



2016-2019

STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted by unanimous vote by Board of Directors on September 13, 2016



Welcome To Our Future

Dear Friends of Smart Beginnings –

As we look along the Virginia peninsula, particularly at the cities of Hampton and Newport News, we see opportunities for change and transformation – particularly in the lives of the young children who represent the future of our community.

Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula was formed in 2012 from a passion for improving the lives of young children, and preparing them for school. We are part of Virginia’s Smart Beginnings network, but our focus is uniquely centered on Hampton and Newport News. Over the years, our mission has grown to center our focus on the cornerstones of school readiness – quality child care, education and health.

We are not alone in this work.

Our community is blessed with a small, but scrappy and dedicated, cluster of corporations, nonprofits, governments, hospitals and universities committed to change. We believe the future of childhood development and school readiness lies in the synergy of our efforts, at the intersection of the work we all do to strengthen our community.

This strategic plan, a first for Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula, looks to strengthen our collaborations within the community. We believe in the value of bringing the community together around a set of key indicators that ensure the readiness of children to learn. When all of us are aligned around a critical few areas of change, we can make a difference – in the lives of our children, and in the future of our community.

We hope you will join us on this journey to strengthen the Virginia Peninsula, and the allow Smart Beginnings to continue its critical role as a champion for children in our community.

Thank you,

Alan Archer
Strategic Plan Committee Chair

Nicole R. Guajardo, Ph.D.
Board Chair

Bruce Myers
Executive Director

Introduction and Overview

As Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula (SBVP) looks toward its fifth year since merging with Preschool Partners, it anticipates a new strategic chapter in which to address some key opportunities and gain greater traction around its vision.

Led by a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of 10 Board members, plus the organization's executive director and assistant coordinator, the project occurred during the months of March, April, May and June, 2016. The process was designed to be expansive and iterative, and to create opportunities for the SBVP team to imagine a future for the organization – and the children of Hampton and Newport News – that is different from the past.

Key activities over the four-month process included:

- ⑥ Three meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee
- ⑥ A driving tour of Newport News and Hampton – narrated by Ivy Mitchell – for the consulting team
- ⑥ Individual interviews with 12 stakeholders (see Appendices)
- ⑥ Two meetings with staff program leads
- ⑥ A full-day retreat with the Board of Directors
- ⑥ Two presentations to the Executive Committee of the Board
- ⑥ An interview and follow-up check-on with the Director of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
- ⑥ Two planning/working meetings with staff and Board leadership

This plan is designed to strengthen Smart Beginnings' voice in the community around issues related to early childhood education and kindergarten readiness, and to maintain the quality programs and capacity building services the organization offers to providers throughout the peninsula region.

During the course of this strategic planning process, the Smart Beginnings Board and staff closely examined the organization's mission and made adjustments that better aligns the mission with the organization's new strategic direction. As such, the following mission, vision, strategic outcomes and supporting strategies provide an aspirational north star for the organization over the course of the next three years – along with the outcomes necessary to move in that direction.

Mission, Vision and Strategic Outcomes

Mission

To provide leadership to champion a collaborative system that provides high quality care, education and health services to prepare children in Hampton and Newport News for kindergarten and life.

Strategic Vision

By 2020, SBVP will have facilitated the establishment of a strong outcomes-based approach to school readiness in Hampton and Newport News.

Strategic Outcomes

- Convene the community to identify and act upon a set of indicators that are the most important to the community and that support our mission.
- Ensure our programs and services support the community indicators and strengthen the capacity of local service providers.
- Build a strong team to deliver on our mission.
- Create a strategic and sustainable approach to fund development.

Strategic Outcome #1
Focus Our Community

Convene the community to identify and act upon a set of indicators that are the most important to the community and that support our mission.

If a community were to identify one chapter in the life of its citizens where constructive interventions could have long and deep-lasting impact, it is likely early childhood would surface to the top of the list. Making small, and positive, changes to the environments of young children and their families creates a ripple effect that spreads to every corner of the community – from education to healthcare, from workforce development to economic growth. The healthy development of our children touches us all.

Understanding the impact of the many programs and interventions in place in Hampton and Newport News that shape the development of young children and their families is only part of the journey. To identify gaps and measure outcomes are only two of the many reasons why effective organizations – and successful communities – track their progress against a set of key indicators. When it comes to the development of young children – and creating the conditions that ensure they start school ready to learn – there are many levers to pull.

Identifying the best opportunities for the community to focus its energy and amplify its voice to ensure a healthy start for the children of Hampton and Newport News is a role that Smart Beginnings can, and should, play. As a convener, Smart Beginnings has an opportunity to play a passionate, child-centered, and politically neutral role in bringing together voices from nonprofits, corporations, philanthropic groups and individuals, schools and government. Building on work already in motion – indicator reports and other existing data sets – Smart Beginnings can build consensus, alignment and investment to accelerate success, and more quickly identify areas of opportunity.

To build on its existing work as a convener around issues impacting the development of young children and their readiness to learn, Smart Beginnings will pursue the following strategies:

STRATEGY 1.1

⑥ Establish an Indicators Task Force of the Board to design and guide Smart Beginnings' convening role.

- The Strategic Planning Committee should identify Task Force members and invite their participation in the process by December of 2016.
- The Task Force should design a process to:
 - Identify and gather key community data sets related to child development and school readiness.
 - Identify and engage key stakeholders for each phase of the process.
 - Develop a high-level engagement plan to build appropriate community awareness at each stage of the process.
- The Task Force should identify and engage key stakeholders, including potential funders and organizational partners, in this process.
- The Task Force should update the Board quarterly on its work and progress.

STRATEGY 1.2

⑥ Convene a core group of community partners to review gathered data, establish high-level priorities for community discussion, and engage the community in this work.

STRATEGY 1.3

⑥ Develop a clear, multi-year plan to engage the community to act on our priorities.

- Agree upon specific metrics and outcomes that impact child development, school readiness, and the overall health of the community.
- Identify appropriate community leaders and partners around each metric or outcome.
- Establish an evaluation process to track and act on progress regularly.
- Regularly convene stakeholder communities to discuss issues, track progress and identify issues and opportunities for collaboration.
- Advocate in the community to build awareness among local officials, as well as business and community leaders, about the issues.

Strategic Outcome #2
Deliver Programs in Support of Community-Wide Goals

Ensure our programs and services support community indicators and strengthen the capacity of local service providers.

Smart Beginnings was founded to strengthen and enhance programs that serve the pre-kindergarten children of Hampton and Newport News, and to increase school readiness. In its efforts to respond to the needs of the broader peninsula community, Smart Beginnings has supported or initiated a range of programs and services to improve the quality of early childhood education and other community programs serving children under age 5.

Strategically, all of the existing programs and services provided by Smart Beginnings – in Hampton, in Newport News, and across the peninsula – address very real community needs. As Smart Beginnings prepares to enter a new strategic phase, it will be increasingly important for its existing programs and services to connect to agreed-upon community indicators. It will also be critical for Smart Beginnings to build on its legacy of success of building the quality and sustainability of child care providers.

Finding a balance between the aspirational role of convener with the practical role of service provider will be important for Smart Beginnings. Both are important for the community, and both help to drive toward the organization's mission.

STRATEGY 2.1

⑥ Evaluate existing programs and services, and establish clear metrics for success that are aligned with agreed-upon community indicators.

- The core program staff should work with the appropriate Board committees to develop a consistent approach to regular program evaluation, and to ensure alignment with the new community indicators.

STRATEGY 2.2

⑥ Continue to create pathways that strengthen the quality and sustainability of child care providers in our community.

- The core program staff, led by the Child Care Specialist, should develop a three-year plan to expand its center-based education efforts with recommendations to deepen our support of home-based child care providers.

STRATEGY 2.3

⑥ Identify appropriate organizational resources to fill service gaps and meet the growing needs of our community.

- Identify resource and service gaps in the community directly related to the indicators, and to our mission.
- Work with our partners to develop creative, effective solutions to fill service gaps.
- Continue to evaluate our internal resources with the goal of moving programs and services, when appropriate, to other qualified providers in the community.

Strategic Outcome #3 **Build Organizational Capacity**

Build a strong team to deliver on our mission.

The core mission of Smart Beginnings is not to grow its staff, but in order to fulfill its mission the organization needs to grow its capacity. Growing and strengthening its Board of Directors, building new key staff roles to advance its mission, and finding a new home that meets the needs of the organization's staff and clients are all important to Smart Beginnings' long-term sustainability and viability.

STRATEGY 3.1

⑥ Develop and implement a long-term plan for Board development and structure.

- Establish a Board Development Committee to:
 - Review the By-Laws, including Board expectations and committee structure; develop a Board orientation process for new members; identify opportunities for Board training and development; and create a formal Board matrix (size, composition) to guide Board succession and growth.
 - Develop a succession plan, including nominations for open Board seats, by January 2017.
 - Develop a process for the Board to track and evaluate its performance against the Strategic Plan.

STRATEGY 3.2

⑥ Develop a staffing model that allows SBVP to implement key components of its strategic plan, and strengthen its capacity.

- Working with the Executive Director, the Executive Committee of the Board will design an aspirational (future-focused) plan for organizational growth to include:
 - A clear organizational structure with clear job descriptions for Executive Director, Program Director, Development Coordinator, and the four program leads.
 - A process to fund an expansion of scope in the role of the Assistant Coordinator to that of Program Director to support both the convener and program delivery components of the organization.

- A process to fund and hire a part-time Development Coordinator.
- The Executive Director and Program Director will work with staff to strengthen the internal capacity, collaboration and communication within the organization with a plan for:
 - Regular staff meetings and more consistent internal communications; consistent and updated policies and procedures; training and development opportunities for staff; and regular performance reviews.

STRATEGY 3.3

- ⑥ **Identify a new home for SBVP that is visible, safe and has the capacity to support program and convener activities.**

Strategic Outcome #4
Develop Fundraising Capacity

Create a strategic and sustainable approach to fund development.

In order to successfully achieve its mission, Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula needs a short-term financial infusion – to give this strategic plan the lift it needs to succeed – and a long-term development plan. Building capacity takes time, and launching a significant community-centered strategy for change requires resources – both people and money. The below strategies are designed to give Smart Beginnings the ability to move forward with increased confidence.

STRATEGY 4.1

- ⑥ **Develop a process and timeline to communicate the strategic plan to key funders and community partners, along with clear funding requests to help launch key initiatives in this plan.**

STRATEGY 4.2

- ⑥ **Hire a part-time development coordinator for the organization to develop and implement a long-range Fundraising Plan that includes:**
 - Grant research and writing to sustain existing programs
 - Grant research and writing to fund new convener role
 - An individual giving/annual fund plan
 - Corporate giving strategy
 - Prospective private and corporate foundation funding
 - Relationship management
 - Public awareness and visibility

Appendices – Process and Participants

Appendix I - Process

- Interview and planning meetings – March 2016
- Kick-Off Session (half-day) with the Strategic Planning Committee on April 13, 2016
- Listening Session with SBVP full-time staff and program leads on April 13, 2016 (Absent: Hilari Devine. Phone discussion: April 27, 2016)
- 12 Stakeholder Interviews during March, April and May 2016
- Report to the Executive Meeting on April 25, 2016
- Board Retreat on May 6, 2016
- Working session on May 11, 2016
- Half-Day working session with the Strategic Planning Committee on May 18, 2016.
- Floricane to draft plan and circulate electronically to the Committee for a direction check.
- Floricane to incorporate feedback, add tactics and timelines, and circulate electronically to the full Board for consideration and feedback.
- Floricane and the Strategic Planning Committee to incorporate feedback and further refine the draft.
- Floricane and the Committee to present the final draft to the Board at its meeting on June 7, 2016.

2016 Strategic Plan

Appendix II – Stakeholder Interviews

Name	Notes
Shardell Gerald	Chief of Prevention Services, Newport News Department of Human Services; Member, SBVP Health and Oral Health committees
Kathy Glazer	President, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation
Mike Helpinstill	Vice President of Business Management and Chief Financial Officer, Newport News Shipbuilding; SBVP Board member
Stacey Hinderliter, MD Patrice Pennyfeather, RN	Associate Director, Riverside Brentwood Family Medicine Residency, Riverside Brentwood Medical Center-Pediatrics Pediatric Nurse
Lisa Hogge	Director, Youth and Family Services, Hampton/Newport News Community Services Board
Cathy Huemer	Early Childhood Curriculum and Development Supervisor, Newport News Public Schools; SBVP Board member; Chair, Early Care & Education Committee
Mike Kuhns	President/CEO, Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce; SBVP Board member
Ivy Mitchell	Founder, Preschool Partners; part-time bookkeeper and advisor to SBVP
Valencia Lewis	Director, Early Childhood Education, Hampton City Schools
Chanda Epps	Coordinator, Title I for Family Engagement, Hampton City Schools
Joanne Drew	Principal, Moton Early Childhood Center
Mike Monteith	CEO, Peninsula Community Foundation: SBVP Board member
Nancy Null	Director, Head Start / Early Head Start
Angie Russ	Program Manager, Healthy Start, Hampton Healthy Families

Appendix III - Strategic Planning Committee

Alan Archer- Chair, Strategic Planning Committee
Deputy Manager, City of Newport News

Nicole R. Guajardo, Ph.D. – Chair, Board of Directors
Dean, College of Natural and Behavioral Sciences
Christopher Newport University

Julie Duregger
Assistant Coordinator, Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula

Terry Hall
Retired, Ferguson Enterprises

Chenequa Hayden
Program Manager, Hampton Healthy Families

Kathy Johnson
Executive Director, Alternatives

Mike Monteith
CEO, Peninsula Community Foundation

Bruce Myers
Executive Director, Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula

Sister David Ann Niski
Executive Director, Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation

Jim Probsdorfer
Retired, Newport News Shipbuilding

Dr. Rosanne Walters
Deputy Director, Department of Human Services, City of Newport News

Bryan Witt
Development Manager, W. M. Jordan Company