



Department of Education Early Learning Team
Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs for Four-Year-Old Children
2012-2013
Legislative Committee Request

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

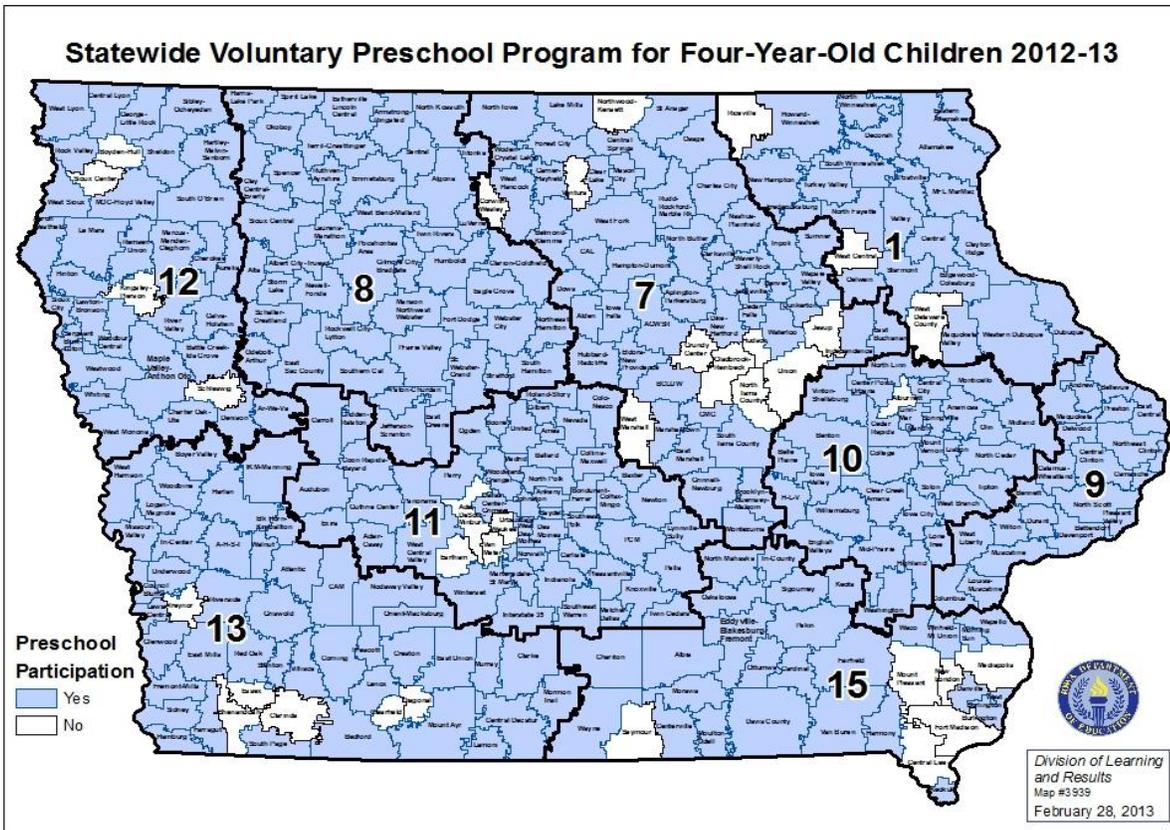
The SWVPP was implemented over a four-year span through a grant application process. Beginning in 2007, school districts, in collaboration with community partners, submitted grant applications for start-up funds to participate in the SWVPP. Applications were awarded and the preschool program implemented 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. 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. In Year 5, all districts received funding based on the preschool count.

Academic Year					
Preschool Funding	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Grant Award Allocation	\$15,000,000	\$11,535,863	\$16,242,230	NA	N/A
Funding Formula	\$16,803,438 (incl. 1.5% reduction)	\$30,131,064 (incl. 10% reduction)	\$48,238,247	\$58,378,261 (incl. levies as applicable)	\$60,413,043 (incl. levies as applicable)
Total	\$31,803,438	\$41,666,927	\$64,480,477	\$58,378,261	\$60,413,043

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 2012-2013. The SWVPP was provided by 314 of Iowa's 348 school districts (90 percent) and their community partners.



Note: Thirty-four districts did not apply for 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 Foundation Aid 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

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Amount per child	\$3,328	\$3,460	\$3,529	\$2,941	\$2,850*
Represents percent of FTE	.6 of 1 FTE	.6 of 1 FTE	.6 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 2012-2013, a total of 23,572 preschool children were served in the quality preschool program. More children participated in the program than were funded.

Preschool Enrollment Count/Certified Enrollment

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Preschool Enrollment Count (Enrolled on October 1)	9,676	13,666	19,799	20,396	21,402

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 in 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

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Number of Districts Awarded	52	56	150	0	0
Number of Participating Districts	119	175	325	320	314**
Number of Children Funded	9,676	13,666	19,799	20,396	21,402
Number of Children Served	9,769	14,386	24,166	23,713	23,572

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Early Childhood Services Bureau, SWVPP Application Data; 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

	2011-2012				2012-2013			
	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	All Ages	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	All Ages
IEP Instruction	450	780	160	1390	291	653	104	1048
IEP Support Services	30	241	8	279	25	351	15	391
Regular Education	1006	20069	404	21,479	545	21,258	330	22,133
Total Served	1486	21090	572	23,190	861	22,262	449	24,021

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

Note: IEP-Individualized Education Program

In 2010-2011, there were 1,439 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.

Preschool Program Data

Program Standards

All districts must assure implementation of research-based high quality preschool program standards. The type of quality preschool program standards implemented and number of classrooms/sessions are shown for each grant award year. Districts and the community partners may implement more than one type of program standard in the various settings. 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.

In 2012-2013, 288 (90 percent) of school districts have adopted the IQPPS as the program standard.

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.

In 2011-2012, 63 districts (20 percent) integrated the SWVPP with other state or federal funding sources to expand the length of the instructional day. Integrated sources of funding include Head Start, Shared Visions, Title I and/or Early Childhood Iowa.

In 2011-2012, 117 districts (37 percent) worked in conjunction with 319 community partners to provide the SWVPP.

Ongoing Support and Program Monitoring for 2011-2012

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.
- A confirmation process is used to assure the implementation of other preschool program standards including NAEYC Accreditation and Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- 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**				
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Districts scheduled for IQPPS Verification Visits	51	46	48	53	47
Districts that have achieved IQPPS Fully-Verified Status*	51	46	48	52	14***

*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 December 30, 2012. IQPPS Verification Visits scheduled for 2012-2013 have not been completed.

Preschool Program Overall Review

IQPPS Verification data from 2011-2012 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 emotional development in young children.
- 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.
- Standard 8 Community Relationships – Districts partnered with a variety of community preschools to provide programming and coordinated efforts with other agencies (AEA, Early Childhood Iowa, Public Health, community-based preschools, etc.) to maximize funding and provide appropriate services for 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 in literacy, math, and science.
- Standard 3 Teaching – Implementing the curriculum to meet the individual interests and needs of children.

- Standard 4 Assessment of Child Progress – Meeting child assessment requirements:
 - Connecting ongoing child assessment to lesson planning and individualized teaching; and
 - Communicating child assessment and curriculum connection to parents.
- 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 high quality preschools;
- Number of licensed teachers with expertise in early childhood education;
- Quality of programming, curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- Collaboration among teaching staff;
- Collaboration between public schools and community partners to provide preschool;
- 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.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Demonstrates Significant Results

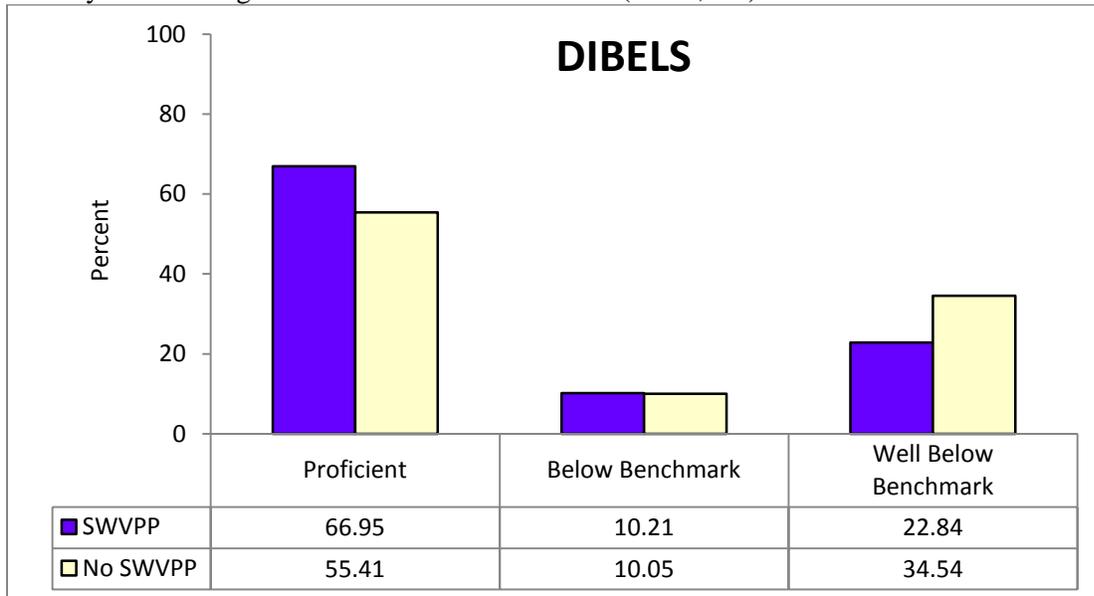
Comparison of Kindergarten Students Who Did and Did Not Attend the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores from children participating in the SWVPP were compared to students with no preschool experience (Figure 1). The SWVPP was established in 2007. This preschool program is based on quality program components including quality program standards, a licensed early childhood teacher, research-based child standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The DIBELS assessment measures important early reading skills. The DIBELS subtests First Sound Fluency and Letter Naming Fluency measures kindergarten student literacy skills for rapidly naming letters and identifying beginning sounds of words by saying or producing the sound. This assessment provides the best overall estimate of the student’s early reading proficiency.

In 2006-2007, prior to the SWVPP, only 56 percent of all kindergarten students assessed were proficient. In 2012-2013, 66.9 percent of the kindergarten students who participated in the SWVPP were proficient as compared to only 55.4 percent of the students who had no preschool experience prior to kindergarten enrollment. As represented in Figure 1, kindergarten students who did not attend the SWVPP were more likely to need additional supports to become proficient in beginning reading skills. In 2012-2013, 34.5 percent of the students who did not attend the preschool program were not proficient (scored well below the benchmark) as compared to only 22.8 percent of those kindergarten students who had attended the preschool program. Kindergarten students scoring well below the benchmark need significant support and resources to achieve grade level reading skills in kindergarten.

Figure 1. Percent of Students Attending SWVPPs Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Beginning Literacy Skills Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N=15,098)



Data Source. Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2012-2013.

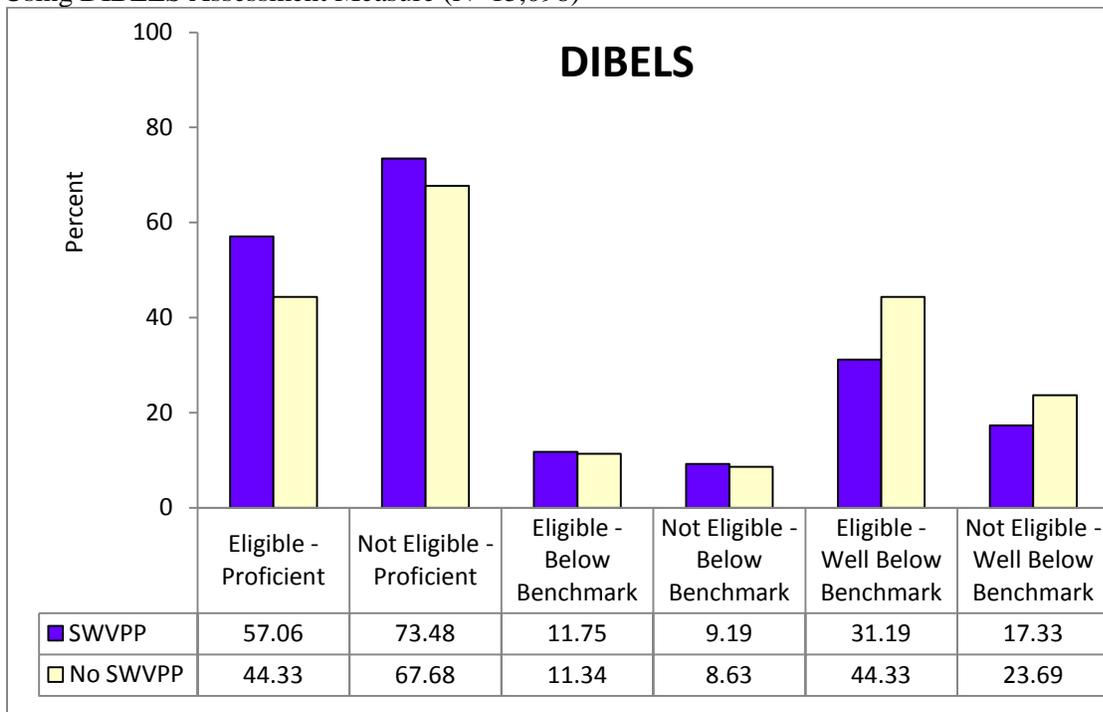
Note: This is preliminary data. Data regarding other approved assessment instruments will be reported in the Annual Condition of Education Report, 2013

Comparison of Kindergarten Students in Poverty Who Did and Did Not Attend the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

The impact of the SWVPP is greater for students in poverty (eligible for free or reduced meals). As seen in Figure 2, fewer kindergarten students in poverty without a preschool experience were proficient in early literacy skills than students in poverty who attended the SWVPP. Of the students eligible for free or reduced meals, 57 percent were proficient in early reading skills as measured by DIBELS as compared to 44.3 percent of kindergarten students who did not attend the SWVPP.

As indicated in Figure 2, a 13 percent point difference was found between students in poverty who attended SWVPP as compared to students in poverty who did not attend SWVPP. Students in this category will need significant support to attain early reading skills and become proficient in reading.

Figure 2. Percent of Students in Poverty Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Beginning Literacy Skills Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N=15,098)



Data Source. Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2011-2012.

Note: This is preliminary data. Data regarding other approved assessment instruments will be reported in the Annual Condition of Education Report, 2012

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
0099	10	Alburnett			
0747	12	Boyden-Hull			
1079	15	Central Lee			Yes
1197	13	Clarinda		X	Yes
1224	14	Clearfield	X		Yes
1782	14	Diagonal	X		
1953	11	Earlham			Yes
2113	13	Essex			
2322	15	Fort Madison	X	X	Yes
2502	07	Gladbrook-Reinbeck			Yes
2727	07	Grundy Center		X	Yes
3042	07	Hudson			Yes
3204	07	Jesup		X	Yes
3348	12	Kingsley-Pierson			
4203	15	Mediapolis			Yes
4536	15	Mount Pleasant	X	X	Yes
4689	15	New London			Yes
4785	07	North Tama County			
4788	07	Northwood-Kensett			
5508	01	Riceville		X	
5832	12	Schleswig		X	Yes
5895	15	Seymour		X	Yes
5976	13	Shenandoah		X	Yes
6030	12	Sioux Center		X	Yes
6453	13	Treynor			
6536	07	Union			
6615	11	Van Meter			
6633	07	Ventura			
6822	11	Waukee		X	Yes
6943	01	West Central			
6950	01	West Delaware County		X	Yes
6985	07	West Marshall			Yes

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children 2012-13

