

Charlottesville-Albemarle Early Education Task Force

Summary for Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

Purpose of Early Education Task Force (EETF)

The community of Charlottesville-Albemarle believes that a robust, inclusive, high-quality early childhood educational program is a key ingredient in preparing at-risk children for kindergarten and closing the achievement gap over time. Further, the community believes that, over time, investments in education and prevention programs will reduce future, greater expenditures in remediation and rehabilitation.

Quality early education is but one critical investment required to increase the likelihood of positive, long-term outcomes for at-risk children, but it is achievable, actionable, and quantifiable.

Vision

Every child in Charlottesville-Albemarle living with risk factors that impact success in life will have access to a high-quality early education program. This clear vision is unclouded by concerns over funding and is endorsed by our City and County Executives, City and County School Superintendents, the United Way and the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation. (See Appendix 1: EETF Membership)

Specifically, in the near term, we seek to address the need for at-risk four-year olds, realizing that the expansion of services to three-year olds, younger children and whole families makes a difference and serves as a longer-term aspirational goal. The current estimate of the gap between the number of City and County four-year olds eligible for access to high-quality pre-k programs and available space is 250.

Highlights of EETF Accomplishments to Date:

1. **Received Innovative Partnership Grant from Virginia Early Childhood Foundation** to fund technical assistance to support our work. One consultant will create a strategic tool (fiscal map) that fully describes the fiscal resources supporting our community's early childhood/school readiness initiatives. A second consultant will then propose creative funding models that could support our efforts to place all at-risk 4 year-olds in high-quality pre-k.
2. **Created a data repository** to increase our shared pool of knowledge and to inform plans.
3. **City and County submitted proposals to the Department of Education for Virginia Preschool Initiative Expansion Grant Funds** and initial indications are that there will be a combined total of \$180,000 to: 1) place children in private settings (during FY16) and 2) to develop a community quality initiative to elevate the quality of pre-k in public and private settings.
4. **Consistent meetings and engagement of EETF.** Since launching the EETF in July has had monthly meetings have been held and the Vision Keepers have met twice. There have also been ad-hoc groups formed to address quality, solutions and data.

Near Term Plans

1. **Place 25 children by February 15.** Pending grant notification, MOUs are being developed to place children on wait lists in private settings that have agreed to enter our quality initiative.
2. **Late Spring Symposium on Quality.** A committee has been formed to plan a day-long training opportunity for public and private pre-k providers with a focus on launching our effort to improve quality in all pre-k settings. ReadyKids, Teach Stone and Curry School are partners for the event.
3. **Apply to CACF for Strengthening Systems grant.** We know we will need private philanthropy as part of our community plan to place all at-risk 4 year-olds in high-quality pre-k. We will apply for a multi-year grant to extend our efforts while creating a sustainable, blended funding model.
4. **Approve work plan.** We are currently drafting a plan that outlines our goals and actions for the year. This document will be revised annually. (See Appendix 2: Draft Work Plan)