I.   Rhode Island's Need for the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant

<u>Background and Commitment for Improving Literacy for All Students</u>

As the nation's smallest state, Rhode Island (RI) educates approximately 143,000 students PK-12 in 60 local educational agencies (LEAs); 37 traditional school districts, 19 charter schools, and 4 state-operated schools. Within these institutions, 47% are classified as low-income, 15% are receiving special education services or are differently abled, and 9% are English Language Learners (ELLs) or multilingual learners (MLLs). Rhode Island has an estimated 850 licensed childcare providers, including early learning programs, family child care homes and public preschools that can service over 21,000 children birth through age 5. Over 780 of these programs participate in Bright Stars, Rhode Island's Quality Rating System (QRIS), with 103 achieving High Quality Rating Status. Rhode Island's early learning providers serve approximately 3,061 students ages 3-5 in Pre-K and Head Start programs, 1,400 children with disabilities, including behavioral health needs, in inclusive preschool settings, and has 12,217 slots for preschool children in center and home-based childcare programs.

RI strives to build an educational system that holds high expectations for all students, regardless of income or background; is responsive to students' individual needs; and pushes the boundaries of imagination and innovation to create better learning conditions for students and educators.[1] Governor Gina Raimondo and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) are deeply committed to ensuring literacy proficiency for ALL students. During her first term, the Governor reinstated the Children's Cabinet—a collaboration among ten state agencies to ensure children and youth ages 0-24 have the opportunities and services they need to thrive— and charged the Cabinet with doubling third grade reading proficiency by 2025. It is a top priority to advance the literacy skills for all students from birth through grade 12 by

supporting LEAs and early learning providers who are serving a high percentage of students with disadvantages. RI continues to build the capacity of its LEAs and early learning providers and establish supports for students and families in schools and early learning programs by implementing state programs as well as federal grants including Reading First, Race to the Top, Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, and Preschool Development Grants.Through this work, RIDE learned what it will take to move the needle on instruction and ultimately student literacy. RIDE's recently issued report, *A Unified Approach to Education, [attached in appendix]* established the need to focus on high quality curriculum, relevant and sustained professional learning, and shared leadership as the foundation to improve student literacy and achievement overall. Exciting progress has been made including supporting districts' adoption processes, revising professional learning standards, and introducing expected legislation that requires LEAs to adopt high quality curriculum no later than 2023.

Rhode Island's Needs Assessment: Identifying Weaknesses and Opportunities

When evaluating critical literacy needs in Rhode Island, we identified specific gaps or weaknesses in three different areas (1) High quality curriculum and instruction, (2) Supports and interventions for all students, and (3) Family and community engagement in literacy.

(1)High quality curriculum and instruction: K-12 Curriculum - Curriculum is a foundational factor in student academic success, but curricula currently implemented in RI varies dramatically in terms of quality. RIDE is committed to ensuring all students have access to a consistent curricular framework and use of high-quality instructional materials. In 2018, RIDE conducted a statewide curriculum survey asking all LEAs to verify what K-8 reading curriculum they are using and where they are in their adoption cycle. In order to support this process, RIDE worked with EdReports, an independent non-profit that trains educators to review ELA curriculum for

the purposes of selecting a high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum through the local adoption process. RIDE identified that only 8% of LEAs in RI are using high quality ELA curriculum that meet all EdReports quality ratings. The majority of LEAs in Rhode Island are using a mix of locally developed, unrated or low rated curriculum, which leads to a lack of coherence in structure, language and pedagogical approach and results in the inability to track progress across years in order to see growth. Rhode Island must broaden access to grade-aligned, high quality instructional materials for all our students to meet the equity goals of the RI Strategic Plan *[attached in appendix]*. As a result of using this data and working with LEAs to thoughtfully select and understand high-quality curriculum, eight LEAs are expected to adopt high-quality rated K-8 curriculum for ELA in the 2019-2020 school year. Despite this progress, there is still a long way to go and support from the CLSD grant would allow LEAs in Rhode Island to offer deep professional learning to educators following the adoption of high quality curriculum; without which we would only provide a technical solution to a more complex problem of practice.[2]

Preschool Curriculum: Rhode Island has one of the highest quality state pre-k programs in the country and is one of only three states that satisfy all 10 quality standards set by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIERR). Two of these standards reference high-quality curriculum and implementation; (1) programs must have comprehensive early learning and development standards that are horizontally and vertically aligned, supported, and culturally sensitive, and (2) there must be supports for curriculum implementation. RIDE also requires that state pre-k programs implement one of three selected high-quality curriculums. Currently, Rhode Island's state pre-k program is serving 1,080 4-year-olds, which is about 10% of the 4-year-olds in RI. Governor Raimondo committed to reaching universal pre-k with a Phase 1 expansion of

540 seats in the proposed FY20 budget. Using this strong foundation set by the state pre-k program, we want to provide similar support for other early learning providers to implement high-quality curriculum and instruction. *Instruction:* We recognize that high quality curriculum adoption will only be successful with curriculum specific, job-embedded, sustained Professional Learning (PL).[3] In the American Teacher Panel Survey from May 2018, 26% of RI teachers reported that the implementation of instructional materials has never been the focus of PL in the last 12 months and only 27% of RI teachers report that they collaborate with other teachers on implementation of main instructional materials once a week or more. Supporting LEAs and early learning providers in selecting high quality curriculum is only one step in the process; it must be paired with high quality, sustained PL to support curriculum implementation and teachers' instruction. The Regional Education Lab Southwest report of more than 1,300 studies on the impact of PL on student achievement, concludes that more than 14 contact hours of PL that is sustained over a period of time "showed a positive, significant effect on student achievement."[4]

(2) Supports and interventions for all students: The ambitious goals identified by the Governor and articulated in Rhode Island's plan to meet the Every Student Succeeds Act to reach 75% reading proficiency across all grade levels, requires focused comprehensive planning and deep professional learning on implementing evidence-based literacy practices and interventions. Based on spring 2018 results of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) English Language Arts (ELA) statewide assessment, only 33.7% of students in grades 3-8 meet or exceed expectations in ELA. The results also highlighted that there are large performance gaps in ELA proficiency for our target populations, which are students with disabilities or differently abled (4.6%), low income students (18.6%) and multilingual learners (MLLs) (5.6%).

*Graph 1: Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations RICAS ELA*
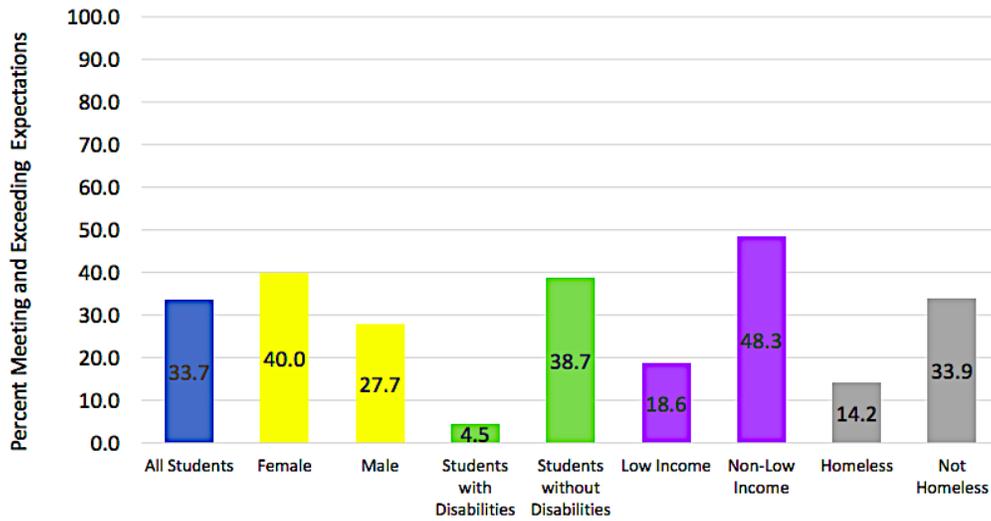
The RICAS results also highlight the disparity in literacy proficiency for our growing MLL population (see Graph 2). Annually assessed with the WIDA developed English Language Proficiency state assessment (ACCESS), MLLs data shows that students recently exited from services are not yet meeting expectations on a par with other students. The 2017 Casey Foundation "Race for the Results Policy Report" also identified Rhode Island as having the lowest index score for Latinx children in the country in terms of well-being, as measured by the overall disparities in opportunities and the barriers that exist for different groups of children.[5]

Graph 2: MLL Students - Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations RICAS ELA
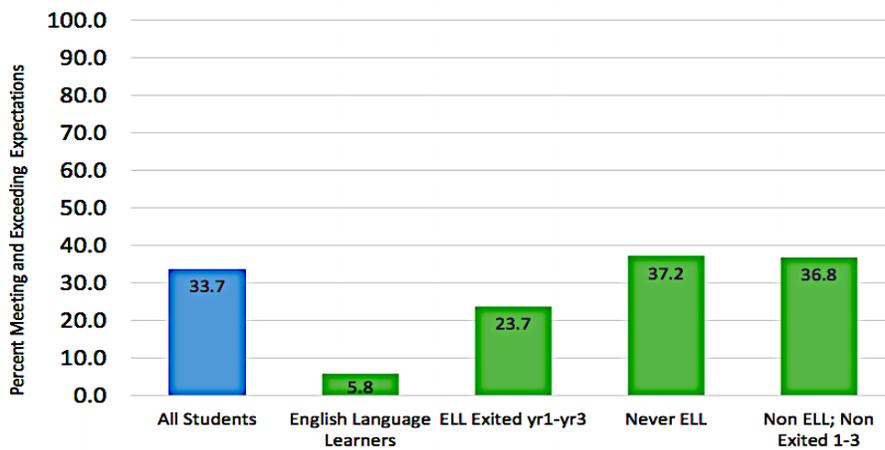
Based on the spring 2018 administration of the SAT, 50% of 11th grade students are meeting or exceeding expectations in English Language Arts. While this is an increase in performance in comparison to elementary and middle school students, large equity gaps remain for low income students, students with disabilities and English Learners/MLLs (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: MLL Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations on SAT
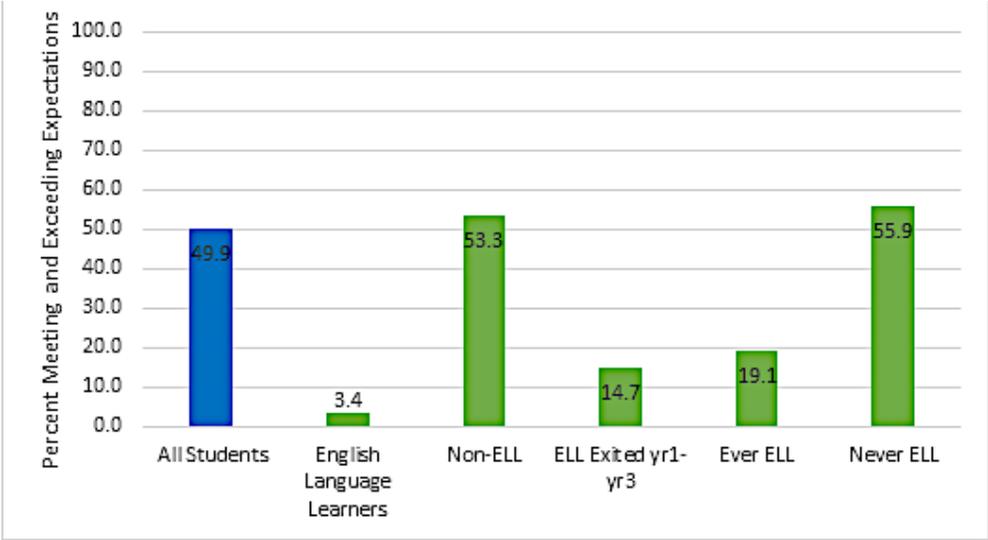
As the above data highlights, RI must do more to support all students in literacy development, especially our target populations. In 2017, RIDE began highlighting supports and resources of prominence regarding dyslexia research to help educators and families work together to better identify and support students who struggle with reading through the development of a comprehensive list of targeted strategies for students with dyslexia. RIDE also invested heavily in Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for over a decade as the method to support school-based teams in examining formative and summative academic and behavior data in determining where tiered interventions must be structured in order to address achievement gaps. Additionally, RIDE adopted the Data-Based Individualization (DBI) for systematically addressing the needs of students at tier III. It is expected that his grant would support school-based teams in implementing literacy interventions in an MTSS structure with DBI practices at tier III. RI needs

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to remove silos across administration, general education, multilingual learners and special education to increase local buy-in and improved coordination. Although training and coaching on research-based processes such as MTSS and DBI are disseminated by RIDE to LEAs, not all LEAs are implementing tiered models in the same way or with fidelity and as a result may not understand how tiered intervention fits into their school-level model or support structures. Administrators, general educators, multilingual educators, special educators and school support professionals would benefit from initiatives that bring clarity to how they may coordinate their roles in supporting effective tiered intervention implementation as part of a multi-tiered framework to support improved academic outcomes.

Family and Community Engagement: Family engagement is an essential component in a student's literacy development. Family involvement in education, especially literacy, can lead to increased student achievement, motivation, and self-esteem while having a positive impact on behavior and attendance in school.[6] Results from Survey Works, a statewide survey sent out annually to hear from Rhode Islanders directly about their experiences in our state's public schools, show that only 24% of families indicated that they become involved with and interact with their child's school and only 8% of families responded favorably to the amount of interactions they have in person with teachers at their child's school. RIDE must assist LEAs and early learning providers to implement evidence-based strategies to engage families in their child's literacy development, ensuring the literacy level and home language of the parents is incorporated into the strategy. One opportunity to provide this link is through Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs). LEAs craft PLPs for students who are reading below grade level to help them advance to grade-level proficiency *[PLP Guidance in appendix]*. The PLP is a cyclic, inclusive, and individualized problem-solving approach to documenting and planning instructional

supports and intervention strategies, which are continually guided by ongoing assessments. Currently, LEAs are required to notify families that their child has a PLP and work with families to review the PLP, but we know that implementation of this expectation is uneven. Through the CLSD grant, we will require LEAs to demonstrate how they engage families in their child's PLP process and use this opportunity to connect all families with evidence-based literacy strategies.

Rhode Island's Comprehensive Literacy Guidance

In 2010, RIDE received a Striving Readers Comprehensive Formula Grant to develop a comprehensive state literacy plan that would reflect scientific research about literacy development, interventions, and instruction to meet the needs of individual students and advance literacy proficiency. The comprehensive guidance explicitly articulates components of effective literacy instruction for all learners including a focus on early learners, differently abled and multilingual students. Adopted in 2012 by the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, the plan and policy articulated that all teachers, preK-12, are responsible for literacy instruction. The *Rhode Island Comprehensive Literacy Guidance* (RICLG) *[attached in appendix]* created a cohesive set of expectations for LEAs to follow in advancing evidence-based literacy efforts. In 2016-2017, RIDE collaborated with its Rhode Island Literacy Advisory Board to update and revise the RICLG to include research that is reflective and inclusive of reading instruction for all students, including those with dyslexia. Based on input from LEA leaders on addressing the needs of students with dyslexia, RIDE developed a self-reflection tool to assist LEAs/schools to evaluate their current curricular materials used for foundational skills instruction.

While the RICLG was widely disseminated to all LEAs and early learning centers, its practical application and use has not been fully realized. RIDE identified there is a need to develop a "RI

Literacy Blueprint" in order to provide a user-friendly template for LEAs and early learning providers to develop their own local literacy plan (LLP) aligned with the RICLG. The RI Literacy Blueprint will be designed to address expectations and bring coherence among leadership, curriculum (selection, adoption, and implementation), professional learning as well as targeted and intensive literacy supports for students so that there is a systematic approach to literacy in every LEA. This design will provide the framework for the development of LLPs. Funds from the CLSD will be used to develop this blueprint before the release of the subgrant RFP. The development and submission of a LLP will be a requirement for all CLSD subgrant applicants.

II. Rhode Island's CLSD Project Design

Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes*:* RI's proposed CLSD project has three main goals to be accomplished by the end of the five year grant timeframe:

1. Every subgrantee will be using a **high-quality curriculum** expertly to deliver coherent and aligned instruction to all students

2. Every subgrantee will use **evidence-based strategies and programs to support struggling readers** in order to narrow the achievement gap for our target populations in a cycle of continuous improvement

3. Every participating **family** will feel welcomed and able to support their students' literacy development

In order to achieve these three goals and track our progress throughout the grant period, we developed several objectives for each age subgroup of the grant; (A) Birth to Pre-k, (B) K to Grade 5, and (C) Grades 6 - 12. Every subgrantee will be required to collect baseline and annual data for each of these objectives. Progress targets are set on page 12 and 13.

A.Birth to Pre-K Objectives:

- A1: Increase the percentage of students with access to with high-quality curriculum, as defined in Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Standards (CECE) and/or Bright Stars QRIS
- A2: Increase the number of programs utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) to monitor student progress
- A3: Increase the number of families participating in pre-k evidence-based literacy activities

B. K – Grade 5 Objectives:

- B1: Increase the percentage of all students with access to high-quality curriculum
- B2: Increase the percentage of teachers reporting engagement with sustained and focused professional learning to support curriculum implementation
- B3: Improve the outcomes for students in targeted populations by increasing the number of students whose needs can be met in Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, improve literacy interventions at Tier 3, and increase outcomes for MLLs on ACCESS and RICAS
- B4: Increase the number of families engaged with their student's PLP

C. Grades 6 – 12 Objectives:

- C1: Increase the percentage of all students with access to high-quality curriculum
- C2: Increase the percentage of teachers reporting engagement with sustained and focused professional learning to support curriculum implementation
- C3: Increase the number of students who are engaged in an evidence-based literacy instruction and intervention

- C4: Increase the number of families engaged with their student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Through the CLSD project we will achieve the following outcomes by the end of the five year grant period:

- 40% increase of 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills on the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) assessment

- 37% increase of 5th grade students who meet or exceed literacy proficiency on RICAS

- 47% increase of 8th grade students who meet or exceed literacy proficiency on RICAS

- 25% increase in the number of high school students who meet or exceed literacy proficiency on SAT

- Decrease gap in achievement for differently abled, low income and MLL students at grades 3, 5, and 8 by 50%

Subgrant Plan including Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

RIDE will conduct a subgrant competition through an independent review process that incentivizes LEAs and early learning providers to implement evidence-based practices. RIDE will supply the RI Literacy Blueprint to assist applicants to develop their local literacy plan (LLP) during the RFP process. Sub-applicants will develop their high-quality LLP to align with the RI Literacy Blueprint. RIDE will require sub-applicants to base their application on a local needs assessment, demonstrating how the subgrant will enable them to reach high-need populations in a way that could not be done without the CLSD funds. Subgrantees must make the assurances required in the CLSD grant application as well as include the relevant CLSD "subgrantee application requirements." Each applicant will define the literacy needs and strategies for their LEA or early learning provider and request funding in each of the relevant

Project Service areas to implement the plan. In addition to giving priority to subgrantee applications as required by the CLSD, RIDE will also give competitive priority for applications that (1) Have activities for evidence-based family engagement in literacy activities and (2) Promote literacy interventions and strategies for RI target populations of multilingual learners, low income students, differently abled students and children in foster care (Note: according to HRSA's List of Rural Communities - Updated Census 2010, RI does not have any rural communities.) Subgrants have 2 levels that applicants must address in their application:

- Level 1: All applicants must include a LLP aligned with the RI Literacy Blueprint. They must also apply for assistance in procuring and/or implementing a high-quality curriculum

- Level 2: All applicants must address *Supports for All Students* and *Family and Community Engagement* evidence-based strategies aligned with the RICLG.

Subgrantees will be required to review and submit TSG data, RICAS data, ACCESS English language proficiency data, their screening tool(s) data and other local assessment system data annually. In addition to these assessments, all subgrantees must collect data for each objective outlined under the section *Project goals, objectives, and outcomes.* RIDE will assist each subgrantee in the creation and maintenance of a continuous improvement plan over the five-year grant period. Subgrantees will be required to participate in biannual reviews where RIDE will conduct site visits and support instructional rounds. These protocols will allow the team to utilize the objective data to assist in developing next steps to facilitate continued improvement. Below are the CLSD goals and proposed progress for the associated objectives across the five year grant period:

Goal 1: Every subgrantee will be using a **high-quality curriculum** expertly to deliver coherent and aligned instruction to all students					
Objectives	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Curriculum: A1, B1, C2	Set Baseline and increase 5%	At least 10% increase	At least 10% increase	At least 10% increase	100% adoption
Implementation: B2, C2	Set Baseline and 3% increase	5% increase	5% increase	5% increase	5% increase

Goal 2: Every subgrantee will use **evidence-based strategies and programs to support struggling readers** in order to narrow the achievement gap for our target populations in a cycle of continuous improvement					
Objectives	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A2, B3, C3	Set Baseline and 3% increase	5% increase	8% increase	10% increase	10% increase

Goal 3: Every participating **family** will feel welcomed and able to support their students literacy development					
Objectives	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

A3, B4, C4	Set Baseline and 5% increase	10% increase	10% increase	10% increase	10% increase

CLSD subgrant funds will be prioritized for the 11 communities in Rhode Island that have the highest proportion of low income students in the state; Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. These communities also represent 55% of RI's student population. 75% of the funds will be prioritized for these 11 high-needs communities and the remaining 25% will be available for other communities throughout RI. The proposed CLSD project will provide an estimated 40 subgrants to LEAs and early learning providers. We anticipate awarding 30 subgrants to applicants in the 11 high-needs communities and 10 subgrants to applicants in other communities.

III. Management Plan

The management plan will address the responsibilities of the CLSD Project Team and three main goals of management plan; (1) Ensure applicants submit subgrant applications aligned to CLSD, (2) Develop protocols to monitor compliance with local CLSD plans and grant requirements, and (3) Utilize monitoring protocols to track implementation fidelity, ongoing progress, and fiscal accountability.

Responsibilities - CLSD Project Team:

RIDE and the RI Department of Human Services (DHS) will form a CLSD Project Team that will be responsible for carrying out the state-level activities and supporting the LEA activities of the project. The CLSD Project Team will include existing staff and one new staff member to be hired with CLSD funds. The existing RIDE and DHS members consist of a cross office team that

will ensure that the target populations are a main focus of all grant activities *[resumes attached in appendix]*. A smaller, core RIDE team will lead the grant activities with support from the extended team in ensuring deliverables are met:

CLSD Project Team Leaders (PTL):

Lisa Foehr - Chief of the Division of Teaching & Learning, will manage the CLSD Project team grant operations.

Phyllis Lynch - Director of the Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum will provide day to day oversight of grant activities.

J. David Sienko - Director of Student, Community and Academic Supports will collaborate closely with Phyllis Lynch to integrate efforts for differently abled students and MLLs

Lauren Matlach - Director of Educator Excellence and Certification Services will provide day to day oversight on high-quality curriculum and professional learning grant activities.

Subgrant and Evaluation Manager (SM)- to be funded with State level grant funds. The SM will be responsible for developing the RFPs, managing procurement, managing active contract management and monitoring. The SM will also be responsible for supporting subgrantees with the collection of objective data and developing continuous improvement plans.

CLSD Project Core Team (PCT) will carry out day-to-day activities of the grant as decided by the PLT:

Colleen O'Brien, Literacy Specialist

Kate Schulz, Instructional Improvement Specialist

Chanthy Lopes, Executive Staff Assistant, Community/Family Engagement

Emily Klein, Education Specialist, Interventions and Multilingual Learners

Jodi Clark, Teaching & Learning Fellow, Portsmouth School District, Implementation Support

David Luther Finance Lead - Federal Grants Manager

CLSD Project Team Staff (PTS) will provide additional support to the core team as needed:

Lisa Nugent, Early Learning Coordinator*; Caitlin Molina,* Associate Director of Child Care,

DHS*; Zoe McGrath,* Early Learning Specialist*; Flavia Molea-Baker,* Multilingual Learner

Coordinator*;* and *Ruth Gallucci,* Education Specialist, Early Childhood Special Education.

Goals of a CLSD Management Plan:

Goal 1: Ensure applicants submit subgrant applications aligned to CLSD requirements			
Activities	Milestone	Timeline	Parties Responsible
Develop guidance on creating an LLP	Literacy Blueprint to serve as LLP template	September to December 2019	PTL, PCT, PTS
Develop subgrant RFP and aligned rubric	Release RFP	September to December 2019	SM, PCT, PTS
Provide TA on subgrant components	Submission of subgrant RFPs	January to February 2020	SM, PCT, PTS
Evaluate RFP	Subgrants awarded	March 2020	PTL, PCT, PTS

Goal 2: Develop protocols to monitor compliance with local CLSD plans and grant requirements			
Activities	Milestone	Timeline	Parties Responsible
Develop	Template that builds off	December 2019 to	SM, PCT, PTS

implementation and reporting template	the state's current reporting requirement and system. The template will serve as the foundation for monitoring plan alignment and quality, implementation fidelity, progress tracking and performance	March 2020	
Develop CLSD site visit and instructional rounds protocol	Protocol to assess implementation fidelity and alignment to RICGL. This will include protocols for interviews with staff, surveys, team observations and reflections conducted jointly with LEA or childcare center staff and document reviews	June to September 2020	SM, PCT, PTS

Goal 3: Utilize monitoring protocols to track implementation fidelity, ongoing progress, and fiscal accountability			
Activities	Milestone	Timeline	Parties Responsible
Desktop monitoring through data collection and reports	Ongoing monitoring and contact to ensure implementation fidelity and fiscal accountability. Project staff will review submissions to determine compliance and quality of activities and will engage with subgrantees to support improvement	Oct 2020-2024	SM, PCT, PTS including FL
CLSD Site visits and instructional rounds	Site visits to monitor implementation	March 2021-2024 Nov 2020-2024	PTL, PCT, PTS
Subgrantee Annual Reports	Analysis of student outcome and grant objective data submitted to assess CLSD progress	June 2020-2024	Submitted by subgratees; reviewed by PTL, PCT, PTS

IV. Project Services

RI proposes the following project services for the CLSD to meet the needs as defined in RI's needs assessment. For all three age groups, Project Services will have two levels:

- Level 1: *High-Quality Curriculum and Instruction* for planning, development, implementation, and professional development of proven literacy teaching and instruction strategies. All applicants must include a LLP aligned with the RI Literacy Blueprint. Applicants must demonstrate that they already conduct all Level 1 activities or apply for funding for the activities.

- *Level 2: Supports for All Students and Family & Community Engagement.* The focused supports in Level 2 will address both Competitive Priority 1 for evidence-based family engagement in literacy activities and Competitive Priority 2 for promoting literacy interventions for differently abled students, multilingual learners, or students in foster care. Applicants must apply for funding in Level 2 for activities that are aligned with their LLP.

Project 1: Birth to Pre-K. To increase the percentage of 4-year olds who achieve significant gains in oral language skills, eligible entities will be able to apply to:

Level 1: High Quality Curriculum and Professional Learning

A. Purchase a High-Quality Pre-K Curriculum. In an effort to promote learning across all domains of the RI Early Learning and Development Standards, all subgrantee applicants will implement a high-quality ECE curriculum from a RIDE endorsed list of high-quality ECE curricula. All approved curricula build on students' interests, explore topics that are relevant to the school community, embrace students' home culture, meet the needs of linguistically diverse learners, and are designed to provide specialized and individualized instruction for children who are differently abled. Currently, this list includes: Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers 5th and

6th editions, High Scope for Preschoolers, and Boston Public Schools. If applicants do not already use one of the endorsed curriculums, they must use funding to purchase one of the endorsed curriculums or can petition RIDE for approval of another curriculum that meets the quality criteria.

B. Provide Professional Learning (PL) to implement High-Quality Curriculum: For maximum gains, curricula must be implemented with expertise to ensure a variety of rigorous learning experiences are provided that are responsive to developmental and individual needs. Teachers must be ready to plan and refine their instruction using curriculum materials and authentic assessment data that enables an understanding of individual student learning. Subgrant applicants must use funding to provide high-quality PL–with a focus on on-site coaching–to teachers to implement the curriculum.

C. Evaluate Progress with Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG): If not already purchased at the local level, applicants must apply to purchase TSG, an evidence-based bilingual authentic assessment tool that can be used for children birth through age 5 and train their ECE workforce in the use and implementation of TSG. As TSG is already used in RI's 60 state-funded Pre-K classrooms, universal adoption across RI would ensure seamless transitions for young children across ECE programs and into Kindergarten. It will also allow for ongoing state-level evaluation of the ECE system and support for continuous improvement.

Applicants must also apply for funding in Level 2 but may choose to apply for funding in any or all of the Level 2 categories (A-E below), per their LLP.

Level 2: Supports for all Students

A. Multi-tiered System of Support: Building on Level 1 (Tier 1), provide professional learning and additional staff capacity to implement a Tiered Intervention model with Tier I (universal

support), Tier 2 (targeted support) and Tier 3 (intensive supports) as defined by Response to Intervention in ECE. While all students would benefit from systematic tiered interventions, it is expected that children who receive special education services will derive the most gains from the targeted supports.

B. Implement Itinerant Special Education Model: To better serve differently abled children, RIDE supports LEAs as they move away from providing special education services in more restrictive and less inclusive special education programs and instead utilize an itinerant model in which special education teachers travel to community-based ECE settings, work with students, and develop staff capacity for intervention and support. Applicants can apply for funding to transition their LEA to the itinerant model with professional development, increased capacity on an interim basis, or other transition needs as defined in their application.

Level 2: Family Engagement

D. Building system partnerships: With the recently awarded Preschool Development Grant (PDG) B-5, RI is developing an integrated, seamless birth through age 5 system to ensure universal Kindergarten readiness by engaging all B-5 programs and families in supporting children's holistic needs. One workstream includes piloting eight programs that engage families in their child's learning and development to understand impact in different regions and for different target populations. The CLSD funding will build on this initiative by extending and scaling partnerships between ECE and family-literacy programming that have proven results. Eligible entities can apply to develop and implement evidence-based family literacy-promoting programs—such as Parents as Teachers (PAT), Family Fun Activities, and Reach Out and Read—as needed based on their needs assessments.

E. Transition to Kindergarten Programs: The Harvard Family Research Project identifies family engagement as one of the most important elements of successful Kindergarten transitions[7]. RI is currently working with the Education Development Center and three high needs districts to develop effective practices to support Pre-K to Kindergarten transitions. This work includes collaborative work across districts through summits as well as individualized technical assistance. The summit and technical assistance focus attention on three essential elements necessary for evidenced based transition practices: leadership, aligned early learning instruction and assessment, and family and community engagement. By focusing on these elements teams obtain content, protocol support, tools and strategies for data sharing, assessment and instructional alignment between the grades with the goal of providing cohesive and comprehensive high quality learning experiences with a fluid transition from Pre-K to kindergarten. Through CLSD applicants can seek funding to enhance transition practices with a focus on supporting families with transitioning their child to Kindergarten through practices supported by Harvard's research, including (1) engaging in storytelling, puzzles, games, and songs (2) emphasizing a "growth mindset" to learning (3) building relationships and demonstrating acceptance of anxiety in transitions (4) ensuring home routines support expectations for Kindergarten (5) engaging children in out of school activities to ensure continuous learning. These activities will especially support children in disadvantaged families who on average have fewer opportunities and less experience in providing at-home support for transitions.

Project 2: Kindergarten through Grade 5: The following Project Service areas apply to all grades Kindergarten through Grade 5 to implement a LLP that will increase the percent of students who meet or exceed literacy proficiency on RICAS at Grade 5 and to decrease

achievement gaps. Eligible entities, based on their LLP, will apply for funding to the following areas (applicants must be specific about the grade levels to be served and funding allocated per grade level to ensure equal distribution per CLSD requirements):

Level 1: High-Quality Curriculum and Professional Learning

A. Purchase a High-Quality Curriculum. If an LEA is not already using a literacy curriculum that meets all of the EdReports quality standards, they must apply for funding to participate in a supported review, selection, and development of an implementation plan of a high-quality literacy curriculum. In selecting the curriculum, LEAs must consider the impact on the needs identified in their LLP and provide assurance that the selected curriculum will be implemented throughout all schools within the LEA.

B. Provide PL on High-Quality Curriculum. Funding must be used to support planning and implementation of a new high-quality curriculum, or if a high-quality curriculum is already in place, improve expertise and quality of implementation along with developing continuous improvement protocols. PL must be sustained, embedded, and aligned to the specific curriculum to ensure maximum impact for educators and students. Training will support teachers in delivering instruction with quality and expertise, and for principals, specialized support personnel, and other LEA personnel to support, develop, administer, and evaluate the high-quality curriculum implementation.

C. Engage Professional Learning Specialists to Support Instructional Delivery: Based on the LLP, applicants can apply to engage professional learning specialists to work with educators - such as Reading Coaches and MLL specialists--to supplement instruction at the school and support ongoing professional coaching and mentoring to build sustainable local expertise and communities of practice.

***Level 2: Supports for All Students*:**

A. Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Trainings: While many districts have adopted MTSS, it is imperative that all school-based staff and educators understand and implement tiered intervention with fidelity. To ensure school-wide adoption, applicants can apply for funding to conduct ongoing, embedded, on-site coaching and training to build the tiered intervention frameworks that include educator practices, systems level support for implementers and data based decision making across all grades at the school level. By engaging in MTSS practices that utilize data across all tiers to measure how all students are performing, including subgroups such as MLL and differently abled students, frameworks will be developed that ensure consistency across grade levels, classrooms and educators.

B. Intensive Intervention (Tier III) and Data-based Individualization (DBI) Training: For students who need more intensive intervention approaches to instruction, applicants can apply for funding to engage in training that will equip educators with skills and methods to systematically intensify interventions for students who have not responded to prior intervention. Individualization includes quantitative and qualitative intervention adaptations, ensuring fidelity of implementation, progress monitoring student outcomes and ensuring family partnership on problem solving teams.

C. Culturally Responsive Teaching: RI's increasingly diverse student population and more veteran education workforce has led to a wide disconnect between students' and educators' lived experiences and identities. RIDE's Strategic Plan and recently developed definition of culturally responsive teaching underscores the need and interest in pursuing deeper learning in this area. Educators must be prepared to understand and teach students in a culturally responsive and competent manner in order to equitably serve students and achieve CLSD outcomes. Research

suggests that culturally responsive instruction allows educators to address social barriers that cause disparities in student achievement; by tailoring instruction to be mindful of these barriers, educators can help students overcome obstacles and succeed.[8] Applicants will be able to seek funding for targeted, high-quality PL that develops cultural competence, coaches educators on culturally responsive approaches to literacy teaching, and supports schools in attaining culturally responsive literacy materials. These trainings and materials should reflect the cultures of the populations served in the schools.

D. Supports for MLL Students: RI's growing MLL population requires a focused effort to build effective language practices and welcoming environments. MLLs who are differently abled introduce added complexity to instructional support services. Teachers need access to PL that addresses English language instruction as well as specialized instructional support and ways to build literacy skills using the student's home language, including bilingual instruction. Eligible entities can apply for funding to provide ongoing, embedded, sustained PL for educators in the practices discussed in the *Evidence-Based Practices for English Learners* innovation configuration funded by Ideas That Work, Office of Special Education Programs, US DOE.[9]

E. Facilitate Transitions to Kindergarten: Pending State legislation would require all LEAs to develop a transition plan for all students entering Kindergarten. Applicants can seek funding to develop and implement evidence-based literacy transition plans with a focus on facilitating hand-offs, engaging families, and ensuring school readiness for each and every entering Kindergarten student such as by conducting teacher home visits and convening summer orientation programs. Students in foster care will especially benefit from seamless transition supports to mitigate interruptions in their ECE experiences.

F. Supports for Dyslexia and Other Scientifically-Based Literacy Trainings: For too long, students with dyslexia have not had appropriate or timely support. Schools are often reluctant to diagnose students with dyslexia because they are worried about the cost of providing services or they do not have anyone with specific training.[10] For LEAs that identify dyslexia as a key need, they can apply for funding for:

- *Screening Consultation:* Screening tools are vital to obtaining early information to better inform instructional decisions and identify students that need further diagnosis. To address this need, applicants may request funding to receive expert consultation on the use of screeners for students who are differently abled and how to use the data from the screeners to best inform instructional decisions and practices.

- *Phonemic-based Interventions and Fluency Development:* Applicants can apply for funding to ensure at least one specialist (i.e. Reading Specialist, Speech Language Pathologist or special educator) at each school is certified or undergoing certification in Orton-Gillingham or a similar International Dyslexia Association accredited training program. Students with dyslexia, regardless of zip code or school size, have access to a professional who is trained with evidence-based best practices.

- *Structured Literacy^{TM} Trainings:* Applicants can apply for funding to provide high-quality PL in Structured Literacy^{TM}, which explicitly teaches word identification/decoding strategies that are vital for all readers including students with dyslexia[11].

- *Dyslexia Endorsement:* Applicants can utilize funding for high-quality PL and/or coursework at institutions of higher education for educators to earn a dyslexia endorsement from RIDE.

Level 2: Family and Community Engagement:

A. Partner with Community Based Organizations to deliver evening/weekend literacy instruction: Applicants can utilize funding to build partnerships with other community organizations focused on literacy--such as local libraries, children's museums, etc--to extend literacy learning beyond the school day by engaging families. Funding can support the development and implementation of an integrated set of structured activities for families to build literacy skills and practice at home as well as embed literacy into community settings such as laundromats, grocery stores, barber shops, and health centers.

B. Parent/Child Homework Sessions: Applicants can seek funding to develop family homework sessions that will build parent knowledge, engage parents with school activities, and demonstrate the importance and fun of literacy development to students.

C. Literacy Libraries: Grant funds may be used to purchase libraries that include books at specific reading levels for students to access independently, that are culturally responsive, reflect the lived experience of students, and are available in multiple languages. Teachers will be provided professional learning to use the libraries effectively. The libraries will foster struggling reader and multi-language learners' language development and independent reading in and out of school. This may take the form of a book bags to allow students to bring books home with them to share literacy materials and engage families with reading or via an online library, which allows families to access a teacher curated set of texts aligned to student reading level or content area being learned in school.

D. Build protocols and tools for engaging families with PLPs: Currently, LEAs may not be notifying or engaging families with their child's PLPs. Applicants can seek funding to develop and implement mechanisms and protocols to engage families once a PLP is created, ensure

ongoing communication and engagement, and connect families with targeted, evidence-based strategies to support literacy development.

Project 3: Grades 6 through 12: The following Project Service areas apply to all grades 6 to 12 to increase the percent of students who meet or exceed literacy proficiency on SAT and to decrease achievement gaps. Eligible entities, based on their LLP, will apply for funding to the following areas (applicants must be specific about the grade levels to be served and funding allocated per grade level to ensure equal distribution per CLSD requirements):

*Level 1***: *High Quality Curriculum and Professional Learning*

See Project 2 Level 1 A-C- MTSS Training, DBI Training, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. In addition, for grades 6-12:

A. Assess quality of comprehensive literacy instruction as part of a well-rounded education: Principals, district-level staff, and instructional leaders need to have an holistic, well-balanced approach to education. Districts can seek funding, if needed, to provide time and training for personnel to plan how the comprehensive literacy instruction integrates with other subject, attends to MLL and domain areas, as well as monitor balance of programming and the sufficiency of staffing for students requiring high-level intervention to ensure that they still access a well-rounded education.

B. Provide time and PL for teachers to meet to plan evidence-based adolescent comprehensive literacy instruction to be delivered as part of a well-rounded education: To ensure that teaching and instruction is consistent and of high-quality across all teachers, teachers need time to work together, learn, plan their approaches, and workshop issues. In addition, literacy instructional leads must have opportunities to share best practices with educators in other subject areas to ensure that students' learning experiences are grounded in evidence-based literacy instruction

across all domains. Applicants may apply for funding to enable these professional planning sessions.

Level 2: Supports for Students: *See Project 2 Level 2-Supports for Students A-D. In addition, for grades 6 through 12:*

A. Support transitions into Grade 6: In RI, the literacy achievement gap for MLL and students of color widens dramatically beginning in Grade 6. With CLSD funding, applicants can propose activities to mitigate this trend by conducting evidence-based, targeted transition supports for students entering middle school. Activities might include summer orientation programs, family engagement, individual instruction and remediation over the summer, mentorship programs, etc.

B. Support transitions from Middle School to High School: Applicants can seek funding to develop and implement evidence-based literacy transition plans with a focus on facilitating hand-offs, engaging families, and ensuring continuity for each and every entering high school student. These facilitated hand-offs could include on-site orientations, meetings between middle school and high school teachers, family conferences, summer learning/reading programming, or other evidence-based activities to support continuous, uninterrupted instruction.

Level 2: Family and Community Engagement:

A. Partner with Community Based Organizations to deliver literacy instruction: Applicants can utilize funding to build partnerships with out-of-school learning organizations to deliver activities and programming that support students' literacy achievement. Funding can be utilized for identifying, selecting, developing, and implementing these aligned activities in partnership with the school.

B. Build protocols and tools for engaging families with ILPs: Currently, LEAs may not be notifying or engaging families with their student's ILPs. Applicants can seek funding to develop

and implement mechanisms and protocols to engage families once a ILP is created, ensure ongoing communication and engagement, and connect families with targeted, evidence-based strategies to support literacy development.

Conclusion:

It is a top priority in Rhode Island to advance the literacy skills for all students from birth through grade 12 by supporting LEAs and early learning providers who are serving a high percentage of students with disadvantages. As outlined above, RIDE will ensure that that the CLSD project goals will be accomplished by the end of the five year grant timeframe: (1) Every subgrantee will be using a high-quality curriculum expertly to deliver coherent and aligned instruction to all students, (2) Every subgrantee will use evidence-based strategies and programs to support struggling readers in order to narrow the achievement gap for our target populations in a cycle of continuous improvement, (3) Every participating family will feel welcomed and able to support their students' literacy development. RI has continued to build the capacity of its LEAs and early learning providers to establish supports for students and families, and we plan to broaden this capacity with the CLSD project.

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