



VCSEA Testimony to House Education - Act 166 Implementation - 2/2/17
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VCSEA supports and is committed to the goals of Act 166 as a statewide structure for public and private high quality preschool education for all 3 and 4-year-old children, and 5-year old children who are not yet enrolled in Kindergarten in Vermont. There is much potential within Act 166 for a strong statewide, regional and district system that invites all families to participate in their child's program to match their developmental and family needs. The increase in numbers of pre-kindergarten students accessing the program since the implementation of Act 166 is a very positive sign of the potential to create a robust pre-kindergarten system.

We are committed to equitable and non-discriminatory (universal) access to high quality prekindergarten programs for *all* children, regardless of socioeconomic status, and specifically for children with disabilities.

A. Overarching Goal: Access to High Quality Pre-Kindergarten (HQPK) in a way that creates heterogeneous Pre-K environments

- * Allow SU/SD to define Act 166 boundary choice for Act 166 implementation requiring enough slots for UPK
- * Require private providers to offer a 10 hour per week option for families.
- * Focus child care subsidy towards 30 hours beyond Act 166 - do not allow providers to decline children because of the lower monetary value of the child care subsidy.
- * Monitor the private providers who accept public funds to ensure that the public funds are used for the purposes of 1) program quality improvement; 2) tuition stability.

B. Leadership: Create a requirement for AOE-AHS Leadership to create an aligned implementation plan including: Fingerprints, Educator Licensing, HQPK monitoring.

C. Provision of Special Education and 504 Services: Allocate resources so that all HQPK Act 166 partner providers would be able to staff to implement IEP and Section 504 Plans. Create a mechanism within AOE for funding and oversight for this partner program staffing. Additional resources are necessary to reduce the barrier that exists for children with disabilities.

D. Pre-K Coordination: Develop HQPK Pre-K Coordinator positions for implementation of the private/public partnerships at the county level or within Building Bright Future regions.