



ELEVATE ^{E3} EARLY EDUCATION



EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO READ.

- The first eight years are a critical time in language and literacy development.
- A child's ability to read by third grade is a predictor of academic and life success.
- When a child cannot read by third grade, they will struggle in K-12, higher education and the workforce.
- Remediation is expensive.
- The data and research are clear — children who have access to quality books have better literacy outcomes.



The Virginia Literacy Act (VLA) passed the legislature in 2022 with strong bipartisan support. During the 2023 Special Session, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation and provided funding to extend VLA through the eighth grade. It is one of the most comprehensive policies in the nation. The VLA ensures teachers are using evidence-based curricula, trains teachers on how to help children become strong readers, develops reading plans for students who have literacy difficulties, monitors progress, provides reading specialists, deploys literacy coaches and equips families with resources. **This is good policy, and now we must ensure strong implementation across Virginia for all students.** The law goes into effect and implementation begins during the 2024-25 academic year.



Virginia must build, implement and invest in the Virginia Literacy Act **year after year, as other states have done. This investment will help more children read proficiently by third grade,** support struggling readers, equip teachers with the knowledge and tools to teach, provide coaches to support classroom instruction and give families strategies to use at home. **Other states have only seen success when the investment is long term.**

POLICY INITIATIVES

The literacy budget amendments support the implementation and sustainability of the Virginia Literacy Act patroned by Senator Lucas and Delegate Coyner in 2022.

The Virginia Language and Literacy Screener System (VALLSS replaces PALS)

Early literacy screeners from preschool to third grade help teachers understand the skills children have in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and listening comprehension. VALLSS can help detect reading difficulties early, provide instructional information to teachers and strategies for families in English and Spanish. Funding is for preschool through eighth grade to develop and implement a statewide screener.

- \$2.4m (Item 117 FY24 – FY26 Introduced Budget)
- \$6.9m first year and \$4.9m second year (Amendment Patron: Delegate Coyner -117 #30h)

Coaching, Professional Development, Technical Assistance and Curriculum Review

Literacy coaches provide support in the classroom to improve instruction and student reading achievement. The curriculum review process focuses on adoption of high-quality instructional materials aligned with the science of reading and the reading SOLS. It includes core and supplemental curricula materials. **Over 1,700 reading specialists** trained with a hybrid of coursework, modules and meetings.

- \$2.4m (Item 117 FY24 – FY26 Introduced Budget)
- \$3.4m first year and second year (Amendment Patron: Delegate Coyner -117 #30h)

Literacy Innovation and Impact Pilots

The pilot program in each superintendent region will develop best practice and system change models to implement the Virginia Literacy Act. The pilots will align with the science of reading to support students, teachers, school leaders and families to help children read by third grade. The literacy screener and SOL reading data will individualize instruction for students, show growth and measure improvement. There will be a family engagement component in English and Spanish.

- \$3.5m first year and \$3.5m second year (Amendment Patrons: Delegate Coyner- Item 124 #13h and Senator Favola- Item 124 #38s)

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Virginia (DPIL) (HB1075)

DPIL is a book gifting program that mails books to children from birth to age five, regardless of their income, to inspire a love of reading. 19 states and DC have expanded to statewide programs. Currently, 50,000 children are enrolled and receiving books in Virginia. An additional 350,000 children in Virginia need quality books. This program is a shared cost between the state, the Dollywood Foundation and private dollars.

- \$481,180 (FY23 Item 124 HB30/SB30)
- \$1,157,065 (FY24-26 Item 124 HB30/SB30)
- \$2,133,251 first year and \$3,249,221 second year (Amendment Patrons: Delegate Coyner- Item 124 #23h and Senator VanValkenburg- Item 124 #12s)

Increase Equitable Access to Quality Early Education for Children and Families

More children and families need access to high quality early education programs across Virginia. Middle-income families need access to quality programs. There is a need to increase the supply of quality programs and expand The New E3 School model.

- \$25m in first year for the Early Learning Capital Incentives Fund (Item 103-FY24-FY26 Introduced Budget)
- \$6.5m (FY24) access to STREAMin3 Curriculum for state-funded programs

Funding Formula in Pre K-12

The funding formula is broken and must be improved based on JLARC Study recommendations utilizing a student-based model.