

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Maryland





U.S. Department of Education PDG Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Check only one box per Program Office instructions. Annual Performance Report Final Performance Report

General Information

1. PR/Award #: S419B150034 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: _____

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grant

4. Grantee Name: Maryland State Department of Education

5. Grantee Address: 200 West Baltimore Street

City: Baltimore State: Maryland Zip: 21201

6. Project Director Name: Dr. Rolf Grafwallner

Title: Assistant Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Development

Phone #: (410) 767-0342 Ext.: _____ Fax #: (410) 333-6226

Email Address: rolf.grafwallner@maryland.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2015 To: 12/31/2015

8. Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$14,503,928.49	\$5,219,725.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$15,000,000.00	\$5,219,725.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

9. Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No
- b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No
- c. If yes, provide the following information:
- Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 7/1/2015 To: 6/30/2016
- Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____
- Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____
- d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
- Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

- a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No
- b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? _____



U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: MD

PR/Award #: S419B150034

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

Maryland's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) implementation plan builds on the strength of its well-developed early childhood education infrastructure. The three key components that made an expansion of prekindergarten for low-income children possible are:

Consolidated governance: By law since 2005, Maryland's early childhood education programs are all under auspices of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The Division of Early Childhood Development, and the divisions of Special Education/Early Intervention Services and Student and Family Support Services (which houses Title 1) provide an ideal structure for aligning policies for services birth to kindergarten, and for the coordination of practices for a modern P-20 education system.

Long-standing prekindergarten track record: Maryland's State Board of Education established a prekindergarten program in public schools as early as 1980. Since then, high quality prekindergarten has been provided as the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) until 2007, and then as a prekindergarten system at all 24 local school districts providing, minimally, to all economically disadvantaged four-year olds access to a half-day prekindergarten education program for the school year. In 2014, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014 which provided \$4.3 million for new PreK slots. Maryland's plan builds on the Prekindergarten Expansion model by creating a mixed service delivery for early education programs to be based in quality community-based early learning settings, such as child care, Head Start, and nursery schools in addition to public schools, including charter schools.

Successful implementation of Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge(RTT-ELC) grant: Through the RTT-ELC, Maryland created two critical elements that will enhance Maryland's plan for expanding prekindergarten - a robust TQRIS and well-developed early childhood comprehensive assessment system. Since the inception in July 2013 of Maryland EXCELS, the State's TQRIS, early learning providers registered with the system at a rate 3-times higher than expected. Such expectations are being articulated by a focus on improving the school readiness skills of preschoolers as they matriculate into kindergarten and start their school career. The Maryland comprehensive assessment system continues to measure school readiness skills, thereby informing early learning providers about the effectiveness of their programs.

Maryland's long-term goal is universal access to high quality prekindergarten for all four-year olds. While public schools provide such access to economically disadvantaged four-year olds, defined as those whose families' household income is at or below 185% of poverty or Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion Act extended the access to children with income levels at 300% of poverty. Maryland's four-year plan for this grant devises strategies of identifying and recruiting four-year olds at 200% of poverty into prekindergarten slots at public schools and community-based programs, and, in the last two years of the grant, by raising the income eligibility for

the grant-funded subgrantees to 300% of poverty through matching state funds. The scope of Maryland's implementation plan is statewide, thereby including many high-need communities in all regions of the State, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City, especially by expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model.

All LEA subgrantees have a 65% FARM rate and recruited income eligible four-year olds into their prekindergarten classrooms. MSDE used four additional needs assessment criteria in awards to public elementary schools:

- Elementary schools in school improvement, i.e., Focus or Priority schools;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with the highest number of income eligible four-year olds who are not enrolled in prekindergarten;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with high numbers of low-income and Hispanic four-year olds enrolled in informal care arrangements; and
- Subgrantees that provide specialized services for income-eligible four-year olds who are medically fragile or need therapeutic nursery services.

Casting such a wide net for identifying and recruiting income eligible four-year olds ensured that a significant number of families with four-year old children in high-need communities across the State had access to high quality prekindergarten. Maryland's expansion for the 2015-2016 school year was 988 new slots and 1,498 improved slots.

Maryland's plan requires that all subgrantees meet the High Quality Preschool criteria required by the PDG. All subgrantees must hire lead teachers that hold a Maryland State teaching certificate in early childhood education. MSDE has established policies by regulation and State law that define the quality of publicly funded prekindergarten. Based on the grant program under the Prekindergarten Expansion Act, the Maryland plan adopted the following eligibility for subgrantees:

1. Prekindergarten operated by local boards of education must comply with the State's prekindergarten regulations;
2. Community-based programs must be either:
 - Published at Level 5, the highest level, in Maryland EXCELS; or
 - State or nationally accredited as a program of quality; or
 - Certified by MSDE as a nursery school.

The rationale for subgrantee eligibility among community-based programs is based on the MSDE's accountability principles when using public funds, which call for reducing the risk of failure among programs that have demonstrated continuous program improvement, stability of program quality, and have the capacity to meet the Expansion Grant's criteria of High Quality Preschool programs.

Maryland's plan includes the use of a newly developed Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) as part of the RTT-ELC funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. The first cohort of four-year olds in prekindergarten funded under this grant will be assessed on the KRA in school year 2016-17, thereby setting the baseline for all and subgroups of prekindergarteners funded by this grant.

Through the PDG, Maryland has put in place the following infrastructure enhancements:

- Four FTEs responsible for providing technical assistance regarding program operation and monitoring of grant-funded preschool programs to ensure high fidelity of implementation with respect to meeting the High-Quality Preschool criteria of this grant;

- Assignment of five full-time early literacy Reading Corps tutors at five Judy Centers in Baltimore City;
- Modification, hosting, and maintenance of the online KRA regarding the expansion of publicly funded prekindergarten slots to community-based subgrantees.

Maryland set a per child cost allocation of \$7,344 per child for new slots and \$3,672 for improved slots. Maryland also sought and received permission from the Department of Education to raise the per child cost allocation for programs specializing therapeutic or extensive comprehensive services (physical therapy, psychiatric or autism services).

Maryland identified jurisdictions for high-needs children and used data from the following MSDE data bases in effort to help subgrantees recruit income-eligible four-year olds:

- Child Care Subsidy data management system;
- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Maryland's Kindergarten Assessment's legacy system which was implemented from 2001 to 2013. data base regarding income-eligible and Hispanic four-year olds in informal care; and
- Prekindergarten waitlists with local school systems;

In addition, the Judy Centers and their partners in selected jurisdictions, assisted in identifying families with income-eligible four-year olds.

Maryland's was successful in recruiting 988 of new slots and 1,498 number of improved slots. Barriers for Maryland include complicated income eligibility for Maryland's Prekindergarten Programs. Locally funded PreK is available to families that are at or below 185% of FPL. The Federal PreK Expansion Program is available to families that are at or below 200% of FPL. The State PreK Expansion Program is available to families at or below 300% of FPL. These differences confuse families as to whether they qualify and if so, for which program. Maryland's plan to overcome this barrier is to create an online eligibility calculator. This will allow families to enter their family income to see what programs (including Head Start & Child Care Subsidy) the family may qualify for and then help link them to the programs through a GIS mapping site. Maryland also plans to raise income eligibility to 300% of FPL for a total of 1,000 children in Grant Years 3 & 4, i.e., SFY18 and SFY19, through State matching funds.

Maryland's model included programs that offer specialized services such as programs that specialize in therapeutic and extensive early intervention services and programs that specialize in supporting children who may be homeless. These models are still actively recruiting for these inclusive settings. The Directors of these specialized programs have begun networking to share recruitment strategies to assist in filling any openings.

Maryland required community based programs and local education agencies to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). These MOUs include a partnership between the LEAs and the community based programs to help support them in providing services for students with special needs or who may need ELL resources. The MOUs also ensure that community based program staff are included in professional development opportunities offered by the local school system.



**U.S. Department of Education
PDG Annual Performance Report
Grant Status Form
Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: MD PR/Award #: S419B150034

Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)

1. Project Objective

1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant. Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2015.

Maryland's plan included many high-need communities in all regions of the state, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City, especially by expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model.

The plan uses communities with schools that have a 65 percent FARM rate as the cut-off for determining prioritized needs, but it also intends to recruit income eligible four-year olds into high quality prekindergarten by using four additional needs assessment criteria:

- Elementary schools in school improvement (e.g., Focus or Priority schools);
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with the highest number of income eligible four-year olds who are not enrolled in prekindergarten;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with high numbers of low-income and Hispanic four-year olds enrolled in informal care arrangements; and
- Subgrantees that provide specialized services for income-eligible four-year olds who are medically fragile or need therapeutic nursery services.

Maryland served 2,486 PreK students through the PDG grant in these high needs communities. The subgrantees that are not at full capacity are continuing to recruit eligible students.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

Maryland's statewide average for serving PreK students with disabilities is 5.6%, and the PDG serves 4.8% of the total new and improved slots. The state number may or may not include students with disabilities who are also low income. However, for the PDG, the students had to meet both the low income and the

special needs criteria. Also, there are PreK students with disabilities that were directed to non PDG funded programs for services. Some PreK students may not have been identified yet, however through the roll out of developmental screening in Maryland, there may be more students with disabilities identified and referred for services. Maryland also funded therapeutic nursery school programs with PDG funds later in the school year. Those programs are actively recruiting new students.

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

Under the PDG, Maryland was able to add 988 (40%) new PreK slots and 1,498 (60%) expanded slots. Of the total number of PreK slots, 320 slots are in 27 community based programs. Establishing additional slots in the community based programs has created new collaborations for professional development and sharing of curriculum between the local public elementary schools and the programs. Community based programs and public elementary schools have planned transition activities/meetings with parents and students from the programs so that parents/students become familiar with their future school and staff. In turn, PreK staff are learning the expectations of the Kindergarten teachers at the elementary schools and are working to prepare their PreK students for Kindergarten.

There are 259 new slots at 10 Maryland Head Start Centers. Just like community based centers, Head Start programs have continued their professional development and transition activities with elementary schools in their communities under the PDG grant. Head Start programs include the offering of services to children and their families, as well as parent engagement activities.

Through the establishment of 21 new Judy Centers, 945 children have been served and directed to early childhood development services, such as, high quality child care, WIC and Medicaid. Children receive developmental screening, access to early interventions, connections to dental, vision, hearing mental health and health department services, service coordination and family support. They offer access to extended day and year services through community based child care and ensure those partners are meeting high-quality standards by providing accreditation support and professional development. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent involvement activities, including kindergarten readiness activities, playgroups, and adult education, and family literacy.

Maryland has worked with subgrantees to assist with student recruitment by mailing informational letters to families receiving child care subsidy to connect them to new PreK slots. While not all programs met their enrollment target, MSDE is working with the subsidy vendor to advise subsidy parents to move their children into eligible PreK slots. MSDE's monitors are providing strategies for recruitment (advertising in community newsletters, circulars in housing lobbies and grocery stores in their communities, and contacting faith community leaders).

Maryland's data over the past decade provides evidence that children who participate in a Judy Center and/or PreK programs outperform students who do not have these services on the Kindergarten assessment. Over the four year period of the grant, Maryland is hopeful that students served by both the state and federal PreK grant will continue to enter Kindergarten ready to learn.

1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program. Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2015-16 school year.

There are 27,003 PreK students being served in LEAs, this includes 504 new slots created by PDG funds. Additionally, through the PDG there are 225 students in community based programs and 259 in Head Start Centers. The total number of PreK students is 27,991. Through the PDG, Maryland increased PreK enrollment by 988 new slots. Now, 37% of eligible PreK students are enrolled.



1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.

In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 1 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
- Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
- School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

Kindergarten readiness is defined as a student that demonstrates the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards. Kindergarten readiness sets the stage for future learning. It is one of the most important factors in, and has a powerful impact on, the educational and life success of every young child in Maryland.

To align with the Maryland's new PreK-12 College and Career Ready Standards, Maryland introduced Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. R4K builds on and advances the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), which was the statewide kindergarten assessment tool in use from 2001 to 2013. R4K provides a single coordinated system for recognizing the needs and measuring the learning progress (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) of young children from 36 to 72 months (3 to 6 years of age) across four domains that align to the state standards. The R4K is comprised of two components: the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) was first administered in the fall of 2014-2015 school year by 3,500 teachers to over 67,000 children to determine the readiness level of every kindergarten student in Maryland. The KRA is administered each year from the first day of school to November 1st to all

public school kindergartners. The KRA is not a mandated assessment. The ELA is optional and will be available to all child care programs, Head Start, and public PreK and K teachers in fall 2016. The ELA is for children 36 months to 72 years of age.

The KRA uses age-appropriate performance tasks and observational items that measure essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors of children's work and play to determine what each entering kindergartener knows and is able to do in four specific domains - Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Well-being & Motor Development, and Social Foundations. The formative Early Learning Assessment looks at children across the four levels as well as Science, Social Studies and the Arts.

Maryland provides KRA training before school starts to all Maryland Kindergarten teachers through online training, face to face training or a combination of both. To ensure fidelity, the Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology Education develops the training materials and provides a Trainer of Trainers model. During training, teachers complete a content assessment and simulator. Additional professional development resources are provided to teachers through an on-line site dedicated to the R4K system. Teachers must pass an assessment in order to be able to administer the KRA. Access to a Help Desk is also provided to teachers during the assessment window.

Teachers in each LEA send home individual student reports in late fall to parents/guardians. The reports are also discussed with parents during individual parent-teacher conferences. Teachers use the student reports to guide instruction through the school year. In late March, the KRA statewide data report is presented to the State Board of Education and then released to the public. At this time, each LEA receives their disaggregated data broken down by elementary school.

Highlights of KRA data for the first administration in school year 2014-2015 are as follows:

- 47% of all Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 40% of male Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 54% of female Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 40% of American Indian Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 53% of Asian Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 43% of African American Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 35% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 57% of White Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 27% of Hispanic Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness
- 52% of Two or More Races Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness

Kindergarteners demonstrating readiness in 2014-2015 by domain is as follows:

- 47% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Language and Literacy
- 42% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Mathematical Thinking
- 54% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Physical Well-being and Motor Development
- 50% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Social Foundations

In fall 2016, students in the PDG funded programs will enter Kindergarten and take the KRA. Their data will be available in winter 2017.



For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:

1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

NA

Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.

The four-year olds enrolled in the expanded prekindergarten program are benefitting from Maryland's revised early learning standards in terms of content and scope. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) informed the revisions in terms of the content for Prek and its alignment with K-12. The standards also incorporate Maryland's *Healthy Beginnings* guidelines for Birth to Four. In fall 2015, Maryland contracted with a consultant to write a curriculum for the Infants and Toddlers through age 4 PreK that is aligned with the standards, and it will be available for free.

While the program standards for public school prekindergarten are defined by the State's Prekindergarten regulations, the program standards for community based providers are defined by Maryland EXCELS, the State's TQRIS which has five levels of quality, Level 5 being the highest. The high quality criteria on Level 5 include completed program accreditation by MSDE or a nationally accrediting organization. A third set of quality program standards is defined by the education program in nursery school certified by MSDE (COMAR 13A.17.14). These program standards comprise the eligibility for participation as a subgrantee under this grant.

Eligible prekindergarten subgrantees are either:

- Y Operated by a local boards of education and in compliance with prekindergarten regulations; or
- Y published at Level 5 of Maryland EXCELS, or
- Y accredited by MSDE or a national accrediting organization recognized by MSDE; or
- Y certified by MSDE as a non-public nursery school.

Maryland EXCELS provides program standards for public prekindergarten and licensed child care centers that are based on nationally recognized indicators of quality in five areas:

- Y Licensing Compliance/School Approval;
- Y Staff/Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development;
- Y Accreditation/Environmental Rating Scales;
- Y Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice /Child Assessment; and
- Y Administrative Policies and Practices.

Maryland EXCELS validation process ensures that programs are implementing activities consistent with high-quality preschool programs by:

- Y On-site monitoring of published programs to view evidence of implementation regarding the standards of Maryland EXCELS;
- Y Providing technical support for areas identified in need of improvement as a result of monitoring visits;
- Y Incorporating a Continuous Quality Improvement framework in all aspects of the TQRIS;
- Y Requiring programs to create and implement Program Improvement Plans at the higher levels of Maryland EXCELS (i.e., Levels 3, 4 and 5), and to include school readiness goals and objectives aligned

- with jurisdictional data on Maryland's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment;
- Y Providing multiple layers of program support for participating programs in meeting high-quality preschool standards within the TQRIS. The types of support come from three primary sources offered online, by phone and through on-site visits:
- o Child Care Resource and Referral Staff (i.e., capacity building through the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center);
 - o Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education Program Coordinators; and
 - o MSDE Quality Assurance Specialists.

The table below depicts the alignment of Maryland's program standards with the PDG's criteria defining High Quality Preschool:

TABLE HERE

All programs receiving PDG funds must have a Maryland certified teacher in the PreK classroom that is paid comparable to the PreK teacher in that LEA. Programs must ensure vision and hearing screening, health care referrals and developmental screenings. During their onsite visits, program specialists are monitoring to ensure these services are provided. Additionally, each subgrantee signed a Memorandum of Understanding with their LEA agreeing to partner for professional development opportunities and transition planning/activities each year of the grant. LEAs are working with subgrantees to ensure that students requiring individualized accommodations are supported in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Program specialists will make monitoring visits to the Federal Prekindergarten programs in early spring 2016. They will provide the subgrantees with the monitoring tool prior to the visit. The monitoring will consist of a review of programmatic and fiscal documents to ensure the subgrantees are meeting the grant criteria. The program specialists will also observe the classrooms to ensure the children are receiving a developmentally appropriate high-quality prekindergarten experience and/or comprehensive services. Monitoring visits are also another time to establish rapport with the subgrantees and provide technical assistance. Monitoring visits will occur in September-October as a check-in period and then again in March-May of each school year.

Programs will receive feedback on the monitoring tool to include commendations and any areas needed for improvement. If it is determined that a program requires improvement, a written program improvement plan will be provided to the program that sets forth the areas of improvement needed and a timeline in which to improve. Monitors will again provide technical assistance, check-ins and another monitoring visit to determine if the program has met the expectations of the grant. Programs not in compliance with the grant requirements could have their funding level reduced or terminated.

2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

The following High-Quality Preschool Program requirements for PDG subgrantees are detailed in their grant applications and notice of grant awards. All subgrantees will be monitored to ensure that they are compiling and implementing these requirements.

(a) High staff qualifications, including a teacher holding a State certification for teaching in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field pursuing residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP), a State-approved alternate pathway, which includes coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, as well as teaching assistants with appropriate credentials.

(b) High-quality professional development for all staff must be provided and is monitored. Community based programs are required to have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with their LEA which includes participation in LEA professional development. Subgrantees provided professional development plans in their applications.

(c) A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1.

(d) A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a).

(e) A Full-Day program.

(f) Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities.

(g) Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry. Subgrantees listed their curricula in their grant applications for approval.

(h) Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities.

(i) Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of LEA K-12 instructional staff.

(j) Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement: Monitoring and technical assistance visits ensure that the structural elements are in place in subgrantees' programs. Maryland was already positioned to meet the High-Quality Prekindergarten definition as many of the elements are already a part of Maryland's Prekindergarten regulations.

(k) On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development. Through the PDG, there are 21 new Judy Centers in Maryland. Judy Centers are specifically placed in elementary schools in Title 1 neighborhoods and target the needs of children zero to five that are most in need. Judy Centers are dedicated to providing services to low income families in the Title 1 elementary school catchment areas. Judy Centers serve all children birth through kindergarten who live in designated Title I school zones. Most of the work of the Judy Centers is accomplished through its partnerships with public kindergarten and prekindergarten, the local Infants and Toddlers Program, preschool special education, private childcare providers, Child Care Resource Centers, and the Family Support Network.

There are also additional partners, such as Pediatric dentists have been recruited to provide a much-needed service that this population typically is not able to access due to cost and the limited availability of providers. Housing authorities provide space for Judy Centers to provide parent workshops which help bridge challenges

between families and housing authorities. Mental health providers also have been recruited to serve families in need. In 2015, the centers served 15,205 children (ranging in age from birth through kindergarten). Kindergarten demographic data shows Judy Center participants' ethnic composition as 32% White, 35% African American, 23% Hispanic, 7% two or more races, 2% Asian and 1% other. Considering Judy Center enrollments as a proportion of the population in kindergarten in the schools served by the Judy Centers in the 2014-2015 school year, 61 percent received at least one year of Judy Center services prior to kindergarten entry.

KRA data shows that 41% of children with Judy Center experience prior to entering kindergarten were Demonstrating Readiness for school while 36% of the children who entered kindergarten at Judy Center schools without prior experience were Demonstrating Readiness. With respect to children receiving special services, there is a much higher percentage of entering kindergartners with Judy Center experience (81%) and entering kindergartners at Judy Center schools without the benefit of Judy Center experience (63%) than the state's kindergartners as a whole (46%). It is important to note that only 143 of the 3,407 kindergartners at the Judy Centers were not receiving special services. This confirms that Judy Centers are placed in very needy areas and are serving high needs children.

In addition to Judy Centers in Title 1 elementary schools, the following schools are Focus schools under Title I and received a PDG grant:

1. Baltimore City : Commodore John Rogers Elementary, Steuart Hill Academic Academy
2. Baltimore County: Sandy Plains Elementary
3. Dorchester: Choptank Elementary
4. Harford: William Paca Elementary
5. Howard: Laurel Woods Elementary

As well, all community based programs provided a list of comprehensive services and the names of the service providers in their grant applications.

(I) Evidence-based health and safety standards: Health and safety are ensured in community based programs through their child care licensing monitoring visits. All subgrantees are required to participate in EXCELS at level 5. Maryland EXCELS - the TQRIS standards incorporate criteria to promote children's physical, social, and emotional development as well as promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, and expanding physical activity. The TQRIS standards include the following criteria:

- Serving fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and limiting fat, sugar, and salt in food served by the program;
- Monitoring foods from home and supplementing as needed, to ensure children are receiving nutritious meals and snacks;
- Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program;
- Providing information to families on the program's policies for nutrition, health and physical activity;
- Providing information to families on the program's policies and practices regarding promoting positive behavior and guidance to children;
- Requesting information from families upon enrollment, regarding any special needs, or health care needs, and information from an IEP or IFSP, if available;
- Incorporating information from the child's IEP or IFSP, when provided by the family, for individual planning related to the child's health, physical, social, and emotional development and the child's activities;
- Limiting Screen Time according to AAP and Caring for Our Children guidelines;
- Recognizing programs that meet higher requirements for Health and Safety by awarding an Achievement in this area for programs certified in Let's Move! Child Care. Programs receiving this achievement are

Table 6 - Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot. Please explain if *Year 1 Target* from the application and *Year 1 Actual* in **Table 6** differ, and any approved changes in targets for Years 2-4.

Thirty-seven percent of all four year olds in Maryland are being served in a PreK program. Maryland's year 1 target was 2,811, and 2,486 students were served under PDG. Maryland funded therapeutic nurseries mid school year, and they are actively recruiting students. Through the PDG, a community based center was funded that enrolls students, which are homeless, They anticipated a higher number of eligible students, however in June, 2015, the housing funds for the residential program were unexpectedly suspended resulting in a change of the PreK enrollment numbers. The data provided is as of December 1, 2015 but Maryland gave subgrantees until December 31, 2015 to reach to their target enrollment numbers. The programs continue to enroll students.

Maryland has worked with subgrantees to assist with student recruitment by mailing informational letters to families receiving child care subsidy to connect them to new PreK slots. While not all programs met their enrollment target, MSDE is working with the subsidy vendor to advise subsidy parents to move their children into eligible PreK slots. MSDE's monitors are providing strategies for recruitment (advertising in community newsletters, circulars in housing lobbies and grocery stores in their communities, and contacting faith community leaders). Maryland plans to create an online eligibility calculator to assist parents in finding PreK programs.

3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

MSDE is providing technical assistance to each subgrantee to successfully implement a high-quality prekindergarten. Three meetings were held to announce the Grant Application process for the PDG funds and to take potential grantees through the RFP and the submission procedure. The meetings were followed by three webinars, each directed to specific applicants - LEAs, community based programs, and Judy Centers. At the completion of the Grant Application process, subgrantees submitted grant applications which specified how the grantee would meet the definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten and included a budget narrative on how the funds would be utilized. Grant applications were reviewed and scored by multiple reviewers. Grant awardees were notified and received the PDG administrative manual developed by MSDE. Subgrantees were re-introduced to Maryland EXCELS (TQRIS) and to the accreditation process so that they could begin the process of attaining a level 5 if they were not at the level already.

Each subgrantee signed a Memorandum of Understanding with their LEA agreeing to partner for professional development opportunities and transition planning/activities each year of the grant. Program specialists made technical assistance visits in the fall and focused on the performance standards, i.e., criteria for High Quality Preschools, and any identification regarding areas of improvement. The fiscal review in the fall consisted of invoice verification (i.e., are programs spending the funds according to the approved plan and budget) and verification of enrollment of income eligible students. Any community-based program receiving more than \$100,000 of Federal funds falls under the State's annual auditing requirements.

4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

Maryland's Early Learning and Development Standards are:

- developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each defined age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers;
- cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards; and
- incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities.

The new Maryland Early Learning Standards reflect the alignment of two documents- the Healthy Beginnings' indicators from Birth to Age 4 and the Prekindergarten through Grade 2 Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. The completed Maryland Early Learning Standards have been disseminated to our early childhood stakeholders in a variety of ways: as an Appendix to our Supporting Every Young Learner- Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy Birth to Age 8, online on our

website, and presented to various stakeholders at conferences and workshops. Emphasis was placed on providing professional development on the Social Foundations standards since it contains new standards in Approaches to Learning and Executive Functioning skills. Professional development was provided for the third summer for combined school and community teams in Title I school areas that focused on increasing their knowledge of early learning development and the standards in the STEM areas of the domains of Social Foundations, Science, and Mathematics. During 2015 and 2016, presentations are focusing on the mathematics standards as the data from the 2014 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment indicated this domain having the lowest percentage of students demonstrating readiness.

Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 1 Target* differs from the *Year 1 Actual*.

While public schools provide access to economically disadvantaged four-year olds, defined as those whose families' household income is at or below 185% of poverty or Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion Act extended the access to community-based programs for income levels at 300% of poverty. Maryland's four-year plan for this grant devises strategies of identifying and recruiting four-year olds at 200% of poverty into prekindergarten slots at public schools and community-based programs, and, in the last two years of the grant, by raising the income eligibility for the grant-funded subgrantees to 300% of poverty through matching state funds.

Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion Act funds half day programs, and PDG funds are used to improve these slots to full day slots. There are 518 Expansion slots that have been improved to full day slots for school year 2015-2016.

The scope of Maryland's plan is statewide, thereby including many high-need communities in all regions of the State, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City, especially by expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model. There are 21 of new Judy centers under the PDG, and 32 funded by state funds and some foundations funds.

In FY 14, the Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore City Public Schools and the Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF) entered into a public-private partnership to increase the number of Judy Centers in Baltimore City. The partnership expanded rapidly and the Federal Preschool Development Grants (PDG) helped leverage philanthropic contributions allowing BCF to raise more funds through private support to open eight centers in the City within a 3-year period. The amount contributed by BCF is \$1,320,000 for 3 years. There are now 12 Judy Centers in Baltimore City, nine of which receive PDG funds.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

The strategic approach to Maryland's plan builds on the comprehensive systems development as implemented by the RTT-ELC. The key drivers for system stability and sustainability are:

- Y ***Establishing Maryland EXCELS as the state's quality rating and improvement system.*** Voluntary participation in Maryland's TQRIS program, EXCELS, applies to all early education and care programs in Maryland. It offers five check levels of quality with Level 5 being the highest. At Level 1, programs must be in good standing with State licensing requirements. After slightly more than one year of implementation 48% of all licensed child care centers and 27% of all family child care

providers are participating. While not all licensed programs will join Maryland EXCELS, MSDE through regulation mandated that child care subsidy will only be available to licensed child care programs that participate in Maryland EXCELS. EXCELS also incorporates the program accreditation process, either facilitated through a national organization recognized by MSDE or MSDE's own program accreditation program for prekindergarten.

Y The MOU between MSDE and all subgrantees includes a condition by which any subgrantee currently not participating in Maryland EXCELS, i.e., LEA prekindergarten subgrantees, subgrantees with a MSDE certified nursery schools, and State or nationally accredited community-based programs, is obligated to participate in Maryland EXCELS within 12 months, i.e., by July 1, 2016.

Y Maryland EXCELS describes the coordination of early childhood education programs by standardizing the quality levels of all participating early learning providers and by including criteria that define specific practices in terms of early learning, family engagement, inclusion of children with disabilities, and updated business practices in administering the programs.

As part of the RTT-ELC, Maryland EXCELS established three types of supports for early learning providers in participating:

- o Johns Hopkins University - Center for Technology of Education, as the vendor supporting the online system, provides technical support in terms of guiding programs through the online enrollment process;
- o MSDE's quality assurance specialists, serving 15 regions of the state, are the brokers for the quality improvement process, i.e., assisting programs to move from one check level to the next and to monitor the maintenance of quality; and
- o Regional Resource and Referral Centers, using an Early Childhood Breakthrough model, coach programs long-term on building the capacity to participate in Maryland EXCELS.
- o The PreK Education Monitors were hired based on their backgrounds in the public school, Head Start, community based and early intervention settings. The monitors provide technical support to PreK subgrantees; this includes supports for teachers in need of professional development, curriculum, and/or classroom management support.

The Judy Centers offer comprehensive services such as: need to add to list below

- Y Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, including pediatric consultation;
- Y Service Linkages programs in public schools;
- Y Homevisiting Services; and
- Y Public libraries outreach services (e.g., book mobiles, family centers).

Maryland mandated full day Kindergarten in 2007.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Across the regions of the state Maryland 988 new PreK slots were created through PDG funding. This number is 222 below the target set in the application. Maryland used estimates in setting targets based on 2010 census data. Maryland's preK enrollment patterns have been relatively stable for the past three

years due to the legislative mandate requiring all LEAs to provide access to all income eligible four-year olds. Thus, new PreK slots are continually created by LEAs to accommodate the new student population. MSDE's calculation is based on a net expansion of the sites for the grant funded slots. Based on that assumption, Maryland is working to enhance recruitment of students and identify new subgrantees to create additional new PreK slots.

Section B: Budget Information

Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

Due to a delay in hiring of staff MSDE estimated a carryover of \$90,000 (\$72,500 in Personnel and \$17,500 in Fringe Benefit) for staff cost. Maryland requested to use these funds for direct grants to PreK programs. The evaluation contract was budgeted to cover the four years of the grant but only obligated for one year of service. The balance of \$214,452 will need to be obligated over the life of the grant. A few programs originally budgeted for dropped out, due to this \$167,000 for direct grants was not issued. An estimate of \$11,000 in indirect cost was not used. The Indirect Cost process is not done until cash expenditures have been incurred based on MSDE Federal Indirect Cost plan. Technical Assistance in the amount of \$25,000 has not been used to date. MSDE is planning a technical assistance meeting with subgrantees in spring 2016. The total amount of funds approved by USDE for carryover was \$529,747.32.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016).

None anticipated.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.

In Years 3 and 4 of the grant, i.e., SFY18 and SFY19, Federal funds will be matched with State funds to expand access to an estimated total of 1,000 four-year olds whose families' income is at 300% of poverty, thereby creating consistency regarding income eligibility among all State and Federal grant-funded subgrantees. In addition, equity will be served by adjusting the rate per slot of State-funded subgrantees to match the federally funded rate. In FY15, Maryland used a rate of \$5,800 for a full-day slot whereas Maryland's Federal expansion plan proposes \$7,344 per slot.

Based on the total enrollment of four-year olds in Maryland's prekindergarten, by Year 4 of the grant the increase of new expanded slots will be 8% above the total prekindergarten enrollment in 2013-14. In addition, the State matching funds will boost eligibility guidelines for families to 300%.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

Due to a delay in hiring of staff MSDE estimated a carryover of \$90,000 (\$72,500 in Personnel and \$17,500 in Fringe Benefit) for staff cost. Maryland requested to use these funds for direct grants to PreK programs. The evaluation contract was budgeted to cover the four years of the grant but only obligated for one year of service. The balance of \$214,452 will need to be obligated over the life of the grant. A

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