

## PEIC Survey Results

Superintendents

11.4.24

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The survey results indicated that superintendents and other school personnel have significant concerns about the resources it would take to implement full school-day, full school-year PreK for 4-year-olds. In addition to obvious cost considerations like the need for additional classroom space, hiring teachers, and meeting new professional development needs, survey respondents also identified less obvious costs like retrofitting spaces to be developmentally appropriate, needing to address deferred building maintenance, transportation costs and considerations unique to young children, and the need for technology updates. Lastly, survey respondents shared concerns about the impact on 3-year-olds if they were to be removed from PreK, the financial impact on the mixed-delivery model, additional complexities delivering special education services to 3 and 4-year-olds, the need to simplify early education regulations, and the fact that the proposed changes come at a politically sensitive time with little appetite for additional education spending.

#### OVERALL NUMBERS

- 42 SDs responded
- 37 SDs (88%) responded that they would have to modify how PreK is provided
- 29 SDs (69%) responded they would require infrastructure changes/resources
- 29 SDs (69%) responded that they would need to modify special education services for 3's

#### RESULTS OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- **Significant investment in facilities or physical infrastructure would be required**
  - Creation of, or adaptation to, developmentally appropriate physical space for 3 & 4-year-olds (including bathrooms, sinks, playgrounds, roofing/plumbing, running water, heating/cooling, furniture, and materials, etc.)
    - Retrofit existing classrooms
    - Deferred maintenance
    - Additional Classrooms
    - Playground space
    - Equipment, furniture, supplies, organization and storage materials
    - Safety, health, compliance infrastructure and space
    - Food service infrastructure expansion
    - ADA compliance
- **Current workforce crisis across all sectors will impact our capacity**
  - Significant workforce capacity needed across all roles
    - Leadership/Directors
    - Qualified ECEs with licenses
    - ECSE and support staff (Paras, speech, OT, PT, etc.)
    - Afterschool providers
    - UPK Coordinators/point person within SDs/Regions

- Administrative staff and support positions
    - Bus drivers
    - Custodial and food service staff
  - Considerations for workforce and staffing configurations if transitioning the model re: ratios, settings, licensing, etc.
- **Need to review, adapt, and/or develop the PreK program model within the necessary mixed-delivery model (including child care, head start, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care)**
  - Reviewing, adapt, and align programmatic offerings, schedules (part time, full-day, school-day, afterschool and out-of-school-time care)
  - Review and develop transition plans from current models (or no offering) to new model allowing for appropriate transition time
  - Review, develop, and EXPAND offerings and slots in childcare, Head Start and Early Head Start, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care settings that align with new preK program offerings based on ages of children and ratios
  - Consider the impact of age on ratios, developmentally appropriate spaces and education, as well as the federal requirements under IDEA for children with disabilities and special health care needs
  - Review existing model of mixed delivery preK for 3 and 4-year-olds to determine successes and best practices that can be replicated and scaled vs. overhauling
  - Review programming and alignment/collaboration between preK and Head Start programs
- **Importance of maintaining 3-year-old benefit & mixed delivery model**
  - Concerns about removing 3-year-olds
    - Limiting families options to meet their child’s needs related to early learning opportunities and special education
    - Many families do not have a demonstrated need for care to qualify for CCFAP and may no longer have access to care or preK in a 4s only model of preK
  - Importance of maintaining mixed delivery to foster a strong early childhood education system that prioritizes family needs, two years of preK, and meets the needs of the rural nature of Vermont
    - Strong reliance on private/community-based partners for preK
    - Concerns about a complete shift in programming for child care, preK, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care
  - How to increase opportunities for 3-year-olds
  - Concerns about removing 3s: impact on staffing and attendance in public schools, impact on private programs re: business model and ratios
- **Transportation Considerations**
  - Expand existing transportation and schedules or develop new transportation options for young children
  - Adapt physical space and schedules for developmentally appropriate drop-off or transportation
  - New travel models would need to be developed to support drop-off and pick-up across public schools and private/community programs and entities
  - workforce/staffing issues
  - Existing transportation challenges/stress on the system
  - Not currently set up to transport 4-year-olds and would need new procedures for 3s

- Supervision and safety during transport
  - Collaboration and public/private partnerships
  - Huge financial cost for districts
  - Several district have transpiration for prek already
  - Training/PD and CQI
- **Need to consider significantly expanding early care, extended care, afterschool and out-of-school-time care**
    - Need for extended care earlier and later in the day requiring partnership with private/community programs
    - Lack of after school care and state funding for afterschool programming
    - Not currently meeting after school needs, vision would significantly increase the need for afterschool and out-of-school time care
    - Lack of transportation to and from afterschool
    - Lack of staffing capacity, multiple background checks, workforce crisis
    - Limited physical space/infrastructure
- **Need to simplify agency oversight**
    - Single agency oversight
    - Simplify licensing regulations for preK in public schools
    - Dual agency oversight as a significant challenge and expending time and resources to staff and administrators in public schools
    - Importance of strengthening partnerships: Collaborate with community-based childcare providers to co-locate pre-K classrooms. Coordinate with Head Start or other pre-K programs to share resources and facilities. Engage parents and local stakeholders to generate support for pre-K expansion.
    - Clear communication
    - Alignment between licensing and regulations across agencies
- **Funding Considerations**
    - Pupil weight adjustment ot at least 1.0 FTE/Increased funding
    - Concerns about school budgets and broader economic concerns
    - Significant time and financial resources required (at odds with Governor's request for school districts to significantly cut budgets)
    - Significant concerns about financial viability of the service delivery model
    - Financial resources will be required for:
      - Staff time to review, plan, coordinate, build strategic/transition plans, implement, and support continuous quality improvement/monitoring within and across PreK programs, child care, head star and early head start, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care, as well as the Agency of Education, the Child Development Division, and Building Bright Futures
      - Facilities/Physical Infrastructure, materials, oversight, contracting, etc.
      - Increase in workforce/staffing infrastructure needed, alongside the time needed to recruit, train, and support building a high quality workforce across all sectors identified
      - Transportation: busses, bus drivers, coordination time, pickup and drop-off zoning
      - Technology upgrades: connectivity/internet, materials and equipment, and monitoring systems

- An analysis of financial resources required to meet these needs and transitions will be necessary
- **Special Education Considerations**
  - Impact on vulnerable children: Concerns about impact on most vulnerable families: children with disabilities, special health care needs, english language learners, historically marginalized, etc.
  - Service delivery restructure: The need to restructure the entire service delivery model for preK and special education moving toward itinerant, community-based service provision
  - Workforce: Concerns about workforce/staffing given the high rates of mental health, behavioral challenges, disabilities, and special health care needs of the existing children (challenges hiring and finding early childhood special education staff and support staff alongside additional professional development needs)
  - Reduction in hours and services: 3-year-olds would have less time in an early childhood education setting, negatively impacting socialization and family wellness; The ability for ECSE staff to provide services would decrease due to increased travel and administrative time required
  - Facilities/infrastructure: May require additional classrooms and slots to ensure meeting federal regulations around Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
  - Inclusive Individualized Instruction: Develop inclusive, sensory-rich classrooms with increased individualized instruction and specialized therapies
  - Playgroups: Considerations/exploration of playgroups model
  - Transition planning: Implement robust transition planning for 3-year-olds as they move from early intervention services to the public school system, including classroom visits, family meetings, and coordinated service plans.
  - Transportation: New travel models would need to be developed to support drop-off and pick-up across public schools and private/community programs and entities
  - Financial impact/cost: Significant time and financial resources required (at odds with Governor’s request for school districts to significantly cut budgets); Significant concerns about financial viability of the service delivery model
- **Many opportunities to improve professional development** (Table on pg. 10 for question 21)

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## QUESTION BY QUESTION RESPONSES AND THEMES

**Question 1: Through which of the following ways does your district provide families with access to prekindergarten? Select all that apply (Total Responses 42 out of \_\_# of SDs)**

<p>How District Provides PreK - Response Count (Total Counts)</p>
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PreK Classrooms in District Schools	39
Contracts with Private PreK Providers	36
Contracts with Other Districts/SUs	21
Act 166 Partner Sites	1

**Question 2: What are your district's primary obstacles to admitting children from these waitlists? Check all that apply (n=32)**

Waitlist Obstacles - Response Count	
Limited Physical Space	20
Lack of qualified educators	13
Insufficient funding	10
Transportation challenges	11
No afterschool care	4
Not enough adults to support students with challenging behaviors	1
Because we are full	1
CDD ratios/number of classrooms	1
Insufficient number of students on waitlist to create a new classroom	1
None/NA	6

**Question 12: Please describe the barrier(s) to operating afterschool programming (n = 14)**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
Lack of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of state funding for afterschool programming, budget constraints</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of transportation between programs, especially ½ day programs, lack of bus drivers/workforce</li> </ul>
Workforce/staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of staffing capacity, multiple background checks, workforce crisis</li> </ul>
Physical space/infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited existing physical space</li> </ul>

Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative oversight (joint oversight), logistics and coordination, multiple background checks and licensing regulations</li> </ul>
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**Question 17: If the proposed change to prekindergarten were to go into effect for the 2025-2026 school year, would your district need to modify how prekindergarten is provided to eligible students in your service area based on your response in Section 1? (n = 42)**

Would you need to modify how PreK is provided? (n = 42) Response Count	
Yes	37
No	5

**Question 18: What additional resources would your district need to address the proposed changes to prekindergarten in time for the 2025-2026 school year? Please select all that apply. (n = 37)**

Additional Resources Needed (n = 37) Response Count	
Pupil weight adjustment of at least 1.0 FTE/Increased funding	34
More qualified prekindergarten teachers	33
Additional classrooms or facilities	31
Support for transportation service	31
Administrative support for program management	22
Training and professional development for staff	18
Curriculum development materials	17
Contract with new or additional private pre qualified prekindergarten programs	17
Other	6

**Question 19: Are there specific infrastructure improvements your district would require to expand prekindergarten capacity? (n = 42)**

Infrastructure Improvements Needed? (n = 42)	
Yes	29

No	7
Not Sure	6

**Question 20: Please describe the specific infrastructure improvements your district would require to expand prekindergarten capacity. (n=34)**

Emergent Themes	Description <i>Quote</i>
<b>Facilities/Physical Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creation of, or adaptation to, developmentally appropriate physical space for 3 &amp; 4-year-olds (including bathrooms, sinks, playgrounds, roofing/plumbing, running water, heating/cooling, furniture, and materials, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retrofit existing classrooms</li> <li>○ Deferred maintenance</li> <li>○ Additional Classrooms</li> <li>○ Playground space</li> <li>○ Equipment, furniture, supplies, organization and storage materials</li> <li>○ Safety, health, compliance infrastructure and space</li> <li>○ ADA compliance</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Deferred Maintenance:</i>  <i>"The current is already beyond the life expectancy and has significant infrastructure needs - roofing, plumbing... Additionally, we would need double the classrooms."</i></p> <p><i>Classroom Spaces:</i>  <i>Identify and renovate existing spaces within school buildings that could be converted into dedicated prekindergarten classrooms. This may involve repurposing underutilized rooms, expanding current early childhood wings, or constructing new additions.</i></p> <p><i>Restroom Facilities:</i>  <i>Ensure that each prekindergarten classroom has direct access to appropriately sized and equipped restroom facilities, including child-height sinks, toilets, and diaper changing stations.</i></p> <p><i>Outdoor Play Areas:</i>  <i>Expand or enhance outdoor play spaces that are specifically designed for young learners, with age-appropriate equipment, soft safety surfacing, and ample space for gross motor activities.</i></p> <p><i>Storage and Organization:</i>  <i>Provide ample storage solutions within prekindergarten classrooms, such as cubbies, shelves, and cabinets, to accommodate the unique needs and materials required for early childhood education.</i></p>

	<p><i>Technology Infrastructure:</i> Possible upgrade the technology infrastructure to support the integration of educational technology, including reliable high-speed internet, interactive whiteboards, tablets, and other digital resources.</p> <p><i>Furniture and Equipment:</i> Furnish prekindergarten classrooms with appropriately scaled furniture, such as small tables, chairs, and activity centers, as well as specialized equipment like rest mats, manipulatives, and learning materials.</p> <p><i>Dedicated Entrances:</i> Establish separate, secure entrances for prekindergarten students and their families to facilitate drop-off and pick-up procedures, as well as to maintain a distinct early childhood environment.</p> <p><i>Nursing/Health Suites:</i> Ensure the availability of dedicated nursing or health suites within the prekindergarten wing to provide a space for routine health screenings, medication administration, and addressing student health needs, such as diapering.</p> <p><i>Acoustics and Lighting:</i> Design the prekindergarten spaces with optimal acoustics and lighting in mind, considering factors such as sound absorption, natural light, and glare reduction to create a conducive learning environment.</p> <p><i>Compliance and Safety:</i> Ensure that all prekindergarten facilities and infrastructure comply with relevant building codes, safety regulations, and accessibility standards for early childhood education settings.</p> <p><i>Accessibility Features:</i> To meet ADA requirements and support all students, including those with mobility challenges or disabilities, we would need infrastructure modifications to improve accessibility—ramps, wide doorways, and adaptive furniture are examples.</p> <p><i>HVAC and Air Quality:</i> Ensuring that ventilation and air filtration systems are modernized to provide clean, healthy air is especially important in early childhood settings, where students are more vulnerable to respiratory issues. We would need improvements in heating, cooling, and overall air quality to meet current health standards.</p>
<b>Workforce/staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significant workforce capacity needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leadership/Directors</li> <li>○ Qualified ECEs with licenses</li> <li>○ ECSE and support staff (Paras, speech, OT, PT, etc.)</li> <li>○ Afterschool providers</li> <li>○ UPK Coordinators/point person within SDs/Regions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Administrative staff and support positions</li> <li>○ Bus drivers</li> <li>● Considerations for workforce and staffing configurations if transitioning the model re: ratios, settings, licensing, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>“Our program currently runs Monday through Thursday. Expanding PreK capacity would mean we would need additional funding to pay teaching assistants for 5 days a week as well as more teaching assistants. . . . Our district would need to expand transportation to 4 year olds for the school year and hire more drivers to possibly transport 3 year olds who need ESCE services at the school. If we changed our model for providing service to 3 year olds at their private programs, we may need to budget for an additional ECSE. We would also have to expand our after school programming to include 4 year olds meaning we would need to hire more after school staff.”</i></p>
<p><b>Review, Adapt, and/or develop the PreK program model within the necessary mixed-delivery model including CHILD CARE, HEAD START, and AFTERSCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME CARE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reviewing, adapt, and align programmatic offerings, schedules (part time, full-day, school-day, afterschool and out-of-school-time care)</li> <li>● Review and develop transition plans from current models (or no offering) to new model allowing for appropriate transition time</li> <li>● Review, develop, and EXPAND offerings and slots in childcare, Head Start and Early Head Start, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care settings that align with new preK program offerings based on ages of children and ratios</li> <li>● Consider the impact of age on ratios, developmentally appropriate spaces and education, as well as the federal requirements under IDEA for children with disabilities and special health care needs</li> </ul> <p><i>“I don't believe our current private providers would have the space without unenrolling 3 year olds. Our school could hold space but it would have to be retrofitted to meet preK standards, we would have to develop a program from the ground up and staff it.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our community does not have enough "slots" to meet the needs of all 4yo, and our district does not have a UPK program. If the shift is for school districts to assume responsibility of providing preK programs for all 4-year-olds comparable to our 5-year-olds, [our SD] would need to build a preK program to accommodate approximately 140 children. That would be about 10 classrooms, 10 teachers, 3 special educators, and at least 10 paraeducators. Our current structure does not have building or classroom space to accommodate. Adding a building also means additional administrative support. The structure of program oversight (i.e., Child Care Regulations, Agency of Education) will dictate staffing decisions and ultimately drive our infrastructure work.”</i></p>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expand existing transportation and schedules or develop new</li> </ul>

	<p>transportation options for young children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adapt physical space and schedules for developmentally appropriate drop-off or transportation</li> </ul> <p><i>“Parking and Drop-Off Zones: Expanding prekindergarten would increase the need for safe, efficient parking and drop-off/pick-up zones. Improving traffic flow and safety features around schools would be essential to manage increased enrollment.”</i></p> <p><i>“We do not transport prekindergarten students so we would need assistance with transportation as well.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our district would need to expand transportation to 4 year olds for the school year and hire more drivers to possibly transport 3 year olds who need ESCE services at the school.”</i></p>
<b>Technology upgrades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased need for reliable high-speed internet, interactive whiteboards, tablets, and other developmentally appropriate tech tools</li> <li>● Monitoring systems</li> </ul> <p><i>“Technology Integration: We would require improvements in technology infrastructure, such as updated wiring for internet connectivity and the installation of interactive technology tools that support early learning, both for instruction and for communicating with parents.”</i></p>
<b>Funding/Cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial resources will be required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff time to review, plan, coordinate, build strategic/transition plans, implement, and support continuous quality improvement/monitoring within and across PreK programs, child care, head start and early head start, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care, as well as the Agency of Education, the Child Development Division, and Building Bright Futures</li> <li>○ Facilities/Physical Infrastructure, materials, oversight, contracting, etc.</li> <li>○ Increase in workforce/staffing infrastructure needed, alongside the time needed to recruit, train, and support building a high quality workforce across all sectors identified</li> <li>○ Transportation: busses, bus drivers, coordination time, pickup and drop-off zoning</li> <li>○ Technology upgrades: connectivity/internet, materials and equipment, and monitoring systems</li> </ul> </li> <li>● An analysis of financial resources required to meet these needs and transitions will be necessary</li> </ul>

**Question 21: What kind of professional development or training would be most beneficial for your prekindergarten educators to expand prekindergarten capacity? (n = 38)**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
Developmentally appropriate practices and socio-emotional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding child development, creating engaging learning environments, and implementing teaching strategies tailored to the needs of young learners</li> <li>• Training on best practices for early childhood education that emphasizes play-based learning, social-emotional development, and individualized instruction. This ensures educators understand how to tailor their approaches to meet the diverse needs of young learners.</li> </ul>
Trauma-informed/responsive practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct training on trauma-informed and/or responsive approaches to supporting the social-emotional and behavioral needs of young children who have experienced adversity or trauma</li> </ul>
Support in meeting licensing requirements/regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and balancing the CDD licensing regulations with public school regulations</li> </ul>
Supporting students requiring special education or who are English Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training on differentiating instruction and implementing interventions to meet the unique needs of each prekindergarten student, including those with special needs or English language learners.</li> </ul>
Support in meeting the mental health needs of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Behavior Interventions &amp; Supports (PBIS)</li> <li>• Early Multi Tiered Systems of Support (Early MTSS)</li> </ul>
Early literacy and numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on implementing engaging and developmentally appropriate early literacy and numeracy activities. This will equip educators with tools to foster foundational skills critical for later academic success.</li> </ul>
Culturally responsive teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops focusing on cultural competency and inclusive teaching strategies to help educators engage with and support families from various cultural backgrounds, fostering a welcoming environment for all students.</li> </ul>
PreK curriculum, classroom management, curriculum development, and required models training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer workshops on designing and implementing high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum for prekindergarten classrooms. This could include training on integrating play-based learning, incorporating STEM concepts, and fostering social-emotional development.</li> <li>• Conduct professional development on effective classroom management techniques for prekindergarten settings. This may include strategies for creating routines, promoting positive behavior, and supporting</li> </ul>

	<p>students with diverse intense behavior; and health needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VELS and emergent curriculum</li> <li>• Universal design</li> </ul>
Family engagement/partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train educators on building strong partnerships with families, including strategies for effective communication, involving parents in the learning process, and supporting family-school connections.</li> </ul>
Monitoring, assessments & technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer workshops on utilizing observational assessment tools to monitor student progress and inform instructional decision-making in prekindergarten classrooms</li> <li>• Offer professional development on integrating technology-based tools and resources to enhance learning and engagement in prekindergarten settings.</li> <li>• TSGOLD, Ready for K, etc.</li> <li>• AAC assessment and usage</li> </ul>
Collaboration & Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development on collaborative teaching models, including co-teaching strategies with special education staff or support personnel. This training will emphasize the importance of teamwork in providing comprehensive support to all students</li> </ul>

**Question 22: The obligation of school districts and supervisory unions under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to provide special education services for all three-year-olds would not change under this proposal. Given that three-year-olds would no (n = 42)**

Would you need to modify spec ed services for 3's? Response Count	
Yes	29
No	13

**Question 23: Please provide more information on how your school might modify ECSE service provision for three-year-olds. An example of a modification could be offering a three-year-old classroom that is inclusive of both children with and without disabilities, off (n = 37)**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
Restructure entire service delivery model for preK and special education moving toward itinerant, community-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special education services would have to happen outside of preK classrooms which is not in alignment with federal IDEA law of students being educated alongside typically developing peers in the least restrictive</li> </ul>

based service provision	<p>environment (LRE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Services/providers traveling to meet children in community-based and private settings</li> <li>● Requires additional travel time and less service provision to children</li> <li>● Additional contracts with community-based service providers</li> <li>● Considerations for already high (and increasing) caseloads across all early childhood settings</li> <li>● Considerations for flexible service delivery models</li> </ul> <p><i>"In addition to inclusive three-year-old classroom, playgroup settings, and community-based services, and collaboration with local agencies, we anticipate additional needs for professional development of new and existing staff, and flexible service delivery models due to possible increased enrollment. We anticipate the need for two additional classrooms that would need to be constructed, furnished and staffed."</i></p>
Workforce/staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hire additional staff to meet child, family, and community needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment, retention (challenges finding/hiring new ECSE and support staff)</li> <li>○ ECSE and support staff (Paras, speech, OT, PT, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Increased staff travel</li> <li>● Increased professional development needs (training, coaching, etc.)</li> </ul>
Reduction in hours and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3-year-olds would have less time in an early childhood education setting, negatively impacting socialization and family wellness</li> <li>● The ability for ECSE staff to provide services would decrease due to increased travel and administrative time required</li> </ul> <p><i>"Unless we were able to add additional classrooms and staff, then we would have to provide itinerant services. This would require additional staff. Given the amount of need, we would not be able to provide as many hours of services as we do now."</i></p>
Facilities/Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would require additional classrooms and slots to ensure meeting federal regulations around Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)</li> </ul> <p><i>"We currently have classrooms that integrate 3 and 4 year olds in our PreK on site classrooms (1/2 day). We have limited classroom slots, but we offer those to 3 and 4 year olds where it has been decided they need to be on site for FAPE. We do not have capacity</i></p>

	<p><i>to provide additional classrooms and if we had only 4 year olds, we would not have balanced classrooms if we also had only 3 year olds with disabilities."</i></p>
Develop inclusive, sensory-rich classrooms with increased individualized instruction and specialized therapies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider placing 3-year-old students with special needs in inclusive prekindergarten classrooms alongside their typically developing peers. This provides opportunities for socialization, peer modeling, and access to the general education curriculum.</li> <li>● Design the 3-year-old special education classroom environments with sensory integration in mind, incorporating calming colors, flexible seating options, and manipulatives that engage the senses.</li> <li>● Ensure 3-year-old students with special needs receive more frequent and intensive one-on-one or small group instruction to address their specific learning, developmental, and therapeutic needs.</li> <li>● Integrate speech-language, occupational, and physical therapy services directly into the 3-year-old's daily classroom routines and activities, rather than pulling them out for separate sessions.</li> <li>● Utilize specialized, developmentally appropriate curriculum designed for 3-year-old students with special needs, focusing on foundational skills in areas such as communication, social-emotional development, and adaptive behavior.</li> </ul>
Playgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Considerations/exploration of playgroups model</li> </ul>
Transition Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement robust transition planning for 3-year-olds as they move from early intervention services to the public school system, including classroom visits, family meetings, and coordinated service plans.</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New travel models would need to be developed to support drop-off and pick-up across public schools and private/community programs and entities</li> </ul>
Financial Impact/Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significant time and financial resources required (at odds with Governor's request for school districts to significantly cut budgets)</li> <li>● Significant concerns about financial viability of the service delivery model</li> </ul> <p><i>"I think if this legislation goes through, we will be doing a great disservice to the 3-year-olds we know need services, while possibly holding spots for 4-year-olds who may never attend. With the amount of money it would cost to provide a special 3-year-old classroom or playgroup or add ECSE service providers or hire more teachers, it would be more cost effective to keep things</i></p>

	<i>status quo."</i>
General feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specific modifications would depend on the individual needs of the 3-year-old students, the resources available within the school district, and the overall early childhood special education service delivery model.</li> </ul> <p><i>"Our district would need time and significant financial resources and support for those funds from the Governor's office directly in order to provide services for three year olds in our school buildings. [Our SD] DOES NOT have classroom capacity for this. We would require the time and funds for a facilities expansion in order to make this happen. We also do not have the staffing. For our current and very small preschool program we frequently have to close due to staff absences and no qualified substitutes.</i></p> <p><i>We would modify our programs by adding a 3 year old playgroup that would be supported by Speech Language Pathologists and Special Educators. If resources were added to our school budget from the state, we would add classrooms and staffing in order to have a 3 year old classroom as a half day program. We would want to have an entire separate teaching team that would be dedicated to developing and delivering a program for 3 year olds and to also transition those students from early intervention.</i></p> <p><i>This move would require us to hire additional staff to provide community based services (outreach services) and we are unclear how to do that given that the Governor has asked school districts across the state to cut their budgets significantly."</i></p>

**Question 24: What, if any, changes to your transportation model for prekindergarten students would be needed if you moved to serving all four-year-olds (and no three-year-olds) per Act 76?**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
Workforce/staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would require additional bus drivers and traveling support staff/aids</li> </ul>
Existing transportation challenges/stress on system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently struggling to provide transportation for the district K-12 due to staffing shortages, lack of staff riding the bus/supervision, challenges contracting, etc.</li> <li>Lacking current capacity, adding 4-year-olds isn't possible</li> </ul>

Not currently set up to transport 4-year-olds and would need new procedures for 3s as well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need expanded bus routes</li> <li>● Would need to consider transporting 3-year-olds accessing special ed services</li> <li>● Expanding bus services at multiple times throughout the day (morning, mid-day, afternoon)</li> </ul>
Supervision and safety during transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about additional staff necessary during bus rides and at drop-off to ensure safety</li> <li>● Need for additional safety restraints/refitting of current bus safety restraints (5-point-harnesses)</li> <li>● Modification of vehicles to be accessible for young children with disabilities</li> </ul>
Collaboration & Public/Private partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significant collaboration and partnership between CDD, AOE, school districts/LEAs, community-based programs, bus companies around planning, transition, regulations, and implementation</li> </ul>
Finances/Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Huge financial barrier for the districts</li> </ul> <p><i>We currently offer transport 25-30 children annually at a cost of \$210,000. If we expanded public PreK we would need to consider dramatically expanding that transportation contract to provide developmentally appropriate transportation to a group of children that could be 6 times as large.</i></p>
No change necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Several districts already provide transportation for preK students and have systems in place</li> </ul>
Training/Professional Development and CQI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional development and training for bus drives and bus aids/support staff</li> <li>● Monitoring transportation effectiveness and engage in CQI</li> </ul>
Overall Concerns	<p><i>“The answer here depends on what you require for transportation. Be aware that [our SD] does not have enough buses to transport the current number of students that we have as a district. We are currently struggling to provide transportation for our district. We contract with [bus company] for bussing and we are still short a minimum of two bus drivers. This has been a significant challenge to generalized transportation over the past three school years. Also, note that we DO NOT have an adult riding on all of our buses. That is not something that we guarantee. The staffing shortage plays a role in this and we are still understaffed as a district. If you require transportation for these students as described, and if you require that each bus has a supervisor for the preschoolers ages 3 or 4, you are setting districts up for failure and to be out of compliance with potential regulations due to the staffing shortages. Transportation for many districts, even in Chittenden County remains a significant challenge. I caution you to be careful</i></p>



	<p><i>on what you regulate as it might be something that schools are not able to provide.”</i></p> <p><i>“Transporting preschoolers requires increased supervision compared to older students. We would have concerns around who is supervising preschoolers while riding the bus. Bus drivers are not able to provide supervision for preschoolers as they are driving. It would be impossible for us to guarantee that we would have a bus monitor on each of our buses for preschoolers. Clearly there would be a need for car seats, and currently our current buses do not have seat belts. This again would be an added expense for the district. Our final concern is around preschoolers and supervision as they wait for the bus, and the supervision of students when they are dropped off. We would not want to just drop a preschooler off, we would want an adult there to receive the child. This is currently a challenge for kinder families, causing buses to be late or return to school as the adult was not at the home to receive the student.”</i></p>
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**Question 25: What, if any, other changes would your district consider in order to expand prekindergarten capacity per Act 76? (n = 32)**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
ADM & Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about school budget</li> <li>● Increasing preK ADM</li> <li>● Opportunities to write grants to support preK:</li> <li>● Economic concerns</li> <li>● Apply for state, federal, or private grants to fund pre-K expansion.</li> <li>● Reallocate existing school budget funds to prioritize pre-K program growth.</li> <li>● Explore partnerships with local early childhood organizations to share costs.</li> </ul>
Maintaining/increasing opportunities for 3-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to increase opportunities for 3-year-olds</li> <li>● Concerns about removing 3s: impact on staffing and attendance in public schools, impact on private programs re: business model and ratios</li> <li>● Maintaining mixed delivery</li> </ul>
Facilities/Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food service infrastructure expansion</li> <li>● Playgrounds</li> <li>● Deferred maintenance</li> <li>● Developmentally appropriate facilities</li> </ul>
Workforce/Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns over staffing shortages</li> <li>● Additional certification/licensure</li> <li>● Additional food and custodial staff</li> </ul>

Early and Afterschool Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need for extended care earlier and later in the day requiring partnership with private/community programs</li> </ul>
Joint Agency Oversight & Collaboration across public, private, and community-based programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dual agency oversight as a significant challenge and expending time and resources to staff and administrators in public schools</li> <li>● Importance of strengthening partnerships: Collaborate with community-based childcare providers to co-locate pre-K classrooms. Coordinate with Head Start or other pre-K programs to share resources and facilities. Engage parents and local stakeholders to generate support for pre-K expansion.</li> <li>● Clear communication</li> <li>● Alignment between licensing and regulations across agencies</li> </ul> <p><i>If this act passes, we would have to consider our collaboration with Head Start. Since we have different rules (Head Start could keep 3's, but not in our case because of the collaboration; they work fewer days, they have different requirements), we don't know what that would look like for sure. I am very concerned that the passing of this law could fracture this collaboration that we have worked so hard to maintain for the last 20 years and that works to serve children and families.</i></p>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Age-appropriate transportation</li> </ul>
Varied options for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding and prioritizing family choice</li> </ul> <p><i>"Our families have been making choices around where their children receive PreK learning opportunities based upon the locations and times available. Many of our families would not be able to access school based full day programs due to still having a need for extended care on either end of the school day. Our schools do not have the staffing nor the space to provide licensed extended care. This would create a need for modifications to buildings and increased hiring of staff. We struggle to find the proper staff that is needed for our programs currently. Families need to have varied options that will provide for the youngest members of our communities."</i></p>

**Question 26: Please share any additional comments or suggestions about your district's current and/or future ability to offer prekindergarten programming. (n = 30)**

Emergent Themes	Description or Quote
Maintaining 3-year-old benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about removing 3-year-olds</li> </ul>

<p>&amp; mixed delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limiting families options to meet their child's needs related to early learning opportunities and special education</li> <li>○ Many families do not have a demonstrated need for care to qualify for CCFAP and may no longer have access to care or preK in a 4s only model of preK</li> <li>● Importance of maintaining mixed delivery to foster a strong early childhood education system that prioritizes family needs, two years of preK, and meets the needs of the rural nature of Vermont <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strong reliance on private/community-based partners for preK</li> <li>○ Concerns about a complete shift in programming for child care, preK, and afterschool and out-of-school-time care</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Vulnerable children and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about impact on most vulnerable families: children with disabilities, special health care needs, english language learners, historically marginalized, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Additional funding and resources required across all domains to expand and adapt preK</li> <li>● Increasing ADM for preK is critical</li> <li>● Concerns about private PreK competing for public preK funding</li> </ul>
<p>Review current service delivery models to strengthen current system with or without expansion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review existing model of mixed delivery preK for 3 and 4-year-olds to determine successes and best practices that can be replicated and scaled vs. overhauling</li> <li>● Review programming and alignment/collaboration between preK and Head Start programs</li> </ul>
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about transportation</li> </ul>
<p>Schedules/Slots (Capacity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns about definition of full-day, full school year and definition not meeting needs of families</li> </ul>
<p>Critical Transitions (prek to K, early intervention to special education, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some programs have strong transitions built into their current mixed delivery systems that can serve as a model based on prioritization and planned transitions for children with SHCN on IEPs</li> </ul>
<p>Administrative Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Difficult budget climate for schools</li> <li>● Significant time would be needed for any transitions</li> <li>● Coordination/collaboration and strategic planning critical to transitions that are mindful of the intersections and impacts within and across child care, preK, and afterschool</li> <li>● Clear communication from the state and legislature</li> </ul>

Simplify Agency Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Single agency oversight</li> <li>● Simplify licensing regulations for preK in public schools</li> <li>● Clarity in regulations and compliance</li> </ul>
Process critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concerns and frustration with the PEIC survey re: timing and limiting the opportunity for data analysis</li> </ul>

### Alternative (Minority) Perspective

*“Our public schools have the capacity and expertise to provide full-day programs for all four-year-olds, offering a high-quality early education that sets the foundation for future academic success. Given the current financial picture, we must prioritize our resources effectively.*

*Investing in our public prekindergarten programs is crucial for our community's future. To achieve this, we need strong support from the state in recruiting and retaining top-notch early education staff. This investment in human capital is essential to maintain the high standards of education our children deserve.*

*It's important to recognize that public school systems are held to rigorous standards and accountability measures. Diverting funds to private Pre-K systems through vouchers, which may not adhere to the same strict standards, could potentially compromise the quality of early education our children receive.*

*Instead, provide full Average Daily Membership (ADM) funding for our prekindergarten students and channel our efforts into strengthening our public education system. This strategy ensures that every dollar spent goes directly towards improving the quality of early education in our community.*

*By concentrating our resources on public prekindergarten programs, we can create a more robust, early education system that gives all our four-year-olds the best possible start in their educational journey. This approach not only maximizes the impact of our educational resources but also ensures more equitable access to high-quality early education for all families in our community.*

*Let the Agency of Human Services focus on birth through three; and the Agency of Education focus on age 4-high school completion. It is time we decouple the dual requirement system we have created in Vermont.”*

