# Superintendent’s Memo #066-19


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 22, 2019

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Early Childhood Quality Grant – Seeking Forward Thinking Partners to Begin Implementation**

As part of a broader statewide effort to unify early childhood – including Pre-K, Head Start, and child care – Virginia is focusing on measuring and strengthening classroom interactions in 2019-2020 and beyond. Young learners who benefit from high quality classroom interactions and instruction are more likely to enter kindergarten ready, putting them on track for success in school and beyond.

To support Pre-K classrooms, the 2018 Virginia General Assembly appropriated funds through the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to the University of Virginia (UVA) to ensure that all Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) classrooms are observed at least every two years by external observers with the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS®) tool and receive feedback as well as aligned professional development and training on the quality of their teacher-child interactions.

To support opportunities for increasing the quality of teacher-child interactions in VPI and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classrooms, the VDOE is pleased to announce the Early Childhood Quality Grant. This grant provides selected forward-thinking school divisions with funds to build local capacity to conduct CLASS® observations by local observers two times a year and who will also provide targeted feedback to teachers resulting in continuous improvement of teacher-child interactions.

School divisions applying for this grant are to target quality improvements and implementation of the CLASS® in both VPI classrooms **and** classrooms where children with IEPs receive services, including regular early childhood programs and self-contained classrooms.

This grant is for those school divisions which are:

* Committed and ready to conduct local CLASS® observations two-times a year for measuring teacher-child interactions during the 2019-2020 school year in all VPI classrooms and ECSE classrooms.
* Prepared to provide professional development/coaching to teachers and instructional assistants (VPI & ECSE) on CLASS® domains/dimensions.

Forward-thinking school divisions interested in applying for an Early Childhood Quality Grant must complete the Grant Application (Attachment A) and the Excel Budget Template (Attachment B) **by 4 p.m. on Friday, May 3, 2019. The application must be emailed to Laura Heath, Executive Secretary, Office of Early Childhood, at** **Laura.Heath@ doe.virginia.gov****.**

All interested school divisions are strongly encouraged to have the division-level grant application contact attend one of two Early Childhood Quality Grant Application Webinars being offered on the dates provided below. Additional information and technical assistance will be provided on the grant application and budget template with an opportunity for questions. For those who cannot attend a live webinar, one of the grant webinars will be recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to all VPI and ECSE Coordinators.

* [Early Childhood Quality Grant Webinar Option One](https://vdoe.adobeconnect.com/qeccgrant/): Monday, April 1, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
* [Early Childhood Quality Grant Webinar Option Two](https://vdoe.adobeconnect.com/qeccgrant/): Monday, April 8, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Meeting Room Number: 9253732

Webinar Phone Number: +1-800-832-0736

If you have questions about the Early Childhood Quality Grant related to VPI, please contact Dr. Mark R. Allan, Early Childhood Education Project Manager, Office of Early Childhood, by email at Mark.Allan@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-225-3665. If you have questions regarding the Early Childhood Quality Grant related to ESCE, please contact Dr. Dawn Hendricks, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, by email at Dawn.Hendricks@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804-225-2675.

JFL/MRA/lh

Attachments:

1. [Early Childhood Quality Grant Application](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2019/066-19a.docx) (Word)
2. [Early Childhood Quality Grant Budget Template](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2019/066-19b.xlsx) (Excel)