| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: J

## Date: April 22, 2021

### Title: First Review of Revised *Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System*

#### Presenter: Ms. Jenna Conway, Chief School Readiness Officer

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Executive Summary:
Section [§22.1-289.05](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter14.1/section22.1-289.05/) of the *Code of Virginia* directs the Board of Education to establish a unified quality rating and improvement system for all publicly-funded early childhood providers in order to improve school readiness in the Commonwealth. To provide all Virginia children with equitable opportunity, Virginia should establish a measurement and improvement system that ensures all children have access to quality teaching and learning experiences that meet their unique needs.

The law requires the Board to establish the new system by July 1, 2021, with initial results to be published in fall 2024. The first two years of the new system will be practice-only so that educators - including those in all school-based preschool, Head Start/Early Head Start, and publicly-funded child care and family day homes - can learn the new system.

The *Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System* describes the guidelines and protocols for Practice Year 1 (2021-2022) of the Unified Measurement and Improvement System.

Virginia’s Unified Measurement and Improvement System will support continuous quality improvement in all publicly-funded early childhood programs, which generally prioritize underserved children, including children in low-income households, children with disabilities, children who are Dual Language Learners and children who face other challenges. Programs that do not receive public funding will have the option to participate.

In Practice Year 1, the Unified Measurement and Improvement System will utilize two nationally recognized quality standards to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in publicly funded birth-to-five programs.

* Through measurement of the quality of teacher-child interactions, using a nationally recognized and verified tool, educators will receive frequent feedback on strategies to support learning and growth for all children.
* Through the use of a quality curriculum, educators in early childhood programs will be supported to access quality instructional materials as a foundational step in developing a comprehensive, culturally-responsive, learning environment.

Through measurement and frequent feedback, the unified system will identify and intervene where needed, dedicating targeted culturally-responsive supports, intervention, and state resources to support improvement in programs and classrooms where it is most critical. Improvement resources will be targeted toward programs with fewer resources, including a focus on child care and family day homes.

The proposal was developed in consultation with early childhood educators, researchers, educational leaders, and subject matter experts. The VDOE has conducted extensive stakeholder engagement, including two public webinars, with over 2000 views, as well as 30+ presentations and listening sessions with educators and leaders from around the state. VDOE also received over 300 responses via online feedback surveys. The feedback received through this engagement informed the development of the proposal for Practice Year 1.

The VDOE received an endorsement with recommendations from the Early Childhood Advisory Committee for the proposed guidelines. The 22 member committee convened for a three hour discussion of the proposal on March 24, 2021 and provided the following recommendations:

1. Provide additional guidance around how programs will be supported to improve;
2. Include family engagement in guiding principles; and
3. Include improvement practices for children with disabilities or children in inclusive classrooms.

All of these recommendations have been fully incorporated into the guidelines presented to the Board for first review.

This item supports Priority 1 of the Board’s Comprehensive Plan to provide high-quality learning environments for all students by providing a framework to measure and improve the quality of early learning experiences.

## Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:

## June 17, 2021

## Superintendent’s Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends the Board of Education receive for first review the *Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System*.

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:
The Board of Education is required to establish a uniform quality rating and improvement system by July 1, 2021 as required by [§22.1-289.05](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter14.1/section22.1-289.05/) of the *Code*. The system must result in ratings for the public no later than July 1, 2024.

**§ 22.1-289.05. (Effective July 1, 2021) Quality rating and improvement system; establishment.**

A. The Board shall establish a uniform quality rating and improvement system designed to provide parents and families with information about the quality and availability of publicly funded providers. Such system shall include:

1. Service provision and performance targets for children from birth to age five that align with standards for kindergarten readiness and early elementary grades;

2. Consistent quality standards;

3. Outcome-based measurements; and

4. Incentives to encourage participation and improvement.

B. All publicly funded providers shall be required to participate in the quality rating and improvement system established pursuant to subsection A. All other child day programs may participate in such system. Any participation in such system shall comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations, including the federal Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. § 9801 et seq.), as amended, and associated regulations.

C. The Board shall establish consequences for publicly funded providers that fail to participate in the quality rating and improvement system established pursuant to subsection A or persistently fail to meet minimal quality standards.

This requirement is one component of the broader charge to the Board to strengthen the early childhood and education system by supporting the development of one unified public-private system for early childhood care and education that ensures that every child has the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

This legislative directive is the result of years of collaborative, bipartisan efforts to strengthen Virginia’s early childhood system. Through joint efforts across the general assembly, stakeholders, and local and state leaders, Virginia has taken many steps to prepare in building a more unified early childhood system that is grounded in local early childhood networks.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:
The *Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System* will be submitted to the Board of Education for final review on June 17, 2021.Upon Board approval, and any technical or editorial edits by Department staff, the *Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System*will be submitted to Town Hall pursuant to the Administrative Process Act, shared via the Virginia Department of Education website, related newsletters, and via webinar or training series. The Department will provide frequent updates and technical assistance to communities participating in Practice Year 1 via weekly office hours and technical assistance meetings.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The Virginia Department of Education’s existing resources supported the development of the proposed guidelines. Any costs associated with the dissemination, training, or implementation related to the guidelines for Practice Year 1 will be supported through federal Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five funding, as has the costs incurred thus far.