

Virginia Preschool Initiative-Plus Formative Evaluation Report Statewide Report

February 2016

Prepared for:

Virginia Department of Education, Office of Humanities and Early
Childhood
VPI+ Implementation Team Members

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with support from
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Executive Summary

In December 2014, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in the Commonwealth of Virginia was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to expand high-quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year olds in 11 of Virginia's 132 school divisions that ranked highest in need on key indicators.¹ Since the PDG grant augments Virginia's already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), Virginia named the work being carried out through its PDG grant, the Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (VPI+).

The PDG funds support two types of preschool classrooms in high-need communities within 11 school divisions across the state:

- **VPI+ classrooms:** newly-opened VPI+ classrooms that implement all of the VPI+ grant requirements. Further, VPI+ classrooms receive the following supports:
 - Developmentally appropriate evidence-based curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum*[®] or other reviewed curriculum)
 - Teaching Strategies-GOLD[™] - formative assessment system and training
 - Ongoing program evaluation and monitoring and improvement support from the Virginia Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
 - Summative assessments and reports to inform instruction (fall and spring of preschool and fall of kindergarten)
 - External program evaluation (formative assessment reports to inform program improvements)
 - Focused coaching (e.g., curriculum implementation connected to five domains of school readiness)
 - Significant additional resources (e.g., instructional technology for classrooms, curriculum support with training, classroom libraries and curriculum-based literacy materials, curriculum-based hands-on materials and learning center supplies)
- **VPI Improved classrooms:** existing state-funded VPI classrooms that enhance their quality by implementing at least one of five program quality enhancements (i.e., raising private providers' teacher and/or assistant compensation to align with K-12 school

¹ School divisions selected to participate in VPI+ were ranked in the top five on one or more of four indicators: percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, number of Title I schools, percentage of entering kindergarten children not reaching benchmark standards on literacy screening, and number of at-risk unserved four-year olds.

division teachers, moving from a half-day program to a full-day program, reducing class size and student-teacher ratio, and providing evidence-based professional development and/or coaching, and making comprehensive services available to children and their families).

Due to evaluation budgetary restraints, VDOE decided to focus the external evaluation on only VPI+ classroom implementation and child outcomes, given VPI+ classrooms will be receiving the full treatment of initiative supports (e.g., approved curriculum, formative assessments, evaluation and monitoring from the QRIS, summative assessments, intensive coaching, and increased availability of instructional materials, including technology). Therefore, the body of this report focuses on only VPI+ classrooms and students. However, **Appendices A, B, and C** include tables with data on both VPI+ and VPI Improved students and teachers.

This first formative report focuses on the period of September-December 2015 and examines progress in the areas of (1) enrollment and access overall and for subgroups of children to VPI+ classrooms; (2) program implementation and quality, including the extent to which VPI+ programs include high-quality program elements specified in the VPI+ model; (3) training and technical assistance for VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators from state partners; and (4) local coaching and professional development, including data on the type, intensity, and content of professional development and perceptions regarding how well professional development and coaching are meeting teachers' needs. Key findings on implementation of these four areas are summarized below. The full report also describes facilitators of and barriers to implementation and recommendations for further strengthening implementation.

Findings

(1) **Enrollment and Access into VPI+ Classrooms**

Because of VPI+, the number of additional slots available for at-risk four-year-olds in a preschool setting across the Commonwealth has increased by 1,230 new slots in 65 newly-opened high-quality preschool classrooms as well as 44 VPI classrooms that were brought up to VPI+ standards, for a total of 109 VPI+ classrooms for Year 1 of the grant (2015–16).

- More than half of children enrolled in VPI+ classrooms were Black or African American, and a quarter of them were Hispanic.
- All VPI+ children were at or below 200% of federal poverty level and 67% of the

children were at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.

- Approximately at total of 25% of children in VPI+ classes spoke a language other than English at home: 20% of VPI+ children had Spanish as their home language and 5% had a home language other than Spanish or English.
- Three percent of VPI+ students had an identified disability (n = 43).

(2) **Program Quality**

All VPI+ classrooms are expected to include certain implementation components consistent with a high-quality preschool program as set forth by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). All VPI+ programs met the PDG expectations:²

- All VPI+ teachers had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- The majority of VPI+ classes were taught by teachers with either a collegiate professional license (44%) or a postgraduate professional license (45%).
- All VPI+ teachers had an elementary teaching license endorsement that included preschool.
- 98% of VPI+ classes had 18 or fewer students. The average child-to-instructional staff ratio was 8.5 students to 1 instructional staff person (includes both teachers and assistant teachers) for VPI+ classes. Almost all VPI+ classes (97%) met the requirement of 9 students to 1 instructional staff member.
- The average VPI+ teacher salary (i.e., \$47,487) was in parity with K-12 teachers in Virginia.
- All VPI+ classes were full-day programs (i.e., included 5.5 hours or more of instructional time).
- 8 of 11 school divisions used the procured evidence-based curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum*®), and the other three requested to use a curriculum that was vetted through a rigorous review process with VDOE and Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL).
- All divisions were using the GOLD™ formative assessment to inform instruction.
- 10 of the 11 divisions participated in fall 2015 summative assessments, and all plan to participate in spring 2016 assessments.

² VDOE required divisions to have a lower child-to-instructional staff ratio than PDG. All but one division met the more conservative VDOE ratio.

- Professional development and coaching on formative assessments and curriculum were offered to all VPI+ teachers.
- 100% of the 53 VPI+ program sites met the Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) rating of Level 3.
 - o On average, VPI+ classrooms were rated as moderately high on emotional support and classroom organization, and they were rated as slightly low on the instructional domain.
 - o Overall, VPI+ program sites were rated as “good” when averaged across the four ECERS dimensions. VPI+ classrooms met the threshold of Level 4 or higher on the dimensions of Language-Reasoning and Interaction, but were slightly below that threshold on the dimensions of Activities and Program Structure
- All 11 school divisions had a family engagement coordinator who worked with families on enrollment, needs assessments, and engagement in program activities and planning.
- School divisions reported using several outreach strategies with hard-to-reach families.
- According to VPI+ Coordinators, VPI+ children and their families had readily available access to a wide range of services.

(3) Training and Technical Assistance from State Partners on VPI+ Implementation

Virginia has provided broad technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ school division leaders, coaches, family engagement coordinators, and teachers in a number of ways.

- VDOE provided technical assistance to VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators on all components of grant implementation through webinars, site visits, meetings, and communication about professional development opportunities. Additionally, VDOE approved 9 professional development vendors offering training and technical assistance on 54 early childhood education topics that school divisions can purchase with their grant funds for individualized professional development plans.
- The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided VPI+ school division leaders with an orientation to Virginia’s QRIS standards. VECF also held a

webinar to assist division leaders with understanding the QRIS summary report for the purpose of setting professional development goals.

- Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provided professional development for coaches with a focus on enhancing high-quality implementation of curricula and effective teacher-child interactions, consultation and technical assistance to school division leaders, and professional development resources through regional consultation meetings and workshops, visiting each VPI+ school division, webinars, and monthly phone calls. CASTL is currently working with the 11 divisions to develop quality improvement plans and related to two specific school readiness goals, a preschool to kindergarten transition planning goal and a sustainability goal. CASTL will work closely with divisions to ensure that they have strong implementation plans related to each of these components (curricula, formative assessments, professional development) and the ways they work together to support student learning. CASTL will also support divisions in the use of their own formative data as well as summative data collected by program evaluators to help ensure continuing program improvement plans including supervising the work of VPI+ coaches and development of individualized professional development plans for each VPI+ teacher.
- VPI+ school division leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants also participated in professional development specific to curriculum implementation and formative assessments.

(4) **Local Coaching Activities** (Period of November 9 – December 31, 2015)

Fourteen local VPI+ coaches helped teachers implement evidence-based curricula to target learning in the five essential domains of school readiness, and to engage in effective teacher-child interactions and individualize instruction based on formative assessments. Although coaching began at the beginning of the school year, the coaching logs were not implemented until November, yielding a 6-week window from which the data below are drawn.

- On average, VPI+ teachers received 6 hours of coaching during the 6-week window. Sessions most often lasted between 30 and 59 minutes.
- Coaches documented that they used a variety of coaching strategies when working individually with VPI+ teachers. Most common were coach observations,

used in 43% of individual contacts with teachers; discussion was included in 35% of contacts, and modeling was included in 30% of the contacts.³ Other coaching strategies included providing resources and materials (20%), connecting to curriculum resources and materials (19%), data review (17%) and/or video review (1%).

- Coaches report addressing domain-specific topics in the majority of their contacts with VPI+ teachers (79%). Coaches also frequently spent time on teacher-child interactions (42%) and supportive environments (36%).
- Generally, coaches included the domains of school readiness when working with teachers from VPI+ classrooms, with language and literacy the domain most often addressed (53%), followed by social and emotional development (29%) and then mathematics (23%).

VPI+ is off to a strong start. Virginia selected and began implementing a developmentally appropriate evidence-based early childhood curriculum and formative assessment, provided professional development and technical assistance, and selected an evaluator who will provide both formative and summative evaluation results to support program refinement and decision-making. Additionally, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) rated 61 newly-opened VPI+ classrooms in fall 2015, providing a baseline measure for future improvement. CASTL supported divisions establish coaching frameworks and begin to develop local professional development plans informed by QRIS, formative assessment, and summative assessment data. Further, school divisions hired coaches, teachers, assistants, and family engagement coordinators, and school divisions enrolled 1,230 children into VPI+ programs, many from hard-to-reach families.

The school divisions are now working on high-quality implementation of formative assessments and curriculum and identifying specific areas to focus on as part of their professional development efforts moving forward, based on QRIS and child assessment data. State-level VPI+ leadership is working on increased communication among all grant partners, but especially with school divisions around issues such as recruitment of eligible children, data collection and reporting, and fidelity of program implementation.

Future formative reports will describe the progress, accomplishments, and challenges of VPI+ throughout implementation of its four-year grant.

³ Coaching contacts may include more than one type of strategy.

Overview

In December 2014, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) in the Commonwealth of Virginia was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to expand high-quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year olds in 11 of Virginia's 132 school divisions that ranked highest in need on key indicators.⁴ Since the PDG Virginia's already existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), Virginia named the work being carried out through its PDG grant, the Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (VPI+).

The PDG funds support two types of preschool classrooms in high-need communities within 11 school divisions across the state:

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- **VPI Improved classrooms:** existing state-funded classrooms that enhance their quality by implementing at least one of five program quality enhancements (i.e., raising private providers' teacher and/or assistant compensation to align with K-12 school division

⁴ School divisions selected to participate in VPI+ were ranked in the top five on one or more of four indicators: percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, number of Title I schools, percentage of entering kindergarten children not reaching benchmark standards on literacy screening, and number of at-risk unserved four-year olds.

teachers, moving from a half-day program to a full-day program, reducing class size and student-teacher ratio, and providing evidence-based professional development and/or coaching, and making comprehensive services available to children and their families).

In addition, Virginia is improving its preschool infrastructure. For example, Virginia is making improvements to the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) to accommodate preschool program characteristic and child assessment data, and has established a Cross-Organizational Data Team to collaborate on integration of preschool data. The team members have established Restricted Use Data Agreements (RUDAs) to appropriately share various data between school divisions, agencies, and the evaluation team.

Virginia also created a cross-agency and cross-sector system at the state level to support coordinated implementation of VPI+ programs. The VPI+ Implementation Team consists of both public and private and state and local agency partners to intentionally integrate the components of high-quality preschool programs to provide supports and services for VPI+ and other at-risk children. The representatives and agencies assigned to the VPI+ Implementation Team have authority and/or influence over a wide range of related programs and services that contribute to the continuum, including the Home Visiting Consortium, the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Virginia, Child Care Resource and Referral, Smart Beginnings, Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and Part B services. The VPI+ Implementation Team, or subcommittees of the team, have met three times for planning, technical assistance, and collaboration between school divisions and agency/organization partners.

To measure impact and support program improvement, VDOE contracted with SRI International in late August 2015 to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of VPI+, including a formative evaluation of VPI+ implementation, a summative evaluation of VPI+ impact on children's school readiness and later academic outcomes, and a cost-effective analysis to determine investments needed for desired outcomes. Due to budgetary restraints, VDOE decided to focus the external evaluation on only VPI+ classroom implementation and child outcomes (not VPI Improved classrooms), given VPI+ classrooms will be receiving the full treatment of initiative supports (e.g., approved curriculum, formative assessments, evaluation and monitoring from the QRIS, summative assessments, intensive coaching, and increased availability of instructional materials, including technology). Therefore, the body of this report focuses on only VPI+

classrooms and students. However, Appendices A, B, and C include tables with data on both VPI+ and VPI Improved students and teachers.

This report presents formative evaluation findings for VPI+ classrooms across all 11 divisions for the period of September-December 2015. All VPI+ divisions will also receive an individual report summarizing formative findings for their individual division twice each year to help them further strengthen their program implementation. This first formative report focuses on the areas of (1) enrollment and access overall and for subgroups of children to VPI+ classrooms; (2) program implementation and quality, including the extent to which VPI+ programs include high-quality program elements specified in the VPI+ model; (3) training and technical assistance for VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators; (4) local coaching and professional development including data on the type, intensity, and content of professional development and perceptions regarding how well professional development and coaching are meeting teachers' needs; (5) facilitators of and barriers to implementation; and (6) recommendations for further strengthening implementation. Future reports will include results from teacher surveys.

The formative evaluation uses a combination of data collection methods to answer a set of implementation questions. The evaluation questions and data collection methods are described below.

Evaluation Questions

- (1) **Enrollment and access:** To what extent are the number of preschool slots and number of at-risk children being served increasing, overall and by public and non-public preschools? How many students are enrolled in the VPI+ classrooms, overall and by race/ethnicity, home language, and special education status?
- (2) **Program quality:** To what extent are VPI+ classrooms providing the elements of high-quality preschool programs included in the VPI+ model? To what extent are VPI+ classrooms providing high-quality teacher and learning environments that address the five school readiness domains, use formative data to individualize instruction, and provide supports to the unique needs of learners? To what extent are the VPI+ classrooms providing comprehensive services and increasing their engagement with families and communities?
- (3) **Technical assistance by State partners:** To what extent are VPI+ coaches and administrators receiving training/technical assistance (TA) from VDOE, VECF, CASTL,

and others to support implementation of an evidence-based curriculum, formative assessments to inform instruction, family engagement strategies, and effective teacher-child interactions? Do these supports meet the needs of division administrators and coaches?

- (4) **Local coaching activities:** To what extent are teachers of VPI+ classrooms receiving local coaching and professional development to support implementation of an evidence-based curriculum, formative assessments to inform instruction, family engagement strategies, effective teacher-child interactions, and other practices based on CASTL’s needs assessment? Do these supports meet the needs of individual teachers?
- (5) **Facilitators and barriers:** What are the facilitators of and barriers to successful implementation? What roles do local context, choices around curriculum and formative assessments, and the backgrounds, experiences, and qualifications of VPI+ teachers and leaders have in implementation?
- (6) **Recommendations:** What additional supports do VPI+ school divisions and programs need for successful implementation?

Methods

To answer the formative evaluation questions, we are using the data methods listed in Exhibit 1 and described below.

Exhibit 1. Formative Evaluation Methods, by Question

	Extant data analysis	Coaching logs	Technical assistance documentation	Observation of PD sessions	Division coordinator interview/surveys	Teacher surveys
Timing of data collection	Fall only	Fall and spring	Fall and spring	Fall and spring	Fall and spring	Spring only
1. Enrollment and access	★				★	
2. Program quality	★					★
3. Technical assistance activities			★	★	★	
4. Local coaching activities		★				★
5. Facilitators and barriers					★	★
6. Recommendations	★		★		★	★

SRI used the following data collection methods to collect formative data:

- **Extant and administrative data analysis:** In December 2015, the evaluation team received data exports from each division on enrollment and student demographics and teacher and program characteristics. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation shared results of Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) ratings collected on VPI+ classrooms through their involvement in a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- **Coaching logs:** To learn about local coaching and professional development activities, local school division coaches have been asked to keep a log of the coaching they deliver to teaching staff, including the content and intensity (hours) of coaching for individual VPI+ teachers. These logs are completed online throughout the school year.
- **Documentation of technical assistance and observations of professional development sessions:** To gather information about the type and intensity of technical assistance and support offered by VDOE, VECF, and CASTL, to VPI+ Coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators, SRI obtained summaries from VDOE and documentation from CASTL with the dates, hours, participant information (division, school/program, type of program, role), and the content of the technical assistance. The evaluation team will observe leadership and coach institutes led by CASTL to collect additional information about the content of technical assistance and the ways in which CASTL is supporting school divisions with the adoption of new curriculum and formative assessments, coaching, use of data, and development of individual professional development plans for their teachers and continuous quality improvement plans for programs.
- **Division administrator phone interviews and surveys:** To gather basic program information, the evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews and brief surveys with the division VPI+ coordinators responsible for coordinating each division's VPI+ classrooms. The interviews gathered information about each division's local experience implementing preschool programs; the coordinator's background, experiences, and qualifications; experiences with implementation of the curriculum and a formative assessment; the characteristics of programs (e.g., full-day, size, staffing, staff qualifications, public or private); and program budget information. Subsequent phone interviews/surveys will focus on accomplishments; the role and influence of CASTL's needs assessment; the types and usefulness of the support around professional development planning local

administrators receive from CASTL; local program improvement activities; the structure and focus of teacher coaching; facilitators of and barriers to the VPI+ work (e.g., availability of teachers and coaches who meet qualifications, availability of classroom space, buy-in to new formative assessment and curriculum, budget changes, and evaluation feedback); and updated staffing and budget information.

The remainder of this report presents formative findings on the enrollment of children in VPI+ classrooms, program quality characteristics and QRIS ratings, technical assistance provided by state partners, supports provided to VPI+ teachers by local coaches, information about facilitators and barriers experienced by VPI+ programs, and recommendations for future VPI+ implementation for VPI+ leaders, partners, and programs.

Enrollment and Access

Because of VPI+, the number of additional slots available for at-risk four-year-olds in a preschool setting across the Commonwealth has increased by 1,230 new slots in 65 newly-opened high-quality preschool classrooms as well as 44 VPI classrooms that were brought up to VPI+ standards, for a total of 109 VPI+ classrooms for Year 1 of the grant (2015–16). Exhibit 2 presents the number of VPI+ classrooms and children the initiative enrolled in 2015–16 by division. Enrollment counts for VPI Improved classrooms are presented in **Appendix A**.

Exhibit 2. Number of VPI+ Schools, Classrooms, and Children for Cohort 1 (2015–16)

School Division	Number of Classrooms	Number of Schools	Number of Children Enrolled
Brunswick County	1	1	11
Chesterfield County	9	9	143
Fairfax County	4	4	68
Giles County	2	2	33
Henrico County	10 (54)*	27	364
Norfolk City	9	9	141
Petersburg City	5	1	69
Prince William County	8	8	143
Richmond City	9	6	136
Sussex County	2	1	20
Winchester City	6	4	102
TOTAL	65 (109)	72	1,230

*Note: Henrico opened 10 new classrooms to accommodate 180 VPI+ children as well as brought 44 existing VPI classrooms up to VPI+ standards, for a total of 54 VPI+ classrooms. Children in these classes are coded by funding source. The 364 VPI+ children are composed of 180 children coded as PDG only, 23 coded as PDG/Title I, and 161 coded as PDG/Head Start.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for PDG funding, students in VPI+ classrooms (or VPI improved classrooms), must be from household at 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) or lower and be four years old as of September 30, 2015. Virginia uses different enrollment eligibility criteria (listed in **Appendix F**) for its Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), which predated the federal grant and continues to operate within the 11 divisions and in the majority of other school divisions across Virginia. VPI+ children who did not meet the federal PDG eligibility requirements are not included in this report or the evaluation.

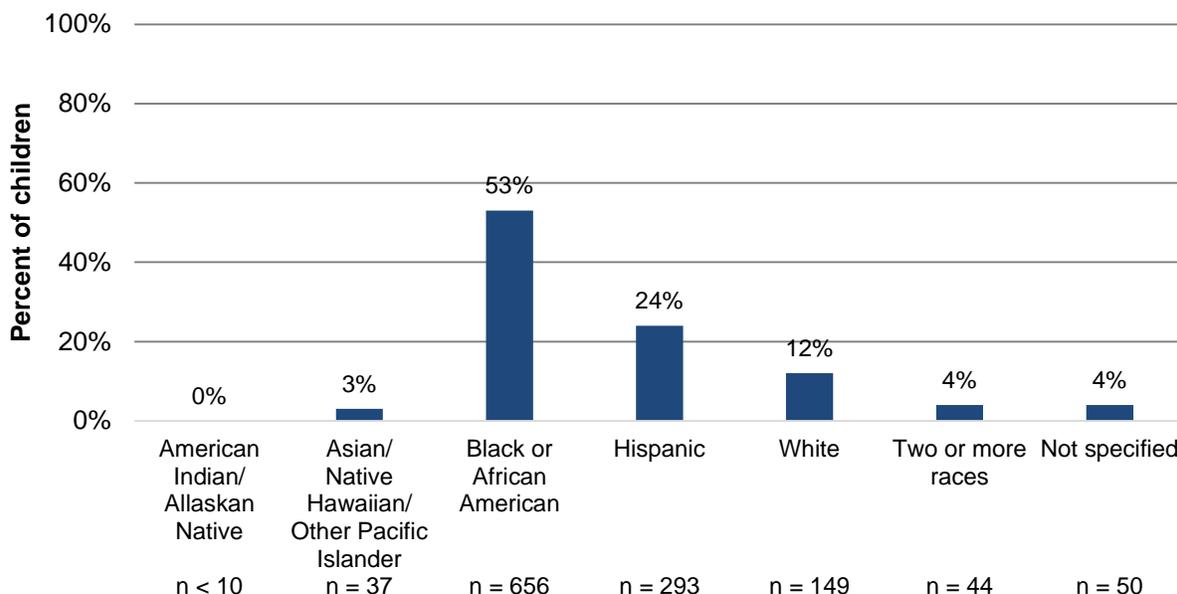
Enrollment by Demographics

The VPI+ program met and exceeded its enrollment target of 1,175 students with 1,230 students as of December 2015, achieving 105% of its goal in its PDG grant proposal. The majority (95%) of VPI+ students were enrolled in public programs.

Participation was distributed evenly across student gender in VPI+ classes (50% male and 50% female). All students were at least 4 years old, ranging from age 48 to 59 months. In VPI+ classes, 49% of children were 48 to 53 months of age as of September 30, 2015. Three percent of VPI+ students had an identified disability (n = 43).

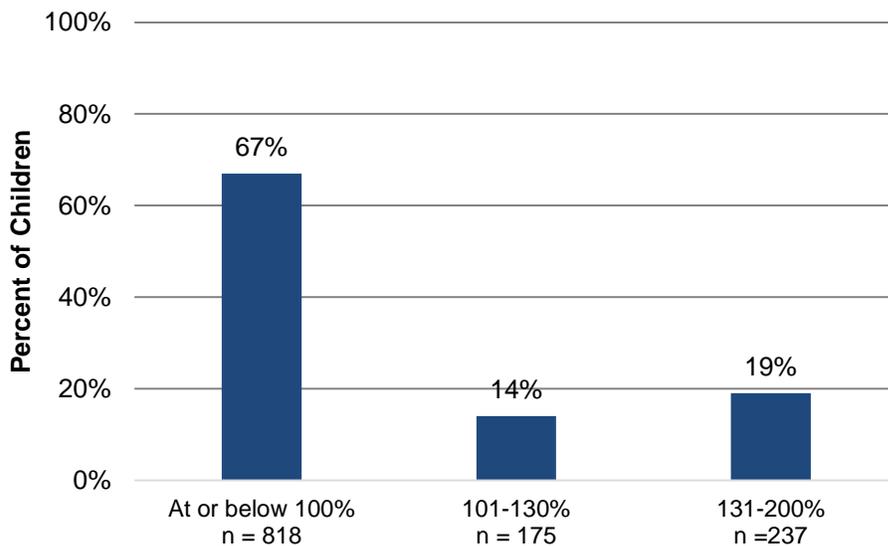
As shown in Exhibit 3, more than half of children enrolled in VPI+ classrooms were Black or African American and a quarter of them were Hispanic.

Exhibit 3. Enrollment by Child Race/Ethnicity, VPI+ Children



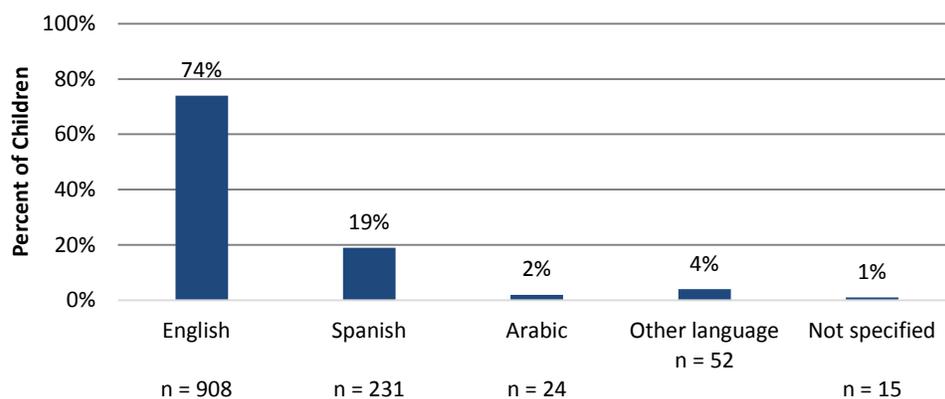
Students were only eligible to be enrolled in VPI+ if families' incomes were at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Exhibit 4 displays the distribution of students across poverty levels. Two-thirds of the children in VPI+ were at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. Fourteen percent of VPI+ children were between 101% and 130% of poverty level, and 19% were between 131% and 200% poverty level.

Exhibit 4. Enrollment by Federal Poverty Level, VPI+ Children



Students' families indicated on registration forms provided to the school divisions the primary language spoken at home. Approximately 75% or more of children in VPI+ classes spoke English as their home language (Exhibit 5). Nearly 20% of VPI+ children spoke Spanish as their home language. The remaining children in VPI+ classes spoke Arabic as their home language (2%), another language (4%), or the home language was not specified (1%). The percent of VPI+ children whose home language was English varied across school divisions. In five school divisions all VPI+ children's home language was English. In the other six school divisions, the percentage of children whose home language was English ranged from 24% to 83%.

Exhibit 5. Enrollment by Home Language, VPI+ Children

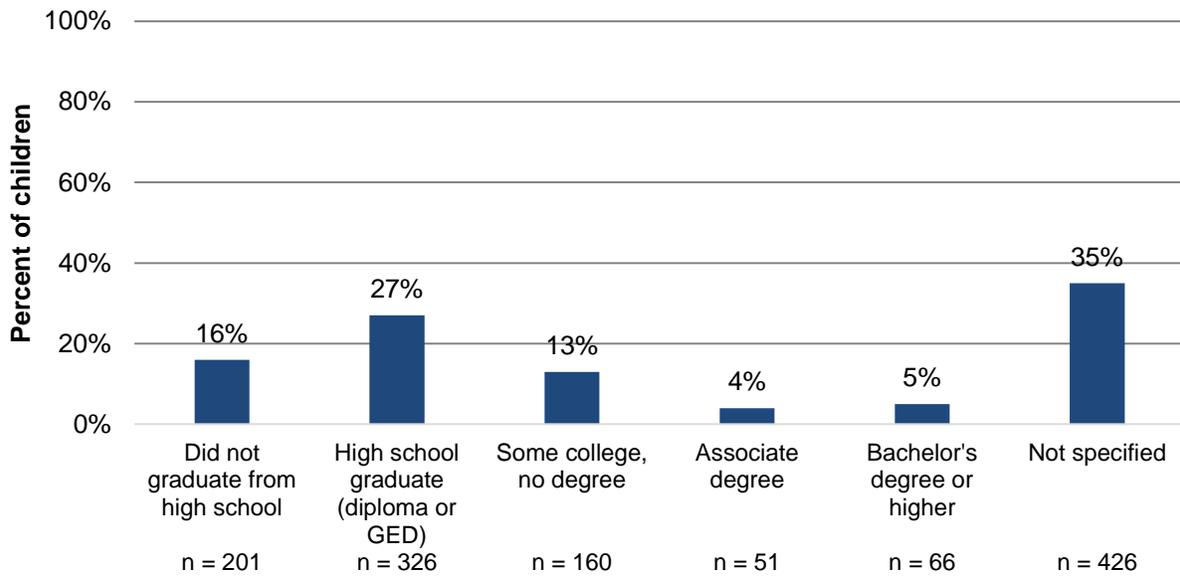


Note: Other languages specified include Amharic, Bengali or Bangla, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Dari, Farsi, French, Kazakh, Malay, Nepali, Pashto, Somali, Swahili, Turkish, and Twi.

Enrollment by maternal education is displayed in Exhibit 6. Mothers of 16% of VPI+ children did not complete high school. Mothers of more than a quarter (27%) of VPI+ children graduated

high school. Mothers of less than a quarter of VPI+ children completed some college (without a degree), received an associate’s degree, or received a Bachelor’s degree. For the first year of implementation, not every division was able to collect data on mother’s level of education, so this information was unknown for 35% of VPI+ children.

Exhibit 6. Enrollment by Maternal Education, VPI+ Children



Program Quality

Numerous studies have found that for preschool programs to have impact on children’s learning outcomes, they need to be of high-quality.⁵ This section describes the extent to which VPI+ classrooms have the characteristics of high-quality preschool programs as defined by the PDG grant. Program characteristics of VPI Improved classrooms are presented in **Appendix B**.

Program Elements and Characteristics

All VPI+ classrooms are expected to include certain implementation components consistent with a high-quality preschool program as set forth by the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) requirements.⁶ Based on data provided by each division in December 2015, the formative evaluation confirmed that the all VPI+ programs have met the PDG requirements (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7. Summary of VPI+ Classrooms Program Requirements and Status

Program Requirement	Current Status
High staff qualifications, including teacher with a bachelor’s degree in ECE or in any field with state-approved pathway and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials	All VPI+ teachers had a college degree: 52% had a bachelor’s degree and 47% had a master’s degree. 43% of teaching assistants had a bachelor’s degree, 27% had an associate’s degree, 10% had some college, 15% had a high school education, and 3% had a master’s degree.
Teacher with an active Virginia teaching license with an elementary endorsement including preschool	The majority of VPI+ classes were taught by teachers with either a collegiate professional license (44%) or a postgraduate professional license (45%). All VPI+ teachers had an elementary teaching license endorsement that included preschool.
Class size of no more than 18 students	98% of VPI+ classes had 18 or fewer students. The average VPI+ class size was 17.3 students. The smallest VPI+ class size was 11 students, and the largest class size was 19 students.
Child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 9 to 1	The average child-to-instructional staff ratio was 8.5 students to 1 teacher for VPI+ classes. The majority of VPI+ classes (97%) met the requirement of 9 students to one teacher.
Full day program	All VPI+ classes were reported to be full-day programs.
Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities	Three percent of students enrolled in VPI+ had an identified disability. Typically, the percent of preschool children identified with disabilities increases during the school year, as staff have more opportunities to observe and screen children. ⁷

⁵ Camilli, G., Vargas, S., Ryan, S., & Barnett, W. S. (2010). Meta-analysis of the effects of early education interventions on cognitive and social development. *The Teachers College Record*, 112, 579-620

⁶ VDOE required divisions to have a lower child-to-instructional staff ratio than PDG. All but one division met the more conservative VDOE ratio.

⁷ Blackorby, J., Schiller, E., Mallik, S., Hebbeler, K., Huang, T., Javitz, H., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., Wagner, M., and Williamson, C. (2010). *Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth With Disabilities (NCEE 2010-4005)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Program Requirement	Current Status
Use of a developmentally-appropriate, evidence-based curricula and formative assessments	<p>Through a competitive procurement process, Virginia selected a curriculum and formative assessment system to be implemented in its VPI+ classrooms. <i>The Creative Curriculum</i>® for Preschool is a comprehensive set of resources that assists teachers as they plan content-rich programs for children with diverse backgrounds and developmental levels. Accompanying <i>The Creative Curriculum</i>® for Preschool is Teaching Strategies GOLD™, an observation-based system for assessing the development and learning of children from birth through kindergarten.</p> <p>Eight divisions reported using <i>The Creative Curriculum</i>® as their core curriculum, one division reported using High Scope as their core curriculum, one division reported using Houghton Mifflin as their core curriculum, and one division reported using a local curriculum designed for their early childhood programs.</p> <p>All divisions reported use of Teaching Strategies GOLD™ formative assessment.</p>
Individualized accommodations and supports so all children can access/participate fully in learning tasks	Three percent of VPI+ students (n=43) were identified as having a disability within the first three months of enrollment.
Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement: (Virginia Quality Rating Improvement System)	VPI+ classrooms were observed by Virginia Early Childhood Foundation using the CLASS and ECERS assessments and school divisions and teachers have received their results. The CLASS ratings of 61 VPI+ classrooms and the ECERS ratings of 53 program sites are presented below.
On-site comprehensive services (e.g., child health, vision and hearing screenings; mental health; family support; nutrition; adult education and training)	<p>According to VPI+ Coordinators, VPI+ children and their families had readily available access to a wide range of services.</p> <p>Services readily available to 95-100% of children and families in VPI+ classrooms included: hearing services, vision services, food bank services, and adult education services.</p> <p>Services readily available to 90-94% of children and families in VPI+ classrooms included: domestic counseling/services, dental services, and health services.</p> <p>Services readily available to 83-85% of children and families in VPI+ classrooms included family resource centers, prenatal services, insurance enrollment, and WIC enrollment.</p> <p>Transportation was available to children in 71% of VPI+ classrooms.</p> <p>Services available to children and families in 54-59% of VPI+ classrooms included mental health services for children and for families, and substance abuse treatment for families.</p> <p>Emergency housing was available to children in 21% of VPI+ classrooms.</p>
Staff salaries comparable to salaries of K-12 teachers	The average VPI+ teacher salary was \$47,487, and salaries ranged from \$29,965 to \$82,234. This is comparable to the salaries of K-12 teachers statewide in Virginia whose average salary is \$54,486. ⁸
High-quality professional development and VPI+ coaching for the teacher	Professional development and coaching on formative assessments and curriculum were offered to all VPI+ teachers. The amount and type of coaching is described in the Local Coaching section of this report.
Summative assessments (fall and spring) that will be integrated into longitudinal data system	10 of the 11 divisions participated in fall summative assessments. One division had additional human subject approval requirements that could not be approved in time for participation in fall summative assessments. All divisions planned to participate in summative assessments by spring 2016.
Engagement of families as decision	All 11 school divisions had a family engagement coordinator who worked with

⁸ DLAS Document Summary: 2015–2016 Teacher Salary Survey Results: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/workforce_data/salaries/2015–2016_salary_report.pdf

Program Requirement	Current Status
makers, to build protective factors, and to support learning at home	families on enrollment, needs assessments, and engagement in program activities and planning. School divisions either built on existing family governance and advisory structures or were trying to establish family decision-making bodies. According to VDOE, all 11 school divisions were planning on conducting a family survey to gather data on family satisfaction in spring 2016.
Targeted outreach for hard-to-reach families	School divisions reported using several outreach strategies with hard-to-reach families that are described in the Facilitators and Barriers section of this report.

Program Quality: CLASS[®] and ECERS Ratings

As part of Virginia’s tiered quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), called *Virginia Quality*, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation is evaluating and assigning Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®] (CLASS[®]) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) ratings of VPI+ classrooms in Years 1 and 3 (2015–16 and 2017–18). This section outlines how CLASS[®] and ECERS scores of VPI+ classrooms from 11 Virginia school divisions are aligned to the scores to the Virginia QRIS. The goals and targets of the Virginia QRIS are described, and the averaged scores of the 11 divisions are aligned then to the QRIS targets.

Virginia Quality – A Quality Rating and Improvement System

Classroom observations, using valid and reliable measures, are important indicators of teaching and learning practices, and help to inform the quality of education programs. Virginia Quality, Virginia’s QRIS, uses observations to inform a scaled set of program standards that participating programs use to continuously improve quality. The QRIS is administered statewide through a public-private partnership between the Virginia Department of Social Services’ Office of Early Childhood Development and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF).

Virginia’s Quality Standards awards levels to child care and preschool programs based on four elements: education and qualifications, curriculum and assessment, environment, and interactions. Participating programs are given a rating Level of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating lower quality, and 5 indicating higher quality. All standards for the first two elements (education and qualifications, and curriculum and assessment) must be met at Level 3 before classroom observations by an unbiased and trained observer take place to determine if the program qualifies for a Level 4 or Level 5 rating. Exhibit 8 outlines the requirements needed for a Level 4 or Level 5 rating.⁹

⁹ http://smartbeginnings.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/VirginiaQuality_standards_summary.pdf

Exhibit 8. Requirements for Level 4 and Level 5 Ratings of the Virginia QRIS

Level 4 Rating	Level 5 Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve an average ECERS score of 4.00 or higher across four ECERS subscales: Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure. • Achieve an average CLASS® PreK score of 5.00 or higher in Emotional Support domain and Classroom Organization domain. • Achieve an average CLASS® PreK score of 3.25 or higher in Instructional Support domain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve an average ECERS score of 5.00 or higher across four ECERS subscales: Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure. • Achieve an average CLASS® PreK score of 6.00 or higher in Emotional Support domain and Classroom Organization domain. • Achieve an average CLASS® PreK score of 4.25 or higher in Instructional Support domain.

In Virginia's QRIS, quality level ratings are awarded at the school/site level (not classroom level). The protocol requires that both CLASS® and ECERS ratings observations are performed on 1 out of 3 classrooms within each age range. Classrooms observed are randomly chosen on the day of the observation. If there was more than one VPI+ classroom at a school (site), the rater randomly selected one of the VPI+ classrooms to observe using both CLASS® and ECERS. 53 schools (sites) received a full CLASS® and ECERS ratings. The remaining 11 VPI+ classrooms received a CLASS-only rating (for a total of 61 VPI+ classrooms rated by December 2015). Goals and ratings related to the Virginia QRIS program level are listed in Exhibit 9. While 100% of VPI+ programs met QRIS overall program quality thresholds for Year 1, only 39% of VPI+ classrooms met the thresholds set for teacher-child interactions.

Exhibit 9. Summary of Virginia QRIS Goals for VPI+ Classrooms, Year 1

	GOALS	YEAR 1 FINDINGS
Goal 1 – Program Quality (53 sites ¹⁰)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1: 60% of VPI+ programs will be at quality level 3 • Year 3: 80% of VPI+ programs will be at quality level 4 or 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of 3 sites met the QRIS Level 3 requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 33 sites met Level 3 requirements ○ 19 sites met Level 4 requirements ○ 1 site met Level 5 requirements
Goal 2 – Quality of Teacher-Child Interactions (64 classrooms ³)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1: 50% of VPI+ classrooms will have a 5 or higher in the Emotional Support/Classroom Organization domains and a 3.25 or higher in the Instruction Support domain. • Year 3: 75% of VPI+ classrooms will have a 5 or higher in the Emotional Support/Classroom Organization domains and a 3.25 or higher in the Instructional Support domain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38% (24 of the 64) classrooms had a 5 or higher in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains and a 3.25 or higher in the Instructional Support domain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The average score across 64 classrooms for the Emotional Support/Classroom Organizations domains was 5.50. 84% of VPI+ classrooms exceeded the threshold of 5.0 in Emotional Support/Classroom Organization. ○ The average score across 64 classrooms for the Instructional Support domain was 2.94. 41% of VPI+ classroom exceeded the threshold of 3.25 in Instructional Support.

¹⁰ Goal 1 program quality ratings are awarded at the school/site level even if a site has more than one classroom, while Goal 2 teacher-child interaction ratings are awarded to each class, which accounts for the difference in sample sizes.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®)

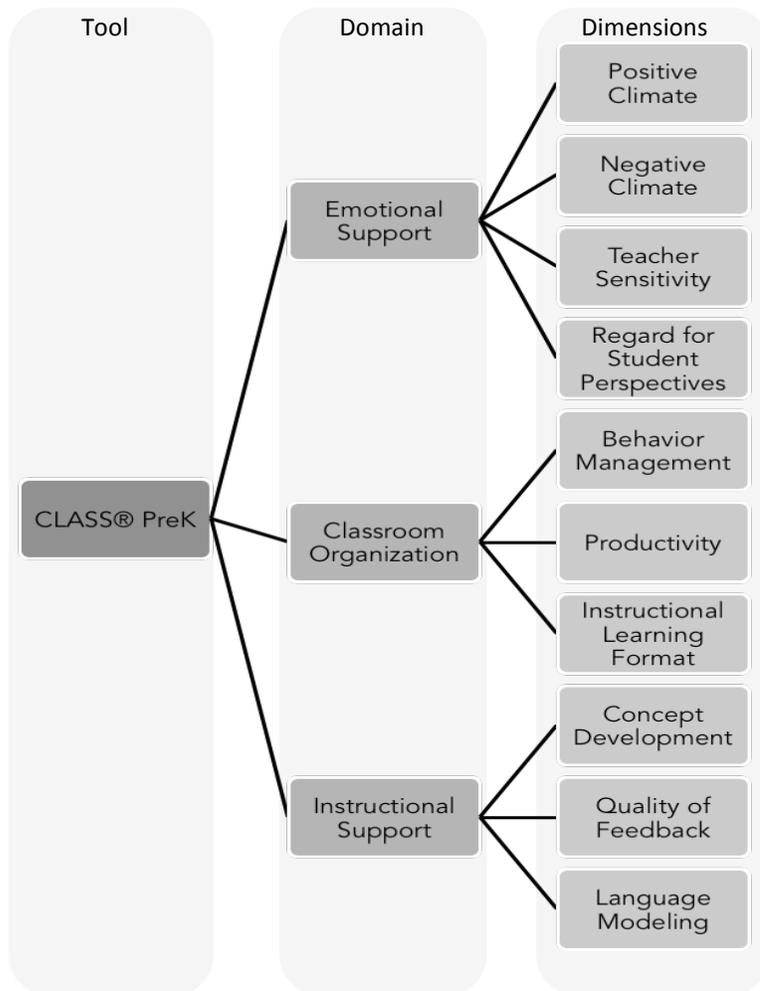
The CLASS® is a tool that measures the daily interactions between teachers and students and among students. The CLASS® measures interactions in three domains, emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support, as described below (Exhibit 10). The CLASS® is based on research that suggests student-teacher interaction is the foundation of student development. Each domain is made up of various dimensions. The dimensions examined by the CLASS® are derived from constructs used in child care research, effective teaching practice literature, focus groups, and pilot studies. The CLASS® is scored by specifically assessing observed interactions, as opposed to physical environment or adoption of a curriculum.

The CLASS® is administered across a typical morning in classrooms where a majority of the children are three to four years old. Teachstone, the creators of the CLASS® require four to six 15-20 minutes cycles for a complete observation. Each observation cycle is followed by a 5-10 minute coding period. This process usually requires an average of 2-3 hours for a complete observation. Observations begin when a majority of children enrolled in a classroom have arrived, and regardless of the start time, the CLASS® has been shown to be stable across times if at least four cycles are observed. Almost all classroom activities, with the exception of recess, nap, and outdoor free play, are observable.

For each cycle, each dimension is scored on a range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating high-quality implementation of the dimension. Each dimension score is averaged across the four to six cycles to get a classroom average for that dimension. The dimensions that comprise a domain are averaged to get a domain average. Negative Climate is the exception to rule, with lower scores indicating higher quality or lack of negativity. For the purpose of averaging a domain score, negative Climate scores are reversed (a score of 1.50 in Negative Climate becomes a score of 6.50).

CLASS® scores fall within ranges: Low range scores fall between 1.00-2.99; mid range scores fall between 3.00-5.99; and high range scores fall between 6.00-7.00. In addition, using national data of state PreK programs, researchers have found threshold scores that are associated with increased child outcomes. For the purpose of the Virginia QRIS, thresholds have been set at 5 or higher in the Emotional Support/Classroom Organization domains and a 3.25 or higher in the Instructional Support domain. Thresholds have not been established at the dimension level.

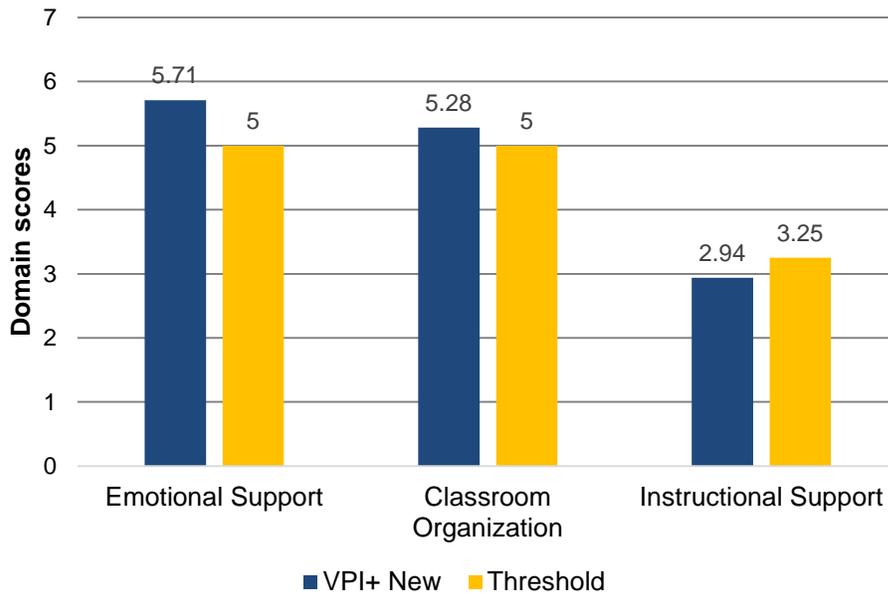
Exhibit 10. Domains and Dimensions of the CLASS®



VPI+ Schools CLASS® Scores

On average, VPI+ classrooms were rated as moderately high on emotional support and classroom organization, and met the threshold set by the Virginia QRIS in these areas (see Exhibit 11). On average, VPI+ classrooms were rated as slightly low on the instructional domain, and did not yet reach the threshold set by the Virginia QRIS in this area.

Exhibit 11. CLASS[®] PreK Domain Scores - Fall 2015, VPI+ Classrooms



CLASS[®] ratings of the 64 VPI+ classrooms varied by school division (Exhibit 12). All school divisions met the 5.0 threshold for emotional support. Most school divisions (8 of 11) met the threshold for classroom organization. Only 1 of the 11 divisions met the threshold set by the Virginia QRIS for instructional support.

Exhibit 12. CLASS[®] PreK Domain Averages for VPI+ Classrooms, by School Division

CLASS [®] PreK Domain Averages	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Division 1	5.50	5.17	2.21
Division 2	5.70	5.29	3.06
Division 3	5.53	5.30	2.68
Division 4	5.95	5.57	3.66
Division 5	5.60	4.72	2.60
Division 6	5.96	5.50	3.17
Division 7	5.25	4.54	2.79
Division 8	5.60	5.00	2.89
Division 9	5.00	4.67	1.92
Division 10	5.66	5.24	2.47
Division 11	5.86	5.60	3.09
Total VPI+	5.71	5.28	2.94

Note: VPI+ division averages are an average of all classrooms in the division; Total VPI+ averages are an average of all classrooms from all VPI+ divisions.

Additional information on CLASS[®] dimension level scores for VPI+ classrooms is included in **Appendix D.**

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)

The ECERS is an observation tool that is designed to measure the process quality of early childhood classrooms serving children ages 2 through 5. Process quality focuses on the interactions that happen in a classroom between children and staff, parents, other children, and the materials and activities in the learning environment. Process quality also looks at features such as space, schedule and materials that relate to these interactions.

The ECERS has seven subscales,¹¹ however, for the purposes of the Virginia QRIS, four of the subscales were used: Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure. The components of the four subscales are listed in Exhibit 13. Within each subscale, items are given a score from 1-7 or not applicable and then averaged to get the subscale score. To get a total scale score (ECERS Average), all items within the four reported subscales are averaged.

Exhibit 13. ECERS Subscale Components

Subscale	Components
Language-Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books and Pictures • Encouraging Children to Communicate • Using Language to Develop Reasoning Skills • Informal Use of Language
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine Motor • Art • Music/Movement • Blocks • Sand/Water • Dramatic Play • Nature/Science • Math/Number • Promoting Acceptance of Diversity • Use of TV, Video, and/or Computers
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of Gross Motor Activities • General Supervision of Children (other than Gross Motor) • Discipline • Staff-Child Interaction • Interactions Among Children
Program Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule • Free Play • Group Time • Provisions for Children with Disabilities

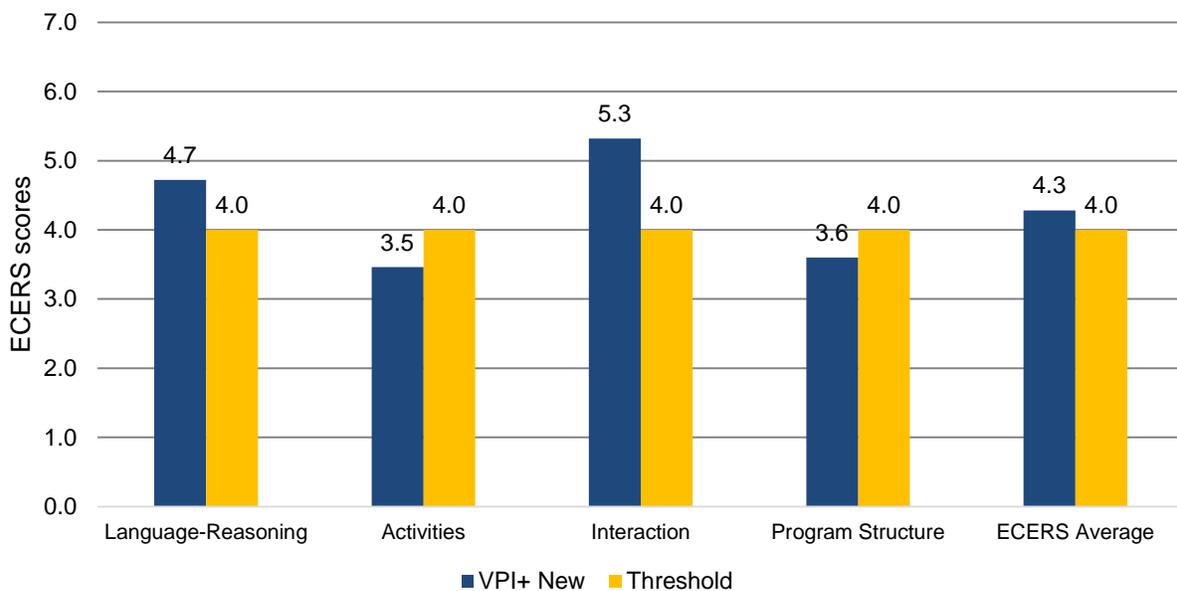
¹¹ ECERS subscales include: (1) Language-Reasoning, (2) Activities, (3) Interaction, (4) Program Structure, (5) Space and Furnishings, (6) Personal Care Routines, and (7) Parents and Staff.

ECERS scores range from 1.00 to 7.00 and scores can fall within the following ranges assigned by the developer: scores that fall between 1.00-1.99 are considered “inadequate”; scores that fall between 2.00-3.99 are considered “minimal”; scores that fall between 4.00-5.99 are considered “good”; and scores that fall between 6.00-7.00 are considered “excellent.” The Virginia QRIS set minimum thresholds at 4.00 or higher across the four ECERS subscales (Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure).

VPI+ Schools ECERS Scores

Overall, VPI+ program sites were rated as “good” when averaged across the four dimensions (Exhibit 14). The 53 VPI+ program sites met the threshold of four or higher on the dimensions of Language-Reasoning and Interaction, but were slightly below that threshold on the dimensions of Activities and Program Structure.

Exhibit 14. ECERS Score Averages – Fall 2015, VPI+ Program Sites



As shown in Exhibit 15, ECERS ratings of VPI+ program sites varied across school divisions. All but two of the school divisions met the threshold for Language-Reasoning. Only one school division met the threshold for Activities. In contrast, all but one school division met or surpassed the threshold set for Interaction, which raised the overall ECERS average for most school divisions. Finally, three of 11 school divisions met the threshold for Program Structure.

Exhibit 15. Fall 2015 ECERS Averages for VPI+ Program Sites, by School Division

ECERS Subscale Averages	Language-Reasoning	Activities	Interaction	Program Structure	ECERS Average
Division 1	4.25	2.55	5.15	2.00	3.49
Division 2	5.75	3.97	5.20	4.71	4.91
Division 3	4.58	3.35	4.31	3.41	3.91
Division 4	4.78	3.51	5.87	3.60	4.44
Division 5	4.50	3.83	5.40	4.00	4.43
Division 6	5.19	4.06	5.95	3.58	4.70
Division 7	2.50	1.80	2.40	1.33	2.01
Division 8	4.80	3.42	5.15	4.00	4.34
Division 9	3.50	2.60	5.20	2.67	3.49
Division 10	5.19	3.12	5.79	3.37	4.37
Division 11	4.16	3.32	5.55	3.84	4.22
Total VPI+	4.72	3.46	5.32	3.60	4.28

Note: VPI+ division averages are an average of all program sites in the division; Total VPI+ averages are an average of all program sites from all participating VPI+ divisions.

Additional information on ECERS subscale scores for VPI+ program sites is included in **Appendix E**.

Training and Technical Assistance From State Partners

Virginia has provided broad technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ school divisions in a number of ways. VDOE has conducted a series of webinars and meetings on numerous topics related to early childhood development and education, and VPI+ implementation. Additionally, through a competitive procurement process, VDOE established a menu of approved professional development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education that school divisions may purchase with their PDG funds for use in the individualized professional development plans being developed for each VPI+ teacher. The VECF provided training on the QRIS system and ways to use the findings to inform program improvements. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia has provided coach training and support, technical assistance to school divisions in the development of professional development plans, and professional development resources. Finally, several divisions received training on *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and its formative assessment, GOLD[™].

Technical Assistance from VDOE

VDOE has conducted a series of webinars and meetings on topics, including: curriculum and formative assessment; family engagement; comprehensive services; practice-based coaching strategies; recruitment of children from hard-to-reach families; providing high-quality professional development and coaching; public libraries as partners; grant budgets and reimbursement requests; school divisions' annual plans for grant implementation; the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); grant data collection (student, teacher, program); VDOE monitoring of program and fiscal grant activities; and reporting of required data and information for Virginia's Annual Performance Report for the PDG. VDOE also conducted technical assistance site visits to each school division during fall 2015 and has planned site visits for each school division in spring 2016. Phone calls and site visits by VDOE staff throughout fall 2015 provided the opportunity to discuss with each school division progress made in engaging at-risk families and children for the VPI+ program and to strategize ways to fill empty VPI+ slots.

When school divisions struggled with filling their VPI+ slots, VDOE conducted a webinar devoted specifically to recruitment of at-risk preschool children to offer school, division-level, and community strategies to identify and recruit children eligible for VPI+ into the program. Also, ideas on how to tap into external community and corporate partnerships to promote the program

were presented, and lessons learned from the Illinois Hard to Reach Families project evaluation were shared. VDOE also offered webinars to private providers in these school divisions to increase interest, and Smart Beginnings, a community network committed to ensuring school readiness, assisted in providing ideas for the recruitment plans and by making phone calls to engage support.

Additionally, through a competitive Request for Proposals process, Virginia established a menu of approved professional development opportunities on a number of topics related to early childhood education (54 different professional development options provided by 9 vendors) that school divisions may purchase for use in the individualized professional development plans being developed for each VPI+ teacher.

Technical Assistance from VECF

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided VPI+ school division leaders with an orientation to Virginia's QRIS standards. VECF also held another webinar that reviewed QRIS rating results to assist division leaders with understanding the QRIS summary report for the purpose of setting professional development goals. All VPI+ divisions were provided with a detailed summary report of CLASS[®] (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) results for each VPI+ classroom observed. QRIS results and trends were also shared with CASTL to help inform planning for VPI+ Leadership Academies.

Technical Assistance from CASTL

VDOE contracted with the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia to provide technical assistance and professional development for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators. Specific activities were developed based on a needs assessment conducted with divisions by CASTL and reported to VDOE in late spring/early summer of 2015. The needs assessment report outlined 5 recommendations based on areas of challenges and strengths that lay the foundation of the work of CASTL with the division coaches:

1. Build a strong community of learning across school divisions.
2. Hold regional division consultation meetings in January 2016 (building off of work already done with Head Start Leadership Academies, to include an annual continuous improvement plan with goals, and an action plan for

attaining said goals in areas of curricula, assessment, professional development, and coaching).

3. Find ways to provide extensive training and technical assistance on data use (including use of data from QRIS results, summative assessment evaluation results, formative assessment results from GOLD™, and Phonological Awareness Language Screening [PALS] assessments).
4. Support use of effective coaching models (particularly since coaching is new in most divisions).
5. Other areas of technical assistance including support for principals and division leadership in building support for and sustainability of the VPI+ program, and planning for kindergarten transition.

In this capacity, CASTL staff members provided professional development for coaches, consultation and technical assistance to school divisions, and professional development other resources through regional consultation meetings, visiting each VPI+ school division, phone calls, and webinars.

Coach Training and Support from CASTL

CASTL provided professional development to VPI+ coaches, with a focus on enhancing high-quality implementation of curricula and effective teacher-child interactions, while building a community of learning among coaches across VPI+ divisions. Coaches were provided approximately 35 hours of training and support by CASTL between August 2015 and January 2016. These activities included:

- One 3-day training (19 hours) focused on the Practice-Based Coaching framework and an introduction to professional development aligned with quality teaching practices (i.e., NCQTL House Framework,¹² CLASS PreK®, ECERS) (19 hours)
- One follow-up meeting to 3-day training (2 hours)
- One site visit to meet individually with coaches to review coaching practices. Topics included practice based coaching skills, supporting curriculum implementation, data use, and when needed, systemic challenges, teacher motivation. These visits varied in length by division (3-4 hours).
- Monthly group Implementation calls (October 2015–January 2016) (1 hour each)

¹² <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice>. National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning uses a house to represent four integral elements of quality teaching and learning: engaging every day interactions with children (the foundation); choosing and implementing a strong curriculum (first pillar); using regular assessment of children's skills (second pillar), and individualized teaching (the roof).

- Monthly individualized coaching sessions (October 2015–January 2016) (1.5 hours each)

School Division Consultation and Technical Assistance from CASTL

CASTL supported school divisions with local planning related to curriculum, professional development, formative assessments and continuous improvement planning. School division VPI+ coordinators received between 11.5 hours to 25.5 hours of division consultation (depending on whether they had already participated in the winter Leadership Academy). The consultation and professional development activities received included:

- One in-person meeting in spring 2015 with each division to start building relationships, gather information about division strengths/needs, and begin joint planning (3 hours)
- VPI+ Implementation Team Meeting (7 hours)
- One call to review division Annual Plans to review progress, challenges, and identify resources/solutions (30-45 minutes per call)
- Two webinars and related materials – one on professional development planning and another on planning for Leadership Academy (1 hour each)
- For some divisions, 1 Leadership Academy focused on data use for continuous improvement and professional development planning (14 hours)*
- *One leadership academy had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather.
- Monthly calls, as needed or requested, with each school division
- Support with the creation and ongoing use of individualized teacher professional development plans with specific training and activities, including how to use the results from fall 2015 QRIS ratings, particularly in the area of improving quality of teacher-child interactions as measured by CLASS[®] (Classroom Assessment Scoring System).
- A list of free online PD resources related to effective teaching for preschool children.
- Support with recording professional development teachers receive in a professional development registry maintained by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

CASTL also is currently working with the 11 divisions to develop continuous quality improvement plans and related to two specific school readiness goals, a preschool to kindergarten transition planning goal, and a sustainability goal.

Professional Development Resources from CASTL

A list of free online professional development resources were mapped onto areas of needs and were shared with coaches and coordinators to use in professional development planning.

Resource types included briefs, e-books, webinars, videos, learning modules, and templates.

Resources covered the following topics:

- Five Essential domains of development (i.e., language and literacy development, cognitive and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development)
- Teacher-child interactions/CLASS®
- ECERS (environment)
- Challenge behaviors
- Dual Language Learners
- Assessment
- Professional development planning
- Coaching
- Early Childhood development
- Evidence-based strategies for transition
- Family engagement
- Cultural competency

Training on *The Creative Curriculum*® and GOLD™

In August and September 2015, VPI+ school division leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants participated in professional development specific to curriculum implementation and formative assessments. Five of the VPI+ school divisions hosted face-to-face professional development sessions focused on use of *The Creative Curriculum*® and *GOLD*™ formative assessments to individualize instruction to meet all children's needs.

Local Coaching

To help VPI+ classrooms achieve implementation of all the components of a high-quality preschool program, local coaches support continuous improvement and teaching excellence. VPI+ coaches are tasked with helping teachers implement evidence-based curricula to target learning in all five essential domains of school readiness (language and literacy, early mathematics and early scientific development, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development), and to engage in effective teacher-child interactions and individualize instruction based on formative assessments.

The grant requires that each VPI+ teacher completes at least 30 hours of professional development focused on early learning environments, and receives up to 40 hours of coaching. School divisions provide the professional development through a procured list of options or through other vendors approved by VDOE. Coaching is provided by local coaches and is tracked by coaches by completing coaching logs. The coaching log data presented below cover about 6 weeks of coaching activities that occurred in November and December 2015. Use of the coaching logs was delayed by the late start of the evaluation contractor. Future reports will examine the types and levels of coaching 6 month period.

While this report focuses on VPI+ teachers and students, it is important to note that 14 coaches also supported the 95 VPI Improved classroom teachers, in addition to 114 VPI+ teachers.¹³ Ten coaches were full time (i.e., 30 hours or more per week), and 4 were part time, ranging between 15 and 40 hours per week. On average, each coach was responsible for 17.2 teachers, but this varied by school division (ranging from 4 to 32 teachers per coach). Data on coaching of VPI Improved teachers is presented in **Appendix C**.

Coaching Contacts and Intensity

Coaching Contacts and Intensity

Coaches worked with teachers through three types of contacts: (1) working with them in classrooms, (2) holding individualized coaching sessions in person or by phone, and (3) facilitating group trainings. For the purpose of this report, a coach contact is one session with a particular teacher (e.g., a meeting with a teacher, an extended phone call with a teacher, or a teacher's attendance of a group training).

¹³ The 114 VPI+ teachers are associated with the 65 newly opened VPI+ classrooms and the 44 existing VPI classrooms that were brought up to VPI+ standards. Some VPI+ classrooms were co-taught.

In these first weeks of implementation, coaches served 85 teachers in VPI+ classrooms (75% of all teachers in VPI+ classrooms) (Exhibit 16). In addition, during the 6-week timeframe, coaches averaged 4.4 contacts per teacher in VPI+ classrooms. In total, coaches made 374 contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms.

On average, VPI+ teachers received 6 hours of coaching during the 6-week window. Exhibit 16 presents data on the amount of time spent during each teacher contact. Sessions most often lasted between 30 and 59 minutes (38%). About a quarter (24%) of contacts lasted between 60 and 89 minutes. A little more than a quarter (27%) of contacts lasted an hour and a half or more.

Exhibit 16. Percent of Coaching Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Length of Contact, VPI+ Teachers

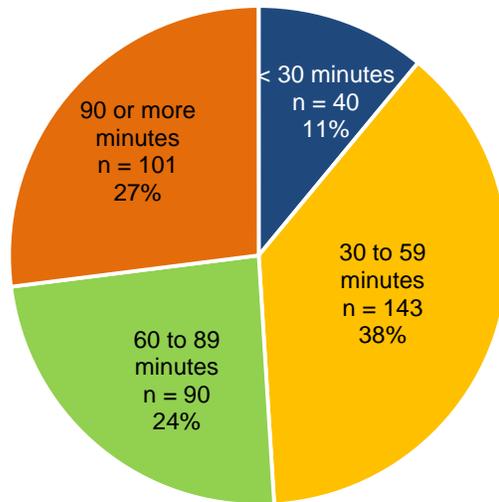


Exhibit 17 shows the percentages of coaching contacts offered by format (i.e., in the classroom, individual coaching, and group training). Teachers in VPI+ classrooms were most likely to receive coaching in the classroom. More than half of coaching contacts in VPI+ programs took place in classrooms with students present (54%). In contrast, 20% of contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms involved group trainings. Meetings with individual VPI+ teachers (including phone calls) comprised more than one-quarter of coaching contacts (26%).

Exhibit 17. Percent of Coaching Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Type of Contact

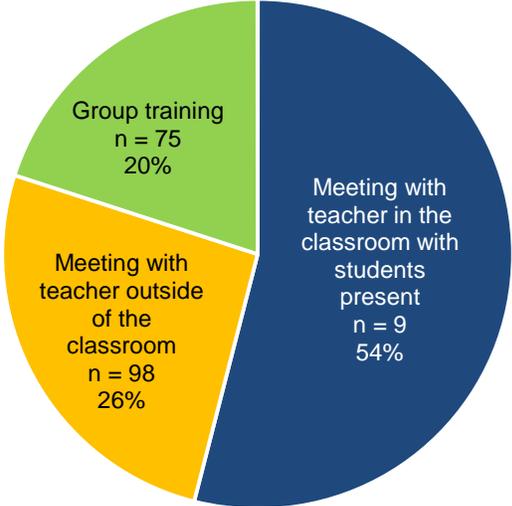
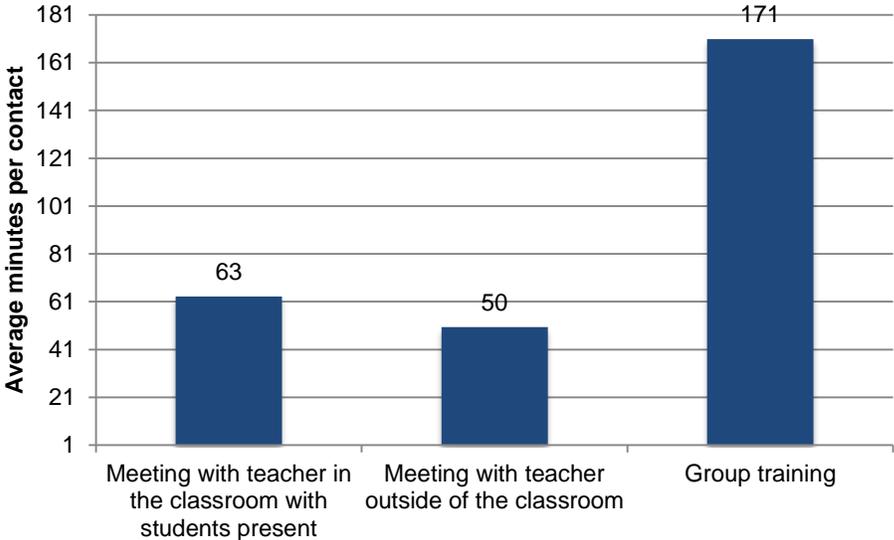


Exhibit 18 shows that in-class coaching sessions lasted about an hour for VPI+ teachers (63 minutes on average), and that individual meetings or technical assistance sessions were slightly shorter (50 minutes). For VPI+ teachers, in-class coaching was the most frequent type of coaching received, but group trainings for these teachers lasted nearly three times as long as the in-class sessions (group trainings lasted 171 minutes on average).

Exhibit 18. Average Length of Contact (Minutes) with VPI+ Teacher by Type of Contact



Coaching Focus

Strategies for Working Individually with Teachers

Coaches documented in a coaching log their use of a variety of coaching strategies when working individually with teachers (Exhibit 19). Most common were coach observations, used in 43% of individual contacts with teachers, and discussion, included in 35% of contacts with VPI+ teachers. Coaches used modeling with VPI+ teachers in 30% of contacts. Likewise, about 1 in 5 contacts with VPI+ teachers included providing resources and materials and making connections to the curriculum and materials. Coaches also spent time reviewing data with teachers in 17% ($n = 52$) of VPI+ contacts. Only four contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms included video review (teachers reflecting on videos of classroom footage).

Exhibit 19. Coaching Strategies for Individual Coaching Contacts With VPI+ Teachers*

Strategy	N of contacts	Percent
Observation	129	43%
Discussion	106	35%
Modeling	91	30%
Providing resources and materials (not connected to curriculum)	59	20%
Connection to curriculum and materials	58	19%
Data review	52	17%
Video review	4	1%
Other strategy	26	9%
None specified	4	1%

*A given contact could include multiple strategies.

Focus Areas

Exhibit 20 presents data from coaches' logs on the percentages of individual and group training contacts that included work on specific focus areas. (A given contact could include work on more than one focus area.) Coaches addressed domain-specific topics (i.e., addressing the five essential domains of school readiness) in the majority of their contacts with VPI+ teachers (79% of contacts). Coaches also frequently spent time on teacher-child interactions (42% of contacts).

Supportive environments were a focus of more than one-third of contacts with VPI+ teachers (36%). Nearly one-fifth of contacts with VPI+ teachers included information on conducting and using formative assessments (20% and 17%). Coaching contacts less frequently included time spent on family engagement (13% of contacts). Likewise, few contacts addressed topics concerning dual language learners and children with special needs.

Exhibit 21 provides additional detail on the domain-specific focus area, showing the percentage of coaching contacts that incorporated each of the five essential domains of school readiness. A given contact could include work on more than one of the domains. Generally, language and literacy was the domain most often addressed, followed by social and emotional development and then mathematics. More than half of contacts with teachers from VPI+ classrooms included work on language and literacy. Coaches included social and emotional development in 29% of contacts with VPI+ teachers. Approaches to learning informed 21% of contacts with VPI+ teachers. Science, the arts, and physical health and development had the least emphasis, included in only 8-13% of contacts with VPI+ teachers.

Exhibit 20. Percentage of Individual Coaching and Group Training Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Focus Area (Both Charts Below)

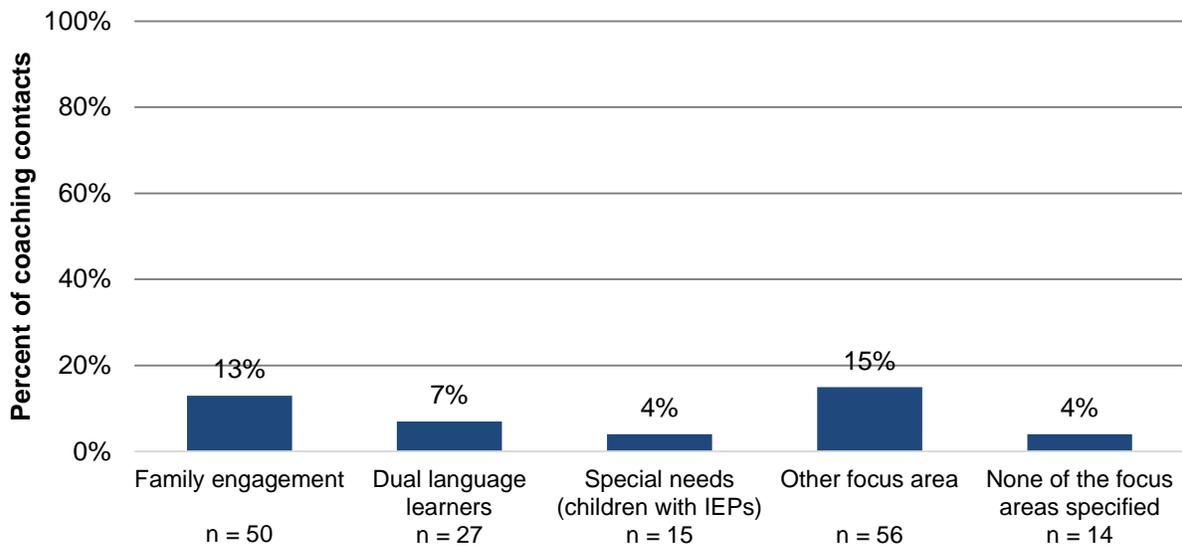
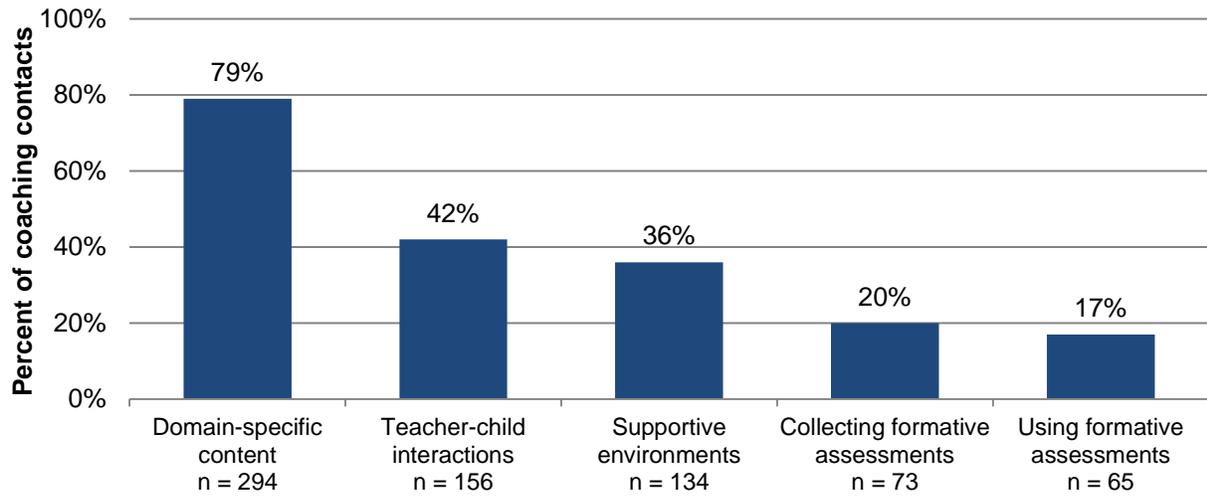
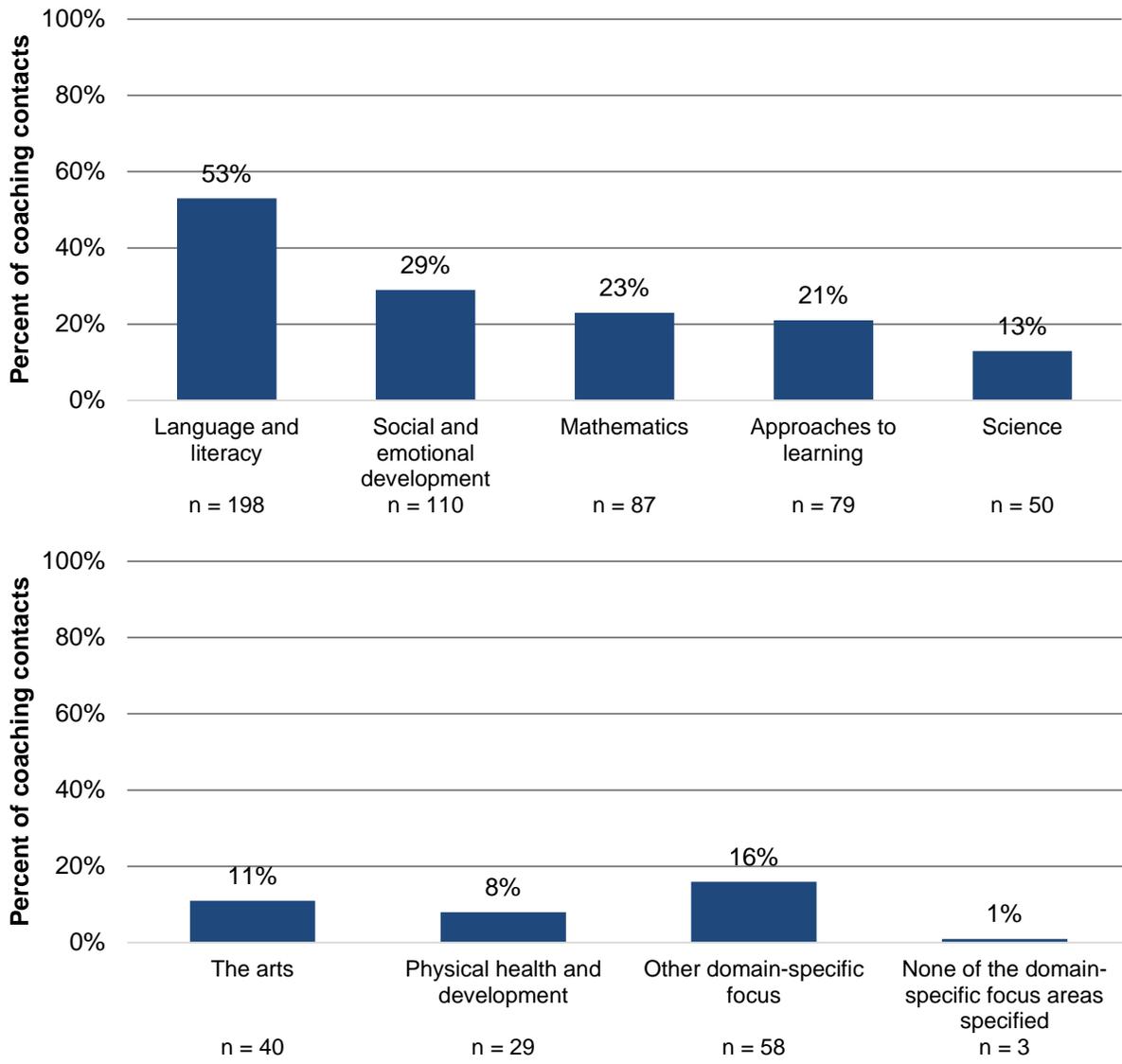


Exhibit 21. Percentage of Individual Coaching and Group Training Contacts with VPI+ Teachers Incorporating Domain-Specific Focus Areas (Both Charts Below)



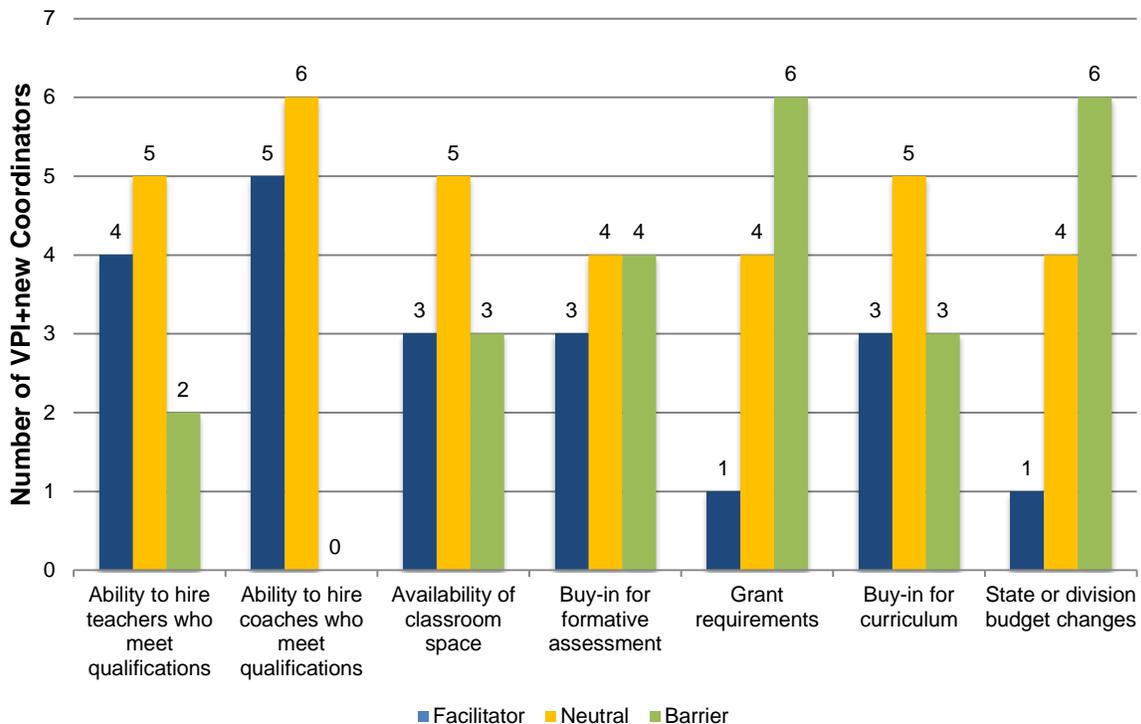
Facilitators and Barriers

VPI+ coordinators reflected on the factors that helped facilitate the successful launch of so many new classrooms, as well as factors that made implementation more difficult, through a survey and phone interviews conducted in November and December 2015. This section describes the lessons learned and shared by the 11 VPI+ coordinators about the launching and initial implementation of VPI+ in their school divisions.

Facilitators and Barriers Overall

The VPI+ coordinator survey asked the VPI+ coordinators about facilitators and barriers to VPI+ program implementation. Exhibit 22 displays the responses. Most VPI+ coordinators rated the ability to hire teachers and coaches who meet the qualifications of the grant as either neutral or facilitating implementation, while meeting grant requirements and addressing state or school division budget changes were either neutral or barriers to implementation. VPI+ coordinators gave mixed ratings on the availability of classroom space and buy-in for the curriculum and formative assessment.

Exhibit 22. Facilitators and Barriers to VPI+ Implementation



Below is a summary of the specific ways in which contextual and other factors supported and hindered enrollment, program implementation, and professional development in the 11 VPI+ school divisions based on interviews with their VPI+ coordinators.

Enrollment and Access

VPI+ coordinators reported increasing their advertising efforts during the first year of the grant and using multiple forms of outreach in schools and the community to identify and recruit families. Several VPI+ coordinators reported having more resources for marketing, and that they advertised more aggressively and in new ways, such as through radio and television announcements. According to VPI+ coordinators, family engagement coordinators led some recruitment activities such as outreach to identify eligible children, translation services, following up with interested families (especially hard-to-reach families), and maintaining a waitlist. VPI+ coordinators also reported collaborating with elementary schools in the division, by sending fliers home from schools with high proportions of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunches and posting information in school newsletters. In a few school divisions, school-based family advocates or administrative staff assisted families with the application process. Other recruitment activities included working with churches and community programs, setting up booths at community events, and displaying fliers at apartment complexes and doctors' offices. One VPI+ coordinator reported reaching out to parents in nearby communities whose children were on waitlists for other preschool programs. School division staff also relied on the reputation of the program in the community and on relationships with community advocates, such as the mayor, families, and agency staff who could promote enrollment through word of mouth.

Several VPI+ coordinators reported that the family engagement coordinator (or family specialist) led or participated in recruitment activities during the enrollment process.

They conducted activities such as outreach to identify eligible children, translation services, following up with interested families (especially hard-to-reach families), and maintaining the waitlist. At least three school divisions mentioned that the family engagement coordinator was responsible for at least the recruitment part of the enrollment process, if not the entire enrollment process itself.

School divisions had processes and supports in place to identify and enroll families whose home language was other than English, but they continued to face challenges in identifying and maintaining contact with other hard-to-reach populations, such as homeless families. Several VPI+ coordinators reported having bilingual staff or access to

translators to assist with recruitment and enrollment. A few VPI+ coordinators discussed using flyers, billboards, and other informational documents printed in multiple languages to promote enrollment. To reach families whose home languages were other than English, VPI+ coordinators also reported working with churches with high concentrations of Latino members, setting up booths at farmers' markets that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars, and having interpreters at all outreach activities. A few VPI+ coordinators reported that "word of mouth" from family, friends, and trusted providers, including having bilingual family members present during enrollment, was useful for identifying and recruiting families who do not speak English at home. Coordinators also reported that school divisions made efforts to connect with other hard-to-reach populations, but these efforts were not as effective as the more general efforts to find children who met the eligibility criteria. In one school division, all recruitment staff members were Notaries Public and had access to portable copier machines, so that enrollment could occur efficiently and wherever families were. Another VPI+ coordinator reported having a staff member dedicated to working with the homeless population. However, it was difficult to reach families who are homeless and even more difficult to maintain communication throughout the enrollment process, because city law requires families to leave hotels after 30 days. Another VPI+ coordinator reported difficulty in identifying families in which the oldest child is four years old and not yet associated with any public programs; the school division had not identified a solution for systematically identifying these families.

Coordinators whose school divisions implemented a universal and/or single-point of entry registration process reported that registration generally went smoothly, while coordinators from other school divisions experienced some procedural barriers. All coordinators whose school divisions used a single-point of entry approach reported that the process was established before the grant began or that they had replicated the process of another preschool program, such as Head Start. The universal process entailed one or more organizations (e.g., VPI, VPI+, Head Start, Title I) implementing a common set of procedures to register children (i.e., using the same forms), and then determining a program for which each child was eligible. School divisions using a single point of entry process (which could also be a universal process) conducted the registration process for the VPI+ program through only one organization. Coordinators in two school divisions reported that having effective collaboration with Head Start during registration was a particular strength. In contrast, one VPI+ coordinator discussed a misunderstanding with Head Start about using a common enrollment form. The coordinator of another school division reported using a multiple points of entry enrollment

process, in which each school registered children, and suggested that a single point of entry might have mitigated some problems, such as staff misunderstanding the enrollment requirements. According to coordinators, school divisions having community-based programs did not have existing enrollment processes and experienced some challenges with implementing a new system for this purpose.

Nearly half of VPI+ coordinators reported experiencing challenges during registration with income verification and eligibility criteria that was different from state-funded VPI in the past. These VPI+ coordinators reported that the VPI+ eligibility determination required verification of household income, rather than family income, and that school divisions did not always have the needed forms or processes in place to verify household income. They also reported that the income criteria resulted in some children being ineligible for programs, particularly in cases where grandparents' incomes had to be included in the household income calculation.

Program Implementation

VPI+ Program Coordination

Nearly all VPI+ coordinators reported that they were able to hire coaches and teachers who met the qualifications, and they used strategies such as recruiting from colleges and universities and hiring certified teachers already working in the school system. All VPI+ coordinators reported having no challenges in finding and hiring qualified coaches with relevant experience and skills. Several coordinators reported that, in addition to meeting qualifications, their coaches brought advantages such as knowledge of early literacy, technology integration, and speech and language pathology, and a few coaches had previously worked in the school division and had longstanding relationships with the teachers. Several coordinators also reported having access to large pools of teacher applicants. Two coordinators reported that all school division teachers met the qualifications and that they hired licensed teachers from public elementary schools. Only one VPI+ coordinator reported having had difficulty hiring a licensed teacher for community program, mentioning a perception among teachers that it is better to work for a school division than for a childcare partner.

Most VPI+ coordinators reported finding space for preschool programs through collaboration with schools, childcare and preschool centers, and community groups, but a few coordinators also expressed that it was challenging to find spaces that were large enough and appropriate for preschool students. In several school divisions, programs took

place in elementary school classrooms, and one VPI+ coordinator reported actively looking for additional space because of overcrowding in the schools. VPI+ coordinators also reported leveraging space from private daycare programs, a local church, and preschool centers that also house Head Start and Title 1 programs. A couple of VPI+ coordinators reported that the available space was not “preschool friendly” and that they were seeking other locations.

Most VPI+ coordinators reported being able to meet transportation needs through school district busing, but there were some challenges in transporting children to community-based and private programs. A few VPI+ coordinators reported having effective collaboration with division transportation offices, and one reported that the local superintendent of a rural school division was very committed to offering transportation to all students. One coordinator reported that the program did not offer transportation but that most children lived within walking distance of the program, and the coordinator was making plans to offer transportation next year. In contrast, three coordinators reported that transportation was a challenge (in some cases it was a barrier to enrollment), especially in their private and community-based programs. One coordinator was working with a community bus service and the local department of transportation to identify solutions.

Communication with schools about VPI+ implementation occurred both formally during designated meeting times and informally as needed. All but one VPI+ coordinator reported meetings between VPI+ programs and participating schools. Two VPI+ coordinators reported only using designated professional learning or professional development time slots for this purpose. In other school divisions, coordinators reported having scheduled meetings with schools at least monthly and some more frequently (i.e., weekly). Three VPI+ coordinators also discussed having frequent informal contact with participating school staff, with two reporting that being in a small school division or having close proximity to school staff facilitated their communication and collaboration. The timing of school division meetings across programs ranged from weekly meetings of VPI coordinators and programs to meeting on school division-designated professional development days only or on an as-needed basis.

VPI+ coordinators reported that principals were generally supportive of VPI+ programs, but they expressed some uncertainty about principals’ roles and how or whether to involve them. VPI+ coordinators reported that building or program administrators were generally supportive of the VPI+ program, actively integrating the VPI+ programs into the school community. One VPI+ coordinator reported that principals “committed upfront to be

ambassadors” for the program. However, a few coordinators were uncertain about how much to involve and communicate with principals. One VPI+ coordinator reported that VPI management (instructional director and assistant superintendents) meet to discuss implementation, but they did not include school administrators or program directors in these meetings.

Despite finding the state-level VPI+ leadership to be responsive and supportive, VPI+ coordinators reported having difficulty meeting the multiple deadlines imposed by the grant and evaluation, and they expressed a desire for more streamlined communication from the state. Several VPI+ coordinators expressed a desire to receive more information up front about reporting expectations, with fewer changes throughout the year. Part of the issue may have been the number of people working with the coordinators. As one coordinator remarked, “Everyone has made 110% effort to communicate, I just think for a while the communication, was a lot, and I was confused who was who.” Two VPI+ coordinators attributed issues with deadlines to the reality of starting a new program, with one reporting, “I really think that first year – it is what it is...[the] calendar, requirements, budget—it is what it had to be.” Nevertheless, both of these VPI+ coordinators hoped that future timelines would not be as difficult to meet.

Most school division VPI+ coordinators reported having multiple roles and responsibilities that prevented them from spending enough time on VPI+ program coordination. Three VPI+ coordinators reported being dedicated solely to VPI+ or both VPI+ and VPI Improved, while all other coordinators had additional responsibilities, such as serving as the director of federal programs or coordinator of Head Start or all school division early childhood programs. At least one coordinator also served as a VPI+ coach and family engagement specialist. Coordinators reported that it was difficult to address all of their responsibilities and communicate with all the different agencies associated with their various coordination roles. For example, one coordinator who is also the VPI+ coach reported that initially she held weekly group meetings with all teachers and spent 15–20 minutes with each teacher individually. However, she said that she had not met with teachers in several weeks due to competing priorities (e.g., recruitment, meetings, data requests). Another coordinator remarked that she spends most of her time in support of approximately 5% of the preschoolers enrolled in VPI+, but she is responsible for the programming for all of them. One coordinator reported receiving an additional stipend from the school division for the work she had put in outside of her contracted time, due to the high demands of the coordinator role.

A few VPI+ coordinators expressed concerns about the adequacy of the budget to fulfill the grant expectations, but VPI+ coordinators who could provide in-kind resources for programing and who had experience operating under similar types of budgets reported that the funding was adequate and that procedures for administering the grant were manageable. Two VPI+ coordinators discussed budget challenges related to misunderstanding what PDG funds could be used for (e.g., they could not be used for supplies in VPI Improved classrooms). One VPI+ coordinator reported that the provision of curriculum resources to the VPI+ classes was creating tension between the VPI+ teachers and the VPI teachers due to the proximity of the classrooms and blatant disparity in resources. These coordinators also mentioned not having budgeted sufficient funds for resources such as food, transportation, and substitute teachers. However, coordinators in at least four school divisions mentioned that in-kind funds provided by the school division and/or experience with similar budgets had afforded them sufficient resources to administer the grant as expected. Another budget-related challenge was managing budget reporting (i.e., having to submit two budget reimbursement requests to accommodate both federal and state budget systems, and having to navigate complicated guidelines around reimbursement).

Implementation of The Creative Curriculum® and the GOLD™ Formative Assessment

VPI+ coordinators reported mixed degrees of teacher buy-in for the selected curricula and the ease of implementation. Three of the VPI+ coordinators reported positive teacher buy-in for the curriculum, three other three VPI+ coordinators reported buy-in to be neutral, and four VPI+ coordinators found buy-in to be an implementation barrier. One VPI+ coordinator expressed that teachers approved of the new curriculum, despite challenges in transitioning from the previous one. Another reported teacher buy-in to be the biggest challenge of the grant.

Most coordinators reported that coaches monitor fidelity through meetings with teachers and by checking lesson plans, but of the eight school divisions using *The Creative Curriculum*® for the first time, only two coordinators mentioned use or awareness of specific tools for monitoring fidelity. When asked about plans for ensuring curriculum fidelity, more than half of the coordinators indicated that fidelity was largely the responsibility of the coaches, but there was some confusion about what it meant to support fidelity. One coordinator reported that there was no common understanding of what curriculum fidelity means; she had asked for more information on multiple occasions but had not yet received clear answers from CASTL. When asked about how they plan to support curriculum fidelity, VPI+ coordinators

reported planning to train teachers in data analysis and social-emotional training, deploying coaches to do lessons with teachers, and having teachers collaborate with each other before units. One coordinator said that it was, “definitely part of the coaching when [the coach] goes into the classroom...she looks at the lesson plans and those plans should contain *The Creative Curriculum*[®] plans.” Only two VPI+ coordinators mentioned the use of tools specifically intended for fidelity support, one using the fidelity books associated with the curriculum, and another using the fidelity checklist and finding it to be a helpful tool.

VPI+ coordinators reported that teachers faced time constraints in conducting GOLD™ formative assessments, so some school divisions purchased supportive technology to make data collection more efficient. Three VPI+ coordinators reported that their teachers experienced time constraints with the mechanics of conducting the formative assessment. One school division reported that the teachers had to spend significant time conducting observations and writing anecdotal notes, but the frustration had eased after they learned that they could apply one anecdote to multiple objectives. At least three VPI+ coordinators reported having purchased iPads to support teachers with data collection. Another VPI+ coordinator had reservations about the fidelity of implementation due to teachers not having needed materials in time to prepare for implementation (due to delays in procuring the curriculum and rolling it out to school divisions).

Most VPI+ coordinators reported that teachers experienced challenges with technology when implementing the formative assessment, but many also reported that these issues were beginning to resolve. Most school divisions mentioned there were initial challenges for teachers in learning to use the technology, and three coordinators reported stating that the training was inadequate, the technology was not reliable, and Teaching Strategies (the vendor of GOLD™) was not responsive to requests for help. Two VPI+ coordinators reported that their teachers were continuing to struggle with the assessment and technology, and one reported that she had made repeated unanswered inquiries to Teaching Strategies and that, “some [teachers] have gotten so frustrated that they stopped using it completely.” Many VPI+ coordinators, however, also acknowledged a learning curve for mastering technology. More than half of VPI+ coordinators reported that teachers were doing better or at least “getting there” with the assessment by the end of the fall. In contrast, two VPI+ coordinators expressed a belief in the potential of GOLD™ and expressed a desire to access all of the GOLD™ domains, rather than being limited to those required by the grant.

Comprehensive Services and Family Engagement

VPI+ coordinators reported having effective collaborations with public and community-based agencies and schools to identify family needs and available services. VPI+ coordinators reported having many preexisting partnerships with community agencies and schools that enabled them to connect families to a wide range of services and specialists. They also indicated that families of children enrolled in school-based VPI+ programs had access to school resources such as staff counselors, dental and medical screenings, and mental health specialists. Another school division capitalized on community partnerships for services in place with their Head Start program by expanding that network to VPI+ children.

Many VPI+ coordinators reported that family engagement coordinators were contributing to the success of the comprehensive service program. All school divisions had a family engagement coordinator/specialist (several were relatively new hires), and the majority were full-time employees. One of the two part-time family engagement coordinators also served in multiple VPI+ roles. One VPI+ coordinator reported that a family advocate was located at each preschool site to document the needs of and services provided to families. Family engagement coordinators conducted home visits and needs assessments and collaborated extensively with both public and community preschool programs to connect families to networks of services offered by school staff (e.g., nutritionist) and community-based agencies (e.g., cooking classes, English classes). In one school division with community-based programs, the family engagement coordinator connected families from two community programs that offer services (these programs are contracted with the county office for children). Several coordinators reported hosting parent and family events, especially before school starts (e.g., "intake week"), which provided additional opportunities to connect families with needed supports. Despite the important role of the family engagement coordinators, it was observed and reported by CASTL that family engagement coordinators had not received the same level of professional development and support as the division coordinators or the coaches.

At the time of the interviews, more than half of the VPI+ coordinators reported already having some type of parent advisory committee in operation, and four other school divisions were working on developing either an advisory committee or a family access consortium. Some school divisions had organized advisory bodies that include parents such as a parent consortium, parent advisory committee, or a policy council. One school division created a "family access consortium" that convenes parents to help them determine what kinds of services families need, whether the program can meet those needs, and if not, work toward

finding the means for the program to provide those services. Some of these advisory groups are specific to VPI+, and some are associated with a combination of preschool programs (e.g., Head Start and VPI+) coordinated by the school division. All coordinators reported arranging family events and activities specifically for the preschool program, such as holiday photos, trips to library, fire station, and parent events. VDOE reports that all school divisions reported having a family access consortium as of January 2016.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

State-Sponsored Technical Assistance

All VPI+ coordinators reported that their coaches attended the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) sponsored trainings, which were reported by coordinators to be very effective. Coordinators expressed appreciation that their coaches received face-to-face training sessions, monthly calls, and one-on-one consultation.

Coordinators consistently reported that support from CASTL facilitated effective implementation of the VPI+ program. One coordinator reported that, “Ann [Lhospital] (the primary CASTL contact with coaches) has been the best thing.” Two VPI+ coordinators also expressed an interest in receiving training in Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®] (CLASS) to help use CLASS data to improve classroom quality. Both the evaluation team and CASTL noted that divisions are expected to complete a significant amount of meetings and reporting in addition to administering the VPI+ initiative. This makes it difficult to find times for division leadership and coaches to meet together for professional development opportunities. CASTL also noted that given the unanticipated demands of the registration and recruitment process, there were fewer opportunities to convene school division leaders who were busy establishing their programs.

All but one VPI+ coordinator reported that coaches and teachers attended both GOLD[™] trainings, but some coordinators reported that trainings occurred at times that conflicted with other teacher responsibilities and were not sufficient in dosage to adequately prepare teachers. Due to the late timing of the training due to a delay in the grant approval, one school division could only send coaches and teachers to one of the two sessions offered. In another school division, the GOLD[™] training occurred within one week of the teachers’ first “check point” (i.e., data submission due date) and also coincided with teacher training on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) PreK assessment. According to a coordinator in another school division, the materials were not yet available at the time of training, and teachers consequently felt that they needed more help than they received. Two VPI+ coordinators expressed that the GOLD[™] training included too much time on background

information and troubleshooting. Two other VPI+ coordinators reported positive impressions of the GOLD™ training but indicated that the limited amount of time spent in training was not enough to adequately prepare teachers. Two VPI+ coordinators reported consequently using local resources to supplement the GOLD™ training. One school division called on Head Start teachers to help provide a half-day of training. Another VPI+ coordinator stated that, “The coaches and I recognize the teachers need more, so we did a webinar with the teachers and modeled for [them]...the teachers really appreciate that.”

Local Coaching and Professional Development

VPI+ coordinators reported that teachers needed more training on *The Creative Curriculum*® and would have benefitted from more preparation time, including access to all materials, before implementation. Several VPI+ coordinators indicated that teachers needed more training on *The Creative Curriculum*® than they received, a few suggesting that there were not enough allotted professional development days. Another challenge was the timing of the curriculum training, which one VPI+ coordinator described as being “very fast” in coming after the grant start-up, which made them feel as though they were behind. Another VPI+ coordinator reported having gotten off to a slow start because not all the curricular materials were provided to them at first. After receiving materials, however, that VPI+ coordinator reported that the teachers were doing better with implementation. Teachers in another school division had difficulty reconciling the focus of the curriculum with what was expected in kindergarten, ultimately supplementing the *The Creative Curriculum*® with *Foundations* (a literacy program) for 30 minutes per day.

In all VPI+ school divisions, coaches had some discretion over the content of the training and coaching topics they covered with teachers, and in a few school divisions, teachers had some input into the coaching topics as well; in most school divisions, the frequency of coaching sessions depended at least partly on teachers’ needs. All VPI+ coordinators reported that coaches designed at least some aspects of the coaching according to individual teachers’ needs, and only one school division identified a specific topic (instruction) that the coaches were expected to integrate into their coaching sessions. One coordinator mentioned CASTL’s needs assessment as a tool that coaches use for identifying and prioritizing teachers’ professional development needs, and another coordinator discussed collaboration among coaches and lead teachers in determining coaching needs. A few coordinators said that teachers could request specific types of training from their coach or set personal professional development goals to work on with coaches. The amount of time coaches spent individually with

teachers also depended somewhat on teachers' needs, with two VPI+ coordinators reporting no prescribed coaching schedule. One coordinator reported that coaches held weekly meetings with teachers and followed up as needed, another reported a minimum of four hours of coaching weekly per teacher, and another reported that the teachers met with coaches nearly every day.

Recommendations

VPI+ state and local partners accomplished a great amount within their first year of the grant. VDOE procured a developmentally appropriate evidence-based curriculum and formative assessment, a professional development partner and cadre of professional development vendors to support local implementation, and an external evaluation contractor. The 11 school divisions launched 65 newly-opened VPI+ classrooms; hired coaches, family engagement coordinators, and highly-qualified teachers; enrolled 1,230 children from hard-to-reach families into VPI+ classrooms; and responded to a variety of grant and evaluation reporting requests. Technical assistance and professional development was provided on numerous topics, including curriculum, formative assessment, comprehensive services, practice-based coaching, recruitment of hard-to-reach families, public libraries as partners, and budget monitoring and reporting. Further, data on program quality was collected as part of Virginia's QRIS and is now being used to inform program improvements and professional development. Also, the evaluation collected and shared summative assessment data on VPI+ children to identify learning needs and track children's progress. Finally, Virginia strengthened its cross-agency coordination of services and data through its VPI+ Implementation Team and Cross-Organizational Data Team.

While initial implementation of VPI+ has been successful overall, the formative evaluation, through the reflection of VPI+ coordinators and data from QRIS ratings and coaching logs, has identified some needs of the school divisions that may benefit from additional support from VDOE and its partners moving forward.

Enrollment Process

- Where possible, use a single-point or universal enrollment process. This would require cooperation between all publically-funded preschool programs (e.g., Head Start, Title 1, VPI, and VPI+) as well as participating private programs.
- Some school divisions identified the need for more support around enrolling children from homeless families. It would be helpful if the state could identify and communicate resources and supports to reach these families and their children.
- School divisions may benefit from tools and training to help them more reliably collect information on family income to determine eligibility and report family characteristics for federal and evaluation reports.

Family Engagement

- Family engagement coordinators need more training and support, particularly around actively engaging families as decision makers.
- Family engagement coordinators also may want to reach out across divisions and identify ways to provide teachers and coaches with more support around family engagement.
 - VDOE and its partners could convene a cross-division meeting with family engagement coordinators to identify best practices for involving and engaging families in VPI+.

Program Quality Improvement

- Teachers may need more training on *The Creative Curriculum*[®] to be able to fully implement the curriculum. VPI+ coordinators and coaches may want to become familiar with fidelity check tools to support its accurate use in classrooms.
- Buy-in for the formative assessment tool (i.e., GOLD[™]) and the new curriculum was mentioned as a barrier in about a third of the divisions and may need continued attention. Helping teachers use data collected through GOLD[™] to inform instruction may increase its perceived value by teachers.
- It often takes a couple of years to become reliable at using formative assessment, such as GOLD[™]. Teachers may need additional trainings given the timing in Year 1 made it difficult for some teachers to attend booster trainings to promote more effective use.
- Teachers may benefit from more professional development and coaching on the practices captured through the CLASS[®] Instructional Support domain and the Activities and Program Structure subscales on the ECERS to support improved instructional quality in the classrooms.

Coaching

- School divisions may want to protect coaches' time so they are spending most of their time coaching and engaging with teachers; this is especially true for coaches who have other roles and responsibilities.
- In addition to using observation, discussion, and modeling with teachers, coaches could help teachers reflect on their practice by increasing the use of data and video review with VPI+ teachers.

- Coaches should help connect teachers to curriculum resources and materials that align with their coaching goals.
- Coaches may also want to consider ways to provide teachers with more support around family engagement, instruction for dual language learners, and working with children with special needs.
- Coaches also may need to help teachers with strategies to strengthen children’s approaches to learning and executive functioning skills (e.g., persistence, cognitive flexibility, self-regulation).
- VDOE and CASTL could help by clarifying expectations for the minimum amount coaching and training each VPI+ teacher should receive and guidance on how coaching time can be targeted based on teacher needs as well as the program goals.

Comprehensive Services

- Comprehensive services and transportation services were more difficult to provide at community-based programs. VPI+ division coordinators also found it more difficult to provide oversight to, communicate with, and provide coaching to community-based programs than VPI+ programs based at public schools. Therefore, technical assistance around strategies for working with community-based programs may be needed.
- Some school divisions may need targeted technical assistance around how to solve transportation service issues.

General

- Now that systems have been developed, expected requests (e.g., data exports, progress reports, meeting attendance, and scheduling of observations and assessments) of school divisions should be scheduled for the year and changes to the schedule should be avoided.
- School divisions may benefit from greater clarification of grant requirements and budget restrictions. Now that implementation is underway, a review of budgets to make sure school divisions have the funding needed to fully support their VPI+ and VPI Improved classrooms may identify needs for redistribution of some funds.
- School divisions may benefit from support in how best to communicate with and involve school principals.

In conclusion, VPI+ is off to a strong start. The school divisions are now working on establishing high-quality implementation of formative assessments and curriculum and identifying specific areas to focus on as part of their professional development efforts moving forward based on QRIS and child assessment data. State-level VPI+ leadership is working on increased communication among all grant partners, but especially with school divisions around issues such as recruitment of eligible children, data collection and reporting and fidelity of program implementation.

Future formative reports will describe the progress, accomplishments, and challenges of VPI+ throughout implementation of its four-year grant.

Appendix A: Enrollment for VPI+ and VPI Improved Classrooms

Enrollment, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

	All VPI+ Divisions			
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved	Total
Table E-1. Year 1 (2015-16) Enrollment	n		n	n
a. Goal (Oct. 2014)	1,213		1,470	2,683
b. Revised goal (Apr. 2015)	1,175		1,771	2,946
c. Enrollment as of Dec. 2015	1,230		1,574	2,804
d. Percentage of filled slots	105%		89%	95%

	All VPI+ Divisions					
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Table E-2. Enrollment by Public versus Private Preschools						
In public programs	1,163	95%	1,574	100%	2,737	98%
In private programs	67	5%			67	2%

	All VPI+ Divisions					
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Table E-3. Enrollment by Child Ethnicity						
Black or African American	656	53%	1,102	70%	1,758	63%
Hispanic	293	24%	199	13%	492	18%
White	149	12%	159	10%	308	11%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	37	3%	37	2%	74	3%
Two or more races	44	4%	23	1%	67	2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	< 10	--	< 10	--	< 10	--
Not specified	50	4%	48	3%	98	3%

Enrollment, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table E-4. Enrollment by Child Gender	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Male	612	50%	774	49%	1,386	49%		
Female	616	50%	769	49%	1,385	49%		
Not specified	< 10	--	31	2%	33	1%		

Table E-5. Enrollment by Child Age (age as of September 30, 2015)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
48 to 53 months	598	49%	788	50%	1,386	49%		
54 to 59 months	631	51%	784	50%	1,415	50%		
60 months or more	< 10	--	< 10	--	< 10	--		

Table E-6. Enrollment by Federal Poverty Level	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
At or below 100 percent	818	67%	879	56%	1,697	61%		
101 to 130 percent	175	14%	347	22%	522	19%		
131 to 200 percent	237	19%	348	22%	585	21%		

Enrollment, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table E-7. Enrollment by Home Language	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
English	908	74%	1,347	86%	2,255	80%		
Spanish	231	19%	154	10%	385	14%		
Arabic	24	2%	18	1%	42	1%		
Other language	52	4%	32	2%	84	3%		
Not specified	15	1%	23	1%	38	1%		

Note: Other languages specified include Amharic, Bengali or Bangla, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Dari, Farsi, French, Kazakh, Malay, Nepali, Pashto, Somali, Swahili, Turkish, and Twi

Table E-8. Enrollment by Child Disability Status	All VPI+ Divisions					
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Identified disability	43	3%	58	4%	101	4%
No identified disability	1,187	97%	1,516	96%	2,703	96%

Table E-9. Enrollment by Maternal Education	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Did not graduate from high school	201	16%	128	8%	329	12%		
High school graduate (diploma or GED)	326	27%	482	31%	808	29%		
Some college, no degree	160	13%	316	20%	476	17%		
Associate degree	51	4%	28	2%	79	3%		
Bachelor's degree or higher	66	5%	111	7%	177	6%		
Not specified	426	35%	509	32%	935	33%		

Note: In the first year of the expansion grant, this information was not consistently collected. In future years, school divisions will provide complete information.

Enrollment, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table E-10. Enrollment by Military Connected Status	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
From military families	30	2%			30	1%		
Not from military families	400	33%	115	7%	515	18%		
Not specified	800	65%	1,459	93%	2,259	81%		

Note: In the first year of the expansion grant, this information was not consistently collected. In future years, school divisions will provide complete information.

Table E-11. Enrollment by Migrant Status	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
From migrant families	< 10	--	<10	--	< 10	--		
Not from migrant families	898	73%	752	48%	1,650	59%		
Not specified	330	27%	821	52%	1,151	41%		

Note: In the first year of the expansion grant, this information was not consistently collected. In future years, school divisions will provide complete information.

Table E-12. Enrollment by Homeless Status	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Homeless	25	2%	31	2%	56	2%		
Not homeless	913	74%	980	62%	1,893	68%		
Not specified	292	24%	563	36%	855	30%		

Note: In the first year of the expansion grant, this information was not consistently collected. In future years, school divisions will provide complete information.

Enrollment, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table E-13. Enrollment by Welfare System Status	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
In the child welfare system (defined as in foster care)	13	1%		< 10	--		16	1%
Not in the child welfare system	397	32%		181	11%		578	21%
Not specified	820	67%		1,390	88%		2,210	79%

Note: In the first year of the expansion grant, this information was not consistently collected. In future years, school divisions will provide complete information.

Appendix B: Program Characteristics of VPI+ and VPI Improved Classrooms

Program Characteristics, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

	All VPI+ Divisions			
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved	Total
Table P-1. Number of Teachers and Classes	n		n	n
Teachers	114		91	205
Assistant teachers	111		93	204
Classes	109		91	200

	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Ratio		n	Ratio		n	Ratio
Table P-2. Class Child-to-Instructional Staff Ratio (includes teachers and assistants)								
Average (number of students to 1 instructional staff person)	109	8.5		91	8.6		200	8.6
Smallest		5.3			6			5.3
Largest		18			9			18

	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
Table P-3. Class Child-to-Instructional Staff Ratio (includes teachers and assistants)								
9:1 or less	106	97.20%		91	100.00%		197	98.50%
10:01	2	1.80%					2	1.00%
11:1 or more	1	0.90%					1	0.50%

Program Characteristics, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table P-4. Class Size (number of students in class)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Size		n	Size		n	Size
Average	109	17.3		91	17.4		200	17.3
Smallest		11			12			11
Largest		19			18			19

Table P-4. Class Size (number of students in class)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Size		n	Size		n	Size
Average	109	17.3		91	17.4		200	17.3
Smallest		11			12			11
Largest		19			18			19

Table P-5. Classes by Size (number of students)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
18 or fewer	107	98.20%		91	100.00%		198	99.00%
19 to 20	2	1.80%					2	1.00%

Table P-6. Children in Classes by Teacher Level of Education (highest completed)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
Bachelor's degree	644	52.40%		683	43.40%		1,327	47.30%
Master's degree	579	47.10%		876	55.70%		1,455	51.90%
Not specified	7	0.60%		15	1.00%		22	0.80%

Program Characteristics, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table P-7. Children in Classes by Teacher Type of License	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Collegiate professional	547	44.50%	689	43.80%	1,236	44.10%		
Postgraduate professional	552	44.90%	815	51.80%	1,367	48.80%		
Provisional	74	6.00%	62	3.90%	136	4.90%		
Other	16	1.30%			16	0.60%		
Not specified	41	3.30%	8	0.50%	49	1.70%		

Table P-8. Children in Classes by Teacher License Endorsement(s)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Elementary education PreK-6	656	53.30%	638	40.50%	1,294	46.10%		
Early NK-4	200	16.30%	755	48.00%	955	34.10%		
Early/primary education PreK-3	359	29.20%	196	12.50%	555	19.80%		
Other teaching license	338	27.50%	174	11.10%	512	18.30%		
Not specified	62	5.00%	15	1.00%	77	2.70%		

Note: Teachers may have more than one type of license endorsement, so total may add up to more than 100 percent.

Table P-9. Children in Classes by Core Curriculum	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
The Creative Curriculum	655	53.30%	--	--	655	53.30%		
High Scope	143	11.60%	--	--	143	11.60%		
Houghton Mifflin PreK	364	29.60%	--	--	364	29.60%		
FCPS Program of Studies	68	5.50%			68	5.50%		

Program Characteristics, All 11 VPI+ Divisions, Fall 2015

Table P-10. Children in Classes with Comprehensive Services Readily Available	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
Hearing	1,230	100.00%		1,574	100.00%		2,804	100.00%
Vision	1,230	100.00%		1,574	100.00%		2,804	100.00%
Food bank	1,214	98.70%		1,574	100.00%		2,788	99.40%
Adult education	1,210	98.40%		1,574	100.00%		2,784	99.30%
Domestic violence counseling/services	1,161	94.40%		1,548	98.30%		2,709	96.60%
Dental	1,128	91.70%		1,545	98.20%		2,673	95.30%
Health services	1,108	90.10%		1,545	98.20%		2,653	94.60%
Family resource centers	1,041	84.60%		1,519	96.50%		2,560	91.30%
WIC enrollment	1,039	84.50%		1,393	88.50%		2,432	86.70%
Insurance enrollment	1,023	83.20%		1,393	88.50%		2,416	86.20%
Prenatal	1,028	83.60%		1,351	85.80%		2,379	84.80%
Mental health services for children	731	59.40%		1,130	71.80%		1,861	66.40%
Mental health services for families	711	57.80%		1,130	71.80%		1,841	65.70%
Substance abuse treatment for families	661	53.70%		1,130	71.80%		1,791	63.90%
Transportation	873	71.00%		559	35.50%		1,432	51.10%
Emergency housing	264	21.50%		251	15.90%		515	18.40%

Appendix C: Coaching Activities With Teachers of VPI+ and VPI Improved Classrooms

Coaching Log Data from November through December 2015

	All VPI+ Divisions
Table C-1. Number of Coaches, FTE, and Teacher-to-Coach Ratio	Total
Number of coaches	14
Total coach FTE	11.9
Teacher-to-coach ratio (number of teachers to 1 FTE coach)	17.2

	All VPI+ Divisions		
Table C-2. Number of Teachers and Teachers Served	VPI+ New	VPI Improved	Total
Total number of teachers	114	91	205
Number of teachers served	85	33	118

	All VPI+ Divisions		
Table C-3. Number of Coaching Contacts, Average Contacts with Teachers, and Average Hours for Contacts	VPI+ New	VPI Improved	Total
Total number of coaching contacts	374	65	439
Average number of coaching contacts with teachers	4.4	2	3.7

	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
Table C-4. Coaching Contacts by Type of Contact	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
In classroom (with students present)	201	54%		16	25%		217	49%
Meeting with teacher (in person or by phone)	98	26%		19	29%		117	27%
Group training	75	20%		30	46%		105	24%

Coaching Log Data from November through December 2015

Table C-5. Average Length of Contact by Type of Contact (minutes)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean		
Average length of contact	374	81.4	65	57.5	439	77.9		
- In classroom (with students present)	201	63.2	16	55.3	217	62.6		
- Meeting with teacher (in person or by phone)	98	50.4	19	46.1	117	49.7		
- Group training	75	170.8	30	66	105	140.9		

Table C-6. Coaching Contacts by Length of Contact (minutes)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved		Total			
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
< 30	40	11%	1	2%	41	9%		
30 to 59	143	38%	37	57%	180	41%		
60 to 89	90	24%	18	28%	108	25%		
90 or more	101	27%	9	14%	110	25%		

Coaching Log Data from November through December 2015

Table C-7. Coaching Strategies for Individual Coaching Contacts (excludes group training contacts)	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Observation	129	43%	15	43%	144	43%		
Discussion (reflective conversation or problem-solving, role playing)	106	35%	13	37%	119	36%		
Modeling (live or via video)	91	30%	3	9%	94	28%		
Providing other resources and materials	59	20%			59	18%		
Connection to curriculum resources and materials	58	19%			58	17%		
Data review	52	17%	2	6%	54	16%		
Video review (of teacher's video)	4	1%			4	1%		
Other strategy	26	9%	8	23%	34	10%		
None of the above coaching strategies specified	4	1%			4	1%		

Note: More than one strategy per contact can be used, so total may add up to more than 100 percent.

Coaching Log Data from November through December 2015

Table C-8. Focus Area for Individual Coaching Contacts and Group Training Contacts	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New			VPI Improved			Total	
	n	Percent		n	Percent		n	Percent
Domain-specific content	294	79%		40	62%		334	76%
Teacher-child interactions	156	42%		19	29%		175	40%
Supportive environments	134	36%		11	17%		145	33%
Collecting formative assessments	73	20%		15	23%		88	20%
Using formative assessments	65	17%		15	23%		80	18%
Family engagement	50	13%		8	12%		58	13%
Dual language learners	27	7%		1	2%		28	6%
Special needs (children with IEPs)	15	4%		6	9%		21	5%
Other focus area	56	15%		31	48%		87	20%
None of the above focus areas specified	14	4%		2	3%		16	4%

Note: More than one focus area per contact can be used, so total may add up to more than 100 percent.

Coaching Log Data from November through December 2015

Table C-9. Domain-Specific Focus for Individual Coaching Contacts and Group Training Contacts	All VPI+ Divisions							
	VPI+ New		VPI Improved				Total	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent		
Language and literacy	198	53%	23	35%	221	50%		
Social and emotional development	110	29%	11	17%	121	28%		
Mathematics	87	23%	10	15%	97	22%		
Approaches to learning	79	21%	4	6%	83	19%		
Science	50	13%	2	3%	52	12%		
The arts	40	11%	2	3%	42	10%		
Physical health and development	29	8%	3	5%	32	7%		
Other domain-specific focus	58	16%	6	9%	64	15%		
None of the above domain-specific focus areas specified	3	1%	3	5%	6	1%		

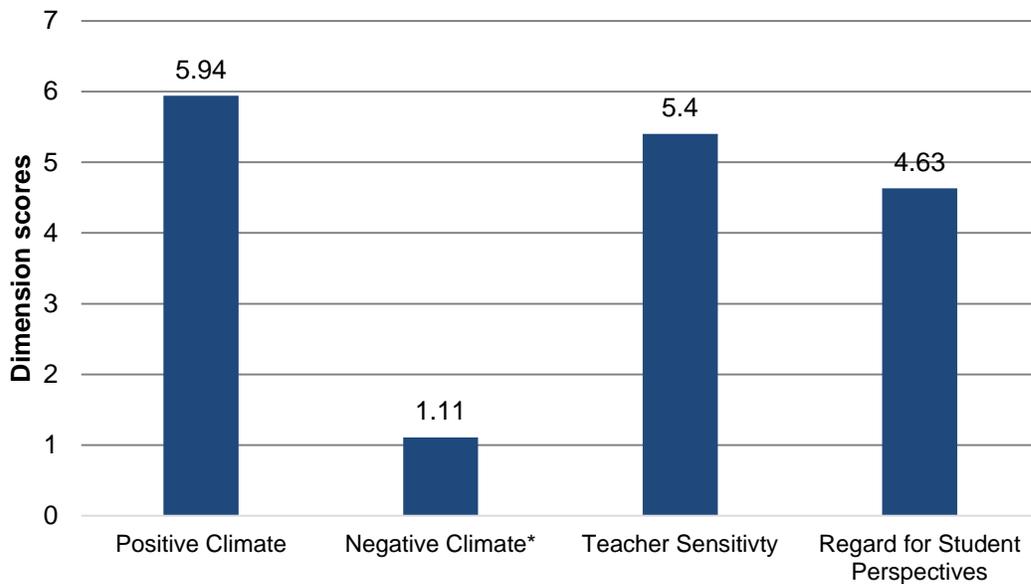
Note: More than one domain-specific focus area per contact can be used, so total may add up to more than 100 percent.

Appendix D: CLASS Domain Scores

Domain 1: Emotional Support

The Emotional Support domain assesses children’s social and emotional functioning in the classroom. Children who are connected to others are more likely to positively develop in both social and academic areas. Teacher support of children’s social and emotional functioning is essential in an effective classroom. Emotional Support contains four dimensions: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives. Thresholds have not been established by the publisher at the dimension level.

Exhibit D-1. CLASS® Emotional Support Scores - Fall 2015



Note: Negative Climate is scored opposite, with higher scores indicating lower quality.

Positive Climate

Positive Climate focuses on how teachers interact with children to develop warm relationships that promote children's enjoyment of the classroom. In classrooms scoring in the high range on positive climate, teachers and students interact with warmth and interest, using positive affect during communication. There is praise and verbal affection from the teacher and general respect among teachers and students.

VPI+ State Average Positive Climate Score: 5.94

Scores in this range indicate:

- There are some indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another;
- There are sometimes positive displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students;
- There are sometimes positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students;
- The teacher and students sometimes demonstrate respect for one another.

Negative Climate

Negative Climate reflects the amount and intensity of expressed negativity in the classroom. A classroom should be free of disrespect, sarcasm, and negative affect during interactions. Teachers should not maintain control of the classroom through threats, physical control or harsh punishment. Finally, there should never be instances of severe negativity such as physical punishment, victimization, or bullying. Note: A low score on Negative Climate is desired, as lower scores indicate higher quality, or a lack of negativity.

VPI+ State Average Negative Climate Score: 1.11

Scores in this range indicate:

- The teachers and students do not display strong negative affect and only rarely, if ever, display mild negativity;
- The teacher does not yell or make threats to establish control;
- The teacher and students are not sarcastic or disrespectful;
- There are no instances of severe negativity between the teacher and students.

Teacher Sensitivity

Teacher Sensitivity captures the teacher's awareness and response to the students' needs, both educational and emotional. In a classroom environment with high teacher sensitivity, students feel comfortable participating in activities and their problems are resolved in an effective manner. Teachers should anticipate student problems and provide acknowledgment and support for problems.

VPI+ State Average Teacher Sensitivity Score: 5.40

Scores in this range indicate:

- The teacher is sometimes aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention;
- Teacher is responsive to students sometimes but at other times is more dismissive or unresponsive, matching his or her support to the needs and abilities of some students but not others;
- The teacher is sometimes effective at addressing students' problems and concerns;
- The students sometimes seek support from, share ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.

Regard for Student Perspectives

Regard for Student Perspectives measures how teacher interaction with students emphasizes students' interests and points of view. One way to emphasize student interests is by allowing students to choose activities or demonstrate leadership or responsibility. Teachers can be flexible in their plans by following student ideas or creating student-driven activities. Teachers can also encourage students to provide ideas or simply talk about their perspective. Students may have freedom of movement or placement within each activity.

VPI+ State Average Regard for Student Perspectives Score: 4.63

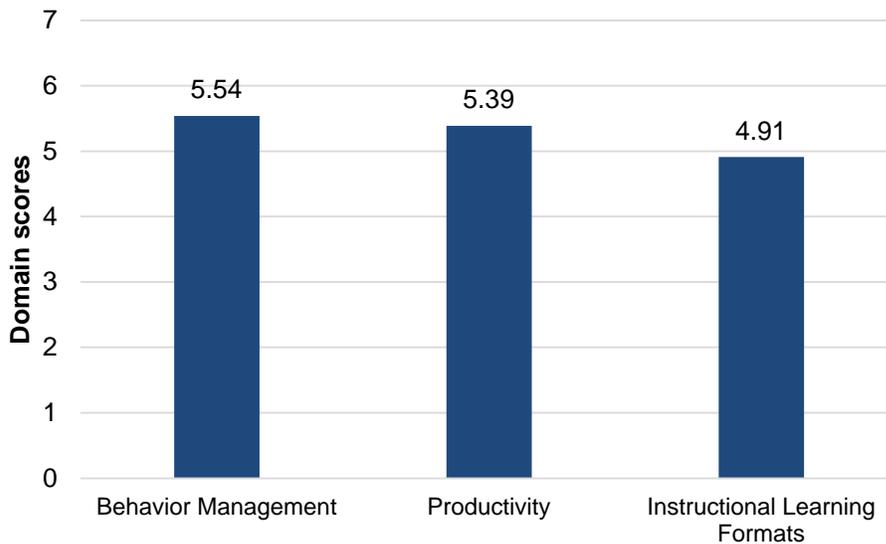
Scores in this range indicate:

- The teacher may follow students' lead during some periods and be more controlling during others;
- The teacher sometimes provides support for student autonomy and leadership but at other times fails to do so;
- There are periods during which there is a lot of talk and expression but other times when teacher talk predominates;
- The teacher is somewhat controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.

Domain 2: Classroom Organization

The Classroom Organization domain reflects the range of classroom processes regarding management of students, including their behavior and interest. Classrooms are able to provide more learning opportunities when students are well-behaved and are engaged in activities. Classroom Organization contains three dimensions: behavior management, productivity, and instructional learning formats. Thresholds have not been established by the publisher at the dimension level.

Exhibit D-2. CLASS® Classroom Organization Scores – Fall 2015



Behavior Management

Behavior Management considers the behavioral expectations provided by the teacher as well as the students' behavior in response. Teachers should clearly communicate the rules and expectations of behavior and enforce said rules in a consistent manner. A classroom with effective behavior management has adults who are proactive by monitoring student behavior to prevent problems from arising. Teachers should redirect misbehavior through subtle cues and a focus on the positive. In a highly effective classroom, students follow behavioral expectations without reminders.

VPI+ State Average Behavior Management Score: 5.54

Scores in this range indicate:

- Rules and expectations may be stated clearly but are inconsistently enforced;
- The teacher uses a mix of proactive and reactive responses; sometimes s/he monitors and reacts to early indicators of behavior problems but other times misses or ignores them;
- Some of the teacher's attempts to redirect behaviors are effective, particularly when the teacher focuses on positives and uses subtle cues. As a result, misbehavior rarely continues, escalates, or takes time away from learning;
- There are periodic episodes of misbehavior in the classroom.

Productivity

Productivity focuses on teacher management of time and student opportunity to engage in learning activities. In a highly productive classroom, teachers consistently provide activities for the students with limited disruptions. When transitions to new activities occur, they remain brief and contain learning opportunities within. Students should know what to do and/or where to be, and the necessary materials should be ready and accessible.

VPI+ State Average Productivity Score: 5.39

Scores in this range indicate:

- The teacher provides activities for the students most of the time, but some learning time is lost in dealing with disruptions and the completion of managerial tasks;
- There is some evidence of classroom routines that allow everyone to know what is expected of them;
- Transitions sometimes take too long or are too frequent and inefficient;
- The teacher is mostly prepared for activities but takes some time away from instruction to take care of last-minute preparations.

Instructional Learning Formats

Instructional Learning Formats assesses how the teacher engages students and impacts their ability to learn during activities. Teachers may effectively facilitate students' involvement by encouraging participation through questions, co-participation, or play. A highly effective classroom may have students that are consistently interested and involved in activities. Teachers can use a variety of materials, ranging across auditory, visual, and movement activities, to improve student interest. Finally, students should be aware of the purpose of the learning activity.

VPI+ State Average Instructional Learning Formats Score: 4.91

Scores in this range indicate:

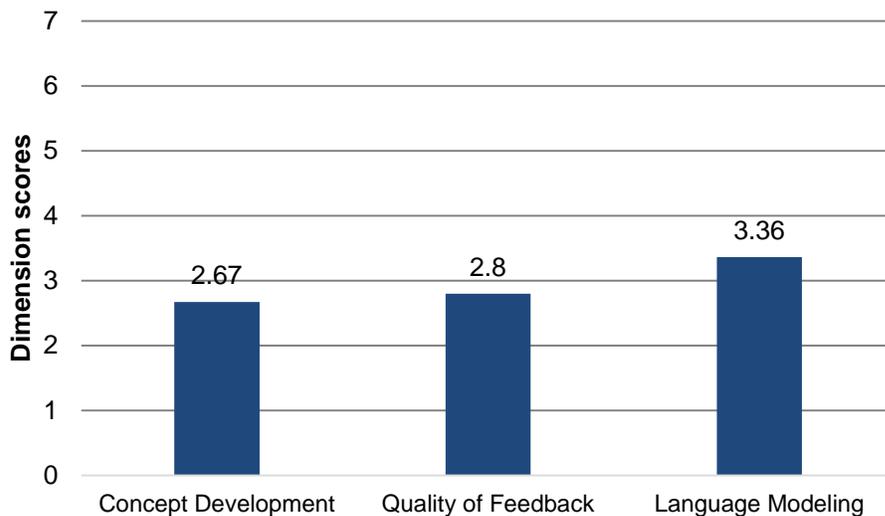
- At times, the teacher actively facilitates activities and lessons to encourage interest and expanded involvement but at other times merely provides activities for the students;
- The teacher is inconsistent in his or her use of a variety of modalities and materials to gain students' interest and participation during activities and lessons;
- Students may be engaged and/or interested for periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not involved in the activity or lesson;
- The teacher orients students somewhat to the learning objectives, or the learning objectives may be clear during some periods but less so during others

Domain 3: Instructional Support

The Instructional Support domain examines students cognitive and language development. Noted is the difference between simply learning facts and learning how facts are connected and organized. The ability of the child being able to develop an understanding of thinking process is critical in overall cognitive development. Interactions between teacher and student

that develop these skills are examined through three dimensions: concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. Thresholds have not been established by the publisher at the dimension level.

Exhibit D-3. CLASS® Instructional Support Scores – Fall 2015



Concept Development

Concept Development focuses on the teacher's promotion of higher-order thinking through discussions and activities. A classroom with a high level of concept development encourages analysis and reasoning through prediction, classification, and evaluation. Students may be provided opportunities to create their own ideas or products. Teachers should link concepts to each other and to the students' personal lives.

VPI+ State Average Concept Development Score: 2.67

Scores in this range indicate:

- The teacher rarely uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning;
- The teacher rarely provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products;
- Concepts and activities are presented independent of one another, and students are not asked to apply previous learning;
- The teacher does not relate concepts to the students' actual lives.

Quality of Feedback

Quality of Feedback captures the amount and quality of feedback provided by the teacher. Teachers can use student difficulties as opportunities to expand learning and understanding by providing hints at the correct answer or follow-up questions. Asking students to explain their reasoning and providing more information about the topic are also ways to expand student

learning. Finally, teachers can provide encouragement of student efforts that will increase their involvement.

VPI+ State Average Quality of Feedback Score: 2.80

Scores in this range indicate:

- The teacher rarely provides scaffolding to students but rather dismisses responses or actions as incorrect or ignores problems in understanding;
- The teacher gives only perfunctory feedback to students;
- The teacher rarely queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions;
- The teacher rarely provides additional information to expand on the students' understanding or actions;
- The teacher rarely offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.

Language Modeling

Language Modeling reflects the degree of language stimulation and language facilitation. Classrooms are assessed on the amount of conversations in the classroom, both teacher-student and student-student. Also, teachers may ask open-ended questions as to encourage elaborated responses from students. Teachers should use advanced language and map actions through descriptions.

VPI+ State Average Language Modeling Score: 3.36

Scores in this range indicate:

- There are limited conversations in the classroom;
- The teacher asks a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions;
- The teacher sometimes repeats or extends the students' responses;
- The teacher occasionally maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description;
- The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

Appendix E: ECERS Subscale Scores

Language-Reasoning

The Language-Reasoning subscale includes the following items: Books and Pictures, Encouraging Children to Communicate, Using Language to Develop Reasoning Skills, and Informal Use of Language. Classrooms that score high in this subscale often include staff that ask children open-ended questions, encourage reasoning from children, link spoken communication to written communication, and rotate books and pictures regularly in the classroom.

VPI+ State Average Language-Reasoning Score: 4.72

Threshold: 4.00

Scores may indicate:

- Books are available and accessible to children for at least some of the day, and staff are observed reading to children;
- Materials such as play telephones, puppets, and dramatic play props are available to children and staff are observed in activities encouraging children to communicate;
- Staff talk with children about logical relationships, and concepts are introduced appropriately;
- Children's talk is encouraged most of the day and staff generally respond to children's talk.

Activities

The Activities subscale includes the following items: Fine Motor, Art, Music/Movement, Blocks, Sand/Water, Dramatic Play, Nature/Science, Math/Number, Promoting Acceptance of Diversity, and Use of TV, Video, and/or Computers. Classrooms that score high in this subscale often include diversity as part of a daily routine, intersecting activities with lessons, rotating materials and activities to maintain children's interest, and teacher facilitation of the activities and materials.

VPI+ State Average Activities Score: 3.46

Threshold: 4.00

Scores may indicate:

- Developmentally appropriate fine motor, art, and music materials are available to children for daily use;
- Materials are accessible for blocks, dramatic play, nature/science, and math/number;
- Cultural diversity is visible in materials and do not present stereotypes.

Interaction

The Interaction subscale includes the following items: Supervision of Gross Motor Activities, General Supervision of Children (other than Gross Motor), Discipline, Staff-Child Interaction, and Interactions Among Children. Classrooms that score high in this subscale often include

positive peer interactions, staff that enjoy being with children, staff that use activities to help children understand social skills, and staff that interact with children during their play.

VPI+ State Average Interaction Score: 5.32

Threshold: 4.00

Scores may indicate:

- Supervision of children is adequate to ensure children's health, safety, proper use of materials, and cleanliness;
- Age-appropriate discipline techniques are used, and free of severe punishment and control;
- Few, if any, interactions between staff and children are unpleasant;
- Staff encourage peer interactions.

Program Structure

The Program Structure subscale includes the following items: Schedule, Free Play, Group Time, and Provisions for Children with Disabilities. Classrooms that score high in this subscale often include integration of children with disabilities into regularly classroom activities, supervision of free play, varied groupings of children, and schedule changes meet individual student needs.

VPI+ State Average Program Structure Score: 3.60

Threshold: 4.00

Scores may indicate:

- Daily schedule is familiar to children that includes free play inside and outside (weather permitting), and group time;
- If there are children with disabilities in the classroom, at least minor modifications are made to the classroom to meet the needs of those children.

Appendix F: VPI Eligibility Criteria

Guidance on 2015–2016 Implementation of Student Eligibility Criteria for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Enacted in Chapter 665 (2015 Appropriation Act)

The amended 2014–2016 budget adopted by the 2015 General Assembly (Chapter 665) was signed into law by Governor McAuliffe on March 26, 2015, without any proposed amendments or vetoes. The enacted budget contains new eligibility criteria for students participating in the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). Item 136 C.14. d.1 of Chapter 665 states:

“d.1) Local plans must indicate the number of at-risk four-year-old children to be served, and the eligibility criteria for participation in this program shall be consistent with the economic and educational risk factors stated in the 2014-2015 programs guidelines that are specific to: (i) family income at or below 200 percent of poverty, (ii) homelessness, (iii) student's parents or guardians are school dropouts, or (iv) family income is less than 350 percent of federal poverty guidelines in the case of students with special needs or disabilities.”

The Department of Education has received guidance from the chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees allowing flexibility in the implementation of the new student eligibility criteria during the 2015-16 school year, to allow a one-year transition from the existing student eligibility language in the VPI program to the newly adopted criteria referenced above.

Accordingly, when enrolling students in VPI programs for the 2015–16 school year, students meeting one of the four new criteria referenced above should be given priority for enrollment into approved VPI slots. School divisions, for the 2015–16 school year only, may also continue to use locally selected at-risk criteria for the enrollment of VPI students. The 2015–16 school year is the only year that will allow the transition of using both the new eligibility requirements adopted by the General Assembly and locally selected criteria. Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, school divisions may only use the four eligibility criteria referenced above in enrolling students in VPI programs. Please also note that the money committee chairmen have requested school divisions to report to the Department of Education the number of students enrolled in VPI for 2015–16 by each local eligibility criterion.