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## INTRODUCTION

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham took office in 2019 committed to providing students in New Mexico with a high-quality education that helps them reach their full potential. Driven by the fact that New Mexico ranks near the bottom on every indicator associated with a child’s ability to access a quality education,<sup>1</sup> Governor Grisham has created a new vision for the New Mexico educational system. This vision focuses on supporting disadvantaged and traditionally underserved populations with the goal of improving key educational outcomes across the state, including reading proficiency. *A New Direction for New Mexico Schools* outlines an 11-point plan for improving the state’s educational system with a primary goal of addressing the large achievement gaps in reading and math between New Mexico students and their peers nationally. The plan includes initiatives to expand access to high-quality early care and education (ECE), ensure equal opportunities to prepare every student for success, and promote families as substantive partners in their children’s education.

Governor Grisham’s vision; new leadership at the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED); and clear, aligned, and actionable steps outlined in the state’s *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) plan, PED Strategic Plan (*Kids First, New Mexico Wins*), and state comprehensive literacy plan (*The New Mexico Statewide Literacy Framework*) lay the groundwork to achieve an equitable education system. Collectively, these efforts will close literacy gaps between disadvantaged

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<sup>1</sup> Education Week. (2019). *Quality Counts: Grading the States Chance for Success*.

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/01/16/highlights-report-new-mexico.html>

children and their more advantaged peers within New Mexico, and New Mexico children and children nationally.

New Mexico’s proposed Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) program is a critical component of the state’s educational reform efforts. CLSD funding will allow for additional capacity and a stronger infrastructure at PED to support local literacy efforts and district-level Literacy Teams in local education agencies (LEAs) with the highest populations of disadvantaged children across the state.<sup>2</sup> At the state level, the allocation from the grant (five percent) will be used to assess literacy needs statewide; revise the state’s comprehensive literacy plan; update a compendium of evidence-based<sup>3</sup> literacy practices, activities, and interventions; develop a compendium of evidence-based family literacy strategies; and implement a Request for Applications (RFA) process to select subgrantees. The state funding will also be used to monitor the subgrantees and provide professional development and support as part of a continuous improvement process. PED will consult and collaborate with the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD), which administers the state’s child care licensing and assistance programs,<sup>4</sup> leverage the work being conducted as part of the state’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B–5) program, and utilize the added capacity of the state’s new Early

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<sup>2</sup> “Disadvantaged children” is defined as children who are served by rural LEAs, are English learners, who were previously in foster care, have disabilities, or children living in poverty.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence-based is defined as having either strong, moderate, or promising evidence using the criteria outlined in the CLSD application.

<sup>4</sup> The New Mexico PreK program is currently administered by PED.

Childhood Education and Care Department (which will begin operations in 2020). The attached letter from Governor Grisham confirms her commitment to the project.

Subgrantees will allocate funding to ECE programs and schools serving the highest need and most underserved groups; adhere to the funding allocations in the application; and propose projects of sufficient quality, size, scope, and duration to meet the state's CLSD performance goals (see Project Design). District literacy teams will support comprehensive literacy instruction by building a vertical continuum of evidence-based literacy strategies and interventions for ECE programs and schools; provide high-quality professional development as part of a continuous improvement model; and support family literacy strategies. Each district will create a local literacy plan that aligns with the revised state literacy plan to ensure it is grounded in best practice. Districts will also conduct local needs assessments to ensure that the local literacy plan addresses specific community needs and strengths. The local literacy plans will be central to LEAs' applications to be subgrantees for CLSD funding. These state and subgrantee-level activities and their implementation are discussed in detail in the following sections. The grant funding amount and duration have been chosen to ensure the services are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to meet the grant's performance goals.

PED has the leadership and organizational infrastructure to successfully implement a high-quality management plan for the grant (see Quality Management Plan). PED has ambitious goals for the grant that are aligned with the performance measures outlined in the federal notice and consistent with the targets set in the state's ESSA plan. PED expects to see a significant impact on state literacy outcomes driven by the estimated 48,000 participating children in at least 11 geographically diverse communities that have the highest percentages of children reading and writing below grade level.

## **SELECTION CRITERION (a): NEED FOR PROJECT**

There is no state more in need of evidence-based practices, activities, strategies, and interventions that advance literacy development than New Mexico. The state has some of the highest percentages of disadvantaged children and traditionally underserved children (as defined by the grant application) in the nation. **Table 1** provides the percentages of children defined as disadvantaged and underserved for New Mexico compared to national percentages. New Mexico's percentages are significantly higher than the nation for most groups. Nearly one in three children birth to 18 are in poverty in New Mexico (29.1 percent), which is nearly nine percentage points higher than the national percentage (20.3 percent). New Mexico also has nearly double the percentage of children who are English learners compared to the national percentage (18.8 percent compared to 9.6 percent), a slightly higher percentage of children with disabilities (16.1 percent compared to 14 percent), and a similar percentage of children in foster care. New Mexico has a large percentage of children (31.2 percent) in schools eligible for the Small, Rural School Achievement Program or Rural and Low-Income Program—greater than the percentage of children in rural areas nationally (22.3 percent).

In addition to having high percentages of disadvantaged and traditionally underserved children, New Mexico also has some of the lowest reading proficiency scores in the country. **Table 2** provides New Mexico's 2017 scores on the Grade 4 and 8 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) overall and by specific subgroups. New Mexico children scored lower than the national average by 13 points in Grade 4 and nine points in Grade 8. Furthermore,

**Table 1. Disadvantaged/Underserved Populations in New Mexico and Nationally<sup>5</sup>**

	<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>National</b>
<b>Disadvantaged Children</b>		
Children in Poverty*	142,793 (29.1%)	14.7 million (20.3%)
English Learners	57,579 (18.8%)	~4.9 million (9.6%)
Children with Disabilities**	49,211 (16.1%)	7.3 million (14%)
<b>Other Underserved Children</b>		
Rural***	95,516 (31.2%)	16.1 million (22.3%)
Children in Foster Care****	2,610 (0.5%)	436,011 (0.6%)

a smaller proportion of students are reading at or above the basic level<sup>6</sup> in New Mexico than nationally (54 percent versus 67 percent in Grade 4 and 66 percent versus 75 percent in Grade 8).

Equally troubling is that subgroups of disadvantaged/underserved children do not do as well as New Mexico children overall or when compared to similar children nationally. Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native children, as well as children receiving free and reduced lunch (FRL) in New Mexico have lower scores and a lower percentage of children at or above the basic level than children in New Mexico overall and their counterparts nationally. For example, the

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<sup>5</sup> \*2017 ACS 5-year estimates. *American FactFinder* \*\*IDEA Section 618 Data Products. *US Department of Education*. \*\*\*Small, Rural School Achievement Program, Rural and Low-Income Program. *US Department of Education*; 2018 District Report Cards. *NM PED* and *Measuring America: Change in Rural and Urban Population Size*. \*\*\*\* Children in Foster Care by Age Group. *KIDS COUNT Data Center*.

<sup>6</sup> Basic level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

percentage of Native American/Alaskan Native children in Grade 4 reading at or above the basic level in New Mexico is 15 percentage points lower than Native American/Alaskan Native children nationally (34 percent compared to 49 percent) and 11 percentage points lower for Grade 8 (52 percent compared to 63 percent). This trend also exists for Hispanic children and children receiving FRL. These subgroups of children not only do poorly when compared to New Mexico children

**Table 2. New Mexico and National NAEP Grade 4/8 Reading Scores and %  $\geq$  Basic, 2017**

	4 <sup>th</sup> grade		8 <sup>th</sup> grade	
	New Mexico	Nation (public)	New Mexico	Nation (public)
<b>All</b>	208 (54%)*	221 (67%)	256 (66%)	265 (75%)
<b>White</b>	225 (71%)	231 (78%)	271 (81%)	274 (83%)
<b>Black</b>	-- <sup>7</sup>	205 (50%)	--	248 (59%)
<b>Hispanic</b>	204 (50%)	208 (54%)	251 (62%)	255 (66%)
<b>Asian</b>	--	241 (84%)	--	283 (87%)
<b>American Indian/ Alaskan Native</b>	189 (34%)	203 (49%)	242 (52%)	253 (63%)
<b>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</b>	--	210 (56%)	--	254 (64%)
<b><math>\geq</math> Two Races</b>	--	226 (72%)	--	270 (80%)
<b>FRL</b>	200 (47%)	208 (54%)	251 (61%)	253 (64%)
<b>NO FRL</b>	232 (78%)	236 (82%)	269 (79%)	277 (86%)

<sup>7</sup> Empty cells indicate that that the sample of that subpopulation was not large enough to calculate an accurate score/percentage.

overall but are also behind children of similar demographics and economic circumstances nationally.

It is important to note that, with the exception of children in rural areas, similar trends exist in New Mexico between subgroups and children overall when examining 4-year-olds using the state's Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT) and among children in Grades 5, 8, and 9–12 using the state's English Language Arts assessment. These trends can be seen in **Table 3** in the next section as part of the performance goals discussion.

In addition to the outcome data, there are significant needs within New Mexico's educational system. In 2018, the weaknesses in services, financing, and educational opportunities were so profound that a lawsuit was filed asserting that the state was not providing a sufficient and uniform system of education to all New Mexican children as guaranteed by the New Mexico State Constitution. Last July, in the case *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico*, the Court ruled that the state failed to provide students—especially low-income students, Native American students, English learner students, and students with disabilities—with the programs and services necessary for them to learn and thrive, and that the state failed to sufficiently fund programs and services. As evidence for the ruling, the presiding judge pointed to the low proficiency rates in reading and the fact that almost 50% of students who attend college need remedial courses.

In the 2019 legislative session, the legislature increased education funding, which included salary increases for teachers and funding for programs and services for Native American students and students at risk of failing because of low family income, English proficiency, or disability. This funding increase is vital for the state's educational infrastructure which has been chronically under-funded for over a decade (New Mexico ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> nationally in per-pupil funding.) The funding to support a stronger overall infrastructure at the LEA level (e.g., attracting and retaining

effective teachers) will support stronger implementation of the literacy initiatives proposed as part of the state’s CLSD program. The quality of the project services, as well as the duration, size, and scope of the subgrants discussed in the following sections are designed to address these gaps and promote literacy proficiency given the dramatic need in the state. PED will conduct a literacy needs assessment as part of its CLSD grant to ensure the agency has a full understanding of the implications of these issues for parents and children as well as for the current efforts of potential subgrantees to advance comprehensive pre-literacy and literacy instruction.

### **SELECTION CRITERION (b): QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN**

#### ***Goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project***

The overall goal of New Mexico’s CLSD grant is to improve the preliteracy skills of children under age 5 and significantly increase the percentage of elementary, middle, and high-school students meeting the state’s language and literacy standards. Specifically, the project services and implementation plan outlined in the sections that follow are designed to: (1) Support early language and literacy skills for children birth to age 5; (2) Increase the number of children reading on grade level by the end of third grade; (3) Boost reading proficiency for students in grades 4–12; and (4) Improve early literacy and literacy outcomes for disadvantaged/traditionally underserved children and students across the birth through grade 12 (B–12) educational continuum.

**Table 3** below provides the project goals aligned with the performance measures of the CLSD program. LEAs who receive a CLSD subgrant will provide local goals in their proposals that align with state goals. Goals will be set for participating children overall and for specific groups of children important to the state and the CLSD program, and will align with the English Language Arts (ELA) goals outlined as part of the state’s ESSA plan and the state literacy framework.

**Table 3. CLSD Language Arts Achievement Goals: Baseline, Mid- Grant and End of Grant<sup>8</sup>**

	Subgroup	Baseline (2018)	Mid -Grant (2021)	End of Grant (2024)
<b>All</b>	4-year-olds	73%	80%	85%
	Grade 5	31%	58%	79%
	Grade 8	29%	58%	80%
	Grades 9–11	35%	68%	92%
<b>Econ. Disadvantaged</b>	4-year-olds	33%	50%	70%
	Grade 5	25%	55%	78%
	Grade 8	23%	51%	72%
	Grades 9–11	27%	62%	88%
<b>Disabilities</b>	4-year-olds	29%	50%	70%
	Grade 5	9%	49%	80%
	Grade 8	10%	49%	65%
	Grades 9–11	7%	50%	82%
<b>Rural</b>	4-year-olds	15%	25%	40%
	Grade 5	35%	62%	81%
	Grade 8	35%	62%	82%
	Grades 9–11	42%	72%	89%
<b>Foster Care</b>	4-year-olds	3%	25%	40%
	Grade 5	14%	31%	43%
	Grade 8	10%	50%	70%
	Grades 9–11	15%	33%	46%
<b>English Learners</b>	4-year-olds	35%	50%	70%
	Grade 5	9%	49%	83%
	Grade 8	7%	44%	69%
	Grades 9–11	6%	42%	66%

<sup>8</sup>% of 4-year-olds scoring “Accomplished” on oral language on the Early Childhood Observational Assessment; other data from Spring 2018 NM Standards-Based Assessment for ELA proficiency.

Progress toward goals will be evaluated each year as part of the state and local continuous improvement process described below. The goals for CLSD take into account the baseline statistics of New Mexico children and students, as well as quality, scope, and intensity of the project services funded through the grant.

### ***Continuous improvement***

Assessment, progress monitoring, and data-driven decision making are essential components of New Mexico's current statewide comprehensive literacy plan (see Quality of Project Services). To achieve CLSD goals, PED will provide performance feedback and support continuous improvement at both the local and state levels. Local CLSD subgrantees will engage in continuous improvement as they work toward the goals in their local literacy plan, their CLSD subgrantee application, and their 90-day NM DASH (Data, Accountability, Sustainability, and High Achievement) plan.<sup>9</sup> Performance data will be collected through multiple sources and used for continuous improvement, tailoring professional development, suggesting literacy interventions, and other supports to ensure progress toward performance goals.

PED will monitor subgrantee progress using a number of data sources.<sup>10</sup> Subgrantees not showing progress toward performance goals will receive additional technical assistance (TA) to develop/strengthen approaches for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a school, as well as

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<sup>9</sup> NM DASH is a required web-based action planning tool designed to support school improvement by identifying evidence-based interventions for the school year. LEAs design two 90-day plans at the beginning and middle of the year to support increased achievement, which includes literacy.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the data source discussed below, other sources include teacher effectiveness data (NMTEACH), student achievement data, and NM Report Card data.

provide districts with the knowledge, skills, and tools to assess these conditions. As part of the TA, subgrantees will complete a self-assessment and participate in a Collaborative Conversation<sup>11</sup> so PED can better understand school needs and the conditions under which the state activities of the CLSD grant can be successful. PED will help the district identify patterns and trends to prioritize support, including partnering with principals on staffing decisions, scheduling, budgeting, targeted professional development, and other operational issues.

PED will engage in a continuous improvement process at the state-level to inform decision-making and improve CLSD implementation. PED will examine FOCUS continuous improvement plans, Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) data, student achievement data, teacher effectiveness data, and NM Report Card data on an annual basis. PED will also examine assessment data and NM DASH data. PED will use this data to inform professional development offerings and determine which schools will need to complete a District Self-Assessment and receive targeted TA. In addition, PED will require each subgrantee to maintain a CLSD Body of Evidence (BOE) that provides documentation of progress in meeting grant requirements (e.g., student data, etc. submitted in a quarterly report). The BOE will be used to understand specific interventions, practices, and strategies that worked for specific populations across the state. PED will monitor 40-, 80- and 120-day counts of student subgroups to ensure sufficient levels of disadvantaged students are being served throughout the grant period.

FOCUS continuous improvement. ECE programs engage in continuous improvement through FOCUS—the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System. Early childhood programs engage

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<sup>11</sup> The Collaborative Conversation involves a small team (typically three to four) of PED members and district leadership, who conduct a two-hour visit to the district.

in a self-assessment of their quality; implement planned changes and improvements based on the self-assessment; measure the effectiveness of the changes and improvements; and make adjustments as necessary. ECE programs participating in the CLSD grant will document this continuous improvement process within the planning template of the elementary school's NM DASH 90-day plan. As part of the collaboration with ECE programs, at least one goal in the NM DASH elementary school plans must address early literacy. Early childhood programs will monitor literacy outcomes using one of the state's recommended assessment tools and have a team that meets regularly to reflect, track, and document action plan progress. Program staff will integrate successful practices and consider revisions, modifications, and additions to the plan to make course corrections as needed.

MLSS data. CLSD subgrantees will utilize MLSS, New Mexico's adaptation of the Response to Intervention Framework. MLSS is a comprehensive framework for educators to organize their schools and school systems to support student learning. MLSS delivers a range of "layered" **interventions** based on data-informed student needs, and uses **progress monitoring for impact** to determine whether specific types of high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction and interventions are effective. Supports are organized in three layers: universal interventions (all students); targeted interventions (some students); and intensive interventions (few students). The MLSS framework will be used by CLSD subgrantees to support comprehensive literacy instruction—addressing both CLSD requirements to differentiate instruction and to provide continuous improvement. Every student defined as a special population under ESSA and State law, which include the disadvantaged and underserved populations identified in the CLSD application—not just those in special education or who are gifted—receive core instruction and interventions and services at all layers, if needed, to attain the desired level of achievement.

CLSD monitoring. PED will conduct site visits at least two times per year to each site. To support continuous improvement, a Feedback Report will document whether the subgrantee is: (1) implementing the model with fidelity and in alignment with the state/local literacy plans; (2) meeting performance goals for key groups of children; and (3) expending CLSD resources in an efficient and impactful way. Through this monitoring process, PED can ensure subgrantees are using differentiated instruction and evidenced-based interventions and professional development.

### **SELECTION CRITERION (c): QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN**

To successfully achieve the project goals, the state has developed an implementation plan describing how it will carry out the project activities. The project consists of three phases: (1) A start-up phase, where the state-level infrastructure will be enhanced to support LEAs in implementing a continuum of evidence-based literacy interventions and family literacy practices; (2) An initial implementation phase, where PED engages in a subgranting process that gives priority to the LEAs with highest need, ensures the appropriate allocation of grant funds, and makes certain that LEAs will implement evidenced-based literacy strategies and high-quality professional development; and, (3) A monitoring and continuous improvement phase. **Table 4** outlines the activities, indicators of success, timeline, and responsible party for the activities. The activities are described in the Quality of Project Services section.

The project will be staffed by a CLSD Manager and two Literacy Specialists (see position descriptions). The anticipated start date of the project is September 1, 2019 given that the Notice Inviting Applications indicates that grants would be awarded in late August 2019. New Mexico has an RFA process currently in place which will allow PED to expedite sub-granting and make awards available by December 2019 with implementation beginning in January 2020.

**Table 4. High-Quality Plan<sup>12</sup> for CLSD Activities**

<b>Phase I: Strengthen state-level infrastructure to support CLSD subgrantees</b>			
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>
<b>P1.1</b> Hire CLSD Manager and Two Literacy Specialists	Well-qualified individuals hired for positions	Sept 2019	Program Manager  Literacy, Humanities, and Early Childhood
<b>P1.2</b> Conduct needs assessment gap analysis, survey, and Town Hall meetings	Feedback incorporated into the revised NM state Literacy Plan Framework	Sept-Oct 2019	Program Manager
<b>P1.3</b> Establish PED literacy advisory team appointed by Deputy Secretary for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	Advisory committee with clearly defined roles and expectations	Sept 2019	Deputy Secretary and Program Manager

<sup>12</sup> Financial resources to complete these activities are described in detail in the Budget Narrative.

<b>P1.4</b> Establish an CLSD webpage on the PED site	Website to contain Compendia, <i>Statewide Literacy Framework</i> , CLSD grant application, FAQs, other relevant grant information	Oct 2019	Program Manager/CLSD Manager
<b>P1.5</b> Develop CLSD RFA and peer review process	RFA that includes elements outlined in sub-granting section of Selection Criterion (d) of application	Oct 2019	CLSD Manager
<b>P1.6</b> Update Compendium of Evidence-Based Literacy Programs & Practices	Compendium that will facilitate subgrantees' selection of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate B–12 interventions	Oct 2019	CLSD Manager, Literacy Specialists with support of experts
<b>P1.7</b> Create Compendium of Family Literacy Programs & Practices	Compendium that will facilitate subgrantees' selection of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate B–12 interventions	Oct/Nov 2019	CLSD Manager (M), Literacy Specialists with support of experts
<b>Phase II: Prepare LEAs for Sub-granting Process and Implement Request for Applications</b>			
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>
<b>P2.1</b> Develop RFA TA trainings	Trainings designed to build local capacity to apply for and implement CLSD programs	Oct 2019	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists

<b>P2.2</b> Conduct virtual RFA trainings, technical support webinars, and office hours to support LEAs.	Well-informed potential subgrantee applicants that are prepared to apply for CLSD funding	Oct-Nov 2019	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P2.3</b> Potential subgrantee applicants conduct local needs assessment and update local literacy plans	Subgrantees understand local literacy needs which are incorporated into local literacy plans and align with state plan	Oct-Nov 2019	LEAs with TA from CLSD and Literacy Specialists
<b>P2.4</b> Grant reviewer training	Training that prepares reviewers to conduct a transparent, rigorous, thorough review of applications	Nov 2019	CLSD Manager
<b>P2.5</b> Release RFA	RFA disseminated; FAQ posted on CLSD Web Page	Nov 2019	PED communications
<b>P2.6</b> Peer Review of applications	Strongest applications are selected	Nov 2019	Peer review committee under supervision of CLSD Manager
<b>P2.7</b> CLSD subgrants awarded based on expert review	Approximately 11 subgrants awarded totaling [REDACTED] and serving approximately 48,000 children	By Dec 31, 2019	CLSD Manager

<b>P2.8</b> CLSD press release of awardees	Awarded subgrantees recognized publicly	Jan 2020	PED communications
<b>Phase III: Provide ongoing implementation support for CLSD subgrantees using a continuous improvement process</b>			
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Party Responsible</b>
<b>P3.1</b> Hold CLSD kick-off meeting for successful CLSD grantees	Subgrantees receive initial TA on implementation, grant requirements, and connect to state supports	Jan 2020	CLSD Manager
<b>P3.2</b> Establish online community of practice with PD modules	Subgrantees required to participate in online modules helping teachers, district and school leaders, and coaches support language and literacy learning	Jan-Feb 2020	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.3</b> Literacy Specialists conducts needs assessment to inform professional development plan	Comprehensive review of B–12 state PD offerings, online survey to subgrantees about needs, and recommendations made about PD plan	Mar 2020	Literacy Specialists

<b>P3.4</b> Set calendar and topics for regional workshops and professional development	CLSD professional development events calendar aligned with other state initiatives sent to all grantees	Jun 2020	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.5</b> Develop implementation and Body of Evidence reporting template	Template that builds off state's current reporting requirements and systems	Aug/Sept 2020	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.6</b> Develop CLSD Site Visit Protocol	Protocol to assess implementation fidelity and alignment to state literacy plan	Sept/Oct 2020	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.7</b> Desktop monitoring	Ongoing monitoring and contact to ensure fidelity to CLSD proposal and fiscal accountability	Oct 2020 forward	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.8</b> CLSD Site Visits	Site visits to monitor implementation and assist with CPI efforts and fiscal accountability	Nov/Dec 2020 forward	CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists
<b>P3.9</b> Subgrantee quarterly reports	Analysis of student outcome data submitted to PED to assess progress toward local and state literacy goals	Dec 2020 forward	LEA subgrantees

## **SELECTION CRITERION (d): QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES**

New Mexico's CLSD proposal contains a number of high-quality activities, interventions, and initiatives designed to meet the performance goals of the project. These project services were designed with the appropriate quality, intensity, and duration to maximize the impact on children who are disadvantaged and traditionally underserved in the state, including children below 200 percent of poverty, children who are English learners, children with disabilities, children in rural areas, and children who are currently or were in the foster care system. The major activities and initiatives are described below. The implementation of these project services, including timing, staffing, milestones, and anticipated deliverables, are discussed in the next section.

### ***Needs assessment***

An important initial step in the state's CLSD project will be to conduct a statewide comprehensive literacy needs assessment that analyzes literacy needs across the state and in high-need early childhood programs and schools. As part of the state's collaboration with CYFD, PED will utilize and leverage findings from the state's PDG B-5 needs assessment and strategic planning process. PED has a representative on the state Early Childhood Advisory Council, which provides a strong connection to the Council as the needs assessment takes place.

To determine literacy needs in New Mexico, PED will conduct a gap analysis of existing literacy needs assessment data including data from the PDG B-5 grant, data from stakeholder meetings providing input on the revision of New Mexico's comprehensive literacy plan, and NM DASH data (which includes a six-step needs assessment that informs local program improvement efforts). Using the results of this gap analysis, PED will create a literacy **needs assessment survey** to be distributed to LEAs and early childhood programs across the state. Finally, the state will conduct **town hall meetings** to hear directly from parents and other stakeholders about the literacy

needs of children; resources needed for families to better support literacy in their homes; and issues with current literacy interventions, assessments, and teaching. The questions designed for the survey and town hall meetings will focus on understanding gaps in literacy proficiency of the target groups for the CLSD grant, access to effective teachers, and the relevance and effectiveness of the state's current literacy plan. The information will be used to revise the state literacy plan, inform the state activities and subgranting process, highlight specific areas of need, and support the continuous improvement process.

### ***State comprehensive literacy instruction plan***

*The New Mexico Statewide Literacy Framework ECE–12*, the state's comprehensive literacy instruction plan, is a foundational component of CLSD project. The plan is based on the premise that every child in New Mexico can succeed regardless of whether they are disadvantaged or are part of a traditionally underserved population. The plan supports the implementation of the scientific evidence about what schools can do to teach literacy, including group size, instructional time, and materials to effectively support reading instruction. It is in direct alignment with needs and goals articulated in New Mexico's ESSA Plan and PED's Strategic Plan 2017–2020. The plan provides clear guidance on the components of a comprehensive literacy system to build, implement, and strengthen literacy instruction. It is designed to strategically address the persistent achievement gap for New Mexico students by implementing evidence-based practices, and establishing a consistent voice and sense of urgency around literacy.

The plan is comprised of five critical components of an effective literacy program, rooted in a foundation of evidence-based programs and practices and a continuous improvement model. These components are: **(1) Informed and Effective Leadership:** Leaders at the state, tribe, district, building and classroom levels collaborate to build shared ownership and direction toward

sustaining an effective approach to literacy. **(2) Evidence-based Instruction and Interventions:** Literacy curriculum and learning materials must be evidence-based and aligned to rigorous state standards. These materials are differentiated to meet individual student needs and implemented within a strong system of professional development and fidelity supports. **(3) Comprehensive Assessment System:** Literacy needs are identified using valid and reliable screening, formative, diagnostic, and outcome measures to target instruction and monitor progress. **(4) Professional Development:** Coordinated professional development activities and resources enhance literacy learning for students, educators, and providers; and **(5) Family Engagement:** Partnerships with families and communities are implemented to support literacy efforts and initiatives.

The state's comprehensive literacy plan will serve as a critical underpinning for successful implementation of New Mexico's CLSD grant. The plan will serve as a guide for the development of local literacy plans and CLSD subgrantee applications. In addition, implementation rubrics for each of the five critical components will play a key role in monitoring the fidelity of implementation of subgrantees' CLSD plans.

In the first year of the CLSD grant, the PED Town Halls conducted as part of the needs assessment will engage teachers, administrators, families, and community leaders in meaningful conversations about their experience with the plan and ask for suggested revisions to ensure that it is meeting the needs of families and CLSD subgrantees. The plan will be revised in light of this input and to ensure that it is fully meeting all of the components of a comprehensive literacy instruction plan as defined by the CLSD program.

### ***Compendium of evidence-based literacy interventions/Family literacy strategies***

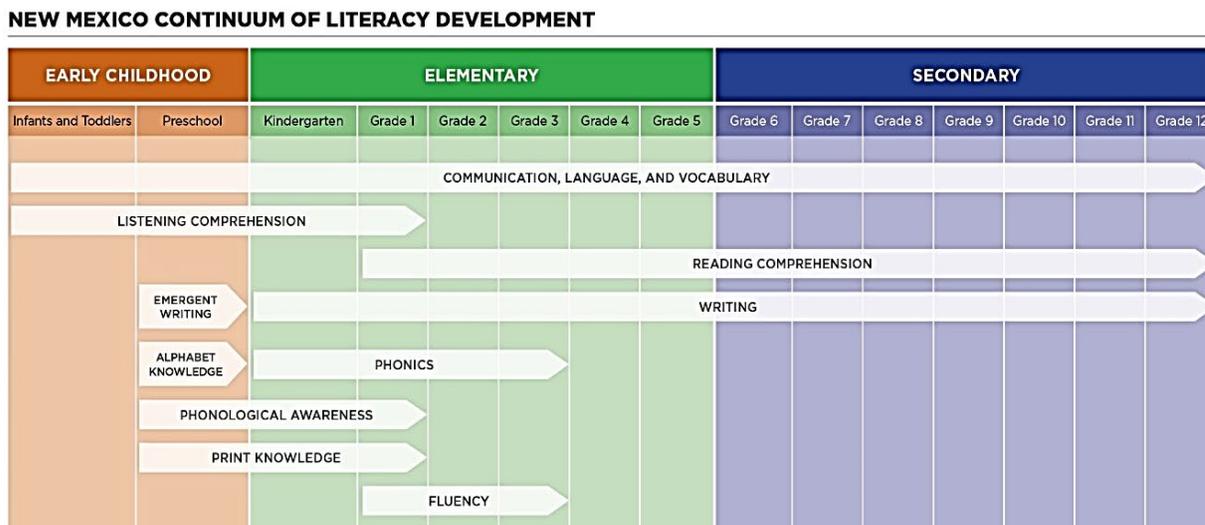
To ensure that CLSD subgrantee applicants are using programs, practices, and professional development that conform to the highest standards of evidence, PED will update its comprehensive list of evidence-based literacy interventions. PED will update the Compendium using a rubric based on

the following criteria: 1) meets the definition of *strong, moderate evidence, or promising evidence*; 2) promotes age-appropriate instruction across a B–12 continuum of literacy development, and 3) supports differentiated instruction based on student needs. To be included in the Compendium, each intervention will need to pass through all three “screens”. A similar Compendium will be developed for family literacy practices.

To ensure that selected programs meet the appropriate level of evidence, PED will consult the Institute of Education Sciences’ What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) for any updates since the development of the original Compendium. PED will expand on this list of interventions by reviewing other resources such as the Child Trends What Works database for updated information. This will be especially important for obtaining evidence-based interventions for infants and toddlers as the WWC only includes interventions for preschool and older. Expert reviewers will determine whether there are any gaps and seek out other programs and practices from credible entities (e.g., Zero to Three, Early Head Start, and the LENA Research Foundation). For the family literacy strategies, PED will consult with numerous organizations and experts in family literacy, including the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, the National Foundation for Family Learning, and Dr. Barbara A. Wasik (author of *The Handbook of Family Literacy*).

In addition to having promising, moderate, or strong evidence demonstrating effectiveness, it will also be important that the interventions listed in the Compendium represent the range of literacy skills that develop from B–12. PED will ensure that there are sufficient options for subgrantees to choose from in the key areas for each age group as outlined in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1. Continuum of Literacy Development**



***Process to determine subgrant awards***

The CLSD subgrantee application requirements will be met through a thorough and transparent RFA process. New Mexico views the subgranting process as an opportunity to engage in substantive discussions with potential subgrantees about the goals of the grant, best practices and evidence-based B–12 literacy interventions and family literacy strategies, and the CLSD priority groups and schools. PED will provide TA and other supports in a uniform and consistent manner across the state to ensure subgrantee applicants have the information they need to submit high-quality applications. TA and supports for the RFA process include:

TA supporting proposal preparation. PED will host virtual meetings, webinars, and TA office hours to publicize the RFA and provide TA in advance of the subgrantee application process. The TA will give potential subgrantees the opportunity to learn about: (1) The two Compendia and the criteria by which the programs and practices were selected for inclusion; (2) Interpreting research on literacy programs and interventions, including how to determine whether a program has a strong, moderate, or promising level of evidence and consideration of the relevant evidence for their specific population of children; (3) The revised *New Mexico State Literacy Framework* and

how to develop a local literacy plan that is aligned with the state Framework and based on findings from a local needs assessment.

These TA meetings will also support the creation and coordination of local literacy teams. The goal of the TA process is to support the coordination of literacy instruction within each LEA, build the capacity of LEAs as informed consumers of research, support stronger CLSD subgrant proposals, and create a more robust foundation for implementation among those entities that are awarded an CLSD subgrant.

RFA process and selection criteria. The CLSD RFA will be designed to reward applicants who propose high-quality, evidence-based B–12 literacy support systems that benefit the greatest number of disadvantaged and underserved children. Even for those LEAs who are ultimately not awarded a grant, the process will provide a solid plan to support literacy development. Additionally, the RFA will include questions, requirements, and assurances that will facilitate the independent peer review panel in differentiating the applicants that have the greatest capacity; most promising plans (size, scope, duration, quality, and intensity); strongest use of evidence-based practice; greatest impact on disadvantaged children; and appropriate allocation of funds (no less than 15 percent for children birth to kindergarten entry; 40 percent for K–Grade 5; and 40 percent for Grades 6–12) .

The CLSD RFA for subgrantees will be structured as follows:

### **Section I: Eligibility**

New Mexico school districts and/or charter schools may apply on behalf of individual schools or a collaborative group (consortium) of schools or districts. To prioritize areas serving large numbers of disadvantaged children, applicants will receive priority for meeting one or more of the following criteria based on state averages: (1) at least 73.5% economically disadvantaged

children; (2) at least 13.6% limited English proficiency; and/or; (3) at least 15.3% receiving special education services. In addition, subgrantees will receive priority points if: (4) the LEA is eligible for the Small, Rural School Achievement Program or Rural and Low Income Program; and (5) the LEA has a high number of children in foster care.

The following age spans must be included in applicants' proposals: birth–preschool, elementary (grades K–5), middle school (grades 6–8), and high school (grades 9–12). Applicants are to select a feeder system that is likely to serve the same disadvantaged children as they progress through their education. To ensure a B–12 continuum, LEAs or consortiums must partner with early childhood providers that serve children birth to age 5 including center-based child care, family child care, state-funded pre-K, Early Head Start, Head Start, and/or home visiting programs.

## **Section II: Need and Capacity**

*a. Demonstration of need.* Given PED's objective to serve the greatest number of disadvantaged children with evidence-based literacy supports, need will be weighted heavily in the application process. Applicants will be asked to document the number of children ages birth through grade 12 who are at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support including: children living in poverty; children with disabilities; children who are English learners; infants and toddlers with developmental delays; children who are homeless; children in foster care; the percentage of students reading or writing below grade level; students who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma or are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time; and students who have been incarcerated.

*b. Demonstration of capacity.* Successful subgrantees will show a high level of need, but also a record of effectiveness in improving language and literacy development of children. The RFA will request LEA student reading data over the last 2 to 3 years with an explanation for any increase or

decrease in proficiency scores. Subgrantees will need to demonstrate sufficient capacity to deliver services and professional development. The applying entity must be able to establish effective partnerships for areas in which they lack specific capacity on their own to deliver services. If partnering with an external provider, the applicant must have a rigorous process for identifying, screening, selecting, matching, and evaluating external provider organizations that provide critical services to schools and complete PED's External Partner and Provider Information form.

### **Section III: Proposed Interventions**

*a. Coherent structure of B–12 literacy programs.* Each applicant must outline a comprehensive B–12 literacy plan for their service area. Applicants must specify the names of literacy interventions that will be used in different program options and for children of different ages ensuring coverage across the continuum depicted in Figure 1. They should discuss why these interventions were chosen over other options, the extent to which the interventions and practices are differentiated and developmentally appropriate, and the types of training and professional development that will be provided to ensure that literacy practices improve.

*b. Extent and relevance of evidence base.* Applicants should ensure that all proposed interventions meet the criteria for strong or moderate evidence. If an applicant decides on interventions outside of the Compendium, they must prove that their selected intervention (including those led by vendors or partners) meets the definitions of moderate or strong evidence. Applicants should also discuss the relevance of the evidence base to their proposed project and identified needs. For example, identifying whether a study's sample was representative of the district population or whether there are any anticipated barriers to implementation fidelity. If an intervention chosen is currently implemented in the district/school, the applicant must provide data indicating the effectiveness of the intervention.

*c. Educational choice.* Applicants will describe how they will provide an opportunity for a child or student to create a high-quality personalized path for learning that incorporates evidence-based activities in an educational setting that best meets the child’s needs.

*d. Continuous program improvement, professional development, and monitoring.* Applicants will describe their system for monitoring implementation by identifying metrics, feedback and observation structures to determine progress, recording evidence to know that a positive impact is occurring, and adjusting for accelerated progress and/or unanticipated barriers. Applicants will describe the high-quality professional development that will be provided to support the literacy and family literacy interventions and how the professional development will be responsive to data related to child progress.

*e. Timeline for implementation.* Subgrantee applicants should present a realistic and specific timeline for the implementation of services.

#### **Section IV: Alignment to Other Literacy Initiatives**

*a. Alignment to statewide literacy framework.* Applicants will describe how their proposed use of grant funding will align with each of these areas of the statewide literacy framework.

*b. Alignment to local literacy plan.* Applicants must also demonstrate how their proposed interventions align to their local literacy plan and its stated goals.

#### **Section V: Budget**

*a. Allocation of funds.* Applicants will provide a cost-effective budget that links costs to proposed activities. The budget and budget justification should outline the use of the grant funds and how the funding will be allocated across birth–age 5 (at least 15 percent), kindergarten through grade 5 (at least 40 percent), and middle and high-school students through grade 12 (at least 40 percent).

*b. Efficient use of funds.* Applicants should include information about leveraging funds with state or federal dollars (e.g., Title I) to maximize impact for students OR if the applicant is submitting a joint application with another district and/or charter school or a regional consortium, they should provide a description of how funds will be leveraged and how dollar efficiency will be increased by this partnership. Applicants should also ensure the funding is adequate and supplements, not supplants current funding.

## **Section VI: Assurances**

The applicant will commit to a set of district and/or charter school assurances to participate in the grant. This will include a written assurance to cooperate with a national evaluation of the CLSD program.

**Independent peer review process.** The team that reviews the subgrantee proposals is just as important as the RFA criteria in ensuring that the subgrantees chosen will be successful in meeting goals of the grant. Accordingly, a well-trained team of reviewers will be selected based on their expertise in evidence-based interventions and understanding of the needs of students and practitioners in the state. The panel will consist of individuals that have expertise or experience in language and literacy development, professional development, and research science. In addition, a former (or otherwise unbiased) practitioner who is familiar with how literacy interventions are used in practice and what supports are necessary to overcome challenges to implementation will be included on the peer review team.

Training for reviewers will be held prior to the application review process to ensure consistency in evaluating subgrant applications. During the review process, PED staff will be on-site and reviewers will use PED's Review and Rating Protocol and the Quality Scoring Guide. In order to maintain a transparent review process, the PED will publish the list of approved

subgrantees on the PED website as well as the procedures used to review and judge the applications. These activities will ensure that a pool of high-quality applications will be submitted, from which those that will serve the greatest number of disadvantaged students with evidence-based literacy interventions will be selected through a rigorous, transparent peer-review process.

The state-level professional development provided by the CLSD Manager and Literacy Specialists through the state continuous improvement model combined with professional development at the LEA-level to support the implementation of the comprehensive literacy instruction interventions and family literacy strategies will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to improve practice among the recipients of services.

## **COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES AND ASSURANCES**

### ***Competitive preference priorities***

New Mexico's proposed CLSD program addresses both competitive preference priorities. The program addresses family literacy (Priority 1) by creating a compendium of family literacy strategies and providing family literacy TA at the state level to support CLSD subgrantees in proposing and implementing family literacy strategies and activities. The RFA to select subgrantees will ask LEAs to address family literacy and will be scored on the quality of the plan to provide family literacy strategies.

The state's proposed CLSD program will also increase the proportion of students with access to educational choice who are served by rural LEAs, students with disabilities, English learners, and children previously in foster care (Priority 2) by offering priority points in the subgranting process for potential subgrantees proposing to serve these populations of children and provide opportunities for a child or student to create a high-quality personalized path for learning in an education setting that best meets the child's or student's needs.

### *Assurances*

The proposed CLSD program is also designed to assure that not less than 95 percent of the proposed funding is awarded in subgrants to eligible entities according to the funding allocations (see budget narrative and subgranting process); that priority will be given to eligible entities that serve children below 200 percent of poverty, are serving a high number/percent of high-need schools, and have geographic diversity (see eligibility and need sections of the subgranting process).