

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 An Act to require the Head Start State Collaboration Office at the Department of Education to develop and
3 recommend to the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education for endorsement a report
4 summarizing the state of Head Start and Early Head Start in the Commonwealth.

5 [H 211]
6 Approved

7 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

8 1. § 1. It is the goal of the Commonwealth to maximize the availability of evidence-based Head Start and
9 Early Head Start programs to eligible families in the Commonwealth. In furtherance of such goal, the Head
10 Start State Collaboration Office at the Department of Education shall, no later than December 1, 2026,
11 develop and recommend to the Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education for endorsement a
12 report summarizing the state of Head Start and Early Head Start in the Commonwealth. Such report shall
13 address:

14 1. Trends in funding, parent demand, enrollment, and costs per child from pre-COVID-19 pandemic to the
15 present, including total annual federal funding and funded enrollment, a summary of change in scope
16 requests submitted by grant recipients to the federal Office of Head Start, a summary of grant awards
17 relinquished by recipient agencies, and the range of funded per-child costs by age and region and how such
18 costs compare to per-child costs generated by the Department of Education's cost-of-quality or
19 rebenchmarking models for children of equivalent ages;

20 2. Barriers to maximization of Head Start funding and slots in the Commonwealth, including regional
21 variations in cost of living relative to income eligibility limits for Head Start eligible families; a summary of
22 identified barriers for families impacting parental demand for Head Start services, including transportation,
23 program hours of service, and alignment between need and availability at the local level; and a summary of
24 identified operational challenges for Head Start grant recipients, including credential requirements,
25 workforce turnover and shortages, facility and infrastructure needs, and operational and service delivery
26 impacts;

27 3. Strengths and challenges in fiscal sustainability for Head Start grant recipients, including (i) an
28 assessment of the extent to which recipients are maximizing all available funding sources to support
29 comprehensive or wraparound services and (ii) recommendations to develop and implement a framework for
30 grant recipients to assess and leverage existing funding streams in their regions;

31 4. Trends in performance, quality improvement, and impact, including growth and results on the Virginia
32 Quality Birth to Five (VQB5) system established pursuant to § 22.1-289.05 of the Code of Virginia, federal
33 monitoring and accountability results, and child growth and school readiness outcomes as measured by
34 program assessment or statewide measures; and

35 5. The Commonwealth's and local grant recipients' readiness to respond to changes in the federal funding
36 context, such as a change in overall available funding or a change in funding structure, and a plan to ensure
37 continuity of care for Head Start families under such changes.