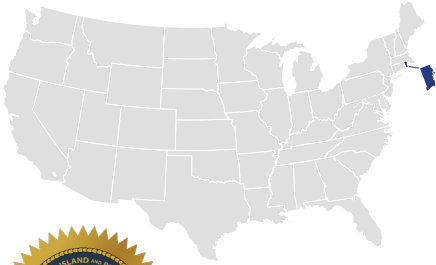


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Rhode Island





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 #: S419B150033 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: _____

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grants - Expansion

4. Grantee Name: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

5. Grantee Address: 255 Westminster St.,
 City: Providence State: Rhode Island Zip: 02903

6. Project Director Name: Mary Ann Snider
 Title: Chief, Educator Excellence and Instructional Effectiveness
 Phone #: (401) 222-8942 Ext.: _____ Fax #: (401) 222-3605
 Email Address: maryann.snider@ride.ri.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		
b. Current Budget Period	\$79,131.23	\$1,409,678.12
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: 07/01/2015 To: 06/30/2016
 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: RI

PR/Award #:

S419B150033

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.

The first year of Rhode Island's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) focused on three main areas: expanding access, implementing a system of continuous quality improvement, and ensuring consistent access to comprehensive services. The year began with an unprecedented expansion during which 16 new classrooms were selected, bringing the total number of children served to 594 in 33 classrooms. Eighteen (18) of the 33 new classrooms received PDG funding to serve 260 of the 324 children enrolled. In the previous school year, 2014-2015, prior to the start of Rhode Island's PDG, the state-funded pre-kindergarten served a total of 306 children in 17 classrooms in the following communities: Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, Warwick, West Warwick, and Newport. The addition of the federal Expansion Grant funds, along with additional state funds, allowed the state to accelerate its planned expansion and almost double the number of classrooms available. In addition to expanding access to Pre-K, a system of continuous quality improvement was formalized. As part of this system, the RI Department of Education (RIDE) team updated and finalized state Pre-K policies and developed a coordinated monitoring system. Using data from monitoring and past professional development initiatives, quality improvement goals for the state Pre-K system were established and a professional development vendor was selected to provide ongoing support to state Pre-K programs. The RIDE team also began to design a system to improve access to comprehensive services for children and families enrolled in state Pre-K programs. When complete, this system will replace the individual practices of sub-grantees and ensure more consistent access to these services across all sub-grantees. Overall, the activities planned under the Expansion grant have proceeded as planned with few, if any, unanticipated outcomes or benefits. The only barrier encountered was related to recruitment. As will be discussed in further detail, while the Pre-K recruitment resulted in hundreds of applications for enrollment, after all children were selected, there were some waiting lists in communities with multiple classrooms which ended up being completely exhausted. During the normal course of Pre-K enrollment there are often children who move or whose families decline enrollment and so additional recruitment strategies were required in order to fill the remaining available Pre-K seats in communities with exhausted waiting lists. In 2016, the state plans to formalize and closely monitor a system of recruitment for the 2016-2017 school year.

Expanding Access to Pre-K

The 2015 grant year began with the selection of additional Pre-K sub-grantees. In January, a Request for Proposals to operate a state-funded Pre-K program was posted. Applications were due February 27th. Application reviews were conducted by the RIDE team and selected sub-grantees were notified in mid-March. The expansion increased the number of classrooms available in each community identified in the state's Pre-K application, as well as two additional communities, Cranston and Warwick. Pre-K classrooms in those communities were funded with additional state funds. The chart

below outlines the 2015-2016 school year (SY) expansion:

Community	# of classrooms SY '14-15	# of classrooms SY `15-16
Central Falls	1	3
Cranston	1	2
East Providence	0	1
Newport	2	3
Pawtucket	1	2
Providence	5	11
Warwick	3	3
West Warwick	2	3
Woonsocket	2	5

Existing Pre-K programs and new sub-grantees then began the process of recruiting families for application to the state Pre-K lottery. State Pre-K sub-grantees are required to actively participate in Pre-K recruitment. Pre-K applications are entered into an electronic application either directly by the parent or by the sub-grantee on behalf of the parent. RIDE staff track the numbers of applications entered by community on an ongoing basis. The 2015 lottery was conducted on June 3rd. At that time, there were 1247 applications for the 594 seats. At the same time, Pre-K grant agreements were being finalized for the July 1 start date which coincides with the state fiscal year. This process included reviewing and approving proposed budgets to ensure compliance with state Pre-K budget guidelines which ensure adequate expenditures in key areas, notably teacher salaries and educational materials and supplies. By July 1, 2015, all thirty-three (33) sub-grantee contracts for the 2015-2016 school year were completed. Following the Pre-K lottery, sub-grantees began contacting selected families and verifying income information. Upon verification, children were then enrolled in the Pre-K classrooms to which they were selected. Sub-grantees are allowed to determine their own school start dates and all 2015-2016 classrooms were fully operational by September 7, 2015.

Implementing a System of Continuous Quality Improvement

A significant focus under the state's Expansion Grant is ensuring that all RI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms operate at the highest level of quality. To this end, the following strategies are used to support this goal: comprehensive, high-quality program regulations; ongoing program monitoring; clearly defined performance goals at the program and teacher level, including defined learning outcomes for children; an aligned system of professional development supports, and an external evaluation of Pre-K impact on child outcomes. During their first year of funding, Pre-K sub-grantees apply for and receive approval under the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program regulations. These regulations meet or exceed accreditation standards and national benchmarks for Pre-K quality. The CECE approval process involves a detailed look at Pre-K program operations including a facilities visit, reviews of written narratives describing program systems and policies, classroom observations using ECERS and CLASS, and on-site visits to review additional teaching practices and documents. Currently, of the 33 state Pre-K classrooms, 1 is fully approved, 13 have received provisional approval, 2 have probationary approval, and 17 are first year applicants and will complete the approval process in the spring of 2016. In addition, RIDE staff conducts monitoring visits to review compliance with state Pre-K policies which expand upon CECE regulations. During 2015, RIDE staff worked to align the monitoring processes under CECE Approval to incorporate state Pre-K policies to create a comprehensive monitoring system. Additionally, CECE Approval and state Pre-K

monitoring are significant sources of data which are then analyzed and used to identify system level Pre-K quality improvement goals. The continuous quality improvement cycle used with the state Pre-K system includes the following components: ongoing data collection; data analysis and goal development; development of a quality improvement plan; and implementation of the quality improvement plan.

In January of 2015, RIDE began the process to select a professional development and technical assistance vendor to provide ongoing support to the state Pre-K system. In July, the Education Development Corporation, Inc. (EDC) was selected. EDC staff work closely with RIDE and with the Center for Early Learning Professionals, another EDC program in RI, to provide an array of professional development supports aligned to state Pre-K system goals and the additional program improvement goals of individual Pre-K programs. These supports are critical to ensuring the implementation of RI's high-quality state Pre-K programs. Finally, a request for proposals to identify a research partner to evaluate the state Pre-K program was developed in the fall of 2015 and is anticipated to be awarded in the spring of 2016. The formal evaluation planned for the state Pre-K program will also inform the state's efforts to implement its high quality vision for state Pre-K.

Consistent Access to Comprehensive Services

All state Pre-K programs are expected to ensure that families and Pre-K children have access to additional services they may need beyond the Pre-K educational program. This expectation is outlined within state Pre-K policies and in contract language. However, there are not uniform policies and procedures across Pre-K programs, resulting in inconsistent access in some areas. Additionally, some Pre-K providers report difficulty in identifying services which are available within the state since eligibility and availability can change. As a result, this area was prioritized for improvement within the state's Development Grant application. There are some services for which clear policies and procedures have been developed for the state Pre-K system, specifically the access to developmental screening through RI's Child Outreach system and connection to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for special education services. In the fall of 2015, RIDE staff began the process to conceptualize a state level system for ensuring consistent access to a wider array of comprehensive services regardless of Pre-K program location (e.g. community-based, public school, or Head Start program). This process involved specifying the overall goals, reviewing resource directories and referral practices that exist in RI, and creating a timeline for the development and implementation of a pilot of the new system in 2016.

In addition to the activities described above, RIDE staff took advantage of several technical assistance opportunities offered in 2015 which served as a catalyst for thinking about future activities. In November, staff attended the peer learning exchange focused on curriculum implementation. This session was useful in helping to frame state thinking on curriculum selection and implementation fidelity. These initial thoughts will be more fully explored during the 2016 grant year. In December, staff attended the peer learning exchange focused on Professional Learning Communities to Build Local Leadership Capacity. This session was useful in helping to frame thinking around how professional learning communities can support the development of Birth through Third Grade systems and support improved transition practices between Pre-K and Kindergarten. Both of these topics will be areas of focus for development at the state level during the 2016 grant year.

In summary, 2015 was a productive year. Additional RI children (260) were afforded access to high-quality, state Pre-K than would have been possible with the state expansion alone. A system of continuous quality improvement was formalized and implemented and will ensure that Pre-K programs meet or exceed all required quality expectations. Thoughtful planning was conducted to ensure that Pre-K programs will be better able to ensure that Pre-K children and their families will have more consistent access to comprehensive services and supports in addition to a high-quality, educational program.





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: RI PR/Award #: S419B150033

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.

Rhode Island's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) goal for the 2015-2016 school year as reported in the state's application was to enroll an additional 202 (7%) children in its high-quality state Pre-K program. The actual number of children enrolled is 260 which represents a percentage of 7.1%. This total exceeds the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure proposed by the state in its application. Rhode Island's Pre-K program is a mixed income model where some enrolled children are in families with incomes above 200% of poverty. The state's PDG application targets were set using estimates that 20% of children selected via lottery would be above 200% of poverty and therefore ineligible for federal PDG funding. The plan was to fund those children with state funds. In addition, per classroom funding was estimated using the maximum per classroom cost of \$200,000. In actuality, sub-grantee budgets for the 2015-2016 school year averaged closer to \$173,000. Both of these factors, allowed the state to enroll and fund more children using PDG funds.

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.

The Rhode Island State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Program has two eligibility requirements. Children must be 4 years of age by September 1 of the relevant school year (making them eligible to attend Kindergarten in the following school year) and must reside in a community where State Pre-K is offered. Since the RI State Pre-K Program is not yet funded to support universal access for all eligible four-year-old children, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) developed a recruitment plan and a child application lottery system to randomly select children from eligible communities to fill State Pre-K seats. The recruitment processes used seek to engage all families, including families of children with disabilities, in entering child lottery applications. To ensure families of children with disabilities are recruited, RIDE coordinates recruitment efforts with eligible community school districts, the RI Section 619 State Coordinator, the RI Special Education Advisory Committee, and

community organizations that support families of children with disabilities, (i.e. the Rhode Island Parent Information Network). As a result, as of December 1 2015, the State Pre-K enrollment percentage of eligible children with disabilities is 27% (71/260); significantly higher than the RI statewide average for four-year-olds of 8.11%, which is higher than the last available national average (FY12) of children with disabilities which is 6.4%. When the percentage is calculated based the total Pre-K enrollment, the state is serving 12% (71/594) of children with disabilities. This is still higher than both the state and national averages.

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

In February of 2015, the state posted its Request for Proposals to operate additional state Pre-K classrooms. A total of 12 agencies submitted applications. A total of 16 new Pre-K Sub-grantees were selected. Sub-grantees then began the process to recruit applications for enrollment. Beginning in April and extending through May 2015, RIDE led, managed and monitored the initial implementation of an online child lottery application system. This oversight included monitoring the efforts of sub-grantees to recruit and enroll hard-to-reach families within eligible communities. Families were recruited to enter applications for eligible children online or by submitting hard copy applications at any of the Pre-K sub-grantees in their community. On June 1, 2015, the child lottery was held, producing lists of selected children and waitlists for each sub-grantee. Sub-grantees then took their enrollment information and implemented required Pre-K lottery enrollment procedures; including age, residency, and income verification, to finalize their enrollment lists. As sub-grantees moved through this process, if families declined the opportunity to enroll their children, sub-grantees contacted RIDE to share this information and to confirm the next name on the waiting list. As of September 7th, a total of 33 state Pre-K sub-grantees, including the 18 new classrooms funded with PDG, serving 260 children, began providing Pre-K programming.

Rhode Island's recruitment and enrollment strategies have proven broadly effective in past years, but in 2015 some areas for improvement were identified. Specifically, the on-line lottery application used by the state did not operate as designed. Instead of removing children selected for Pre-K enrollment from waiting lists, the system left them listed which led the state to assume inflated numbers of children on Pre-K waiting lists. During initial enrollment and at times during the school year, there can be turnover resulting from families declining the program, moving or leaving the program due to other family circumstances. Because the waiting lists were actually under enrolled, waiting lists in several communities were exhausted, leaving open seats in Pre-K classrooms during the first months of school. The two communities most impacted by were Newport and Providence. In an effort to address this issue, RIDE staff facilitated the use of non-Pre-K waiting lists by impacted sub-grantees. These waiting lists included general waiting lists of community-based programs, Head Start, and public schools. RIDE requested permission to access each organization's existing waiting lists in order to contact families of any eligible children (or to confirm that the organization would reach out to families with the opportunity) and offer the opportunity to enroll their child in the State Pre-K program. The response to this request was very positive, yet in some instances, challenging to move to action. As a result of RIDE's coordination and the quick action, the current enrollment status is improved. For the rest of the 2015 - 2016 school year, RIDE will actively coordinate waiting lists within these communities and will facilitate the enrollment of children for any open seats. The other eligible communities continue to follow established enrollment policies in coordination with RIDE and enrollment is at full capacity. Concurrently, an internal team at RIDE is working to fix the online lottery application system. This work is currently in its final stages. RIDE is testing the repaired system in preparation for the FY17 child lottery in June 2016.

In addition, in 2016, RIDE will work on a more formalized plan to increase coordination of FY16 recruitment and enrollment procedures across early childhood education programs in the state. To begin this work, RIDE was supported by Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Technical Assistance to conduct a technical assistance call with Connecticut's PDG Family Engagement Specialist. The content of the call was very helpful. Connecticut recommended implementing very specific recruitment planning with sub-grantees and more intense state monitoring of recruitment activities, particularly in relation to categories of Eligible Children that appear to be underrepresented in recruitment data. An anecdotal review of RI child lottery selected and waiting lists indicate that our current recruitment efforts are not effectively engaging certain categories of hard-to-reach families. While our recruitment strategies appear to be effective when seeking to enroll Eligible Children with disabilities in the State Pre-K program, other categories of Eligible Children could benefit from further attention and more

specific recruitment planning. These categories are: children who are homeless, children who are in the child welfare system and children who are English Language Learners. RIDE is acting on these recommendations and plans to develop new recruitment and monitoring procedures and to train sub-grantees in these procedures by April 2016. RIDE has also discussed recruitment data with the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families (RI's child welfare agency) and has developed a coordinated plan to include recruitment specifically focused on Eligible Children in foster care.

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.

Using a combination of state and federal PDG funds, Rhode Island's state Pre-K program expanded, as planned, from 17 classrooms to a total of 33 classrooms serving 594 children. The total number of sub-grantees by community is outlined in the chart below:

Community	Number of Classrooms	Number of children	Percentage of Total Children
Central Falls	3	54	9%
Cranston	2	36	6%
East Providence	1	18	3%
Newport	3	54	9%
Pawtucket	2	36	6%
Providence	11	198	33%
Warwick	3	54	9%
West Warwick	3	54	9%
Woonsocket	5	90	15%

In the state's PDG application, it was anticipated that the PDG funds in combination with additional state funds would result in a total enrollment of 558 children. In the application, per classroom funding was estimated using the maximum per classroom cost of \$200,000. In actuality, sub-grantee budgets for the 2015-2016 school year averaged closer to \$173,000. This allowed the state to fund additional classrooms and enroll more children.

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.

Rhode Island does not have an official definition of school readiness. It has identified "school readiness" within in its RI Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) by outlining expectations for children's knowledge and development at the end of preschool, or at age 60 months. Within the state Pre-K program, formative assessment is used to assess and monitor children's progress in reaching these expectations/learning goals outlined in the RI Early Learning Standards. Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) is the formative assessment tool used to collect this data. This tool has been used since the start of the state Pre-K program in 2009. Both the RIELDS and TSG address all the Essential Domains of Learning. Specifically, RIELDS outlines learning goals in the following domains: Physical Health and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development (including Language Development of Dual Language Learners), Literacy, Cognitive Development, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Creative Arts. TSG outlines learning expectations within the following areas: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, The Arts, and English Language Acquisition. In 2015, the state completed an alignment document for state Pre-K which identifies a specific score on each dimension of Teaching Strategies GOLD with the corresponding learning expectation at the 60

month level. This document outlines the benchmarks which indicate a child has met the end of Pre-K “school readiness” expectations.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is used by all Pre-K teachers on an ongoing basis to collect child assessment information and to make preliminary decisions about child performance along the TSG continuum. Twice a year, in November and June, final checkpoints are completed. These checkpoints summarize a children's performance in each of the Essential Domains. The June checkpoint data will be used to understand the “school readiness” of Pre-K children, including disaggregated data on specific subgroups. This assessment is conducted on all children enrolled in state Pre-K. In order to support the quality of this assessment data, Rhode Island has developed several components to support its efforts. First, a set of workforce knowledge and competencies were created specific to the use of the TSG system by teachers and program administrators. Second, a state level monitoring system was designed to provide ongoing assurance that the formative system is being used to fidelity. The monitoring system addresses: Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) child assessment baseline data entry, TSG final checkpoints, and State Pre-K sub-grantee engagement in professional development activities which focus on effective implementation of TSG administrator- and teacher-level defined procedures. Third, monitoring data from the previous year identified formative assessment as an area requiring additional focus and so specific goals were identified as part of the Pre-K continuous quality improvement process. Those goals are: 1) achieve reliability on Teaching Strategies GOLD and 2) use Teaching Strategies GOLD with fidelity. In order to support the achievement of those goals, intensive supports for the staff administering the assessment are provided by the state's professional development provider, EDC. In 2015, 75 staff were trained in an all-day workshop which focused on planning for and using TSG and its reports to understand children's knowledge and skills at Pre-K entry, to plan for and implement high-quality curriculum and individualized instructional supports, and to prepare to collect and analyze end-of-year data to determine if children meet the expectations outlined in the RI Early Learning and Development Standards. In addition, 8 on-site technical assistance visits were conducted to provide additional supports to sub-grantees in using the system and analyzing data, and 13 Educational Coordinators participated in a 3-hour community of practice session focused on understanding and using data at the program level. In 2016, Rhode Island will continue to support programs in collecting data that are accurate and reliable, in ensuring all teachers and education coordinators establish reliability on the Teaching Strategies GOLD system, and by monitoring use of the system to identify areas that need additional support. At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, programs will provide data identifying children's growth on the TSG learning trajectories, using specific scores rather than “widely held expectations.” This will provide the State with a clear picture of the progress made by children in each classroom.

In addition, Rhode Island is participating in the K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium, led by North Carolina, in order to achieve goals outlined in the state's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant related to piloting a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The Consortium is developing a formative assessment system which includes an embedded Kindergarten Entry Assessment, which Rhode Island is calling a Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP). A full pilot of the assessment is scheduled for the spring of 2016, followed by a multi-state field test in the fall of 2016. Thus, a completed KEP will not be ready for implementation in Rhode Island until the fall of 2017. Currently, the plan is for the KEP to be implemented voluntarily. Once implemented, KEP data will be included in Rhode Island's statewide longitudinal data system. While it will one day be possible to link a child's enrollment in Pre-K to their Kindergarten Entry Profile, this is not the sole source of data RI will use to determine the number and percentage of Pre-K children who are ready for kindergarten. Instead, RI will use the Early Childhood Education Data System being constructed under its Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant to best understand all of the variables which support kindergarten readiness. Rhode Island will continue to use formative assessment data at the end of the Pre-K year to describe children's progress within the Pre-K year as it relates to meeting “school readiness” expectations outlined at the 60 month benchmark in the RIELDS.

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.

N/A

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.

Rhode Island's 2015 efforts to ensure quality focused on 1) coordinating and improving the systematic implementation of state monitoring, 2) supplementing existing technical assistance supports for continuous quality improvement, and 3) implementing a rigorous evaluation of the state Pre-K.

Coordinate and improve the systematic implementation of state monitoring The CECE regulations are the program expectations which state Pre-K programs are required to meet within their first year of Pre-K operation. These regulations meet or exceed national accreditation standards and benchmarks for high-quality Pre-K. The CECE Approval process is a progressive approval process and contains the following components: written application, facilities visit, objective classroom observations using ECERS and CLASS, and an on-site verification visit. The process includes comprehensive review of current policies and procedures that address: Physical facilities; Health, safety, and nutrition; Enrollment and staffing; Staff qualifications and ongoing professional development; Administration; Curriculum; Child assessment; and Family engagement. In addition, CECE Approved classrooms must achieve a minimum of an average score of 5 on the ECERS-R in order to receive approval, a State Pre-K contractual deliverable. CLASS assessments are also conducted, and although the state does not currently require a benchmark score for CECE approval or as part of the State Pre-K contract. The CECE Approval process results in a comprehensive monitoring of Pre-K program operations at both a program/school and classroom level. In 2015, new sub-grantees worked over the summer months and through early fall 2015 to develop their initial CECE Approval applications. In addition, facilities and objective observational assessments (ECERS and CLASS) were conducted in each new classroom. Sub-grantees then developed and submitted technical assistance action plans which delineated their plans to address ECERS and CLASS findings. Throughout the CECE Approval process, program information was shared with the State Pre-K staff specialist to ensure all Pre-K quality benchmarks were being met. The CECE Approval process continues for these programs with onsite verification visits, and if needed, repeated quality observational measures occurring in the March and April 2016. In order to ensure state capacity to monitor during the PDG expansion, RIDE will contract with independent consultants to assist with CECE Approval. An RFP to secure consultant assistance was posted in November of 2015. East Bay Collaborative was selected as the state fiscal agent to support Pre-K monitoring in January of 2016. Following issuance of a state purchase order, consultants will be hired and trained to follow all monitoring protocols and procedures, including conducting on-site monitoring visits and desk reviews of key documents related to compliance with program standards and providing extensive, written feedback to programs. It is anticipated that consultants will be hired and trained in March 2016 and begin monitoring in April 2016. In addition to CECE program regulations, state Pre-K sub-grantees are required to comply with additional expectations which are specific to the implementation of a state Pre-K classroom. State Pre-K policies

delineate those additional expectations and cover the following areas: child enrollment, staffing, attendance, child assessment, comprehensive services and interventions, grants and contracting, budget development and fiscal monitoring, state Pre-K Continuous Program Quality Improvement System, technical assistance and professional development supports, monitoring Pre-K program performance, and program evaluation. In 2015, RIDE State Pre-K and CECE specialists met to design one streamlined monitoring process that addresses both CECE Program Regulations and state Pre-K policies. A revised State Pre-K/CECE application, approval and monitoring timeline and process which streamlines CECE Approval and Pre-K policy monitoring, is currently under review by the RIDE Associate Director of Early Childhood. Once the process is in final draft form, RIDE will conduct a focus group with sub-grantees to gather feedback and inform final revisions. The new coordinated State Pre-K/CECE application, approval and monitoring process will be rolled out by webinar to all sub-grantees with implementation anticipated to begin in March 2016.

Supplement existing technical assistance supports for continuous quality improvement Once selected as a state Pre-K sub-grantee, all Pre-K Programs engage in a program-level continuous quality improvement process. As outlined in CECE regulations, every state Pre-K Program must engage in a comprehensive self-assessment process *“to determine its compliance with the structural and educational program standards contained within the RIDE CECE Standards for Preschool Program approval, as well as any other standards and regulations governing the program and the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and families. This assessment shall include a review and analysis of program-wide child assessment information that reveals patterns and trends. The process shall involve families and staff”* (RIDE CECE Standard 5.14). RIDE has historically provided intensive technical assistance (TA) to all programs during their first year in the state Pre-K Program. The primary purpose of the technical assistance was to focus on supporting programs in successfully implementing the State Pre-K policies and CECE Program Regulations, and supporting improvement in areas identified through program evaluation. In the past, RIDE used a pool of approved independent consultants to provide this individualized technical assistance. In 2015, the PDG grant afforded the state the opportunity to conceptualize and formalize a state-level continuous quality improvement plan supported by a variety of effective supports and interventions provided by a professional development partner agency. In July 2015, RIDE awarded a contract to the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) to provide professional development and technical assistance (PDTA) services to the State Pre-K sub-grantees. At the same time, RIDE compiled available State Pre-K program data (child developmental screening data, formative assessment data, classroom quality observational measures data and program monitoring data) to inform its newly conceptualized continuous quality improvement (QI) process. This analysis led to the development of FY16 State Pre-K program Quality Improvement (QI) goals and associated measures. Program- and teacher-level QI goals target the following areas: child assessment systems and formative assessment practices, coordination of comprehensive services for State Pre-K children and families in need, provision of data-informed RI Early Learning and Development Standards-based curriculum which emphasizes early teaching of social emotional competencies, and measurable child outcomes. Once the goals and measures were identified, EDC drafted an aligned program quality improvement plan and an FY16 PDTA Work Plan. With the Program QI Plan information in hand, EDC's TA consultants began site visits to conduct individual needs assessments with Pre-K Program sub-grantees. During these initial visits, program- and classroom-level improvement plans were aligned with the State Pre-K Program QI plan and action steps were identified to address all goals. With all improvement plans in place, TA consultation continued with monthly technical assistance visits. The monthly visits included review and planning related to the required State Pre-K/CECE application, approval and monitoring process. EDC presented its first quarterly PDTA report to RIDE detailing sub-grantees' progress toward Quality Improvement Plan goals in December of 2015. The State Pre-K Specialist meets monthly with EDC to monitor each State Pre-K Program sub-grantee's ongoing activities, as well as to formulate responsive PDTA activities. Thus far, responsive PDTA activities have included: the development of monthly communities of practice meetings for State Pre-K program administrators, a peer mentoring program for first year teachers, education coordinators and administrators, and onsite program- and classroom-level technical assistance focused on addressing system's coordination and classroom

strategies to support children exhibiting challenging behaviors.

Implement a rigorous external evaluation of the state pre-k program

Rhode Island is committed to evaluating its state Pre-K Program to determine the impact on child outcomes. In 2014, the state worked with NIEER to develop a plan for external evaluation using a randomized control trial (RCT) design. This design uses the “gold standard” in research to garner the true effects of the state Pre-K. This evaluation will provide Rhode Island with robust program quality and child outcome data to inform revisions to Pre-K Program policies or practices and quality improvement areas and supports needed.

RIDE has developed, and is currently awaiting the RI Division of Purchasing's posting of a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will support contracting with a qualified researcher to conduct the evaluation using the proposed randomized control trial study design with a longitudinal component. The evaluation plan's potential components are: 1) investigation and documentation of program quality, 2) determination of the short- and long-term effects of participation in these programs on children's early learning outcomes and 3) comparison of the costs of the program to the savings that are attributable to the outcomes of the state Pre-K program. RIDE anticipates 1) reviewing vendor proposals in March 2) completing contracting in May and in collaboration with the vendor 3) developing a finalized program evaluation implementation timeline and work plan by July 2016.

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.

Rhode Island uses a combination of stakeholder-guided Pre-K program design, state regulations, competitive selection of sub-grantees, contracting, and monitoring to ensure that all Pre-K programs meet the structural elements specified in the Pre-School Expansion Grant requirements. As one of the newer states to develop a state Pre-K Program, Rhode Island was able to learn from the experiences of states which had implemented Pre-K before Rhode Island launched its Pre-K Program in 2009. The resounding message of these Pre-K pioneers was that it was easier to increase access than to increase quality. This wisdom and the significant research evidence that only high-quality programs produce child outcomes were key factors in the state's decision to implement a Pre-K design that prioritized and supported quality structural requirements. Thus, Rhode Island's Pre-K Program model meets all of the criteria outlined in the Federal Definition of a High Quality Preschool Program. Rhode Island selects all of its Pre-K Program sub-grantees through a competitive Request for Proposals process targeted to the highest need communities in the State. This ensures that Pre-K sub-grantees are programs/schools which are best positioned to meet and maintain the high-quality requirements of RI's Pre-K model. The summary below outlines how the state monitors each required element:

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 alternate 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:

Required in contracting and as criteria for CECE Approval, regulations specify: Teacher: BA with RI Certification in Early Childhood Education Teacher Assistant: minimum of 12 credits in Early Childhood Education. All programs are all also required to have an Education Coordinator who is also a certified Early Childhood Educator (CECE 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

High-quality professional development for all staff: Required as criteria for CECE Approval, regulations specify: The program shall assure that each teacher/teacher assistant/Education Coordinator shall have an individual professional development plan to complete at least 20 hours of professional development related to the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies appropriate to his/her position. This plan shall be developed and updated annually as part of each staff person's annual performance evaluation. (CECE 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) Additionally, the state has contracted with a professional development partner to tailor specific support to Pre-K sub-grantees.

A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1: Required in contracting and as criteria for CECE Approval: regulations specify: Staff:child ratio of 1:9 (CECE 3.4)

A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a) of this definition: Required in contracting and as criteria for CECE Approval, regulations specify: Class size of no more than 18 with at least one qualified teacher in each classroom (CECE 3.4 and 3.5)

A full-day program: Required in contracting: Contracts specify Pre-K programs must be 6 hour each day, 180 days each year - with coordinated wraparound child care

Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities: Required as criteria for CECE Approval, regulations specify: The program shall welcome children and families of all abilities, modify the program, make reasonable accommodations, and collaborate with key partners to **support all children**. The program shall have a written plan which describes the

process for supporting all children including, but not limited to, those with developmental delays and disabilities, mental health diagnosis and behavioral challenges. (CECE 5.12, 5.13) For children requiring special education services, **early childhood educators and special education providers shall work collaboratively**, and in **partnership with families**, in supporting successful participation in inclusive environments and in ensuring that each partner has access to the necessary information and supports. (CECE 7.13)

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: Required as criteria for CECE Approval: Program-level and classroom-level standards for Curriculum (6.1 - 6.23) encompass all components of the federal definition (CECE 6.1-6.22)

Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities: Required as criteria for CECE Approval, regulations specify: The program shall welcome children and families of all abilities, modify the program, make reasonable accommodations, and collaborate with key partners to **support all children**. The program shall have a written plan which describes the process for supporting all children including, but not limited to, those with developmental delays and disabilities, mental health diagnosis and behavioral challenges. (CECE 5.12, 5.13). Teachers shall **use child assessment information** to: Identify children's strengths, learning styles and developmental levels; Inform classroom instruction, make sound decisions about individual and group curriculum content, inform teaching approaches, guide personal interactions, and inform the design of the children's learning environment; Identify children who might benefit from additional or increased supports and/or special services; Document and implement a plan for each child that supports his or her inclusion and success; and, Share information on each child's progress with families and other authorized parties. (CECE 7.12)

Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff: Scored as a competitive component in State Pre--K selection, also monitored during state budget approval during contracting, as outlined in state Pre-K policies

Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement: Required in State Pre-K policies; RFP to select research partner to be posted in early 2016

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: Required in State Pre-K policies, which specify, at a minimum: Must participate in food program, provide wrap around child care, ensure screening, work with LEAs

Evidence-based health and safety standards: Required as criteria for CECE Approval: regulations specify: All CECE approved programs are required to comply with either DCYF child care licensing regulations or, if located in a public or private PK-12 school, with RIDE Basic Education Program (BEP) Regulations, G--14-4 "Ensuring a Safe and Healthy Physical Environment," in addition to CECE Program standards which build upon the core approvals - DCYF or BEP to ensure consistency across settings.

A comprehensive system of programmatic monitoring is used to ensure compliance with the contracted deliverables, state Pre-K policies and CECE Approval regulations. This system of monitoring begins with the sub-grantee contract which includes required assurances and specified deliverables. Sub-grantees are awarded contracts for a period of three years; however, the state reserves the right to defund a sub-grantee for non-performance with regard to either programmatic or fiscal requirements. Any defunded programs will be re-competed in the annual RFP process used to select additional classrooms. Additionally, at the end of each three year grant cycle, sub-grantees are required to re-compete, regardless of past performance, so as to ensure the state's ongoing ability to select the highest quality classrooms for participation in the state Pre-K program. Once selected, as specified in sub-grantees contract, the sub-grantee is required to: "Implement a RIDE comprehensive

early childhood education (CECE) standards provisionally or fully approved program for a minimum of 180 days for at least 6 hours per day. This includes: submitting an application by the start of the school year, completing the approval process and maintaining all program-level and classroom-level standards as specified in the 2013 RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Programs Standards for Approval, including the specific staffing qualifications as identified in this RFP." RIDE CECE program standards detail comprehensive expectations for high-quality educational programming and align with Development Grant requirements. The approval process includes analysis of program level documents; onsite visits to assess facilities, classroom environment, teacher-child interactions, and classroom level compliance with CECE standards. In the initial approval year, it is possible for a program to receive three to four onsite visits. Approvals are granted for a maximum of three years, but annual renewal requires the submission of updated documents and assurances that classroom quality and compliance with CECE standards are maintained. In approval years two and three, an on-site monitoring visit will be conducted to verify that compliance with CECE standards continues. Additionally, as state Pre-K program sub-grantees, document review and on-site monitoring will be conducted to ensure compliance with state Pre-K policies which extend beyond CECE standards. Examples of this include policies regarding the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD for formative child assessment, child enrollment and attendance, participation in state pre-k program evaluation and on-going technical assistance. During the 2015 grant year, these two systems of programmatic monitoring, CECE and state Pre-K, were aligned and coordinated to reduce any burden for sub-grantees while ensuring that compliance with programmatic expectations is maintained. In addition, the state has contracted with the Educational Development Corporation, Inc. to provide targeted professional development and technical assistance support to pre-K sub-grantees. The data from monitoring and approval reviews was used to inform the targeted supports provided to sub-grantees via EDC to ensure high-quality performance. At this time, of the 33 state Pre-K classrooms, 1 is fully approved, 13 have received provisional approval, 2 have probationary approval, and 17 are first year applicants and will complete the approval process in the spring of 2016.

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.

Rhode Island's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) goal for the 2015-2016 school year was to add 14 additional preschool classrooms using federal funding from the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) resulting in a total of 31 RI Pre-Kindergarten classrooms funded with state and federal funds. As a result of per classroom amounts being lower than budgeted, RI was able to fund 16 additional preschool classrooms for a total of 33 classrooms. These additional PDG funded classrooms allowed 260 more eligible children to enroll in the state's high-quality Pre-K program. This total exceeds the target set in Year 1 in the state's application. There are no changes for Years 2-4 targets at this time. The estimated cost per slot in the state's application was \$13,889. Actual cost per child is estimated at \$10,167. The per-classroom budgeted amount in the state's application reflected a maximum classroom budget of \$190,000, plus \$10,000 for professional development supports, which allowed for salaries for teachers with experience. Actual classroom budgets for the 2015-2016 sub-grantees were on average around \$173,000, reflecting beginning teachers with fewer years of experience. Over the course of the grant, the state expects classroom costs to increase as teacher salaries increase.

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.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has established processes for selecting and contracting, monitoring, and working collaboratively with its Pre-K sub-grantees in order to ensure that each sub-grantee is effectively implementing the state Pre-K program. The state's role is well-defined and extends beyond the provision of funds. Specifically, the state's plan for partnering with sub-grantees includes 1) ensuring the effective start-up and implementation of state Pre-K classrooms, and 2) working collaboratively with sub-grantees to coordinate with other state and local systems, and to ensure strong partnerships to provide comprehensive professional-, family- and program-level services.

Effective start-up and implementation of state Pre-K classrooms

In January 2015, RIDE released a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) that communicated State Pre-K Program funding policies within its program selection criteria and competitive process. In February, RIDE selected programs in high-need communities based on their ability to demonstrate that proposed Pre-K classrooms meet high-quality program standards. Once selection was made, RIDE managed sub-grantee contracting and budgeting, child recruitment and enrollment, and supported sub-grantees in opening the FY15 Pre-K school year. All activities are briefly described next.

From April - July 2015, with budgeting completed, and contracting in process, RIDE, in coordination with State Pre-K sub-grantees, managed and implemented the state child lottery. State- and program-level outreach activities included: initial implementation of an online child lottery application system which was available in English and Spanish, and coordinated recruitment efforts with eligible community school districts, the RI Section 619 State Coordinator, the RI Special Education Advisory Committee, as well as community organizations that support families of children with disabilities, homeless families, families whose primary language is not English. Sub-grantee outreach also focused on community businesses including laundry mats, convenience stores, and churches.

Early in July, to support sub-grantees' successful and efficient enrollment activities, RIDE staff established and provided implementation guidance for child enrollment and as well as income verification policies and procedures. In July and August, State Pre-K sub-grantees commenced with the required enrollment and income verification procedures. This process proceeded with ongoing communication via email and phone calls between the State Pre-K specialist and the State Pre-K sub-grantees throughout the summer months.

In July and August 2015, with the support of the RIDE CECE Specialist, all newly selected and existing FY15 State Pre-K program sub-grantees actively began the process of applying for Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program Approval for Preschools. Using the self-assessment information, sub-grantees reviewed and revised their program quality improvement plans, program policy narratives, began purchasing classroom materials and equipment, and, as necessary, hiring qualified staff. Throughout the summer months, RIDE CECE and State Pre-K Specialists monitored all sub-grantees' progress in completing CECE approval requirements and in completing contractual deliverables related to child lottery recruitment, child enrollment, family income verification and program preparation for the opening of the school year in September 2015. Work also focused specifically on child assessments, data sharing, and targeted professional development. In preparation for the FY15 school year, RIDE contracted with and funded all state Pre-K Program child assessment

portfolios through Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), additionally providing all contracts and policies describing the state and sub-grantee responsibilities for and access to state Pre-K Program- and child-level assessment data. Professional development and technical assistance was also secured through the state's contract with Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). Among the FY15 State Pre-K sub-grantees, all but one had experience using TSG as a formative assessment tool as part of their assessment system. To ensure effective use of TSG in all State Pre-K programs, EDC, under the direction of and in collaboration with RIDE staff, conducted a Pre-K orientation half-day session with all State Pre-K sub-grantees in August 2015. During this session, RIDE staff presented an introduction to the use of TSG with guidance on startup activities and immediate technical assistance. All existing State Pre-K sub-grantees also received startup support. In October 2015, EDC held a full day professional learning day, again in collaboration with RIDE, to support sub-grantee staff in data literacy and in effective implementation of TSG in relation to State Pre-K program measurable child outcomes. Following this professional development, EDC provided ongoing technical assistance to sub-grantees to support effective implementation of program assessment plans. Sub-grantees have also integrated specific professional development/technical assistance (PDTA) series into their program quality improvement plans. The PDTA series' design links knowledge-building experiences with practice implementation in the Pre-K classrooms. In November 2015, RIDE created online program- and classroom-level TSG monitoring reports. This data was shared with all sub-grantees and EDC to support program quality improvement work. Data was also used to inform analysis of progress on goals within the State-level Program quality improvement plan.

Collaboration with sub-grantees to coordinate with other state and local systems and strong partnerships to provide comprehensive professional-, family- and program-level services

During September - December 2015, the State Pre-K Specialist supported new and existing State Pre-K sub-grantees in establishing strong partnerships and effective communication related to child referrals for special education with their local school districts and in relation to developmental screening with local Child Outreach providers. Meetings were held within each Eligible community, bringing Pre-K sub-grantees together with school district professionals to ensure communication was effective. The State 619 Coordinator and the Pre-K PDTA consultants were also present at each meeting and continued to support State Pre-K sub-grantees in maintaining and strengthening these coordinated systems of supports and services for families and children in need. The State 619 Coordinator also provided support and technical assistance to the State Pre-K sub-grantees when circumstances arose that required specific consultation. During this same time period, many of the established State Pre-K sub-grantees also participated in a pilot project to expand itinerant special education service delivery. Sub-grantees and partnering school districts collaboratively participated in multiple trainings and onsite technical assistance visits to improve the provision of special education services for State Pre-K children within their natural and least restrictive environment - the State Pre-Kindergarten program classroom. Again, RIDE coordinated the attendance of State Pre-K PDTA consultants in order to support this important work for children with disabilities in the State Pre-K program. Additionally, in another project, RIDE began a new partnership with Bradley Hospital to conceptualize and implement a mental health consultation model which is fully integrated into the early care and education system of supports to early learning programs. This model is called SUCCESS, Supporting Children's Competencies in Emotional and Social Skills, and consists of intervention level services provided directly to children and families in early care and education settings in coordination with promotion and prevention level services supporting high-quality educational practices provided by the Center for Early Learning Professionals. State Pre-K programs were among the settings prioritized during the "soft launch" phase of this new system. In all, 17 children received SUCCESS services prior to December 2015. These services include program and classroom -level assessment, including conversations with program staff and children's caregivers. The data results in feedback and recommendations to program staff and families regarding consultation findings and leads to the development of collaborative action plans. Follow-up supports to integrate consultation recommendations, include supporting staff to assess, plan for, and intervene with challenging classroom behavior, helping families get connected to community supports and

services, and classroom- and program- level consultation to enhance the child care center's capacities to respond to children's social, emotional, and behavioral health needs. Despite these strong collaborations, the state is aware that Pre-K grantee awareness of and access to a comprehensive set of supports and interventions is variable and that it can be difficult to reliably connect families to a wider variety of services, even when they exist within the same organization. Consequently, the state's Expansion Grant application also included a plan to expand a referral system developed under its RTT-ELC grant for use by primary care providers engaged in developmental screening and referral of children B-3 years old. In 2015, the state contracted with a facilitator to support the development of a conceptual design for a comprehensive resource and referral system. This process is described in more detail in the state's response to Competitive Priority 2.

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).

Maintaining Progress within B-5: Under RTTELC, significant amount of progress was made to create alignment within the B-5 system. Learning expectations for children ages B-5 (RIELDS) were finalized, related professional development support was revised and access was expanded. Expectations for workforce knowledge and competencies were developed for multiple roles in the early learning system. Regulations and quality standards guiding early learning programs were aligned to create a cohesive pathway toward increased program quality. Rhode Island also implemented two initiatives designed to impact all children regardless of access to early learning. Resources and supports on children's learning and development were created for families. A developmental screening campaign targeted to families of children B-5 was implemented. Strategies to increase rates of developmental screening were enhanced and expanded. Rhode Island progressed in the development of the Early Care and Education Data System (ECEDS) which integrates data from multiple state agencies, community early learning programs, and the early learning workforce to assist the state in answering critical policy questions about early learning programs, the early learning workforce, and children's access to supports, services, and programs. In 2015, support for the use of RIELDS expanded beyond the ongoing professional development supports provided to early learning workforce. The University of Rhode Island completed the integration of RIELDS professional development concepts into its coursework. RI College and the Community College of RI will complete their integration in the spring of 2016. The Department of Education partnered with the lead agency for IDEA Part C, to develop a training series on the RIELDS for Early Intervention providers. A partnership with the Department of Health was also formed in order to integrate use of the RIELDS into two home visiting programs, Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers. A revised version of RIELDS training was piloted with teachers holding RI Early Childhood Teacher Certification, including K-3 teachers. Draft workforce knowledge and competency (WKC) framework for Administrators/Educational Coordinators were completed. These competencies will be finalized in 2016 after a review by national and local experts and stakeholders. Once finalized, the Administrator/Education Coordinator WKC will provide a framework for alignment of professional development and technical assistance activities available for leaders supervising early childhood programs and schools. Rhode Island also made progress on increasing access to high-quality programs by expanding the numbers of early learning programs participating in the BrightStars TQRIS and achieving CECE Approval. In 2011, only 93 programs were participating in the state's QRIS. Currently, close to 700 programs are participating. These initiatives ensure that within the B-5 system, there is a common framework and shared understanding of the learning and development of children B-5 and how the knowledge and skills of

the workforce and the quality of early learning programs work collectively to support improved child outcomes. State Pre-K programs, regardless of their type (e.g. child care, Head Start, public preschool), participate within this B-5 system. Their curriculum and assessment practices are aligned to RIELDS. They ensure all enrolled children receive a developmental screening. Their teachers complete individual professional development plans and access professional development that is aligned to workforce knowledge and competencies. They participate in the state's program quality continuum by applying for both Brightstars and CECE Approval.

Ensuring a Seamless Transition into K-3: The second component of creating an aligned Birth through Third Grade continuum involves sustaining the impacts of the B-5 system and encouraging a seamless transition into the K-3 system. Rhode Island's plan for making progress includes aligning expectations, policies, and practices in key areas, including effective early childhood formative assessment practices within the B-5 system that align with expectations for K-3 formative assessment initiatives; the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that aligns with early learning and development standards and CCSS; and the connection of the Early Care and Education Data system to the Statewide Longitudinal Data system to link information about children, teachers, and programs B-5 with K-12 data. In 2015, Rhode Island made significant progress toward supporting effective early childhood formative assessment practices by developing a set of training modules. These modules address the following topics: Using Documentation and Assessment to Support Children's Learning; Best Practices in Assessment in ECE; Scaffolding to develop problem-solving and self-help skills in young children; Supporting early learning and development through formative assessment; Observing children: Gathering and analyzing information to inform curriculum decision making; Portfolios: Tell the story of assessment and learning; Authentic Assessment in Infant & Toddler Care Settings: Review of Recent Research; Beyond Outcomes: How ongoing Assessment Supports Children's Learning and Leads to Meaningful Curriculum; Family Engagement and ongoing child assessment. The modules were aligned with the state's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Educators and with training modules developed for use in K-12 classrooms and will be used as a reference for future professional development specific to supporting the use of specific to supporting the use of the Kindergarten Entry Profile in development as part of the state's involvement with the North Carolina K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium. Professional development supports within the K-3 Consortium have not been finalized, but the state's plan is to ensure that all formative assessment efforts Birth through Grade 3 have a cohesive message. The completed modules were transferred to the Center for Early Learning Professionals and will be offered to the early learning community on an ongoing basis. Rhode Island continues to participate in the K-3 Assessment Consortium led by North Carolina. In 2015, Rhode Island kindergarten teachers participated in spring and fall pilots of the Kindergarten Entry Profile. In addition, the state began the development of a Kindergarten Entry Profile Implementation plan. A consultant was hired to gather information from other states and from the kindergarten stakeholder community to inform the implementation plan which will guide the introduction and roll-out of the Kindergarten Entry Profile once it is finalized. Information gathered during district visits to recruit kindergarten teachers for the KEP pilot and information gathered via focus groups with kindergarten teachers to support the implementation plan identified some clear areas of where the alignment of expectations, policies, and practices in kindergarten and those in place in high-quality B-5 classrooms could be better aligned. Key areas where alignment could be improved included developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result, the state began exploring ways to improve alignment between B-5 and K. A first step was to compare the expectations within the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers with the expectations outlined in the RI version of the Danielson Framework used with RI's educator evaluation system. This exercise revealed a good degree of alignment. Next, the state tested out the use of the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) K-3 with a small group (N=5) of kindergarten teachers to gauge whether the tool provided constructive, actionable feedback on teacher instructional practices. The state then conceptualized a technical assistance opportunity and released an RFP to select a professional development vendor to work with a small group of districts to

engage in professional development and technical assistance in one of two areas: transition into kindergarten and high-quality instruction and assessment in kindergarten classrooms. The technical assistance work will begin in 2016 and will likely include opportunities to address the following topics; understanding the RIELDS, developmentally appropriate instruction tied to standards, early childhood formative assessment, family engagement, and effective transition practices. The feedback from this initial exploration will be used to inform supports in later years focused on alignment between B-5 and K-3. Finally, in 2015 the development of the ECEDS saw significant progress. The Workforce Registry component and the Program Portal were launched. This allows the state to collect basic information on the workforce and allows early learning programs to enter program information to enhance the information provided to families via the state data systems. The state data consists of program operation and quality information from three separate state agencies which is funneled into one early learning program search so that families have all relevant information in one place, regardless the type of early learning program. In order to launch the Program Portal, data connections were made between state agency data systems at the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Children, Youth, and Families, and with the state's QRIS vendor. Additionally, connections for program data were made within the Department of Education between ECEDS and the Department's Statewide Longitudinal Data System. In summary, through the support of the existing RTT-ELC grant, the state continues to make progress on developing an aligned Birth through Grade Three Continuum.

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*.

In state fiscal year 2016, Rhode Island contributed an additional \$1,000,000 in state funds for a total Pre-K investment of \$3,950,000 to support the implementation of its federal Development Grant plan. RI will continue to advocate for additional state funding for the Pre-K program so that all classrooms can be sustained when the federal funding ends.

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.

Rhode Island's plan to address the goals in this section is to ensure that all enrolled Pre-K children and their families have access to a more seamless progression of supports and interventions. Expectations for Rhode Island Pre-K programs responsibilities in this area are specified in state Pre-K policies and within Pre-K contract language. State Pre-K policy states: *Since the state Pre-K program exists within the state and local social support systems for RI families, Pre-K program staff are responsible for supporting and implementing effective transitions for children in and out of the Pre-K, provide access to/coordination of before and after care if needed, and engaging in community collaboration with social service agencies or other relevant organizations (school districts, community mental health providers, health centers). State Pre-K administrators are responsible for building community linkages and for actively coordinating Pre-K family supports with other professionals when needed.* Pre-K contract language includes the following task: *Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners and seek resources as needed to ensure full support of children and families experiencing crisis and/or special health care needs and to fully include children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.* Pre-K monitoring is used to ensure that sub-grantees are meeting these expectations. Funds for state Pre-K are allocated for the educational program children attend and are not sufficient to maintain a high-quality educational program and directly provide access to supports and interventions outside the scope of general educational interventions. Instead, it is the expectation that programs will develop collaborative partnerships with options available in the community. During grant year 2015, a good deal of coordination was provided to ensure access to the following components: before and after school care, full day kindergarten, developmental screening and early childhood special education, and mental health consultation. State Pre-K policies require that all sub-grantees either make before and after school care available to children enrolled in Pre-K OR develop collaborative partnerships with agencies to provide such care as needed by enrolled families. Each Pre-K sub-grantee's compliance with this requirement is reviewed as part of the state monitoring system. In 2015-2016 in Rhode Island, full day kindergarten was available in all but two (Cranston and

Warwick) Pre-K communities. However, a gubernatorial requirement instituted this year requires that districts choosing to draw down state education aid provide access to full day kindergarten beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. Thus, full day kindergarten will be provided in all districts and children currently enrolled in Pre-K will have access to a full day program in their kindergarten year. Another well-established collaboration within the state Pre-K program is the connection to Child Outreach developmental screening programs administered by the local school districts. This year, state Pre-K programs were required to ensure that all enrolled children were screened by October 31st, or within 45 days of school entry for children who join the program after standard enrollment. The screening covers five areas: vision, hearing, speech/language, general development, and social and emotional development. Child Outreach screening programs use standardized screening tools and follow state protocols regarding re-screening, screening of English Language learners, and referral to early childhood special education. As of December 2015, all children enrolled in state Pre-K had completed screening with 221 (N=594) requiring rescreening and 66 resulting in referral to early childhood special education. Additionally, state staff support collaborations between Pre-K classrooms and district special education services to ensure that to the maximum extent possible that identified special education services are integrated into the child's Pre-K experience within the Pre-K classroom. Finally, the Department of Education began a new partnership with Bradley Hospital to conceptualize and implement a mental health consultation model which is fully integrated into the early care and education system of supports to early learning programs. This model is called SUCCESS, Supporting Children's Competencies in Emotional and Social Skills, and consists of intervention level services provided directly to children and families in early care and education settings in coordination with promotion and prevention level services supporting high-quality educational practices provided by the Center for Early Learning Professionals. State Pre-K programs were among the settings prioritized during the "soft launch" phase of this new system. In all, 17 children received SUCCESS services prior to December 2015. These services include program and classroom -level assessment, including conversations with program staff and children's caregivers. The data results in feedback and recommendations to program staff and families regarding consultation findings and leads to the development of collaborative action plans. Follow-up supports to integrate consultation recommendations, include: supporting staff to assess, plan for, and intervene with challenging classroom behavior, helping families get connected to community supports and services, and classroom- and program- level consultation to enhance the child care center's capacities to respond to children's social, emotional, and behavioral health needs.

Despite these strong collaborations, the state is aware that Pre-K grantee awareness of and access to a comprehensive set of supports and interventions is variable and that it can be difficult to reliably connect families to a wider variety of services, even when they exist within the same organization. Consequently, the state's Expansion Grant application also included a plan to expand a referral system developed under its RTT-ELC grant for use by primary care providers engaged in developmental screening and referral of children B-3 years old. In 2015, the state contracted with a facilitator to support the development of a conceptual design for a comprehensive resource and referral system. A state planning team was identified and included staff from the Department of Education and the Department of Health. The planning team began by identifying the over-arching goals for the project and then conducting a scan of existing systems to inform the conceptual design of the system which will be used by state Pre-K programs. The project goals identified by the planning team were to:

1. Develop a comprehensive services system in which early childhood educators are able to efficiently and effectively access and link Pre-K children and families with community-based services (special education, early intervention, home visiting, mental health, health and social services);
2. Maximize use of technology to support access to resource information, and direct electronic referrals to select services where possible.

In order to accomplish these goals the planning team defined the scope of the work to include:

- Developing a needs assessment tool for administrators to use to assess family needs;
- Mapping out a process for needs assessment, resource identification, referral (hard and soft) to services, and referral documentation and follow-up.
- Enhancing (if funding allows) and utilizing an existing comprehensive online resource directory for resource identification.
- If funding allows, enhancing the HEALTH Directory referral tool for use by administrators to make hard referrals to home visiting, MH/Project Success, and Child Outreach.
- Piloting the system and supporting technology within state-funded Pre-K programs.
- Evaluating the pilot

As of December 2015, the existing resource and referral tools reviewed by the planning team included United Way 211, the Rhode Island Resource Hub, the HEALTH Directory, and the Economic Progress Institute's Online Guide. The planning team identified United Way 211 as the existing online resource directory which was the most comprehensive as it pertained to the identification of existing resources and supports. However, the United Way 211 system is solely a directory and does not include the capacity for direct electronic referrals. In order to enable Pre-K grantees to make direct electronic referrals to prioritized interventions such as evidence-based home visiting, mental health consultation, and developmental screening, the HEALTH Directory was identified as an option with the functionality to achieve the desired outcome. In addition, several needs assessments were identified as resources to refer to when developing the Pre-K needs assessment. Work to continue to develop and pilot the system will continue in grant year 2016. The next immediate step will be to meet with Pre-K program administrators to review the conceptual design and solicit their feedback and input before moving forward.

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.

Rhode Island's existing state Pre-K program meets the definition of High-Quality Preschool Program. Thus, 100% of the federal grant award has been used to increase the overall number of new Pre-K slots in the state. The state investment in state fiscal year 2016 was \$3,950,000, an increase of \$1,000,000 from fiscal year 2015. Without federal Expansion grant funds, Rhode Island would have had the capacity to enroll up to 334 children. Instead, in school year 2015-2016, there are 33 classrooms serving 594 children.

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.

RI's funding of preschool classrooms is aligned with the state fiscal year/school year rather than the calendar year. The first grant cycle began July 1, 2015 and will end June 30, 2016. Since state funds do not carry over from one fiscal year to the next, RIDE has been using the state funds first to reimburse grantees. Therefore, actual expenditures through 12/31/2015 are less than the initial budget. The unspent budget from Year 1 has been shifted to Year 2. RIDE anticipates that most Year 1 funds will be expended by June 30, 2016; though there may be some carryover funds as a result of some of the contracted work starting later than initially anticipated. However, all Year One PEG funds have been encumbered.

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).

Unspent funds from the 2015 allocation will be reflected in the Year 2 budget. As a result of funding being awarded based on the state fiscal year/school year, the six month lag in expenditures will continue into year 2. Awards for classrooms being funded with the 2016 allocation will begin July 1, 2016. There are no substantive changes to the scope of the project.

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.

RI has steadily increased its state investment in Pre-K programs over the last few years, adding approximately \$1.0 million/year for a total investment of \$3,950,000 in state fiscal year 2016. RIDE will continue to request and advocate for increases in funding to support the state match for the PDG. In the final year of the grant, the state investment is anticipated to be \$7,360,000, which would allow the state to sustain approximately 40 Pre-K classrooms. However, RIDE intends to request and advocate for further funding to be able to sustain all classrooms. The total post-PDG state investment is projected to be \$12,000,000.

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.

RI's funding of preschool classrooms is aligned with the state fiscal year/school year rather than the calendar year. The first grant cycle began July 1, 2015 and will end June 30, 2016. Therefore, actual expenditures through 12/31/2015 are less than the initial budget. All sub-grantee funds are encumbered and RIDE anticipates that all funds will be expended by June 30, 2016.