

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

2015 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Tennessee





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 #: S419B150026 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: 47

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grants-Expansion

4. Grantee Name: Tennessee Department of Education

5. Grantee Address: 710 James Robertson Parkway 11th fl AJ Tower

City: Nashville State: Tennessee Zip: 37243

6. Project Director Name: Joey Hassell

Title: Assistant Commissioner

Phone #: (615) 253-2112 Ext.: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: joey.hassell@tn.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	\$17,500,000.00	\$9,823,679.00
c. Entire Project Period <i>(For Final Performance Reports only)</i>		

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: TN

PR/Award #: S419B150026

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.

Overview of Progress

Through the preschool development-expansion application process, the State of Tennessee submitted an ambitious and achievable goal to partner with a Consortium of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Shelby County, including the districts responsible for all schools in the City of Memphis, and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), to expand High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten in their communities.

Key goals of this plan included:

- To significantly increase pre-K access among Eligible Children in High-Need Communities in Shelby County and Nashville
- To strengthen quality through upgrading existing pre-K seats in both communities to include all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs. In particular, to add Comprehensive Services to existing classrooms that already address all other elements of High-Quality programs and to implement a teacher coaching model
- To strengthen alignment of the birth-to-third grade continuum
- To build Tennessee's pre-K infrastructure, particularly in the area of evaluating and ensuring program quality
- To measure the impact of several different models of High-Quality Preschool Programs

The work with these two urban school districts in Tennessee had some similarities as well as differences based on the unique needs of the children, families and communities they serve.

Shelby County Consortium

Increased access

The Shelby County Consortium is made up of four districts: Shelby County Schools serving the city of Memphis, Bartlett City Schools and Millington Municipal Schools serving a defined suburb of Memphis and the Achievement School District (ASD) which was created to catapult the bottom 5% of schools to the top 25% of the state within 5 years. These districts were awarded funding through the County Commission in 2014 to expand pre-K by 400 seats. This grant allowed the expansion of this initiative by adding an additional 660 seats in year one and a goal of adding an additional 340 seats over the next two years and maintain serving these additional 1,000 children in year four and beyond.

In year one, Shelby County Schools added 540 seats, Millington added 20 seats and the ASD

added 100 seats. Bartlett City Schools did not add any additional new seats because the district's population did not warrant any additional seats as they currently offer enough state pre-K programs to meet the income eligible population in their district. They do however remain as an active partner of this Consortium and continue to provide 60 children access to high quality pre-K through the one county commission funded classroom and two Voluntary pre-K classrooms. The Shelby County Consortium was successful with adding the 33 classrooms as written in the grant and maintaining the 20 county commission classrooms as well.

Improvement to existing classrooms

In addition to the opening of the 33 new classrooms, Shelby County Schools and ASD also added comprehensive services to 32 and 14 existing state funded preschool classrooms served by community child care programs as well other existing ASD classrooms, respectively. All of these programs received comprehensive services, which meet the definition of high quality preschool programs, through a partnership with Porter-Leath, an established, highly successful community organization supporting early childhood programs for 160 years. Services offered by Porter-Leath include developmental, vision, hearing, and dental screenings, family services and meetings, access to extended day services and "*Moving Up to Kindergarten*" kits for all ASD preschool classrooms to support students and parents during summer transitions to kindergarten. With the addition of services to these 32 classrooms, all new classrooms in the Shelby County Consortium have access to comprehensive services.

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

Increased access

MNPS set a goal to add 440 new seats in their school district in year one and maintain the operation of those classrooms over the four years of the grant and beyond. Due to several administrative level staff changes in MNPS and the delayed hiring of additional grant support staff, the opening of a new preschool hub was pushed back to opening in 2016-17. This site would have housed eight of the 10 classrooms that did not open this year. A decision was made by the district to hold off on opening the other two classrooms until next year as well. The district was successful with meeting this new first year goal and is on target for meeting the year two goal of opening an additional 12 classrooms.

MNPS expanded their access to quality pre-K classrooms in 2014 with the opening of three Early Learning Centers (ELC) serving 540 children with the expectation that 390 children would meet the 200% of poverty income eligibility guidelines set by this grant. The children served in these classrooms as well as those in the existing 55 state funded pre-K classrooms received comprehensive services to meet the definition of high quality preschool programs.

Improvement of existing programs

A focus for MNPS is the implementation of a teacher coaching model to which significant resources to provide job-embedded, evidence based professional development to teachers were added. Based on past experience of the ELCs with this model, MNPS realized the greater need for differentiation in their approach to professional development. Because Pre-K teachers have never worked one on one with an instructional coaching framework, there has been some resistance to the coaching model. The grant supports job embedded coaching for teachers and educational assistants as well as access to over 100 hours of professional development collectively for teachers, educational assistants, administrators and other early childhood staff.

As presented in GPRA 1(a) table totals, the total number of students targeted to be served by all sub-grantees and the number of students actually served is short by 79 students or .5% of targeted goal.

Evaluation of effectiveness of new and improved seats

The state and both communities are deeply committed to better understanding not just whether pre-K is better preparing children for Kindergarten, but when, where, and how best to do this work. The state has partnered with Peabody Research Institute (PRI) in a study of the effectiveness of this pre-K expansion. Peabody researchers assessed 1,490 students enrolled in new or improved pre-k classrooms and through a battery of assessment tools collected individual measures on these students' skills entering pre-K. Assessments were completed between September and November of 2015. There were some challenges with the districts having accurate data for identifying which classrooms were participating in this evaluation and then identifying the income eligible children in these classrooms. A post assessment of these same 1490 students will occur in April 2016. The challenges of identifying students have been noted and a system is in place to ensure quicker exchange of information in 2016. This will result in student assessments occurring closer to the beginning of the school year rather than two or three months into the school year.

In addition to student assessments, PRI is currently conducting classroom observations, enabling analysis of how teacher practices correlate with student learning.

TDOE staff members have been trained by and are working alongside Peabody staff in student assessment protocol and conducting observations. This collaboration will build the state's ongoing capacity for monitoring classroom quality and identifying successful practices to implement statewide.

Alignment of birth to third grade continuum at the state and local level

Both the Shelby County Consortium and MNPS are committed to fostering a continuum of learning, birth through third grade. Both communities have focused resources and existing infrastructure to ensure successful transitions from pre-K to Kindergarten for all families served. Porter-Leath has purchased "Moving Up to Kindergarten" kits for all ASD preschool classrooms to support students and parents during summer transitions to kindergarten. The state is also investigating other opportunities to address the summer slide as the research identifies this as a major factor in students' demonstrating readiness for Kindergarten.

Much work continues to be done to ensure alignment of Kindergarten to third grade instruction with the foundations of pre-K. MNPS has contracted with an organization to assist them with development of a plan for alignment of pre-K with their district's early grades plan for alignment. The Shelby County Consortium is also in the negotiation stage of developing a birth to grade three continuum with much work to continue in the next three years of this grant.

The state department of education has identified early learning foundations as one of their priority areas in the department's strategic plan. To meet this priority the state will:

- support and monitor programs serving students birth to age 5 to ensure implementation of high quality practices necessary for building a solid foundation for ongoing learning,
- identify and implement a kindergarten entry screener to provide solid data on the readiness skills kindergarten students present at entry into the formal educational system, and
- provide professional development across the birth to grade 3 continuum to support high quality educational experiences across all birth to 4 settings and grades K-3.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Year one of this grant has been an exciting one in Tennessee and while we have celebrated much success it has not been without its many challenges. While funding for this grant was awarded in January 2015, Tennessee was limited in moving forward with implementation of many activities and strategies due to the delay with our state legislators to approve acceptance of the funding which did not occur until late spring. The state set a very ambitious goal for year one. As a result of this, much of the work done up until this time was completed by state and sub-grantee employees on top of their already full time job responsibilities on other projects. In spite of this, the state supported the sub-grantees as they successfully opened the number of classrooms identified in the grant or as amended with approval from the state.

Another challenge, related to the delayed approval for implementation, was both the loss of strategic staff at the sub-grantee level as well as the delayed hiring of support staff at the state and sub-grantee level. MNPS lost both the director of the school district as well as the early childhood grant manager and project manager for their early learning center hubs. Hiring of new staff included not only learning a new job but taking on tasks written and developed by someone else and trying to interpret how the data was identified. As a result of this, the state and sub-grantees are asked to fully document their work so that others can follow any future work.

A third challenge is understanding data collection and the use of technology to interpret the data. There are several different departments who play a role in the collection of data. Identifying each player, the data they collect and how to streamline the collection is a major task. Through ongoing communication and understanding of each other's systems we are gaining a better sense of how to work together. Each system and state is unique and a one size fits all system does not appear imminent but communicating needs is improving access and understanding of each other's data collection.

A final challenge is ensuring that the work we are doing does not impede our first priority which is to provide high quality early childhood experiences for children. Our teachers, assistants, administrative and support staff need to feel valued and supported and not overwhelmed with collection of data and classroom visitors. We can best do this by keeping them and the children and families they serve in the center of all that we do.

Conclusion

Tennessee has much to celebration through year one implementation. It was a very successful year with opportunities afforded to meet many of our year one goals, and to learn about the challenges of implementation as we continue planning for years two, three and four.

Although funding was awarded in January 2015 it was not until May that our state legislators approved acceptance of this funding. Monthly dialogue between the skeletal crew of both the state and sub-grantees during this time allowed for timely implementation of most activities.

Collaboration between the state and the communities engaged in this work has been strengthened through regularly scheduled monthly opportunities for intentional, ongoing, and open dialogue. This proved crucial to ensuring the work was completed in a timely manner and to learn from each other through this process. In numerous instances did many team players agree that we were learning how much we didn't know and what a great experience it has offered to us. Some of the lesson learned:

- Allow time to get team in place and for them to plan before full implementation is expected.

- Focus on what you learn from your plan not going exactly as written, rather than thinking you failed. It's okay not to be right all the time.
- Celebrate the successes no matter how big or how small!



**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: TN

PR/Award #: S419B150026

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.

Tennessee was very successful with meeting the amended goal of increased enrollment of eligible children served in high quality preschool programs. Tennessee's original proposal was to serve 1860 children through the opening of 53 new classrooms in 2015 and support the continued operation of the 46 newly funded classrooms opened in 2014. Due to several administrative level staff changes in MNPS and the delayed hiring of additional grant support staff throughout the year, the opening of a new preschool hub was pushed back to opening in 2016-17. This site would have housed eight of the 10 classrooms that did not open this year. A decision was made by the district to hold off on opening the other two classrooms until next year as well. The good news is that MNPS is on target to reach (or succeed) their initial grant goal of 22 classrooms after year 2 enrollment.

As a way to support our Subgrantees, the department distributed an eligibility enrollment form which included a chart of income eligibility figures based on number of family members. We also provided Subgrantees a code for identifying income eligibility students through the schools' student information system which then becomes a part of the state information system. Subgrantees can readily track the eligibility of their students in this way.

Tennessee hired a data manager as part of the state's administrative team to specifically work with the Subgrantees as well as the state's database to ensure accurate data.

All Subgrantees have engaged in conversations with other child serving organizations such as local Head Start organizations, child care programs, United Way, county commissions and local government to assist with identifying areas of need for locating quality preschool programs.

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.

Tennessee is an advocate for supporting and ensuring children with disabilities have access to high quality early childhood programs which will support the goals identified on their Individual

Education Plans (IEPs). As such, our IDEA 619 preschool coordinator and his staff work tirelessly to ensure children are included in general education programs and that these programs meet the needs of all children. Since the inception of our state preschool program we have encouraged the enrollment of children with disabilities. Approximately 10 percent of students served in the state Voluntary Pre-K Programs (VPK) are children with IEPs. Children with IEPs are first in line for enrollment in VPK if their family income status qualifies them for Tier 1 enrollment. Even students with IEPs who don't meet the income requirement still qualify for the second tier for priority enrollment in state-funded preschools. The VPK Scope of Services lays out the specific requirements for inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays for any preschool program accepting state funds or adhering to state standards.

The percentage of children with IEPs served in the newly funded PDG classrooms exceeds the national average of 6.4%. However, some of our Subgrantees are below this average and others are way above this average. The state is interested in following up on this information to find out why there is such a variance and how we can level these figures for next year.

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

The school districts' communities represented by the Subgrantees in this grant operate state pre-K programs accessible by only 40% of the eligible population. Both communities are considered very high needs with over 70% of their elementary school population eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Less than half of their third graders score proficient in reading and math on state administered tests. The need for additional programs is present. The desire of the communities for additional programs is present. Both of these communities offered up county and local funds to open up a total of 47 new classrooms across the two communities which is one of the reasons why they were chosen to receive funding for this grant. Leaders from both communities including school district leaders, governmental leaders and private organization leaders pressed the department of education to apply for this grant funding.

One major factor in the success of opening 43 new classrooms across these two communities in year one is the foundational structure of the state's Voluntary Pre-K program. The major pieces for applying for pre-K, were already in place and needed only a few minor tweaks to increase the eligibility criteria from 185 to 200% of poverty, and to then find classroom space and hire teachers.

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.

Based on the data collected and entered in GPRA 1(b) Tennessee increased enrollment for the 2015-16 school year by 10.4% which is just shy of the target goal of 10.8%. This could be accounted for in a couple of ways. First, the data was collected on a specific date and it could be that a child had recently moved leaving a vacancy which had not yet been filled. A second possibility is that data was not entered accurately thereby omitting identification of some students as meeting the economic disadvantaged criteria. The success of these enrollment numbers fall purely on the work of the Subgrantees for promoting the availability of these programs, supporting families with the completion of paper work and then providing accurate data to ensure all eligible students meet enrollment criteria. As stated earlier, the successful implementation of our existing VPK program set the foundation for continued success for enrollment and operation of these additional classrooms.

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.

The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;

Tennessee has joined a consortium of states including Maryland, Ohio and Connecticut which are implementing the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment developed in conjunction with West Ed and John Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education. The assessment tool administered in Tennessee will be named the Kindergarten Entry Screener 2.0 (TN KES).

The essential domains of school readiness measured by the TN-KES include:

- 1. Social Foundations**, which includes social-emotional, approaches to learning/executive functioning, and social studies
- 2. Language and Literacy**, which includes reading, speaking and listening, writing, and language
- 3. Mathematics**, which includes counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, and geometry
- 4. Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**, which includes physical education and health

When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);

The assessment tool will be given during the first 6-8 weeks of kindergarten.

Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;

The TN KES is mandated by the PDG grant for implementation in 2016-17 for the districts included in the Preschool Development Grant only. The TN KES will be administered to all kindergarten students in the subgrantee districts in 2017-18 along with a state-wide phase-in pilot. The state will require state-wide implementation in 2018-19.

The KES will be administered to 2,000 kindergarten students across the districts identified in the PDG as subgrantees in 2016-17. The students will represent the diversity, including race, ability and gender, of the districts.

How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);

The State has not used the TN KES in the past. This is a new tool.

Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;

The TN KES will be implemented in some kindergarten classrooms in 2016-17 in the High-Need Communities defined in the State's Preschool Development Grant. The TN KES will be piloted statewide in 2017-18 in districts representative of the population of Tennessee, pending budget and contract approvals. Implementation as stated in this document may refer to piloting, field testing and/or full implementation. The state will require state-wide implementation in 2018-19.

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;

As a part of the contract with the Maryland-Ohio Consortium, a partnership will be established with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education who will provide professional development for implementation of the TN KES. The professional development includes a comprehensive needs assessment, field testing, a train the trainer model, technology-supported teacher training, ongoing collaboration and support through online learning communities and coaching, validation by simulation and content assessment, and an evaluation of the professional development. The trainers will then be responsible for training the teachers on administering the tool.

If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported. Also, please describe, if applicable:

The State will ensure data is reported in a timely manner through a partnership with WestEd, the Maryland-Ohio Consortium and the Tennessee Department of Education's departments of research, assessment, evaluation and data management. The details of the partnership that would describe specific time-lines and data reporting are yet to be determined.

The State's definition of "school readiness;"

Tennessee School Readiness Model

Tennessee's school readiness model emphasizes that the state's children will be ready to succeed in school only when families, communities, and schools work together on their behalf throughout the early childhood years. Readiness is not seen solely as a condition within a child, but is a condition that exists when communities, schools, and families collectively create a nurturing environment for child development starting at birth.

For more information: <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/tennessee-s-school-readiness-model>

Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;

Kindergarten readiness is the state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences. These early learning experiences will result in a child's successful readiness into a social and educational environment. Early experiences provide for the integration of the five common child development domains with intentional, high quality instruction as determined by universal research based best practices. These developmental domains include language and literacy development, social and emotional development, cognition and general knowledge, physical well-being and motor development and approaches to learning.

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;

The State does not currently have disaggregated data for school readiness by subgroup. The State has not had a kindergarten entry screener/assessment before this year. The first year of data reporting is expected to be 2016-17 for preliminary baseline data and 2017-18 for full implementation baseline data.

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.

Not Applicable

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.

During this first year of implementation, our time and efforts have focused on meeting and talking with our Subgrantees, our CEELo technical assistance support team, and other states as we identify what resources are already available, what the needs are for our Subgrantees the best route for providing these services.

A description of where we have been and where we are heading on each of the structural elements Tennessee is focusing on are as follows:

- (a) *Enhancing or expanding Early Learning and Development Standards* - The Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TNELDS) were adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education in August 2012 and are aligned with the state Kindergarten standards. The TNELDS will be reviewed and revised in 2017.
- (b) *Implementing Program Standards consistent with a High-Quality Preschool Program* - the program standards in Tennessee are also aligned with the Pre-K Guidelines and Compliance Standards (including health and safety) and are evaluated twice yearly by state Program Evaluators. These guidelines are currently under revision.
- (c) *Supporting programs in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and English learners, including in workforce development* - The subgrantees will focus on inclusive education for all children. This is one area off focus in developing and implementing a professional development plan.
- (d) *Conducting a needs assessment to determine the current availability of High-Quality Preschool Programs, including private and faith-based providers and Head Start programs* - As part of the expansion planning for new classrooms each subgrantee determined the need of additional classroom seats through multiple procedures including current availability of seats, number of kindergarten seats available and projected growth in the communities of need. Some of the expansion classrooms are located in community settings.
- (e) *Establishing or upgrading preschool teacher education and licensure requirements* - Tennessee requires that pre-K teachers in the public school hold a Bachelor's degree and Early Childhood Education certification. TCA § 49-6-104 (b)(2)

(f) Improvements to teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development; As our state and Subgrantees took a closer look at the various new initiatives including new curriculum, assessments and coaching model, it became apparent that unless a professional development plan was developed based on a set of specific priorities and plan for implementation we would not gain the in depth knowledge and understanding needed to effect change. We also discussed the need to show the

interconnectedness of all topics in order to support teachers understanding that everything we do works in tandem with other projects.

The state department's focus of training is on the foundational elements of a high quality classrooms necessary for the success of the use of curriculum and assessment. Our consultants and program evaluator's will provide training on the following topics to the coaches and classroom leaders in each of the LEAs who are a member of the Shelby County Consortium or the MNPS system.

- Master teacher/coaches training- Staff from the Tennessee department of education completed ECERS-R classroom assessments on a selection of new PDG classrooms. In an effort to develop a plan to improve these scores, CELO staff connected our department with staff from the New Jersey department of education to talk about their successful plan for improving quality, as measured by ECERS-R. The state will develop and offer a series of topics similar to those of New Jersey to coaches from each Subgrantee with the outcome being to improve scores on ECERS-R over the remaining grant years. Cost for this training will be included as part of the job duties of the education consultants working on this project.
- Teacher training- the state has identified professional development core competencies as required for all preschool classroom staff in an effort to have a solid foundation on which to develop a high quality pre-K classroom. A monthly training calendar offering these topics has been developed for the 2016-17 school year. The state has budgeted \$20,000 for the delivery of this content.
 - Child Development
 - TN Early Learning Developmental Standards
 - Pyramid Model- social and emotional development
 - ECERS and ELLCO
 - Developmentally Appropriate Practices

In addition to the training for coaches and teaching staff, the department will further pursue offering administrator training. Administrator training will not only impact practices at the pre-K level but across the pre-K-3 learning continuum. A final decision on content for this cohort has not yet been identified. Consideration is being given to the content recently released by a report from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) outlining six competencies that have been proven essential for principals' success in leading pre-K-3 learning communities. The state has budgeted \$40,000 to these projects in 2016-17.

(g) Implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data- There is a statewide student data system already in place and the PDGE Data Manager maintains the system while collaborating with the subgrantee data management teams to ensure data is entered correctly and is usable to inform practice.

(h) A Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System

Tennessee's plan for a comprehensive early learning assessment system includes the following components:

- **Student assessment:** The subgrantees are committed to setting ambitious goals for both preschool gains and kindergarten readiness improvement to be achieved through this program. The state contracted with PRI to complete student assessments on 1490 students in the fall and will assess these same students again in the spring. Based on prior research completed by PRI using the same assessment tools used in this grant in similar pre-K classrooms in MNPS, benchmarks for each assessment tool were set and progress on reaching these benchmarks will be measured by the children assessed each year of this grant. These benchmarks will be linked to the kindergarten readiness screening instrument chosen by the state and Subgrantees. The Subgrantees'

Kindergarten readiness measurable outcome goal is to have 75% of participating preschool students score as kindergarten ready on at least three of the five domains as measured by this instrument. The state infrastructure portion of the grant will fund PRI's contract and fully fund two Education Consultants at TDOE who will support the implementation of both of these assessments.

- (i) *Building preschool programs' capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home* - The state of Tennessee has created website that provides resources and information for families about childhood development and services that are available to support families and children. (<http://kidcentraltn.com/>). In addition each subgrantee is using provided funds to enhance the comprehensive services that children and families received. Included in these services are physical health screenings and referrals, family supports within the communities for aftercare, mental health services, basic needs (food and clothing as needed), sharing developmentally appropriate practices through connecting community partners (libraries, museums, zoos & parks for example), and implementing transition planning to and from pre-K to support children and families from one education system to another. Within the pre-K guidelines family engagement is required, parent teacher conference are expected as well as home visiting.
- (j) *Building State- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families, such as child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors* - Tennessee has a Readiness Model that links families, children, schools and communities as a framework of support. Each district has a community advisory council to discuss the pre-K opportunities, community resources and needs in their district.

(k) Other activities that would support the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children. The state has again partnered with PRI to augment its current quality assessments to focus on the components of effective high-quality preschool.

- **Quality assessment:** A sampling of classrooms in each Subgrantee will be observed by PRI trained individuals using a **Narrative Record** in the winter of each school year. The narrative record allows for summaries that include, but are not limited to, the amount of time devoted to whole-class instruction, the amount of time spent on mathematics, and the percentage of episodes that a teacher used a high level of inference in his or her instruction. A second tool, the **Pre-kindergarten Classroom Dynamics Rating Scale** is a collection of behaviorally anchored ratings completed by observers at the end of each of the full-day observations. These questions include groups of items that fall under the headings of Overall Impression, Classroom Management, Teacher Responsiveness, Community, and Academic and Learning-related Behaviors. As noted above, the grant will fund PRI's contract and fully fund two Education Consultants at TDOE who will help with administering the assessment if necessary.
- **Grant support:** The Child Care Program Evaluator and Education Consultant positions funded by the grant will also oversee the implementation of the grant and support training and technical assistance.

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.

Tennessee's current state funded pre-K program currently requires many of the structural elements identified in this section through state law T.C.A. 49-6-101 --110.

- A teacher is required to hold a bachelor's with teacher licensure in early childhood education. In Tennessee there are several different certifications that meet this requirement. Our currently offered licensure endorsements include a dual general education and special education license for birth through kindergarten, or a pre-K-3rd grade in either general education or special education. Previously offered endorsements and still accepted today covered licensure to teach pre-K-4th grade. A district can apply for a waiver for a teacher if that person has an endorsement in another grade level, (i.e., K-6). The waiver is good for two years during which time the candidate must complete coursework and pass appropriate Praxis tests for a college or university to recommend the teacher receiving a pre-K endorse on her license. A waiver cannot be renewed if the teacher fails to complete any of these tasks. Teacher assistants are required to hold a minimum of a Child Development Credential if available. If not, the assistant must have a high school diploma and prior experience working in an early childhood classroom.
- All staff are required to have 18 hours of professional development in their first year of hire including child abuse reporting, and personal safety and 12 hours of professional development in the following years. All PD must be related to early childhood development or education.
- Staff child ratio is 1 to 10 at all times except during nap or rest time. This includes outdoor time, or participation in any activity outside the classroom
- Class size capacity is 20 children regardless of classroom size. It requires at least one licensed and early childhood endorsed teacher.
- The pre-K day operates a minimum of 6 hours and may include a thirty minute nap time.
- Full inclusion of children with disabilities is encouraged. This is beyond the occasional visit of children with special needs to participate with their peers in outside activities or other planned special activities. Approximately 10% of children enrolled in our state funded pre-K program are children with IEPs. Accommodations are made to ensure full participation of all students.
- Classrooms are required to adhere to a scope of services specific to VPK as well as the State Board of Education's Early Childhood Policy which addresses the requirement to use a state approved comprehensive curriculum, to provide hands on learning experiences, to be culturally and linguistically responsive to all students and families and to connect learning activities to the state's early learning developmental standards for four year olds.
- Teachers hired by the school district are compensated using the same pay scale and teachers' rights as any K-12 teacher is compensated.
- Education consultants and program evaluators (PEs) complete site visits regularly. PEs are required by state rules, which set standards for health and safety, to make a minimum of two site visits per year. Additional oversight is completed through desktop review of various surveys and reports required by the Office of Early Learning.
- Funding from this grant was awarded to Subgrantees to provide access to comprehensive services that were not already in place prior to this school year. These services include assessments of students as well as providing health, mental health, and counseling to families as requested or necessary.
- Rules 0520-2-01-.01 --.16 provide evidence based health and safety standards with which all

schools must be in compliance.

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.

The actual Eligible Children Served in New Preschool Slots for Year One is 1648 at a cost of \$11,999 per slot and the target number was 1850 at a cost of \$11,999 per slot. The actual Eligible Children Served in Improved Preschool Slots for Year One is 3010 at a cost of \$1,457 per slot and the target number was 2958 at a cost of \$1,457 per slot. The difference in number of eligible children served in both new slots and improved slots is due to the administrative level staff changes in MNPS as described in the executive summary and the process of establishing outside contracts for the Family Advocate component of the comprehensive services in MNPS which was finalized in December. Moving forward the MNPS the administrative and comprehensive services programs are now in place and we believe targets in year 2 and 3 will be met.

In opening the new slots, the classrooms are expected to adhere to the the State Board of Education's Early Childhood Policy which addresses the requirement to use a state approved comprehensive curriculum, to provide hands on learning experiences, to be culturally and linguistically responsive to all students and families and to connect learning activities to the state's early learning developmental standards for four year olds. To meet these requirements the following expenses contribute to the cost per slot include:

- Developmentally appropriate set-up of new classrooms that includes equipping classrooms with:
 - Child sized furnishings
 - Technology
 - Approved curriculum and materials to implement
 - Center/interest area materials
 - Children's books
- Hiring qualified teachers and teaching assistants for new classrooms
- Providing Professional Development for teachers and teaching assistants
 - Travel for Professional Development
- For providing comprehensive services for the improved and new slots including but not limited to some of the following:
 - Hiring Family Involvement Specialists that provide a partnership between schools/ centers and families which can involve parent workshops, kindergarten readiness workshops and assisting families with kindergarten registration, connecting families with community resources.
 - Contracting with Family Advocates to work with families on barriers to attendance, challenging child behavior and connecting families to resources in the community
 - Providing hearing, vision and dental screening and follow up for families.

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.

Overview

The Tennessee Department of Education and the Subgrantees of this PDG-E grant forged a tight bond this past year through the implementation of this grant. The success of this first year can be attributed to the development of a trusting relationship as well as having many of the mechanisms needed for implementation of this grant already in place.

The department worked diligently to openly communicate with each district and to hold regularly scheduled calls and meetings. A process was established quickly for submission of MOUs, budgets and an electronic application for distribution of funds through the state's electronic application, *ePlan*. This plan allowed for ease of flow of funds as needed by the districts to open all classrooms in a timely manner in the fall of 2015.

A schedule for monthly calls or meetings was established early on to ensure availability of participants from each district. An agenda was distributed in advance of the call or meeting (in most cases), to allow districts to complete a pre-meeting reading assignment or be prepared to discuss items on the agenda.

A timeline of needed student data, scheduled assessments and classroom visits were established to help districts prepare or plan for these events as necessary.

The state developed a scope of work document in an effort to help districts track their progress as well as the state tracking this progress as well.

Because an emphasis was placed on building relationships requests made by the state of the grantee were generally met in a timely manner.

Monitoring for compliance with grant requirements has been successful because of the existing relationships as well as the state already having in place many of the pieces monitored for compliance through this grant.

Progress by Topic

Establishment of roles and responsibilities of the State and Subgrantee toward implementing the State's plan;

In order to maximize efficiency and integration of the expansion program with existing state and local preschool programs, the roles and responsibilities associated with the implementation of this project plan closely follow those associated with implementation of the statewide Voluntary Pre-K program (VPK). Through these existing VPK roles and responsibilities, Tennessee has made clear its preference for local control and local accountability in carrying out the state's vision for early childhood education. Because of that preference, local communities are able to develop their own priorities around early childhood education, build coalitions, and engage stakeholders to ensure local priorities are met. In the process Shelby County and Metro Nashville have developed and are moving toward ambitious goals of their own, taking a leading role in moving towards high-quality preschool for every child in their communities.

Because both Subgrantees already have significant experience administering VPK

programs and both recently committed and allocated new funding to their preschool programs, the state elected to delegate the allocation of new preschool classrooms and slots to local decision makers. Both Subgrantees have established their own committees to review applications for funding and allocated classrooms according to agreed-upon criteria. The state continues to provide program administration, monitoring, oversight, and technical assistance.

Increasing organizational capacity and infrastructure of the Subgrantee to provide High-Quality Preschool Programs, either directly or indirectly through an Early Learning Provider(s);

Tennessee's Office of Early Learning (OEL), established in 2005, currently administers the VPK program. Its responsibilities include reviewing applications and overseeing the application process, program administration, monitoring, data collection, technical assistance, training, and family literacy and health consultations. OEL is responsible for data collection and filing of all state and federal progress reports regarding all programs administered through this office.

In the spirit of local ownership, both Shelby County and MNPS have carried out the expansion program through slightly different methods. The differentiated strategies take into account their existing education and early childhood infrastructures, the different stakeholders in each community, and the local investments in quality already underway in those communities. The state, through the Office of Early Learning at TDOE, oversees all grant funds; distributes expansion funds to Early Learning Providers according to the recommendations of each Subgrantee; collects and compiles all required student and classroom data to fulfill state, federal, and grant requirements; establishes standards for the responsible use of grant funds; and ensures that all Early Learning Programs receiving expansion funding are meeting those standards.

Ensuring that each Subgrantee minimizes local administrative costs;

Each subgrantee submitted a budget including a line item for administrative costs. These budgets were reviewed and approved by the state department. Amendments must be made if changes in any line exceeds 15% or more of the original budget. The state's electronic system is set up so that funds cannot be drawn down if line item amounts do not align with the requests for payment. Amendments are encouraged to be held no more than twice during the grant period, approximately six months after the grant period begins and two to three months prior to the end of the grant period.

Monitoring Early Learning Providers to ensure they are delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs;

The Tennessee Department of Education already monitors preschool programs operated by school districts and works with the Department of Human Services and the Subgrantees to ensure classrooms located in DHS facilities meet the highest rating for quality as defined by the Stars Quality Rating and State Report Card. Monitors and providers are already well-versed in these quality metrics and stakeholders already had a clear set of expectations. In addition, researchers from PRI, together with the new staff members budgeted in the state portion of the grant, have conducted additional observations of these classrooms as part of the program evaluation.

Coordination of plans related to assessments, data sharing, instructional tools, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts,

professional development, and workforce and leadership development;

Each school district has identified one or two point people through which all communication regarding the grant is channeled and they are responsible for coordinating the activities of their district. Some of the responsibilities of these people include:

- Identify terms regarding data sharing and tackle roadblocks to enhance the interoperability of data systems. This is done in conjunction with the input from their district's Office of Research, Assessment & Evaluation and the state and local Data Management Offices,
- Structure data sharing agreements with comprehensive community service providers to assess the quality of services and impact on student learning
- Collaboratively design summer professional development and trainings to be offered by the state, and based on input from each Subgrantee
- Aggregate, review, and provide input on family engagement strategies based on findings from the annual family satisfaction survey

Delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports, such as:

- ***children with disabilities or developmental delays***
- ***English learners***
- ***children who reside on "Indian lands"***
- ***migrant children***
- ***homeless children***
- ***children in the child welfare system***
- ***children who reside in rural or tribal areas***
- ***children from military families***
- ***other children as identified by the State***

The data found in Table A.3(a) and Table A.3(b) identifies a very diverse population being served in our expansion preschool classrooms. The location of the districts in very urban settings accounts for the lack of any children from migrant families or who reside on Indian lands. Because these Subgrantees are located in large urban cities they have access to many resources to meet the diverse needs of their population,

Subgrantees will implement culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication efforts to enroll children from families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families; helps families build protective factors; and engages parents and families (e.g., builds capacity to support children's learning and development) as decision-makers in their children's education.

The Subgrantees are required to document their process for enrollment and registration as well as provide documentation of family engagement activities and opportunities. Reaching out to these very diverse population is not new to either Subgrantee. Each district has many strategies already in place to reach families who might otherwise be overlooked. The state will work with each Subgrantee to provide support and suggestions as needed to expand these outreach

opportunities. While neither grantee has the funding to serve the entire at risk population in their districts, the usual ways of communicating with families about the program are not reaching families and additional ways for reaching these families must be considered. Some of the services available and provided by the Subgrantees includes:

- Translation services
- Family engagement specialists who conduct workshops and formal outreach
- Shelby County offers a community celebration fair focused on preschool students where families can receive a variety of information about preschool, health and dental services, family support
- MNPS participants in the Parent Ambassador Program, started by the Mayor's office and Metro Schools, pairs immigrant families with host families in Nashville

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).

In the past year, the Tennessee Department of Education has refocused its mission and support for the importance of the early years and publicly recognizes this time as foundational to the success of every child graduating from high school with the knowledge and skills needed for success in postsecondary or college studies. The Office of Early Learning, comprised of the Part C, Tennessee Early Intervention Services; IDEA 619 Preschool Services; Voluntary Pre-K, Head Start State Collaboration Office, and School Based Support Services is regrouping after a time when the individual units were scattered to various divisions. There is a renewed energy and sense of excitement about the services offered through these programs and the integral role each one plays in the success of the other.

There is also a growing sense of camaraderie between the department of education and other early childhood serving state agencies such as the Department of Human Services which oversees the state's child care licensing system and the impact of federal laws and rules such as Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Child Care, Development Fund, the Department of Health and its role with Home Visitors and supporting an understanding of the Adverse Childhood Experiences and its impact on brain development and the Department of Mental Health and their role with supporting a handful of rural school districts with limited resources to assist young children with potential mental health issues. All of these organizations play one part in understanding the development of the whole child and not just seeing a child through the lens of being "just a student".

These recent initiatives are focused on birth to age four but there is also so exciting things happening around transition from pre-K to K as well as through third grade. The state produced a well-received video titled "Kindergarten Here We Come" which raised awareness of the need for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers to talk with one another. The latest results of the PRI study on the Effectiveness of Pre-K opened the dialogue around what was happening in the early grades and if there something different we can do in these grades to better support young children's learning. Teachers in pre-K and K wanted an assessment tool that would be more directly tied to their teaching skills and a pre-K and K student portfolio was developed and is being

implemented in a few districts this year.

All of these new strategies and ideas are impacting the continuum of learning in the Subgrantees communities as well. There is a renewed energy around early childhood and that the quality really matters not only for the children being served but for the learning foundation that is being formed to be built on for the next 15 plus years.

*Provide examples of your efforts for improving transitions for children from **Birth through Age Five**, and from **Kindergarten through Grade Three**.*

1. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Five

(a) Indicate the key activities for alignment of birth through age-five programs that include coordination of early education and care programs and child care family service providers supported through Federal, State, and local resources.

Provide specific examples that may include:

- *(a) How your efforts expanded families' choices or activities that facilitated or improved families' access to programs and supports in their own communities;*
- *How families with Eligible Children were engaged in the process, including efforts to reach geographically isolated populations or families that experienced other barriers to participation.*

In MNPS all Pre-K Sites provide access to health screenings and family engagement support. Six family advocates were hired to support families of children attending schools in some of the most culturally diverse areas of the city to assist families with understanding availability and access to resources for them and their children. In the Shelby County Consortium school districts, Porter Leath provides comprehensive services such as health screenings and family support to all families in the expansion classrooms as well as previously existing classrooms that did not have these services available. Services are diverse to meet the needs of the families. Both Subgrantees offer an open registration form so that families can fill out on form and identify the top 3-5 schools they are interested in enrolling their child in pre-K.

(b) How the State is working to ensure that High-Quality Preschool Programs will not diminish services or increase costs to families for other programs serving children from birth through age five?

Tennessee's plan for providing new HQ preschool seats is entirely funded with newly committed resources. There is an assumption that families who participate in this program may not currently be receiving any of these services and thus should not impact any existing services. However, this is a great question and may require gathering additional information to fully formulate an accurate response at this time.

2. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Kindergarten to Grade 3

Indicate your progress during the reporting year for activities supporting children from kindergarten through third grade. Provide specific examples that may include:

(a) How the State will ensure that Eligible Children are well-prepared for kindergarten;

Several data points will help us ensure that children who participate in the preschool classrooms are well prepared for kindergarten. The individual student information gathered from PRI assessments along with the Kindergarten Readiness Screener which will be piloted next year in a limited capacity will provide us with much needed data to identify individual student data. The teacher's evaluation

scores on the CLASS as well as the ECERS-R will assist us with an understanding of the teacher's style of interaction with the students as well as the level of quality of the classroom environment. The Narrative Record will also identify provide insight into the daily activities of the classroom and how the time is spent and the level of engagement of the students.

(b) Efforts and activities to sustain the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children, such as:

- (i) Collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers;*
- (ii) Expansion of access to Full-Day kindergarten; and*
- (iii) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do math at grade level by the end of third grade.*

The governor and the department of education and other child serving state departments revealed a new initiative "Read to Be Ready" in February 2016 which focuses on supporting families, early care providers and teachers with understanding of research based best practices to build the foundational skills important as well as necessary for conventional reading and writing. Currently only 43% of third grade students are reading on grade level. The goal through this initiative is to have 75% of third graders reading on grade level by the year 2015. Because the approach is an integrated one, it should impact the math scores as well.

The State's plan to engage parents and families for children moving from High- Quality Preschool Programs into the early elementary school years.

(c) Steps you have taken to build upon or align:

- (i) Child learning standards and expectations;*
- (ii) Teacher preparation, credentials, and workforce competencies;*
- (iii) Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems;*
- (iv) Data systems; and*

Tennessee is fortunate that the current program foundational requirements are high yet they could use some polishing. We have a set of early learning standards directly aligned with kindergarten standards. Our kindergarten standards are going through a change and this will require a revision of our four year old standards which will probably occur in 2017. We require a teacher with a four year degree, a teaching license and an endorsement in pre-K. Our teacher licensure staff are revisiting the teacher prep program to determine what adjustments, if any, need to be made to ensure teachers are prepared to teach after graduation. We have a data system for tracking students enrolled in our school districts but not one that connects students enrolled in a non-school based or administered program.

(v) Family engagement strategies.

Tennessee offers many resources help families become involved in their child's learning at home and at school. The Imagination Library, sometimes called the Governor's Books from Birth program, offer one free book a month, from the month the child is born until he turns five, to every child in Tennessee. Many of the books offer suggestions on questions or comments to make with children about the book. The first lady of Tennessee developed a program called read for twenty which encourages families to read to their children at least 20 minutes a day. A state sponsored website, KidsCentralTN.org, offers resources to families focused on education, development and health. The new Read to Be Ready initiative provides a link for connecting the community to supporting children's love and engagement in reading.



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*.

There are no discrepancies to report on our Year 1 target matching funds and our Year 1 Actual matching funds. The county commission classrooms operating within the Shelby County Consortium school districts continue to be funded and operated as originally defined. The MNPS early learning center preschool hubs continue to be a site where researched based practice and ongoing data analysis of student's success as well as positive changes in teacher practices continue to grow. Tennessee is very fortunate that the city and county governmental entities of these two largest districts serving a great many of our highest needs population, had the foresight to fund these programs in 2014. Without this, Tennessee would not have been in the position to apply for these funds and to expand our services even more.

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.

Both MNPS and the school districts comprising the Shelby County Consortium are working diligently to not only provide a high quality pre-K program but to truly think about the links that could strength this program by looking at the experiences each student has prior to entering pre-K and the experiences they will have when entering the formal K-12 education system. Administrators of pre-K-3 classrooms are learning more about what quality pre-K looks like and how K-3 teachers can differentiate and support children at the diverse levels of development they bring with them into the school system. MNPS is taking a closer look at their districts current k-5 strategic plan and rethinking this in order to consider the role of pre-K and community child care and Head Start programs to strengthen the continuum and not just think of pre-K as an add on of one year. The provision of Comprehensive Services is now thought of as a vital role of support for children's successful education. The focus is moving towards meeting the needs of the whole child including their health and their family. This is not to say that it is education's responsibility but that it is the responsibility of all entities touching a young child and their family. There is much work still to be done but the state of Tennessee is moving in the right direction.

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.

A review of the spreadsheet submitted with our application, shows that over the four year grant period, 70% of our total grant request will go to creating new state preschool program seats.

The need in the districts represented by our Subgrantees far outweigh the supply we can provide. It was and continues to be our intention to extend an opportunity for any many children as possible to participate in and experience a learning experience that set them on a track for success for many years to come. Pre-K is not **the**

answer but it certainly is a great start.

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.

There are no changes to the approved budget and total expenditures for the reporting year from the summary requested and provided in November 2015. Funding for year one was approved and allocated in June 2015 with the budget year following the state budget year of July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016. Expenditures continue to remain on target with all year one funds to be expended or obligated by June 30, 2016. Year two funds will be spent after year one funds have been exhausted.

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).

At this time I do not anticipate any substantive changes to our budget from the one submitted last year. There may be some slight adjustments to our contract with Peabody Research Institute, depending on the direction and approval of Kindergarten Entry assessment tool selected by the State.

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.

The Tennessee department of education along with the Subgrantees remain focused on continued provision of high quality pre-K classrooms beyond the four year grant period. The department has included early foundations as a major piece of its strategic plan to ensure all students are postsecondary and career ready when graduating high school. The governor and the department of education and other child serving state departments revealed a new initiative "Read to Be Ready" which also focuses on supporting families, early care providers and teachers understanding of research based best practices to build the foundational skills important necessary for conventional reading and writing. There is also a renewed interest by private businesses, philanthropic organizations, chambers of commerce and even some legislators to invest in practices to ensure quality early learning experiences are available and that the department is working to hold all programs to high quality standards.

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.

There are no discrepancies to report at this time. Activities not yet completed include: 1) development of training plan for administrators and classroom staff; 2) regional Summit in each area of the state served by this grant which is planned for June 2016; 3) continuation of classroom observations and collection of data for identifying next steps; 4) technical assistance opportunities including ongoing travel to visit classrooms, and other opportunities to learn from our technical assistance partners and other states; 5) salaries of staff in the department of education as well staff from grantees and contractual agreements; 6) ongoing implementation of comprehensive services. All planned projects are meeting benchmarks for completion by June 30, 2016.