# Agenda Item: L

## Date: April 20, 2023

### Title: First Review of *Guidelines for 2023-2024 of the Early Childhood*

### *Unified Measurement and Improvement System (VQB5)*

#### Presenter: Ms. Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent, Division of Early

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Executive Summary:**

Section [22.1-289.03](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter14.1/section22.1-289.03/) of the Code of Virginia directs the Board of Education to establish a unified quality rating and improvement system for all publicly-funded birth-to-five providers in order to improve school readiness outcomes. Further, [Chapter 446](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?212+ful+CHAP0446) of the Virginia Acts of the Assembly 2021 Special Session I requires the following:

11. That, notwithstanding the provisions of the third enactment of this act, the establishment and implementation of the quality rating and improvement system described in § 22.1-289.05 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, shall occur as follows: (i) the Board of Education shall establish such quality rating and improvement system no later than July 1, 2021, (ii) publicly-funded providers may participate in the quality rating and improvement system beginning in the 2021–2022 school year and shall participate in the quality rating and improvement system beginning in the 2023–2024 school year, and (iii) the initial quality ratings shall be published in the fall of 2024.

In June 2021, the Board of Education fulfilled the expectation for establishing a quality rating and improvement system by approving the Guidelines for Practice Year 1 of Virginia’s Unified Measurement and Improvement System, known as VQB5. These guidelines were updated a second time in June 2022, with the Board of Education approving Guidelines for Year 2 of VQB5.

Beginning in fall 2023, all Virginia’s publicly-funded birth-to-five programs, which includes school-based preschool, Head Start/Early Head Start, and child care subsidy participating child care and family day homes, will be required to participate in VQB5. This includes approximately 3,600 schools, child care and family day home programs with 12,000 classrooms. Quality profiles that include rating information from the 2023-2024 participation year will be published via a family-friendly website in fall 2024.

The 2023-2024 VQB5 Guidelines largely reflect similar expectations and protocols for program measurement and improvement as compared to prior years. There are slight shifts based on the learnings from the two practice years for VQB5, in which more than 70% of publicly-funded programs have participated. The proposed guidelines set forth strategies to improve the quality of early childhood care and education to ensure all of Virginia’s youngest learners have the opportunity to enter school ready.

As in prior years, VQB5 measures the quality of infant, toddler, and preschool teaching and learning based on two nationally recognized quality indicators: interactions and curriculum.

* **Interactions -** This indicator measures the quality of teacher-child interactions and instruction in a developmentally-appropriate way, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). All children benefit socially and academically from being in classrooms with high quality teacher-child interactions, including children from diverse settings, dual language learners (DLLs), and children with special needs.[[1]](#footnote-2)
* **Curriculum** - This indicator measures the use of a comprehensive curriculum in alignment with Virginia’s early learning and development standards to ensure that all areas of learning and development are being covered in developmentally-appropriate ways. This standard will also help ensure that early childhood programs have curricula that provide guidance on how to individualize instruction based on needs, including children with disabilities, suspected delays, or other special needs.

The 2023-2024 Guidelines specify which sites are legislatively required to participate, explain the key activities that participating sites must complete, and outlines the consequences for refusal to participate. The 2023-2024 Guidelines also provide updates to the approved curriculum options, external CLASS observation expectations and protocols, improvement supports, and formal review processes. Finally, the 2023-2024 Guidelines provide a detailed timeline for the development of the VQB5 quality profiles, including plans to engage families, stakeholders and practitioners prior to the public posting of quality profile results in the fall of 2024.

The VDOE received a full endorsement from the Early Childhood Advisory Committee for the proposed 2023-2024 VQB5 Guidelines. The 22-member committee convened for an in-depth discussion and review of the proposal on March 16, 2023.

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 the Board’s meeting on June 15, 2023.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends the Board receive for first review the *2023-2024 Guidelines for the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System (VQB5)*.

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 2023-2024 *Guidelines for the Early Childhood Unified Measurement and Improvement System (VQB5)* will be submitted to the Board of Education for final review on June 15, 2023. Following Board approval, the Guidelines will be submitted to Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period, pursuant to the Administrative Process Act.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The VDOE’s existing resources supported the development of the proposed guidelines. Any costs associated with the dissemination, training, or implementation related to the guidelines for 2023-2024 will be supported through federal Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five funding, and funding from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). Some State General Funds are projected to be used to support External Classroom Observations.

1. Teachstone Training, LLC. (2020). *Research Validating CLASS® with Child Outcomes across Diverse Populations of Children*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)