



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

DATE: September 7, 2018

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: *Showcase PreK in VA* Pilot Program**

**Introduction**

In 2014, Virginia received a federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to improve access to high-quality preschool opportunities in high-need communities across the Commonwealth in a program known as [VPI Plus \(VPI+\)](#). The participating 13 VPI+ divisions have focused on a number of high-quality system improvements, including the implementation of an evidence-based curriculum, coaching models, family engagement efforts, and more.

**Pilot Program Overview**

This pilot program, known as *Showcase PreK in VA*, is a unique opportunity for selected VPI+ programs to share promising practices in a particular learning focus area and to foster collaborative learning networks across the Commonwealth.

This is *not about "perfection," it's about reflection*—creating the opportunity for educators and leaders to engage meaningfully around a promising practice in the same time and space—a logistical challenge that is a real rarity, especially in early childhood. It's about acknowledging that often, in getting educators together, *"the answer is in the room."*

**Visitors to a Showcase day can expect:**

- A day of interactive professional development experiences (including guided tours and hands-on activities) so they can *know, see, do, and reflect* on promising practices.
- To hear from program leaders and early childhood teachers about steps they've taken to implement and refine practices and conditions that help at-risk students thrive.
- Time to plan for implementing relevant elements in their own home programs.
- Access to curated artifacts and resources to clarify practices and provide support for implementation.
- 

**Who might benefit?**

Intended visiting audiences include early childhood teachers in public and private settings, principals, elementary directors, curriculum and instruction leaders, special education directors, school superintendents, policy makers, and other community stakeholders.

### **Visitor expectations**

In addition to attending a Showcase event prepared to engage and connect with other early childhood professionals, we will ask visitors to:

- Plan to provide feedback on the experience via surveys and possibly interviews;
- Create a short reflective product following the visit, capturing their learning takeaways, that can be used and shared by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and its VPI+ partners. Details to follow, but minimal time commitment (less than 30 minutes).

### **Registration process**

Space is limited and slots are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis until all participant spaces are filled. Note that each visit is a stand-alone opportunity, not a cumulative training. Thus register for one date, as content and activities will be repeated three times. Please register for no more than 2 events, so we can accommodate the maximum number of visitors. Waitlists will also be formed once slots are full. While each person must register separately, we invite school, division, community-based, and cross-sector teams to coordinate and attend a common event together. To see all options for Showcase visits and to register, view the [Showcase PreK in VA Visit Dates for 2018-2019 schedule](#).

### **Meals**

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to visitors.

### **Travel Expenses**

School divisions are encouraged to cover participants' travel expenses (e.g., mileage, lodging if applicable) based on state travel rates. The VDOE will not provide reimbursement for participants' travel expenses.

### **Contact**

Questions regarding the registration process, waitlists, and cancellations should be directed to Laura Heath, Administrative Support for VPI+, via email at [Laura.Heath@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Laura.Heath@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 225-3717. Questions regarding the pilot program should be directed to Dr. Laura Kassner, VPI+ State Coordinator, via email at [Laura.Kassner@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Laura.Kassner@doe.virginia.gov) or by telephone at (804) 225-3394.