
Virginia Preschool Initiative-Plus Formative Evaluation Report Spring 2016 Statewide Report

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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 existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI),² 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 the five essential 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)
 - Increased funding to provide comprehensive services to VPI+ children and their families and to increase family engagement in their children's early learning

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.

² Appendix B contains VPI eligibility criteria.

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

Due to evaluation budgetary constraints, 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, increased funding for comprehensive services and family engagement, and increased availability of instructional materials, including technology). Therefore, the body of this report focuses on only VPI+ classrooms and children. However, **Appendix A** includes tables with data on coaching provided to both VPI+ and VPI Improved teachers.

To inform VPI+ implementation, the evaluation contractor (SRI International) is conducting a formative evaluation and preparing formative evaluation reports each fall and spring of the initiative. This Spring 2016 Formative Report focuses on the period of January–May 2016³ and examines progress in the areas of (1) program quality, including teacher background, beliefs, and practices; (2) training and technical assistance from state partners to VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators; and (3) 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 three areas are summarized below. The full report also describes facilitators of and barriers to implementation and recommendations for further strengthening implementation.

Findings

(1) **Program Quality: VPI+ Teacher Background, Beliefs, and Practices**

All VPI+ classrooms are expected to include certain implementation components consistent with a high-quality preschool program as set forth by the Preschool

³ The Fall 2015 VPI+ Formative Evaluation Report was made available to VDOE and VPI+ school divisions in February 2016.

Development Grant (PDG), including a highly educated work force with a deep understanding of child development, children's and families' access to comprehensive services, use of an evidence-based curriculum, use of formative assessment results to inform instruction, and engagement of families in children's learning and progress.

VPI+ Teacher Background

- All VPI+ teachers had a bachelor's degree, and more than half (52%) also reported having a master's degree.
- Most VPI+ teachers identified themselves as White (67%), with another 20% identifying themselves as Black. Almost all (94%) VPI+ teachers were female, but a few were male.
- Most VPI+ teachers (90%) reported speaking only English proficiently; small percentages of teachers reported speaking proficiently in Spanish (7%) or in another language (4%) in addition to English.
- Most VPI+ teachers (68%) had prior experience teaching in preschools. Of those VPI+ teachers who were new to teaching preschool, more than half (56%) reported having taught elementary school the prior year.
- The VPI+ teachers who had taught preschool the prior year ($n = 74$) came from various types of preschool programs and most ($n = 45$) who had taught preschool before had worked in division-operated preschool classrooms in the same school divisions the prior year.

VPI+ Teacher Beliefs

- The majority of VPI+ teachers rated all social and academic skills as being essential or very important, but of all skills, they most often rated four social skills as being essential or very important: children's ability to take turns and share (99%), communicate their needs in their primary language (96%), follow directions (96%), and have good problem-solving skills (93%).
- Most VPI+ teachers reported believing that medical services such as vision, hearing, and dental screenings and care (92%, 89%, and 79%) were readily available to children in their VPI+ classrooms and their families. However, fewer than half of VPI+ teachers reported believing that mental health services for children or families or other health services, such as immunizations, were readily available. Less than a third of VPI+ teachers reported believing that support with

WIC or insurance enrollment, domestic violence and substance abuse treatment counseling, or prenatal care services were readily available to VPI+ children and families. Teachers may have lacked awareness of some services that actually were available.

VPI+ Teacher Practices

Instruction

- Most VPI+ teachers reported that children in their classes usually worked daily on lessons or projects in the areas of reading and language arts, music, mathematics, dance and movement, and art.
- VPI+ teachers reported more minutes spent on reading and language arts than on any other subject, followed by mathematics, art, and music.

Curriculum

- Eight of eleven school divisions used *The Creative Curriculum*[®], and the other three used other curricula vetted through a rigorous review process with VDOE and Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) of the University of Virginia. The majority (68%) of VPI+ teachers across divisions were new to the curricula they were implementing, especially those using *The Creative Curriculum*[®].
- Most VPI+ teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that their curriculum prepared their students for kindergarten, their classrooms had the materials to support the curriculum, and they were confident in their ability to teach the curriculum, but those using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] were less likely to strongly agree with these statements.

Formative Assessment

- All divisions used the *GOLD*[™] formative assessment to inform instruction.
- Ninety percent of VPI+ teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that they felt confident collecting data using the *GOLD*[™] formative assessment, and 92% of VPI+ teachers reported feeling strongly or somewhat confident interpreting *GOLD*[™] results.
- Similarly, the majority of VPI+ teachers agreed that *GOLD*[™] was very or moderately useful for informing curricular and lesson planning, individualizing instruction for students, and evaluating the effectiveness of their own practice.

About half found it helpful for communicating progress to parents and guardians. Fewer VPI+ teachers agreed that *GOLD™* was very or moderately useful for informing instruction for children with disabilities or who are dual language learners.

Family Engagement

- VPI+ teachers reported on the teacher survey engaging all or most of their students' families in several ways, including inviting them to help in the classroom (86%), sending home activities for them to do with their children (86%); communicating with them by sending notes or emails (81%), responding to parents' or guardian's requests for information or meetings (78%), meeting with parents or guardians' to discuss their children's strengths and needs (75%); and using school-based resources (e.g., family coordinators) to reach students' families (72%). Fewer VPI+ teachers reported talking with all or most of their students' parents or guardians' informally before or after class or visiting families in their homes (63% and 62%).

(2) 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.

- From January through May 2016, VDOE conducted webinars, a conference, and individual meetings with VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators to support grant implementation. Additionally, VDOE approved nine 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. Also, VDOE approved requests by divisions to send staff to early childhood professional development conferences and trainings.
- The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) provided technical assistance and professional development for VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators through a two-day Leadership Academy and phone consultations. Coaches also received professional development from CASTL on strategies to work effectively with teachers via a two-day training, a webinar, monthly group coach calls, and monthly individual

calls. CASTL also worked closely with divisions to ensure that they will have strong implementation plans for year 2 of the VPI+ initiative related to each of the primary grant components (i.e., curriculum, formative assessments, and professional development) and assisted divisions in the development of continuous improvement plans.

- The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided a two-day Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®] (CLASS[®]) training to support coaches and other division staff in becoming certified CLASS[®] observers so they could continue to observe and provide feedback to VPI+ teachers on high quality classroom interactions.

(3) **Local Professional Development and Coaching Activities**

Professional development. VPI+ teachers reported on the spring 2016 survey having received professional development (including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and/or coaching) on several instructional subject areas.

- Most VPI+ teachers received professional development on literacy and language (91%), children’s social-emotional development (79%), and mathematics (75%).
- Almost all VPI+ teachers found the professional development across all the subject areas to be very or moderately useful.
- Most VPI+ teachers also received professional development on several instructional strategies, including teacher-child interactions (81%), supportive environments (80%), classroom organization (68%), and family engagement and support (65%).
- VPI+ teachers less often received professional development on supporting dual language learners (44%), working with children with disabilities (29%), and supporting children’s transition to kindergarten (43%).
- VPI+ teachers reported that the professional development focused on teacher-child interactions and supportive environments was particularly useful, and that the professional development around dual language learners and family engagement was a little less useful.
- VPI+ teachers reported being most interested in having more professional development on approaches to learning (50%) and social-emotional development (49%). VPI+ teachers were least interested in additional professional development on teacher-child interactions (25%) and physical and motor

development (20%). However, there was not strong consensus on most of these topics.

Coaching. 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. Coaches completed coaching logs documenting the supports they provided to teachers.

- On average, VPI+ teachers received 17.9 hours of coaching during the 5-month window (3.6 hours a month). 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 47% of individual contacts with teachers; discussion, included in 40% of contacts; and modeling, included in 25% of the contacts.⁴ Other coaching strategies included providing resources and materials (22%), connecting to curriculum resources and materials (21%), data review (18%), and/or video review (7%).
- Coaches reported addressing domain-specific topics in the majority of their contacts with VPI+ teachers (80%). Coaches also frequently spent time on teacher-child interactions (44%) and supportive environments (30%).
- Generally, coaches included the domains of school readiness when working with teachers from VPI+ classrooms, with language and literacy the domain most often addressed (52%), followed by social and emotional development (24%) and then approaches to learning (19%) and mathematics (18%).

VPI+ had a strong first year. Since January 2016, the 11 divisions served more than 1,230 children with highly educated teachers, an evidence-based curriculum and formative assessment, family engagement activities, and comprehensive services. Division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators received technical assistance and professional development on numerous topics. Additionally, with support from CASTL, VPI+ divisions used fall 2015 results from the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and GOLD formative assessment results to develop continuous quality improvement and local professional development plans. VPI+ teachers received professional development and coaching on

⁴ Coaching contacts may include more than one type of strategy.

instructional strategies, teacher-child interactions, and supportive learning environments. Finally, Virginia continued to strengthen its cross-agency coordination of services and data through its VPI+ Implementation Team and Cross-Organizational Data Team. The school divisions are now recruiting children for Year 2 of the VPI+ program.

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.⁵ Since the PDG augments Virginia's existing state-funded Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI),⁶ 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 the five essential 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)
 - Increased funding to provide comprehensive services to VPI+ children and their families and to increase family engagement in their children's early learning

⁵ 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.

⁶ Appendix B contains VPI eligibility criteria.

- **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 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 among 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 connections with a wide range of related programs and services that can support VPI+ children and their families, 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 constraints, 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, increased funding for comprehensive services and family engagement, and increased availability of instructional materials, including technology). Therefore, the body of this report focuses on only VPI+ classrooms and children. However, Appendix A includes tables with data on coaching of both VPI+ and VPI Improved teachers.

This report is the second formative evaluation report and presents findings for VPI+ classrooms across all 11 divisions for the period of January–May 2016.⁷ All VPI+ divisions also receive an individual report summarizing formative findings for their individual division twice each year to help them further strengthen their program implementation.

The current report focuses on the evaluation questions below and is organized into sections addressing (1) program quality, including VPI+ teacher background, beliefs, and practices; (2) training and technical assistance for VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators; (3) local coaching and professional development of VPI+ teachers, and perceptions of how well they meet teachers' needs; (4) facilitators of and barriers to implementation; and (5) recommendations for further strengthening implementation.⁸

The formative evaluation uses a combination of data collection methods to answer a set of formative evaluation 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: VPI+ Teacher background, beliefs, and practices:** 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 essential school readiness domains,

⁷ The Fall 2015 VPI+ Formative Evaluation Report was made available to VDOE and VPI+ school divisions in February 2016.

⁸ The Fall 2015 VPI+ Formative Evaluation Report addressed some evaluation questions that are not addressed in the current report, including questions on access and enrollment and some elements of program quality, such as high-quality teacher and learning environments. The Fall 2015 VPI+ Formative Evaluation Report was made available to the VDOE and VPI+ school divisions in February 2016.

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 and professional development 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, SRI is 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 and professional development activities		★				★
5. Facilitators and barriers					★	★
6. Recommendations	★		★		★	★

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

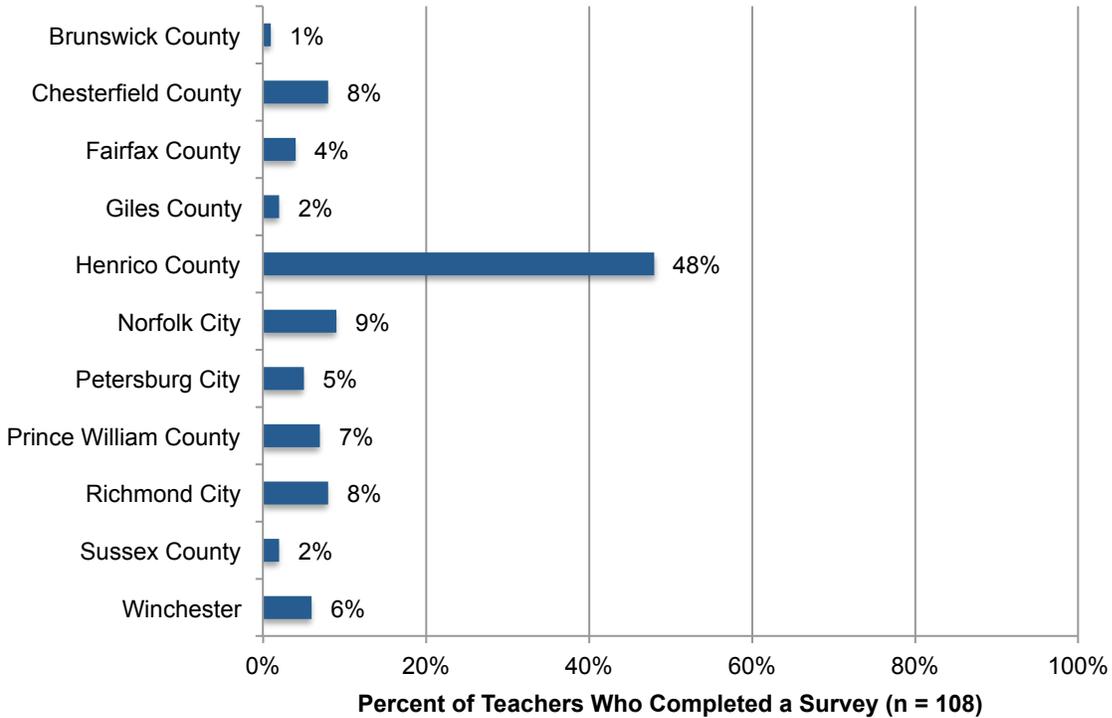
- Extant and administrative data analysis:** Each VPI+ school division provides data exports to the evaluation team on VPI+ and VPI improved enrollment and student demographics and teacher and program characteristics each fall, on updates to student enrollment each spring, and on cumulative attendance each summer. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation shares 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) following collection of this information (which last occurred in fall 2015).
- 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 has 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 has observed 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 curricula 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 has conducted semi-structured interviews and brief surveys with the division VPI+ coordinators responsible for coordinating each division's VPI+ classrooms in the fall and spring of 2015–16 and will continue to do so each year of the initiative. The interviews gather 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. The phone interviews/surveys also focused on accomplishments; the role and influence of CASTL's needs assessment; the types and usefulness of the support local administrators receive from CASTL around professional development planning; local program improvement activities; the structure and focus of VPI+ 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 the new formative assessment and curriculum, budget changes, and evaluation feedback); and updated staffing and budget information.
- **Teacher surveys.** SRI conducted an online survey with VPI+ teachers and will continue to do so annually each spring to learn about teachers' backgrounds, experiences, and qualifications; participation in professional development and coaching; perceived usefulness of PD and coaching; their classroom practices, including use of certain curricula, formative assessments to inform instruction, and selected family and community engagement activities; buy-in for the new curriculum and formative assessment; access to and use of comprehensive services by their students; and facilitators and barriers to VPI+ implementation. Nearly all VPI+ lead teachers (108 or 110) participated in the survey. The number of teachers who responded to each survey item varies because sometimes not all teachers responded to an item, or an item was only answered by a subset of teachers based on a survey skip pattern. Furthermore, nearly half of the VPI+ teachers who

responded to the teacher survey taught in one school division, Henrico County Public Schools (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. VPI+ Teachers Who Participated in the Teacher Survey, by VPI+ School Division



The remainder of this report presents formative findings about program quality and implementation characteristics based on teacher survey data, 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.

Program Quality: VPI+ Teacher Background, Beliefs, and Practices

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). These components include hiring teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher, using an evidence-based curriculum, using a formative assessment to inform instruction and support children's individual needs, and providing VPI+ children and their families access to a wide range of services. Other classroom components consistent with high-quality programs were examined in the fall 2015 report (professional teacher license with a preschool endorsement, small class size, child-to-instructional-staff ratio, and teacher salary parity). Using data from the spring 2016 teacher survey, this section provides background information on VPI+ teachers, including their demographic characteristics and prior experience as preschool teachers; their beliefs about school readiness and awareness of comprehensive services for children and families; and their practices, including time spent on instruction and curriculum focus, use and perceptions of formative assessments, and family engagement activities.

VPI+ Teacher Background Information

VPI+ Teacher Demographic Characteristics

One research-based quality standard for preschool programs is employing teachers who have, at a minimum, a 4-year college degree and specific training in early childhood education. Therefore, VPI+ requires teachers to have a bachelor's degree.⁹ All surveyed VPI+ teachers reported having a bachelor's degree, and more than half (52%) also reported having a master's degree.

Almost all (94%) VPI+ teachers were female, but a few were male (Exhibit 3). Most VPI+ teachers identified themselves as White (67%), and another 20% identified themselves as Black.¹⁰

Most VPI+ teachers (90%) reported speaking only English proficiently; small percentages of teachers reported speaking proficiently in Spanish (7%) or in another language (4%) in addition to English (Exhibit 4). In contrast, according to student registration forms completed by families

⁹ The State of Preschool 2013: <http://www.nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/yearbook2013.pdf>

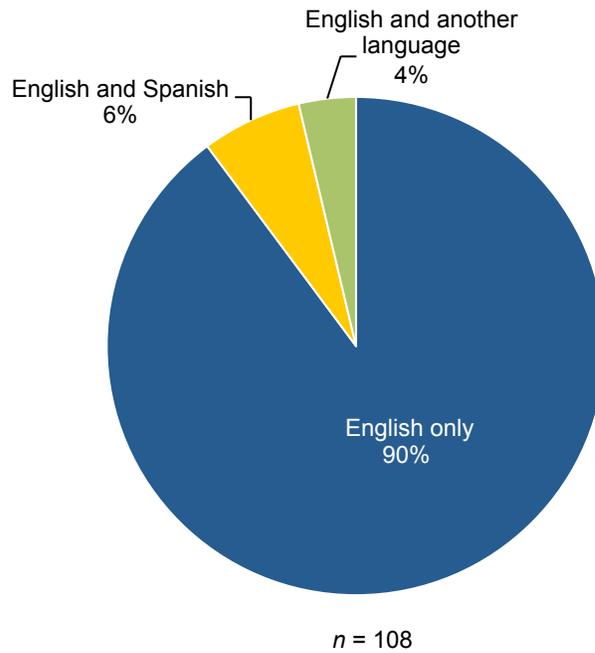
¹⁰ Based on fall 2015 enrollment data, the racial/ethnic representation of VPI+ students ($n = 1,230$) was 53% Black, 25% Hispanic, 12% White, 4% multiracial, and 3% other. Note that this count does not include about 370 children in one school division who were Head Start, Title I, and VPI Improved students in VPI+ classrooms.

in fall 2015, 20% of VPI+ children spoke Spanish as their home language, and another 6% of VPI+ children spoke Arabic or another language as their home language.

Exhibit 3. Demographic Characteristics of VPI+ Teachers

	Percent of VPI+ Teachers (<i>n</i> = 108)
Male	3
Female	94
Gender not specified	3
White	68
Black	19
Hispanic	3
Other	2
Multiracial	4
Race/Ethnicity not specified	5

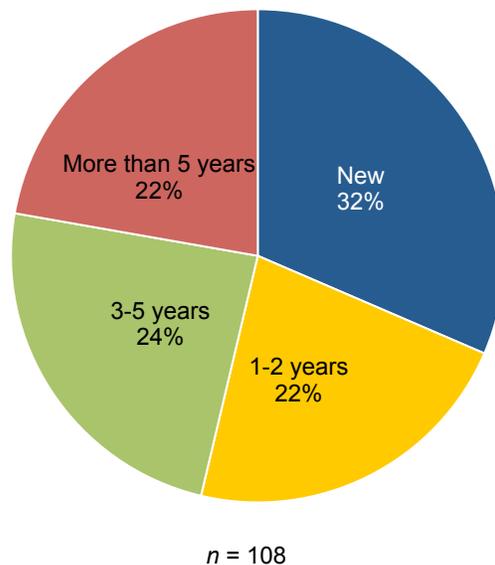
Exhibit 4. Languages Spoken Proficiently by VPI+ Teachers



Experience Teaching Preschool

Most VPI+ teachers had prior experience teaching in preschools. Although the majority (67%) of VPI+ teachers were new to their schools this year, almost 70% of VPI+ teachers had previously taught preschool. More than a fifth of VPI+ teachers had taught preschool for more than 5 years, about a quarter had taught preschool for 3-5 years, and a little more than a fifth were relatively new to teaching preschool (i.e., had taught for 1-2 years) (Exhibit 5). About a third of VPI+ teachers had no previous experience teaching preschool. Of those VPI+ teachers who were new to teaching preschool, more than half (56%) reported having taught elementary school the prior year.

Exhibit 5. Years of Experience Teaching Preschool



The VPI+ teachers who had taught preschool the prior year ($n=74$) came from various types of preschool programs (Exhibit 6). A third of VPI+ teachers with prior preschool experience had taught in programs with blended funding streams, and another quarter had taught in private programs. A few VPI+ teachers had taught in Head Start, VPI, or Title I programs (12%, 11%, and 5%). Most experienced VPI+ teachers (45 of 74, or 61%) had worked in division-operated preschool classrooms in the same school divisions the prior year, and about a quarter came from private preschool programs (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 6. Type of Preschool in Which Previously Taught

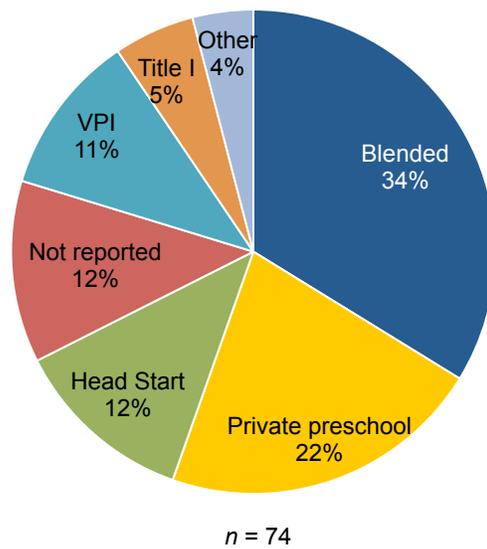
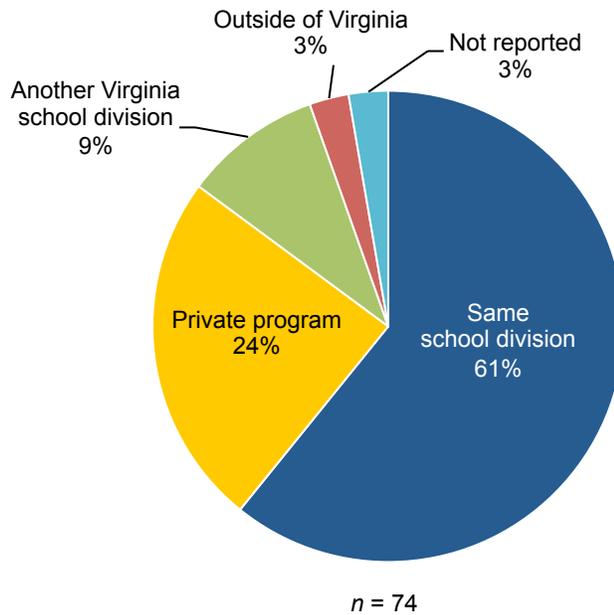


Exhibit 7. Location of Preschool in Which Previously Taught



VPI+ Teacher Beliefs

VPI+ Teacher Beliefs About School Readiness

Teachers reported their beliefs about the importance of various social and academic skills for children's readiness for kindergarten and school by responding to a survey item taken from the Preschool Early Care and Education Providers Questionnaire used in the Early Childhood

Longitudinal Study-Birth cohort (ECLS-B) study.¹¹ The majority of VPI+ teachers rated all social and academic skills as being essential or very important (Exhibits 8 and 9). Almost all VPI+ teachers believed that children's ability to do the following are essential or very important for school readiness: take turns and share (99%), communicate their needs in their primary language (96%), follow directions (96%), and have good problem-solving skills (93%). Further, VPI+ teachers tended to rate these four social skills as more essential or important than all the other social and academic skills.

Many VPI+ teachers also believed that having children know how to not be disruptive in class, be sensitive to other children's feelings, and finish tasks was also essential or very important for school readiness (88%, 90%, and 81%). VPI+ teachers were least likely to report that sitting still and paying attention and knowing English are essential or very important for school readiness (66% and 63%).

The two academic skills that VPI+ teachers most often rated as essential or very important were children's ability to use pencils and paint brushes and identify primary colors and shapes (88% and 89%). Many VPI+ teachers also believed that knowing how to write one's own name and read or pretend to read books (81% and 79%) are essential or very important for school readiness. VPI+ teachers were less likely to report that knowing most of the alphabet and counting to 20 are essential or very important for school readiness (74% and 70%).

¹¹ ECLS-B Preschool teacher survey instrument available at: https://nces.ed.gov/ecls/pdf/birth/ecep_interview.pdf

Exhibit 8. VPI+ Teacher Beliefs About the Importance of Social Skills for School Readiness

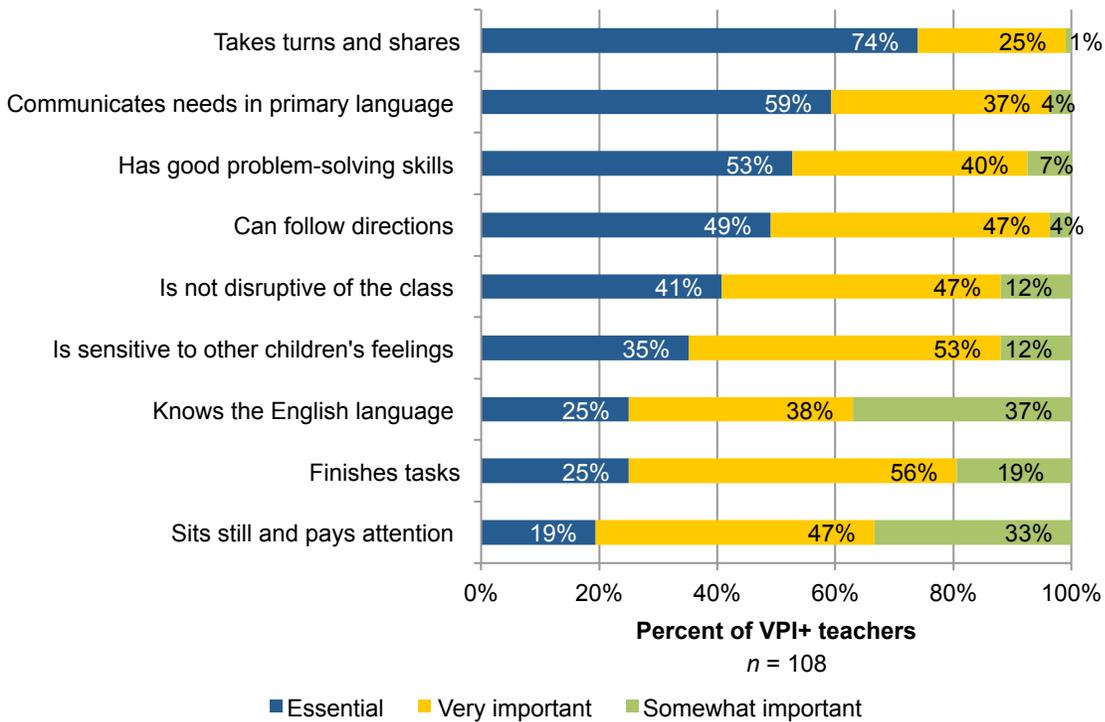
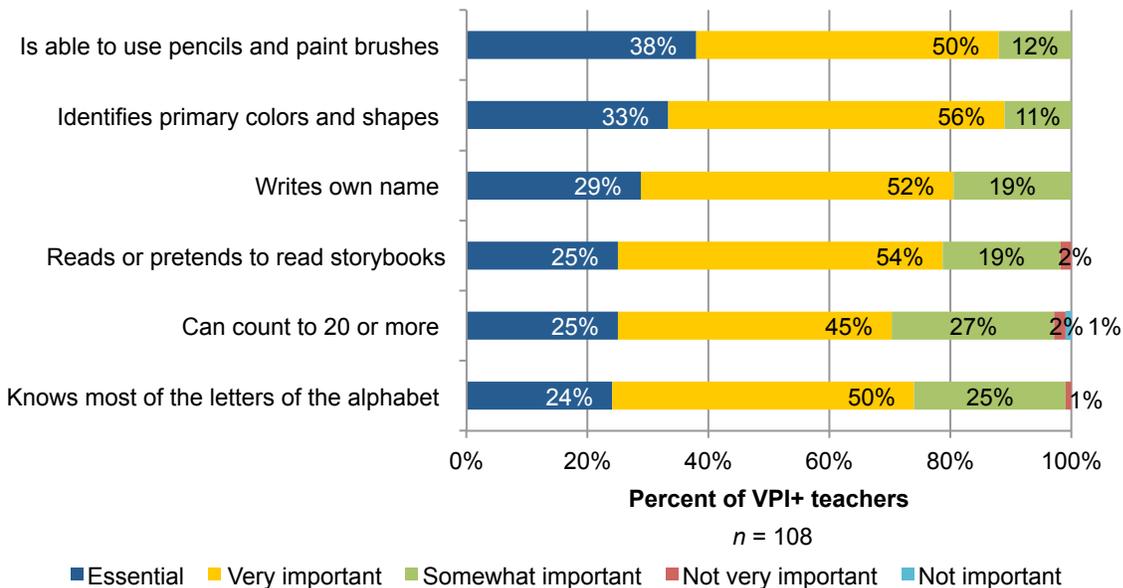


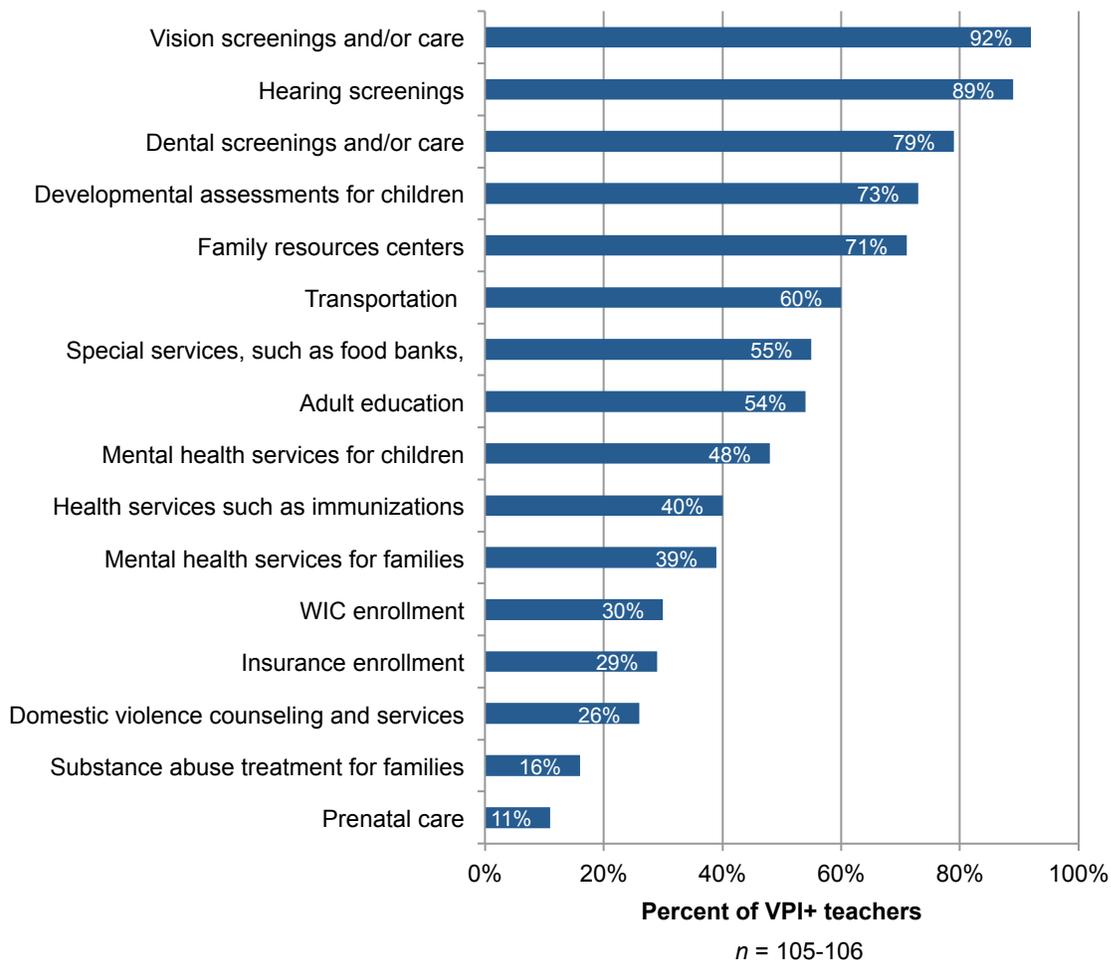
Exhibit 9. VPI+ Teacher Beliefs About the Importance of Academic Skills for School Readiness



VPI+ Teacher Awareness of Comprehensive Services for Children and Families

VPI+ teachers reported on the services they thought were readily available to their students and their families (Exhibit 10). Teachers may have lacked awareness of some services that actually were available. VPI+ teachers most often reported believing that medical services such as vision, hearing, and dental screenings and care (92%, 89%, and 79%) were readily available. However, fewer than half of VPI+ teachers reported believing that mental health services for children or families or other health services such as immunizations were readily available. Most VPI+ teachers also reported believing that children had access to developmental assessments (73%) and transportation services (60%). About half of VPI+ teachers reported believing that special services such as food banks and adult education were readily available. Less than a third of VPI+ teachers reported believing that support with WIC or insurance enrollment, domestic violence and substance abuse treatment counseling, or prenatal care services were readily available to families of VPI+ children.

Exhibit 10. Teacher Beliefs About Services Readily Available to VPI+ Children and Families

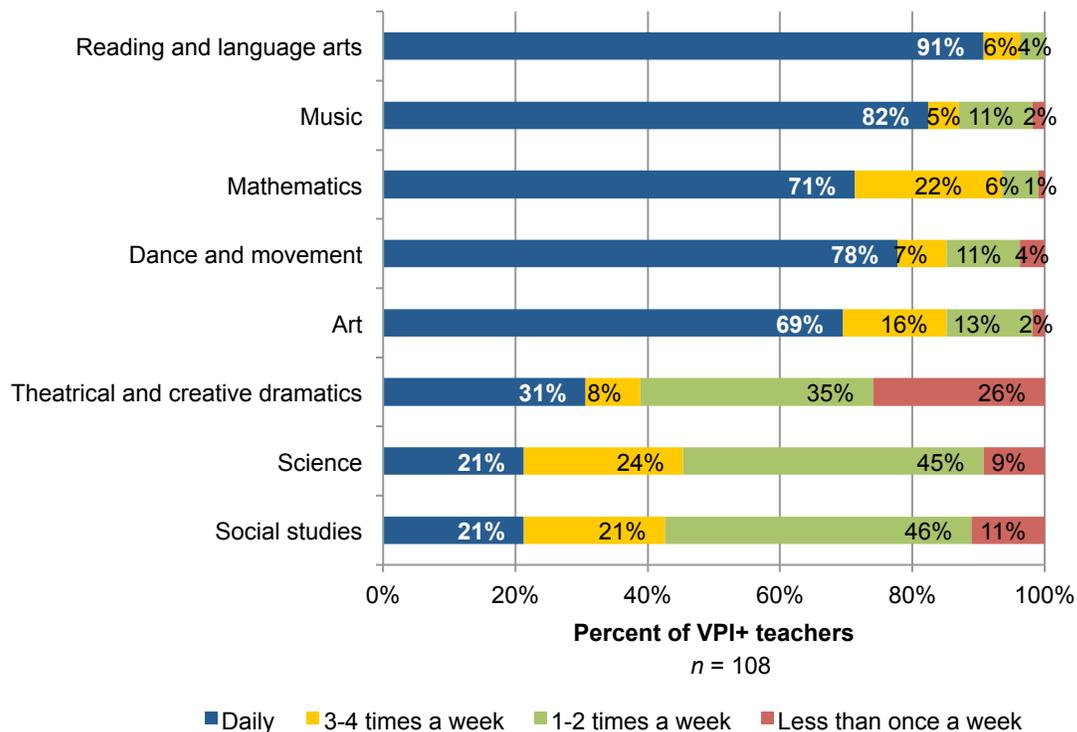


VPI+ Teacher Practices

Instructional Time and Curriculum Focus

VPI+ teachers reported on the frequency and duration of lessons or projects in various topic areas. Almost all VPI+ teachers reported that children in their classes usually worked daily on lessons or projects in the areas of reading and language arts, and most VPI+ teachers reported their children participated in daily projects or lessons focused on music, mathematics, dance and movement, and art (Exhibit 11). VPI+ teachers less frequently reported offering their children projects or lessons focused on theatrical and creative dramatics, science, and social studies.

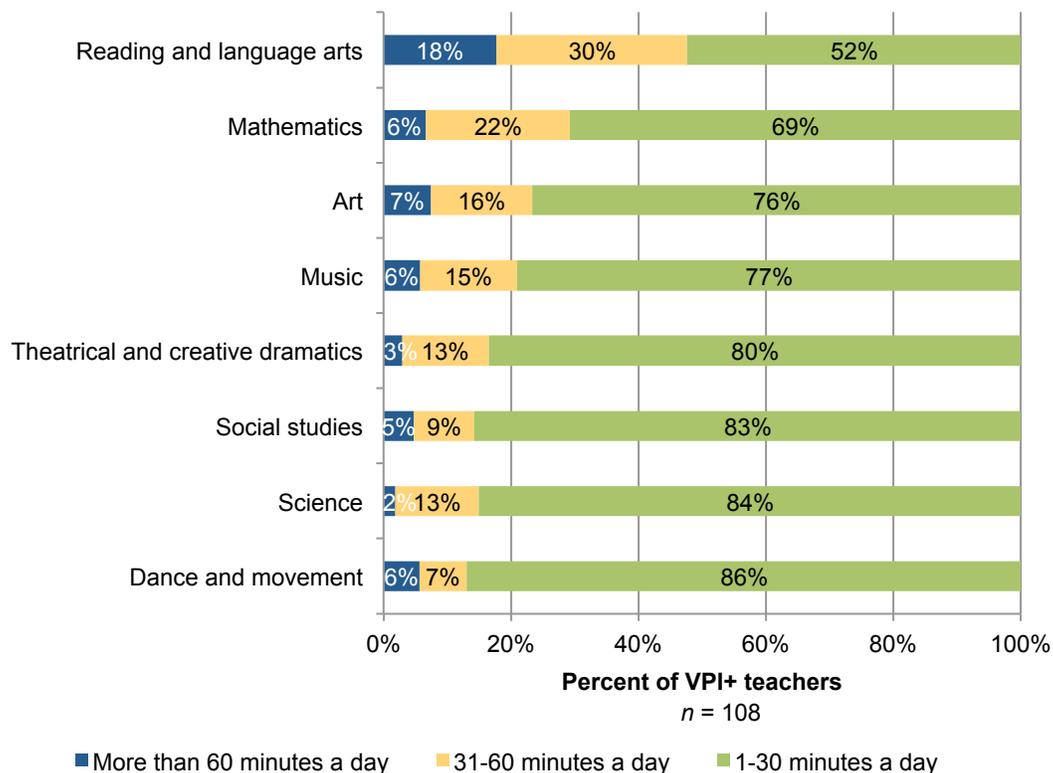
Exhibit 11. Frequency Subject Areas Taught in VPI+ Classrooms



VPI+ teachers also reported the number of minutes children spent on lessons or projects in each subject area (when taught on a given day). Across all subjects, VPI+ teachers reported that children usually spent 30 minutes or less on each lesson or project. They reported more minutes spent on reading and language arts than on any other subject. Nearly half (48%) of VPI+ teachers reported that reading and language arts activities lasted at least 31 minutes.

Similarly, VPI+ teachers reported more minutes spent on mathematics, art, and music than on other subjects (except reading and language arts) (Exhibit 12).

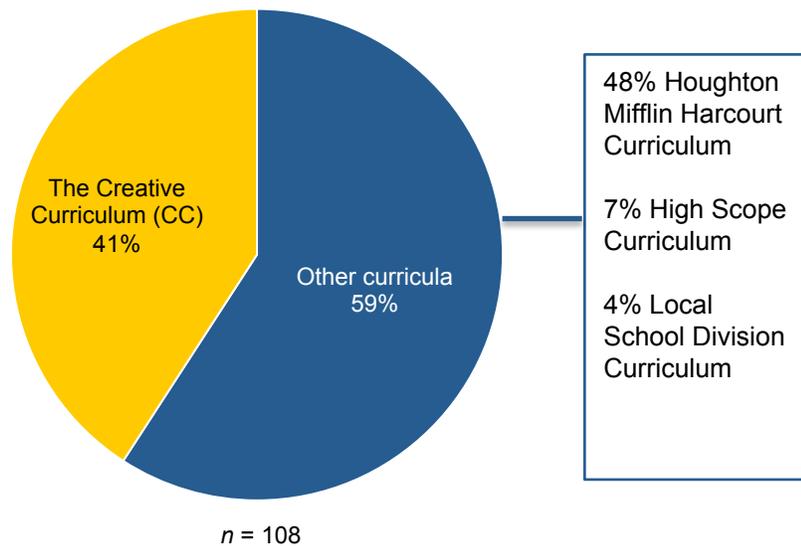
Exhibit 12. Amount of Time Subject Is Taught on a Day When Taught



Curriculum

The VPI+ school divisions are using four different curricula. Eight of the eleven divisions are using *The Creative Curriculum*[®]. Three divisions used “other” curricula: one large school division used Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, another school division used High Scope curriculum, and one school division used a locally developed curriculum that was vetted by VDOE (Exhibit 13). Among teachers using *The Creative Curriculum*[®], only 9% had used it before the 2015–16 school year. In school divisions implementing “other” curricula, 52% of the teachers had used the curriculum before the 2015–16 school year. Thus, the majority (68%) of VPI+ teachers across divisions were new to the curricula they were implementing.

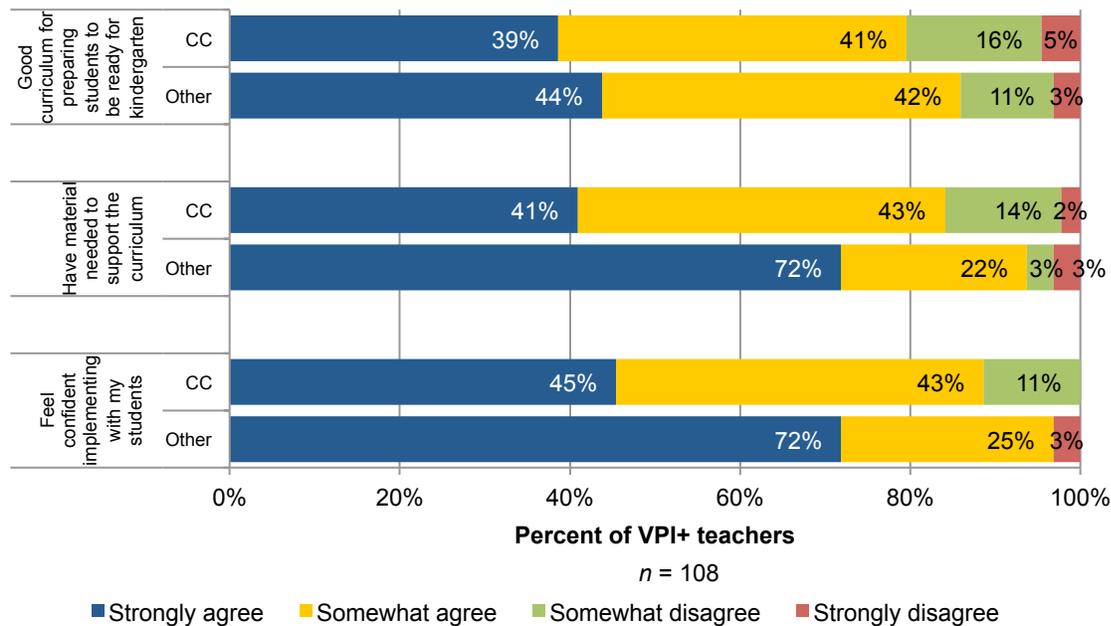
Exhibit 13. Percent of Classrooms Using Various Curricula



Overall, most VPI+ teachers reported feeling prepared to use their curriculum, with only a small minority of teachers reporting they didn't have the materials they needed or that they didn't feel confident implementing the curriculum (Exhibit 14).

Most VPI+ teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that their curriculum prepared their students for kindergarten, their classrooms had the materials to support the curriculum, and they were confident in their ability to teach the curriculum (Exhibit 14). However, those teachers using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] were less likely to strongly agree with these statements than teachers using the other curricula. This may have been because this was the first year of using the curriculum for more of teachers using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] compared to teachers using other curricula.

Exhibit 14. Preparedness to Use Curricula by Curriculum Used



Note: CC = *The Creative Curriculum*®

Use and Perceptions of Formative Assessment

To help teachers individualize instruction, monitor the effectiveness of their own instruction, plan lessons, communicate children’s progress with families, and support children who are dual language learners and those who have disabilities, all VPI+ teachers were required to use the *GOLD*™ formative assessment multiple times a year.

Ninety percent of VPI+ teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that they felt confident collecting data using the *GOLD*™ formative assessment, and 92% of VPI+ teachers reported feeling confident interpreting *GOLD*™ results (Exhibit 15). VPI+ teachers using *The Creative Curriculum*® reported feeling more confident in interpreting *GOLD*™ data than VPI+ teachers using other curricula but less confident in collecting the data (Exhibit 16).

Exhibit 15. Confidence with Collecting and Interpreting *GOLD*™ Data

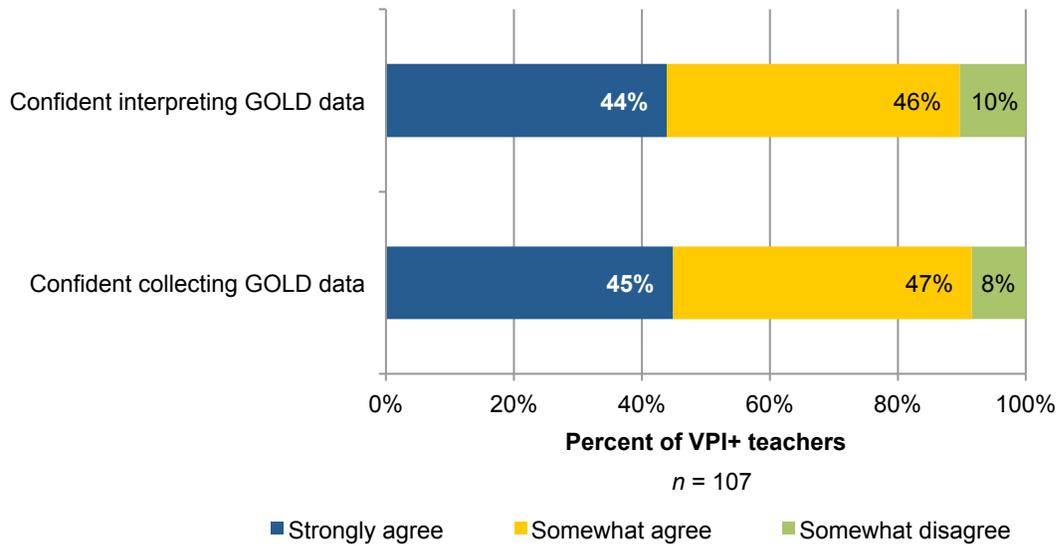
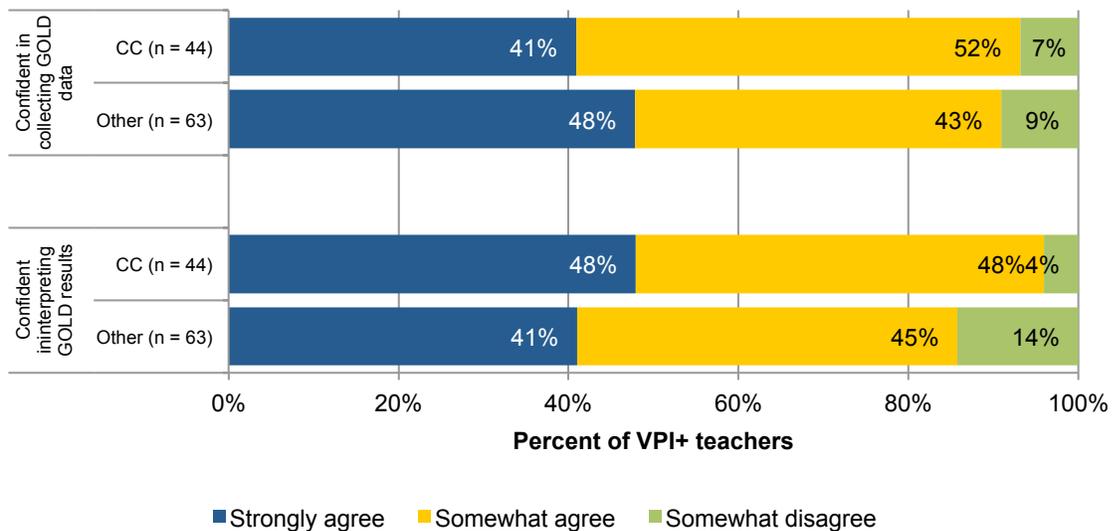


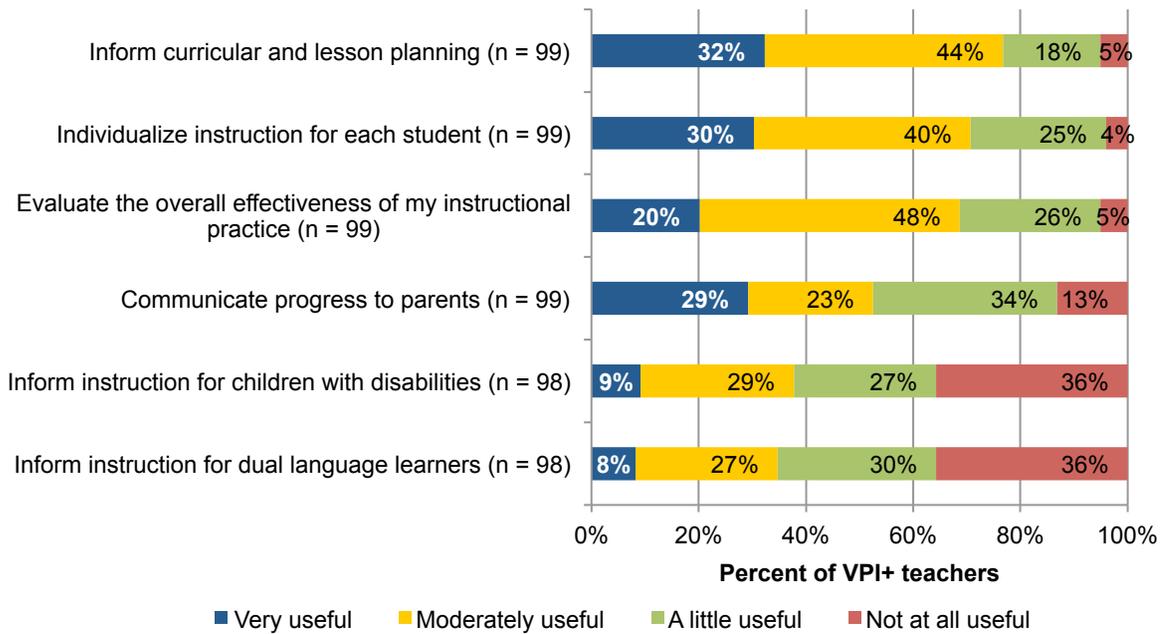
Exhibit 16. Confidence with Collecting and Interpreting *GOLD*™ Data by Curriculum



Note. CC = *The Creative Curriculum*®

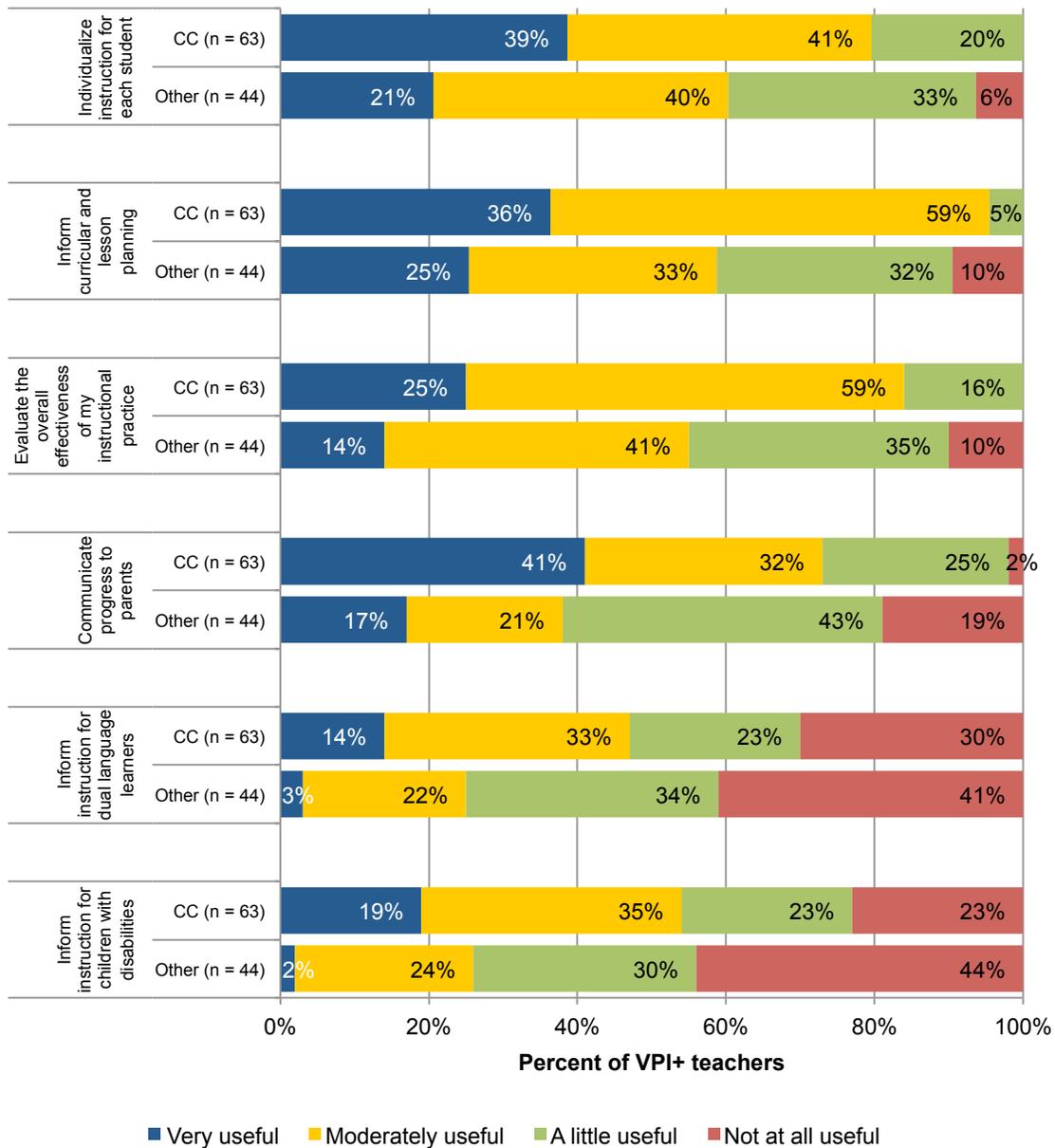
Similarly, the majority of VPI+ teachers agreed that *GOLD*™ was very or moderately useful for informing curricular and lesson planning, individualizing instruction for students, and evaluating the effectiveness of their own practice (Exhibit 17). About half of VPI+ teachers reported that *GOLD*™ was very or moderately useful for communicating children’s progress to parents or guardians. Fewer VPI+ teachers agreed that *GOLD*™ was very or moderately useful for informing instruction for children with disabilities or who are dual language learners.

Exhibit 17. Perceived Usefulness of GOLD™ for Instruction



Teachers using *The Creative Curriculum*® more strongly agreed than teachers using another curriculum that *GOLD*™ is useful for the various instructional purposes (Exhibit 18). Because *The Creative Curriculum*® and *GOLD*™ are both products of Teaching Strategies®, *GOLD*™ may be better aligned with *The Creative Curriculum*® than with the other curricula being used by three of the VPI+ school divisions. Thus, alignment of *GOLD*™ with the curricula and receiving more hours of training (as discussed in section on Training and Technical Assistance from State Partners) were important factors in how useful teachers found *GOLD*™ data to be.

Exhibit 18. Perceived Usefulness of GOLD™ by Curriculum Used



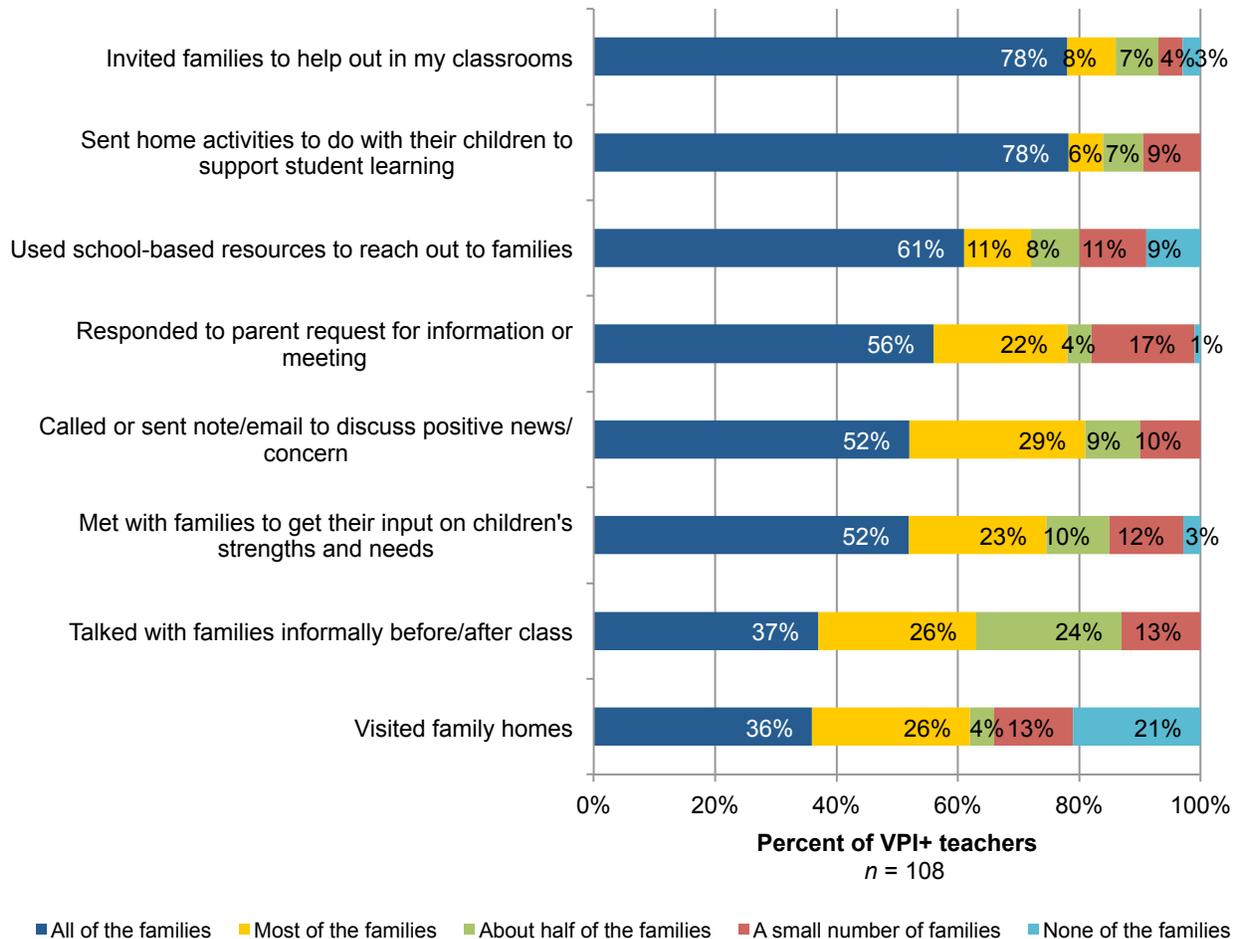
Note. CC = *The Creative Curriculum*®

Family Engagement

VPI+ teachers engaged their students’ families in several ways (Exhibit 19). Most VPI+ teachers (86%) invited all or most of their students’ families to help in the classroom and sent home activities for families to do with their children. Most VPI+ teachers reported communicating with all or most of their families by: sending notes or emails to parents or guardians (81%),

responding to parents' or guardians' requests for information or meetings (78%), meeting with parents or guardians to discuss their children's strengths and needs (75%), and using school-based resources (e.g., family coordinators) to reach to students' families (72%). Fewer VPI+ teachers reported talking with all or most of their students' parents or guardians informally before or after class or visiting families in their homes (63% and 62%).

Exhibit 19. Proportion of Families VPI+ Teachers Engaged in Various Ways



Training and Technical Assistance From State Partners

Virginia state agencies and partners have provided technical assistance and professional development to VPI+ school divisions in a number of ways. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted and endorsed a series of webinars, meetings, and conferences on numerous topics related to early childhood development and education, and VPI+ implementation. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) provided training on Pre-K CLASS[®] (Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®]) on using CLASS[®] data and becoming a certified observer. The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia has provided coach training and support and technical assistance to school division leaders on the development of continuous improvement plans, improving teacher practices, and selecting coaching models. Finally, several divisions received training on *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and the *GOLD*[™] Formative Assessment. This section presents a summary of the training and technical assistance school divisions received from state partners from January-May 2016.

Technical Assistance from VDOE

From January through May 2016, VDOE conducted quarterly phone conferences, webinars, a conference, and individual meetings with VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators to provide technical assistance and monitoring of grant implementation. Webinar topics included: recruiting low-income and hard to access families; supporting children's social-emotional development; strategies and resources for inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms; outreach and services for homeless children and families; connecting with the Child Find process to support early identification of disabilities; and planning and budgeting for Year 2 VPI+ implementation. VDOE also offered webinars to private preschool programs. In addition, VDOE conducted site visits to all 11 divisions in April and June 2016 to monitor grant and budget compliance and discuss Year 2 VPI+ implementation plans. In addition, VDOE's Training and Technical Assistance Center held a conference in April focused on promoting social-emotional growth in early childhood. Finally, VDOE supported sending two school division teams to the National Inclusion Institute in North Carolina.

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 CASTL

CASTL provided 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.

VPI+ division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators attended one of two VPI+ Leadership Academies (2-day trainings held in January and March 2016) led by CASTL staff. The Academy focused on data use for continuous improvement and professional development planning.

CASTL provided additional support for coaches, including a two-day coach training, a webinar on using video to support teacher reflection, monthly group coach calls, and monthly individual calls with coaches. The coach training focused on working effectively with teachers (i.e., isolating teacher behaviors, motivational interviewing, and dealing with teacher resistance) and the use of video and audio for enhancing teacher practices. Three monthly calls focused on motivating teacher change, audio review, and video review. Individual calls with coaches covered improving coaching focus and intensity, implementing strategies for motivating teacher change, and planning PD. Other topics, which varied by division, covered following up on coaching models for Year 2, planning a scope and sequence of PD for teachers and coaches, and engaging division administrators.

Division coordinators, together with their family engagement coordinators and coaches, also received one to three phone consultations with CASTL staff on developing continuous improvement plans and identifying coaching models for Year 2.

Technical Assistance from VECF

At the VPI+ Leadership Academies, VECF provided VPI+ coaches with an overview of the quality rating results for the 64 VPI+ Classrooms that were rated using Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) in the fall. At the CASTL 2-day coaching training, VECF presented information about the ECERS-R, including additional information about ECERS-R subscales and how average sub-scale scores were determined.

VECF also provided an in-person, two-day Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®] (CLASS[®]) training to support coaches and other division staff in becoming certified CLASS[®] observers so they could continue to observe and provide feedback to VPI+ teachers on classroom quality. Teams of staff from five VPI+ divisions attended the training, which included small and large group activities and watching and scoring CLASS[®] Pre-K videos. After the training, participants had 8 weeks to complete and pass the CLASS[®] reliability exam on the Teachstone[®] website to complete their certification.

Training on *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and GOLD[™]

Of the 108 VPI+ teachers responding to the teacher survey, 44 had implemented *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and 64 had implemented a curriculum other than *The Creative Curriculum*[®]. All VPI+ teachers who implemented *The Creative Curriculum*[®] reported having received professional development on the curriculum (e.g., in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching). Of the VPI+ teachers implementing a different curriculum, 72% ($n = 46$) reported having received professional development on their curriculum.

On average, VPI+ teachers who attended training for *The Creative Curriculum*[®] received twice as many hours of training (14 hours) as teachers using another type of curriculum (7 hours). One quarter (25%) of teachers implementing *The Creative Curriculum*[®] received 16 or more hours of training, compared with only 14% of teachers using other curricula (Exhibit 20). The majority of VPI+ teachers, regardless of curriculum, perceived the training to be moderately or very useful (Exhibit 21).

Exhibit 20. Amount of Professional Development that VPI+ Teachers Received on Using Curricula by Curricula

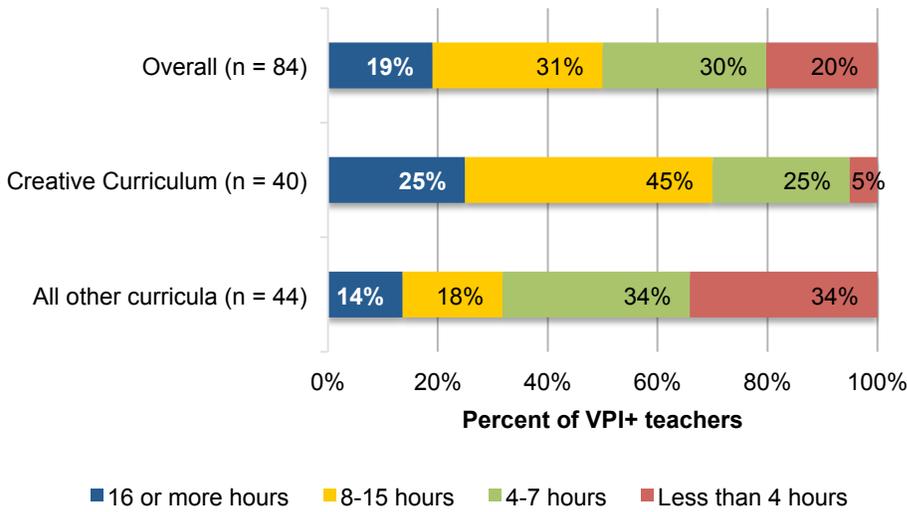
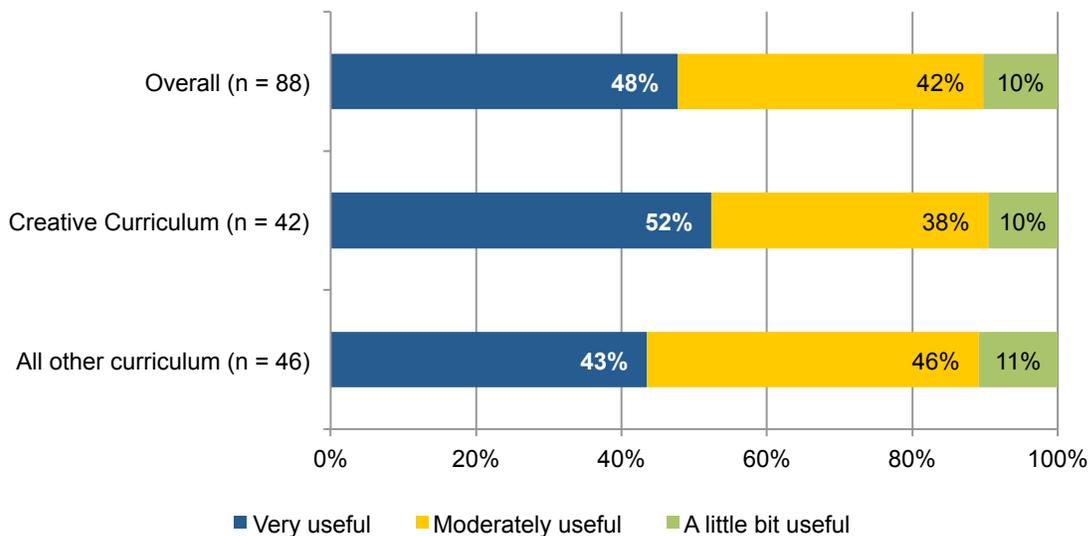


Exhibit 21. Perceived Usefulness of Professional Development on Use of Curricula by Curricula



Nearly all VPI+ teachers (98%) also reported having received professional development (including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching) on *GOLD™*. The amount of professional development teachers received on *GOLD™* varied (Exhibit 22). Almost a quarter (24%) of VPI+ teachers received 16 or more hours of training on the formative assessment, and an equivalent percentage of VPI+ teachers received 8-15 hours of training. More than half of VPI+ teachers received 7 hours or less of training on *GOLD™*, with almost a third (30%) having received less than 4 hours and about one fifth (22%) having received 4-7 hours (Exhibit 23). Most VPI+ teachers who received at least 8 hours of *GOLD™* professional

development found it to be very useful, but most teachers who received less than 4 hours finding the training only a little bit useful (Exhibit 23).

Exhibit 22. Hours of Professional Development That VPI+ Teachers Received on GOLD™

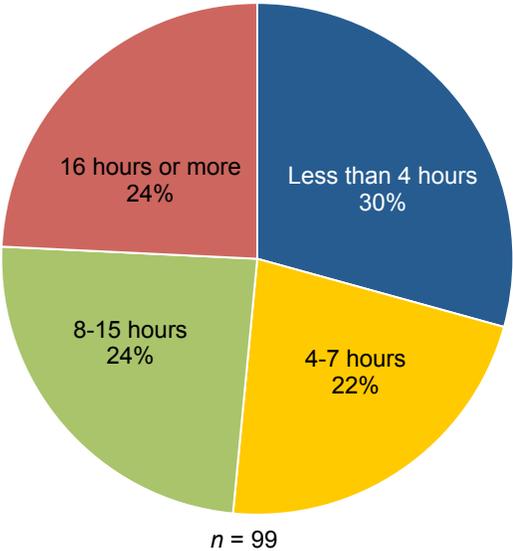
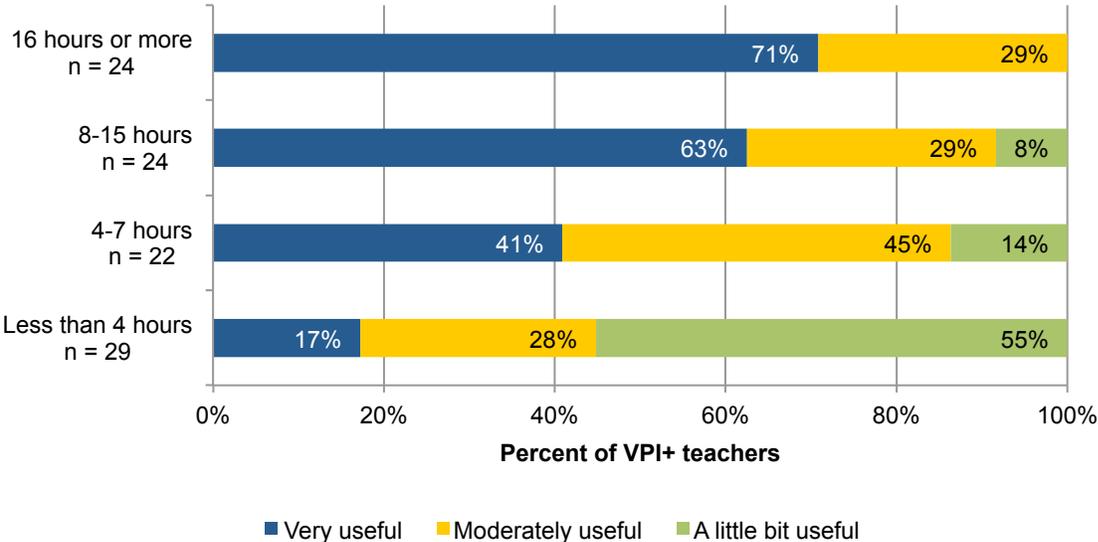


Exhibit 23. Perceived Usefulness of GOLD™ Professional Development by Hours of Training Received



Other State Partner Training

Additional trainings and conferences endorsed by VDOE were offered by entities outside of VDOE, VECF, and CASTL such as the Virginia Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), other centers in at the University of Virginia, Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VA SCD), and Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development Central Regional Consortium. For example, the HHS Preschool Development Grant Dual Language Learner Community of Practice hosted a national webinar on an assessment tool to increase awareness of practices with Dual Language Learners. The PALS program at the University of Virginia offered four webinars (1.5 hours each) to VPI+ teachers to review PALS-PreK mid-year assessment data, PALS PreK resources, effective preschool instructional practices, and age-appropriate classrooms for PreK and kindergarten teachers. Finally, VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and teachers attended the third annual Summit for Early Childhood Professional Development Providers which provided information on new early learning legislation, federal regulations on Child Care Block Grants, and how special education and preschool programs can work together.

Local Coaching and Professional Development

To help VPI+ classrooms achieve implementation of all the components of a high-quality preschool program, local school divisions offered professional development on subject content and instructional strategies and coaches supported continuous improvement and teaching excellence. VPI+ teachers received professional development through local in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and coaching. VPI+ coaches helped 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. Local coaches provided coaching and completed logs to track their activities.

Professional Development on Instructional Subjects and Domains

VPI+ teachers reported on the spring 2016 survey having received professional development (including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and/or coaching) on several instructional subject areas (Exhibit 24). Almost all VPI+ teachers (91%) received professional development on literacy and language. A larger majority of VPI+ teachers also received professional development on children's social-emotional development (79%) and mathematics (75%). About half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on supporting children's approaches to learning and science. Fewer than half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on children's physical and motor development. Almost all VPI+ teachers found the professional development across all the subject areas to be very or moderately useful, and they found the professional development focused on the arts to be particularly useful (Exhibit 25).

Exhibit 24. VPI+ Teachers Who Received Professional Development in Specific Subjects

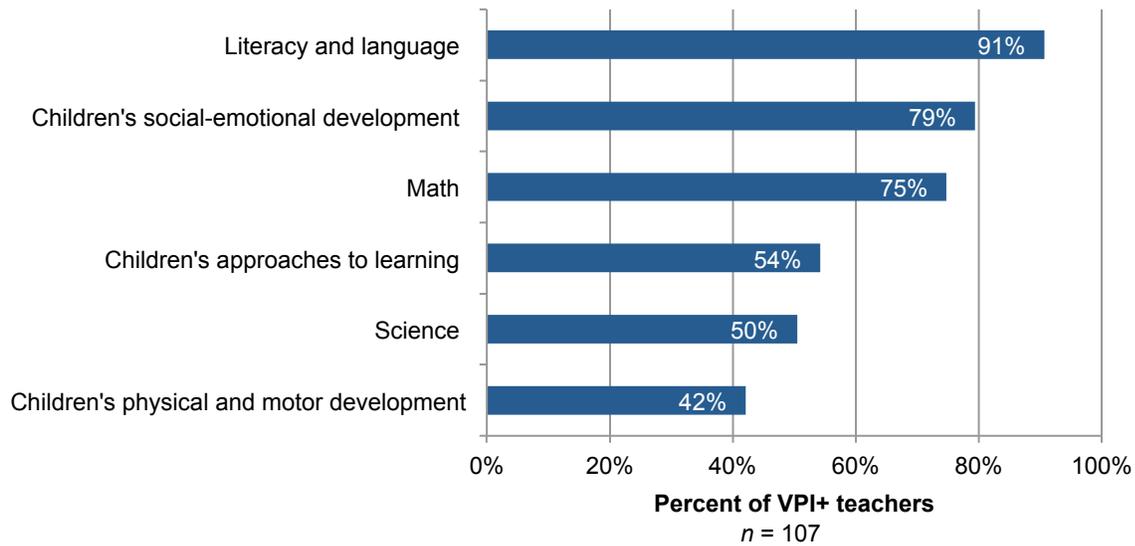
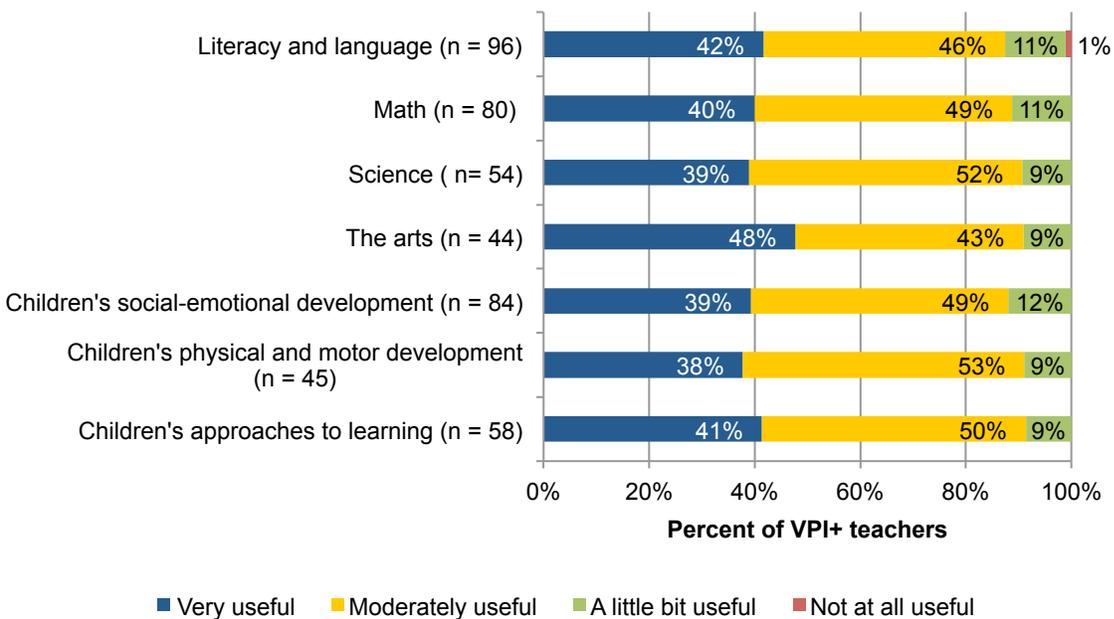


Exhibit 25. Perceived Usefulness of Professional Development in Specific Subjects



VPI+ teachers also received professional development (including in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and/or coaching) on several instructional strategies (Exhibit 26). The vast majority of VPI+ teachers received professional development on teacher-child interactions and supportive environments (81% and 80%). More than half of VPI+ teachers also received professional development on classroom organization and family engagement and support (68% and 65%). Fewer than half of VPI+ teachers received professional development on working with

dual language learners and supporting children’s transition to kindergarten. A small minority of VPI+ teachers received professional development on working with children with disabilities (29%). Almost all VPI+ teachers found the professional development across all the instructional strategies to be very or moderately useful (Exhibit 27). Teachers reported that the professional development focused on the teacher-child interactions and supportive environments was particularly useful and that the professional development around dual language learners and family engagement was a little less useful.

Exhibit 26. Professional Development Received in Specific Instructional Strategies

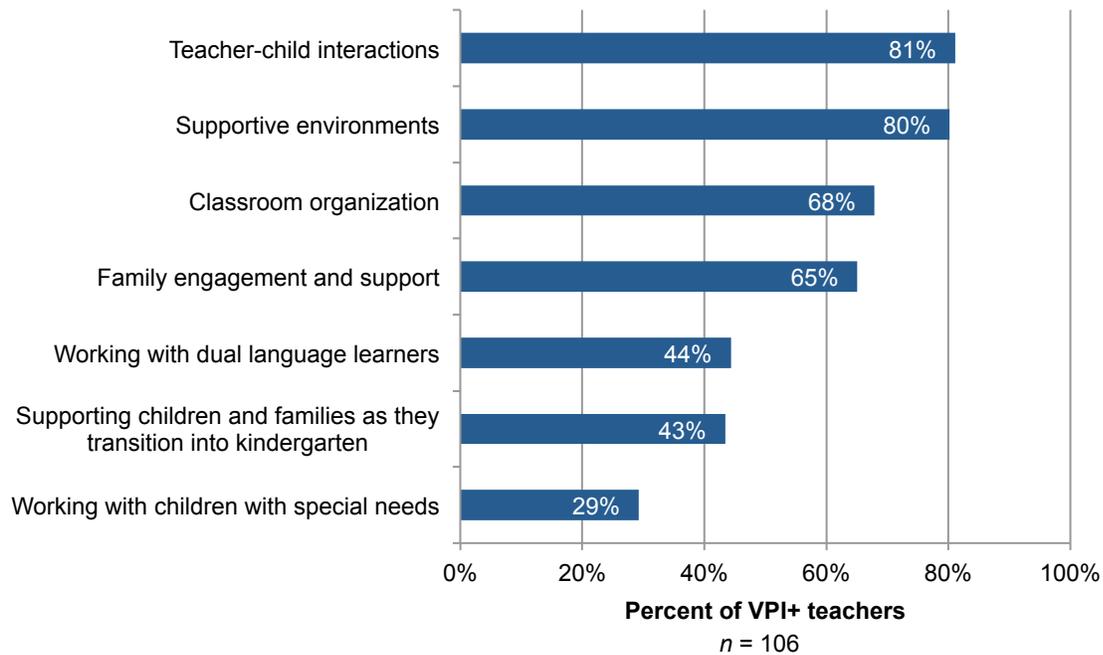
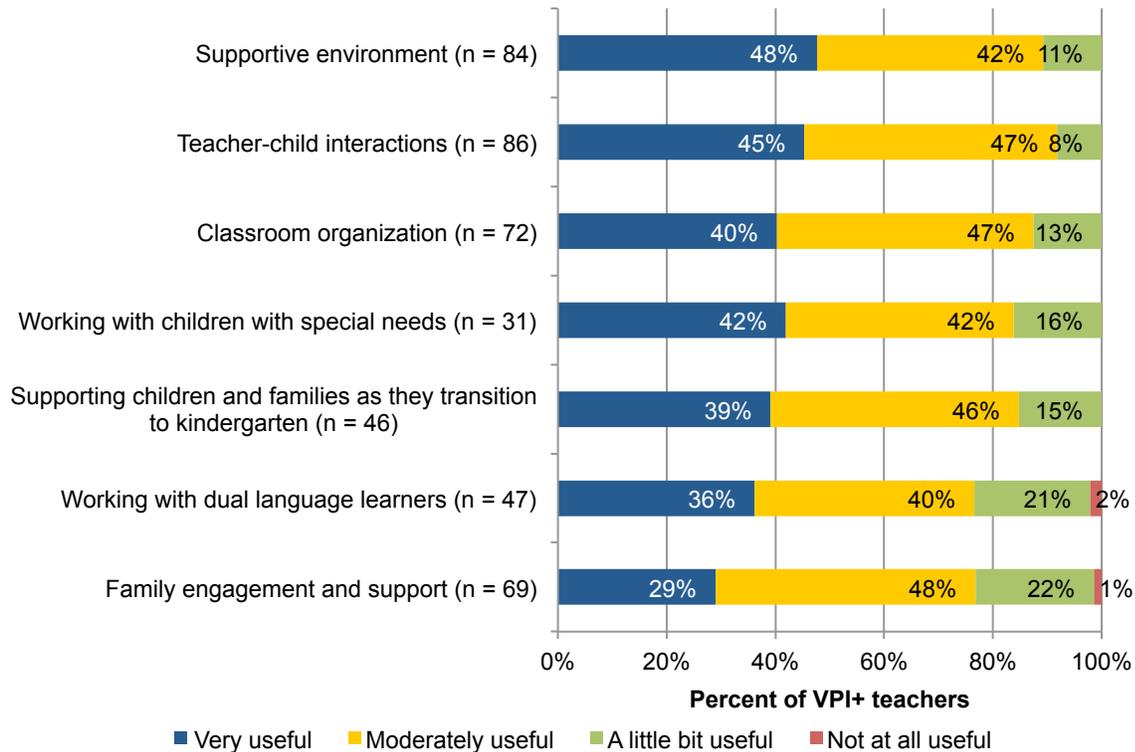
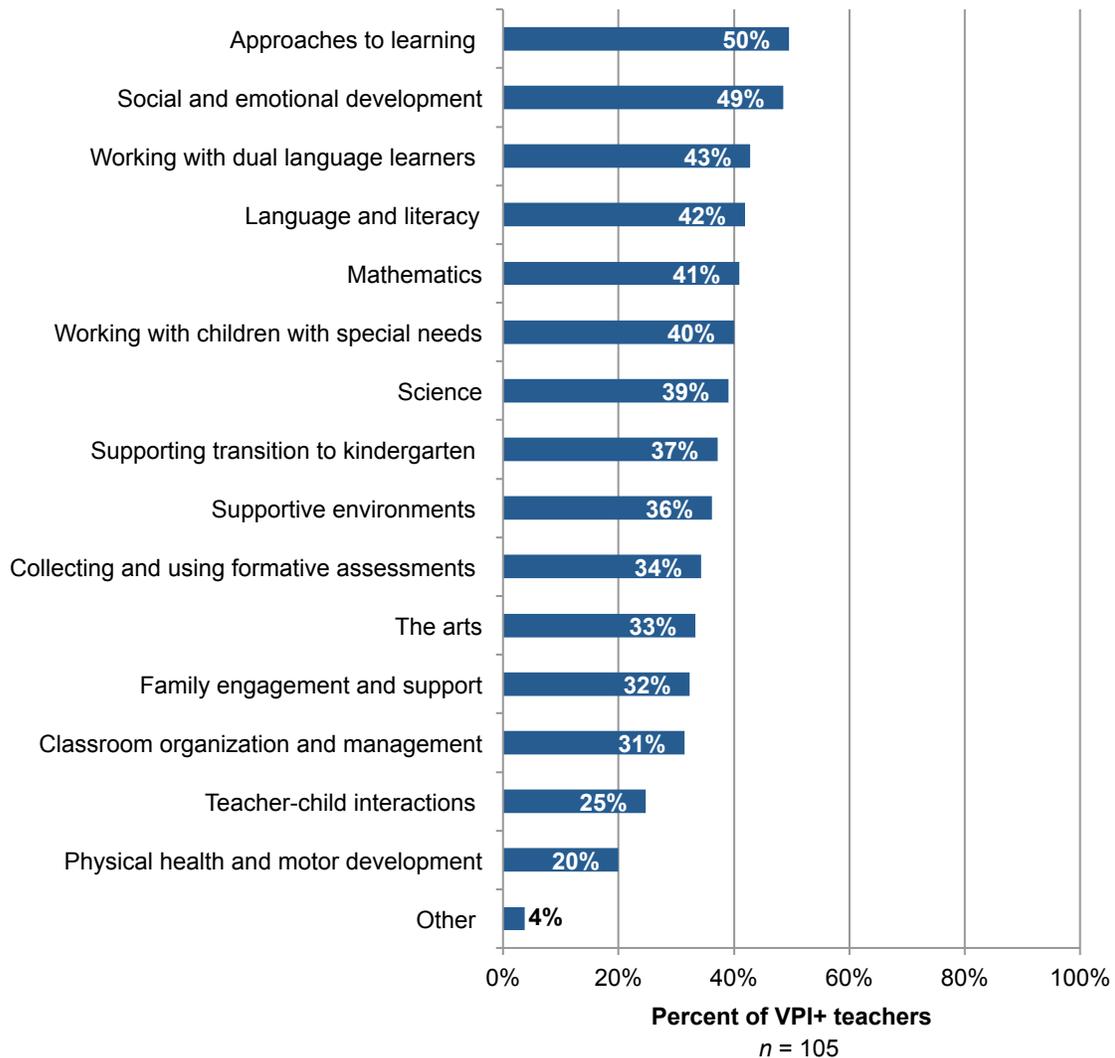


Exhibit 27. Perceived Usefulness of Professional Development in Specific Instructional Strategies



VPI+ teachers also reported on subjects and instructional strategies on which they desire more professional development via in-person training sessions, online modules, webinars, and/or coaching (Exhibit 28). VPI+ teachers most often identified the areas of approaches to learning and social-emotional development. VPI+ teachers were least interested in additional professional development on teacher-child interactions and physical and motor development. However, there was not strong consensus on most of these topics.

Exhibit 28. Areas in Which VPI+ Teachers Desire More Professional Development



Coaching

The coaching log data presented below cover coaching activities that occurred in January through May 2016. While this report focuses on VPI+ teachers and students, it is important to note that 14 coaches also supported the 91 VPI Improved classroom teachers, in addition to 115 VPI+ teachers.¹² Ten coaches were full time (i.e., 30 hours or more per week), and 4 were part time (ranging between 15 and 20 hours per week). On average, each coach was responsible for 17.3 teachers, but this varied by school division (ranging from 4 to 32 teachers per coach). VPI+ coaches also provided coaching to VPI Improved teachers and some school

¹² 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.

divisions had staff other than their VPI+ coaches who provided coaching to their VPI improved teachers and who may have received professional development from CASTL around coaching. Data on coaching of VPI Improved teachers are presented in **Appendix A**.

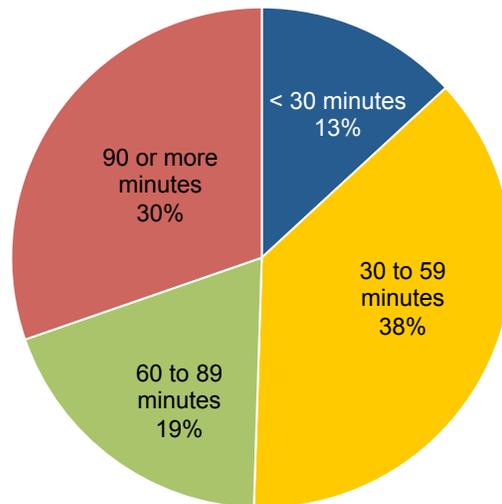
Coaching Contacts and Intensity

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 defined as 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 at a group training).

Between January 1 and May 31, 2016, coaches served 96 teachers in VPI+ classrooms (83% of all teachers in VPI+ classrooms). Coaches averaged 12.7 contacts per teacher in VPI+ classrooms (an average of 2.5 contacts per month). In total, coaches made 1,218 contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms.

On average, VPI+ teachers received 17.9 hours of coaching during the 5-month window (3.6 hours a month). Exhibit 29 presents data on the amount of time spent during each teacher contact. Sessions most often lasted between 30 and 59 minutes (38%). Almost a third (30%) of contacts lasted an hour and a half or more. About a fifth (19%) of contacts lasted between 60 and 89 minutes.

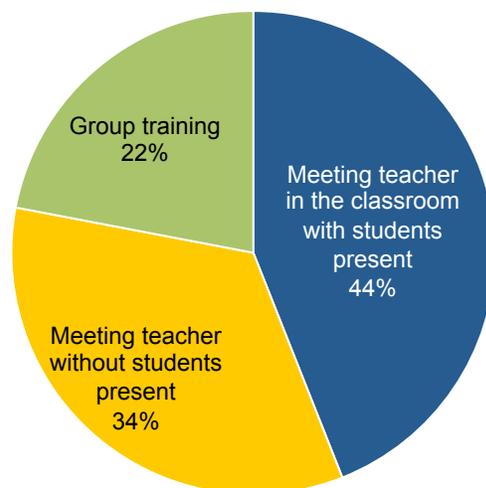
Exhibit 29. Coaching Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Length of Contact



n = 1,218 coaching contacts

Exhibit 30 shows the percentages of coaching contacts offered by format (i.e., in the classroom, individual coaching, and group training). The most frequent format was for teachers in VPI+ classrooms to receive coaching in the classroom with students present (44%). In contrast, 22% of contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms involved group trainings. Meetings with individual VPI+ teachers without students present (including phone calls) comprised more than a third of coaching contacts (34%).

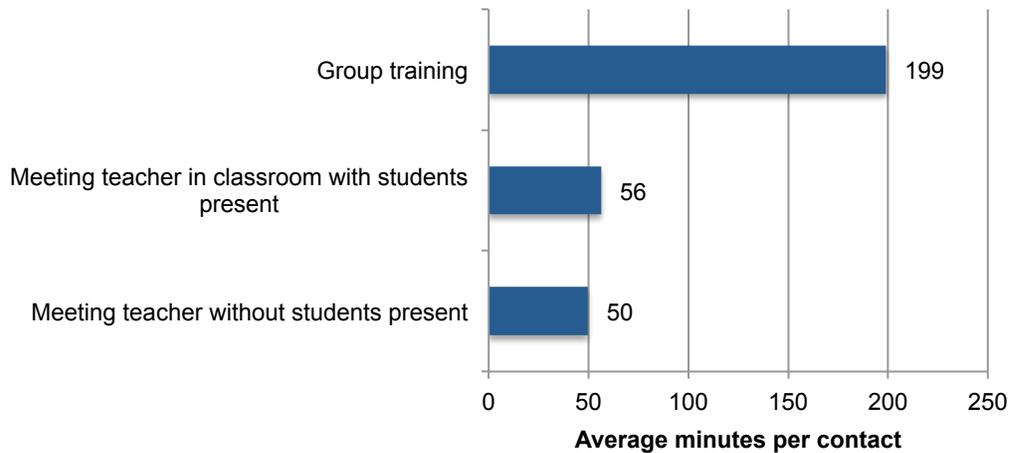
Exhibit 30. Coaching Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Type of Contact



n = 1,216 contacts

Exhibit 31 shows that in-class coaching sessions lasted about an hour for VPI+ teachers (56 minutes on average), and that individual meetings sessions (including phone calls) without students present were slightly shorter (50 minutes). Group trainings for these teachers lasted more than three hours on average (199 minutes).

Exhibit 31. 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 32). Most common were coach observations, used in 47% of individual contacts with teachers, and discussion, included in 40% of contacts with VPI+ teachers. Coaches used modeling with VPI+ teachers in 25% of contacts. Likewise, about 22% of 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 18% of VPI+ contacts. Only 7% of contacts with teachers in VPI+ classrooms included video review (teachers reflecting on videos of classroom footage).

Exhibit 32. Coaching Strategies for Individual Coaching Contacts with VPI+ Teachers

Strategy	N of contacts*	Percent of contacts
Observation	452	47%
Discussion	378	40%
Modeling	239	25%
Providing resources and materials (not connected to curriculum)	213	22%
Connection to curriculum and materials	205	21%
Data review	168	18%
Video review	71	7%
Other strategy	57	6%
None specified	8	1%

*A given contact could include multiple strategies.

Instructional strategies and domain-specific focus areas. Exhibit 33 presents data from coaches' logs on the percentages of individual and group training contacts that included work on specific focus areas (note that a given contact could include work on more than one focus area). Coaches most often addressed domain-specific topics (i.e., addressing the five essential domains of school readiness) during their contacts with VPI+ teachers (80% of contacts). More than a third of coaching contacts with VPI+ teachers focused on teacher-child interactions (44% of contacts) and nearly a third of coaching contacts (30%) focused on supportive environments. Coaching contacts with VPI+ teachers less frequently addressed conducting and using formative assessments and engaging families (both 15%). Furthermore, coaching contacts rarely addressed supporting dual language learners and children with disabilities (8% and 5%).

As mentioned above, 80% of coaching contacts included support around a domain focus area. Exhibit 34 presents the percentage of those contacts that addressed each domain. A given coaching contact could include work on more than one domain. Language and literacy was addressed with VPI+ teachers during more than half of domain-specific coaching contacts (52%). Social and emotional development was part of almost a quarter of domain-specific contacts with VPI+ teachers (24%). In almost a fifth of domain-specific contacts with VPI+ teachers, coaches shared information about approaches to learning (19%) and mathematics

(18%). Science, the arts, and physical health and development had the least emphasis and were included in only 3% to 13% of contacts with VPI+ teachers.

Exhibit 33. Individual Coaching and Group Training Contacts with VPI+ Teachers by Focus Area

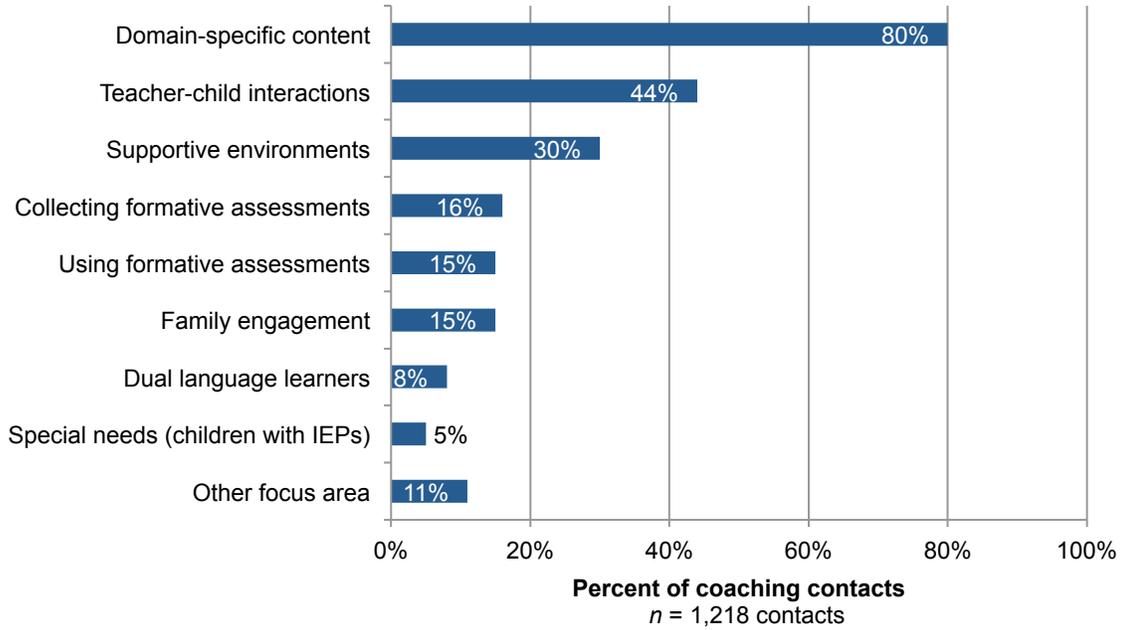
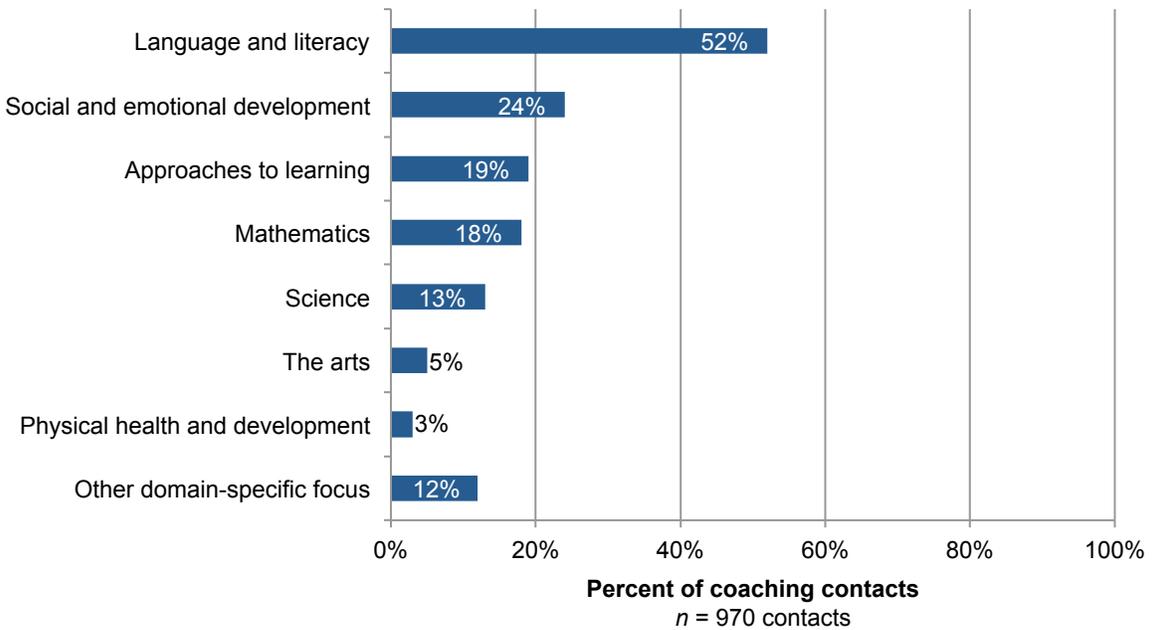


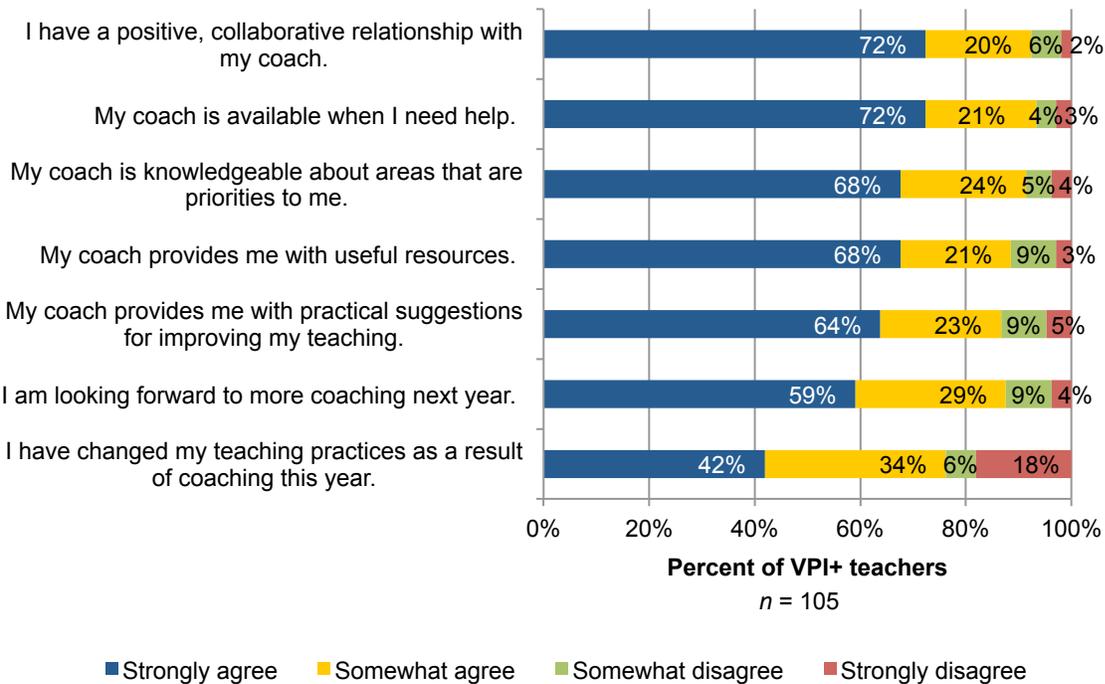
Exhibit 34. Individual Coaching and Group Training Contacts with VPI+ Teachers Incorporating Domain-Specific Focus Areas



Perceived Usefulness of Coaching

Based on the spring 2016 teacher survey, most VPI+ teachers were positive about the support they had received from their VPI+ coaches (Exhibit 35). The vast majority of VPI+ teachers either strongly or somewhat agreed that they had a positive relationship with their coaches, their coaches were available when they needed help, their coaches were knowledgeable about priority areas, their coaches provided useful resources, their coaches provided practical suggestions for improving teaching, and they looked forward to working with their coaches next year. Fewer VPI+ teachers strongly or somewhat agreed that coaching had changed their teaching practices.

Exhibit 35. VPI+ Teachers' Perceptions of Coaching



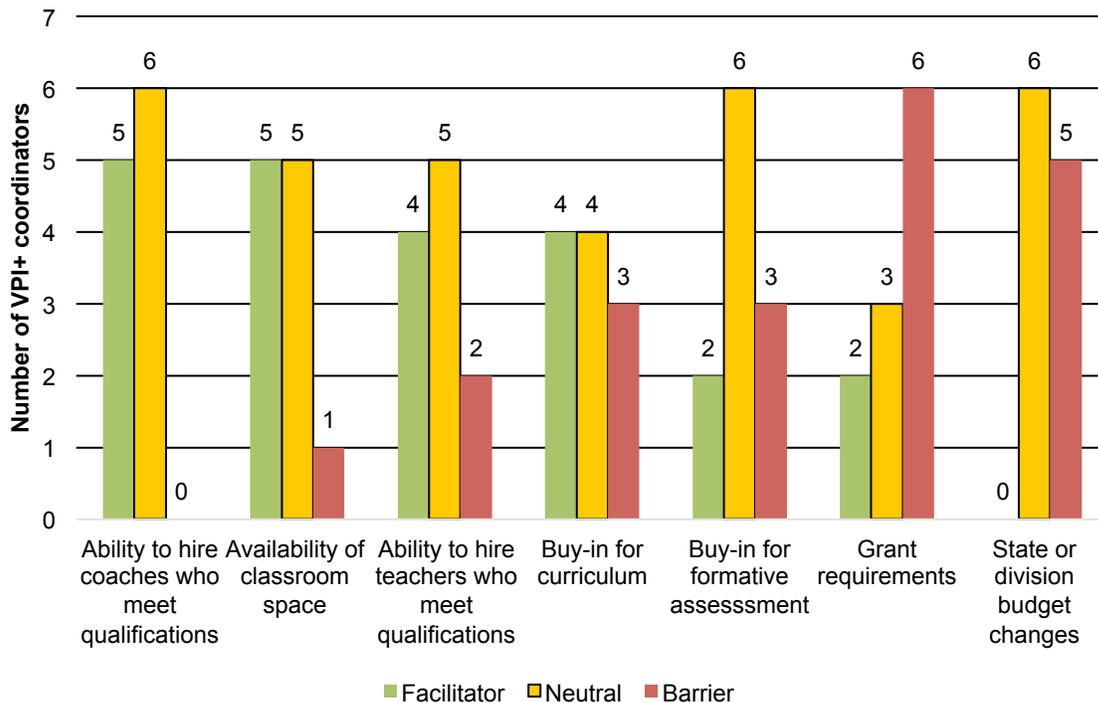
Facilitators and Barriers

VPI+ coordinators identified factors that have helped facilitate successful program implementation of VPI+ as well as factors that have made implementation more difficult, through a survey and phone interviews conducted in April and May 2016. VPI+ teachers also indicated which factors presented challenges to program implementation on the spring 2016 teacher survey.

Facilitators and Barriers Overall

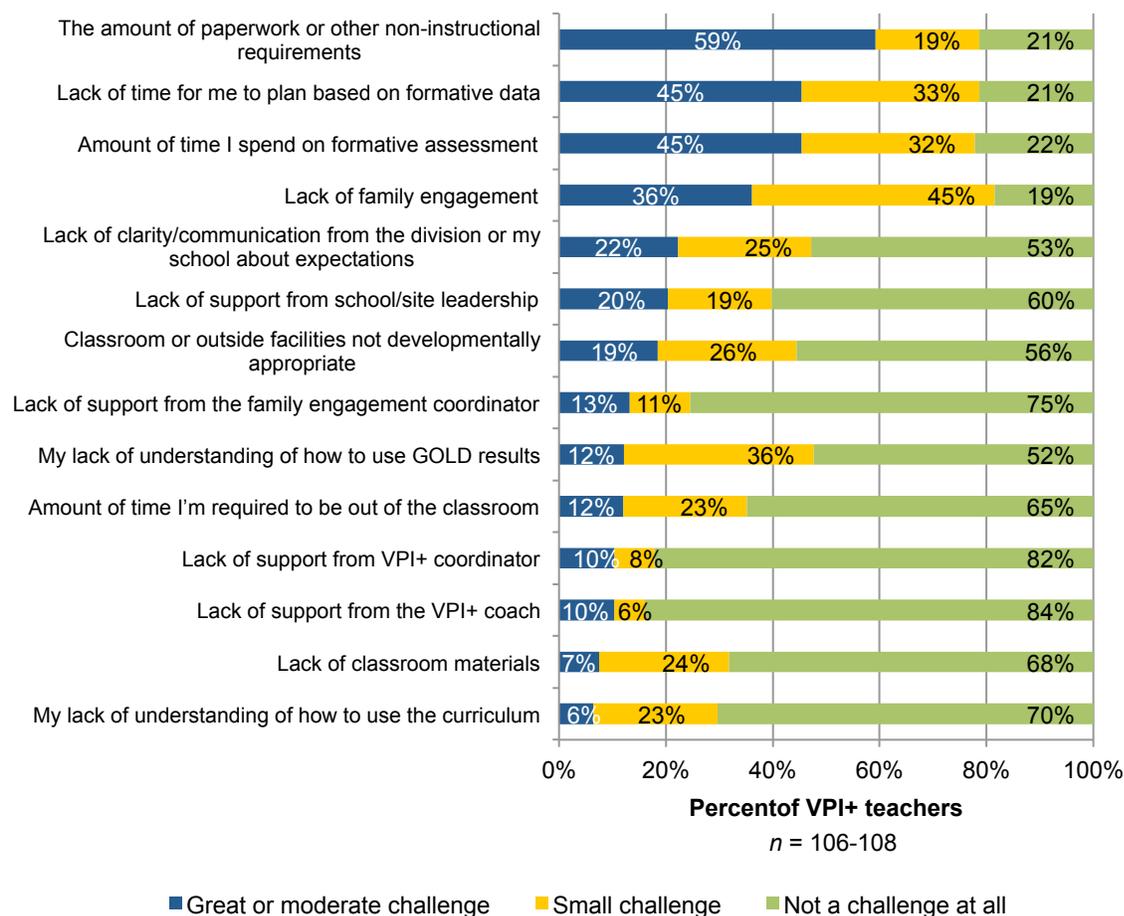
VPI+ coordinators reported whether various factors served as facilitators, barriers, or were neutral to VPI+ program implementation on a spring 2016 survey (Exhibit 36). Most VPI+ coordinators rated the ability to hire coaches and teachers who met the qualifications of the grant and availability of classroom space as being a facilitator or neutral factor. In contrast, VPI+ coordinators rated meeting grant requirements and addressing state or school division budget changes as barriers or neutral to implementation. VPI+ coordinators were mixed in their views on teacher buy-in for the curriculum and formative assessment, with the number of coordinators rating these factors as facilitators being almost the same as the number reporting them as barriers.

Exhibit 36. Facilitators and Barriers to VPI+ Implementation According to Coordinators



On a spring 2016 teacher survey, VPI+ teachers indicated the extent to which certain factors were challenges to providing the best educational experience for VPI+ students (Exhibit 37). The most common challenge identified by teachers was the amount of paperwork or other non-instructional requirements, with 59% of teachers identifying this as either a great challenge or a moderate challenge. Other significant challenges were the amount of time spent on formative assessment (45%) as well as a lack of time to develop a plan based on the formative assessment data (45%). More than a third of teachers (36%) indicated lack of family engagement as a great or moderate challenge to providing the best educational experience for VPI+ students. About a fifth of teachers identified lack of clarity or communication from the division or school about expectations of teachers (22%), a lack of support from school or site leadership (20%), and classroom or outside facilities not being developmentally appropriate (19%) as great or moderate challenges. Fewer than fourteen percent of VPI+ teachers considered other factors to be great or moderate challenges.

Exhibit 37. Teacher-Reported Challenges to Providing the Best Educational Experience



Below is a description of how factors supported and hindered student access, program implementation, and professional development in the 11 VPI+ school divisions based on interviews with their VPI+ coordinators.

Student Mobility and Access

Student Mobility

Most VPI+ coordinators felt that student mobility did not interfere with program implementation. Four coordinators reported low mobility, two reported moderate mobility, and five coordinators reported high mobility. Three of the coordinators noted that student mobility was due to the transient nature of the participating families. Five division coordinators reported that their VPI+ programs kept waitlists throughout the entire year to fill vacancies as they became available. Coordinators in a couple of divisions without waiting lists mentioned they were planning for next year to use a new recruitment model (e.g., single point registration for multiple preschool programs) that will hopefully produce a waiting list.

Support for At-Risk Subgroups

Nearly all coordinators reported that VPI+ programs provided supports for children with disabilities. All but one division reported that they were able to provide supports for children with disabilities. Seven divisions specifically reported having building-level services and supports available for children with disabilities. One division had “collaborative classrooms,” which were staffed by a special education teacher, general education teacher, and an assistant, and one division intends to move to this model next year. Another division offered screenings through the county and special education services through a contractor. One division coordinator reported that workshops from their local *Training and Technical Assistance Center* (T/TAC) prepared their teachers and coaches to work with children with disabilities. Only one division did not feel that the VPI+ program was able to provide the needed instructional supports to children with disabilities due to a lack of perceived support from the regional special education program.

Nearly all VPI+ programs that served dual language learners supported them by hiring or identifying existing bilingual staff in the division. Six of eight VPI+ coordinators in divisions that had dual language learners in their VPI+ programs reported hiring or identifying existing ESL specialists or staff in the division who speak the languages of the families, including bilingual VPI+ staff and/or interpreters. Divisions varied in how they used these staff members, with some divisions integrating them fully into the delivery of the curriculum and others using

them on an as-needed basis. One division assigned dual language learners to classes taught by bilingual teachers, and another division provided either a bilingual teacher or a bilingual assistant teacher in every classroom. One division coordinator mentioned utilizing the division ESL specialist, coordinator, and an ESL teacher when needed¹³. One division arranged for an interpreter to read books to children in English and Spanish to increase children's English vocabulary, whereas another division arranged for interpreters to be on call in the event that parents or guardians needed to communicate about their child. Two divisions offered indirect support to students by having ESL staff provide professional development to teachers. Finally, one division coordinator did not mention specific strategies for supporting dual language learners, but was confident in the VPI+ teachers' understanding of dual language learners' needs and in the appropriateness of classroom materials for supporting language learning by dual language learners (i.e., leveled literature for all learners, books that show multi-cultural families, and labeling classroom materials both in English and children's native language).

Three divisions did not report having any dual language learners in their VPI+ classes. One of these divisions did not have any dual language learners in the public school system and the other two divisions did not have any dual language learners enrolled in their VPI+ classrooms, but mentioned having access to translated materials and bilingual staff in their divisions.

All coordinators reported that VPI+ programs had supports available for homeless children and their families. All coordinators reported that their VPI+ programs provided clothing and transportation for homeless children. Three divisions mentioned having funding from the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act (a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth and provides funding to states for district programs that serve homeless children). In addition, one division also had a "Me-Too" fund available to any child or family in the division who has a need (e.g., funds for field trips, prescriptions, lice treatment, transportation). Another division mentioned providing a summer school program for children of all homeless families and those most at risk (including, but not limited to, VPI+ children). This division also distributes nutritional backpacks over school breaks that provide food, books, and activities. Two other divisions reported working with non-VPI+ entities (i.e., the county director of social services and the Department of Pupil Personnel) to meet the needs of homeless children and their families.

¹³ VPI+ coordinators typically used the term "ESL" when referring to staff who worked with dual language learners.

Program Implementation

Grant Administration

VPI+ coordinators have found ways to alleviate some of the demands of the grant by bringing on additional staff or re-assigning duties. One division brought in an assistant to help with data export requirements. Another division hired a part-time coordinator to oversee and communicate with the community-based programs given that the primary VPI+ coordinator was also responsible for all other preschool programs within the division. The original coordinator continued to oversee the public school programs and provide leadership for the academic supports in both the public and private programs.

Nearly all VPI+ coordinators reported having support from their schools' principals and other elementary school staff. Ten division coordinators reported strong support from their school principals and staff, and three division coordinators stated that the elementary school leaders and staff were “thrilled” and “proud” to be able to serve preschool children. Two of the VPI+ coordinators noted that the coaches had played an important role in developing relationships with building principals by sharing data and communicating with them about the children. However, one division coordinator mentioned having some conflicts with a principal who was concerned about VPI+ teachers being out of the classroom so often for training, but the conflict was ultimately resolved with support from the superintendent.

Coaching

All division coordinators reported their coaches tailored coaching to individual needs of teachers and children, but that there were some common focus areas. Coaches developed individualized implementation plans to guide their coaching with each teacher. Four division coordinators mentioned their coaches conducted observations, walk-throughs, and/or progress monitoring to inform their development of implementation plans. One coordinator shared that her coach uses a CASTL coaching model: the coach meets with the teacher, determines areas of strength, and figures out a plan for growth. Another coordinator based individualization of implementation plans around use of the *GOLD*[™] and *CLASS*[®] data. Even though implementation plans were individualized, the division coordinators reported consistent themes for their coaching across divisions, including a focus on teacher-child interactions, development of children’s oral language, classroom management, and behavior management (based on *CLASS*[®]/*QRIS* ratings); triangulating, understanding, and using data to inform instruction; working with dual language learners; effective use of classroom resources; making home-school connections; and solving technology issues with *GOLD*[™].

Several teachers considered their experiences with their coaches to be the greatest success of VPI+. Teachers appreciated coach feedback and ideas, that coaches listened to their concerns, and that coaches were able to encourage reflection and growth as a teacher. One teacher commented, “Coaching was really helpful for finding ways to continue to grow as an educator and to get an outside perspective on issues I encountered in the classroom.”

More than half of VPI+ coordinators reported that math and social-emotional development would be priorities for training and professional development in 2016–17.

Social-emotional development was the area most frequently identified by divisions as being a focus for next year ($n = 10$), followed by math ($n = 6$). Three divisions further planned to provide professional development around the use of classroom quality data. Other plans included training and professional development on using data from *GOLD*[™] and PALS, strengthening curriculum implementation fidelity, language and literacy supports for dual language learners, and instructional strategies focused on phonological awareness, oral language development, and science. Plans included working with specific vendors and training centers such as Erikson Math, Teaching Strategies[®], regional *Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC)*, Center for Applied Linguistics, and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI).

Curriculum and Instruction

All VPI+ coordinators in divisions implementing *The Creative Curriculum*[®] reported that teachers were doing well with implementation after having overcome some initial challenges, but a few coordinators felt that more training was needed to further raise implementation quality. Coordinators in five of eight divisions using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] mentioned having wanted additional training in the second half of the year, but only one arranged for and received such training, despite VDOE negotiating for free onsite training. For example, a coordinator said, “We love the goal of Creative Curriculum and where it goes; we just need more help in implementing it appropriately.” Two coordinators pointed out the large learning curve with adopting a new curriculum, with one coordinator explaining, “It’s gradually gotten better all year long... We finally reached a point where [teachers] don’t have to read a card and follow it strictly.” Several teachers concurred and reported that adopting *The Creative Curriculum*[®] has been one of the biggest VPI+ accomplishments. One teacher wrote, “Overall, I think the Creative Curriculum[®] really helped my students to become more independent and think more critically.”

VPI+ coordinators reported their classrooms having most of the necessary instructional materials to support use of their curricula, but needing other classroom and outdoor equipment. All coordinators reported having access to all of the instructional materials needed. A few mentioned planning to purchase more books associated with *The Creative Curriculum*[®] to use in classrooms and send home to families to encourage them to read with children. (In contrast, a few VPI+ teachers reported on the survey that they needed more instructional materials.) Two division coordinators mentioned needing equipment such as balls, jump ropes, and larger play equipment. One division coordinator mentioned needing sand tables and science and math materials. One division coordinator mentioned appreciation of VDOE providing guidance on and approval of expenditures that came up during the school year, such as refrigerators for snacks, books for use with the curriculum, and tablets.

The GOLD™ Formative Assessment

VPI+ teachers and coordinators identified time as a challenge in using the GOLD™ Formative Assessment. Forty-five percent of VPI+ teachers reported that the amount of time spent on formative assessment was a challenge to providing the best educational experience for their children. On surveys, several VPI+ teachers listed concerns about the amount of paperwork and data entry time that *GOLD™* required, and they felt this time could have been better spent on instruction. They also reported needing more time for planning around formative assessment results. In addition, a couple of VPI+ coordinators mentioned that time had been a challenge for the teachers, with one VPI+ coordinator stating that *GOLD™* was “a lot” in terms of the time it took to do, but that teachers were able to collect evidence more efficiently as they gained experience with *GOLD™*. One division coordinator commented that *GOLD™* did take time out of teachers’ days, but that *GOLD™* provided new information that complemented the information they were obtaining from other assessments used in the division.

A few coordinators reported miscommunication and concerns around the timing of the GOLD™ checkpoints (i.e., assessment data collection windows). One division coordinator expressed frustration in finding out after having engaged in a great deal of work, that the second checkpoint was not mandatory. Another coordinator also shared a miscommunication over the timing of the second checkpoint, which resulted in their division collecting data for the third window while the second checkpoint was still occurring. Finally, another coordinator felt that without an end-of-year checkpoint, data would not reflect the full extent of children’s growth, especially for dual language learners.

While use of tablets can reduce burden of administering GOLD™, two division coordinators reported some initial challenges with using the technology. One division coordinator reported there were issues with the Division’s iPads which were eventually resolved. Another division coordinator noted that in addition to iPad difficulties that eventually were resolved, they had ongoing compatibility issues between GOLD™ and other tablets that they were never able to resolve.

Five of the VPI+ coordinators mentioned the need for additional training on the GOLD™ Formative Assessment. They mentioned feeling that their teachers did not receive sufficient training on the GOLD™ and their needing more training before school begins next year. One coordinator explained, “The first set of GOLD™ professional development wasn’t as thorough as it needed to be and I came away confused, but the teachers jumped right in and watched modules and worked on it on the weekend. It would be nice if we had more up-front training next year.” Coordinators also mentioned that in-person training was desired, but that the vendor wanted to provide online support. Despite VDOE negotiating with Teaching Strategies® to provide differentiated free onsite training to all 11 school divisions to address unmet training needs, a couple of division coordinators reported having not heard that their divisions could receive an additional training on GOLD™ until it was too late to schedule one, and one division had already paid for a training, before learning they could have had one at no cost. Due to the perceived lack of training, one division planned to attend a GOLD™ Formative Assessment conference to supplement their training, and another coordinator was trying to schedule another in-person training. They mentioned that coaches did what they could, but it was new to them as well.

Family Engagement

Nearly all VPI+ coordinators reported having a formal parent advisory committee and hosting activities or events to engage families. Nine division coordinators mentioned having a parent advisory committee. Parent advisory committee members’ responsibilities included communicating with other parents and providing feedback and guidance on budget decisions, hiring decisions, instruction, and implications of evaluation results. Four coordinators also mentioned having or planning to have a family access consortium within their divisions to provide feedback on whether parent needs are being met, including the curriculum and comprehensive services. All VPI+ coordinators reported involving parents and guardians in family engagement activities, including having parents and guardians come to registration and orientation events, keeping a cadre of parent volunteers on hand, inviting parents and guardians

to visit the classroom to read and discuss their jobs with children, distributing a parent/guardian newsletter, hosting regular parent/guardian dinners, and taking parents/guardians to places in the community such as the library or on a grocery store tour.

Family engagement coordinators were critical for student recruitment and connecting families with services. All VPI+ coordinators reported that one of the roles of the family engagement coordinator was to get to know families and to connect them with resources in the community. Family engagement coordinators also worked on recruitment for next year's VPI+ students and supported current families with registration for and transition to kindergarten. However, one division coordinator commented that there were few webinars or trainings available for the family engagement coordinator, but that she planned to attend a national conference next school year to receive relevant training.

Transition to Kindergarten

Almost all VPI+ coordinators reported that their divisions offered kindergarten transition activities for VPI+ children and their families. Ten of the eleven division coordinators reported connecting children and/or families with the kindergarten classroom environment prior to kindergarten. Strategies for facilitating kindergarten transition included hosting transition workshops or parent meetings; conducting kindergarten summer camp prior to the beginning of the school year; providing transition packets and information including activities parents and guardians can engage in to support transition; sharing child data, including assessment data and/or strength-based information with the kindergarten teachers; mutual sharing of expectations and standards between preschool and kindergarten teachers; and providing shared professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers.

Comprehensive Services

More than half of the VPI+ coordinators reported being able to provide all services needed for their children. Eight division coordinators reported being able to provide all services, but one division coordinator commented that the timeliness of actually receiving services was sometimes lacking. One division coordinator mentioned that their family engagement coordinator had trouble providing clothing for a needy child and finding translation services. Two divisions mentioned that were able to provide all services with the exception of transportation, which they felt impacted their enrollment numbers, but they had either found a solution or were working toward a solution for next year. Only one division reported that services

were difficult to provide in general for undocumented families, especially since identification is often required by the local charities that provide some of the services.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

State-Sponsored Technical Assistance

VPI+ coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators appreciated the training and technical assistance they received from VDOE and other state partners. All VPI+ coordinators and coaches and almost all family engagement coordinators attended the CASTL-sponsored “Leadership Academy,” which was largely well received. VPI+ coordinators also found value in working with CASTL on continuous improvement planning and the networking opportunities that the academy provided. VPI+ coordinators also reported attending many different types of state or state-contracted trainings, including VDOE sponsored webinars and VECF’s training on using CLASS[®] data. Coordinators found trainings around dual language learners and the PALS particularly valuable. Future topics of interest include training and guidance around building public-private preschool partnerships as specified in the grant requirements; special education; supports for dual language learners, and student grade retention.

Recommendations

VPI+ state and local partners accomplished a great amount within their first year of the grant. Since January 2016, the 11 divisions served more than 1,230 children in high-quality preschool classrooms, defined by having educated teachers, an evidence-based curriculum and formative assessment, family engagement activities, and comprehensive services. Division coordinators, coaches, and family engagement coordinators received technical assistance and professional development on numerous topics, including recruiting low-income and hard to access families; supporting children's social-emotional development; strategies and resources for inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms and early identification of special needs; outreach and services for homeless children and families; and budget monitoring and reporting. Further, divisions began using program quality data and child assessment data to inform program improvements and professional development. VPI+ teachers received professional development and coaching on instructional strategies, teacher-child interactions, and supportive learning environments. Finally, Virginia continued to strengthen 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 the teacher survey and coaching logs, has identified some needs of the school divisions. Additional support from VDOE and its partners can address these needs to strengthen VPI+ as the program enters the second year of the expansion grant. Below are recommendations that came from analyses of the formative data.

Curriculum and Instruction

- In the 41% of VPI+ classrooms using *The Creative Curriculum*,[®] nearly all VPI+ teachers were new to using it. Results from the teacher survey indicated that teachers using this curriculum felt less confident than other teachers about implementing their curriculum. VPI+ teachers in divisions using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] could benefit from more training to be able to fully implement the curriculum with fidelity and with sufficient intensity to achieve adequate levels of kindergarten readiness in the children they serve. School divisions implementing *The Creative Curriculum*[®] may benefit from scheduling onsite differentiated training that is available free of charge to each division from Teaching Strategies[®] each grant year.

Formative Assessment

- Buy-in for the formative assessment tool (i.e., *GOLD*[™]) was mentioned as a barrier in 3 of 11 of the divisions and may need continued attention. Almost half of teachers (45%) reported that the amount of time they spend on the formative assessment is a great or moderate challenge to providing the best early educational experiences for children. Helping teachers use data collected through *GOLD*[™] to inform instruction may increase its perceived value by teachers, and it may be that the first year did not provide enough time and opportunity for teachers to experience or participate in this iterative process.
- It often takes a couple of years to become reliable at using a formative assessment, such as *GOLD*[™]. Many teachers received four hours or less of training on *GOLD*[™], and they may need additional training to promote more effective collection and use of data. Further, training on how to use *GOLD*[™] with dual language learners and children with disabilities may help teachers feel it is more useful for working with those students. School divisions may benefit from taking advantage of onsite training on *GOLD*[™] available to them from Teaching Strategies[®] each grant year.
- Some *GOLD*[™] implementation challenges could be reduced by divisions ensuring proper lead time to make sure technology (e.g., tablets) works before data collection begins. Implementation challenges could also be reduced with clear communication from VDOE to divisions and from divisions to VPI+ teachers about the dates of data collection windows and other expectations.

Family Engagement

- Family engagement coordinators might benefit from more ongoing support (e.g., monthly conference calls), such that CASTL provides to coaches to help them learn from each other about promising practices for student recruitment, family intakes, partnering with community agencies around services and resources, organizing parent and family activities, and coordinating parent advisory committees.
- Fewer VPI+ teachers reported talking with all or most of their families informally before or after class or visiting families in their homes (63% and 62%) than inviting them to help in the classroom (86%) or sending home activities for them to do with their children (86%). If informal check-ins or home visits are to be used more broadly, some teachers may need systems and supports that enable them to engage in these activities (e.g., days set aside for home visits or built-in time when parents and guardians are welcome to be in the classroom at the beginning or end of the day).

Local Professional Development and Coaching

- Given almost a third (32%) of VPI+ teachers are new to teaching preschool, school divisions may want to check whether they are receiving targeted coaching, especially focused on developmentally appropriate instructional strategies, teacher-child interactions, and supportive learning environments.
- Teachers reported being most interested in having more professional development on non-cognitive skills such as approaches to learning and social-emotional development, and nearly all (10 of 11) school divisions mentioned having a focus on supporting social emotional skills as part of their local professional development plan. Given the widespread interest in these topics, coaches may be able to share training and coaching resources on these topics across divisions.
- Teachers received less professional development on supporting dual language learners and children with disabilities than on other topics, and those who did receive support in these areas tended to find it less useful than other professional development. Therefore, divisions may want to examine the amount and quality of training that teachers are receiving on supporting children with unique learning needs.
- VPI+ teachers are supposed to receive up to 40 hours of coaching per school year (4.5 hours a month), but the hours are expected to vary by teachers' professional development needs. VPI+ teachers received an average of 3.6 hours of coaching a month. VDOE and CASTL may want to review whether an average of 3.6 hours meets expectations for the average amount of coaching VPI+ teachers should be receiving.
- While teachers overall were positive about the support they received from their coaches, they were less likely to agree that the coaching changed their teaching practices. To help teachers reflect on and modify their teaching practice, coaches may want to increase the use of video and focus on specific practices.
- Coaches also may want to consider ways to provide teachers with more support around family engagement, instruction for dual language learners, and working with children with disabilities.
- Based on teacher interests, coaches also may want to provide more support for strengthening children's approaches to learning (e.g., persistence, cognitive flexibility, curiosity, problem-solving, use of resources, reflection) and development of social-emotional skills (e.g., positive self-identity and self-competence, understanding of emotions, empathy, relationship building and cooperation, and conflict resolution).

Comprehensive Services

- Fewer than half of VPI+ teachers reported believing that mental health services are readily available to children in their VPI+ classrooms and their families, and even fewer teachers reported thinking that families had access to services such as WIC and insurance enrollment and domestic violence and substance abuse treatment counseling. If such services are available to VPI+ children and their families, increasing teacher awareness may improve families' access to those services.

In conclusion, VPI+ had a strong first year. The school divisions are now working on specific program improvement and professional development efforts using data from the QRIS and summative assessments. 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: Coaching Activities with Teachers of VPI+ and VPI Improved Classrooms

<i>Table C-1. Number of Coaches, FTE, and Teacher-to-Coach Ratio</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>		<i>Total</i>
Number of coaches			14
Total coach FTE			11.9
Teacher-to-coach ratio (number of teachers to 1 FTE coach)			17.3

<i>Table C-2. Number of Teachers and Teachers Served</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>		
	<i>VPI+ New</i>	<i>VPI Improved</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total number of teachers	115	91	206
Number of teachers served	96	35	131

<i>Table C-3. Number of Coaching Contacts, Average Contacts with Teachers, and Average Hours for Contacts</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>		
	<i>VPI+ New</i>	<i>VPI Improved</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total number of coaching contacts	1,218	314	1,532
Average total number of coaching contacts per teacher	12.7	9.0	11.7
Average number of coaching contacts per teacher per month	2.5	1.8	2.3
Average total number of hours for coaching contacts per teacher	17.9	13.1	16.6
Average number of hours for coaching contacts per teacher per month	3.6	2.6	3.3

<i>Table C-4. Coaching Contacts by Type of Contact</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>					
	<i>VPI+ New</i>		<i>VPI Improved</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>
In classroom (with students present)	536	44%	86	27%	622	41%
Meeting with teacher/TA (in person or phone)	420	34%	100	32%	520	34%
Group training	262	22%	128	41%	390	25%

<i>Table C-5. Average Length of Contact by Type of Contact (minutes)</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>					
	<i>VPI+ New</i>		<i>VPI Improved</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Average length of contact	1,218	84.7	314	87.7	1,532	85.3
- In classroom (with students present)	536	56.3	86	47.8	622	55.1
- Meeting with teacher/TA (in person or phone)	420	49.8	100	45.3	520	48.9
- Group training	262	198.9	128	147.5	390	182.0

<i>Table C-6. Coaching Contacts by Length of Contact (minutes)</i>	<i>All VPI+ Divisions</i>					
	<i>VPI+ New</i>		<i>VPI Improved</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>
< 30	162	13%	27	9%	189	12%
30 to 59	454	37%	117	37%	571	37%
60 to 89	233	19%	89	28%	322	21%
90 or more	369	30%	81	26%	450	29%

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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	452	47%	71	38%	523	46%
Discussion (reflective conversation or problem-solving, role playing)	378	40%	64	34%	442	39%
Modeling (live or via video)	239	25%	13	7%	252	22%
Providing other resources and materials	213	22%	40	22%	253	22%
Connection to curriculum resources and materials	205	21%	36	19%	241	21%
Data review	168	18%	45	24%	213	19%
Video review (of teacher's video)	71	7%	12	6%	83	7%
Other strategy	57	6%	39	21%	96	8%
None of the above coaching strategies specified	8	1%	6	2%	14	1%

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

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	970	80%	227	72%	1,197	78%
Teacher-child interactions	538	44%	97	31%	635	41%
Supportive environments	368	30%	50	16%	418	27%
Collecting formative assessments	195	16%	36	11%	231	15%
Using formative assessments	187	15%	31	10%	218	14%
Family engagement	181	15%	27	9%	208	14%
Dual language learners	93	8%	13	4%	106	7%
Special needs (children with IEPs)	59	5%	7	2%	66	4%
Other focus area	135	11%	112	36%	247	16%
None of the above focus areas specified	63	5%	24	8%	87	6%

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

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	635	52%	168	54%	803	52%
Social and emotional development	291	24%	70	22%	361	24%
Mathematics	217	18%	43	14%	260	17%
Approaches to learning	234	19%	25	8%	259	17%
Science	163	13%	9	3%	172	11%
The arts	57	5%	4	1%	61	4%
Physical health and development	32	3%	8	3%	40	3%
Other domain-specific focus	145	12%	54	17%	199	13%
None of the above domain-specific focus areas specified	13	1%			13	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 B: 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.