

# PEIC Survey Results

## Principals & School Board Members

11.4.24

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### OVERALL NUMBERS

- 74 total respondents
  - 62 Principals
  - 13 School Board members
- 53/47 responded that they have existing prek programs when asked “What is already in place for you to move forward?”

#### RESULTS OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- **3-year-olds**
  - Respondents did not have clarity about what they would do with 3-year olds.
  - The top response to “what is your plan for 3-year-olds?” was “unsure at this time, need more info to decide” (35/74 responses). No other choice was selected by more than 13 recipients.
  - Only 5/74 principals & school board members selected “transition 3yos to the child care system” when asked “what is your plan for 3-year-olds?”.
  - Concern re: 3-year-olds was noted in 8/50 responses to the option, open question, “anything else you would like to share about the implementation of ACT 76??”
- **Capacity challenges**
  - Only 8 responses specifically called out physical space/facilities when asked “what is already in place for you to move forward?”
- **Simplify agency oversight**
  - “Streamlined agency oversight to reduce administrative burden and general confusion” was the 2nd choice (51/74 responses) among principals and school board members asked “what considerations should we think about in order to evolve into a prek4 system?”
  - Also came up in the “other” category of multiple choice questions 5
  - “Training on compliance & regulatory requirements” was the top choice among principals (38/62 responses) when asked “What support would you need for system oversight?”
- **Funding**

Funding was top concern for many survey respondents

  - “Addressing the financial implications & funding plans” (66/74 responses) was the top choice among principals and school board members asked “what considerations should we think about in order to evolve into a prek4 system?”

- “Funding & budget considerations” the top choice (63/74 responses) among principals and school board members asked “what support, information and resources will you need to have 4-year-olds full time in your school?”
- “Budget management & financial oversight” was the 2nd choice answer among principals (32/62 responses) when asked “What support would you need for system oversight?”
- Most frequent response to come up among the 50 principals & school board members who responded to the optional, open question, “anything else you would like to share about the implementation of ACT 76??”

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### QUESTION BY QUESTION RESPONSES AND THEMES

**Question 1: What considerations should we think about in order to evolve into a PreK-4 System? Please check all that apply. (n=74 Principals & School Board)**

Multiple Choice Answer	Response Count
Addressing the financial implications and funding plans	66
Ensuring program quality standards and qualified educators	57
Implementing developmentally appropriate practices aligned with children's needs	51
Supporting social and emotional and academic readiness for kindergarten	50
Aligning with special education requirements and least restrictive environments	47
Other (streamline regulations, impact on private/existing programs)	15

**Question 2: What support, information and resources will you need to have 4-year-olds full time in your school? Please check all that apply. (n=74 Principals & School Board)**

Multiple Choice Answer	Response Count
Funding & budget considerations	63
Streamlined agency oversight to reduce administrative burden and general confusion	51

Support staff (e.g. aides, counselors)	51
Classroom space & facilities suitable for young children	45
Health & safety guidelines specific to young children	24
Training for teachers on ECE	23
Parent engagement strategies & resources	23
Access to community resources & partnerships	21
Curriculum materials & lesson plans	19
We already have 4 year olds in the building	9
Other	6

**Question 3: What is already in place for you to move forward? (n=74 Principals & School Board)**

Emergent Theme	Response Count	Description or Quote
Existing Prek Program	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full time prek program in district (15)</li> <li>● Part time prek program in district (12)</li> <li>● Prek program in district, time unspecified (26)</li> </ul>
Classroom/Space	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>We already have PreK classrooms at each building with the capacity of taking on our 4 year olds.</i></li> </ul>
Staff/teachers	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Excellent teaching staff and developmentally appropriate practices in well functioning programs for children</i></li> </ul>
Nothing	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Nothing currently! All would need to be expanded upon.</i></li> </ul>
Unknown	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Unknown at this time.</i></li> </ul>

**Question 4: What support would you need for system oversight? (N=62 Principals)**

Multiple Choice Answer	Response Count
Training on compliance & regulatory requirements	38
Budget management & financial oversight	32

Professional development for leadership & management skills	25
Regular performance metrics & evaluation processes	24
Communication systems for stakeholder engagement	21
Risk management & mitigation strategies	18
Data management & analysis tools	17
Technology infrastructure for monitoring & reporting	9

**Question 5: What would your plan for 3-year-olds be? (n=74 Principals & School Board)**

Multiple Choice Answer	Response Count
Unsure at this time, need more information to decide	35
Offer part-time district programs for 3yos	13
Offer a hybrid model with both district & child care options	11
Keep 3yos in district programming regardless of loss of state funding	10
Develop partnerships with high-quality child care providers	10
Provide district-supported programs within existing child care centers	6
Transition 3yos to the child care system	5
Implement a gradual transition plan from child care to district programming	4
Create a separate early learning center for 3yos within the district	2
Other (depending on funding & supports)	6

**Question 6: Anything else you would like to share about the implementation of ACT 76? (n=50)**

Emergent Theme	Response Count	Quote
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Funding challenges	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>This change to the publicly funded pre-K model will have a positive impact on the well-being of Vermont's children. With that said, in a time when schools are facing staffing, facilities and budget challenges, this change will have many unintended consequences that will impact the efficacy and financial stability of public education in our state.</i></li> <li>● <i>My only concern is the expectation placed upon current schools and districts. We would need the funding and time to prepare for this without compromising the experiences of current students and staff (loss of \$\$\$)</i></li> <li>● <i>With the governor's recent letter regarding the state education funding outlook for next year, it is hard to foresee how we would make a significant change to PreK at this time, without significant negative impacts on the younger students and their families in our community. If we are to absorb them, too, that would most likely require doubling the number of PreK classrooms in our school, at a time when I expect we will be asked to cut teaching positions across the board.</i></li> <li>● <i>Without looking at overall funding of education in VT, just adding full day for 4 year olds is going to stress an already stressed system. That is what I worry about most</i></li> <li>● <i>The continuation of funding early childhood from the same pot as the K12 system is highly problematic as we are already struggling to maintain costs and present a passable budget to our voters. Continuing to create required additional actions/education without addressing our funding structure is dangerous and irresponsible.</i></li> </ul>
Staff capacity challenges	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Consideration of available trained faculty and staff, especially in rural communities, needs to be a priority before mandates should be put in place.</i></li> <li>● <i>It is increasingly difficult to find quality, licensed Early Educators in our area. The last time we hired a PreK teacher we had just one applicant. If we have to provide classroom space for all of our district 4 year olds then we will need to hire at least 2 more licensed early educators and at least 2 more classroom paras.</i></li> </ul>
Timeline/readiness challenges	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Is this really the right time to add an additional burden on struggling school districts?</i></li> <li>● <i>This change to the publicly funded pre-K model will have a positive impact on the well-being of Vermont's children. With that said, in a time when schools are facing staffing, facilities and budget challenges, this change will have many unintended</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>consequences that will impact the efficacy and financial stability of public education in our state.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>It would require many hours of thoughtful planning to make this work for our district.</i></li> </ul>
Streamline regulations & oversight	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Please advocate for streamlining Pre-K requirements for Pre-K in public school.</i></li> <li>● <i>The regulations of a child care facility inside a public elementary school is a huge burden to the operation of the school for a majority of the student population served in a PK-6 setting.</i></li> </ul>
Space/facilities challenges	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Larger school districts do not have the space or budget to add 7-8 additional classrooms with staffing in order to implement Act 76. I wonder how the state will be able to support this legislation financially.</i></li> <li>● <i>I think that this would be difficult to accomplish in smaller communities where infrastructure can and will be a problem. Where will the classrooms be and how will buildings change to accommodate these new rooms?</i></li> </ul>
Supportive of change	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>This change to the publicly funded pre-K model will have a positive impact on the well-being of Vermont's children.</i></li> <li>● <i>I am very optimistic about the pathway that Act 76 will create for a more equitable student and family educational experience and the short and long term benefits it would have.</i></li> </ul>
Concern re: 3YOs	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Please don't forget about programming for three year olds. Can't ACT 76 include ten hours a week for 3 year olds that could continue to receive funding?</i></li> <li>● <i>I am incredibly disappointed that opportunities are going to be taken away from 3 year old children. Our data supports great success from students receiving 2 years of high quality PreK education. Particularly our children with disabilities benefit from 2 years in a consistent classroom setting. Removing 3 year olds from the conversation continues to cause me concern and I fear that it will result in reduced outcomes for children.</i></li> </ul>