



**VECF and the Virginia Promise Partnership respectfully encourage support of the Senate budget position on VPI per pupil amount (PPA) funding.**

Discussion: House budget amendment Item 145 #8h modifies the Governor’s introduced budget (HB1800) by reducing the proposed VPI Per Pupil Amounts in FY22. The amendment “saves \$11.1 million the second year from the general fund and increases the VPI per pupil amount by 10% from \$6,326 in fiscal year 2021 to \$6,959 in fiscal year 2022.” The introduced budget had proposed increasing the per pupil amount to \$7,655 for FY22.

<u>Introduced budget</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>
VPI PPA	\$6,326	\$7,655
<u>House amendment</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>
VPI PPA	\$6,326	\$6,959
Budget impact	\$0	(\$11,119,673)

This funding directly supports the quality and sustainability of VPI services for at-risk preschoolers. This is exceedingly important now as the impacts of the pandemic become clear as evidenced by widening achievement gaps and social-emotional struggles among young children.

A greater percentage of Virginia children (45%) started kindergarten without having the key literacy, math and social-emotional skills needed to be successful.

The drop in entering kindergarteners’ literacy skills represents the largest ever single year decrease (5 times that of any one-year change in the history of PALS since 1997).

Virginia’s most vulnerable kindergarteners fared the worst; there are disproportionate numbers of children at high risk for reading failure among Black, Hispanic, economically-disadvantaged students and English learners (ELs).

Kindergarten teachers reported greater concerns about children’s social-emotional well-being.

It is imperative that Virginia provide sustained access to high-quality environments and experiences that support children’s healthy growth and development. VPI’s per pupil amount has never adequately or fully supported the true cost of a quality preschool experience. Now is the time to do more, not less to support Virginia’s signature early childhood program.

Both VECF and the Virginia Promise Partnership strongly support the Senate budget position on VPI per pupil amount funding.