COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: April 21, 2023

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Web-based Data Collection and Application Requirements for Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024)

The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) provides programs for preschool children that have been identified as at-risk and are eligible based on the criteria established in the state budget. This memo provides the updated requirements for VPI for Fiscal Year 2024. The VPI application for 2023-2024 is now available and is due on **May 15, 2023**.

Through a focus on advancing effective interactions and instruction, VPI programs help to ensure Virginia children enter school fully prepared for success. As of fall 2023, VPI programs must participate in the Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5), Virginia's unified measurement and improvement system. All VPI programs must provide services the entire school year and must operate on a half-day or full-day schedule. Programs operating half-day will receive funds prorated at 50 percent. The VPI Guidelines are being revised to reflect the program requirements for VPI in 2023-2024. Divisions should review the updated VPI Guidelines before submitting their VPI application.

VPI Application and Data Submission - Due May 15, 2023

School divisions must submit the VPI application accessed through VDOE's Single Sign-On Web Systems (SSWS) portal. Access to the VPI application in the SSWS portal should be requested through the school division's SSWS account manager. The VPI application collects

budget and program summary information for serving 4-year-olds and for requesting 3-year-old slots in 2023-2024. A local plan for serving VPI eligible children and families must be completed within the application. Instructions are available in Attachment A.

All school divisions, regardless of participation, must submit required data in the VPI application in SSWS and the division superintendent must certify electronically that the data are correct. For the number of state-allocated VPI slots for 4-year-olds for your division, please see FY24 (2023-2024 School Year) VPI Slots Initial Allocation by Division. All divisions may apply for VPI 4-year-olds regardless of state allocation (see information in Wait List and Reallocating Slots below). If final state budget actions for Fiscal Year 2024 affect division VPI eligibility, updated information will be provided when it becomes available.

The VPI application must be electronically approved and certified by the division superintendent through the Superintendent's Data Collection Approvals (SDCA) in SSWS. The SDCA will automatically be available to school division superintendents through SSWS. For superintendents, SDCA will automatically launch upon SSWS login. However, for designees, SDCA will function just as any other SSWS application functions with a selection being required from the main system menu.

VPI 3-Year-Olds

A separate application section for divisions interested in applying for VPI 3-year-olds is included within the spring VPI application due on May 15. All divisions are eligible to apply to serve VPI 3-year-olds. VPI 3-year-olds follow the same VPI Guidelines and are funded at the same state per-pupil rate as slots for 4-year-olds, including the same local match. Slots for serving 3-year-olds are not guaranteed. Slots for serving 3-year-olds are not included in the 2023-2024 projected VPI slots; they are above and beyond the initially allocated number of VPI slots for 4-year-olds. Divisions may request 3-year-olds slots regardless of participation in VPI 4-year-olds slots. Divisions that apply to serve 3-year-olds will be notified of the outcome of their request by July 1, 2023. More information on 3-year-olds slots can be found in the VPI Guidelines.

Funding Overview

Per Pupil Funding

It is anticipated that Fiscal Year 2024 state funds for the program will be distributed based on an allocation formula providing the state share based on each division's composite index capped at 0.5000 of the VPI per pupil rate per child for 100 percent of the estimated unserved at-risk 4-year-olds in each locality as projected by the VDOE. The proposed budget language for Fiscal Year 2024 states that the VPI per pupil rate will be:

- For Planning District Eight localities, grants shall be distributed based on an allocation formula providing the state share of $8,989 per pupil. For the counties of Stafford, Fauquier, Spotsylvania, Clarke, Warren, Frederick, and Culpeper and the Cities of Fredericksburg and Winchester, grants shall be distributed based on an allocation formula providing the state share of $8,516 per pupil.
- For all other localities, grants shall be distributed based on an allocation formula providing the state share of $8,359 per pupil.

The projected local distribution of state funds for each locality for school year 2023-2024 is included in the "Budget Calculator" section of the VPI application in SSWS. This section provides the estimated formula-driven entitlement available to each locality. If the locality chooses to serve fewer children than the total number allocated by formula, insert the local projected number of children to be served in the calculator in the "Local Projection" fields. The projected state and local shares of cost will automatically be recomputed for your information.

Local Match

A local match based on the composite index is required. The local match may be up to 50 percent in-kind contributions. The local match required for each locality is based on the locality's composite index and the locality's VPI per pupil rate.

Funding for VPI Slots Filled After October 1, 2023

The opportunity to request to fill VPI slots following the fall Student Record Collection (SRC) is anticipated to be available for school year 2023-2024. Following the 2023 fall SRC, which

counts enrollment as of October 1, the current budget language would enable school divisions to request access to a late enrollment application. The late enrollment application would enable divisions to receive prorated funding for VPI 3- and 4-year-old slots filled for the first time between October 1 and December 31.

Serving 5-Year-Olds

The current budget language extends the ability of VPI programs to serve students who are kindergarten age eligible. The budget language states VPI programs may serve at-risk 5-year-olds who "who are not eligible to attend kindergarten, or who did not have access to a sufficient preschool experience and whose families request preschool as the most appropriate placement." Additional guidance can be found in the VPI Guidelines.

Eligibility for Children with Disabilities

Budget language includes eligibility for children with disabilities or delays who are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, regardless of household income. This is in addition to the typical eligibility criteria.

Wait Lists and Reallocating Slots

School divisions committed to filling 100 percent of VPI allocated slots and school divisions who were not allocated VPI slots may indicate an interest in serving more VPI eligible 4-year-olds during 2023-2024 in their spring application. Divisions should include the estimated number of additional VPI eligible 4-year-olds they are committed to serving as a reported wait list in the 2023-2024 VPI application. Slots may be redistributed to these divisions from divisions not planning to fill all their 2023-2024 slots. Redistribution of any slots will be determined by VDOE after all VPI applications have been received. VDOE will notify school divisions by July 1, 2023, if their VPI slot allocation has changed (either increased or decreased) as a result of reallocating unused VPI slots.

Community Provider Add-on

Localities should consider partnering with community providers to maximize the impact of VPI. This means offering the VPI program in community based (e.g., child care) settings. To support this goal, a community provider add-on may be requested by the locality, which adds funding to

each VPI slot served in a community provider setting. If approved through the VPI application process, add-on funds vary by region ($1,500, $2,500, or $3,500). VPI community provider add-on funds do not increase the typical local match requirements for VPI slots. The current proposed state budget for Fiscal Year 2024 includes a waiver for teacher licensure for teachers in community provider settings. If approved, this would mean that VPI funds could be used to pay an unlicensed teacher in a community provider VPI setting.

Student Record Collection (SRC) Data Requirements for Funding

VPI funds are based on VPI preschool data collected on the fall SRC application in the SSWS portal. If final state budget actions affect Fiscal Year 2024, updated information will be provided to divisions when it becomes available.

For questions regarding the VPI Spring Application, please contact Tiffanie Meehling, Associate Director of PreK Programs, at (804) 750-8703 or Tiffanie.Meehling@doe.virginia.gov.

LC/TAM

Attachment:

   A. VPI Spring Application Instructions (Word)