

# PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2016 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: Rhode Island Department of Education

5. Grantee Address: Rhode Island Department of Education

City: 255 Westminster Street                      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: 01/01/2016                      To: 12/31/2016

### 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		
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: 07/01/2016                      To: 06/30/2017
- 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 second year of Rhode Island's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) focused on four main areas: continuing to expand access, implementing a refined system of monitoring for continuous quality improvement, deepening collaborations around coordinated recruitment, and continuing to ensure consistent access to comprehensive services. The 2016 school year closed with 19 programs, 32 funded classrooms, in 10 communities (1 community is solely funded with state funds), serving a total of 954 children. The following communities offered State Pre-K: Central Falls, East Providence, Providence, Pawtucket, Newport, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Of the children enrolled that year, 17% were English Language Learners, less than 1% experienced homelessness, 8% were in the child welfare system and 12% were identified as having disabilities and IEPs.

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. The start of the 2016 school year proved to be the largest expansion year yet. This work began in January 2016, when 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 added two additional communities, North Providence and Johnston. Pre-K classrooms in those communities were funded with additional state funds. Existing wait list data, combined with Head Start availability and overall Census data was used to determine where classrooms were operated. The chart below outlines the school year (SY) expansion:

<b>Community</b>	<b>SY '14-15</b>	<b>SY `15-16</b>	<b>SY 16-17</b>
	<b># of classrooms</b>	<b># of classrooms</b>	<b># of classrooms</b>
Central Falls	1	3	4
Cranston	1	2	3
East Providence	0	1	8
Johnston	0	0	1
Newport	2	3	3
North Providence	0	0	1
Pawtucket	1	1	5
Providence	5	11	18
Warwick	3	3	2
West Warwick	2	3	4

Woonsocket	2	5	7
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>56</i>

Existing Pre-K programs and new sub-grantees then began the process of recruiting families for application to the state Pre-K lottery. During the 2015-2016 school year, the state identified barriers related to recruitment. In an effort to incorporate these lessons learned, RIDE worked closely with its state agency partners regarding recruitment, as well as convened the states Head Start grantees to discuss ongoing efforts to collaborate so that collectively, we could ensure that every high quality seat in the state was filled. A series of meetings were held which included the attendance of the following: Head Start grantees, the state's Head Start State Collaboration Office at DHS, the Head Start Association representative, KidsCount and the states Technical Assistance specialist from the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO). The group engaged its CEELo representative to gather feedback and strategies which other states found successful and to inform RI plan moving forward.

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 number of applications entered by community on an ongoing basis. The 2016 lottery was conducted on June 30, 2016. At that time, there were 1,925 applications for the 1,008 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 in order to ensure pay parity, staff time to participate in PD/TA activities, and educational materials and supplies. By July 1, 2016, all 30 grantees and 56 classroom contracts for the 2016-2017 school year were completed. Following the Pre-K lottery, sub-grantees began contacting selected families and verifying income information. Income levels in the states formula match those of the representative community. So for each classroom, the number of children below poverty and above poverty varies based on that community. As a result, selection in the lottery alone does not guarantee a slot. Income eligibility must match what was submitted on the application, and match the community percentages. 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 2016-2017 classrooms were fully operational by September 7, 2016.

**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 applied for and received approval for 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. As of spring 2016 of the 32 2015-2016 grantees, 6 had full CECE Approval, 5 had Provisional Approval, 21 had Provisional/Conditional Approval, and 1 had Probationary Approval (due to a staffing change and need for new classroom quality assessments). During the course of the year approval statuses may change for a variety of reasons. The most common being that a lead teacher changes, in which case programs are marked as probational until new classroom assessments are done. Other times, they may be marked to probational if there are working on revising or updating program documentation for submission to RIDE. For the 2016 fall school year, we have 23 new classrooms that are first year applicants and will complete the approval process in the spring of 2017.

In addition, RIDE staff conducts monitoring visits to review compliance with state Pre-K policies which expand upon CECE regulations. During 2016, RIDE staff worked to align the monitoring processes under CECE Approval to incorporate state Pre-K policies to create a comprehensive monitoring system. This resulted in a revised rubric, tracking system and guidance documents for the field. The data from the CECE approval process and monitoring visits are 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: the development of what is called a 1, 2, 3, 4 plan in which programs address areas scoring under a 5 in their

ERS and CLASS assessments, as well as a program level Quality Improvement Plan and Individual Professional Development Plans.

### **Professional Development and Technical Assistance Supports**

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 RI Department of Education's Professional Development and Technical Assistance vendor, Education Development Center's (EDC) Center for Early Learning Professionals, began its work during the 2015-2016 school year, and continued in fall 2016. RIDE, together with the vendor implemented a services plan, informed by ECERS and CLASS data, as well as program Quality Improvement (QI) goals. The resulting plan informed a menu of services which ranged from on-site individual technical assistance, small group communities of practice and community wide professional development. RIDE worked with the vendor to develop an evaluation plan which would provide key information on the usefulness of services. The findings of the evaluation were made available summer 2016 and were subsequently used to inform the fall 2016 plan for services. The evaluation demonstrated core content areas programs identified needing support in regards to, achievements of programs and practitioners. The evaluation was designed to answer three primary questions: 1). What changes in knowledge and practices has the Center helped teachers and programs achieve?, 2) Which of the Center's PD/TA strategies do teachers and administrators find most helpful in supporting progress toward Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP) and program quality improvement related to Pre-K goals?, 3). What are the ongoing areas of challenge for teachers and education coordinators in terms of achieving IPDP and QI goals related to Pre-K? Data collection included a series of focus groups for which 92% of education coordinators and 20% of teachers attended. There were also two online surveys administered in May 2016 for which there was an 87% response rate for Education Coordinators and a 79% response rate for teachers. The evaluation highlighted the success in supporting all but one teacher in obtaining Teaching Strategies Gold reliability, gains made in 92% of programs reaching the ECERS target score of 5 or higher, and teachers self-reported gains on IPDP goals. Based on the findings, 2016-2017 school year services, work entailed ensuring a broader variety of events, increased differentiation, greater formative assessment support, and greater support to teacher assistants as a key component of the teaching team.

### **State Pre-K Evaluation**

RIDE engaged in an RFP process to select a RIDE program evaluation vendor. An RFP solicitation was released March 16, 2016. During this time a technical review committee was formed. There were five received submissions and ultimately an award was made to Child Trends on August 22, 2016. The vendor was selected based on their understanding of the issues, their experience, developed work plan, capacity and budget proposal. After receiving the award, RIDE worked with the vendor to finalize a work plan. The work plan includes a classroom quality study as well as a longitudinal child outcome study. It was determined that given the award was made the week before school was to begin, that it was too late to begin child level data collection for fall 2016. Year 1 activities, as a result, included evaluation staff reviewing State Pre-K written program standards, monitoring systems, and quality systems to assess their clarity, objectivity and ease of measurement. Additionally, evaluators conducted an analysis of the 2016 ECERS data in order to report on initial quality, make final selections on child level data collection tools, work towards IRB approval. This will ensure that data collection procedures and forms are finalized for use in 2017.

### **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. In some cases, for example, Head Start grantees utilize existing internal staff for these supports, or public schools may access their nurse. 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 an effort to continue this work, during the spring of 2016 RIDE and a consultant engaged in a series of focus groups on the topic, to get a better sense of what programs currently do, assess their needs in order to meet

with requirement successfully, and to begin to vet a revised system. This feedback, allowed RIDE to work with the Department of Health to begin to draft a system. Two specific goals were established, which included that the system would 1). Enable early childhood program administrators to efficiently and effectively assess family needs, to refer to and monitor Pre-K children and their family members access to community-based services and resources (special education, early intervention, home visiting, mental health, health and social services), and 2). That practitioners can maximize use of technology to support access to resource information, and electronic referrals to services where possible. Strategies to meet these goals were established which included: developing state-level guidance and policies for a comprehensive support services system, providing tools to support programs in addressing the policies, as well as the promotion and support in the utilization the online resource directory at DOH. Work during the fall 2016 focused around exploring vendor capacity to enhance the HEALTH referral tool for use by administrators to makereferrals, as well as drafting initial guidance to programs. These policies summarize the goals, vision, and requirements to ensure that early learning programs with state-funded Pre-K classrooms have in place a process and written procedures for identifying family needs and referring them to support services. During 2017 a vendor will be contracted with to build the electronic referral and tracking system. RIDE and DOH will be working to jointly contract with a vendor for the development of this system. This coordinated effort, while important has taken additional time. Once complete, the comprehensive services system will allow programs to identify and make referrals for things such as: food scarcity, family needs for diapers, clothing, car or seats, insurance assistance, help with paying utility bills, legal help with housing, immigration, or custody/guardianship issues etc. This system will also replace the individual practices of sub-grantees and ensure more consistent access to these services across all sub-grantees throughout the state.

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

2016 was our largest expansion year yet, which posed challenges in the selection of grantees who would be most prepared to implement these high quality Standards. During the year's expansion, we added more public school grantees than ever before. This brought with it new challenges in navigating teacher unions, large internal systems, and in ensuring that all involved understood the specific State Pre-K requirements. Public schools, in addition to community based agencies and Head Starts, remain essential State Pre-K partners, however, and come with nuances which must be worked through in order to implement the State Pre-K model with fidelity.

Additionally, with the near end of the state's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, Rhode Island experienced a reduction in staff and as well as turnover. While some staff were retained from the RTT-ELC work, there was still a transition period during the summer and fall of 2016.

**Conclusion**

Rhode Island has been able to leverage its systems work under the RTT-ELC grant in order to utilize the existing systems of support for all state Pre-K grantees. During 2016, the state was able to make further progress on services and supports for families and practitioners, which were made available to state Pre-K grantees.



**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, 2016.

Rhode Island's Pre-K program is a mixed income model where some enrolled children are in families with incomes above 200% of poverty and are subsequently paid for using state dollars. The states PDG application targets were set using estimates that 20% of children selected via the lottery would be above 200% of poverty and therefore ineligible for federal PDG funding. The program has subsequently mixed federal and state dollars, and as a result, has been able to ensure mixed income classrooms. The program design, is built around evidence that mixed income classrooms are beneficial to all children enrolled, and that classroom makeups should be representative of the broader community. Additionally, state dollars were used to expand into high needs communities not originally proposed in the grant.

Rhode Island's enrollment goal for the 2015-2016 school year included 763 children. The fall 2016 school year was the largest expansion year to date. The school year expansion allowed the state to increase to 1,008 children. The state was able to expand faster than proposed in its original grant due to cost savings in program operations.

A substantial amount of preparation went into the start of the 2016 year, particularly related to discussing opportunities for new grantees. Prior to awards being made to grantees, state staff met with districts to explore their capacity and interest in implementing State Pre-K. We also worked closely with community child care programs to explore space which could be utilized for classrooms in the catchment area. Kids Count provided substantial support in working to gather interest from grantees, analyze data such as in regards to wages and appropriate budgets during the contracting period, and provide ongoing updates to the field. Updates were shared with the Department of Education Board, Early Learning Council, Children's Cabinet, and Director's Network among others.

An expansion, such as the one we saw in 2016 required additional infrastructure development. The state ensured that there were adequate professional development offerings available and that there were resources specific to those implementing Pre-K programs for the first time. The expansion meant that there were many new individuals involved in implementing the program, which required a substantial amount of relationship building, as well as program and policy implementation support. This meant, not only working to build the capacity and understanding of direct service staff, but also behind the scenes registration and attendance officers, public school superintendents and school boards, and presidents/CEO's of community based organizations.

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 seeks 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, at the end of the 2016 school year, 12% were identified as having disabilities and IEPS. RIDE works diligently statewide to share the message that high quality Pre-K benefits all children, and shares associated Administration for Children and Families and ED resources reinforcing this message via its social media streams. For the children starting the 2016 school year, the State Pre-K enrollment percentage of eligible children with disabilities is 13% (131/1,008). 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%.

During 2016, the 619 Coordinator, in partnership with several trainers and consultants within the state, conducted pilots of The Inclusive Classroom Profile. Five State Pre-K grantees agreed to participate in the pilot. The Profile was used as a quality improvement tool in order to further support high quality inclusion experiences for children in the program. The approach to the pilot was that a local public school district needed to select a community partner, which in many cases was a community based early learning program, to participate. In conjunction, two new PD offerings were developed. These courses included: "The Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education Service Delivery Model" (offered twice) and "Intro to the Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education Service Delivery Model (IECSE) for General EC Teachers" (offered twice). The first was developed specifically for special education staff, and the later for all educators. These courses require a commitment from schools and programs in that the administrator must sign up to attend with their teacher, as well as to participate in the technical assistance services. Participants committed to receiving at least 1½ years of targeted and individualized technical assistance to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to support the implementation of quality inclusive practices. The training and technical assistance helped to support efforts to ensure that young children with disabilities are able to access and actively participate in general early childhood environments. This work allowed the state to move forward its Itinerant Early Childhood Special Education services ensure that young children with disabilities are able to access and actively participate in general early childhood environments by embedding the necessary support, service, and intervention within the daily classroom activities.

The state was able to use the State Pre-K model as an opportunity to discuss misconceptions about the importance of inclusion classrooms, and itinerant models which support all children, including those with disabilities. Working with schools, including new public school grantees, allowed opportunities for ongoing discussion about the states itinerant model, coaching and PD opportunities. There were also opportunities for

program leaders to use the high quality standards required in the State Pre-K classroom(s) to inform quality improvement in its previous part-day, non-state Pre-K inclusion classrooms.

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 2016, the state posted its Request for Proposals to operate additional state Pre-K classrooms. The state was looking to add an additional 18 classrooms, serving 454 children. In response to the RFP, a total of 22 agencies submitted applications requesting a total of 47 classrooms. The review resulted in a total of 30 grantees implementing 56 classrooms for the 2016 year.

Once awarded, sub-grantees then began the process of recruiting children for enrollment. Beginning in April and extending through May 2016, 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 July 5, 2016, 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.

Rhode Island's recruitment and enrollment strategies have proven broadly effective in past years, but this year's rapid expansion also highlighted areas for improvement. Early in the year, state specialists worked with Kids Count to analyze data including birth rates, school enrollment rates etc. and we identified gaps between the number of potential eligible children in a community, and the number of children whose families applied for state pre-k. The fact that wait lists had been exhausted, and yet demographics indicated that not all children were being served within a community presented an opportunity to think through additional opportunities to strengthen recruitment. We used this information to work on strengthening existing statewide collaborations, as well as to gather information on why particular families who may have been eligible, did not proceed with enrollment.

We also identified an area for improvement surrounding continuity for families with twins. The lottery system wasn't developed to accommodate families with twins, which is something which will be revised for the 2017-2018 school year. Another area we determined improvements could be made, was in regards to state Pre-K program coordination with Head Start. The state convened a meeting with all Head Start grantees, Kids Count and the states Collaboration Director and Head Start Association to discuss opportunities for a formalized agreement and process for coordinated recruitment. The state also sought technical assistance from the Center on the Enhancement of Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) on how Head Start and state pre-k programs have worked together in other states. The response to this coordination was very positive, and the state continues to work together on the implementation of new strategies to ensure all high quality seats are filled by children. More specifically, for the remainder of the 2016 - 2017 school year, RIDE will actively coordinate waiting lists within these communities and will facilitate the enrollment of children for any open seats.

There were several exciting events which brought attention to early care and education in the state during 2016. In the Spring 2016 Governor Raimondo held an Early Learning Summit which brought together stakeholders from across the state to discuss the states accomplishments and investments in early learning. Additionally, Kids Count in collaboration with the Governor's Office held a press conference at one of the State Pre-K grantee sites where legislators could tour the program and learn more about the importance of high quality early learning.

During 2016, the state worked to ensure its system was increasingly accessible. It updated websites and forms to increase the availability of resources in Spanish. Additionally, it leveraged CCDBG/CCDF funds for quality supports whenever possible. These funds were used to continue the state's investments in its QRIS system which State Pre-K programs participate, access early childhood mental health consultation supports provided from the Success program at Bradley Hospital, as well as PD opportunities above and beyond those provided by the projects vendor, EDC through its Center for Early Learning Professionals.

**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 2016-17 school year.

Using a combination of state and federal PDG funds, Rhode Island's state Pre-K program expanded, from 33 classrooms to 56 classrooms serving 1,008 children. The total number of sub-grantees is outlined below:

<b>Community</b>	<b># of classrooms SY 16-17</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>% of Total Children</b>
Central Falls	4	54	5.3%
Cranston	3	36	3.5%
East Providence	8	144	14.2%
Johnston	1	18	1.7%
Newport	3	36	3.5%
North Providence	1	18	1.7%
Pawtucket	5	90	8.9%
Providence	18	324	32.14%
Warwick	2	36	2.3%
West Warwick	4	54	5.3%
Woonsocket	7	126	12.5%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>1008</i>	

In the states PDG application, it was anticipated that the PDG funds in combination with additional state funds would result in total enrollment of 954 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 2016-2017 school year averaged closer to \$180,000. This allowed the state to fund additional classrooms and enroll more children and to expand to actually serve 1,008 children during the fall of 2016.

We have found that word of mouth has helped spread the word about the program among families. New families relocating to the State of RI seem to be familiar with State Pre-K from their previous states and call the department to learn more. The state has also worked closely with the diversity of practitioners working with families to share information about the program. Pediatricians, EI providers, social workers, foster care workers, the states 211 just to name a few, share information about the program and eligibility criteria with families. Rhode Island has a strong, and small, early childhood network which helps with continuity across the state, and the consistent sharing of information with families.

The state Pre-K program has also a strong collaboration with the states AEYC and QRIS team. The staff at Bright Stars conduct the ECERS and CLASS for State Pre-K grantees, in order to ensure consistency across the system, and further supports shared goals of increasing participation and ratings in the system.

**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 2 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 defines school readiness according to the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) which outline expectations for what children should know, understand and be able to do at 60 months, when they transition into Kindergarten. The RIELDS outline the nine key knowledge and skill areas (Domains), as well as the specific Learning Goals for children at the end of Pre-K. The RIELDS, are aligned with the Rhode Island adopted Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy & Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards. Additionally, RIDE believes that kindergarten readiness is not just about the readiness of children, it is also about the readiness of schools to receive all children. In Rhode Island, the only requirement to participating in kindergarten is that they must be 5 on or before September 1st.

Rhode Island continues to participate in the K-3 Assessment Consortium led by North Carolina. In 2016, forty-one Rhode Island K-3 teachers volunteered to participate in the K-3 Formative Assessment Field Test Project. The K-3 Formative Assessment System drew on many different kinds of evidence (observations, conversations, work samples, and tasks) from many different sources to shed light on students' learning progress. During this field test year teachers were required to assess students in the fall and winter blocks of the school year. All the teachers as well as administrators received training from the Center for Learning and Development of SRI Education, a partner of the North Carolina Consortium. With teachers participating across grade K-3, we will be

conducting feedback sessions at the end of the field test year (March-April 2017) on the supports needed to gather and analyze data in the five areas of learning and development: approaches to learning, cognition, language and communication, physical/motor, and social-emotional development for each grade level.

RIDE has outlined 9 essential domains of school readiness which are: Physical Health and Motor, Social and Emotional, Language, Literacy, Cognitive, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Creative Arts. The State domains have been aligned to Teaching Strategies Gold Dimensions and teachers use these aligned resources in all lesson planning.

In addition, the state used information from the Kindergarten Entry Profile Implementation Plan conducted by The Policy Equity Group. One of the biggest take-aways from the report was the need to acknowledge that the KEP was part of a larger context which must focus on implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result, the state used funding from the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge to work with EDC to develop an approach that began with the state's first ever kindergarten conference this past September and continued with piloting an interdisciplinary, Common Core-aligned kindergarten curriculum developed by Boston Public Schools (BPS) in twenty-one classrooms across the state. This pilot project provided opportunities for Kindergarten teachers in participating schools to take part in professional development led by experienced coaches from BPS's Early Childhood Department. These teachers also received school-based coaching through the Center for Early Learning Professionals through December 2016.

Given that the pilot is currently under way and the participating states don't yet have access to the results child level data from, the state is using Teaching Strategies Gold data to evaluate progress made on school readiness indicators. The state has used Teaching Strategies Gold for State Pre-K since 2009. Under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, the state began working with Teaching Strategies to align its 2013 Early Learning and Development Standards with the tool. An alignment document has been finalized for use by the field in 2016, and was shared and used in PD/TA activities. During 2016, RIDE removed the requirement for teachers to obtain reliability on the tool, primarily because results demonstrated that this requirement didn't yield meaningful impacts on formative assessment skills. Instead, during 2016 RIDE continued to provide intensive monitoring, and PD/TA services on formative assessment. RIDE is cautious in using this data to concretely analyze children's school readiness, because the ongoing development of formative assessment skills remains a key goal in the State Pre-K program. Subsequently, during 2016, two online series were offered on formative assessment for the first time through the states Center for Early Learning Professionals. Session 1 is titled "Assessment in Early Childhood Settings" and Session 2 is titled "Formative Assessment in Early Childhood Settings". These courses are available to all professionals within the state.

Careful interpretation is required when using TSG data to measure children's progress in being ready for kindergarten within the state. TSG is highly dependent on the user's familiarity and expertise with the tool. It is for this reason that the state will continue to provide its model of intensive monitoring, PD and TA, particularly for new grantees and first time users.

In looking at the spring 2016 data, data from TSG on children's readiness is as follows:

**State Pre K Spring 2016**

**K Readiness Data**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Range %</b>	<b>Average %</b>
Social and Emotional Below Widely Held Expectations	2.8-100	13.6
Social and Emotional Meeting Widely Held Expectations	37.5-100	86.4
Physical Below Widely Held Expectations	7.9-100	11.1
Physical Meeting Widely Held Expectations	33.3-100	88.9
Language Below Widely Held Expectations	2.8-100	18.8
Language		

Meeting Widely Held Expectations Cognitive	33.3-100	81.2
Below Widely Held Expectations Cognitive	5-100	12.5
Meeting Widely Held Expectations Literacy	37.5-100	87.5
Below Widely Held Expectations Literacy	11-100	15.8
Meeting Widely Held Expectations Math	37.5-100	84.2
Below Widely Held Expectations Math	11.1-100	26.7
Meeting Widely Held Expectations	10.4-100	73.3

**State Pre K Spring 2016**

**K Readiness Data**

**Domain White Black Asian Hispanic Non-Hispanic 2 or more races English Learners Children with Disabilities**

Social and Emotional Below Widely Held Expectations	9.3	18.3	6.7	11.4	11.6	11.3	13.2	32.1
Social and Emotional Meeting Widely Held Expectations	90.7	81.7	93.3	88.6	88.4	88.7	86.8	67.9
Physical Below Widely Held Expectations	7.8	12.9	2.6	11.7	6.3	8.1	14.5	30.7
Physical Meeting Widely Held Expectations	92.2	87.10	97.4	88.3	93.7	91.9	85.5	69.3
Language Below Widely Held Expectations	11.9	18.3	30.2	18.8	11.9	12.1	29.6	52.6
Language Meeting Widely Held Expectations	88.1	81.7	69.8	81.2	88.10	87.9	70.4	47.4
Cognitive Below Widely Held Expectations	8.5	16.3	13.3	12.1	8.8	7.3	18.5	33.3
Cognitive Meeting Widely Held Expectations	91.5	83.7	86.7	87.9	91.2	92.7	81.5	66.7
Literacy Below Widely Held Expectations	11.1	18.5	19.1	17.1	10.7	11.4	23.8	37.8
Literacy Meeting Widely Held Expectations	88.9	81.5	80.9	82.9	89.3	88.6	76.2	62.2
Math Below Widely Held Expectations	19.6	32.3	21.4	29.5	18.2	21.1	37.1	58.1
Math Meeting Widely Held Expectations	80.4	67.7	78.6	70.5	81.8	78.9	62.9	41.9

\*No data available for Native Hawaiian, American Indian or Alaskan Native

In the GPRA data table we have reported that 575 children were ready for kindergarten. This total represents the total number of children who across dimensions met widely held expectations at 60 months.

**Longitudinal Data System**

In addition to the above, using RTT-ELC funds, the state has developed a longitudinal integrated data system, which tracks children at birth who are born in a Rhode Island Hospital, or through their pediatricians office when they begin receiving well child visits in the state. This allows the state to track children across services and throughout their school education. Upon entry into either State Pre-K or Kindergarten, all children are assigned a state unique identifier, or SASID, which allows the state to connect children to its State Pre-K intervention and through to graduation.

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**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 2016 efforts to ensure quality focused on 1) implementing and continuing to improve the coordinated state monitoring process, 2) supporting programs on use of the states integrated data system, called the Early Care and Education Data System (ECEDS) for the purposes of applying for CECE approval, and 3) redesigning, based on previous feedback and evaluation results, a revised PD/TA plan.

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 Annual 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, 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 comprehensive monitoring of Pre-K program operations at both a program/school and classroom level. As a result, the Standards contribute to not only classroom quality improvements but to overall program improvements, even for non-state Pre-K classrooms. 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).

In 2016, new sub-grantees worked over the spring to complete their applications for approval. New grantees for the 2016-2017 school year began their applications during the summer months and through early fall 2016. All used the integrated data system, ECEDS, for the first time to manage and maintain their applications for approval. As part of the application process, facilities and objective observational assessments (ECERS and CLASS) were conducted in each new classroom, as well as for any grantees where there was turnover of the lead teaching staff. Sub-grantees used this data to develop and submit action plans delineating their plans to address ECERS and CLASS priority area findings. Throughout the CECE Approval process, program information was shared with the Pre-K staff specialist to ensure all Pre-K quality benchmarks were being met, as well as to provide additional support when needed. The CECE Approval process continues for these programs with onsite

verification visits, and if needed, repeated quality observational measures. In order to ensure state capacity to monitor during the PDG expansion, RIDE hired an Early Childhood Coordinator, using state funds to oversee and manage this application and approval process. Additionally, as part of the CECE approval process RIDE will conduct onsite monitoring of sub grantees.

In addition to CECE program regulations, state Pre-K sub-grantees are required to comply with additional expectations 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, attendance, comprehensive services and interventions, developmental screening, grants and contracting, budget development and fiscal monitoring, technical assistance and professional development participation, kindergarten transition and participation in program evaluation. In 2015 State Pre-K staff aligned and revised the monitoring policies and protocols, which were then implemented in the fall of 2016. Implementation of the new monitoring plan highlighted opportunities where additional grantee guidance would be beneficial. As a result, state Pre-k staff developed a series of materials which will be shared with programs in 2017.

RIDE has historically provided intensive technical assistance 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. The state continued its relationship in 2016 with Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) Center for Early Learning Professionals to provide professional development and technical assistance (PDTA) services to all State Pre-K sub-grantees. The state used available state Pre-K program data including child developmental screening data, formative assessment data, classroom quality observational measures data and program monitoring data, to inform its continuous quality improvement (QI) process. This analysis led to the development of the 2016-2017 school year 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, measurable child outcomes, supporting access to and differentiation of children for children with special needs, achieving CECE approval.

Once the goals and measures were identified, EDC implemented these goals as part of their work plan, as well as aligned their evaluation to these goals accordingly. With the Program QI Plan information, 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, revising and updating goals based on the availability of new data. The monthly visits included review and planning related to the required State Pre-K/CECE application, approval and monitoring process. EDC provided an evaluation of their services, aligned to these QI goals for the 2016 year. State Pre-K staff meet 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 both small and large group communities of practice meetings for teachers and teacher assistants, as well as for education coordinators and administrators, a peer mentor model which continues to be used this year, in addition to on-site technical assistance. Additionally, programs are assigned mentors, which allow new state Pre-K grantees to seek peer support and learning opportunities from more experienced program leaders and previous grantees.

Additional program support is being provided through consultants with specific expertise on the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards and Teaching Strategies Gold. In response to needs articulated in the community, several new early learning and development standards courses were developed for those working in State Pre-K classrooms, as well as those with state teaching certification. These courses included: "RIELDS for Certified Educators", "RIELDS for Certified Administrators", and "Pre-K to K Transition Standards" course. These courses have also been developed to further promote collaboration between Pre-K and K teachers in order to foster stronger transitions and deeper understanding of each other's roles. Resources from the states Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant allowed these courses to be completed by December 2016, with plans to implement the new offerings in 2017.

Rhode Island remains committed to evaluating its state Pre-K Program to determine the impact on child outcomes and program quality. 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. During the 2016 year, the state released an RFP for evaluation vendor and selected Child Trends. Working with Child Trends, RIDE finalized its evaluation plan the fall of 2016, and subsequently Child Trends began work to obtain IRB approval and begin implementation design. The evaluation plan's components are: (1) Classroom Quality Study, (2) Longitudinal Child Outcomes Study, and (3) Cost Study. Year 1 activities include evaluation staff reviewing State Pre-K written program standards, monitoring systems, and quality systems to assess their clarity, objectivity and ease of measurement. Additionally, evaluators conducted an analysis of the 2016 ECERS data in order to report on initial quality make final selections on child level data collection tools, and work towards IRB approval, and ensuring data collection procedures and forms were finalized for use in 2017.

In order to further support leadership development within the state, and alignment between Pre-K and the upper grades, RIDE utilized Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funds to develop a Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Education Leadership for Child Care Administrators, Education Coordinators, and Principles. The program intends to provide content in order to support an understanding of the developmental and learning needs of young children, the pivotal roles of family and community in early learning, and effective strategies for strengthening teaching and learning. This Certificate model design was completed in December 2016. It includes a total of 18 credits, and requirements to complete the following courses: ECL 501 Early Childhood Development: Theory and Research, ECL 502 Leadership Strategies: Early Childhood Education, ECL 503 Early Childhood Curriculum: Leading Improvement 1, ECL 504 Family/Community Partnerships: Early Childhood Leadership, ECL 505 Early Childhood Curriculum: Leading Improvement 2, and ECL 506 Supervision of Early Childhood Teachers.

## 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.

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 best positioned to meet and maintain the high-quality requirements of RI's Pre-K model.

Additionally, Rhode Island was able to leverage its structural quality elements developed under the RTT-ELC grant. This includes its 2013 Early Learning and Development Standards, revised Program Standards, State Longitudinal Data System, family engagement resources, quality improvement grant dollars, facilities supports, and professional development and technical assistance services, college scholarships, and comprehensive assessment Systems. RTT-ELC funds were used to enhance and augment key areas within the system such as prepared aspiring as well as participating State Pre-K programs to send teachers to school, repair hazardous playgrounds, purchase technology to participate in the states online systems. The grant allowed the State Pre-K program to participate in a pilot of the early childhood mental health system, called Success. The Success project was implemented by Bradley Hospital and was developed and refined under the RTT-ELC grant.

The state was also able to use State Pre-K funding for specific resources which could be piloted with grantees and potentially later, released to the broader field. As a result, the state was able to best leverage its federal and state resources to build comprehensive system supports for all educators and programs in the state. Examples of this work, included guidance documents used to support stronger and more specific classroom and program practices such as those around the transition between Pre-K and K, as well as the Comprehensive Services Model.

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 contracts, the sub-grantee is required to: "Implement 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, 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. At this time, of the 33 state Pre-K classrooms, programs have obtained the following:

Full CECE approval - 6

Provisional Approval - 5

Provisional Conditional - 21

Probationary Approval - 1

Programs may be in a provisional or probationary status if they have had lead teacher turnover, or are working on updating program documentation. When lead teachers turn over, programs are placed in probationary status until new classroom quality assessments are conducted that meet the minimum score thresholds. There are also deliverables which are due throughout the year, at when programs need to make any modification, they are changed to provisional until the updated documents have been submitted.

Additionally we have 23 new classrooms that are first year applicants and will complete the approval process in the spring of 2017.

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 and evaluate child outcomes of those participating in state Pre-K and those who haven't

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, and 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.

As the above demonstrates, progress was made in both expanding the capacity of programs to implement high quality classrooms and programs, refining the states system of monitoring and program standards implementation, as well as the opportunities for leveraging these new programs and resources for broader use across the state.

### **Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA**

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot.

Rhode Island's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) goal for the 2016-2017 school year was to add 396 additional preschool classrooms using federal funding from the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) resulting in a total of 56 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 additional preschool classrooms for a total of 1,008 children, up from the proposed amount of slots as 954. This total exceeds the target set in Year 2 in the state's application. There are no changes for Years 3-4 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 2016-2017 sub-grantees were, on average, \$180,000, 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, 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 in order to provide comprehensive professional-, family- and program-level services.

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

In January 2016, 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 FY16 Pre-K school year. All activities are briefly described next.

From April - July 2016, 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 2016, with the support of the RIDE CECE Specialist, all newly selected and existing FY16 State Pre-K program sub-grantees actively began the process of applying for Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program Approval. 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 2016. Work also focused specifically on child assessments, data sharing, and targeted professional development. In preparation for the FY16 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. The states PD/ TA vendor EDC, provided an overview and orientation to the tool. Among the FY16 State Pre-K sub-grantees, all but one program/school had experience using TSG as a formative assessment tool as part of their assessment system. Most grantees use the system as part of their integrated preschool program, however, many of the staff hired specifically to teach in state Pre-K were new to the system. All State Pre-K sub-grantees also received startup support. The States TSG Monitor, also provided two PD offerings for both teachers and

administrators, which the States TA providers attended. Following this professional development, ongoing technical assistance to sub-grantees was implemented to support effective implementation of program assessment plans was provided by both EDC, as well as RIDE. This support helped to facilitate data collection and end entry using TSG by the November 2016 benchmark date. Some programs had a larger lift than others due to delays in obtaining and signing an MOU with the state's fiscal agent for the purposes of sharing data with the state. This caused delays in entering the data into the system. However, all programs were in and met requirements within the month of November. In preparation for the required benchmark dates, EDC supported programs through what we called "Data Days", which is where TA staff would support program staff in reviewing their data, ensuring accuracy and completion. Data was also used to support program quality improvement work, and inform analysis of progress on goals within the State-level Program quality improvement plan.

The State Pre-K grant allowed the State to further define roles and responsibilities of grantees, including teachers and leaders implementing a high quality program. State staff, as well as the PD/TA contracted vendor worked with staff in the administration office, attendance office, fiscal office and itinerant teams to increase capacity and understanding of implementation policies, appropriate early childhood development and instructional practices. For example, itinerant educators needed to be informed about schedules and instruction for the State Pre-K class, which was highlighted in ERS results. This allowed the opportunity for joint professional development, by which itinerant educators attended services provided by the states PD/TA vendor. An area of growth which was identified was supporting grantees in understanding their distinct roles and responsibilities as a State Pre-K grantee, which was often different from their previous school wide policies as well as those implemented in the states special education preschool program. This allowed the opportunity for discussions around opportunities for alignment between services, and remains an ongoing goal for the state to think through.

During January - December 2016, the State Pre-K Specialist supported new and existing State Pre-K sub-grantees in establishing strong partnerships and ensuring 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. The State 619 Coordinator supported 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. The 619 Coordinator routinely met with public school staff, and provided professional development through the states PD/TA provider.

During this same time period RIDE facilitated and offered a series of Foundations for EI/ECSE courses which were designed to provide both early intervention staff and special education staff an overview of the RI Early Learning and Development Standards and typical child development. RTT-ELC funds were used to facilitate the course at five organizations and schools across the state. The offering of this course further supported the State Pre-K programs goals to have coordinated support between EI/Child Outreach agencies and early learning programs.

RIDE continues to work on supporting State Pre-K grantee awareness of and access to a comprehensive set of supports and interventions, and to ensure the programs are best equipped to support the diversity of learners attending programs. In response, RIDE continues to maintain strong relationships with Bradley Hospital, the states early childhood mental health provider, the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Child Welfare, as well as numerous family shelters. RIDE continues the development of its Comprehensive Services referral system in collaboration with the Department of Health and anticipates launching an online referral and tracking system during 2017. The next step in the development is to contract with the IT developer to build the discussed functionality and to provide training and support to Pre-K grantees on its use. Additionally, RIDE has used the federal Department of Human Services and Department of Education publications to strengthen existing policies and embed when appropriate within state guidance. For example, RIDE has used the following: "Dual Language Learners: Preschool and Workforce", "Aligning Early Childhood Programs to Serve Children Experiencing Homelessness", "Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness" and the "Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs". These collaborations will continue to remain an ongoing goal, particularly as the states RTT-ELC grant came to an end, and state leaders continued to make ongoing decisions around sustainability.

#### 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).

**Overview:** With help from the RTT-ELC grant, Rhode Island made significant progress on implementing an aligned birth through third grade system. These initiatives ensure that there is a common framework and shared understanding of the learning and development of children B-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and how the knowledge and skills of the workforce and the quality of early learning programs work collectively to support improved child outcomes. This work has ensured that state Pre-K programs, regardless of their type (e.g. child care, Head Start, public preschool), participate within this system. The state's efforts will be explained in greater detail below.

**Transitions for Programs Serving Children B-5:** Under RTT-ELC, a 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, new opportunities with greater differentiation were rolled out, and access was expanded. Expectations for workforce knowledge and competencies were developed for multiple roles in the early learning system. The WKC's now provide a framework for alignment of professional development and technical assistance activities available throughout the state. Regulations and quality standards guiding early learning programs were aligned to create a cohesive pathway toward increased program quality.

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. The Workforce Registry and Program Portal were rolled out winter 2016, which allowed both individual users to create accounts, as well as form programs to enter and maintain the data for the family search as well as for their licensing, Bright Stars and CECE applications. The DCYF child care licensing application was released and programs were able to, for the first time, submit their licensing renewal electronically. Additionally, during the fall of 2016 the CECE application function was released which allowed State Pre-K programs to apply for CECE approval electronically. Additionally, the Center for Early Learning Professionals had a technology grant to support both the provision of computers and associated technology (scanners etc.) in order to support programs accessing the online systems, as well as technical assistance in completing Program Portals and staff Workforce Registries.

The states three public institutes of higher education, including the Community College of Rhode Island, The University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College, completed integration of the state's Early Learning and Development Standards into their programs of study. This allowed opportunities for program enhancements in order to ensure the Early Learning and Development Standards were fully incorporated. Additionally, graduating classes moving forward will obtain a RI Department of Education professional certificate on the Standards. This certificate, was previously only obtainable by attending PD, and now is embedded within the programs of study. The certificate is a requirement in the states QRIS. For those who have already graduated and obtained teacher certification in the state, two expedited pathways were developed. These were titled "RIELDS for Certified Educators" and "RIELDS for Certified Administrators". Additionally, a Pre-K to K transition course was developed for Pre-K and K teachers to better understand the alignment between the Early Learning and Development Standards, Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.

The Department of Education also partnered with the lead agency for IDEA Part C, to develop and implement 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 Growing Great Kids and Parents as Teachers. These alignments are now posted and available to the community.

For families, two initiatives were designed to impact all children regardless of access to formal early learning environments. These included a set of resources and parent trainings for families on children's development

and learning. Work was done to ensure these resources are found where parents live, work and play. RIDE supported the states children's museum in developing a series of resources aligned to the Standards, in the alignment of exhibit spaces, and the development of PD offerings for educators. Funds were also used to support the development of a series of family bags aligned to the Standards which families could use to support learning at home. The bags included copies of the Fun Family Activity Cards, books and manipulatives. These resources are also available as a tool for families in order to prevent summer learning loss. Additionally, a developmental screening campaign targeted to families of children B-5 was implemented and strategies to increase rates of developmental screening were enhanced and expanded.

Rhode Island also made progress on increasing access to high-quality programs by expanding the numbers of early learning programs participating in the Bright Stars, the states TQRIS and in achieving CECE Approval. In 2011, only 93 programs were participating in the state's QRIS. As of December 2016, 707 programs were participating. Additionally, 23 new programs have applied for CECE Approval.

In accordance with the state's high quality program and professional standards, state Pre- K programs are required to operate within this system, to meet these standards and utilize these supports in order to ensure their curriculum, assessment and family engagement practices align with best practices and state Standards, that their staff use competencies in developing professional development goals, and that staff attend the states approved professional development offerings. All children enrolled must receive a developmental screening within 45 days of enrollment. Additionally, they must also participate in the state's program quality continuum by applying for both Brightstars and CECE Approval, which ensures they meet the highest level of quality in the state, and set ongoing quality improvement goals, both at the classroom and program level. Having numerous high quality program options within funded regions, helped to allowed families greater choice when applying for State Pre-K.

**Transitions for programs Serving Children from 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 2016, Rhode Island made significant progress toward supporting effective early childhood formative assessment practices by developing a set of training modules which are available on-line, in collaboration with the states PDTA vendor, the Center for Early Learning Professionals. 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.

Rhode Island continues to participate in the K-3 Assessment Consortium led by North Carolina. In 2016, forty-one Rhode Island K-3 teachers volunteered to participate in the K-3 Formative Assessment Field Test Project. The K-3 Formative Assessment System drew on many different kinds of evidence (observations, conversations, work samples, and tasks) from many different sources to shed light on students' learning progress. During this field test year teachers were required to assess students in the fall and winter blocks of the school year. All the teachers as well as administrators received training from the Center for Learning and Development and SRI Education, a partner of the North Carolina Consortium. With teachers participating across grade K-3, there will be ongoing feedback sessions at the end of the field test year (March-April 2017) on the supports needed to gather and analyze data in the five areas of learning and development: approaches to learning, cognition, language and communication, physical/motor, and social-emotional development for each grade level. In addition, the state used information from the Kindergarten Entry Profile Implementation Plan conducted by The Policy Equity Group. One of the biggest take-aways from the report was the need to acknowledge that the KEP was part of a larger context which must focus on implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result, the state used funding from the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge to work with EDC to develop an approach that began with the state's first ever kindergarten

conference this past September and continued with piloting an interdisciplinary, Common Core-aligned kindergarten curriculum developed by Boston Public Schools (BPS) in twenty-one classrooms across the state. This pilot project provided opportunities for Kindergarten teachers in participating schools to take part in professional development led by experienced coaches from BPS's Early Childhood Department. These teachers also received school-based coaching through the Education Development Center (EDC) Center for Early Learning Professionals through December. These districts worked closely on the implementation of aligned and developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Work during the year focused on supporting enhanced leadership as well as increased opportunities for educators working in K-8. The development of both the RI Early Learning and Development Standards Pre-K to K course as well as the Graduate Certificate for Administrators, Education Coordinators and Principals are intended to bring together professionals working in the birth through 5, and K through 8 settings. While these courses will not be implemented until 2017, development of the curricula was completed during 2016.

One of the states Pre-K districts also participated in the Math Science Partnership (MSP) grant during 2016, and focused on Pre-K through 3 use of Standards in the development and implementation of curriculum. This initiative attempted to increase the capacity of the state's largest public school's to deliver math content in a developmentally appropriate way.

Additionally, in 2016 the state began increasing the number of districts offering full day kindergarten, with full implementation in all but two districts during 2016, and full implementation during 2017 per the Governors proposed plan and budget.

Finally, Governor Gina Raimondo announced her goal that 75% of all Rhode Island third graders will core proficient or higher in reading by 2025. This goal has led to the development of a cross agency team with responsibility to develop a plan to enable Rhode Island to reach this goal. The Rhode Island Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Department of Children Youth and Families are in the processes of developing goals and a work plan to be implemented in the coming year. The plan is focusing on strengthening and aligning Rhode Island's continuum of birth to eight (B-8) services and supports in four key areas including School Readiness, School Success, Safety Net Services, and Robust Family and Community and Engagement. The plan is expected to be finalized March 2017.

## 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 2 Target* differs from the *Year 2 Actual*.

In state fiscal year 2017, \$2,210,000 in State funds were allocated through the education funding formula for the specific purpose of the expansion of the state Pre-K program. These funds were combined with the federal grant funds to add additional classrooms and to pay for enrollment of children selected via the lottery whose family income is over 200% of poverty. 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.

The state is working to continue ensuring a more seamless progression of supports for those in state Pre-K by requiring and supporting grantees to fully participate in the system. The State Pre-K model aims to be a demonstration of an exemplar model, which is highly integrated and connected across all state agencies, and systems. 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 requires that programs *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 2016, existing and new grantees were supported to coordinate, and ensure access to minimally 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. Despite these policies, the state is aware that Pre-K grantees 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. Often times, grantees who also manage Head Start, will use their existing internal systems of supports by offering these supports "in-kind" to state Pre-K. For community based and public school programs, these connections are often more variable. As the states PDG application spoke to, the state has begun work with the Department of Health on building an electronic resource and referral system to be piloted with State Pre-K, and potentially be available statewide for all programs. The previously developed conceptual design, allowed RIDE the opportunity to conduct a series of community focus groups in order to elicit feedback on the conceptualized system. The group defined the existing Health Directory resources which would provide a focused list of resources to make referrals to. The Department of Health and RIDE are partnering in establishing a pilot with a selected vendor to build the online referral and tracking mechanism using these resources. These agencies have engaged in a series of planning calls to outline the desired functionality. This portion of the project was slightly delayed due to the decision to change vendors. In order for RIDE to continue, it needed to wait until Health finalized its contract with the vendor which will occur in 2017. In the meantime, RIDE is working to strengthen its Pre-K policy guidance for programs in regards to comprehensive services, as well as to formalize the questionnaire programs will administer to families to evaluate needs for services.

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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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.

Rhode Island's early childhood mental health consultation program is now being managed and funded by the state's Department of Human Services. 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. Essentially, the foundational supports such as related to schedules, environment, and differentiation are provided by the Center, and the needs of children and families at the top of the pyramid are provided by SUCCESS. Services offered, 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.

The state is also supporting strong transitions to kindergarten. In the 2015-2016 school year, 88% of Rhode Island kindergartners statewide and 100% of kindergartners in the four core cities were in full-day kindergarten. As of the 2015-2016 school year, 31 of the 35 elementary school districts and all of the public charter elementary schools in Rhode Island offer universal access to full-day kindergarten programs, and upon the start of the 2016-2017 school year 33 school districts participate. The Governor has established the required that by 2017 all public schools must offer full day k. Work under RTT-ELC supported these districts in focusing on instructional quality through work in partnership with Boston Public Schools to implement their evidenced based, developmentally appropriate curricula. Educators received professional development and coaching through December 2016, as well as were supported to purchase materials required to implement the curricula moving forward. This work, will help ensure instructional alignment and consistent experiences for children between Per-K and K.

RIDE has and will continued its efforts to ensure a continuous and consistent high quality early learning opportunities, across the diversity of settings in which State Pre-K is offered. The State Pre-K program brought to light opportunities for coordinated recruitment with Head Start, home visiting, child care, and social services. The result of this was a letter signed by both RIDE, and the states Head Start Association, and supported by the Head Start Collaboration Director, Kids Count as well as the states grantees. This effort solidified our efforts related to data sharing and coordinated recruitment.

**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 2017 was \$7,983,871, an increase of \$4,033,871 from fiscal year 2016. Without federal Expansion grant funds, Rhode Island would have had the capacity to enroll up to 486 children. Instead, in school year 2016-2017, there are 56 classrooms serving 1,008 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, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

RI's funding of preschool classrooms is aligned with the state fiscal year/school year rather than the calendar year. 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. Most Year 1 funds were expended by June 30, 2016. We anticipate that most Year 2 funds will be expended by June 30, 2017.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017).

Unspent funds from the 2016 allocation will be reflected in the Year 3 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 3. Awards for classrooms being funded with the 2017 allocation will begin July 1, 2017. 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 \$5,160,000 in state fiscal year 2017. 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, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

RI's funding of preschool classrooms is aligned with the state fiscal year/school year rather than the calendar year. Therefore, actual expenditures through 12/31/2016 are less than the initial budget; however, all subrecipient funds are encumbered and RIDE anticipates that all funds will be expended by June 30, 2017.