquez, Dora G. Wynn, Phyllis Mondak, Barbara Newlin, Aleta Lawson, Veronica Tate

**Welcome and Updates** – Secretary of Education, Anne Holton, and Secretary of Health, Bill Hazel, began the meeting by thanking the group for their work and providing updates on various initiatives of the Children’s Cabinet (which they co-chair) and their respective secretariats.

**Secretary Holton updates:**

- Received grant to expand Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) to thousands of new children in the Commonwealth

**Secretary Hazel updates:**

- Children’s cabinet just received a Casey Family grant to do some strategic planning, which will begin this spring
- Cross-side work/facilitation
- They are working on a number of bills related to the safety of children in VA day care facilities
- Their philosophy is focused on early interventions; to that end Dr. Levine and VA Dept of Health (VDH) thriving infant doing great work to improve health outcomes
- Their agencies are very focused on improving how they share data appropriately to define and track success

**Update from the Virginia Commission on Youth**

The Lt. Governor informed everyone that the [Council received a letter from the Commission on Youth](#) requesting that they look and quality childcare programming and professional development, the request has gone directly to the Access and Quality Subgroup.

**Presentation on Pay for Success Feasibility Grant**

Dr. Levine and Lisa Specter-Dunaway provided the group with an overview of a grant hat VDH and a Pay For Success workgroup of advocates are applying for, and for which they are seeking support from the Council. A [detailed overview of the project](#) was provided in advance to Council members, who voted unanimously to sign a [letter of support](#).

### **Presentation on Preschool Expansion Grant**

Cheryl Strobel, Associate Director of Early Childhood Education at the Virginia Department of Education, gave the group a brief update on PreK Expansion Grant which Virginia successfully competed for. She covered the details in [this overview document](#).

### **Presentation on Early Head Start Expansion Grants**

Aleta Lawson, Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office in the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Development at the Virginia Department of Social Services, informed the group that in addition to the PreK Expansion Grant, providers in Virginia received more than \$8 million federal funds in December to provide additional Head Start classrooms to more than 500 children. [The particulars are outlined in her document](#).

### **Updates from Workgroups**

The Lt. Governor asked all of the workgroups to come prepared to discuss their work thus far, preliminary recommendations, and a bit about their work for the spring.

### **School Readiness Workgroup:**

*Virginia Preschool Initiative Subgroup (John Purnell)*

- The workgroup began by surveying all members on their ideas, and has since held 3 meetings. Special thanks was given to DOE Staff, Christine Harris and Cheryl Strobel who have presented various information at each meeting to assist the workgroup.
- The workgroup has 5 preliminary recommendations:
  1. Restore funding to DOE budget for VPI site visits and technical assistance
  2. Change how funds are swept away and how nonparticipation is calculate.
  3. Given increased participation in recent years, find ways to increase whole classrooms not just individuals slots
  4. Improve formula by increasing per pupil funding or the percent of in kind a locality must provide
  5. Incentivize mixed delivery systems by better leveraging community partners

*Access to and Quality of Childcare and Preschool Subgroup (Selena Childress Mayo)*

- Thus far the group has heard presentations on VSQI and its new improvements; current regulation of family day homes; access to child care throughout VA; and the recent reauthorization of the CCDBG grants.
- Moving forward the group will be focused on defining quality in addition to making recommendations about improved access and ensuring that all childcare facilities transition students into preschool or kindergarten seamlessly.

### *Early Elementary School Subgroup (Jim Baldwin on behalf of Dr. Staples)*

- The group met once during the fall and outlined 4 specific areas of focus for its scope of work throughout the spring, for which it has 5 meetings planned:
  - Kindergarten readiness
  - Achievement gap and unmet needs in K-3
  - Coordination of services in the community
  - Defining success with specific data and outcomes

### **Health and Well Being Workgroup (Catherine Hancock):**

- The group has met twice since the last Council meeting and during that time decided that its scope would not focus on behavioral or oral health, as other efforts are underway in Virginia to focus on those. The group will consider adopting recommendations from those groups in the future.
- Thus far the group has heard presentations on the importance of prevention efforts in health care; VDH's thriving infants efforts; racial and poverty disparities and their impact on health outcomes.

### **Data and Governance Workgroup (Delegate Krupicka):**

- The group has met a number of times and has been focused on learning about what exists in Virginia now, like VLDS, and what some of the best governance practices are in other states.
- As for governance, the group is looking at realignments and lots of different models in other states, such as Georgia and Maryland. Some of the improved outcomes seen in other states include: integrated child care and educator licensing; better data sharing; conserving funding streams; etc.
- [The Delegate shared a rough outline of some of the groups considerations](#), and emphasized that these are very preliminary ideas and that the group is considering all options at this point.

### **Public Comments**

Public Comments were received from those in the audience wishing to participate. They included:

- Seon Rockwell: Business woman, mother, and volunteers with United Way Women's Leadership Council which was founded in 2008 and has since grown to 1200 members. The Council and their volunteers support our efforts and are working to ensure that all kids are healthy and well educated.
- Akua Kouyate-Tate: Senior Director of Education at Wolftrap, advocated for early learning to include the arts, as performing arts-support all level domains. [Her comments are available online.](#)



# COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON CHILDHOOD SUCCESS

[WWW.LTGOV.VIRGINIA.GOV/INI\\_CHILDHOODSUCCESS.HTM](http://WWW.LTGOV.VIRGINIA.GOV/INI_CHILDHOODSUCCESS.HTM)

**Thursday January 15, 2015**

# Agenda

- I. Welcome and Updates
  - Children’s Cabinet Co-Chairs, Secretaries Holton and Hazel
  - Commission on Youth Letter
  - Pay for Success Grant Application – Letter of Support
  
- II. Federal Grant Briefings
  - Federal Preschool Expansion Grant
  - Early Head Start Expansion Grants
  
- III. Presentation and Discussion of Preliminary Findings from Workgroups
  1. School Readiness
    - Virginia Preschool Initiative
    - Access to and Quality of Child Care and Preschool
    - Early Elementary Years
  2. Health and Well Being
  3. Data and Governance
  
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Next Steps

# Virginia Pay For Success Feasibility Grant

- The Virginia Pay for Success Council has partnered with the Department of Health to apply for grant funding to conduct a feasibility study in Virginia to utilize a “pay for success” financing model for home visiting.
- Pay for Success is an innovative way of partnering with philanthropic and private sector investors to create incentives for service providers to deliver better outcomes at lower cost—producing the highest return on taxpayer investments.
- The funding for this grant would come from Third Sector Capitol, a nonprofit technical assistance firm that received a large federal grant this fall to help interested states conduct feasibility studies.
- The applicants have asked the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success to submit a letter of support for their application.

# Federal Preschool Expansion Grant

*Presentation by Dr. Staples, Virginia Superintendent for Public Instruction*

- \$17.5 million awarded for year one, serving students during the 2015-2016 school year
- Will facilitate the development of “VPI+” a program that will be administered by the VA Department of Education and run parallel to existing VPI programs
- Classrooms participating will administer “VPI+” program with ambitious goals for children's educational and developmental outcomes . Classrooms will participate in QRIS to monitor quality, CASTL teams will provide coaching to teachers, and all will receive extensive professional development services
- Comprehensive, wrap around services will be coordinated with participating families
- Communities to be served under the grant: Brunswick, Chesterfield, Fairfax, Giles, Henrico, Petersburg, Prince William, Richmond, Sussex, Winchester

# Early Head Start Expansion Grants

*Presentation by Aleta Lawson, Head Start Collaboration Director at DSS*

- Head Start grants are awarded directly to service providers, not to the state
- Preliminary grantees include providers in Alexandria, Culpeper, Fairfax, Oakton, Roanoke, Verona and West Point and range from \$600,000 to \$2.7 million per provider (Do note, grant amounts are not yet final)
- These grants will allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families.

# Updates from Workgroups

- Workgroups are meeting in between full Council meetings to develop recommendations for the consideration by the full Council in Spring 2015
- Workgroups include interested Council members, their staff, and outside stakeholders with additional expertise
- Each workgroup is considering relevant recommendations related to data collection; professional development and workforce development; state policy changes (legislative and regulatory); and financing of programs and services

# Next Steps

- March/ April Town Halls: Northern Virginia, Richmond, Hampton Roads and Southside
- Spring Council Meeting: Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>
- Workgroups with written recommendations by Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>
- Website with meeting materials, agenda, minutes, etc:  
[www.ltgov.virginia.gov/ini\\_childhoodsuccess.htm](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/ini_childhoodsuccess.htm)
- Public comments can be submitted electronically to:  
[childhoodsuccess@ltgov.virginia.gov](mailto:childhoodsuccess@ltgov.virginia.gov)
- To be added to the Listserv and receive email updates contact Holly Coy ([holly.coy@ltgov.virginia.gov](mailto:holly.coy@ltgov.virginia.gov))



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
*Commission on Youth*

Delegate Christopher K. Peace, *Chair*  
Senator Barbara A. Favola, *Vice Chair*

General Assembly Building  
201 N. 9th Street, Suite 269  
Richmond, Virginia 23219-0406

*Executive Director*  
Amy M. Atkinson

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December 5, 2014

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
Lieutenant Governor of Virginia  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
P. O. Box 1195  
Richmond, VA 23218

Subject: Early Childhood Education – Workgroup on Quality

Dear Lieutenant Governor Northam:

I am writing regarding a legislative initiative recently conducted by the Virginia Commission on Youth. You may recall that the Commission convened the Early Childhood Education Workgroup on Quality on June 17 at the Capitol. The Workgroup brought together representatives from the General Assembly, the Executive Branch, the business community, and impacted stakeholders to investigate ways Virginia could invest in high-quality early childhood education. Attached is a copy of the Commission's Study Plan for your review.

The Workgroup identified that high-quality early childhood education is critical to success in school and to the future workforce. Investments in high-quality early education have demonstrated a \$7-10 return. In addition, there will be several opportunities over the coming year to enhance licensure and regulatory requirements in early learning. For example, the reauthorization of the federal *Child Care and Development Block Grant* (CCDBG) offers the opportunity to examine ways to link quality improvement with standards/regulations for early learning providers.

At the Commission's meeting on December 2, 2014, members, including Gubernatorial appointees, adopted a recommendation to be shared with the Executive Branch. This recommendation is outlined herein:

Request the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success to investigate the development of a child care system where all providers, including home-based providers, be required to obtain a child care license and present on its activities to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2016 General Assembly Session.

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
December 5, 2014  
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The Commission respectfully requests your careful consideration of this recommendation. Please feel free to contact me or Mrs. Amy Atkinson, Executive Director, at 804-371-2481 or [aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov](mailto:aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov), if you have any questions or if you wish to schedule a meeting to discuss this study recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher K. Peace". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Christopher K. Peace

Enclosure

cc: Holly Coy  
Amy M. Atkinson

## Data and Governance Workgroup

### Presentation and Discussion of Preliminary Findings and Recommendations:

#### I. Update on Progress and Strategy:

- Research and communication with states that have already implemented Early Childhood Education programs
  - Thus far, we have spoken with Maryland (DECD) and Georgia (DECAL)
- Other prospective states to reach out to include Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington, Colorado
- Other resources utilized: National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Virginia Longitudinal Data Systems (VLDS), Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Early Childhood Data Collaborative

#### II. Results of Preliminary Conversations:

- There are multiple approaches available:
  - Georgia: consolidation/standalone new department
  - Maryland: state-level office within existing state department (DOE)
- Data component is less clearly defined, but priorities include ensuring clear lines of communication and access to data both within and across agencies
- All are strongly enthusiastic about the benefits of alignment

#### III. Key Findings: Georgia and Maryland

- Enhanced efficiency across departments and built greater culture of education
- Improved regulatory mechanisms: able to consolidate, coordinate standards of care
- Childcare licensing and Pre-K better aligned
- Alignment supports better data sharing across agencies and departments
- More efficient uses of funding streams—cut down considerably on duplicative contracts and competition for funding
  - E.g. Georgia: Foundation partnerships are a major component; way to raise private funds to assist DECAL's priorities
- Some reorganizational costs to be expected; long-term savings from consolidation
  - E.g. Maryland fiscal impact: ~\$6m in costs with \$3.5m in net gains
- Programs included: Head Start, VPI, childcare licensing, nutrition, educational standards for Pre-K/school readiness, referrals, childcare subsidies, mental health

#### IV. Preliminary Concepts for Virginia

1. Create one agency
2. Include all relevant children's programs, including home visiting and mental health
3. Create governing board
4. Utilize private funding paths for specific program funding
5. Make sure all agencies are sharing relevant data

## Virginia Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

As announced on December 10, 2014

**Preliminary** Award Information - rolling awards, dates to begin enrollment may vary

| Service Area   | Grantee                              | Preliminary Funding | # of Children | Center Based or Family Child Care Partners |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--|
| Alexandria   | The Campagna Center, Inc.            | \$900,000           | 50            | Family Child Care                          |
| Culpeper   | Culpeper Human Services              | \$800,000           | 80            | Center-Based                               |
| Fairfax County   | Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  | \$800,000           | 56            | Center-Based and Family Child Care         |
| Oakton   | Northern Virginia Family Service     | \$1,200,000         | 72            | Center-Based                               |
| Roanoke Region to include:<br>Alleghany County<br>Covington, VA<br>Craig County<br>Giles County<br>Lexington, VA<br>Montgomery County<br>Pulaski County<br>Roanoke, VA | Total Action for Progress (TAP)      | \$2,700,000         | 156           | Center-Based                               |
| Verona (communities of Augusta and Staunton)   | Augusta County School Board          | \$600,000           | 48            | Center-Based                               |
| West Point   | Parent-Child Development Corporation | \$1,100,000         | 72            | Center-Based and Family Child Care         |
| <b>TOTAL - 15 Localities</b>   | <b>7 Grantees</b>                    | <b>\$8,100,000</b>  | <b>534</b>    |  |

January 15, 2015

Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.  
200 Clarendon St., 9th Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Re: The Virginia Pay for Success Council application to develop pay for success capabilities in Virginia

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the members of The Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, I am writing with our full support for the application submitted by the Virginia Pay for Success Council (the "VPS Council") and the Virginia Department of Health ("VDH") to Third Sector for technical assistance in exploring the potential for pay for success initiatives in Virginia. We look forward to working with Third Sector in studying the feasibility of these pay for success initiatives in Virginia.

The Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success (CCCS), which was created by Governor McAuliffe's Executive Order and which I chair, is focused on improving the health, education, and well-being of our youngest children, from prenatal through age 8. The Council consists of representatives of the following entities: Department of Education; Department of Social Services; Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services; Department of Health; programs under part B, Section 619, and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Virginia's Head Start Collaboration; the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation; local educational agencies; institutions of higher education; local providers of education and child care; local Head Start programs; the business community; and bipartisan members of the legislature.

The Council and its workgroups are now in the process of developing recommendations for improving: 1) funding for preschool, 2) kindergarten readiness, 3) strategies to close the achievement gap in early elementary years, 4) the quality and accountability of child care programs and providers, and 5) coordination of services for at-risk families.

We support the study and feasibility assessment of the initial pilot project being proposed by VDH and the VPS Council: applying PFS financing to prenatal counseling for low-income expectant woman can improve the birth outcomes for those mothers and reduce health care costs for the mothers and their babies. It is an innovative approach that we believe relevant state agencies seeking to improve both the delivery of health care services as well as the financing of governmental services ought to fully explore.

We look forward to working with the VPS Council and Third Sector Partners to study the feasibility of PFS projects in Virginia.

Sincerely,

## **The Virginia Pay for Success Council Technical Assistant Grant Application**

The Virginia Pay for Success Council (the Council), a group of dedicated business, government and non-profit leaders, and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) are filing an application for a Pay for Success (PFS) technical assistance grant. Recipients of the grant will receive technical assistance from Third Sector Capital Partners, the leader in PFS finance, in conducting a late stage, intensive feasibility study of a proposed PFS pilot project. PFS finance is an innovative public/private financing tool to fund scaling-up evidence-based interventions with no or reduced risk to the government. The pilot project we hope to study with this technical assistance focuses on scaling-up prenatal counseling to reduce infant health costs. In addition, we hope the feasibility study and pilot project can demonstrate the utility of PFS finance approaches for possible application to other Virginia government activities.

The pilot project proposes to provide pre-natal counseling through home visiting to low-income Medicaid-qualifying pregnant women in four major population areas of Virginia: the Greater Richmond Region, South Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, and the Roanoke Region. The primary goal of this pilot intervention project – and the primary metric on which outcomes and financial success would be based -- is reduced health care costs in the first year of the infant's life. Based on prior studies, the Council believes this pilot project has the potential to provide a measurable impact on desired outcomes and serve as a viable “test case” for pay for success models in Virginia.

If the application is successful, the Commonwealth proposes to form a PFS working group to support this feasibility study. The working group would be comprised of representatives of the Children's Cabinet, the Secretariat of Health and Human Resources, the Secretariat of Commerce and Trade, the Secretariat of Finance, VDH and the Department of Medical Assistance Services. This working group will work closely with the Council and Third Sector in making sure the appropriate constituents are included and heard, and proper assistance is provided, on behalf of the Commonwealth through the feasibility study phase and, if viable, implementation of the pilot program.

The Council has already secured confirmation of a \$25,000 matching grant from the Robins Foundation and is in active conversations with other private foundations as well. The Virginia Chamber has been fully briefed, is supporting the application and is looking for ways to help in the feasibility study and implementation. The VCHI has committed to considering whether this prenatal counseling PFS Project could serve as a sustainability model to be evaluated under the recently awarded \$2.6 million federal grant for developing a new statewide healthcare plan. There is great potential for this PFS Project to be complementary to and yield efficiencies with the VCHI grant work.



Preschool Development Grants

# Expansion Grants

## GRANTEE ABSTRACT

# Virginia

## Overview

Virginia has developed a bold and innovative plan for transforming its existing State Preschool Program into a national exemplar through adoption of highly effective best practices to improve quality, access, and impact in High Need Communities.

Building from the successful Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) that has supported the school readiness of at-risk four-year-olds since 1996, Virginia will create a more comprehensive and effective State Preschool Program called *VPI Plus* (VPI+). VPI+ will meet or exceed every element of the definition of a High Quality Preschool Program and will be implemented through a mixed delivery system. By the end of the grant term, 3,179 four-year-olds at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line will be served annually through VPI+ in eleven local school divisions.

These Subgrantees represent the geographic and demographic diversity of the Commonwealth, allowing us to field test and refine VPI+ innovations throughout Virginia to ensure uniform high quality, appropriate flexibility tailored to local circumstances, and broad replicability.

## *Project Objectives and Activities*

Increase access to High Quality Preschool.

- VPI+ will establish 88 new classrooms in Year 1, increasing to nearly 100

### **Lead Agency**

Virginia Department of Education

### **Year 1 Federal Award Amount**

\$ 17,500,000

### **Plan Period**

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2018

**Preschool Development Grants** will support states to build, develop, and expand voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families.

There are two types of grants.

**Development Grants** are for states that currently serve less than 10 percent of four-year-olds and have not received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant.

**Expansion Grants** are for states that currently serve 10 percent or more of four-year-olds or have received an RTT-ELC grant.

classrooms by Year 4 (serving more than 1,200 students in Year 1, increasing to 1,669 students by Year 4) using a model that enhances quality in three ways: installs rigorous, research-tested professional development and curriculum to ensure teacher effectiveness and classroom quality; fosters broad community partnerships to ensure more systematic provision of Comprehensive Services to support low-income four-year-olds and their families; and creates effective pathways to fully engage parents and families, especially those who are hard-to-reach and culturally and linguistically diverse.

Increase the number of High-Quality Preschool Programs

- Virginia will improve the quality of 96 existing classrooms serving 1,470 students annually in diverse settings. With grant support, Subgrantees will extend VPI+ best practices to existing classrooms within their division and use community partnerships to expand high quality practices to non-school programs.

Strengthen the statewide infrastructure supporting the State Preschool Program.

- Virginia will improve its Longitudinal Data System; expand its continuous quality improvement system; systematize the use of formative and summative assessment tools; ensure rigorous evaluation; and build a higher caliber pre-service and in-service training and credentialing system to ensure a cadre of highly competent early educators for Virginia's Preschool children.

Pursue policy changes to promote statewide improvements to standards, practice and access.

- The Preschool Expansion Grant will enable Virginia to test, refine, and expand High Quality
- Preschool programs statewide, with a priority on improving state policy to expand access, particularly in High Need Communities.

*Proposed Project Outcomes*

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Some of the measurable outcomes to be achieved include:

- Measurable improvements in children's outcomes, including school readiness.
- A 17 percent increase in the number of slots available in High Quality Preschool Programs.
- A 15 percent reduction in the number of unserved at-risk four-year-olds in VPI+ divisions.

- Demonstrable progress toward a more robust mixed delivery system through measurable increases in the percentage of High Quality classrooms located in non-public school settings.
- Improved policies expanding access, quality and support for State Preschool Programs.

*Collaborating Organizations*

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The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the lead agency for VPI+. VDOE and the eleven Subgrantees will work in close partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) and its statewide Smart Beginnings network of local public-private school readiness partnerships. These local networks will be instrumental in fostering enhanced Comprehensive Services in all settings, effective strategies to more fully engage families, and through the TQRIS, a sound framework for continuous program quality improvement for VPI+.

Virginia's ambitious and achievable plan counts on partnership with the University of Virginia's Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) – arguably the nation's most prestigious applied research center focused on early education teacher effectiveness and classroom quality. CASTL will guide all professional development and classroom improvement methods with the Subgrantees, including the provision of research-based coaching techniques that have successfully improved teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Drawing on Virginia's unique assets, from CASTL's highly focused research, to our cutting edge, rigorous TQRIS, to our nationally recognized public-private network of local Smart Beginnings, VPI+ will harness these partnerships to build a "first in class" Preschool Program. VPI+ will be

accessible to and supportive of families, staffed by a highly-skilled cadre of teachers who are part of a vibrant statewide learning community, and sustainable in Virginia's diverse High-Needs Communities, creating a strong pathway for Virginia's preschool success.

| <b>High Need Communities to be served under Virginia's Plan</b> |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Brunswick</b>  | <b>Petersburg</b>     |
| <b>Chesterfield</b>   | <b>Prince William</b> |
| <b>Fairfax</b>  | <b>Richmond</b>       |
| <b>Giles</b>  | <b>Sussex</b>         |
| <b>Henrico</b>  | <b>Winchester</b>     |
| <b>Norfolk</b>  |                       |



# **WOLF TRAP**

FOUNDATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**Testimony of Akua F. Kouyate-Tate, Senior Director, Education  
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts  
Before the  
Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success  
Richmond, Virginia**

**January 15, 2015**

Good afternoon Lt. Governor Northam and Members of the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, I am Akua Kouyate-Tate, Senior Director, Education at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. I am pleased to be here to share the experience of Wolf Trap and its Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts. Across the nation, but especially here in the Commonwealth, Wolf Trap uses the performing arts to provide early childhood education, professional development for teachers, and parent training. Wolf Trap Foundation is a nonprofit organization that produces and presents a full range of performance and education programs in Northern Virginia as well as nationally reaching over 400,000 people of all ages in 30 states.

We applaud the Governor for establishing the Children's Cabinet and the Council, specifically placing priority on early childhood issues in this Administration. Wolf Trap agrees that expanding access to high quality early childhood education is critical to workforce development and the future of the Commonwealth and the country's success in a global economy as the Governor emphasized in his State of the Commonwealth. Through the years, we have worked with the US Department of Education, the Virginia Departments of Education and Social Services, county school districts, early childhood professional organization including Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children and Virginia Head Start Association, members of the General Assembly, and many organizations represented on the Council and the Workgroups. We were pleased to testify before the House Appropriations Committee last year about our arts integration programs at the invitation of Delegates Tag Greason and Rosalyn Dance. We welcome the opportunity to assist with your efforts to develop recommendations for opportunities and areas of improvement of statewide programs in any way that we can.

We strongly recommend that arts integration be included as a highly effective strategy to increase quality of early childhood education including kindergarten readiness in the Council's final report to the Governor.

Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts provides effective arts-integrated direct services to children while supporting systemic change through innovative, relevant professional development. The performing arts are effective in teaching children of multiple learning styles, supporting all developmental domains, and providing the foundation for all future learning. At the forefront of educational thinking and practice since 1981, Wolf Trap Institute coaches teachers in using active, arts-integrated learning techniques in the classroom, while simultaneously providing quality performing arts experiences for children birth to five. Since the beginning teachers, children and their parents throughout the Commonwealth -- as far east as Accomack and Northampton counties, west in Washington county, south in Halifax county and the Tidewater



areas and throughout northern Virginia- have benefited from Wolf Trap Institute's model of arts-integrated active learning as a means to enhance young children's school readiness. In 2013-14 school year alone, Wolf Trap Institute provided educational services to 4,372 children with a total of 18,152 contact hours, and 3,130 adults (educators and parents) for a total of 11,300 contact hours of arts education focused on ensuring young children's success and readiness.

Independent research of the Wolf Trap model, research from the arts education and early childhood fields, and Wolf Trap Institute's over 30 years of experience, confirm that the infusion of performing arts strategies in instruction aids significantly in developing children's skills across curriculum content and supports education standards (including Virginia's Standards of Learning and Foundation Blocks for Early Learning and Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework). The performing arts provides powerful teaching tools that enhance all areas of development including language and literacy, social/emotional growth, health and wellness, STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as well as 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills of critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

Wolf Trap's early childhood programs are measurably impacting student achievement: newly completed, federally funded research shows that children participating in Wolf Trap programs show significant advances in math achievement as compared to their peers. Additionally, this third-party evaluation confirmed that Wolf Trap's approach demonstrated all features of effective professional development for teachers. We will share this research with the Council and hope you will find it helpful in your efforts.

In addition to today's testimony, we are submitting for the record a copy of our comments to the White House Summit on Early Childhood Education convened in December 2014 which outlines the research in the field of arts integration.

In conclusion, Wolf Trap Foundation is honored to share our experience in early childhood education and to urge the Council to include arts integration as a highly effective strategy to increase quality of early childhood education including kindergarten readiness in the Council's final report to the Governor.



## Arts as the Great Equalizer in Early Childhood Education

Commitment for Action  
for the White House Summit on Early Childhood Education  
Convened December 10, 2014

Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts provides effective arts-integrated direct services to children while supporting systemic change through innovative, relevant professional development. The performing arts are effective in teaching children of multiple learning styles, supporting all developmental domains, and providing the foundation for all future learning. At the forefront of educational thinking and practice since 1981, Wolf Trap Institute coaches teachers in using active, arts-integrated learning techniques in the classroom, while simultaneously providing quality performing arts experiences for children birth to five.

Independent research of the Wolf Trap model, research from the arts education and early childhood fields, and Wolf Trap Institute's over 30 years of experience, confirms that the infusion of performing arts strategies into curriculum content and standards (including Common Core State Standards) provides powerful teaching tools that enhance all areas of development including language and literacy, social/emotional growth, health and wellness, STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as well as 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills of critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

The Wolf Trap Institute addresses two primary concerns:

- 1.) The school readiness of children who live in economically disadvantaged circumstances, and
- 2.) Access to effective professional development for teachers who work with these children.

### Promoting Innovation in Early Education

Wolf Trap's arts integrated approach fosters children's excitement and cultivates their natural curiosity about STEM subjects, increases children's language and emergent literacy and promotes health and wellness. Research in early childhood mathematics has demonstrated a causal link between professional development in mathematics and positive child outcomes (Clements and Sarama, 2007, 2008). Research also confirms that young children are able to learn STEM concepts as the brain is particularly receptive to learning math and logic between the ages of 1 and 4, and that early math skills are the strongest predictor of later academic success. A study found that at kindergarten entry, "early math concepts, such as knowledge of numbers and ordinality, were the most powerful predictors of later learning" (Duncan et al., 2007). Recent research of the Wolf Trap Early Childhood STEM Learning Through the Arts (Early STEM/Arts) program indicates that Wolf Trap's model of performing arts-integrated instruction in pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms demonstrated significant impact on young children's math learning. Wolf Trap received a 4-year grant from the US Department of Education to develop and implement Early STEM/Arts in a public school district and conduct a research study of the program. In the scientifically-based study performed by American Institutes for Research (AIR, 2014), schools were randomly selected with early childhood classrooms identified as treatment and controlled groups. The AIR study results show that *children in classrooms participating in Wolf Trap Early STEM/Arts programs scored significantly better* on the Early Math Diagnostic Assessment – a nationally validated mathematics assessment tool— than their peers in the comparison classrooms who did not participate in the program.



# WOLF TRAP

FOUNDATION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

## **Building the Skills of the Early Learning Workforce**

The National Academy of Sciences' study, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*, notes that the professional development of teachers is correlated with the quality of early childhood programs, and the quality of professional development predicts developmental outcomes for children – yet schools continue to lose funds for professional development. By emphasizing professional development for early childhood educators, Wolf Trap builds the skills of the early learning workforce. AIR measured Wolf Trap's model against the six features of quality professional development (PD) and the report confirms *the Wolf Trap model provides high quality PD for educators* by thoroughly integrating the six features: form, duration, collective participation, content, active learning, and coherence. The evaluation team also measured the fidelity of the Wolf Trap model, confirming that the Wolf Trap model is indeed implemented with fidelity, meaning the elements of quality PD are delivered as intended. Wolf Trap's impact on children's learning is multiplied exponentially as these teachers use Institute models and strategies throughout their careers.

## **Enriching Early Education Experiences through the Arts – Language and Literacy**

A 2006 independent study showed that preschool *children who participated in a Wolf Trap Institute arts-integrated residency program, Fairfax Pages, scored significantly higher on standardized tests measuring six key areas: initiative, social relations, creative representation, language and literacy, logic and mathematics, and movement and music*. Children were assessed before and after implementation of Wolf Trap's program using the standardized, nationally validated Child Observation Record (COR), an observational assessment tool designed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation and implemented in Fairfax County Public Schools and early childhood programs administered by the Fairfax County Office for Children. (Klayman, 2006)

## **Enriching Early Education Experiences through the Arts – Health and Wellness**

*The naturally stimulating combination of music and movement experiences has an impact on healthy physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and language development skills in infants and toddlers*. Developed by Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts for Little Voices For Healthy Choices, A National Initiative for Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) administered by the Early Head Start National Resource Center (EHS NRC) at Zero to Three, Wolf Trap Teaching Artists share dynamic, creative, developmentally appropriate movement and music experiences to be used in the home, day care and classroom setting. Wolf Trap Teaching Artists lead three hour Professional Development Workshops for early childhood educators and customized in-depth multi-session residencies designed to provide young children ages three months to three years old and their parents, caregivers, and teachers with early childhood music, drama, and movement activities aimed at supporting child development. Participants in Wolf Trap's health and wellness focused programs learn about the inherent connection that music and movement have in infant and toddler development and explore opportunities to apply these sensory experiences in the everyday routines of the classroom and home settings.

## **Commitment to Action – Partnerships**

Wolf Trap Institute programs of direct instruction for children and professional development for early childhood educators have been replicated and are available at Wolf Trap National Affiliates in 17 cities throughout the US. As a part of Wolf Trap's recent Early STEM/Arts dissemination efforts to support children's learning nationwide, all Wolf Trap National Affiliates are now able to conduct Early STEM/Arts classroom residencies and teacher professional development in schools districts and early children centers in their states. Additionally, Wolf Trap has received major support from STEM industry corporations including Northrop Grumman Foundation, Boeing, Batelle, USAA, Telos and others to partner in early childhood classrooms throughout the US.



For additional information about partnering with Wolf Trap to provide Early STEM/Arts in your communities, call: Akua F. Kouyate-Tate, Senior Director, Education (703-255-1933) or email: [education@wolftrap.org](mailto:education@wolftrap.org).