November 21, 2022

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Janet D. Howell
Co-Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations
Committee
Pocahontas Building
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Barry D. Knight
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Pocahontas Building
900 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable George L. Barker
Co-Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations
Committee
Pocahontas Building
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Governor Youngkin, Delegate Knight, Senator Howell, and Senator Barker:

We are pleased to submit the enclosed Annual Update on the Plan to Implement Comprehensive Early Childhood Reporting. The Annual Update is in response to the following language in House Bill 30 (Chapter 2) of the 2022 Special Session I, Item 137 C.14.j:

> *5.) The Department shall develop a plan for comprehensive public reporting on early childhood expenditures, outcomes, and program quality to replace this reporting requirement. Such plan and subsequent reports shall consider the components included in this reporting requirement, and include all publicly-funded providers as defined in Chapter 860 and Chapter 861, 2020 Acts of Assembly. The plan shall identify any fiscal, legislative, or regulatory barriers to implementing such public reporting, and shall consider integration with the Department's School Quality Profiles. The Department of Education shall submit an update on implementation of the plan to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1 each year. Once fully implemented, the Department of Education shall update and submit the report by December 1 of each year.*

The Annual Update provides a summary of the progress that has been in 2022, as well as the barriers that remain.

Please direct questions to Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent of Early Childhood at Jenna.Conway@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Jillian Balow

JB/EC/la

Annual Update on the Plan to Implement Comprehensive Early Childhood Reporting

Annual Update Report for Fiscal Year 2022

UPDATE ON THE PLAN TO IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD REPORTING – FISCAL YEAR 2022

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the Virginia Department of Education submitted "A Plan to Implement Comprehensive Early Childhood Reporting" to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriation Committees. Following this report, the 2021 Appropriations Act language was revised to include the request that an annual progress update be provided to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriation Committees by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). This report was included once again in House Bill 30 (Chapter 2) of the 2022 Special Session I, Item 137 C.14.j:

> *5.) The Department shall develop a plan for comprehensive public reporting on early childhood expenditures, outcomes, and program quality to replace this reporting requirement. Such plan and subsequent reports shall consider the components included in this reporting requirement, and include all publicly-funded providers as defined in Chapter 860 and Chapter 861, 2020 Acts of Assembly. The plan shall identify any fiscal, legislative, or regulatory barriers to implementing such public reporting, and shall consider integration with the Department's School Quality Profiles. The Department of Education shall submit an update on implementation of the plan to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1 each year. Once fully implemented, the Department of Education shall update and submit the report by December 1 of each year.*

The following Annual Update will provide a summary of the progress that has been made in developing and implementing an approach for comprehensive early childhood reporting for publicly-funded early childhood programs in 2022, as well as the barriers that remain.

VIRGINIA'S BIRTH TO FIVE LANDSCAPE

According to Virginia's Birth - 5 Needs Assessment[1] conducted as part of the Preschool Development Grant Birth - 5 (PDG B5), approximately 510,000 children under the age of five live in Virginia. Of these children, 182,325 (36%) live in low-income households and 33,699 (7%) have been identified as eligible for support through Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education. Additionally, approximately 24% come from an immigrant family.[2] Virginia has made a commitment to support its most vulnerable children through a variety of state- and federally-funded programs. Ultimately, Virginia's goal is to provide high-quality educational experiences to its youngest learners -- regardless of what type of program they attend -- and to fully serve those eligible for public supports, resulting in improved school readiness and longer-term trajectories for Virginia's children. In pursuit of this goal, Virginia has taken several key steps in the recent years, including passing legislation to unify early childhood care and

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[1] Commonwealth of Virginia. (2019). *Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Needs Assessment*. https://www.vecf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Needs_Assessment_with_Appendicesv10.pdf?_ga=2.225037594.1247438984.1605810559-897076843.1605810559

[2] Migration Policy Institute (2018). *State Immigration Data Profiles*. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/VA

education (ECCE) oversight under the Board of Education, expanding family access to publicly-funded ECCE programs, and winning a multi-year federally-funded PDG B5 grant to further support systemic early childhood improvements.

Key Developments for Fiscal Year 2022

The following key developments have impacted Virginia's early childhood landscape during 2022:

- *Unification of the Early Childhood System:* In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly codified [Chapter 14.1](#) in Title 22.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, directing the Board of Education (the Board) to establish a unified public-private system for early care and education to increase school readiness in the Commonwealth. On July 1, 2021, the Board became responsible for all publicly-funded early childhood care and education, to be carried out by the VDOE. In 2022, the VDOE took the following actions to support this unification:
    - Convened the [Early Childhood Advisory Committee 7 times to review proposed guidelines and regulations](#) related to Virginia's unified early childhood system.
    - Began, in collaboration with stakeholders and the Early Childhood Advisory Committee workgroup, the review and revision of regulations related to licensing child day programs.
    - Submit and receive approval on a new application for Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and renewed coordinated partnership agreements with the Virginia Department of Social Services to support the oversight of the Child Care Subsidy Program.
    - Launch Practice Year 1 of VQB5, Virginia's uniform measurement and improvement system, for all publicly-funded early childhood programs (*see VQB5 below*).
    - Formed an internal data governance committee to support coordination of data-related activities across the Division of Early Childhood Care and Education.

- *Rebounds and Increases in Enrollment and Providers* – Participation in Virginia's birth-5 programs has fully rebounded from the COVID 19 drops, resulting in enrollment that is now higher than program participation prior to the pandemic. Through the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP), more than 32,000 children and families are enrolled at nearly 2,000 child care programs statewide (as of July 2022). Participation in the CCSP is at a historic high as more families engage in Virginia's growing economy. Prior to the pandemic, roughly 22,000 children participated in CCSP, while 35,000 are expected to enroll this year, representing an increase of 60%. Virginia's preschool programs have experienced a similar growth in enrollment, with the Virginia Preschool Initiative providing preschool to roughly 20,000 children in 2021-2022, an increase of nearly 16% from the prior year. The Mixed Delivery Program, coordinated with the Virginia Early

Childhood Foundation, increased by 400%, going from 250 slots in 2020-2021 to 1,250 in 2021-2022. Finally, Head Start and Early Head Start have similarly restored enrollment, maintaining access for up to 14,000 at-risk children across the Commonwealth.

- *Launch of Ready Regions* - Ready Regions launched at the end of 2021 to ensure that every locality is included in Virginia's approach to build regional capacity for early childhood initiatives. Each Ready Region is responsible for systems building and will: 1) Build relationships through collaborative public and private partnerships, 2) Strengthen quality to ensure high-impact learning experiences and outcomes for children, 3) Increase access by championing equitable early childhood opportunities through exploration and implementation of coordinated enrollment strategies, and 4) Engage families in informing the design of early childhood systems, policies, and services.

- *Launch of VQB5* - [Chapter 14.1](#) in Title 22.1 of the *Code of Virginia* further directed the Board to establish a Unified Measurement and Improvement System (referred to as "VQB5"). VQB5 is a measurement and improvement system that focuses on the quality of all publicly-funded birth-5 classrooms and supports families to choose quality programming across different program types. VQB5 sets shared expectations for measuring quality and supporting teachers for all birth-5 programs. Through VQB5, teachers and leaders will receive the feedback and support they need to help young children learn. Participation in this system includes using the VQB5 data system (LinkB5, more information below), completing two Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations, and recognition of programs who have chosen to access and use an approved curriculum. The ultimate goal of the VQB5 system will be to provide information on the quality of early childhood sites to families. State legislation requires that the all publicly-funded birth-5 programs participate as of July 2023, however, in preparation of this requirement, the Board of Education has supported providing two optional practice years to early childhood programs. July 2021 marked the beginning of Practice Year 1 of the VQB5 system, with over 1,500 sites and 5,000 classrooms participating in the 2021-2022 school year. Between both the Fall and Spring of Practice Year 1, PDG Communities conducted over 9,700 CLASS observations and feedback sessions in participating infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms, including family day homes. Classroom data profiles, including information on the type of curriculum used, were entered in LinkB5 for over 4,700 classrooms. In October 2022, 1,514 early childhood sites received Practice Year 1 profiles, which included their results based on the measured teacher-child interactions and quality curriculum use within their classrooms, collected via the LinkB5 data system. In addition to informing practice ratings, data from CLASS observations and curriculum use was used to plan professional development and target resources for improvement support. Furthermore, over 6,000

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child care center teachers and family day home providers registered to receive a financial incentive of up to $2,000 for participating in the Preschool Development Grant and VQB5 through RecognizeB5. Practice Year 2 began in July of 2022, with over 2,400 sites and 8,200 classes registered to participate. These sites will receive practice ratings in the Fall of 2023.

- *Expansion of LinkB5 and Integration of Key ECCE Data Systems* - VQB5 is supported by the ongoing development and expansion of the LinkB5 data system. LinkB5 collects information on the characteristics of communities, sites, and classrooms, and is the collection point of information for VQB5, which will ultimately be used to provide information to parents on the measured quality of the early learning programs available to them. Several enhancements have been made to LinkB5 to improve user experience, data accuracy, and system functionality. Alongside improvements to LinkB5, investments were made to strengthen, expand, and integrate early childhood data systems in Virginia. Plans for a new system to align the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), Virginia Literacy Screener, and LinkB5 data systems have been developed, with expected launch in Fall 2023. The integrated data system will allow Virginia to leverage data to inform policy and practice as a result of Virginia's investment in its youngest learners, and provide additional information to families on the experiences children are having in their early learning site

- *Evolution of Coordinated Enrollment Data System* - To support efforts of coordinated enrollment, a coordinated enrollment data system is underway and being piloted in Virginia communities. This new system will ensure that state and regional administrative partners, individual early care and education providers, and other stakeholders can easily collect and utilize data needed for effectively managing activities associated with coordinated enrollment in diverse ECCE environments. Of paramount importance in building this system is establishing a family-centric user-interface experience, with families serving as integral decision-making partners in designing and implementing a solution that is responsive to their needs and preferences, and provides the maximum amount of information on the choices available to them.

- *Expansion of Virginia's Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP):* The 2021 and 2022 General Assembly called for the expansion of the VKRP to be used in the fall and spring for pre-K classrooms, as well as its continued use twice a year in kindergarten. Complementing data from Virginia's long-standing use of literacy screening in the primary grades (PALS) and the Virginia Literacy Partnership's revision of Virginia's statewide literacy screening system, this expansion will provide insight into four critical areas of school readiness for students in pre-kindergarten (for children ages 3 and 4) and into the early grades, in the areas of literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and mental health. With VKRP for PreK now available to all preschool programs

accepting any public funding-- not just school based, VPI classrooms-- Virginia collected data in 865 four-year-old pre-kindergarten classrooms from center based and Head Start programs during the 2021-2022 school year. Including all sector types, 2,511 four-year-old pre-kindergarten classrooms from across the Commonwealth participated in VKRP. After a successful pilot during the 2021-2022 school year, VKRP is also now available for publicly funded preschool programs serving 3 year olds and required for VPI classrooms. The expanded use of VKRP will support state efforts to better track young children's growth and learning in future years, and will be particularly important to understanding the effects of COVID 19 on young learners at discrete points in their early education.

- *Revision of Early Literacy Screener* - Effective this fall, the Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener, replaces PALS-PreK. A new and improved literacy screener is currently being piloted in school divisions across Virginia for kindergarten to grade 3 (PALS K-3). The new screener will align with the most current evidence base and includes new subtests, including a language development component, and a Spanish measure for PreK to Grade 3. Data from the administration of the new literacy screener, in conjunction with VKRP data, will offer insight into growth and learning amongst Virginia's youngest students over time.

- *Expansion of a Mixed Delivery System:* Virginia has taken several steps towards an expanded mixed-delivery, public-private operating system. Through restored state funding and direction of COVID relief funding, the Mixed Delivery Grant, which funds year-round high-quality care and education for three and four-year-olds in private child care settings, expanded from 250 children in 2020-2021 to over 1,200 in 2021-2022. A total of 1,257 children were served by 92 ECCE providers. Participating providers were supported by 8 grantees funded by the Mixed Delivery Grant. The Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) has similarly expanded the utilization of the community-provider add-on, which supports the offering of VPI in community settings. The expansion of mixed-delivery approaches to preschool education is a key strategy for supporting parent choice, increasing access to quality care, and presents unique challenges and opportunities for comprehensive and coordinated data reporting.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLICLY-FUNDED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS – FISCAL YEAR 2022

Virginia serves at-risk birth-5 children across the Commonwealth through a variety of out-of-the-home ECCE programs. These programs differ in many respects, including their target populations, how they are funded, and how they collect/report data, among others.

Table 1 summarizes the key choices available to birth-5 children and their families, and includes the participation and enrollment reported for FY2022.

Variation Across Programs and Impact on Data Reporting

The variety of choices in public ECCE programs in Virginia allows programs to develop specialized profiles of services and importantly, allows families to choose a program that best meets their needs and preferences. For instance, families participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program can choose to enroll children in any site participating in the program, allowing them the option of selecting programs that are geographically convenient, provide full-day, full-year care that matches the family's work schedule, or are more aligned with the family's culture. Similarly, families choosing to enroll children in VPI receive many of the benefits of the K-12 system, including transportation, nutrition, and health services. Table 1 includes a summary of the programs available for families with birth-to-5 aged children in fiscal year 22.

Table 1. Out-of-the-home ECCE Program Summaries for Fiscal Year 2022

Program Choice	Target Population	Number of Children Served (SFY22)	State & Federal Expenditures (FY22)*
Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)	At-risk 3-4 year olds unserved by other programs	20,645	$101,353,553 (state funds)
Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP)	Children under age 13 with low household incomes whose parents are working	35,468 total 18,211 ages 5 and younger	$207,399,219 (state and federal funds)
Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**	Children age 2-5 identified as having a disability	11,535	$6,939,845 (federal funds)
Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS)	Children under age 5 from low-income families	10,133 total served (*14,272 Total Funded Enrollment*)	$154,728,427 (federal funds)
Mixed Delivery Program	At-risk 4-year-old children in selected pilot communities	1,257	$5,000,000 State General Funds (SGF) $1,000,000 Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER)

			$10,000,000 Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA)
CCSP and HS/EHS reported on federal fiscal year; other programs reported on state fiscal year. ***Includes children funded through IDEA Part B, Section 619 funds who attend at least half-day programs.*			

While Virginia has made significant strides in supporting a more unified early childhood system, and corresponding data systems, there are still instances where data collection and reporting across the publicly-funded programs above do not support a simple comparison. This is the result of the programs historically different functions and funding streams. This has led to a landscape where Virginia has rich data *within* any given ECCE program, but the ability to connect data *between* programs has been limited. This limited compatibility of data across programs has prevented Virginia from understanding gaps in access among eligible children and families, since programs have been unable to coordinate knowledge to sufficiently meet demand across the state. In order to address these limited capabilities, data systems must be refined to support integration between sources, a multi-year effort for which the VDOE has begun initial work, as was highlighted in the Fiscal Year 2022 accomplishments above. The remainder of the report will review several strategies for achieving a more comprehensive approach for early childhood data and reporting for publicly-funded programs in future years, while also acknowledging the key limitations or barriers for achieving such a system.

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING

In December 2020, the Virginia Department of Education submitted "A Plan to Implement Comprehensive Early Childhood Reporting" to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriation Committees. This report included the plan to develop an annual report to the General Assembly by December 31st of each year that includes data on early childhood expenditures, enrollment, outcomes, and program quality. The proposed report would include data from VPI, the Mixed Delivery program, CCSP, Early Childhood Special Education, and Head Start/Early Head Start, with expenditure data being reported from the previous fiscal year. The report proposed in the Plan is comprehensive and will demonstrate change across years. However, as noted in the Plan, many of the reporting elements described in the comprehensive report rely on a system that is not expected to be fully in place until 2024-2025,

when the uniform quality measurement and improvement system (VQB5) reaches statewide scale for all publicly-funded programs and its associated reporting platform becomes required.

The following sections describe the key sections that will be included in the comprehensive early childhood data report, once fully in place. Each section reviews the elements that will be included in the report, as well as Virginia's key developments related to each section for Fiscal Year 2022. While some of these elements are currently reported on in existing annual deliverables, the new comprehensive early childhood data report will provide a complete annual summary for the Virginia General Assembly, and other interested parties.

Key Sections for the Proposed Comprehensive Early Childhood Data Report

1. Expenditures

The VDOE will report on the funding allocated to and expended by each locality during the previous fiscal year in support of out-of-the-home early childhood programs. This will include:
- Funding for VPI, disaggregated to show funding allocated for and expended by the 4-year-old VPI program as well as for the 3-year-old program (where applicable),
- CCSP expenditures for children birth-5,
- Head Start/Early Head Start allocations,
- (Where applicable) funding allocated to and expended by the VECF Mixed Delivery program, disaggregated to show funding by child age, and
- ECSE funding provided through Part B, Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

All expenditure reporting will also be summarized at the state level.

Key Developments in Expenditures Reporting in 2022: With the shift towards a unified system under the VDOE, the VDOE now has access to the data necessary for comprehensive reporting on expenditures. A summary of currently available statewide data is included in Table 1 earlier in the report. In future years, the VDOE will use comprehensive data sources to include information by age group.

2. Enrollment

The VDOE will report on the enrollment in ECCE programs within each locality as of September 30th of the current academic year. This reporting will include, for each locality, the number of children enrolled in the following programs, disaggregated by child age:
- VPI,
- ECSE,
- VECF Mixed Delivery,
- CCSP
- Head Start/Early Head Start

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Additionally, enrollment will be disaggregated by whether or not a child is experiencing economic disadvantage, which the VDOE defines as: eligible for free/reduced meals, receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF), or eligible for Medicaid.

One caveat of the reporting proposed above is that it is not currently possible for Virginia to obtain an unduplicated count of children served across all of these programs due to limitations in how child-level data is collected. For instance, if a child were to receive services through VPI and CCSP (e.g. for before/after school care), the child could be represented in both counts. Enrollment counts could also be affected by children transitioning between programs as well as by families moving into different localities. It should be noted, however, it is highly unlikely that the child is receiving duplicate services; rather the child is likely receiving different services from different funding sources. For example, a family may choose VPI for the school day but also need private child care for before and after school.

In the future, the VDOE will also report the number of children birth-5 served by setting type (i.e. public school, private center, family day home) as this reporting becomes feasible through LinkB5. The VDOE will also report the number of children birth-5 served who speak a language other than English at home as this reporting becomes feasible through LinkB5.

All enrollment reporting will also be summarized at the state level.

Key Developments in Enrollment Reporting in 2022: The VDOE currently produces reports on enrollment with the described characteristics for VPI, Mixed Delivery and CCSP Programs. The VDOE has built capacity through the LinkB5 system to move closer towards obtaining an unduplicated count of children enrolled in publicly-funded programs, with the rollout of the "class list" feature as a pilot in 2020, and expanded use by communities and sites in 2021-2022. The "class list" feature would link children to ECCE classrooms and sites, across all sectors and through time, to obtain a de-duplicated view of children's early childhood experiences in any program. Fully implementing this feature and ensuring high-quality data will take several more years. However, in the future, the VDOE will rely on LinkB5 and its capacity to capture child-level data to produce a count of children served across programs once this reporting becomes feasible and the VDOE is confident in the quality of the data.

Fiscal Year 2022 was the first full-year for VDOE oversight of the CCSP, which is administered in partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). This cross-agency partnership has allowed VDOE greater and more accurate insight into enrollment data. With rapid growth of CCSP participation and enrollment, the need for stronger reporting has become abundantly clear. As of August 2022, more than 2,000 Virginia providers participate in CCSP and they currently serve 32,000 Virginia children. Family demand for participation in CCSP is at an all-time high. In one year's time, program enrollment has increased by 50%. With expanded income eligibility for families with young children, more families are choosing public-private options like the CCSP as they search for care. It should also be noted that CCSP is the only large-scale publicly-funded early childhood program available for families of infants and toddlers. To capture increased enrollment and the overall growth of the program, VDOE has worked with VDSS to create dashboards and routine reports to share across agencies.

3. Quality

As mandated by [Chapter 14.1](#) in Title 22.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, the VDOE is currently working to establish a VQB5 as the uniform measurement and improvement system for all publicly-funded ECCE providers. To fully honor this dynamic process and ensure the system realizes the state's goals, as well as to comply with the enactment established in the legislation, the VDOE will refrain from publicly sharing information related to program quality until 2024. Once the uniform measurement and improvement system is fully established in 2024, the VDOE will publicly release quality profiles associated with each participating provider. The VDOE will also produce a report aggregating profile information up to the locality and state levels, all with the greater goal of supporting increased data transparency and supporting informed family choice.

Key Developments in Quality Reporting in 2022: Practice Year 1 for VQB5 concluded in 2022 with the dissemination of more than 1,500 practice ratings and results to participating sites. The Board approved guidelines for Practice Year 2 of VQB5 in June 2022. Practice Year 2 will provide participating sites more insight into quality measurement ratings in the new VQB5 system.

As directed by the Board, the VDOE has begun the development of a VQB5 quality profile that will be used to share Practice Year 2 results. The VQB5 quality profile will be developed with input from the field and will include information about performance on measurements (i.e., practice rating results) and other topics of interest to families, policymakers and the general public to better prepare sites for the information that will be shared following the practice years. In 2022-2023, the VDOE will lead an interactive process with families, practitioners, and stakeholders to determine what other relevant information should be shared on these site-level profiles; this could include information such as improvement over time or information on key program elements (e.g., curriculum used). Note that this will be for informational purposes only; these elements will not affect the ratings. The VQB5 Quality Profiles for Practice Year 2 will be shared privately with site administrators in the fall of 2023 and will not be posted publicly. Feedback from the practice year site quality profile prototype will inform the development of the public VQB5 quality profiles, to be shared in the fall of 2024.

4. Outcomes

The VDOE proposes that reporting on outcomes for young children is accomplished through the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness (VKRP) report, which is submitted to the General Assembly on October 1 of each year, documenting the results of the previous year's assessments. This report disaggregates VKRP results at multiple levels that provide indications of the effect of participating in public preschool programs on children's kindergarten readiness. However, historically, the VKRP has been limited in that it only reports information on children once they have entered kindergarten, allowing only inferences to be made about their prior experiences.

To more fully understand children's development over time, as well as to understand the influence of participating in various programs on children's development, the VDOE proposed

the addition of VKRP for 4-year-olds in public-school pre-K as part of the FY22 Virginia State Budget. This expansion was adopted, with 4-year-olds being assessed for the first time in fall and spring 2021-2022. As a result, Virginia collected data in 865 four-year-old pre-kindergarten classrooms in center-based programs, 358 of which were in VPI/Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Mixed Delivery programs, 263 in Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Mixed Delivery programs, and 244 in Head Start programs during the 2021-2022 school year. Including all sector types, 2,511 four-year-old pre-kindergarten classrooms from across the Commonwealth participated in VKRP. After a successful pilot during the 2021-2022 school year, VKRP is also now available for publicly funded preschool programs serving 3 year olds and required for VPI. In addition to the increased administration of the tool, the VKRP and literacy screener is being revised and improved to increase the tool's ability to quantify individual students' growth in a way that has not previously been possible. This new analysis provides important information as to how different students progress throughout their kindergarten and preschool years, leading to important insights and reflections on how to support the early learning experiences of all learners.

To investigate how children's classroom experiences in publicly-funded programs relate to student outcomes (such as VKRP scores), the VDOE needs to expand its capacity and procedures for uniformly collecting child-level data across all program types. As described previously, the VDOE is currently developing this capacity into the LinkB5 data system through the class list feature; however, fully implementing this feature and ensuring it yields high-quality data will take several years as well as the continuation of dedicated funding.

Key Developments in Outcomes Reporting in 2022*: The use of VKRP expanded significantly in the 2021-2022 school year, with VPI and Mixed Delivery classrooms now using the preschool VKRP twice a year. This expansion in outcome reporting provides important insights into child learning and development, allowing for a full understanding of children's development over time, as well as to understanding the influence of participating in various programs on children's development. To further expand the Commonwealth's understanding of student outcomes and improve the tool overall, a pilot of VKRP assessments for grades 1-3 is underway and will fill in gaps to track growth and better understand students' development in the early elementary grades beyond literacy. The VDOE has also launched a project with the University of Virginia on an approach for increased data integration, which would enable more sophisticated understanding of child and program outcomes across data sets.

Summary of Proposed Reporting Plan

This comprehensive data report proposed in the initial plan will integrate data from several state systems and will report on expenditures, enrollment, quality, and outcomes for the state as well as for individual localities. Where pertinent and possible, the VDOE will disaggregate the reported data by subpopulations of children. Since Virginia is in the midst of multiple systems-level changes to its early childhood landscape and increasing interoperability between data systems, the VDOE proposes to modify how specific elements described here are reported to the public as key changes are implemented. Most notably, when the VQB5 reaches statewide scale and enacts its legislatively-mandated public reporting in 2024, several components described in

the current plan will be reported through the measurement and improvement system's public website.

Barriers to Implementing Comprehensive Reporting

The unification of ECCE in Virginia under the Board of Education marks further progress toward creating a system that is more navigable for families, educators, and stakeholders at all levels. However, barriers to implementing comprehensive public reporting exist. The remainder of this section discusses the barriers that have been identified in previous versions of this annual update report, and their status as of Fiscal Year 2022.

Potential Fiscal Barriers

The VDOE has identified the following fiscal barriers that could impede the implementation of the reporting described previously:
- *Sustained/expanded funding to develop a unified reporting system.* Currently, Virginia is using PDG B5 funding to build LinkB5, which will serve as the data system for the revised quality measurement and improvement system. This funding is time-limited to the dedicated three-year-grant, which began January 2020. As the unified system grows and sustains, Virginia will need to dedicate other funding sources to expand this system, including some state funding. This will include funding to develop and maintain the public-facing website, to maintain the implement key changes in the LinkB5 system, to provide technical assistance and support for users of the LinkB5 system, and to ensure connectivity with the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), the child care licensing system, and other state systems.
- *Expansion of coordinated enrollment technology.* Implementing the coordinated enrollment data solution both within and across regions is a challenge, as it requires more frequent utilization at the site level, and capacity can be limited. Accurate and regular data entry will be integral to the success of the data system and subsequent reporting, which may present additional time burdens on site administrators. Sustained funding will be necessary to provide sites and regions with adequate resources to scale up the system and complete all required data entry on a regular basis.

Potential Legislative Barriers

The VDOE has identified the following legislative barriers that could impede the implementation of the reporting described previously:
- *Authority for the VDOE to capture sufficient child-level data.* Currently, children served through educational programs offered through local education agencies (LEAs) are required to be assigned state testing identifiers (STIs). STIs are unique identifiers that follow students throughout their educational careers and allow for longitudinal tracking of individual students and, by extension, analyses of the efficacy of the programs they participate in. Children who participate in ECCE programs not administered by LEAs --

notably the Child Care Subsidy Program and community-based Head Start/Early Head Start programs -- will not have STIs, and the VDOE will not be able to reliably connect their early childhood experiences with later development. Providing the VDOE with the authority to assign STIs to children participating in any publicly-funded ECCE program will greatly increase the state's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs as well as to provide targeted supports to its most vulnerable children using rich child-level data.

Potential Regulatory and Systems Barriers

The VDOE has identified the following regulatory and systemic barriers that could impede the implementation of the reporting described previously. These barriers may include explicit regulations as well as the norms and capacity of state agencies as well as of personnel in the field.

- *Enhancing technology systems.* The VDOE is at a critical juncture in the lifecycle of its ECCE data systems where rapid infrastructure building is already happening, and upgrades are needed to support expansion. The need to migrate systems from on-premises servers to a cloud-based environment has arisen to allow for more data storage, better data collection, increased analytic capacity, and improved system capability. To address this barrier, the VDOE has sought approval for cloud migration through an Enterprise Cloud Oversight Service (ECOS) assessment. Though the process has been delayed at times, the VDOE and its technology vendor will be able to proceed with upgrades immediately upon approval.

- *Facilitating data sharing.* As presented in Appendix B, data that will be included in this comprehensive reporting is currently housed across several different data systems. Efficiently sharing data across these systems -- and between personnel responsible for these systems -- could be hindered by multiple barriers. First, sharing data between state agencies (or between state agencies and other organizations) may require the participating agencies to establish data sharing agreements. Although these agreements play an important role in protecting data privacy, they can stall data reporting and analysis, particularly if they need to be revised as data needs evolve. Second, agency data staff may have limited capacity to create new reports that meet the necessary parameters for this reporting requirement, particularly if the parameters of these reports change over time.

- *Successfully scaling new data collections.* The VDOE estimates there are over 7,000 ECCE sites comprising over 12,000 classrooms that could participate in the uniform quality measurement and improvement system and thereby contribute data toward this reporting requirement. To fulfill this comprehensive reporting requirement, the VDOE must scale new and existing data collections to these programs, which differ in their previous experience reporting data to state agencies, their infrastructure, and their comfort using the requisite technology. Although the VDOE is confident it can

accomplish this task, implementing system protocols and providing supports to the field that results in high-quality data will take multiple years.

- *Obtaining assessment data.* As VKRP and other assessments expand and evolve, obtaining assessment data on all publicly-funded children will grow to be more challenging, specifically as ECCE settings continue to diversify. In programs like the CCSP where not every child in the classroom is publicly-funded, it becomes increasingly difficult to capture assessment information on subsets of children in the classroom and/or ECCE program.

- *Reconciling different data collection practices.* The various data systems that will contribute data to fulfill this reporting requirement collect data for different purposes and at different frequencies. Where possible, the VDOE will need to work with owners of this data to establish business rules and agreed-upon practices that provide the best, most comparable representations of this data moving forward. Fully vetting these processes to produce reports that are most useful for the public and most accurately represent the data may take multiple iterations. To address this barrier, the VDOE has established an early childhood data governance committee to set best practices in line with this reporting requirement. Work to standardize data definitions and practices will continue into 2023.

Summary of Potential Barriers
The VDOE acknowledges that it may face several barriers in implementing comprehensive reporting of early childhood care and education. Two such barriers seem particularly salient. First, the VDOE needs explicit authority to assign STIs to children participating in any publicly-funded ECCE programs, not only those administered by LEAs. This would allow the VDOE to gain a more nuanced understanding of patterns of access across the state, which will be particularly useful in targeting supports for the most vulnerable children. It would further allow the VDOE to more effectively evaluate its ECCE programs by using long-term student outcome data.

Second, the VDOE needs dedicated funding to sustain and expand the LinkB5 early childhood data system beyond 2023. Currently, the system is being developed using funds from the federal Preschool Development Grant; however, these funds will expire at the end of the PDG. Since LinkB5 is one of the central pieces that facilitates this comprehensive reporting -- as well as other critical functions for ECCE in Virginia -- sustaining funding for the system should be a priority for the state.

As Virginia continues to move towards fully implementing multiple systems-level changes to early childhood care and education, the VDOE will continue to submit an annual update such as this one to the General Assembly by December 1 each year through 2025. Through this brief, the VDOE will identify any new barriers arising during the previous year and describe the reconciliation or persistence of barriers identified in previous briefs. This process will allow the VDOE to keep the General Assembly apprised of key factors in the system's evolution.

APPENDIX A. ACRONYM GLOSSARY

Acronym	Description
CCDBG	Child Care Development Block Grant
CCSP	Child Care Subsidy Program
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education
EHS	Early Head Start
HS	Head Start
LEA	Local Education Agency
MD	Mixed Delivery Program
PALS	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening
PDG B5	Preschool Development Grant Birth - 5
SFY	State fiscal year
SQP	School Quality Profile
STI	State Testing Identifier
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
VDOE	Virginia Department of Education
VDSS	Virginia Department of Social Services
VKRP	Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program
VLDS	Virginia Longitudinal Data System
VPI	Virginia Preschool Initiative

APPENDIX B. DATA SOURCES FOR REPORTING CATEGORIES

Data Source	Reporting Category
HS/EHS Program Information Reports	Enrollment
HS/EHS Summary Reports	Expenditures; Enrollment
IDEA Part B, Section 619 Budget Data	Expenditures
LinkB5	Enrollment; Quality
VDOE Student Records	Enrollment; Outcomes
VDOE Vendor Data	Outcomes
VECF MD Budgetary Data	Expenditures
Virginia Case Management System	Expenditures; Enrollment
Virginia State Budget	Expenditures
VPI Budget Table	Expenditures