Department of Education

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs for Four-Year-Old Children

2015-2016

Preliminary Report

Purpose of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs for Four-Year-Old Children

The Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs for Four-Year-Old Children (SWVPP) was established May 10, 2007, with signing of HF877. The purpose of this preschool program legislation is to provide an opportunity for all four-year-old children in the state of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding access to research-based preschool curricula and licensed teaching staff. The allocation of funds for the SWVPP is to improve access to high quality early childhood education with predictable, equitable, and sustainable funding to increase the number of children participating in quality programs.

Grant Application Process

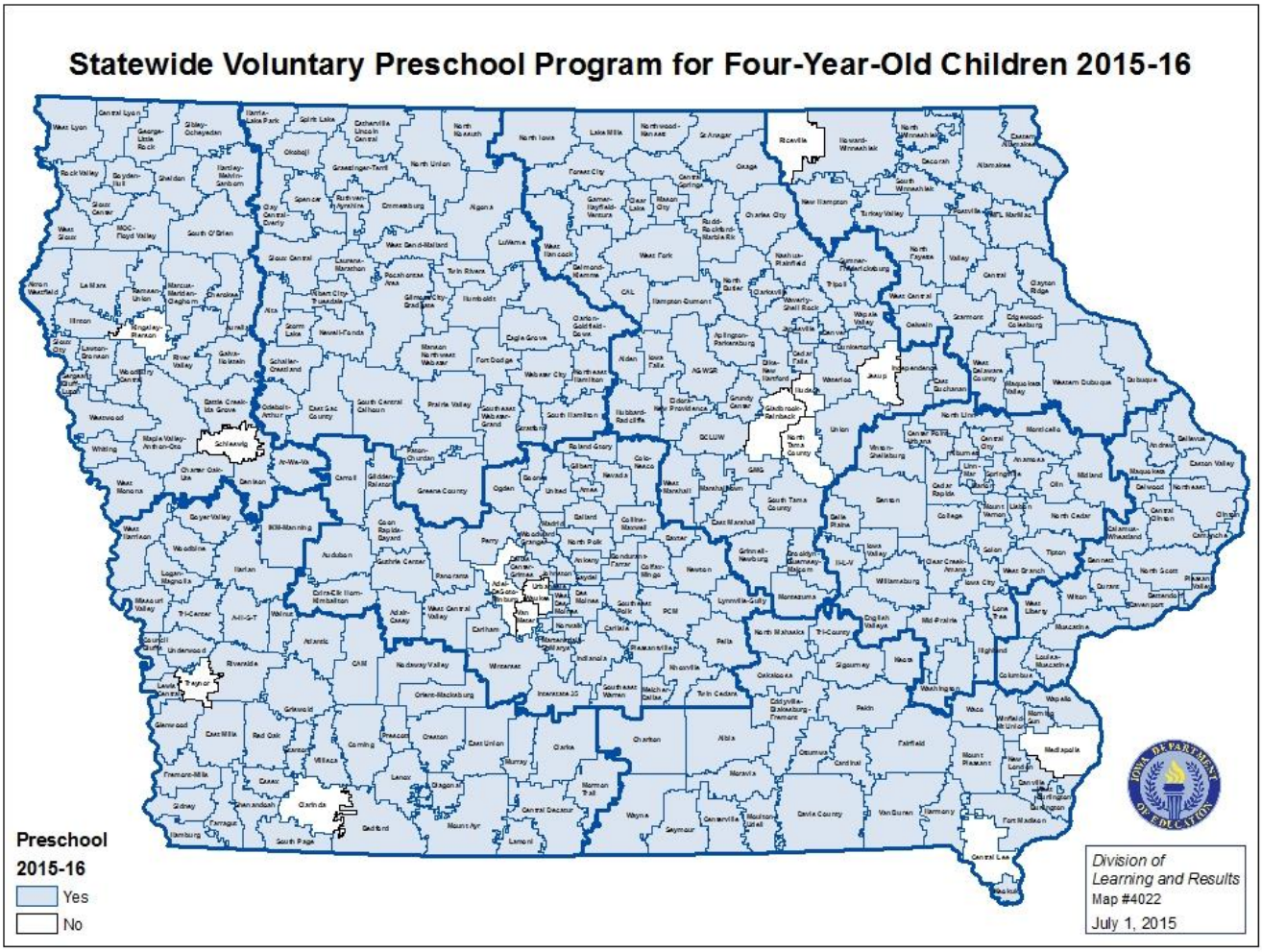
The SWVPP was implemented over a four-year span through a grant application process. Beginning in 2007, school districts, in collaboration with community partners, submitted grant applications for start-up funds to participate in the SWVPP. Applications were awarded and the preschool program implemented in four consecutive years from 2007-2008 to 2010-2011. Successful applicants were allocated grant funding during the first year of implementation. The grant funding to support start-up costs ended in 2010-2011. Since that time additional districts have been approved to provide the SWVPP but have not received any grant funding. The table below shows the grant allocations and funding formula for the most recent five years.

The SWVPP Grant Award provided on-time funding during a district's first year of implementation of the preschool program. In the application, districts demonstrated collaborative involvement with multiple stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the preschool program. Years 1, 2, and 3 were awarded through a competitive grant process. In Year 4, all districts that applied received funding on a pro-rated basis (up to 48.95 percent of their kindergarten enrollment from 2009) as indicated in legislation. After the districts initial grant formula funding was based on the preschool count.

	Academic Year				
Preschool Funding	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**	**2014-2015**
Grant Award Allocation	$16,242,230	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Funding Formula	$48,238,247	$58,378,261 (incl. levies as applicable)	$60,413,043 (incl. levies as applicable)	$66, 099,739 (incl. levies as applicable)	$69,955,725 (incl. levies as applicable)
Total	$64,480,477	$58,378,261	$60,413,043	$66, 099,739	$69,955,725

Districts Providing the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year Old Children

The following map depicts the districts implementing the SWVPP for Four-Year-Old Children in 2015-2016. The SWVPP was provided by 322 of Iowa's 336 school districts (96 percent) and their community partners.



Note: Thirty-four districts did not apply for the initial grant funding due to various reasons. Some districts that did not apply had established preschools, secured other federal or state funding support or were not interested in seeking state funding. One district withdrew from the program after one year of implementation. See attached addendum for information specific to each district.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Enrollment Data

The Preschool Supplemental Assistance allocated to districts is a per child amount determined by a formula based on a percentage of the full-time enrollment (FTE) cost. For the first four years (2007-2008 to 2010-2011), districts were funded at 60 percent of the per pupils cost for one full-time student. In 2011-2012, the per child allocation was reduced to 50 percent of one FTE.

Preschool Per Child Allocation

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Amount per child	$3,529	$2,941	$2,850*	$3061	$3183	$3223
Represents percent of FTE	.6 of 1 FTE	.5 of 1 FTE	.5 of 1 FTE	.5 of 1 FTE	.5 of 1 FTE	.5 of 1 FTE

**Note:* The amount that flows to districts less the funding for Department administration and oversight of the preschool program, IAC 256C.5(4).

The preschool enrollment count provides the funding for subsequent school years from the Certified Enrollment Count for awarded districts. This October 1 count provides the predictable, equitable, and sustainable funding to support the preschool program in subsequent years. As indicated in the table below, only eligible and funded children, those who are four years of age on or before September 15, are included in the Preschool Certified Enrollment. In 2015-2016, a total of 24,740 preschool children were served in the quality preschool program. More children participated in the program than were funded.

Preschool Enrollment Count/Certified Enrollment

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Preschool Enrollment Count (Enrolled on October 1)	19,799	20,396	21,402	21,926	22,269	23,141

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Student Reporting in Iowa fall files.

Districts may serve children who are younger or older than four years of age on or before September 15 in the preschool program if space is available. However, they will not count for state funding through the SWVPP nor can SWVPP funding be used for their portion of the preschool program. Districts are also encouraged to utilize the SWVPPs as inclusive settings for preschool children with disabilities to assist Iowa in meeting federal special education requirements.

Preschool Enrollment Count/Certified Enrollment

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Number of Districts Awarded	146	0	0	8	8	2
Number of Participating Districts**	325	317	314	319	320	322
Number of Children Funded	19,799	19,900	21,429	22,265	22,269	23,141
Number of Children Served	24,166	23,713	23,616	24,167	24,269	24,740

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Student Reporting in Iowa fall files.

***Note:* Number of districts participating has declined primarily due to school mergers.

Preschool-Aged Children Served in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

	2014-2015				2015-2016			
	Age 3	**Age 4**	**Age 5**	**All Ages**	**Age 3**	**Age 4**	**Age 5**	**All Ages**
IEP Instruction	253	570	71	894	276	642	57	975
IEP Support Services	12	260	4	276	15	282	4	301
Regular Education	346	22,598	137	23,081	381	22,989	147	23,517
Total Served	611	23,428	212	24,251	672	23,913	208	24,793

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Information and Analysis, Student Reporting in Iowa fall files.
Note: IEP-Individualized Education Program

In 2015-2016, there were 1,170 additional preschool children receiving special education services in the preschool program. The earlier intervention is offered to children identified as "eligible individuals," the sooner children will receive specialized instruction to meet their individual needs to close the achievement gap between students on individualized education programs (IEP) and their nondisabled peers. In addition, districts are meeting federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) child find requirements for children of special needs three to five years of age.

Program Standards

All districts must assure implementation of research-based high quality preschool program standards. Districts and community partner preschools are required to follow one of the three program standards which include: Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or Head Start Program Performance Standards. Districts and the community partners may implement more than one type of program standard in the various settings.

Community Partnerships

Districts collaborate with a variety of community partner preschools to provide the SWVPP. Partners represent a variety of entities including Head Start and Shared Visions as well as faith-based, private for-profit and non-profit preschools. Preliminary fall 2015 data indicates of the more than 24,000 children participating in this program 16,903 children participate in a school site and 7,890 children participate in a community partner site.

In 2011-2012, 117 districts (37 percent) worked in conjunction with 319 community partners to provide the SWVPP. In 2013-2014, 97 districts (28 percent) worked in conjunction with 238 community partners to provide these preschool services. In 2015-2016, 113 districts (34 percent) worked in conjunction with 297 community partners to provide the SWVPP. Some community partners have not been able to maintain an appropriately licensed teacher or meet the other requirements of the law.

Ongoing Support and Program Monitoring for 2015-2016

As required by IAC [281—16.14(82GA, HF877)], the Department of Education provides monitoring to ensure district compliance with the SWVPP assurances. In addition to program monitoring, the Department of Education provides ongoing support to ensure district compliance with Chapter 16 and the implementation of the SWVPP. Activities include the following:

- Webinars of various topics pertaining to the SWVPP are recorded, scripted and posted on the department website to provide guidance for all SWVPP districts. Topics include Preschool Overview and Requirements, Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Data System Requirements.
- Monthly updates for preschool programs in the School Leader Update.
- Professional development to build the capacity of area education agency (AEA) early childhood specialists to support the implementation of high quality program standards.
- Integration of the Iowa Early Learning Standards as well as, alignment with the Iowa Core and research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment in preschool programs.
- Assurances and classroom information are updated annually by school districts through the Early Childhood Data System. This includes information on teacher endorsements, community partners, program standards, integration with other preschool programs, collaboration with community partners and professional development, as well as curriculum and assessment.
- Districts enter child data into Student Reporting in Iowa, which is linked with a unique student identification number assigned to all children participating in the preschool program. The unique identification number is associated with the child throughout his or her educational career or until he or she leaves the state to ensure an unduplicated child count.

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Verification Visits

IQPPS Verification Visits typically occur when a district is in the second year of preschool implementation. The visit includes all SWVPPs, Early Childhood Special Education classrooms, and early childhood sites (including community partners) serving a child on an IEP. Districts are required to meet SWVPP assurances and IQPPS "required criteria" within 45 days of the visit and 85 percent of other criteria for each standard within one year of the visit.

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards Verification Visits

IQPPS Verification Visit Status	Year of Visit**					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Districts scheduled for IQPPS Verification Visits	48	53	45	36	12	9
Districts that have achieved IQPPS Fully-Verified Status*	48	53	45	36	11	1***

*Fully Verified Status is achieved when the District meets all 23 of the required criteria and 85 percent of the other remaining criteria in each of the ten standards.
**Districts have one year from the IQPPS Verification Visit to meet 85 percent of the other remaining criteria in each of the ten standards.
*** Data as of April 2016. IQPPS Verification Visits scheduled for 2015-2016 have not been completed.

Preschool Program Overall Review

IQPPS Verification data from 2014-2015 were analyzed for a comprehensive review of districts receiving an on-site verification visit. The data indicated common strengths and challenges which have remained consistent over the last three years. AEA provides technical assistance to the districts in the area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as well as preparation for the IQPPS Verification Visit; however, no funding is allocated in IAC 256C and minimal funding is allocated in IAC 279.51 for this service.

Strengths – Districts demonstrated strengths in the following areas:

- Standard 1 Relationships – Teaching staff developed and demonstrated relationships that encouraged social and emotional development in young children to contribute to each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member;
- Standards 2 Curriculum – Teaching staff implement curriculum that promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, literacy, math science and technology;
- Standards 3 Teaching – Teaching staff use effective approaches to address the needs of children with differing abilities and to teach and manage appropriate behavior;
- Standard 7 Families – Families expressed satisfaction with their children's progress and the ongoing communication between home and school. Districts and teachers utilize a variety of methods to communicate and ensure that families are primary decision-makers for their preschool children.

Challenges - As districts implemented the IQPPS, challenges continue to be noted including:

- Standard 2 Curriculum – Implementing the curriculum to meet the individual interests and needs of children and promote increased competence in literacy, and science;
- Standard 3 Teaching –Teaching staff use their knowledge of children to plan activities that promote children's emerging skills and interests, extend children's engagement, and support self-initiated learning;
- Standard 4 Assessment of Child Progress – Meeting child assessment requirements:
    - Connecting ongoing child assessment to lesson planning and individualized teaching; and
    - Adapting curriculum, individualizing teaching, and informing program development;
- Standard 6 Teachers – Meeting requirements for teachers and staff due to the following:
    - Some areas of the state do not offer courses needed for associate teacher requirements;
    - Pay rate of associates does not support the additional education requirements; and
    - Veteran associates do not always desire to continue their education without pay increase.

Positive Impacts of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

Districts, families, and community partners report many positive impacts as a result of the SWVPP. Impacts of the SWVPP include increased:

- Access to higher quality preschools;
- Increased quality of programming, curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- Collaboration among teaching staff;
- Integration of children with disabilities;
- Family involvement, at a higher level of quality;
    - Strengthen home to school and school to home communication;
    - Assist families to generalize children's skills from school to home; and
    - Inform families of community programs/assistance such as health screenings and other services.
- Opportunities for appropriate quality professional development and Professional Learning Communities; and
- Children are more prepared to fully participate in the kindergarten learning environment according to anecdotal reports from kindergarten teachers and district administrators.

District that chose to withdraw from the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

District	AEA	District Name	Shared Visions Preschool in District	Head Start Program in City	District Offers a Preschool Program
0027	11	Adel Desoto Minburn			Yes

Districts that Did Not Apply for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Funding

District	AEA	District Name	Shared Visions Preschool in District	Head Start Program in City	District Offers a Preschool Program
1079	15	Central Lee			Yes
1197	13	Clarinda		X	Yes
1449	7	Corwith-Wesley			
2502	07	Gladbrook-Reinbeck			Yes
3042	07	Hudson			Yes
3204	07	Jesup		X	Yes
3348	12	Kingsley-Pierson			
4203	15	Mediapolis			Yes
4785	07	North Tama County			
5508	01	Riceville		X	
5832	12	Schleswig		X	Yes
6453	13	Treynor			
6615	11	Van Meter			
6633	07	Ventura			
6822	11	Waukee		X	Yes