WORKFORCE

- **Alabama**: In October, their SBE supported a resolution that adopts Praxis Assessment 5531: Pre-Kindergarten Education as a precondition for initial certification for pre-K teachers.
- **Florida**: Florida SBE approved an amendment to a rule regarding the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Director Credential for private providers. The amended rule requires VPK credential candidates take two additional online courses, beginning after November 1, 2018. The courses add to the minimum standards and educational requirements of the VPK credential and are aligned to the performance standards for children participating in the VPK education program. The additional courses cover mathematical thinking for early learners and language and vocabulary in the VPK classroom.
- **Louisiana**: SBE Approved allocation of CCDF funds to support development of Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs and help lead teachers in publicly-funded centers meet the credential requirements within policy. Beginning on July 1, 2019, all lead teachers in publicly-funded centers (Type III) will be required to have a current or be earning an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate as a minimum credential. Teachers will have 24 months from their start date as a lead teacher to earn the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate. Note: the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate will not qualify an individual to work as a lead teacher in public schools. The bachelor’s degree and teaching certificate requirement for pre-K teachers in public and nonpublic schools will remain the same. Head Start teacher requirements will continue to follow the national credential and qualification guidelines.

TRANSITION (Pre-K to Kindergarten)

- **Illinois**: Indicators for P-2 readiness have been under consideration by the Boards P-2 Indicator Working Group. In January, 2018, the Working Group recommended focusing on three indicators: overweighting chronic absenteeism in the K-2 years, providing required services for K-2 dual language learners, and participating in acceleration and enrichment.

SYSTEM ALIGNMENT

- **Florida**: Revised child performance standards for the School Readiness Program, a program that offers financial assistance to low-income families for early childhood education and care. The standards were revised to be more concise and accessible and to align with the child performance standards for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (another program administered by Florida’s Office of Early Learning). The new standards also align with standards for kindergarten in Florida.
- **Utah**: Recommendations made to revise early childhood standards to align with recently revised elementary standards. The following was recommended by the Board (of greatest relevance is the final recommendation to consider the Developmental Observation Tool (DOT) and the Kindergarten Entry & Exit Profile (KEEP)):
• Revise the standard headings to be stated as follows:
  o Language and Literacy
  o Mathematics
  o Approaches to Learning and Science
  o Social Studies and Personal Development
  o Creative Arts
  o Physical Education
  o Health and Safety
• The current Early Childhood Core Standards formatting has aligned the standards for three different periods: Preschool Foundational, Kindergarten Readiness (End of Preschool) and Kindergarten (end of kindergarten). It is recommended the formatting be revised to fit the USBE standards template with each period individually formatted and also include an alignment of the revised standards over the three periods in order to analyze current and future needs of students.
• Strategies and activities are included throughout the current standards. The committee recommends the standards be listed in a separate document from strategies and activities in order to conform to USBE formatting and have the strategies available to the various early childhood providers (public, private, home school) that regularly access them.
• Early childhood standards that emphasize developmentally appropriate content and outcomes are essential for children age 3-5. This population has unique learning needs that require best practice instruction and interactions appropriate for the age. The writing committee will need to reference research that addresses developmentally appropriate practice to ensure that the revised standards meet the needs of early childhood students.
• The committee reviewed the standards for each content area and have created a revision suggestions document for the writing committees’ consideration. In summary, the committee recommends the Early Childhood standards need to be aligned with the recently revised Elementary standards. The writing committee will also need to consider the ongoing revision of the health standards.
• It is recommended the writing committee consider the Developmental Observation Tool (DOT) and the Kindergarten Entry & Exit Profile (KEEP) as the standards are being revised. Both assessments are directly correlated to state standards, are used to gather data for monitoring of student progress, and to inform instruction. If the writing committee recommends a revision of a standard assessed by either of these tools there will need to be researched based justification for the recommendation.

FINANCE

- **Arizona**: Early Literacy Grant Funds approved.
- **Arkansas**: $1.5 million appropriated to provide a one-time cost of living increase in funding for the Arkansas Better Chance program.
- **Georgia**: Early Learning Challenge Grant approval.
- **Illinois**: Three Early Childhood Block Grants will begin July 1, 2018 and will extend through June 30, 2019.
- **Michigan**: Great Start Readiness Program Grants approved to “reduce the impact of high-risk factors and provide equitable resources to meet the needs of students and ensure they have access to quality educational opportunities...GSRP grants enable eligible recipients to establish, continue or expand high-quality preschool programs designed to improve the readiness and subsequent achievement of children at risk of school failure.”

- **Michigan**: Grant approval for the Early Learning Collaborative Pilot Program in Kent Intermediate School District. This pilot will evaluate the relative impact on vulnerable children of one versus two years of preschool education.

- **Utah**: The Utah State Legislature [provided](#) seven million dollars ($7,000,000) of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds through the High Quality School Readiness Program Expansion bill, 53A-1b-105, to expand access to high quality school readiness programs for economically disadvantaged students, specifically students whose families qualify for free or reduced lunch.

### STANDARDS/CURRICULUM

- **Kentucky**: Reviewed their 2017 “Screener Results” for kindergarten readiness and found that 51.4 percent of students tested were deemed “ready” upon their entrance into kindergarten. Kentucky's kindergarten screener data provides a snapshot of student readiness in the following areas: academic/cognitive, language development, physical development, self-help, and social-emotional.

- **Maryland**: Shared information on 2017 Kindergarten Readiness Results: 45 percent demonstrate readiness, 37 percent approach, and 18 percent are emerging.

- **Mississippi**: Results of Kindergarten Readiness Results were discussed in their December Board meeting. The details of the results are not yet public.

- **Nebraska**: Action to grant the state commissioner the authority to approve purchase of curriculum for center-based and family child care home programs participating in Step Up to Quality.

- **Virginia**: Conducted their first review of the Virginia Guidelines for Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion of Young Children: Supporting Children with Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood settings. The proposed guidelines were developed as a collaborative effort across Virginia’s early childhood stakeholder groups, both public and private. A steering committee was co-led by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). The steering committee members represented parents, teachers, principals, school division administrators, early childhood special educators, private childcare providers, Head Start personnel, higher education professionals, and health professionals.

The Guidelines include the following sections:

- Rationale and guiding principles;
- Definitions of suspension and expulsion;
- Best practices in promoting positive behavior;
- Suggested steps to prevent suspensions and severely limit expulsions; and
- Resources for promoting children’s social-emotional development.
The Guidelines state that all early childhood settings should establish policies that adhere to three guiding principles:

- Communicate clearly the expectations for children and adult behavior in early care and education settings;
- Provide support and training for the early care and education workforce on the positive strategies to manage children’s behavior and the prevention of inappropriate or challenging behavior; and
- Ensure the fair and equitable application of positive behavior management and discipline practices in early care and education settings.