

**West Virginia's Journey:
An Ongoing Commitment to High-Quality Early Learning
Opportunities for All Children**

History, Studies, Current Projects, and Looking Forward

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**WVDE Division of Teaching and Learning
Office of Early Learning**

Introduction

West Virginia is one of a very small handful of states in the nation with free, full-day, five-day kindergarten for all children AND voluntary universal pre-k to all four year old children (and three year old children with special needs). Beginning in 2016-2017, West Virginia's voluntary universal pre-k program will ensure full-day, **five-day** services are offered to all four olds and three year olds with special needs. The following components are provided to show the prior work, current efforts, and future aspirations for the programs serving young learners in West Virginia:

Section One: Annotated description and timeline of the history of early learning milestones in WV

Section Two: Prior research inclusive of West Virginia Early Learning Programs

Section Three: WVDE Advisory Council on a Comprehensive Approach to Early Learning for Grades P-5

Section Four: Defining the Current Work

Section Five: Achieving Results

Please note that all links to resources are included in the text below. For additional information, please contact Clayton Burch, WVDE Chief Academic Officer, at wburch@k12.wv.us, or Monica DellaMea, Executive Director, WVDE Office of Early Learning, at mdellamea@k12.wv.us or (304) 558-9994.

Section One: Annotated description and timeline of the history of early learning milestones in WV

- 1983 With a new piece of legislation, local school boards are given the ability to offer preschool to three- and four-year-old children. This resulted in the formation of the Public School Early Childhood Education Initiative.
- 2000- The West Virginia State Legislature made \$1 million available to the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families in the 2001 budget for the Educare initiative, which was intended to enhance existing early childhood programs and encourage quality improvement. Funds were awarded through a competitive grant process to collaborative community groups that include core partners representing Head Start, child care, public preschool, birth to three, and parent of a preschool child.
- 2001 The WVDE hired an early childhood/even start coordinator. (Dr. Cathy Jones)
- 2002 Educare Pilot eliminated and West Virginia legislation passed W. Va. Code §18-5-44. This bill required the West Virginia Board of Education, in collaboration with the Secretary of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, to ensure that every four year old has access to a high quality pre-k classroom by 2012-13.
- 2002 Partners Implementing an Early Child Care & Education System (Pieces) was created to ensure the vision of collaborative pre-k.
- 2004 Each had to develop a pre-k plan that included 50% collaboration with existing early childhood community programs to maximize local, state, and federal dollars.
- **WVBE Policy 2520.15-** 2004, 2010, 2015

The WVBE initially implemented the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework to guide instructional practices. The WVBE revised the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework (WVBE Policy 2520.15) to better meet alignment to the Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives- Kindergarten, as well as to address school readiness, child assessment, and Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Standards Framework.

- 2004 First Universal Pre-K Policy jointly written (Policy 2525)
- 2005 The National Institute for the Early Education Research at Rutgers University conducted a study on the effects of West Virginia's Early Education Program on young children's school readiness. The study results provide strong evidence of the positive impact of West Virginia's Early Education program on children's language, literacy and math skills development. This evidence indicates that the West Virginia's program produces the kinds of effects that lead to increased school success and later improvements in children's reading and math skills.

- 2005 State removed the requirement that school districts provide funding for the first year of their pre-k program, which allows more districts to begin offering pre-k.
- **WVBE Policy 2525-** 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015
West Virginia Board of Education revisions were completed to Policy 2525 to ensure continued revisions to strengthen the quality of WV pre-k and the collaborative process.
- **Funding-** 2008
The WVDE changed the rules for WV Pre-K funding calculations to ensure children in various setting were funded equally and equitably, regardless of type of collaboration or setting.
- 2010 The WV Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was established to replace and expand upon the work of the PIECES (Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System) Advisory Council. This group is designed to better position the state to address pressing needs and emerging opportunities in early childhood, including the provision in the 2007 Head Start Act regarding the establishment of State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- During **2014-2015, 75%** of the classrooms were in collaboration with community partners, including childcare centers and Head Start programs.

Section Two: Prior research inclusive of West Virginia Early Learning Programs

Appendix A: National Institute for Early Education Research. (2005). [New Study Shows West Virginia's Pre-K Program Improves Language and Math Abilities of Children of All Backgrounds.](#)

Appendix B: Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University. (2005). [Early Childhood Education, Economic Development and the Formation of Human Capital.](#)

Appendix C: Regional Education Laboratory Program. (2009). [West Virginia's Progress Toward Universal Prekindergarten.](#)

Appendix D: National Institute for Early Education Research (2009). [NIEER - Providing Preschool Education for All 4-Year-Olds: Lessons from Six State Journeys \(2009\).](#)

Appendix E: Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University. (2010). [Comparison of State Policies for Access and Funding of Early Childhood Education Programs.](#)

Appendix F: Regional Education Laboratory Program. (2011). [Pre-Kindergarten Collaborations in the Four REL Appalachia States, Regional Education Lab Report \(2011\).](#)

Appendix G: Regional Education Laboratory Program. (2012). [Pre-Kindergarten participation rates in West Virginia \(2012\).](#)

Appendix H: National Institute for Early Education Research. (2014). [Technical Report: Kindergarten Early Learning Scale.](#)

Section Three: WVDE Advisory Council on a Comprehensive Approach to Early Learning for Grades P-5

Appendix I: WVDE Advisory Council on a Comprehensive Approach to Early Learning [Logic Model](#)

Appendix J: WVDE Advisory Council on a Comprehensive Approach to Early Learning [Google Site with Work Group Pages to Indicate Current Progress of Outcomes](#)

Appendix K: WVDE Office of Early Learning [Website](#)

Section Four: Defining the Current Work

Appendix L: [An Overview of WV Universal Pre-K](#) for 2014-2015 (with 3-year trend data)

Appendix M: Ready, Set, Go! WV Comprehensive Framework for School Readiness and Transitions
[Website, Toolkits, and School Readiness Profile](#)

Appendix N: Resources to Support West Virginia's Efforts to Close the Third Grade Literacy Achievement Gap

- Appendix N.1: WVBE Policy 2512: Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy (based on W.Va. Code §2-E-10). [PDE](#), external); ([Word](#), external)
- Appendix N.2: WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading [Website](#)

Appendix O: [WV TREE \(Teacher Resources for Educational Excellence\)](#): West Virginia's one stop for educational resources by grade level (P-5; 6-12 launch slated for June 2016).

Section Five: Achieving Results

Appendix P: National Institute for Early Education Research . (2015). State of Preschool Yearbook 2014. West Virginia: A Model for Other States [Press Release](#); State [Profile](#)

Appendix Q: [Preliminary Statewide Assessment Results Show Positive Achievement in Literacy](#). (WVDE, August 2015)