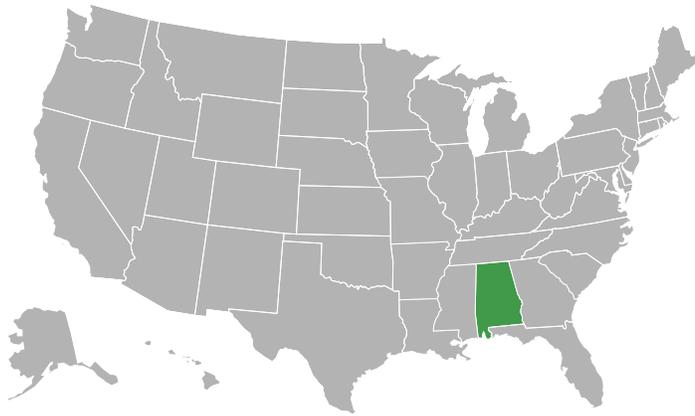


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Alabama



Preschool Development Grants

AUGUST 2018



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

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 08/31/2020

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

General Information

1. PR/Award #: S419A150014 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: _____

3. Project Title: 84.419A

4. Grantee Name: Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

5. Grantee Address: 135 South Union Street

City: Montgomery State: Alabama Zip: 36130

6. Project Director Name: Jeana Ross

Title: Secretary, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

Phone #: (334) 353-2700 Ext.: 2719 Fax #: _____

Email Address: jeana.ross@ece.alabama.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2016 To: 12/01/2017

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	\$175,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$175,000,000.00	\$16,000,000.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

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

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No
- b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No
- c. If yes, provide the following information:
- Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 10/01/2016 To: 09/30/2018
- Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: HHS
- 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. 08/31/2020

Grantee State: AL

PR/Award #: S419A150014

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.

Background/Introduction:

The mission of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is to inspire, support, and deliver cohesive comprehensive systems of high quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn. The Office of School Readiness (OSR) housed within DECE implements Alabama's state and federally funded First Class Pre-K (FCPK) program. DECE is well-positioned to coordinate the state's preschool programs and support alignment across the early childhood and elementary systems. OSR, Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program are all housed within DECE. DECE is also the statutorily designated agency to administer and lead the State Children's Policy Council (CPC) which coordinates children's services.

Accomplishments:

In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE provided access to high-quality preschool programs for 15,240 of the 28,937 target eligible children (below 200% of poverty) in communities served by the PDG through new and improved/enhancement slots. Also in Year 3, all existing FCPK classrooms received funds for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts.

As part of the ongoing sustainability plan, Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) sites moved to state funding in Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). During Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016), the previous Year 1 (2015-2016 school year; as of December 1, 2015) sites also moved to state funding.

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool programs in Alabama. During the 2013-2014 school year (prior to the PDG), FCPK classrooms served 5,598 of the state's 60,665 4-year-old children from that year, representing 9.2% of the 4-year-old population. As of Year 3 of the PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), with a combination of PDG and state funds, FCPK is providing access for 16,034 of the state's 59,667 4 year olds. This represents 26.9% of 4-year-olds in Alabama. There are a total 940 classrooms (as of December 1, 2017) in FCPK's diverse delivery system, including public schools, private child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers.

As Alabama has expanded access to preschool programs, the state has maintained high-quality as the center for all of its efforts. In addition to meeting 12 of 12 quality structural elements as discussed in Section B.2,

FCPK has consistently met all 10 quality standards identified by the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) since 2005-2006 and was one of only six state-funded Pre-K programs to meet all 10 NIEER quality standard benchmarks in 2016 and one of only two states to meet all 10 new benchmarks. According to a July 2016 policy scan conducted by NIEER (Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High Quality: a State and Local Policy Scan), Alabama fully meets 11 of its now expanded 15 Essential Elements and partially meets one other. Recent policy improvements and focus areas related to DLL and special education would likely result in an increased number of full meets.

During Year 3 of PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017) FCPK classrooms served 1,097 students with disabilities or 7.2% of children served by the grant. This exceeds both the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through the Part B of IDEA program (4.1%) and the current national percentage of four-year-old children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA (6.4%).

DECE measures Kindergarten readiness using Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) Spring assessment of all 4-year-olds in FCPK programs. TS GOLD identifies readiness by developmental domain based on selected items. Based on the Spring 2017 assessment of all FCPK 4-year-olds, percentages deemed accomplished for Kindergarten readiness ranged from 81.7% for math to 93.6% for literacy.

DECE realized major successes in supporting the early childhood/preschool workforce during PDG Year 3. Due in large part to the strong, trusting relationships DECE has built with legislators, its history of transparency and accountability, and FCPK data that show positive educational outcomes of children who participate in the program, DECE was successful in establishing and sustaining pay parity for Pre-K teachers with K-12 teachers. DECE was able to make the case that pay parity was essential to recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts. Further, DECE has helped establish Pre-K/early childhood certification options to ensure that those with an early childhood education degree have field experience in classrooms with children ages birth-4 years and has collaborated with higher education leadership to support articulation of coursework between 2- and 4-year institutions and alignment of coursework with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) requirements for early childhood certification.

DECE has also made significant progress in developing a Pre-K-3rd Grade Continuum initiative during PDG Year 3. With the strong support of Governor Kay Ivey and in partnership with ALSDE and the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS), DECE has led the development of an Alabama Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy and is piloting one-year innovation grants to local schools to support the delivery of a coordinated and comprehensive high-quality early childhood continuum. Grants provided up to \$15,000 for each awarded classroom. LEAs were encouraged to write for Pre-K to Kindergarten, Pre-K to 1st Grade, Pre-K to 2nd Grade, or Pre-K to 3rd Grade, depending on the readiness of the school.

Strategies and Activities:

Expanding Access to High-Quality Pre-K:

High-Need Communities (counties) in Alabama were identified for targeted funding through the PDG as part of an initial needs assessment. This assessment determined that all of Alabama's 67 counties have factors that would qualify them as High-Need Communities. Using characteristics of high-need and access to a high-quality Pre-K program, 23 of Alabama's 67 counties were determined to be at highest need. These counties were funded based on the criteria determined by the needs assessment, with those areas of highest need receiving services first. Further, the 23 counties were sub-divided into two groups, with priority given to those with identified failing K-12 public school(s). High-need criteria included:

- percentage of eligible 4-year-olds;
- percentage of 4-year-olds being served in Pre-K;
- high school graduation rate;
- percentage of English language learners in K-12 public schools;
- percentage of single parent families;
- presence of identified K-12 failing school(s);
- public school retention rates for both first and ninth grade; and
- juvenile violence rate.

DECE released a Request for Proposals, available to all 67 counties, though PDG funding was limited to the 23 highest-need counties. All completed applications were evaluated by independent readers using a 10-point scoring rubric with additional points granted for the following circumstances: poverty based on free or reduced lunch, percentage of nearest public school system, creating new access in underserved areas, being in a high-need county, and being in a high-need county with one or more failing schools. Further, all applicant sites were placed on a detailed map to visualize potential sites in the context of the under-5 population, poverty, and existing early childhood resources including FCPK programs, Head Start, MIECHV programs, and licensed and licensed-exempt child care settings. This visualization assisted with the final decision for awards by reducing crowd-out in areas where adequate opportunities existed for access to high-quality Pre-K, while identifying opportunities for greatest impact based on underserved areas or areas without access to high-quality Pre-K programs. Visits were made to potential sites to evaluate the suitability of location and physical characteristics as well as condition of proposed classrooms.

OSR requirements assure that both the NIEER Quality Indicators and all structural elements listed above as “evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality” are met in FCPK. The FCPK Framework guides program development and operations. New FCPK classes added as a result of the PDG or through continued state funding are required to adhere to the Framework and Program Assurances as conditions of their sub-grantee award to ensure continued high-quality of programs.

- Lead teachers must have a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, at minimum. Lead teachers must also have specialized training in the early childhood field. Auxiliary teachers must have a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or equivalent (9 hours of approved coursework in child development), at minimum.
- Lead and auxiliary teachers must have at least 30 and 20 hours yearly, respectively, of in-service professional development and training. Both lead and auxiliary teachers are required to have individual personal development plans. A full-time Professional Development Coordinator plans high-quality professional development for continuous improvement for the highest quality early childhood education instructional and developmentally-appropriate practices.
- All teachers in the FCPK diverse delivery system earn salaries that are comparable to those of K-12 public school instructional staff.
- The lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in FCPK classrooms must be 1:10 or better.
- The maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 (Head Start) or fewer; recommended number is 18.
- FCPK provides 6.5 hours per day of high quality and developmentally appropriate activities and instruction, five days per week. OSR recommends 180 days per year for eligible 4-year old children.
- DECE is working in collaboration with other partners to include and support students with special needs. An Inclusion Task Force Committee was created to ensure that all children, regardless of ability, are appropriately identified and served in the least restrictive environment. The Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children (Standards) reflect the philosophy of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs and the importance of teachers making accommodations to the curriculum and learning environment to meet the needs of all children.
- The Standards guide FCPK implementation and are aligned with ALSDE's Developmental Standards for

Preschool Children with Disabilities and the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP). The Standards are age, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and serve as a natural progression to Kindergarten.

- FCPK provides individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities, including children with disabilities and Dual Language Learner (DLL) students.
- DECE is committed to the use of data for program evaluation and to improve and expand access to the FCPK program. Data are used in all aspects of program decision-making, including resource allocation, professional development, classroom quality assessment, and program and child outcomes.
- FCPK promotes family access to services that support their child's learning and development. Physical, vision, hearing, and dental screenings and referrals and support services for families are supported through a partnership with Help Me Grow (HMG) throughout the state. Parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) developmental screener. FCPK teachers and staff participate in Strengthening Families (SF) training to support them in building protective factors in their interactions with children and families.
- FCPK implements strong evidence-based health and safety standards in all classrooms, including a requirement to adhere to Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) minimum standards and other program requirements for playground inspection, immunization, background checks, food provision, and physical activity.

FCPK assures quality at both the individual child and classroom levels using research-based observational assessments, including the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and TS GOLD. An external team observed randomly-selected classrooms using the CLASS tool. Alabama FCPK aggregate scores for Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support were higher than national averages.

Based on TS-GOLD assessment at entry into FCPK programs in the 2016/2017 school year, a large percentage of children were performing below widely-held expectations (WHE) for their age across six domains of development (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math; ranging from 30.2% below WHE for literacy to 63.1% below WHE for math). After completing a year of FCPK, the majority of children were meeting or exceeding WHE across all domains (ranging from 91.8% meeting/exceeding WHE for math to 97.8% meeting/exceeding WHE for literacy. Without FCPK, many of these students would arrive to Kindergarten below expectations for school readiness, threatening their future school success.

System-Building Initiatives:

DECE is collaborating with ALSDE and higher education to develop and implement an early childhood workforce development plan. The plan supports specific pathways for current Pre-K teachers who are not certified or degreed to obtain a 4-year degree or certification. In collaboration with Alabama Partnership for Children, DECE supports T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® ALABAMA, a scholarship program developed to increase the level of education and effectiveness of early learning professionals by making the educational process more affordable, increasing wages, and reducing staff turnover rates. Scholarships are currently offered for the CDA assessment fee, associate degrees in child development and early care and education, and bachelor's degrees in child development and early care and education.

In the 2017 Legislative session, DECE and ALSDE proposed two new options for earning a Pre-K certificate (Birth to age 4) that are now issued by ALSDE. One option leads to a Class B Pre-K Professional Educator Certificate; the other leads to a Pre-K Child Development Certificate. These certificates represent a milestone in Alabama as individuals who previously graduated with a child

development degree were unable to teach in public schools; these certifications allow them to do so and expand options for lead teachers.

Alabama's Early Educator Innovative Program Network provides support for the development and implementation of model early educator preparation programs. During 2017-2018, teams of higher education leaders from 2- and 4-year institutions are developing/implementing model programs and are working to create/improve articulation agreements. Efforts will establish each participating institution as a model program for other Alabama higher education institutions.

DECE has formed collaborations with ALSDE's High School Career Tech (Career Tech) program and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to add the CDA track and credential to their respective programs. DECE is coordinating efforts between programs to streamline and ensure quality of training of future educators. This activity supports child development paths for future teachers and assures appropriate choices related to teaching credentials. DECE is also facilitating discussions regarding articulation of coursework, internships, and collaboration to ensure that all students in both settings have access to quality instruction and support.

DECE and ALSDE are working collaboratively to develop Pre-K- 3rd Grade Strong Start Early Learning Collaborative. This initiative focuses on establishing a strong early learning foundation for the children of Alabama and will be accomplished through a comprehensive, systematic approach to high quality learning opportunities using the Pre-K-3rd Grade framework and early learning continuum, with focus areas based on leadership, instruction, and assessment. DECE awarded funds to the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) to support an Alabama Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy: Excelling Innovation in Leadership of Pre-K-3 Learning Communities. CLAS, in collaboration with DECE and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), developed a high quality professional learning and resource program to meet the needs of elementary principals serving children from ages 3 to 8 years in Alabama. Further, DECE and ALSDE are completing a pilot Pre-K to 3rd Grade initiative, supported through competitive innovation grants. In June 2017, participants in the inaugural Leadership Academy were invited to submit applications for the 2017-2018 school year for grants that support the delivery of a coordinated and comprehensive high-quality early childhood continuum. Grants provided up to \$15,000 for each awarded classroom. LEAs were encouraged to write for Pre-K to Kindergarten, Pre-K to 1st Grade, Pre-K to 2nd Grade, or Pre-K to 3rd Grade, depending on the readiness of the school. To assist potential grantees, DECE included a sample budget to develop and/or sustain whole child instruction and a suggested list of classroom set up resources and materials and manipulatives to support whole child instruction for Kindergarten.

Infrastructure and Collaborations:

DECE has directed PDG funds for building and enhancing infrastructure in existing and new preschool classrooms, including employing additional coaches and monitors, ensuring proper equipment and technology, professional development, and other quality-enhancing and systems-building activities that improve the delivery of high-quality preschool programs for eligible children.

One distinctive example of infrastructure investment that ensures high quality is DECE's rigorous coaching and monitoring program. The Alabama Reflective Coaching (ARC) Model, developed by DECE in cooperation with faculty at University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Education (UABSOE), was designed to give FCPK teachers the requisite support and skills to provide a high quality environment that supports school readiness. ARC provides customized support for FCPK teachers using a tiered model of coaching designed to meet the individual professional development needs of each teacher. First Class Coaches and First Class Monitors have distinct roles that assure quality in all classrooms and compliance with FCPK policies and guidelines.

DECE is leading an ongoing effort to expand Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) using TS GOLD. See GPRA 1(c) for detailed information. In 2017-2018, OSR continued the use of TS GOLD-Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), after first piloting in 2015-2016 and expanding in 2016-2017. KEA provides teachers and parents with important criterion-based information about a child's learning and development in 6 domains at the beginning of Kindergarten. Furthermore, even before the pilot Pre-K to 3rd Grade initiative competitive innovation grant requirement to use TS GOLD, first grade teachers at KEA sites began using the assessment and results to guide instruction. Stand alone KEA will be phased out as this is required as a part of the Pre-K to Kindergarten portion of the Pre-K to 3rd Grade continuum initiative. Programs commit to using TS GOLD for a year and then if want to apply to become part of Pre-K to 3rd Grade initiative they will already be on track and aligned.

ALSDE divisions of Special Education and Federal Programs (Title I and Title III) are actively working with FCPK programs to ensure children receive appropriate services. Preschool special educators have been trained to use TS GOLD, and coaches and monitors have been trained to work with FCPK teachers to provide services for children in special education. DECE has established an Inclusion Task Force Committee as mentioned above.

DECE has developed a comprehensive plan to support children who are Dual Language Learners (DLL). All FCPK classrooms are required to complete a home language survey, and when children who are DLL are identified, additional objectives can be assigned through TS GOLD. DECE has also partnered with the UABSOE through Project IMPACT-PD, a coaching and professional development project designed to improve preschoolers' language acquisition and DLL instruction.

DECE is partnering with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to fund a position for an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) State Coordinator who leads the Alabama IECMH Initiative and provides oversight for Alabama's IECMH Framework. The Coordinator has led modification of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health Endorsement system for implementation in Alabama; has expanded IECMH consultation; and is building the capacity of the early childhood workforce to address developmental, emotional, and behavioral challenges of infants, young children, and families to ensure healthy social-emotional wellness and promote school readiness. To date, three individuals in the state have become credentialed as IECMH Consultants, including one DECE state leadership staff member.

DECE has also expanded its capacity for evaluation of FCPK outcomes and longitudinal research. A diverse research evaluation team supports the state's ability to identify and present programmatic accomplishments, student performance, and cost-savings as well as address longitudinal research capacity. This research team includes members from DECE, an external data specialist (ThinkData Solutions), the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA), UABSOE, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health (UABSOPH).

Conclusion:

In just Year 3 of the PDG, Alabama has already exceeded its ambitious goals of increasing access to high-quality preschool programs to 26% of eligible 4-year-olds through 895 classrooms by the end of the grant period. As of December 1, 2017, FCPK funds 940 classrooms and serves 19,034 (27% of all 4 year-olds) statewide. These gains will be sustained through state allocations to maintain newly-added classrooms. Alabama's Governor Kay Ivey and the state legislature have historically given substantial increases for the expansion of FCPK and are committed to incrementally increasing funds to serve all families who choose for their children to participate in Pre-K. Public support for voluntary, high-quality preschool programs is high in Alabama, and advocacy efforts are led through the Alabama School Readiness Alliance.

The success of FCPK is due in large part to the strong working relationship DECE has with the Alabama Governor and state legislature, as well as DECE's diverse, well-qualified state-level leadership team. Legislative relationships support funding to maintain and enhance the infrastructure needed to expand the program while assuring high quality standards. State leadership supports regional and local FCPK staff through professional development and leadership training, assuring that they in turn provide high quality coaching, monitoring, and support to FCPK teachers in local classrooms. These characteristics, combined with DECE's leadership in engaging and meaningful collaborations with other agencies and organizations, investments in data for program evaluation and accountability, workforce and infrastructure-building activities, and commitment to building a comprehensive early childhood system, create the foundation for school achievement and lifelong success for Alabama's children.

A parent comment on the 2017 Family Survey highlights the impact of FCPK for each of the 16,938 children served statewide through Alabama's First Class Pre-K Program: "This Pre-K experience has been the best gift that my child could have been given. She has grown and learned so much during her time in class. The teachers are incredible. I am so happy to feel that my daughter is well prepared to start kindergarten - something I wouldn't have felt prior to her attending this Pre-K class."



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. 08/31/2020

Grantee State: AL PR/Award #: S419A150014

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, 2017.

Overview:

The mission of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is to inspire, support, and deliver cohesive comprehensive systems of high quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn. DECE is well-positioned to coordinate the state's preschool programs and support alignment across the early childhood and elementary systems. OSR, Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program are all housed within DECE. DECE is also the statutorily designated agency to administer and lead the State Children's Policy Council (CPC), which coordinates children's services. The Office of School Readiness (OSR), housed within DECE is implementing Alabama's state and federally funded First Class Pre-K (FCPK) program.

Accomplishments, Strategies, and Activities:

In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE provided access to high-quality preschool programs for 15,240 of the 28,937 target eligible children (below 200% of poverty) in communities served by the PDG through new and improved/enhancement slots. Also in Year 3, all existing FCPK classrooms received funds for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts.

As part of the ongoing sustainability plan, Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) sites moved to state funding in Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). During Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016), the previous Year 1 (2015-2016 school year; as of December 1, 2015) sites also moved to state funding.

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool programs in Alabama. During the 2013-2014 school year (prior to the PDG), FCPK classrooms served 5,598 of the state's 60,665 4-year-old children from that year, representing 9.2% of the 4-year-old population. As of Year 3 of the PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), with a combination of PDG and state funds, FCPK is providing access for 16,034 of the state's 59,667 4 year olds. This represents 27% of 4-year-olds in Alabama. There are a total 940 classrooms (as of December 1, 2017) in FCPK's diverse delivery system, including public schools, private

child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers.

FPCPK awards grants at 3 levels: Plus/Intervention/New Classrooms; Excellence; and Tiered. Excellence and Tiered grants are equivalent to Improved State Preschool Programs. Plus/Intervention/New Classrooms awards are intended to fully establish a new classroom, including equipment, coaching, professional development, assessment tools, and curriculum materials. These 1-year awards are funded at \$120,000-\$150,000 and grantees must apply for either a Tiered or Excellence award after their first year. Excellence awards are available to any existing program and intended to provide resources for a classroom that has an existing funding source (such as Head Start, Title I in public schools, or tuition-based childcare). These awards are limited to \$45,000 per classroom. Tiered awards are intended to support qualified teachers and high quality early learning environments. The funding level for these awards ranges from \$80,100 to \$92,700 based on the poverty level of the location of the classroom as indicated by free/reduced lunch population. Tiered awards are for 3 years with annual renewal. Supplemental grants were also given to assure pay parity for Pre-K teachers with K-12. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FPCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts. The delivery system is diverse, including public schools, private child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers. PDG funds were initially targeted to high needs communities identified through a comprehensive needs assessment.

Refer to GPRA 1 (b) for OSR programs and policies that support quality for the FPCPK system as a whole as well as classroom and child-level research-based assessments that assure quality and consistency. See Section A. Part B.1-B.2 for detailed information on how OSR ensures quality in FPCPK, including a discussion of how the program assures that both the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Quality Indicators and all structural elements listed as “evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality” are met.

In preparing to apply for the PDG, High-Need Communities in Alabama were identified for targeted funding through the PDG. These communities (defined as counties) were identified through a comprehensive needs assessment that combined 7 characteristics of high-need in the community with the level of available access to a high-quality Pre-K program. While all of Alabama's 67 counties have factors that would qualify them as High-Need Communities, counties representing those with the highest needs were ranked based on the following criteria:

- percentage of eligible four-year-olds;
- percentage of four-year-olds being served in Pre-K;
- high school graduation rate;
- percentage of English language learners in K-12 public schools;
- percentage of single parent families;
- presence of identified K-12 failing school(s);
- public school retention rates for both first and ninth grade; and
- juvenile violence rate.

Using these criteria, 23 of Alabama's 67 counties were determined to be at greatest risk based on highest needs. These counties were funded based on the criteria determined by the needs assessment, with those areas of highest need receiving services first. Further, the 23 counties were sub-divided into two groups, with priority being given to those with identified failing K-12 public school(s).

As in previous years, DECE released a Request for Proposals, available to all 67 counties. PDG funding was limited to the 23 counties identified in the needs assessment. All completed applications were evaluated by independent readers using a 10-point scoring rubric with additional points granted for the

following circumstances: poverty based on free or reduced lunch percentage of nearest public school system, creating new access in underserved areas, being in a high-need county, and being in a high-need county with one or more failing schools. Further, all applicant sites were placed on a detailed map created through ArcGIS to visualize potential sites in the context of the under-five population, poverty, and existing early childhood resources including FCPK programs, Head Start, and MIECHV programs, and licensed and licensed-exempt child care settings. This visualization assisted with the final decision for awards (PDG-funded and state-funded) by reducing crowd-out in areas where adequate opportunities existed for access to high-quality Pre-K and identified opportunities for greatest impact based on underserved areas or areas without access to high-quality Pre-K programs. Also, reviewers carefully examined each potential sub-grantee's ability to meet specific FCPK quality assurances and to abide by rigorous operating guidelines. Finally, visits were made to potential sites to evaluate the suitability of location and physical characteristics as well as condition of the proposed class.

After selecting sub-grantees, DECE followed its standardized methods (Alabama Pre-K Quality Assurances Contract) to assure sites agree to, abide by, and incorporate the standards and practices of the Alabama FCPK Framework. All classrooms are assigned a First Class Coach and a First Class Monitor. DECE Programs are monitored and evaluated using Framework guidelines and standards to maintain quality and promote student achievement consistently in all programs. See GPRA 1 (d) and Section A. Parts B.1-3 for more detailed information on the Alabama FCPK Framework, Quality Standards, and the First Class Coaching and Monitoring Program.

Secretary Ross has assured that DECE has a fully-functioning and adequate infrastructure to provide statewide leadership and support for expanding FCPK. A full time Professional Development Coordinator plans high quality professional development for continuous improvement for the highest quality early childhood education instructional practices and administration for Pre-K teachers, directors, and OSR staff. OSR has divided the state into eight regions that are purposefully structured in a manner that promotes increased support, consistency of program delivery, and increased accountability.

Efforts during Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017) of the PDG also included enhancing infrastructure in existing and new preschool classrooms, employing additional coaches and monitors, ensuring proper equipment and technology, professional development, piloting the Pre-K to 3rd grade continuum and other quality-enhancing activities that improve the delivery of high-quality preschool programs to eligible children. Investments have also been made to further develop the agency's capacity for evaluation of FCPK outcomes and longitudinal research.

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.

During Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017) FCPK classrooms served 1,097 students with disabilities, which is 7.2% of children served by the grant. This exceeds both the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through the Part B of IDEA program (4.1%) and the current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA (6.4%). We believe the number of children with disabilities served is underreported in the FCPK data system due to the timing of required reporting (many children were in the IEP referral process during the reporting period). OSR has refined a comprehensive system to support children who enter FCPK with an existing

Individualized Education Plan (IEP), children who need referrals or who are in the referral process while in FCPK, children who were tested but found ineligible for IEP, and children who have challenging behavior but no referral has been made. These data elements are recorded in the FCPK database, Baseline, by FCPK monitors when visiting programs and Regional Directors assure data are entered and accurate.

DECE has focused on helping teachers understand the referral process, including developing a Power Point approved by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and adding a link to the referral process on the ALSDE website. First Class Coaches work with teachers to understand IEP referrals and First Class Monitors are now following up each month with directors to make sure children who have been referred are getting the outcome results entered into the DECE database. Entering disability status into the FCPK data system will continue to be a topic of coaching and professional development. DECE has a special education specialist who travels across the state to observe and assist in the screening and referral of those with suspected disabilities.

FCPK is committed to ensuring equal access and treatment for students with disabilities, and every effort is made to ensure the elimination of possible disability barriers within preschool programs, curriculum, and activities. This strictly adheres to the provisions outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as the anti-discrimination policy established by DECE, which specifically states that no person shall be discriminated against due to a disability. To ensure access, a qualified special education consultant is involved with all grant activities. This individual is responsible for assuring that the program model is implemented with respect to the inclusion of all children with appropriate accommodations in the least restrictive environment.

In 2010, DECE and the Special Education section of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) created one set of standards for all preschool children in the state. The document, Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children (Standards), is a result of the shared mission that all children should be provided school readiness experiences that meet their individual needs. The Standards guide FCPK implementation and are aligned with ALSDE's Developmental Standards for Preschool Children with Disabilities and the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP). The Standards reflect the philosophy of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs and the importance of teachers making accommodations to the curriculum and the learning environment to meet the needs of all children. The Standards are age, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and serve as a natural progression to Kindergarten, supporting seamless transitions for all students. Further, the Standards contain a strategic plan for the inclusion of children with disabilities in all early childhood systems and programs, emphasizing shared responsibility and commitment to inclusion through policy changes and resource allocation. Objectives were added to many of the Standards to provide a hierarchy of learning targets for children with functional level delays, a systematic measurement tool for monitoring programs, accountability, and effectiveness of IDEA Part B preschool programs.

DECE is working in collaboration with other state partners to include and support students with special needs across all early childhood programs. An Alabama Inclusion Task Force Committee (AITF), chaired by the Part C Early Intervention Director for Alabama, was created by DECE during Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) of the PDG and continues during Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). The AITF includes members from Early Intervention (EI), ALSDE, DECE, a faculty member from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Education (UABSOE), and Local Education Agencies (LEA). AITF members are co-creating an inclusion strategic plan for the state of Alabama to provide support and guidance at the LEA, school, and program levels to ensure that all children, regardless of disability, are being appropriately identified and served in the least restrictive environment. This plan, "Early Childhood Inclusion for All Children in Alabama from Birth - 8 years," strongly emphasizes inclusion as a shared responsibility and a top priority and demonstrates a commitment to inclusion through policy changes and appropriate resource allocation at all levels.

The vision for AITF is “All Alabama early childhood programs and services working together to embody the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to have access and participate in systems of high quality, developmentally appropriate, culturally competent, cohesive services allowing full participation in community and society.” This vision applies broadly to the early childhood system, including public and private preschool, center- and family-based child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, and the IDEA, in partnership with families and communities. The goal for the work of the AITF is that all young children with disabilities have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations within groups representing national proportionality. Initial action steps included: developing a plan for inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs. Progress to date includes: Members reviewed their agency policies and guidelines; conducted a survey of the number of children with disabilities being served to establish a current baseline; reviewed FCPK 2015-2016 guidelines addressing inclusion; and enhanced relationships between special education support at the local level and classroom teachers to support guidance. Activities of the AITF have resulted in a statewide document to educate the early child education community related to inclusion. At every meeting, AITF members share how many children with disabilities are served by their agency to identify increases over baseline established through the initial survey.

Through the development of guiding principles and initial activities, AITF is making progress to support infrastructure and capacity within all early childhood education settings so that children with special health or educational needs are better served. This partnership will allow for better services, smoother transitions, and improved understanding of how to teach and provide supports to families and young children with special health care needs or educational challenges. The task force is focusing its work on public awareness, data tracking across agencies, creation of a system of inclusive care, and development of interagency approaches to inclusion in all early childhood settings. Within these key areas, activities will include policy work, professional development of existing and entering early childhood workforce, establishment of better processes and procedures for early identification and referrals within Alabama's early childhood system, and compliance with key federal and state regulations for inclusion of children with disabilities. See Section A:Part B.2 for more information on AITF.

DECE and FCPK staff members are actively working with teachers and parents in the screening and referral processes. FCPK has a proven track record in identifying, referring, and serving children with special needs. Physical, vision, hearing, and dental screenings and referrals and support services for families are provided for all children either on-site or through partnerships with local providers. Referrals are supported through a centralized referral-based hub and a partnership with Help Me Grow (HMG) throughout the state. All parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) developmental screeners prior to the start of school and before children are assigned to classrooms. During year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016), the AITF recommended moving to centralized registration to assist in early identification and help programs place those with disabilities across multiple classrooms.

During Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), 115 (10%) FCPK classrooms are participating in an expanded pilot of the Electronic-Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (e-DECA) to determine feasibility of expanding broadly to provide strategies for the development of resilient children, including a strength-based approach for supporting initiative, attachment, and self-control for a strong social emotional development. Other FCPK Classrooms use the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment-Preschool (DECA-P).

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 Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE provided access to high-quality preschool programs for 15,240 of the 28,937 target eligible children (below 200% of poverty) in communities served by the PDG through new and improved/enhancement slots. Also in Year 3, all existing FCPK classrooms received funds for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts.

As part of the ongoing sustainability plan, Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) sites moved to state funding in Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). During Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016), the previous Year 1 (2015-2016 school year; as of December 1, 2015) sites also moved to state funding.

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool programs in Alabama. During the 2013-2014 school year (prior to the PDG), FCPK classrooms served 5,598 of the state's 60,665 4-year-old children from that year, representing 9.2% of the 4-year-old population. As of Year 3 of the PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), with a combination of PDG and state funds, FCPK is providing access for 16,034 of the state's 59,667 4 year olds. This represents 27% of 4-year-olds in Alabama. There are a total 940 classrooms (as of December 1, 2017) in FCPK's diverse delivery system, including public schools, private child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers.

See GPRA 1 (a) for a description of the FCPK grant process. Refer to GPRA 1 (b) for OSR programs and policies that support quality for the FCPK system as a whole as well as classroom and child-level research-based assessments that assure quality and consistency. See Section A. Part B.1-B.2 for detailed information on how OSR ensures quality in FCPK, including a discussion of how the program assures that both the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Quality Indicators and all structural elements listed as "evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality" are met.

FCPK engages in extensive outreach through multiple venues and partnerships to increase public awareness of potential sub-grantee funding opportunities and the availability of FCPK slots in local communities. In addition to presentations and website announcements, both the Governor's Office and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance regularly issue press releases in efforts to grow awareness and support outreach given the increasing demand for high quality Pre-K in Alabama. DECE leadership travels around the state to communicate the importance of early learning and provide an understanding of high quality programming.

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 2017-18 school year.

Overview:

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool programs in Alabama. During the 2013-2014 school year (prior to the PDG), FCPK classrooms served 5,598 of the state's 60,665 4-year-old children from that year, representing 9.2% of the 4-year-old population. As of Year 3 of the PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), with a combination of PDG and state funds, FCPK is providing access for 16,034

of the state's 59,667 4 year olds. This represents 27% of 4-year-olds in Alabama. Also in Year 3, all existing FCPK classrooms received funds for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts.

As part of the ongoing sustainability plan, Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) sites moved to state funding in Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). During Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016), the previous Year 1 (2015-2016 school year; as of December 1, 2015) sites also moved to state funding. This was made possible through strong leadership from Alabama's Governor, bi-partisan legislative support for FCPK, and additional state funding.

As of December 1, 2017, there were 940 FCPK classrooms. The delivery system is diverse, including public schools, private child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers. The breakout of number of classrooms by type is as follows:

Public School = 687

Head Start = 118

Private Non-Faith-Based = 74

Private Faith-Based = 28

Community/Non-Faith-Based = 21

College/University = 9

Military Child Development Centers = 3

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool in Alabama. In just Year 3 of the PDG, Alabama has already exceeded its ambitious goals of increasing access to high-quality preschool programs to 26% of eligible 4-year-olds through 895 classrooms by the end of the grant period - as of January 2018, FCPK funds serves 16,938 (29% of all 4 year-olds) statewide. These gains will be sustained through state allocations to maintain newly-added classrooms. This is a realistic expectation as Governor Ivey has provided critical, priority-setting leadership for funding FCPK. Additionally, the Alabama State Legislature has demonstrated its belief in and commitment to state Pre-K education by providing level or increased funding each year with significantly increased appropriations in the budget years of 2010-2017. See Section B.3 for more detailed information on FCPK budget allocations. Public support for voluntary, high-quality preschool programs is high in Alabama, and advocacy efforts are led through the Alabama School Readiness Alliance. In the current legislative cycle, which began in early January, 2018, Governor Ivey proposed a \$20 million increase for FCPK. The Alabama State Legislature is currently considering this budget request.

Activities and Strategies:

See GPRA 1 (a) for a description of the FCPK grant process.

FCPK engages in extensive outreach through multiple venues and partnerships to increase public awareness of potential sub-grantee funding opportunities and the availability of FCPK slots in local communities. In addition to presentations and website announcements, both the Governor's Office and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance regularly issue press releases in efforts to grow awareness and support outreach given the increasing demand for high quality Pre-K in Alabama.

OSR Program Guidelines and Classroom Guidelines both establish policies and procedures to ensure

consistent attendance. These policies and procedures assure that FCPK slots are available for families who truly desire placement in a FCPK classroom. FCPK providers are required to formulate written procedures for addressing issues regarding attendance and tardiness. These procedures are shared with families during orientation and reviewed by the FCPK Monitor. Daily attendance records are maintained on-site. Attendance procedures specify actions to be taken by the FCPK provider if attendance issues become problematic. For example, the procedures could require a phone call to parents after three unexcused absences or tardies; a letter to parents from the director after six absences or tardies; a parent conference after eight or nine absences; or referral to the FCPK Coach after 10 absences. The goal of the attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than 4 days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation. FCPK providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/guardians of children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or routinely leave the program early. Providers meet the parent/guardian to determine reason(s) and potential resolutions. Inability to resolve chronic absenteeism after documented interventions is referred to the FCPK Regional Director for dismissal consideration. The program may only drop the child from the class roll if approval is granted and received, in writing, from the FCPK Regional Director. Children who are consecutively absent for 10 days without medical or other reasonable explanation are replaced with children from the FCPK waiting list. Although data on chronic absenteeism are not available for this reporting, DECE has added a data field to its database and to the monitoring checklist used by First Class Pre-K Monitors to capture this for the coming year.

In some instances, students may need a modified school day to be successful. Modified schedules (i.e., less than 6.5 hours of instructional time a day) requires prior approval from the FCPK Regional Director and is part of an IEP. Programs must contact their FCPK Coach and Regional Director to discuss requests for modified schedules and must provide a proposed daily schedule, including times and activities, a justification for the proposed schedule, and a written plan describing how the child's schedule will be increased over time to the typical 6.5 hour day. Modified schedules are used in conjunction with child-specific interventions to increase a child's tolerance for up to a full-day of instruction.

OSR has a strict student discipline policy that is presented in both the Program Guidelines and Classroom Guidelines. No form of physical or mental punishment is permitted. This includes corporal punishment of any kind, use of time-out and behavior charts, stoplights, and/or other behavior documentation displays that may publically shame children. Suspension and expulsion from FCPK programs are always a last resort and only occur after all other options and interventions are unsuccessful in resolving the classroom problems. Extensive documentation and approvals are required.

Only developmentally-appropriate practices that support the development of self-regulation are approved methods of correcting behavior issues in the FCPK program. Examples of appropriate practices include: redirection; encouragement; problem solving; effective planning; calming strategies; and smooth, engaging transitions. It is more effective to reinforce positive behavior by using immediate, effective verbal acknowledgement that describes a child's appropriate words and actions.

OSR provides a Conscious Discipline book study, including participation in a webinar series, *Becoming the Best You Can Be*, the *Seven Powers for Conscious Adults (You Can't Teach What You Don't Know)*. State OSR staff, including Regional Directors, coaches, monitors, and the entire DECE Professional Development Team recently participated in comprehensive training on Conscious Discipline provided by Dr. Becky Bailey's team. The OSR Early Learning Best Practice Coordinator trained coaches on the Challenging Behavior Toolkit using the DECA-P assessment as a guide, including strategies from Conscious Discipline and also provided trainings through a Summer Institute on social-emotional development, challenging behavior, developmentally appropriate practice, and using a trauma informed

lens. Further, OSR classrooms were provided professional development on topics of discipline, behaviors, and importance of being trauma informed. The OSR Early Learning Best Practice Coordinator provided 18 training sessions on addressing challenging behaviors and conscious discipline, offering opportunities for teachers, families, and early childhood education college students statewide to participate over the last year. Professional Development on Conscious Discipline will be offered to teacher summer 2018.

FCPK assures quality at both the individual child and classroom levels using research-based observational assessments, including the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD).

An external team observed randomly-selected classrooms across two phases using the CLASS tool. Spring 2017 final aggregate CLASS scores were: Emotional Support- 6.05; Classroom Organization- 5.79; Instructional Support- 3.32. Alabama FCPK scores were higher than national averages across these areas. In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), CLASS continues, with results being used to develop individual Professional Development Plans (PDP) for teachers and coaching to support PDP.

To support high quality learning environments and alignment of effective instruction to student success, all children in FCPK classrooms are assessed using TS GOLD, an ongoing, observation-based, research-validated assessment system. Grounded in current research related to child development and learning, the TS GOLD assessment includes 38 objectives across six domains of development (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math) that are associated with school success based on school readiness standards.

Based on TS-GOLD assessment at entry into FCPK programs in the 2016/2017 school year, a large percentage of children were performing below widely-held expectations (WHE) for their age across six domains of development (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math; ranging from 30.2% below WHE for literacy to 63.1% below WHE for math). After completing a year of FCPK, the majority of children were meeting or exceeding WHE across all domains (ranging from 91.8% meeting/exceeding WHE for math to 97.8% meeting/exceeding WHE for literacy. Without FCPK, many of these students would arrive to Kindergarten below expectations for school readiness, threatening their future school success.

The school readiness domains with the largest increases in the percentage of children meeting or exceeding WHE were math (54.9 percentage points), cognitive (43.2 percentage points), and social-emotional (42.2 percentage points). The observed largest gains for math skills is an important finding as research suggests early math skills not only predict math achievement through high school, but are also a better predictor of later reading achievement than even early reading skills.

TS GOLD assessments offer an opportunity for family engagement in a child's learning experience. At least two individual conferences per year between the lead teacher and parent/guardian are required. These conferences are held after each GOLD checkpoint during the year.

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 3 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children enrolled and served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children enrolled and received services by the grant during the 2016-17 preschool year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).

In the Year 3 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.

Overview:

In December 2002, OSR adopted the following definition of "School Readiness": A condition whereby children enter school with

- (a) an enthusiasm for learning,
- (b) an ability to function in a social setting,
- (c) age-appropriate communication and problem solving skills,
- (d) age-appropriate physical and emotional skills, and
- (e) optimal health.

Despite this broad definition, school readiness expectations have been as diverse as the number of school districts in the state, and Alabama has not adopted a consistent, mandatory assessment for all kindergarten programs.

School readiness is assessed in FCPK using the observation based assessment, TS GOLD. Students are assessed at entry (Fall), midpoint (Winter), and exit (Spring) of the preschool year, with scores compared to WHE for four-year-olds as provided by TS GOLD for each time point. Results are typically dichotomized to “below expectations” and “meets or exceeds expectations.” TS GOLD also provides expected growth targets by domain based on normed scaled score ranges calculated as the difference between the Spring and Fall time point assessments. Meeting expected growth targets is an especially important outcome for children in vulnerable groups who may not meet WHE for their age yet make expected growth gains that show progress and reflect closing the achievement gap. Finally, TS GOLD provides an assessment of Kindergarten readiness by domain based on selected items.

TS GOLD is mandated for use statewide in all FCPK classrooms, including all high-needs communities and in both state-funded and PDG-funded sites. DECE has been using TS GOLD since the 2012-2013 school year.

Strategies and Accomplishments:

OSR supports reliability in administration of scoring TS GOLD through the provision of extensive training and support. Participation in one session of TS GOLD Intro and Lab is a requirement of all new lead and auxiliary teachers of FCPK. Additionally, Directors of FCPK are required to attend one session from TS GOLD Reporting. Training is widely-available and geographically convenient. All FCPK teachers are required to complete professional development modules online through TS GOLD as well as TS GOLD interrater reliability (IRR) training.

Given the parameters of the data workbook for this measure, children were considered “ready” if they tested “accomplished” for readiness at the Spring 2017 TS GOLD checkpoint for at least 5 of the 6 domains included. Individual level data is reported for readiness by classroom in the data workbook. The following charts present statewide readiness disaggregated by domain. These data are presented publicly through legislative presentations and presentations to interested groups. A series of related issue briefs is posted on the DECE website, including one specific to school readiness.

“Accomplished” Kindergarten Readiness by Developmental Area, TS GOLD, All First Class Pre-K 4 year-olds; Spring 2017

Social-emotional =	93.3%
Physical =	92.8%
Language =	88.1%
Cognitive =	92.6%
Literacy =	93.6%
Math =	81.7%

In addition to the use of the 4 year-old Pre-K TS GOLD assessment, DECE has led an initiative to expand school readiness assessments at the start of Kindergarten. In Fall of the 2015-2016 school year, OSR began a pilot to use the TS GOLD-Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). KEA provides teachers and parents with important criterion-based information about a child's learning and development in 6 domains at the beginning of Kindergarten.

OSR, in partnership with the Early Learning Action Network of the Bold Goals work at United Way of Central Alabama, funded opportunities to participate throughout the state and provided training for Kindergarten teachers in the use of the KEA. Teachers received incentives to participate including professional development stipends, Pre-K Conference admission, a personal technology device, and substitute teacher support to allow release time to complete the assessment.

The pilot program included volunteers from 21 school systems statewide and gathered data from approximately 2,700 students, some of whom had previously received FCPK and some who had not. For the 2016-2017 school year, OSR expanded the pilot program, including a partnership with Bold Goals to expand full participation within one of the largest districts in Central Alabama, where 29 schools assessed 1,896 children at Kindergarten entry. See Section A:Part B.4 for more information on birth to 3rd Grade continuum strategies.

In the Fall of the 2016-2017 school year, the FCPK Research Evaluation Team compared readiness at Kindergarten entry by domain between children who received FCPK and others in the classroom who did not receive FCPK. Results are displayed below - for all domains, children who received FCPK the previous year were more likely to be ready for Kindergarten than were their peers who had not received FCPK. These differences were all statistically significant at $p < 0.01$.

Comparison of School Readiness at Kindergarten between Children who Received First Class Pre-K and Children Who Did Not Receive First Class Pre-K; Kindergarten; Fall 2016

School Readiness Domain	Percentage Meeting/Accomplishing Readiness Expectations	
	FCPK	No FCPK
Social-Emotional =	81.3%	71.0%
Physical =	80.0%	73.4%
Language =	72.8%	60.6%
Cognitive =	80.7%	68.3%
Literacy =	88.5%	81.5%
Math =	59.8%	53.5%

The benefits continue as the students progress through school. Students who voluntarily participate in FCPK are more likely to be proficient in reading and math than their peers, according to a new study of Alabama third graders. Among the study's key findings, the research team observed that participation in Alabama's First Class Pre-K program:

- Narrowed the gap in reading proficiency by 28 percent for all children in poverty; 32 percent for White children in poverty; 31 percent for Hispanic children in poverty; and, 26 percent for Black children.
- Narrowed the gap in math proficiency by 57 percent for all children in poverty; 71 percent for Hispanic children in poverty; and, 37 percent for Black children in poverty.
- Increased reading proficiency for children in poverty by 12 percent overall; 25 percent for Hispanic children in poverty; 23 percent for Black children in poverty; and, 3 percent for White children in poverty.
- Increased math proficiency for children in poverty by 13 percent overall; 17 percent for Hispanic children in poverty; 16 percent for Black children in poverty; and, a 10 percent for White children in poverty.

DECE continues to partner with ALSDE toward its goals of statewide, universal testing for all students at Kindergarten entry. This goal is included as a part of the expanding Pre-K to 3rd Grade Continuum initiatives in the state. This effort will support a consistent measurement and reporting system for school readiness, provide classroom information for teachers, and facilitate longitudinal studies of the impact of FCPK.

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.

Overview:

Over the last 13 years, early childhood professionals and preschool educators from across the state have worked to develop and refine what is now the Alabama First Class Pre-K Framework (Framework). This Framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, coaching methods, family engagement and monitoring practices to create a replicable model for high quality Pre-K programs. Components of this Framework include resources and support to enhance performance and learning and alignment with the NIEER Quality Standards. Components are measured through on-going observation and authentic, research-based assessment. The Framework guides program development and program operations to ensure that Alabama's children are prepared for school achievement and lifelong success. When new FCPK programs are proposed, sub-grantees must agree to abide by and incorporate the standards and practices of the Framework through an Alabama Pre-K Quality Assurances Contract in order to be considered for an award. Programs are monitored and evaluated using Framework guidelines and standards to maintain quality and to promote student achievement consistently in all programs.

Accomplishments:

As Alabama has expanded access to preschool programs, the state has maintained high-quality as the center of all its efforts. In addition to meeting 12 of 12 quality structural elements as discussed in Section A. Part B.2, FCPK has consistently met all 10 quality standards identified by NIEER since 2005-2006 and was one of only six state-funded Pre-K programs to meet all 10 NIEER quality standard benchmarks in 2016; it was one of only two states to meet all 10 new benchmarks. According to a July 2016 policy scan conducted by NIEER (Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High Quality: a State and Local Policy Scan), Alabama fully meets 11 of its now expanded 15 Essential Elements and partially meets one other. Recent policy improvements and focus areas related to DLL and special education would likely result in an increased number of “fully meets”. OSR requirements assure that both the NIEER Quality Indicators and all quality structural elements listed in Section A. Part B.2 as “evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality” are met in the FCPK Program.

See Section A. Parts B.1-3 for more detailed information on the Alabama Framework, Quality Standards, and the First Class Coaching and Monitoring Program.

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.

Overview:

DECE allocated PDG funds for building and enhancing infrastructure in existing and new preschool classrooms, including employing additional coaches and monitors, ensuring proper equipment and technology, professional development, and other quality-enhancing and systems-building activities that improve the delivery of high-quality preschool programs to eligible children.

Strategies:

Key infrastructure activities include: higher education initiatives to develop a Pre-K certificate; core competencies and field experience in birth-age 4 years; Strengthening Families training for all staff and teachers; teacher scholarships; increased communication of outcomes through research briefs; expanded outreach through Facebook, Twitter, and a website; partnerships that resulted in a CDA in high school; Principals/Directors Leadership Academy; partnership with HMG; Pre-K-3rd Grade continuum; pay parity Pre-K-12; and online training through My Teachstone, based on CLASS and individual teacher professional development plans. These are discussed in greater detail in Sections A: Part B.3-4 and Part C.1-2.

One distinctive example of infrastructure investment that ensures high quality is DECE's rigorous coaching and monitoring program. The Alabama Reflective Coaching (ARC) Model, developed by DECE in cooperation with faculty at UABSOE, was designed to give FCPK teachers the support and skills they need to provide a high quality environment that supports school readiness. ARC provides customized support for FCPK teachers using a tiered model of coaching designed to meet the individual professional development needs of each teacher. The model was developed for use with FCPK coaches, FCPK directors, lead teachers, auxiliary teachers and support personnel. First Class Coaches and First Class Monitors have distinct roles that assure quality in all classrooms and compliance with FCPK policies and guidelines. Additional details on coaching and monitoring roles are provided in Section A. Part B.3.

The underlying framework of ARC includes the use of shared planning between the learner and coach, observations by and of the learner, participatory action by the learner, learner reflection on actions, and feedback by the coach on the learner's reflections. Reflection is the most important step in the process and is what differentiates coaching from problem solving, consultation, monitoring, and information-sharing. The goal is to promote continuous improvement by assisting learners in analyzing their practices and

behavior through the use of a reflective discussion with the coach. The person being coached recognizes existing strengths and discovers ways to build upon those strengths in order to address identified questions, goals, plans, priorities, and interests.

The tiered coaching approach is customized for three levels based on teacher experience, with specific supports provided and differing coaching roles. The foundation of the model applies to all teachers and includes TS GOLD support, GOLD Training, FCPK Guidelines Training, and attendance of the FCPK Conference. Tier 3-Full Coaching applies to new or inexperienced teachers in need of building a stronger knowledge base and mastering best practice strategies. At this level, teachers benefit from clear direction and extensive mentoring and modeling. Coaches provide at least monthly in-person guidance and coaching for teachers in this tier. Tier 2-Modified Coaching applies to teachers with some experience, but who benefit from targeted professional growth opportunities. At this level, coaches serve as developers and provide bi-monthly coaching visits to support continued professional and personal development. Tier 1-Supplemental Coaching applies to experienced teachers with vast knowledge and experience who benefit from mentoring opportunities and virtual support. Coaches provide tri-annual catalyst-type coaching for teachers at this level.

Monitoring is provided by DECE employees through an individualized approach similar to that of coaching. Through the use of the Compliance Monitoring System (CMS), monitors have the ability to increase or decrease the level of support needed at each program. The CMS is designed to lend more assistance to programs that are in need of more intensive support and may be at-risk of non-compliance. Monitors visit classrooms to ensure quality and use data gathered in the CMS to determine the needed level of support for each program. If a FCPK classroom is in compliance with all guidelines, it will receive a follow-up visit within 30 to 60 days. Those with 3 or fewer non-compliance issues will receive a follow-up visit within 10 days. A classroom with 4 to 6 non-compliance issues will receive a follow-up visit within 5 days and will be placed on probation. Those with 7 to 10 issues are given a follow-up visit in 3 days and funding is terminated if issues are not resolved. Communication between monitors and program directors occurs on-site (generally monthly), over the phone, and via email. Monitors also communicate with FCPK coaches to ensure a seamless delivery of technical assistance to quickly resolve any matters that may impact a FCPK classroom.

DECE has also made investments to support and enhance reflective supervision among FCPK coaches. The Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultant has developed a Reflective Community of Practice during PDG Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). The IECMH Consultant is expertise in Reflective Supervision and is conducting reflective practice phone calls with OSR coaches, providing them with reflective consultation to support their understanding of reflective supervision.

Additionally, infrastructure funds have been used to further expand professional development opportunities for teachers, auxiliary teachers, and directors/administrators from sub-grantees and potential sub-grantees. A full-time Professional Development Coordinator plans high-quality professional development for continuous improvement for the highest quality early childhood education instructional practices and administration.

DECE has also partnered with the UABSOE through Project IMPACT-PD, a coaching and professional development project designed to improve preschoolers' language acquisition and DLL instruction. Strategies include a planned language approach, coaching support for classrooms with DLL students, and individualized support for DLL students.

OSR staff participated in an extensive one-day training on Resilient Leadership (presented by Rachel Sperry) during the 2018 Annual First Class Pre-K Conference.

FCPK employs 8 Regional Directors to support coaches, program directors, and teachers in local communities. During Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017) of PDG, these Regional Directors (along with all coaches, monitors, and the entire DECE Professional Development Team) participated in comprehensive training on Conscious Discipline provided by Dr. Becky Bailey's team.

DECE has also supported professional development for its key state leadership team. Three staff members have completed Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) Leadership Academy. State leadership team members frequently serve as expert speakers at national and state meetings, as well as serve on national and state leadership boards related to early childhood systems initiatives.

Research-based observational assessments, including the CLASS and Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Preschool Program (DECA-P) are administered in classrooms to measure and ensure quality. In addition, during Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE is piloting the e-DECA system in 10% (115) of classrooms to determine if the electronic version of DECA used on a larger scale would be beneficial.

An external team observed randomly-selected classrooms across two phases using the CLASS tool. Spring 2017 final aggregate CLASS scores were: Emotional Support- 6.05; Classroom Organization- 5.79; Instructional Support- 3.32. Alabama FCPK scores were higher than national averages across these areas. In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), CLASS continues, with results being used to develop individual professional development plans for teachers. In addition, during the first 30 days the DECA-P Reflective Checklist is completed by a coach for each classroom. This is a Reflective Checklist which refers to Daily Routines, Environment, Caring Connections, Activities, and Partnerships with Parents. This checklist is to ensure that universal strategies are in place to benefit all children. As in previous smaller pilots, the most commonly-observed area of need among children was attachment/relationships.

Infrastructure enhancement funds (improvement) have also been used to further develop the capacity for evaluation of FCPK outcomes and longitudinal research. A diverse research evaluation team has been expanded to support the state's ability to identify and present programmatic accomplishments, student performance, and cost-savings as well as address longitudinal research capacity. This research team includes members from DECE, an external data specialist (ThinkData Solutions), the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA), UABSOE, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health (UABSOPH).

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.

Overview and Accomplishments:

By building sustainable relationships and developing meaningful collaborations, DECE has increased access for children to attend a state-funded high quality Pre-K program, growing from serving fewer than 4,000 children - or 6% of eligible 4-year-olds - to nearly 17,000 children - or 29% of eligible 4-year-olds - in just 5 years, while maintaining high quality in all programs. FCPK has been nationally recognized as a high-quality program by NIEER. FCPK has consistently met all 10 quality standards identified by NIEER since 2005-2006 and was one of only six state-funded Pre-K programs to meet all 10 NIEER quality standard benchmarks in 2016; it was one of only two states to meet all 10 new benchmarks. According to a July 2016 policy scan conducted by NIEER (Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High Quality: a State and Local Policy Scan), Alabama fully meets 11 of its now expanded 15 Essential Elements and partially meets one other. Recent policy improvements and focus areas related to DLL and special education would likely result in an increased number of fully meets.

Activities and Strategies:

OSR requirements assure that both the NIEER Quality Indicators and all structural elements listed above as “evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality” are met in the FCPK Program.

1. High staff qualifications: Lead teachers must have a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, at minimum. Lead teachers must also have specialized training in the early childhood field. Auxiliary teachers must have a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or equivalent (9 hours of approved coursework in child development), at minimum.
2. High-quality professional development: Lead and auxiliary teachers must have at least 30 and 20 hours yearly, respectively, of in-service professional development and training. Each grantee is funded for 187 school days to include 7 days of professional development for staff. A full-time Professional Development Coordinator plans high-quality professional development for continuous improvement for the highest quality early childhood education instructional practices and administration for Pre-K teachers, directors, and First Class Coaches and Monitors. DECE has also partnered with UABSOE through Project IMPACT-PD, a coaching and professional development project designed to improve preschoolers' language acquisition and DLL instruction. The ARC model provides customized support for FCPK teachers using a tiered model of coaching designed to meet the individual professional development needs of each teacher. Both lead and auxiliary teachers are required to have individual personal development plans.
3. A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1: Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom must be 1:10 or better.
4. A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications: Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or fewer; recommended number is 18
5. A Full-Day program: FCPK provides 6.5 hours per day of high quality and developmentally appropriate activities and instruction, five days per week. OSR recommends 180 days per year for eligible 4-year old children.
6. Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities: DECE is working in collaboration with other partners to include and support students with special needs. An Inclusion Task Force Committee was created and comprises members from EI, ALSDE, DECE, and LEAs. These partners are co-creating a plan to ensure that all children, regardless of

disability, are being appropriately identified and served in the least restrictive environment. See below and Program Requirement (k)(2) discussion for more details on the Inclusion Task Force. The Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children reflect the philosophy of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs and the importance of teachers making accommodations to the curriculum and the learning environment to meet the needs of all children. The Standards contain a strategic plan for the inclusion of children with disabilities in all early childhood systems and programs, emphasizing shared responsibility and commitment to inclusion through policy changes and resource allocation.

7. 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: The Framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, coaching methods, and monitoring practices to create a replicable model for High-Quality Pre-K programs. The Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children (<http://children.alabama.gov/alabama-developmental-standards-for-preschool-children>) guide FCPK implementation and are aligned with ALSDE's Developmental Standards for Preschool Children with Disabilities and the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP). The Standards are age, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and serve as a natural progression to kindergarten. See below for more detail.
8. Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities. The Standards emphasize shared responsibility and commitment to inclusion of all children through policy changes, accommodation, and resource allocation. DECE is working in collaboration with other partners to include and support students with special needs. Further, DECE has developed a comprehensive plan to support DLL. All FCPK classrooms are required to complete a home language survey, and when children who are DLL are identified, additional objectives can be assigned through the state assessment tool, TS GOLD. DECE is focusing on a coaching and professional development project designed to improve preschoolers' language acquisition and DLL instruction. OSR promotes the use of a tiered system of intervention, Response to Intervention (RtI), to provide differentiated instruction. FCPK teachers assess all children's abilities and progress using TS GOLD to guide instruction and support alignment with early learning standards.
9. Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff: In 2015-2016, Alabama introduced policies to create parity, including with raises going forward. All teachers in the FCPK diverse delivery system earn salaries that are comparable to those of K-12 public school instructional staff. Establishing parity for Pre-K teachers was accomplished in large part due to the trusting relationships DECE has built with legislators, its history of transparency and accountability, and FCPK data that show high quality and positive educational outcomes of children who participate in the program. By educating superintendents, directors, and legislators about the importance of having high quality teachers with specific expertise and professionalism to support young children during this critical developmental period, DECE was able to make the case that pay parity was essential to recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. The work of the Pre-K teacher was valued and recognized as important, with pay equal to K-12 teachers, lifting the profession in general. Further, when the Alabama State Legislature passed a 4% raise for K-12 teachers, the agency successfully advocated for additional budget allocations to extend that raise to Pre-K teachers as well. Additionally, in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts. DECE continues to support adequate teacher salaries, providing funds to all existing FCPK classrooms for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers.
10. Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement: DECE is committed to using data to improve and expand access to the FCPK program. Data are used in all aspects of program decision-making, including resource allocation, professional development, classroom quality

assessment, and program and child outcomes. First Class Monitors provide site visits to ensure quality and compliance with all program guidelines. Pre-K teachers are required to assess children's abilities and progress using TS GOLD. Research-based observational assessments, including the CLASS and DECA-P are administered in classrooms to ensure the program is meeting children's needs. A diverse, external academic research evaluation team meets at least monthly with FCPK leadership to evaluate program outcomes and examine student performance and outcomes and potential cost-savings related to retention, chronic absenteeism, and special education placement. The research team is also building program capacity for longitudinal research to look at longer term outcomes of the program into middle and high school and beyond.

11. 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: Physical, vision, hearing, and dental screenings and referrals and support services for families are provided through all classrooms and are supported through a centralized referral-based hub and a partnership HMG throughout the state. All parents complete the ASQ-3 developmental screener. FCPK teachers and staff participate in Strengthening Families (SF) training to support them in building protective factors in their interactions with children and families. DECE sends out a monthly newsletter highlighting family engagement strategies and strategies to implement the SF components. Some schools and communities are implementing the SF model of parent communities and parent enrichment activities
12. Evidence-based health and safety standards: FCPK provider sites must hold a current license from the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). School systems that are not DHR-licensed must adhere to DHR minimum standards and safety requirements for day care and nighttime centers; including both classrooms and playgrounds. DECE has ensured that each region has one person with the NPPS National Playground Safety Inspector credential to ensure that sites are supported with playground design and maintenance. This person provides inspections for FCPK playgrounds. Additionally, sites are supported through trainings on loose parts, natural playgrounds, and playground design. DECE also presents at local conferences to support non-OSR sites in this important safety area. DECE has worked with vendors to ensure that playground designs offered are developmentally appropriate and directors have access to numerous vendors with various designs. All FCPK teachers have access to 6 best practice training modules for caregivers of infants and toddlers through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Building a Healthy Start: Professional Development for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers Project. The project's purpose is to improve the quality of infant and toddler child care in Alabama by integrating nationally recognized health and safety standards. Topical areas addressed by the training modules are include nutrition, physical activity, disaster preparedness, environmental health, social emotional development, and child abuse and neglect prevention (<http://www.adph.org/healthystart/Default.asp?id=6473>). Background checks are performed for all employees. Families grant permission for vision, hearing, dental, and physical screenings to be completed either on-site or through partnerships with providers. All parents complete the ASQ-3 developmental screener. Referrals are made as necessary with follow-up through HMG. Evidence of age-appropriate, up-to-date immunizations (blue card) or signed religious beliefs affidavits against such immunizations are maintained on-site for each child. Programs must provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks. The school day must include 60 minutes of gross motor activities.

The FCPK Framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, family engagement, coaching methods, and monitoring practices to create a replicable model for high-quality Pre-K programs. The components of this Framework include resources and support to enhance performance and learning and alignment with NIEER Quality Standards. Components are measured through on-going observation and authentic, research-based assessment. The Framework guides program development and program operations to ensure that Alabama's children are prepared for school achievement and lifelong success. Programs are monitored and evaluated using

Framework guidelines and standards to maintain quality and promote student achievement consistently in all programs. New FCPK classes added as a result of the PDG or through continued state funding are required to adhere to the Framework and Program Assurances as conditions of their sub-grantee award to ensure continued high-quality of programs.

The Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children (Standards), focusing on 3-5 year-olds, are based on current research on teaching and learning from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The Standards conform to recommendations by the National Research Council. The Standards are organized around 9 areas of development: Approaches to Learning Language and Literacy; Mathematics; Science; Creative Arts; Technology; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Health and Daily Living. Each area of development identifies goals followed by specific learning standards that are developmentally appropriate across the 3-5 year-old age range.

The Standards have also been designed to be collectively reflective of standards and curricula used in various preschool settings throughout the state. The Standards serve as a natural progression to the Kindergarten standards contained in the Alabama Courses of Study and describe outcomes desired for all children at the end of their preschool experience as they enter Kindergarten. The Standards are aligned with ALSDE's Developmental Standards for Preschool Children with Disabilities, reflecting the philosophy of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs and the importance of teachers making accommodations to the curriculum and the learning environment to meet the needs of all children. Also included in the Standards are Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP) objectives which provide examples of actions children might do and supportive practices teachers can incorporate in the classroom. ELPP objectives are to be used by teachers of students with disabilities as well as in helping teachers recognize emerging behaviors in children as they master a skill.

The Standards are age, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and serve as a natural progression to kindergarten. Each FCPK program develops a transition plan to support children and their parents in successfully transitioning to Kindergarten. This involves partnerships with the schools and other Early Learning Providers in organizing visits to the Kindergarten classroom to meet the teacher and parent workshops on Kindergarten readiness. Working with the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC), OSR is assisting communities in developing community-wide Kindergarten Transition Teams (KTT) that identify resources for high quality early learning experiences, linkages between early childhood programs and schools into which they feed, and engagement of parents and families into planning a smooth and effective transition into Kindergarten. Teams include elementary school administrators, teachers, family support personnel, and others who can ensure that the first few grades of school are developmentally and educationally appropriate and supportive of children with identified special needs to transition smoothly from Early Intervention. Schools provide data to KTT on learning outcomes and educational success. KTT also provides resources and professional development to support and enable the use of an effective kindergarten readiness assessment, TS GOLD, a key component of the team's work that supports identification of gaps in readiness and informs professional development planning.

FCPK Program Guidelines, Classroom Guidelines, and Grant Assurances have been created and published by OSR to ensure that Pre-K programs provide a safe and high-quality learning environment for all preschool children. The Classroom Guidelines provide descriptions and definitions of optimal classroom environment characteristics, basics of classroom management, ideas for classroom displays, guidance on lesson planning, and instructions on the use of the assessment tool TS GOLD for individualized, intentional instruction. All FCPK classrooms are required to have a research-based instructional plan for effective teaching and learning that meets standards of developmentally-appropriate practice. Pre-K teachers are required to assess children's abilities and progress using the TS GOLD Assessment Tool and to enter observations at checkpoint dates during the program year. The support of coaches and monitors for each FCPK teacher ensures that program and classroom guidelines are met. OSR evaluates all

classrooms using the CLASS or the DECA-P (e-DECA pilot in 115 classrooms). Coaches, together with teachers, develop individualized improvement plans that reflect the assessment results and personal improvement goals of teachers.

Evaluations of statewide early childhood Pre-K systems indicate that the most effective programs link early learning standards with curriculum and assessment. OSR has developed early learning standards for guiding First Class instructional practices. TS GOLD is the state assessment tool that guides the appropriate alignment of the Standards with teaching instruction. Therefore, if teachers and administrators are choosing a curriculum, it is important that it aligns with the Standards and GOLD assessment. Although OSR does not endorse any one commercial curriculum, all FCPK classrooms implement the Framework, the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children, First Class Program Guidelines, First Class Classroom Guidelines, the ASQ-3 Developmental Screener, and the TS GOLD Assessment. Curriculum content is comprehensively presented and reinforced with intentional teaching strategies for Pre-K teachers. Implementation of the curriculum is embedded into the Alabama Reflective Coaching Model that includes effective teaching practices, curriculum content based on early learning standards, and professional development. DECE reviews curricula to provide guidance on which early learning childhood curricula are most likely aligned to the Alabama Framework and the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children. All curricula must promote appropriate instructional practice and enhance learning and development while being consistent with the intent of the OSR Program Framework to assist children in mastering skills to ensure school readiness.

Partnerships have been formed to support programs in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and DLLs. ALSDE divisions of Special Education and Federal Programs (Title I and Title III) are actively working with FCPK programs to ensure children receive appropriate services. Preschool special educators have been trained to use TS GOLD, and coaches and monitors have been trained to work with FCPK teachers to provide services for children in special education. DECE has established an Inclusion Task Force Committee (see below), including members from EI, ALSDE, and LEAs. These partners are co-creating a plan to ensure that all children, regardless of ability, are being appropriately identified and served in the least restrictive environment. DECE has developed a comprehensive plan to support children who are DLL. All FCPK classrooms are required to complete a home language survey, and when children who are DLL are identified, additional objectives can be assigned through TS GOLD. DECE has an ongoing coaching and professional development project designed to improve preschoolers' language acquisition and DLL instruction.

Three taskforces that were formed in Year 2 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2016) continue to actively shape the early childhood education system in Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017). These taskforces were established to create shared understanding and priorities in combining resources and best practices to create a comprehensive, cohesive continuum of high quality early childhood education from birth to 5 that will successfully transition through the early childhood education years for all children. These include the Head Start Task Force, the Childcare Task Force, and the Alabama Inclusion Task Force.

The goal of the Head Start Task Force (HSTF) is to create an effective and efficient coordination of efforts and programs to serve children throughout Alabama. Initial action steps included: reviewing points of collaboration developed from an integration chart and crosswalk of guidelines and regulations; beginning the process of defining partnerships, resulting in a collaborative model early childhood program that other states can emulate; developing a method to document each step of this endeavor; and evaluating to identify challenges and solidify successes. Progress to date includes: completed review of OSR guidelines regarding selection of children; clarified with monitors regarding the Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) requirements that Head Start (HS) must meet; informed HS Directors that at least 2 children must represent a diverse socio-economic population and provided definitions of how this

can be done; reviewed with OSR Monitors the required vs. suggested classroom equipment; revised OSR monitoring form to include an area of suggestions for improvement; created a sample HS budget that can be shared with all HS Directors, Regional Managers, Coaches and Monitors; and made recommendations for braiding Pre-K funds with HS, focusing on raising salaries of all HS teachers with BA degrees teaching in a 4-year old classroom. OSR/HS classrooms now receive a supplement to bring salaries comparable to beginning public school pay. Because of the HSTF, OSR staff have helped support trainings, including CLASS training, and can provide additional professional development to Head Start classrooms throughout the state. OSR has also been able to support Head Start in meeting its new mandate for coaching, with plans to start mentor coaching Head Start coaches on reflective practice in spring 2018.

The goal of the Childcare Task Force (CCTF) is to support the diverse delivery system of high quality FCPK in early care settings. Initial action steps included: developing an open dialog between DECE and childcare providers in creating an understanding of the unique needs of the childcare industry in Alabama; creating business partnerships to provide financial consultation and business administration guidance; and providing additional professional development unique to early care and education. Progress to date includes: regular meetings for ongoing discussion to support the success of 4-year old Pre-K in the childcare settings; financial support for the Alabama Association for Early Care & Education (AALECE) annual conference; and hosting an initial meeting with key bank leaders in the state capital. The CCTF hosted a retreat to develop a comprehensive toolkit to help childcare directors create budgets to become OSR FCPK classrooms.

The Alabama Inclusion Task Force (AITF) is also discussed in the earlier section of Program Requirement (k)(2). The vision for AITF is “All Alabama early childhood programs and services working together to embody the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to have access and participate in systems of high quality, developmentally appropriate, culturally competent, cohesive services allowing full participation in community and society.” This vision applies broadly to the early childhood system, including public and private preschool, center- and family-based child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, and the IDEA, in partnership with families and communities. The goal for the work of the AITF is that all young children with disabilities have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations within groups representing national proportionality. Initial action steps included: developing a plan for inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs. Progress to date includes: Member reviewed their agency policies and guidelines; conducted a survey of the number of children with disabilities being served to establish a current baseline; reviewed FCPK 2015-2016 guidelines addressing inclusion; and enhanced relationships between special education support at the local level and classroom teachers to support guidance. Activities of the AITF have resulted in a statewide document to educate the early child education community related to inclusion. At every meeting, AITF members share how many children with disabilities are served by their agency to identify increases over baseline established through the initial survey.

Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

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

In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE provided access to high-quality preschool programs for 15,240 of the 28,937 target eligible children (below 200% of poverty) in communities served by the PDG through new and improved/enhancement slots. Also in Year 3, all existing FCPK classrooms received funds for salary enhancement and incremental raises to assure pay parity with public K-12 teachers. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount

provided to their K-12 counterparts.

Year 3 targets included establishing an additional 100 classrooms and serving 1,800 new children. The cost per slot was \$6,336 from PDG funds plus at least a 25% local match is required.

There are no proposed or approved changes in targets for Year 4.

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

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

Overview:

The efforts of many organizations support the success of FCPK. OSR works collaboratively with other local, state, and federal organizations to provide sustained support for each site. Cross-sector services include partnerships with the DHR, Head Start, Early Head Start, ALSDE, LEAs, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Auburn University, Alabama Power Company, and the Alabama Partnership for Children. Each of these organizations offers assistance to FCPK sites, enabling OSR to provide comprehensive services including health, vision, and physical screenings, as well as assistance for children and families in need of additional school support including special education services for students with disabilities or developmental delays and for DLLs.

Each FCPK subgrantee is required to be a participating member of the county Children's Policy Council. See also Section A. Part B.2 for information on three critical taskforces that support system-wide collaboration.

Strategies and Accomplishments:

Provision of high-quality Pre-K programs requires the implementation of effective instructional practices. OSR works to ensure the success of FCPK classrooms by providing tiered, individualized professional development for all sub-grantees using the Alabama Reflective Coaching (ARC) Model (discussed in detail in Section A. Part B.1). Professional development needs are identified through CLASS and TS GOLD, as well as by recommendations of the assigned First Class Coaches and Monitors (see below). Coordination of professional development activities is managed through STIPd, the statewide database of approved professional development opportunities for Pre-K-12 educators. Sub-grantees may participate in professional development at no cost. STIPd allows the teacher, site, and OSR to document and access records of training sessions attended by FCPK directors and teachers. OSR also hosts an annual FCPK Conference. The most recent event, attended by over 2,700 people, included speakers such as Rachel Sperry, Kyle Snow, Peter Pizzolongo, Karma Wilson, Isabell Baker, Jill Molli from Conscious Discipline, and Tom Rendon.

Improving teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development are vital components of the FCPK Framework. The most distinctive activity to support professional development is the ARC Model, a coaching and monitoring support system. The model includes both a First Class Coach and a First Class Monitor. The role of the Coach is distinct from the Monitor so that nuances associated with coaching Pre-K teachers do not compromise the evaluative/monitoring role of the Monitors. Given that principles of best practice in teaching support differentiated instruction, discussions at all levels of the system center on the value of providing different things for different people at different times. A tiered model of coaching has been developed and implemented to meet the individual professional development needs of each teacher based on previous formative evaluation. The coaching model provides individualized support for Pre-K teachers based on needs that arise during the school year through a bottom-up approach with top-down support to develop a grassroots professional development system. An annual conference and differentiated professional development are implemented throughout

the year utilizing local, state, and national presenters based on teacher needs. A full time Professional Development Coordinator plans high quality professional development for continuous improvement for the highest quality early childhood education instructional practices and administration for Pre-K teachers, directors, and OSR staff. OSR has divided the state into 8 regions (each supported by a Regional Director) that are purposefully structured in a manner that promotes increased support, consistency of program delivery, and increased accountability. Regional Directors often provide professional development for teachers in their regions in addition to the extensive offerings delivered by OSR.

First Class Coaches and Monitors are specialists who are experienced in multiple early childhood content areas ranging from early childhood teaching and learning, curriculum development and instruction, professional development and training, and early childhood program administration. The primary role of the First Class Coach is to visit assigned FCPK classrooms (average caseload is 20 classrooms) to coach teachers using reflective practice to improve instruction. It is through this coaching model that strong, supportive relationships are formed, individual goals are set and achieved, and the process of teaching and learning for continuous improvement occurs. OSR has embraced the idea that in order to better meet the individual needs of classroom teachers, Coaches first and foremost, must be viewed in a positive, non-threatening manner. In order to achieve this, OSR clearly distinguishes the roles of Coaches and Monitors. As a result, the coaching model is centered on focused on-site observations and the co-creation of program and professional development goals through joint planning and hands-on assistance by the Coach. Coaches provide practical, operational help to teachers as needed assisting with classroom set-up, materials selection, and lesson planning. Coaches also utilize classroom level and individual student level assessments to provide structured classroom feedback and enhance the teacher's ability to translate the information into instructional strategies to support the individual needs of Pre-K students.

Just as the First Class Coach works to ensure the quality of instruction in individual FCPK classrooms, the First Class Monitor provides program support to directors, accountants, and pre-school owners and/or providers. Each Monitor has an average caseload of 35 classrooms. The primary role of the First Class Monitor is to provide oversight to all state-funded FCPK classrooms to ensure program quality and accountability. Monitoring increases the level of transparency among all FCPK providers and supports OSR by providing critical data essential for continued growth throughout the state. Monitors work to ensure that programs are supported in their efforts to follow OSR Program Guidelines, which are central to the organization and structure of FCPK in the state. Monitors regularly work with programs to ensure that quality indicators such as fiscal accountability, enrollment, and teacher qualifications are met and sustained throughout the year.

In a 2017 survey, Pre-K Directors in local communities overwhelmingly noted the benefits of OSR approaches to quality. Related to coaching, 92% indicated that OSR coaching was beneficial to their teachers, and 93% identified OSR coaching as effective in supporting teacher use of evidence-based teaching practices. Specific to monitoring, 90% identified OSR monitoring as effective in supporting Directors' use of evidence-based teaching practices, and 94% indicated that they benefitted from OSR monitoring. Speaking to the benefits of FCPK coaching, one Director stated, "I cannot stress how strongly I feel that the OSR coaches are an integral part of the success of the OSR Pre-K. I wish I had this type support and coaching for all my teachers Pre-K-3rd Grade. Having an expert opinion from a caring, knowledgeable coach who is well versed with coaching strategies is invaluable!"

FCPK Pre-K teachers also reported on the benefits of coaching and other OSR supports. In the 2017 survey, 95% of FCPK teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with coaching and 94% were satisfied or very satisfied with monitoring they had received. Nearly 85% of FCPK teachers reported moderate to significant changes in their knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice as a result of the OSR supports they had received. Several quotes highlight the perceived benefits of the OSR FCPK approach, both for new and experienced teachers:

- “Through my coach and her observations I have become a better teacher in my 26th year of teaching!”
- “My coach has been such a wonderful support for me since this is my first year as lead teacher. She has been supportive, encouraging and given me such good strategies to use in my classroom to better myself as an effective teacher of my Pre-K students.”
- “I have used my coach as a "thinking partner" during the process of learning more about how to best support students' social-emotional growth. I have appreciated having a knowledgeable resource to help me think through new instructional strategies.”

DECE is collaborating with ALSDE and higher education to develop and implement an early childhood workforce development plan with the goal of having quality teachers and multiple avenues to obtain certification. The plan supports specific pathways for current Pre-K teachers who are not certified or degreed to obtain a 4-year degree or certification. In collaboration with Alabama Partnership for Children, DECE supports the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) initiative. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ALABAMA is a scholarship program that was developed to increase the level of education and effectiveness of early learning professionals by making the educational process more affordable, increasing wages, and reducing staff turnover rates. Scholarships are currently offered for the CDA (Child Development Associate) assessment fee, associate degrees in child development and early care and education, and bachelor's degrees in child development and early care and education. To date, 132 current FCPK lead and auxiliary teachers have received T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, including 117 for Bachelor's degrees, 10 for CDA, and 5 for Associate's degrees. The average wage for T.E.A.C.H. recipients in FY2017 was \$9.73 per hour, and bachelor degree recipients received an average wage increase of 6%.

OSR is participating in a study conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to examine the impact of the HighScope preschool curriculum and professional development for FCPK classrooms. Participating classrooms receive HighScope training for lead and auxiliary teachers, HighScope classroom materials plus access to online library, assessments, audiovisuals, and other resources, and mentoring coach support to teachers, including instructional observation and feedback. Individual classrooms have volunteered to participate with 48 sites randomly assigned to the immediate training group (treatment group) and 50 sites randomly assigned to the delayed training group (control group). The treatment group initiated HighScope Curriculum Training in the fall of 2016 and will use the curriculum when they complete training. The control groups will begin HighScope Curriculum Training in the fall of 2018. Teachers in this group will continue to use their business-as-usual approaches to curriculum training and use. Researchers are preparing to complete post assessments for both the treatment and control groups in spring 2018. OSR is setting training dates for summer and fall 2018 for the control group to receive training. Through additional funding, all OSR staff can participate in these trainings and treatment programs that have new classrooms since the beginning of the study will also be allowed to send their new teachers so the entire school can have the HighScope training.

DECE has supported and participated in the work of DHR's Child Care Division as it develops a QRIS. One program in a large public school is participating in QRIS to determine the best method for standalone programs to make it through the QRIS process.

DECE also supports DHR through an interagency agreement with Early Head Start (EHS)-Child Care Programs by providing TS GOLD training and support and training on the ARC Model. DECE offers technical support to DHR with TS GOLD accounts, checkpoint and data concerns, and planning TS GOLD implementation. DECE supports existing EHS programs and is branching out into partnerships with private child care centers as well. DECE provides intensive coaching to teachers who are in highest need based on the Creative Curriculum: Coaching to Fidelity Tool for Teachers (Infants and Toddlers) Self-Assessment. In addition, DECE offers training on the Teaching Strategies: Coaching to Fidelity Tool to Head Start program partners.

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:

DECE is well-positioned to coordinate the state's preschool programs and support alignment across the early childhood and elementary systems. OSR, Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the MIECHV Program are all housed within DECE. DECE is also the statutorily designated agency to administer and lead the State Children's Policy Council (CPC). CPC is designated by state law as a coordinating entity for children's services; it brings together agencies that impact children. The State CPC is designated as the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), meeting the requirements described in Section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837(b)). The re-formation of CPC/ECAC in 2015 has resulted in improved coordination, collaboration, and oversight of all services and programs for children in Alabama. Through the creation of the Pre-K Collaboration Task Force, partnerships between DECE and ALSDE have been established. Monthly meetings of the Task Force bring together groups that serve Alabama preschool children - Title I, Head Start, Special Education, Migrant, Homeless, and Child Subsidy - to address barriers to the delivery of a high quality program to all children. In PDG Year 3 (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE made significant progress in leading efforts toward birth to third grade alignment, early childhood workforce development, and partnerships with other agencies and programs that are part of the early childhood system in Alabama.

Accomplishments, Activities, and Strategies:

A high quality early education provides the foundation for student success in school. Having a seamless learning continuum from Pre-K to 3rd grade will align and integrate a comprehensive educational approach to student learning during the years when children have the greatest growth potential and ensure that children enter classrooms that promote their on-going educational progress by building on what they have previously learned. Governor Kay Ivey's Strong Start, Strong Finish education initiative focuses on three stages of education: early childhood education, computer science in middle and high school, and workforce preparedness. With Governor Ivey's strong support for extending the FCPK principles and approaches into the K-3rd grade education system, DECE and ALSDE are working collaboratively to develop Pre-K-3rd Strong Start Early Learning Collaborative. This initiative focuses on establishing a strong early learning foundation for the children of Alabama and will be accomplished through a comprehensive, systematic approach to high quality learning opportunities using the Pre-K-3rd framework and early learning continuum. The basic framework and three focus areas of the continuum are based on:

1. Leadership

- a. Leaders embrace the Pre-K-3rd early learning continuum
- b. Leaders ensure developmentally appropriate practices
- c. Leaders provide personalized, blended learning environments
- d. Leaders use measures to guide growth in student learning
- e. Leaders build professional capacity across the early learning community
- f. Leaders make schools a hub for Pre-K-3rd learning for families and communities

2. Instruction

- a. Align and coordinate standards, curriculum, instructional practices, assessment, environments and professional development creating an incremental alignment plan for Pre-K-3rd

- b. Use consistent, yet developmentally appropriate, instructional approaches across grades
- c. Require horizontal and vertical team meetings
- d. Use instructional coaches with early childhood learning experiences and credentials
- e. Communicate proactively and involve parents, families and the community

3. Assessment

- a. Ongoing comprehensive system to include diagnostic, formative/progress monitoring and summative assessments
- b. Include all domains of development and learning: social, language, physical, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science and technology and the arts

DECE awarded funds to the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) to support an Alabama Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy: Excelling Innovation in Leadership of Pre-K-3 Learning Communities. CLAS, in collaboration with DECE and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), developed a high quality professional learning and resource program to meet the needs of elementary principals serving children from ages 3 to 8, or Pre-K-3 in Alabama. The purpose of Leadership Academy is to improve the attitudes and knowledge regarding early childhood practices in education to assure incorporation of best practices. The approach includes:

1) Provide access to a cohort of Alabama's principals to a year-long online training program (101 and 201 level coursework with associated lessons), the NAESP Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy, a multifaceted and highly engaging blended professional learning curriculum and coursework aligned to the research and foundational competency publication *Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice*.

2) Establish Alabama's Pre-K-3 Leadership Academy and a community of practice that is supported by three in-person full-day education leadership programming and learning sessions to help principals take theory, learning and content into practice. Participants follow a series of blended coursework and create a Capstone Project aimed at improving practice in their schools and demonstrating mastery of deeper-level content.

The first Leadership Academy is ongoing and the first cohort includes 30 participants.

DECE and ALSDE are completing a pilot Pre-K to 3rd Grade initiative, supported through competitive innovation grants. In June 2017, participants in the inaugural Leadership Academy were invited to submit applications for the 2017-2018 school year for grants that support the delivery of a coordinated and comprehensive high-quality early childhood continuum. Grants provided up to \$15,000 for each awarded classroom. LEAs were encouraged to write for Pre-K to Kindergarten, Pre-K to 1st Grade, Pre-K to 2nd Grade, or Pre-K to 3rd Grade, depending on the readiness of the school. To assist potential grantees, DECE included a sample budget to develop and/or sustain whole child instruction and a suggested list of classroom set up resources and materials and manipulatives to support whole child instruction for Kindergarten. Grants were awarded and support 37 classrooms in seven schools in five districts in 5 counties. Two schools focused on Pre-K to Kindergarten, four schools focused on Pre-K to 1st Grade, and one school focused on Pre-K to 2nd Grade. No programs included the entire Pre-K to 3rd Grade continuum during this pilot year. With additional grant funds to expand the pilot and anticipated state budget increases, DECE will award selected schools with new and continuing grants during the 2018-2019 school year. Current awardees re-competed to sustain and expand their Pre-K-3rd Grade initiatives.

The evaluation plan for the Pre-K to 3rd Grade Pilot includes measurement strategies for each of the three focus areas of the continuum:

1. Leadership:

- a. primary quantitative measure = pre/post data from Leadership Academy
- b. primary qualitative method = structured interviews and surveys with principal/director

2. Instruction:

- a. primary measure quantitative measure = Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- b. primary qualitative method = structured interviews/focus groups and surveys with teachers

3. Assessment:

- a. primary measure quantitative measure = Teaching Strategies GOLD (Spring/Fall checkpoints against widely-held expectations, “met” expected growth, “accomplished” readiness for next grade)
- b. selected child outcomes prior to standardized testing = local school assessments, example DIBELS
- c. longitudinal outcome measures = identify in ALSDE data by cohort children who received Pre-K-3rd Grade approach and dose (number of years) - compare performance on standardized testing beginning in 3rd grade, absenteeism, retention in grade, student grades, student incident reports

DECE is leading an ongoing effort to expand Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) using TS GOLD. See GPRA 1(c) for detailed information. Stand-alone KEA will be phased out as this is required as a part of the Pre-K to Kindergarten portion of the Pre-K to 3rd Grade continuum initiative.

DECE is leading efforts in Alabama to support early childhood workforce development. These efforts include several strategies focused on higher education leadership, articulation of coursework between 2- and 4-year institutions, alignment of coursework with NAEYC requirements for early childhood certification, the development of Pre-K/early childhood certification options to ensure that those with an early childhood education degree have field experience in classrooms with children ages birth-4 years, and efforts towards pay parity between Pre-K and elementary educators. In 2015-2016, parity policies were approved to assure all teachers in the FCPK diverse delivery system earn salaries that are comparable to those of K-12 public school instructional staff. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts. DECE continues to provide funding to support salary enhancement for all FCPK teachers.

The 2015 Early Educator Workforce Summit initiated efforts to define key components and content of early childhood teacher preparation for inclusion in every Alabama certificate or degree program. Summit participants also initiated discussions concerning articulation between 2- and 4-year institutions and collaboration between teacher education and child development departments. Following the 2015 Summit, a subcommittee was formed as the Alabama's Early Educator Innovative Program Network. The purpose of this network is to provide support for the development and implementation of model early educator preparation programs. During 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, tiered technical assistance is provided to higher education leaders (deans, faculty) through working meetings of teams that include two- and four-year institutions. These teams are developing/implementing model programs and working to create/improve articulation agreements. Teams make program changes within their institutions that lead to policy recommendations for creating exemplary early educator preparation programs, establishing each participating institution as a model program for other Alabama higher education institutions.

DECE has formed collaborations with ALSDE's High School Career Tech (Career Tech) program and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to add the CDA track and credential to their respective programs. DECE provides supports by speaking with interested high schools and community colleges, speaking at Career Tech conferences, providing support to high school and community college teachers and parents as they learn about the CDA, and assisting in the creation of curriculum and portfolio assignments. DECE is coordinating efforts between programs to streamline and ensure quality of training of future educators. This activity supports child development paths for future teachers and assures appropriate choices related to teaching credentials. DECE is also facilitating discussion regarding articulation of coursework, internships, and collaboration to ensure that all students in both settings have access to quality instruction and support. This work is ongoing and expanding to more programs and community colleges in the state.

In the 2017 Legislative session, DECE and ALSDE proposed two new options for earning a Pre-K certificate (Birth to age 4) that are now issued by ALSDE. One option leads to a Class B Pre-K Professional Educator Certificate (following NAEYC-based rules) and the other leads to a Pre-K Child Development Certificate (requires NAEYC accreditation). The first university program (University of Alabama) is now NAEYC accredited and will begin offering the Pre-K Child Development Certificate. These certificates represent a milestone in Alabama as students who previously graduated with a child development degree were unable to teach in public schools; these certifications allow them to do so and expand options for lead teachers. Other options for certification include K to 6th grade and Birth to 3rd grade.

DECE has established ongoing partnerships with higher education programs to assure the availability of high quality teachers to meet the demand for Pre-K teachers as access continues to expand in the state. DECE conducted a survey with 2- and 4-year institutions to support planning for expansion by establishing how many qualified pre-k teachers are currently available and what capacity higher education has to prepare qualified pre-k teachers in the next 5 to 10 years. Each respondent was asked for cohort numbers of anticipated early childhood education (Pre-K-3rd Grade), early childhood special education, pre-kindergarten, and human development/family studies graduates for the 2017-2018 school year; details related to early childhood articulation agreements if applicable; total enrollment for the early childhood program; and for 4-year institutions only, the types of pre-kindergarten, early childhood education, or early childhood special education teaching field courses the institution typically accepts from which community colleges in lieu of the institution's approved program teaching field courses. Also, early childhood education students assist DECE with conducting PPVT assessments in classrooms. Higher education institutions are incorporating content on TS GOLD, CLASS, and Conscious Discipline into their coursework. The DECE Senior Director spoke on appropriate placements at the statewide Early Childhood Field Experience Directors Forum and is working with a 4-year institution's Dean of Education (also a Pre-K Director) to align their course of study to NAEYC standards.

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 3 Target* differs from the *Year 3 Actual*.

The Alabama State Legislature approved \$10 million in state funding to support FCPK during Year 1 (2015-2016 school year; as of December 1, 2015) of the PDG. These monies were in addition to the \$17.5 million in federal funds that came to the state and represent a state match of more than 50% of the federal contribution. For Year 2 of the PDG (2016-2017 school year; as of December 1, 2017), the Alabama State Legislature appropriated a \$16 million dollar increase to sustain and expand FCPK, again representing more than a 50% match to the federal contribution of \$17.5 million. In the current legislative cycle, which began in early January, 2018, Governor Ivey proposed a \$20 million increase for FCPK. The Alabama State Legislature is currently considering this budget request.

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.

Overview:

Governor Ivey has appointed Jeana Ross as the Secretary of Early Childhood Education, and charged DECE, through the OSR, with administering Alabama's state and federally funded Pre-K program. DECE infrastructure and other statutory designations are discussed in Section A. Part B.4.

In 2017, DECE continued to make significant progress in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade for children and their families within each high need community. In addition to the discussions below, please see Section A. Part B.4 for details on progress for this priority.

Accomplishments, Activities, and Strategies:

Governor Kay Ivey's Strong Start, Strong Finish education initiative focuses on three stages of education: early childhood education, computer science in middle and high school, and workforce preparedness. With Governor Ivey's strong support for extending the FCPK principles and approaches into the K-3rd grade education system, DECE and ALSDE are working collaboratively to develop Pre-K-3rd Strong Start Early Learning Collaborative. This initiative focuses on establishing a strong early learning foundation for the children of Alabama and will be accomplished through a comprehensive, systematic approach to high quality learning opportunities using the Pre-K-3rd framework and early learning continuum.

See Section A. Part B.2 for a detailed discussion of DECE strategies to support the alignment of the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children with the ALSDE's Developmental Standards

for Preschool Children with Disabilities and the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP) and the work of community-based Kindergarten Transition Teams. In addition to these strategies, in 2016, DECE implemented a pilot program for play-based Kindergarten, focusing on educating through developmentally-appropriate instruction and offsetting misalignment between teaching practices that focus on how young children learn and those that focus on academic achievement. Seventeen Kindergarten and 3, 1st grade teachers in 4 schools across 4 districts committed to a 2-year pilot of whole child instruction including: social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, technology, and English language acquisition. These domains of learning were selected based on the criteria within NAEYC's position statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice as well as alignment with TS GOLD assessment. Pilot program participants received a 2-day training, Play and Academic Rigor, provided by Tom Rendon and funded by the Kellogg Foundation; curricular training provided by TS GOLD; monthly coaching sessions and bi-weekly follow-up phone conferences; and classroom materials to support their implementation of the curriculum. Participants were invited to participate in the TS GOLD pilot of the newly-developed Creative Curriculum for Kindergarten. As a result of this pilot project, 4 districts across the state committed to become partners in whole child instructional practices. The pilot project continues in 2017-2018 and is connected to the Pre-K-3rd Grade Continuum initiative.

Partnerships have also been formed to support programs in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and DLLs. See Section A. Part B.2 for detailed discussion.

DECE is leading efforts in Alabama to support early childhood workforce development. These efforts include several strategies focused on higher education leadership, articulation of coursework between 2- and 4-year institutions, alignment of coursework with NAEYC requirements for early childhood certification, the development of Pre-K/early childhood certification options to ensure that those with an early childhood education degree have field experience in classrooms with children ages birth-4 years, and efforts towards pay parity between Pre-K and elementary educators. In 2015-2016, parity policies were approved to assure all teachers in the FCPK diverse delivery system earn salaries that are comparable to those of K-12 public school instructional staff. Additionally in PDG Year 3, DECE provided up to a \$5,000 salary supplement for FCPK teachers with a Master's degree; this is comparable to the supplemental amount provided to their K-12 counterparts. DECE continues to provide funding to support salary enhancement for all FCPK teachers.

The 2015 Early Educator Workforce Summit initiated efforts to define key components and content of early childhood teacher preparation for inclusion in every Alabama certificate or degree program. Summit participants also initiated discussions concerning articulation between 2- and 4-year institutions and collaboration between teacher education and child development departments. Following the 2015 Summit, a subcommittee was formed as the Alabama's Early Educator Innovative Program Network. The purpose of this network is to provide support for the development and implementation of model early educator preparation programs. During 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, tiered technical assistance is provided to higher education leaders (deans, faculty) through working meetings of teams that include two- and four-year institutions. These teams are developing/implementing model programs and working to create/improve articulation agreements. Teams make program changes within their institutions that lead to policy recommendations for creating exemplary early educator preparation programs, establishing each participating institution as a model program for other Alabama higher education institutions.

DECE has formed collaborations with ALSDE's High School Career Tech (Career Tech) program and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to add the CDA track and credential to their respective programs. DECE provides supports by speaking with interested high schools and community colleges, speaking at Career Tech conferences, providing support to high school and community college teachers and parents as they learn about the CDA, and assisting in the creation of curriculum and portfolio assignments. DECE is coordinating efforts between programs to streamline and ensure quality of training

of future educators. This activity supports child development paths for future teachers and assures appropriate choices related to teaching credentials. DECE is also facilitating discussion regarding articulation of coursework, internships, and collaboration to ensure that all students in both settings have access to quality instruction and support. This work is ongoing and expanding to more programs and community colleges in the state.

In the 2017 Legislative session, DECE and ALSDE proposed two new options for earning a Pre-K certificate (Birth to age 4) that are now issued by ALSDE. One option leads to a Class B Pre-K Professional Educator Certificate (following NAEYC-based rules) and the other leads to a Pre-K Child Development Certificate (requires NAEYC accreditation). The first university program (University of Alabama) is now NAEYC accredited and will begin offering the Pre-K Child Development Certificate. These certificates represent a milestone in Alabama as students who previously graduated with a child development degree were unable to teach in public schools; these certifications allow them to do so and expand options for lead teachers. Other options for certification include K to 6th grade and Birth to 3rd grade.

DECE has established ongoing partnerships with higher education programs to assure the availability of high quality teachers to meet the demand for Pre-K teachers as access continues to expand in the state. DECE conducted a survey with 2- and 4-year institutions to support planning for expansion by establishing how many qualified pre-k teachers are currently available and what capacity higher education has to prepare qualified pre-k teachers in the next 5 to 10 years. Each respondent was asked for cohort numbers of anticipated early childhood education (Pre-K-3rd Grade), early childhood special education, pre-kindergarten, and human development/family studies graduates for the 2017-2018 school year; details related to early childhood articulation agreements if applicable; total enrollment for the early childhood program; and for 4-year institutions only, the types of pre-kindergarten, early childhood education, or early childhood special education teaching field courses the institution typically accepts from which community colleges in lieu of the institution's approved program teaching field courses. Also, early childhood education students assist DECE with conducting PPVT assessments in classrooms. Higher education institutions are incorporating content on TS GOLD, CLASS, and Conscious Discipline into their coursework. The DECE Senior Director spoke on appropriate placements at the statewide Early Childhood Field Experience Directors Forum and is working with a 4-year institution's Dean of Education (also a Pre-K Director) to align their course of study to NAEYC standards.

DECE has identified and expanded several initiatives to support the continuum of early learning and development and assure that children are healthy and ready for school success. Led by the state's public/private organization dedicated to the needs of children, Alabama Partnership for Children, and in partnerships with several state agencies, FCPK has been closely involved in programs to coordinate comprehensive services for families and children, specifically SF and HMG.

The SF framework is implemented in FCPK programs as a parent engagement model that incorporates:

- ensuring program quality and building systemic linkages to other programs and resources to support families;
- reaching isolated, hard-to-reach families and meeting the needs of eligible preschool-age children such as those in the child welfare system;
- helping families build protective factors and engaging parents and families as decision-makers in their children's education; and
- supporting families during the transition to Kindergarten.

The state's SF initiative is delivered through local family resource centers that provide a range of supports and services to families. Rather than build these supports within individual FCPK programs, OSR's emphasis is on connecting and linking through professional development, resource sharing, and community-wide planning, thus eliminating duplication of effort. SF training is offered to all 2nd year

FCPK teachers. OSR is moving toward system to support all FCPK classrooms to provide parent learning communities and enrichment activities.

Through a partnership with 12 other organizations, the HMG campaign was formed to link families to community resources, provide effective care coordination, and facilitate partnerships with state and local communities to improve the accessibility and quality of support services for families and children. HMG is an intentional and focused set of strategies that build on existing resources and programs. HMG ensures that all FCPK children receive developmental screenings with the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE and connects families to the state's referral hotline 2-1-1. Through PDG funding, this service was expanded from a regional pilot to a statewide service available to all Alabama families. The 2-1-1 network is the single point of entry for families and providers and facilitates appropriate referrals and connections through a centralized, online hub. HMG is delivered in partnership with physicians, mental health professionals, United Way-2-1-1 Connects, early childhood programs, EI, and programs for children with special health care needs. By connecting FCPK programs to this network for early childhood assessment programs and referrals to appropriate interventions and support services, local costs are minimized through strong partnerships and collaboration with the existing and effective network. OSR provides professional development to all lead teachers, assistant teachers, and directors regarding how to use HMG. FCPK Monitors, assigned to all classrooms, receive professional development training to expand their ability to link families to these statewide initiatives. OSR provided additional training to FCPK Program Directors on HMG at annual grantee training during Summer 2017.

Additional support for families is provided through First Teacher, Alabama's federal MIECHV Program. First Teacher is administered by the Office of Early Learning and Family Support division within DECE and provides home visitation services to pregnant women and families with children ages birth to 5 years. These services are delivered through three evidenced-based home visiting models: Parents as Teachers (PAT), Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY), and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP). The program also administers state-funded home visiting programs using the PAT and HIPPPY models. Through state and federal funding, First Teacher had the capacity to serve more than 3,500 children ages 0-5 years statewide during 2016-2017. DECE is working with the FCPK Research Evaluation Team and the First Teacher Research Evaluation Team to identify children who received home visiting and Pre-K services to better understand the impact of these programs on child health, family strengths, and school readiness.

DECE is building its capacity for outcome evaluation and longitudinal research. ALSDE utilizes iNow, a student data system, for students in K-12. This system manages data for demographics, assessment, attendance, and performance of students. Students are issued unique state student identification (SSID) numbers which follow them throughout their school career. Through strong collaboration with ALSDE, DECE has worked diligently to collect identifying information that is matched with the SSID. These two departments have hired a shared staff person to continue to match student data, identify state Pre-K students, and follow their progress as a group. De-identified data are shared with the Pre-K Research Evaluation Team, a diverse group of researchers and practitioners that supports outcome evaluation and research. Data analyses focus on student performance on standardized assessments of reading and math at 3rd - 6th grades, achievement gap closure and gains associated with FCPK, retention, absenteeism, special education, cost-savings, Kindergarten readiness, and pre- and post-FCPK performance on TS GOLD. Though initial analyses have focused on birth to 6th grade experiences, the addition of longitudinal data will allow the team to examine outcomes into high school and beyond and will facilitate comprehensive evaluation and research of outcomes associated with the Pre-K-3rd Grade initiatives that are being piloted in the state.

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.

Overview, Strategies, and Accomplishments:

See narrative for GPRA 1(a) for detailed information on how Alabama identified High-Need Communities for PDG and the process for making classroom awards.

In Year 3 (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), DECE provided access to high-quality preschool programs for 15,608 of the 28,937 target eligible children (below 200% of poverty) in communities served by the PDG (53.9%) through new and improved/enhancement slots.

The addition of PDG funds to state allocations significantly increased the percentage of young children who are receiving voluntary, high-quality preschool programs in Alabama. During the 2013-2014 school year (prior to the PDG), FCPK classrooms served 5,598 of the state's 60,665 4-year-old children from that year, representing 9.2% of the 4-year-old population. As of Year 3 of the PDG (2017-2018 school year; as of December 1, 2017), with a combination of PDG and state funds, FCPK is providing access for 16,034 of the state's 59,667 4 year olds. This represents 26.9% of 4-year-olds in Alabama. There are a total 940 classrooms (as of December 1, 2017) in FCPK's diverse delivery system, including public schools, private child care, faith-based settings, Head Start, community-based/non-profit centers, college or university settings, and military child development centers.

In addition to meeting 12 of 12 quality structural elements as discussed in Section B.2, FCPK has been nationally recognized as a high-quality program by NIEER. FCPK has consistently met all 10 quality standards identified by NIEER since 2005-2006 and was one of only six state-funded Pre-K programs to meet all 10 NIEER quality standard benchmarks in 2016; it is one of only two states to meet all 10 new benchmarks. According to a July 2016 policy scan conducted by NIEER (Implementing 15 Essential Elements for High Quality: a State and Local Policy Scan), Alabama fully meets 11 of its now expanded 15 Essential Elements and partially meets one other. Recent policy improvements and focus areas related to DLL and special education would likely result in and increased number of fully meets.

OSR requirements assure that both the NIEER Quality Indicators and all quality structural elements listed in section 2 as "evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality" are met in the FCPK Program. The Framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, coaching methods, and monitoring practices to create a replicable model for high-quality Pre-K programs. The components of this Framework include resources and support to enhance performance and learning and alignment with the NIEER Quality Standards. Components are measured through on-going observation and authentic, research-based assessment. The Framework guides program development and program operations to ensure that Alabama's children are prepared for school achievement and lifelong success. Programs are monitored and evaluated using Framework guidelines and standards to maintain quality and to promote student achievement consistently in all programs. New Alabama FCPK classes added as a result of the PDG or through continued state funding are required to adhere to the Framework and Program Assurances as conditions of their sub-grantee award to ensure continued high-quality of programs. See Section A. Part B.2 for more detailed information on how FCPK assures high quality in all classrooms.

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, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

There were no discrepancies between the sub-recipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. All funds were expended or obligated from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 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, 2018 through December 31, 2018).

In January 2018, DECE received \$1.5 M in supplemental funding to support additional FCPK slots.

We do not anticipate any substantive programmatic or budget changes to the State's PDG budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018).

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.

Alabama has developed a plan of sustainability for each of the expansion classrooms. Each new group of expansion classrooms will be funded in Year 1 with federal grant funds. After Year 1, classrooms will be funded with state appropriations. Alabama Governor Kay Ivey is committed to funding voluntary high-quality Pre-K programs. FCPK has strong bi-partisan support in the state legislature. The following chart is a simple depiction of how the funds will be used to sustain high-quality Pre-K Programs after the grant period.

	Initiated with Federal Funds	Sustained with State Funds
Year 1 2015-2016	Cohort 1	-
Year 2 2016-2017	Cohort 2	Cohort 1
Year 3 2017-2018	Cohort 3	Cohorts 1 and 2
Year 4 2018-2019	Cohort 4	Cohorts 1, 2, and 3
After 2019	-	Cohorts 1, 2, 3, and 4

Each cohort will operate 1 full year on federal grant funding before being sustained by state funding.

Budget Year	State Appropriation	OSR Number of FCPK Classrooms	Number of Students	Number of Eligible Children	% of Eligible Children in FCPK
2005-2006	\$4,326,050	57	1,026	60,002	1.7%
2006-2007	\$5,369,898	59	2,062	60,565	1.8%

2007-2008	\$10,000,000	128	2,304	62,354	3.7%
2008-2009	\$15,490,831	185	3,330	59,803	5.5%
2009-2010	\$18,376,806	215	3,870	61,093	6.0%
2010-2011	\$18,376,806	217	3,906	62,104	6.0%
2011-2012	\$19,087,050	217	3,906	62,104	6.0%
2012-2013	\$19,087,050	217	3,906	59,987	6.5%
2013-2014	\$28,624,146	311	5,598	60,665	9.0%
2014-2015	\$38,462,050	419	7,542	59,216	13.0%
2015-2016	\$48,462,050	652	11,736	58,740	20.0%
2016-2017	\$64,462,050	811	14,598	59,736	25.0%
2017-2018	\$77,462,050	941	16,938	57,128	29.0%

Each \$10 million increase results in approximately 100 new classrooms. The PDG allows start-up funds in addition to operating funds for first year of classroom operation. To sustain the 100 new classrooms established through PDG, the cost is approximately \$8.6 million.

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, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

There were no discrepancies between the sub-recipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. All funds were expended or obligated from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.