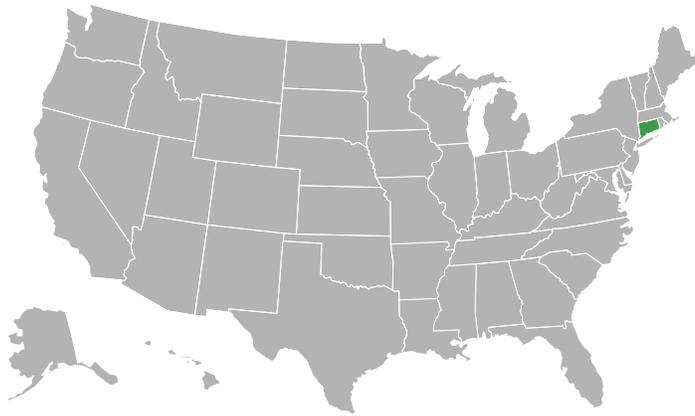


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Connecticut



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 #: S419B15000 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: 09

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grant

4. Grantee Name: Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

5. Grantee Address: 450 Columbus Blvd Suite 304

City: Hartford State: Zip: 06103

6. Project Director Name: Jennifer Johnson

Title: Director, Quality Improvement

Phone #: (860) 500-4538 Ext.: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: jenn.m.johnson@ct.gov

Reporting Period Information

7. Reporting Period: From: 01/01/2017 To: 12/31/2017

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

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$12,176,136.00	\$6,048,036.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$5,262,798.00	\$2,523,323.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

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

- 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: _____ To: _____
- Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____
- Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____
- d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:
- Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

- a. 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: CT

PR/Award #:

S419B15000

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

The start of the second year of PDG in CT began on July 1, 2016, at which time PDG was moved into the newly established Quality Improvement (QI) Division of the OEC. The QI Division has since outlined a clear vision of early childhood quality improvement for the state, focusing on five pillars of quality: Health and Safety; Workforce Qualifications; Program Leadership; Family Engagement; and, Learning Environments. Since October of 2016, the QI division has conducted 12 listening sessions with approximately 300 members of the public to further inform CT's quality improvement work and that of the future Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS). Feedback from these listening sessions, along with lessons learned from PDG implementation, as well as expertise from local and national partners will inform and advance Connecticut's QRIS work.

In 2016, the OEC officially launched the Early Care and Education component of the state's Early Childhood Information System (ECE-ECIS). The ECE-ECIS is a secure online data system that will allow the OEC to collect and monitor data to make informed program and policy decisions affecting young children birth to age five. All early childhood programs receiving public funds are required to participate in ECE-ECIS including PDG. Launched in October 2016 after a series of setbacks related to technological glitches, ECE-ECIS now contains 15,004 unduplicated state and PDG funded children. 240 out of 730 PDG eligible children were uploaded in March 2017 after the release of a batch upload function made available to programs in February 2017. This function will help larger programs upload children into ECE-ECIS all at once, rather than one-by-one, reducing the likelihood of error and duplication of children in the system.

In addition to using ECE-ECIS as a tool to track, monitor and analyze data, the OEC has also refined and implemented new monitoring tools in the second year of PDG implementation to assess subrecipient compliance at the state level, as well as help subrecipients assess their own compliance at the local level. One such tool is the Corrective Action Plan (CAP), a formal document that outlines the issue(s) of noncompliance and requires subrecipients to document and provide timelines of how compliance will be attained. To date, four CAPs have been issued and returned with satisfactory plans to resolve issues of noncompliance. Additionally, the PDG Project Manager for Data and Accountability has collaborated with other managers of state funded programs to develop a new monitoring tool that integrates all program requirements including PDG. This new tool was launched in November 2017, and randomly selected completed monitoring tools will be submitted to the OEC for review beginning in April 2018.

The CLASS tool continues to be used in year three and measures adult-child relationships in three domains and 10 dimensions to help teachers and classroom staff identify areas of strength and areas of improvement as they support children's learning.

As of February 28, 2018, 136 pre and post CLASS observations had been completed using the online tool. While the initial thinking was that the myTeachstone online application would be helpful in collecting and sharing CLASS data, several barriers have been realized since its implementation.

The first is that the system must be manually updated whenever there are changes to classroom staff being observed. In most instances, staff changes are not known until CLASS observers log into

the system to conduct their observations and do not find the correct staff names listed in the system. The OEC is currently setting up protocols to update the system just before the time period CLASS observations are conducted to ensure all staff are in the system before observations occur.

Additionally, due to the above mentioned staff changes, CLASS scores and growth cannot be tracked overtime as post-scores of one individual cannot be compared with pre-scores of another individual. The OEC is currently trying to decipher which staff have been consistent over time in PDG classrooms to provide richer data on growth within CLASS domains, this information will be available in the summer of 2018.

PDG is also improving quality within PDG classrooms by way of high-quality professional learning opportunities, namely through the provision of ECCP, individualized coaching, and tailored family engagement support and technical assistance. At the close of year one, results from a third-party evaluation however, revealed that subrecipients regarded the three components as disjointed. In response to these findings, the OEC developed the PDG Professional Learning Collaborative as a means to provide an integrated approach that would better serve communities and classrooms. The Collaborative was launched in March 2016 and together, the Project Manager for Family Engagement, ECCP Consultants, and Program & Instructional Support Coaches prioritize work through regular meetings and ongoing collaboration to provide: an environment for sharing and receiving feedback and support; an opportunity to develop consistent messaging through the adoption of a shared set of goals; and supports for a culture of continued growth and development for the Collaborative and for communities and programs.

Deepening Family Engagement in 13 PDG Communities

An additional high-quality component continues to be deepening family engagement in the 13 PDG communities by employing meaningful, culturally appropriate, high-impact strategies supported by a quarterly meeting process. The quarterly meetings were intended to provide a context in which community teams reflect on their practices, review promising strategies, and develop roadmaps (plans) for deepening family engagement locally.

Mutually respectful trusting relationships between families and teachers are fundamental to high-quality family engagement. Given that reality, the community teams developed to participate in the quarterly meeting process include providers/teachers, and families. The teams are meant to be inclusive, however, including anyone within the school or program who interacts with children and families on a daily basis to the extent they are willing and able to participate. In addition, other community stake-holders outside the PDG sites are welcome to participate in the process, including McKinney-Vento Liaisons, DCF representatives, Early Childhood Consultation Partnership Consultants, and instructional coaches.

During PDG year 2 families were integrated into the quarterly meeting process. While teams are expected to consistently invite families to participate, we realize that many “hard-to-reach” families may be unable or unwilling to participate in 2.5 hour meetings in the middle of the day. (Given union constraints and demands on teachers' time, the meetings are scheduled at times convenient for teachers. Unfortunately, in many cases, those times are not convenient for families.) So the teams will continuously invite families to engage in the roadmap process, utilizing alternative means and continuously asking families how and when they would like to engage.

Several communities have worried that families won't be comfortable, that they will be bored, or that they won't participate; they have been hesitant, perhaps resistant, to invite families. In the case of the communities who have secured family participation, none of these predictions have materialized. Families are participating enthusiastically and demonstrating, without exception, that they bring to the table exactly what is needed in the process - a passion for their children's education, a desire to participate, and knowledge of their children, their families, their neighborhoods, and their cultures - knowledge we need to optimally support their children's learning.

During PDG Year 3, family participation in efforts to deepen family engagement expanded to include participation in focus groups to inform development of Connecticut's Definition and Framework on Full and Equal Partnerships with Families and participation in the associated Symposium on Family Engagement.

Modification of the PDG Quarterly Meeting Process During Year 3

During Year 2, PDG Family Engagement Community Teams experimented with regional team meetings of multiple communities. During Year 3, five communities elected to meet regionally. In one case, three communities are meeting together; in the second case, two communities are meeting. The remaining eight communities have decided to “go it alone” and continue to meet on a community basis.

During Years 1 & 2, quarterly meetings consisted of a review of high-impact family engagement strategies and work on community roadmaps (plans for deepening family engagement locally). In Year 2, communities took over facilitation of the roadmap work time. The meetings have continued to evolve in response to lessons learned and experience in implementation.

In year 3, meetings are devoted to a review of family engagement efforts to-date and extended work time on community roadmaps. The meetings are facilitated by the community's school readiness liaison or another designated team member. The PDG project manager for family and community engagement attends the quarterlies as a resource and monitor. The review of high-impact family engagement strategies continues via team participation in grant-wide, 2.5 hour sessions on family engagement strategies offered in lieu of December quarterly meetings.

Continued Implementation of Parent Teacher Home Visits in Year 3

PDG's successful implementation of Parent Teacher Home Visits continues in Year 3. Only one of 13 communities opted out of home visits in year 3, but the opportunity will be offered to them again in year 4.

During year 2, kindergarten teachers in PDG communities were invited to participate in PTHV training and to conduct relational home visits with incoming PDG children transitioning to kindergarten. Fifteen kindergarten teachers were trained, and seven, of those trained, conducted 24 relational home visits prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

One hundred and sixty-five relational home visits were also conducted by pre-kindergarten teachers with new PDG children enrolled for year 3.

A total of 189 relational home visits were conducted with year 2 PDG children as they transitioned to kindergarten and with year 3 PDG children as they began their pre-kindergarten year. In the spring of 2018, at the end of the pre-k year, families of PDG children will receive a second home visit; this second visit will be an informational home visit focused on transition to kindergarten .

Through family and teacher reports, we continue to observe the tremendous potential of the PTHV relational home visit to “jump start” mutually respectful trusting relationships with families.

Staff and family members who participate in fall relational visits and spring informational visits during the 2017-2018 school year will be surveyed in June to assess the impact of the visits on their capacity to support their children's learning.

Interim Report Data on Impact of PTHVs

In the current interim reports submitted by programs in January, data was collected on indicators from national research documenting the significant impact of PTHV on child outcomes. The indicators are increased attendance, decreased behavior problems, and increased parent participation in school

activities.

Given the number of variables involved relative to service provision in PDG, we can't make definitive statements regarding the impact of PTHV based on this data. Further analyses will be conducted to determine what services may have contributed most to rates of attendance, incidence of behavior challenges, and family engagement.

The data collection includes the following observations.

- Sixty-nine percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had better average daily attendance than those who did not receive PTHVs.
- Fifty percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had fewer classroom behavioral interventions than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Fifty percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had fewer referrals for behavioral challenges to the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Sixty-two percent of PDG programs reported that children in families who received PTHVs had fewer referrals to school districts for further evaluation than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Eighty-five percent of PDG programs reported that PDG families who received PTHVs participated more in family classroom activities than those whose families did not receive PTHVs.

We will share this data with UCONN third party evaluators to incorporate into their general study relative to child outcomes in PDG, and perhaps they will be able to offer additional analyses relative to the impact of PTHV.

Birth-Third Grade Continuum

We feel that focusing on targeted activities designed to smooth the transition to kindergarten will be a significant contribution to development of a seamless birth-third grade continuum in PDG communities. Those activities include the following.

- PTHV relational home visits at the beginning of the pre-kindergarten year.
- PTHV informational home visits focusing on kindergarten transition at the end of the pre-kindergarten year.
- PTHV relational home visits prior to the start of the kindergarten year conducted by receiving kindergarten teachers.
- Development and utilization of an online kindergarten transition toolkit for families.
- Co-training of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers in Parent Teacher Home Visits and other high-impact family engagement strategies in December of years 3 and 4.
- Supporting the development of CT's Definition and Framework on Full and Equal Partnerships with Families.

In PDG year 3, the federal Preschool Development-Expansion Grant (PDG) has enabled the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to expand access to high-quality preschool programs for 740 eligible preschoolers in 13 high-need communities throughout the state. The OEC has built on the successful implementation of PDG in years one and two by streamlining, further refining and enhancing key components of high-quality, and making year 3 even more effective and meaningful for eligible children and families throughout the state.

In December 2017, the OEC was awarded an additional \$1,375,000 million PDG Supplemental Award which will build upon existing PDG projects, activities and goals. Supplemental Award funds to focus on the sustainability and replicability of the PDG with the goal of improving and expanding access to

high-quality preschool for more eligible children throughout the state. To accomplish this, the OEC would target supplemental funds towards the infrastructure and systems-level changes necessary to enhance and sustain the high-quality elements and eligibility requirements from CT's PDG. An additional result of some of the proposed infrastructure and systems investments will be that CT begins to integrate our PDG quality and eligibility priorities into the state's broader Early Care and Education (ECE) system.

More specifically, PDG supplemental award funds will build upon PDG successes in four key activities:

- A. Create more long-term sustainability and replicability of the PDG model in PDG communities and to begin to align the state's existing preschool funding infrastructure with PDG priorities
- B. Build upon the state's ability to track, analyze and share data from its Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) to better serve PDG children and families
- C. Enhance PDG evaluation efforts to better understand, improve and tell the story of the impact of PDG on child and family outcomes
- D. Expand on parent and community engagement successes in existing PDG communities



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: CT

PR/Award #: S419B15000

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.*

As of December 1, 2017, Connecticut's PDG was supporting the delivery of high-quality preschool to 721 eligible four-year olds. This represents 97% enrollment of our target 740 eligible children. Of those eligible children enrolled, 59% were in expansion spaces and 41% in improved spaces. Additionally, eligible children were served in 55 classrooms within 37 programs and across 13 communities.

There are several factors that have contributed to the overall enrollment of eligible children served in PDG programs, they include:

- Increasing School Readiness Liaison hours
- Regular monitoring of outreach and recruitment efforts
- Regular monitoring using monthly enrollment reports as well as tracking wait lists
- Helping subrecipients to implement community-coordinated systematic outreach and recruitment plans
- Regular quarterly family engagement meetings and bimonthly School Readiness Liaison meetings in which subrecipients can discuss challenges and/or concerns regarding outreach and recruitment efforts
-

In Connecticut, the 13 subrecipients of the PDG are existing School Readiness Councils which employ a full or part-time School Readiness Liaison to act as a single point of contact for the OEC and to coordinate all of the activities of the Council. Councils are primarily responsible for coordinating Connecticut's School Readiness program, including the distribution of spaces to high-quality programs. PDG funds were used in the first year of implementation to expand the hours of 12 PDG Liaison positions by an average of 20 hours per week in order to meet the compliance requirements of PDG. In years two and three, these positions continue to be supported. Expanding and maintaining the hours of these positions has been critical to enrollment as Liaisons have been key in working with early learning providers on their outreach and recruitment strategies for eligible children, as well as monitoring and providing data to the OEC about outreach and enrollment activities. Additionally, many Liaisons help programs distribute flyers, coordinate enrollment events and sign children up for PDG spaces within the community. Undoubtedly, without the support of Liaisons, enrollment would

suffer across PDG sites.

Another major resource available to assist subrecipients in the enrollment of eligible children is the Family Engagement Project Manager, whose primary work includes supporting PDG communities in deepening family engagement locally.

Hired in May 2015, the Family Engagement project manager supports communities in meeting their outreach and recruitment goals utilizing the PDG Outreach & Recruitment Plan. The plan is designed to be a resource rather than a prescriptive document, and is designed to serve three purposes to:

1. support a community-coordinated, systematic outreach effort with accountability that will enhance Connecticut's capacity to identify, recruit, and serve PDG-eligible children, giving priority to children who are homeless, in foster care, and dual language learners while ensuring enrollment of children with IEPs that reflects their representation in their communities
2. document and monitor the efforts described above
3. share and disseminate promising and proven outreach and recruitment strategies among Connecticut's 13 PDG communities

PDG communities have been encouraged to go where prospective hard-to-reach PDG families are likely to be rather than just distribute flyers. Where flyers are used, teams have been encouraged to distribute them in person, so they can speak to prospective families directly and begin to overcome any hesitancy among families in engaging with community programs like PDG.

Monthly enrollment reports are submitted for review and tracking of enrollment efforts across programs and communities. These reports are submitted electronically a week after the close of each monthly enrollment period. A trend analyses is then created and shared with the Project Manager for Family Engagement to target technical assistance in those communities where enrollment can be improved.

The OEC credits formal outreach and recruitment plans in helping subrecipients overcome barriers they saw in the previous year regarding enrollment of eligible children served. Data shows that in September of 2015, 85% of spaces were filled whereas during the same time period in 2016, 95% were filled and in 2017 97% were filled. Monthly enrollment reports indicate that every month in 2016, from September through December, saw higher rates of enrollment of eligible children when compared to those same months in 2015 --showing that subrecipients were better at targeting eligible children and their families and enrolling them sooner.

Connecticut's PDG enrollment figures also include data on the enrollment of the three priority groups of children outlined in the grant: children who are experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, and/or in foster care. Given the importance of recruiting children from these priority populations, communities have been encouraged to develop relationships with the McKinney-Vento liaisons in their districts as well as Department of Children and Families (DCF) representatives from their regions. As of December 1, 2017, 2% of eligible children enrolled in PDG spaces were experiencing homelessness (down 1% from 2016), 21% were English language learners (down 3% from 2016), and 2% were involved in the child welfare system (up 1% from 2016).

The OEC has not established targets for enrollment of children who are experiencing homelessness, dual language learners or in foster care. That said, in year two the OEC realized that PDG classrooms were serving children in these priority populations in proportions relative to their prevalence throughout the state.

According to a policy brief published by the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet in 2015 regarding families experiencing homelessness with young children, estimates of the number of children experiencing homelessness ages 0-5 in Connecticut range from 3,621 to 12,914. These estimates reveal that the percentage of all four-year olds in the state who are experiencing homelessness is between 2% and 6%. The percentage of PDG children who are experiencing homelessness, as of December 1, 2017 is 3%.

Additionally, according to the CT State Department of Education's Data Bulletin, in school year 2014-2015, 24.5% of children in grades K-1 were English Language Learners. While there is no data that exists specifically on the number of four-year olds in the state who are English Learners, the OEC believes SDE K-1 data is reliable when estimating this figure. As of December 1, 2017, 21% of all children enrolled in PDG were English Language Learners.

In year two, the OEC worked closely with its sister agency, the Department of Children and Families, to better understand the total number of four-year olds who were in foster care across the 13 PDG communities. A close inspection of data revealed that the total number of four-year olds who were in foster care was 42, 54 and 66 in fiscal years 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively --this retrospective data provided a high-level understanding that, when compared with the general population of four-year olds in PDG communities, the pool of eligible children was relatively small (less than 1%). Additionally, data was provided on all children in foster care who would turn four-years-old by January 1, 2017 (Connecticut's cut off age), which would help the OEC better understand the anticipated enrollment in year two. Data revealed only 42 children across 13 communities who would turn four-years-old by January 1, 2017. This data has not changed noticeably in year three and was shared with subrecipients, so they could plan and conduct outreach accordingly with local DCF offices in their region. As of December 1, 2017, 2% of eligible children in PDG classrooms were in foster care.

As indicated previously, the OEC has no required enrollment thresholds for eligible children who are experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, or in foster care. However, using the data outlined above has provided the OEC with some insight as to its relative success in enrolling these vulnerable populations in their naturally occurring proportions within the general population. The OEC will continue to analyze data and future trends to ensure that appropriate outreach and recruitment of eligible children within special at-risk populations remains a priority.

In addition to the priority populations described above, children with IEPs are also included in PDG classrooms as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA). Our target for enrollment of children with disabilities is 8.92%, Connecticut's current percentage of four-year-olds served statewide through Part B, section 619 of IDEA.

The actual enrollment of children with disabilities in PDG classrooms in year three has increased from 6% in 2016 to 7% as of December 1, 2017. While enrollment of eligible children with disabilities has increased by one percentage point, it is still less than our target enrollment of 8.92%.

In the original PDG NOI, states were urged to enroll mixed-age and mixed-income children in PDG classrooms. Connecticut's PDG classrooms have 239 PDG-eligible children who are served in mixed-age and/or mixed-income groups. In APR's for years one and two, the OEC provided data for PDG-eligible children only. In year three, recognizing that PDG-ineligible children receive the same high-quality learning experiences and services in PDG classrooms as PDG-eligible children, we have included 26 PDG-ineligible children in our count of children with IEPs. When both eligible and ineligible children are accounted for, the number of children with IEPs in PDG classrooms increases to 9.85% which exceeds the target enrollment. We believe this figure better represents our capacity to enroll children with disabilities - especially in the context of the benefits of mixed-age and mixed-

income groups.

Overall, the OEC has met its target number and percentage of eligible children served in high-quality preschool programs funded by the grant as outlined in its original application. Year three saw an increase in available PDG spaces for eligible children, and currently provides 740 spaces, up from 712 in year one and 730 in year two. As of December 1, 2017, 97% of those spaces had been filled. The OEC is currently working with those programs that have consistently had one or two spaces unutilized to understand the barriers to enrollment and/or to reallocate spaces. Of course, the OEC will continue to monitor enrollment and work towards implementing best practices with regard to outreach and recruitment of eligible families.

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.

As per Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), the OEC was to establish policies and procedures that ensure the percentage of eligible children with disabilities served by PDG 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, or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Currently, Connecticut's percentage of four-year-olds served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 8.92%, higher than the national average and the target for PDG enrollment in the state. (8.92% of PDG classrooms of 18 children equates to 1.6 children.)

In addition to ensuring that children with IEPs have the opportunity to participate in PDG's high-quality classrooms, priority is also given to children who are experiencing homelessness, dual languages learners, and/or in foster care. By definition these priority groups include children who are at-risk of developmental delay and who may exhibit high-needs. In order to meet the needs of all the children in the classroom, we would like to enroll at least one, but no more than two children with IEPs in each PDG classroom. Doing so would enable us to meet our target of 8.92% children with disabilities in each classroom while successfully addressing the needs of all the children enrolled.

The actual enrollment of children with disabilities in PDG classrooms in year 3 has increased from 6% last year to 7% as of December 1, 2017. While enrollment of children with disabilities has increased by one percentage point, it is still less than our target enrollment of 8.92%.

In the original PDG RFP, states were urged to enroll mixed-age and mixed-income children in PDG classrooms. Connecticut's PDG classrooms have 239 PDG-eligible children who are served in mixed-age and/or mixed-income groups. In APR's for years 1 and 2, the OEC provided data for PDG-eligible children only. In year 3, recognizing that PDG-ineligible children receive the same high-quality learning experiences and services in PDG classrooms as PDG-eligible children, we have included the 172 PDG-ineligible children in PDG classrooms in our count of children with IEPs. (Twenty-six of these ineligible children also have IEPs.) When the two groups are combined, the number of children with IEPs in PDG classrooms increases to 9.85% which exceeds our target enrollment by .93 percentage points. We believe the 9.85% of PDG-eligible and PDG-ineligible children with IEPs better represents our capacity to enroll children with disabilities - especially in the context of the benefits of mixed-age and mixed-

income groups.

The OEC will continue to collaborate with colleagues at the State Department of Education, subrecipients, early learning providers, early childhood special education coordinators, and other school district and community partners to identify, recruit, enroll, and serve children with disabilities in PDG settings.

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

As of December 1, 2017, Connecticut's PDG was supporting the delivery of high-quality preschool to 721 eligible four-year olds in 37 programs and 55 classrooms throughout the state (97% of our target of 740 eligible children). Of those eligible children served, 59% were in expansion spaces and 41% in improved spaces.

As mentioned previously, the OEC uses existing School Readiness Councils to implement PDG at the local level. Each Council is charged with the responsibility of making recommendations on issues related to the state's School Readiness Program. It is imperative that PDG efforts coordinate with this existing state preschool program to affect the overall number and percentage of eligible children served.

Connecticut's PDG has supported the enhancement of 13 School Readiness Liaison positions by increasing the hours of part-time positions. The expansion of these positions has contributed to an increase in the overall number and percent of eligible children enrolled in PDG, given that Liaisons help to coordinate local outreach and recruitment efforts with support from the OEC, as well as identify opportunities in their communities for expansion of high-quality spaces. Additionally, Liaisons monitor enrollment data and report figures to the OEC on an ongoing basis.

Using the existing School Readiness Council infrastructure was critical to increasing the number of eligible children in high-quality programs. All councils follow General Policies (GPs) created by the OEC to ensure quality in early childhood settings as well as outline processes, procedures, rules and guidance when using School Readiness funds. In many instances, these GPs were used for PDG, except in cases where federal regulations were different. For example, GPs outline processes for programs to adhere to regarding licensing, NAEYC accreditation and interim quality measures if programs are in the process of acquiring NAEYC accreditation. Additionally, GPs provide information related to compliance with the Early Childhood Professional Registry, a registry that all state and PDG funded staff must use to verify qualifications and credentials for working in early childhood settings. All but six PDG funded programs received state funds and were familiar with the GPs prior to PDG. Additionally, the six remaining programs are now becoming familiar with the GPs and have since improved the quality of their programs by implementing many of these policies and procedures.

School Readiness Councils are also comprised of many individuals and stakeholders who have been key members of on-the-ground implementation of PDG. Councils consist of parents, teachers, police officers, librarians, school district personnel, health and wellness providers, pediatricians and many others who care about the wellbeing of young children in their community. These individuals were some of the first to be included on PDG family engagement teams and to inform professional learning within PDG. Their input has been invaluable to understanding existing early childhood practices within each community and helping to increase enrollment and quality in PDG and other early childhood programs.

Additionally, Connecticut has made considerable state investment in its high-quality state preschool programs for three and four-year olds, now budgeted at \$11,821,921

In 2016, the OEC officially launched the Early Care and Education component of the state's Early Childhood Information System (ECE-ECIS), this component contains child-level data on all children in state and federally funded preschool programs (Section B5 of the original application). In May 2017, the OEC was granted approval to use PDG funds to support the continued roll-out of the ECE-ECIS batch upload system as well as to incorporate home visiting modules to help track children across our

Family Support and Early Care and Education Divisions. Currently, both the batch upload system and Home Visiting components are in place and more than 32,000 children have been entered into ECIS in the Birth-to-Three, Home Visiting and ECE modules.

While the OEC now has the ability to view child-level demographic data of children enrolled in state and federally funded programs, we do not yet have the capability of analyzing aggregate data trends or data-matching between programs. The OEC was recently awarded approximately \$2 million in state bond funds to develop additional technological features that would allow for data-matching and reporting in order to more meaningfully use the data contained in ECIS. Specifically, funds will be deployed to add components to the transactional data systems (aka a Data Warehouse) and allow OEC users to consolidate reporting and data analysis and provide streamlined aggregate data for all programs housed in ECIS. With this additional investment, the Data Warehouse will help the OEC team analyze trends and answer key policy questions regarding both the PDG program itself and outcomes for PDG eligible children. This will allow the OEC to meaningfully use data to guide resource allocation decisions, accountability and continuous quality improvement (Section A, 4j of the original application). Through this investment, OEC will be able to leverage a successful \$6 million dollar state IT investment in ECIS, improving its ability to support PDG priorities and help to increase the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant by using data to target eligible children in PDG funded communities.

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.*

Connecticut has made a strong commitment to young children in the state for many years. The clearest testament of this commitment came with the creation of the OEC in 2013 by Executive Order, and put into statute in the 2014 legislative session with passage of Public Act 14-39. This cabinet-level agency has complete statutory and budgetary authority over state early childhood programs and services, including state preschool programs, child care subsidies from the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), licensing and the majority of home visiting services as well as the PDG.

Several other legislative acts were passed in recent years to expand access to high-quality preschool including the following:

Public Act 14-39 - An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood, Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education and Concerning Dyslexia and Special Education.

Statutorily establishes the Office of Early Childhood.

- 1) Develop a quality improvement plan.
- 2) Create 1,020 additional School Readiness slots.
- 3) Develop a plan by January 1, 2015 to provide school readiness spaces for all eligible children.
- 4) Develop a plan by June 30, 2015 regarding the kindergarten age.
- 5) Begin a state longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program. OEC will develop a kindergarten entry assessment tool.
- 6) Develop and implement an early childhood information system.
- 7) Develop by December 31, 2015 an accountability plan and by July 1, 2015 a report card.

8) Develop by March 1, 2015 a preschool survey.

9) Implement annual inspections of center- and home-based child care.

10) OEC is designated the lead agency for Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

Public Act 14-41 - An Act Establishing the Smart Start Program.

Requires the Office of Early Childhood to design and administer a competitive grant program to allow for public schools to create or expand preschool opportunities.

Public Act 14-47 - An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures and Revenues for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015.

1) Expansion of 1,020 School Readiness preschool slots in the Priority and Competitive School Districts and Alliance Districts.

2) Rate increase from \$8,346 to \$8,670 for full-day School Readiness programs.

3) 3% rate increase for state-funded Child Day Care Centers.

4) \$1.3 million in funding for quality enhancements and the Accreditation Facilitation Project.

5) In addition to the existing 73 General Fund staff, a total of 40 new positions are added in the budget: 28 staff for licensing to allow for annual child care inspections and increase capacity to process background checks; 4 staff for a quality improvement system; 3 staff for the Smart Start Program; and 2 staff to improve internal capacity.

6) Carry-forward funding will support the following: creation of a statewide universal pre-k plan; local and regional planning grants; and start-up costs for additional preschool classrooms/slots.

Connecticut has made considerable state investment in its high-quality state preschool programs for three and four-year olds, now budgeted at \$11,821,921 million in state Fiscal Year 2017. The state has increased the number of state preschool program spaces seven times since State Fiscal Year 2007. In the most recent expansion for FY 2015, the Governor proposed and the legislature approved, expanding state preschool programs by 1,020 spaces. That increase brought the Fiscal Year 2016 total preschool spaces to 14,852 (including those spaces that are used as wrap-around or extended day). In FY 17, a slight increase in spaces brought the total preschool spaces to 14,904 and in FY 18 another slight bump brought Connecticut's total preschool spaces to 15,134. Connecticut's ability to increase state preschool spaces has been limited by the state budget; however, the governor's office remains committed to supporting quality early childhood education and has limited rescissions wherever possible in order to maintain the state's existing high-quality preschool programs.

The above commitments and investments have helped the OEC to secure the PDG to increase 430 high-quality preschool spaces and improve 282 existing preschool spaces for eligible four-year olds in year one. As of year three, 28 additional PDG spaces were added, nine expansion and 19 improved, bringing total PDG expansion spaces to 439 and improved spaces to 301. Based on the estimated number of four year olds served in Connecticut's state preschool program, PDG has been able to create 4.3% more preschool spaces to serve eligible four-year olds in FY 18.

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.

- *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 school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.*
 - *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.*

In 2013 Connecticut joined a multi-state consortium supported by federal funds, to develop a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), aligned to Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards, addressing all essential domains of school readiness. The new KEA will be administered by trained teachers in the first eight weeks of school. While Connecticut's current Kindergarten Entry Inventory relies solely upon teacher's global ratings, the new instrument will use multiple methods of assessment, including selected-response items, performance tasks and observational rubrics that are consistent with nationally recognized technical standards, research and best practices to assess all children upon entry to Kindergarten.

The OEC is working in partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to coordinate implementation of the new KEA, which will be called a Revised Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI).

-Maintain administration of KEI data collection

- Include KEI data in the State Longitudinal Data System
- Provide technical assistance to school districts on KEI administration and any modifications
- Provide periodic recalibration and training on KEI administration

As the revised KEI is still being developed, CSDE has not yet determined with OEC how and when data will be reported. It is important to note that Connecticut's KEI will not be designed as a tool for teacher evaluation, program evaluation, or to determine an individual child's eligibility for kindergarten.

Originally, Connecticut planned to initiate a field test of the KEI in 2015, with census administration in 2016.

As described in year 1, the OEC has partnered with the University of Connecticut (UCONN) Neag School of Education, who is conducting the third-party evaluation of PDG, to determine the best methods of student assessment until details of the revised KEI census implementation have been solidified. The UCONN research team has undertaken several steps and enacted several processes to collect student-level data and support the data collection and analysis efforts to determine kindergarten readiness of year 2 children and future PDG cohorts.

The data collection team at UCONN worked to assess preschool students at PDG programs in Fall 2016 (225 students assessed), Spring 2017 (274 students assessed), and Fall 2017 (310 students assessed). Students were assessed on 6 achievement measures from the Woodcock-Johnson IV: Picture Vocabulary and Oral Comprehension from the WJ-IV (Oral Language), and Letter-Word Identification, Applied Problems, Calculation, and Word Attack from the WJ-IV Achievement.

Analysis of the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 data collections allowed us to compare the scores at both points in time for 213 individual students across 12 of the 13 communities that are recipients of PDG funds. Results from repeated measure of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed a statistically significant increase in scores between Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 in the areas of Oral Comprehension, Mathematics Cluster, and Calculation. There were also suggestive, though not statistically significant positive changes in mean scores on the Oral Language Cluster, Applied Problems, and Word Attack. Conducting analysis at the community level, separately by community, is not advisable since at least half of the communities had relatively few students assessed. Small pools of assessed students reflect both the size of the programs in those communities, as well as the response rate from families whose children are enrolled in programs in those communities.

Additional analyses that measure differences in learning by controlling for fall scores, age, community of program, race and gender, and continuous measures of family income also demonstrate statistically significant changes in learning across the school year. Testing whether change across the school year is higher among students in PDG funded spaces has thus far yielded inconclusive results. Using only one cohort of students the estimates of differences in outcome change for students who were, and were not, funded by PDG funds, are imprecise. However, the point estimates are suggestive of a positive difference for some outcomes.

The University of Connecticut is classified as a research intensive university with a strong national and international reputation. In particular, the Neag School of Education is ranked in the top 35 schools of education nationally and is known for having a strong research infrastructure and producing high-quality research. Shaun M. Dougherty (PI) is an assistant professor of education policy and leadership with expertise in causal program evaluation and estimating the effects of educational interventions and policies with an eye towards improving equity in educational outcomes. His current work involves using state and large-district administrative longitudinal data sets to answer key education policy

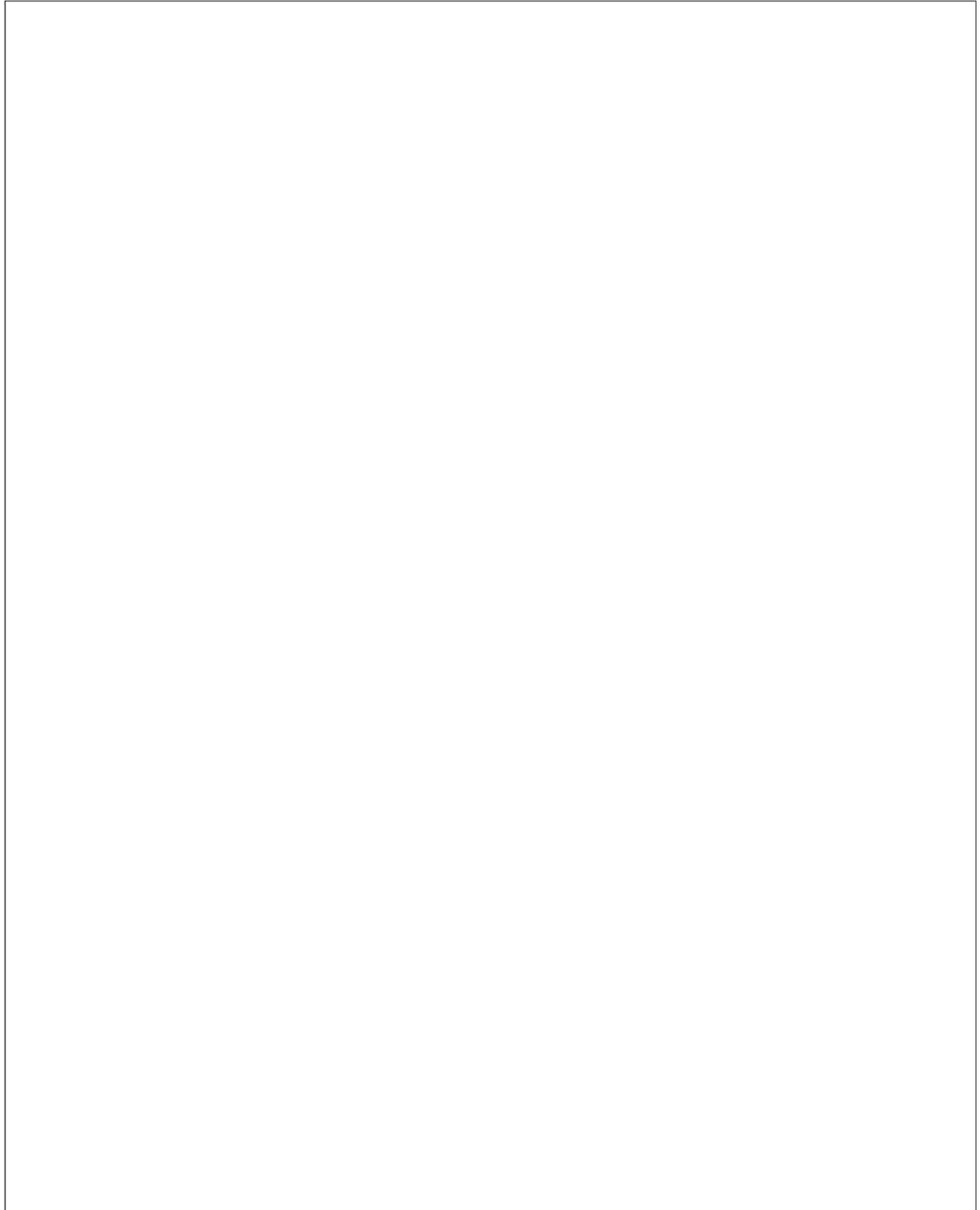
questions for policy makers and practitioners.

As outlined above, the state's revised Kindergarten Entrance Assessment has not yet been administered statewide, leaving the existing evaluation without data on the actual kindergarten readiness of PDG eligible children. To rectify this, the OEC will supplement the existing UCONN research team with complementary expertise, extending the scope of the current PDG evaluation to examine the effects in elementary grades and family outcomes that support children, and developing a way to sustain evaluation of the PDG model into the future with state dollars.

In order to enhance the existing evaluation, PDG supplemental funds will be used to collaborate with the Partnership for Early Education Research (PEER), based at the Yale School of Medicine. PEER is a research-practice partnership involving early childhood stakeholders across three CT communities, along with the OEC, UCONN and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Funds will be used to support a small research team at PEER to examine the association of PDG enrollment with child outcomes in grades K, 1 and 2, beginning with the first cohort of PDG children in school year 2015-2016.

For Preschool Development Grants

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.



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.

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.

Connecticut plans to use no more than five percent of the funds received over the grant period for state preschool program quality infrastructure. It will use these funds in conjunction with existing state funds to build a statewide high-quality preschool infrastructure.

Since the OEC's initial application, no more than five percent of the funds received over the grant period have been used for state preschool program infrastructure. Funds for infrastructure have been used in the following ways and directly address activities (c), (d), (i), (f) and (j) described in Section (C) (1)(a-k) of the NIA:

- Employing a Data Accountability Project Manager
- Employing a Family Engagement Project Manager
- Enhancing the quality of child-teacher interactions through use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Conducting a third-party evaluation
- Introducing the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project
- Attending PDG meetings and Peer Exchanges to learn best practices and share information

In May of 2015, the OEC hired two full-time Project Managers

The OEC has also hired a full-time Family Engagement Project Manager to deepen local family engagement practices by working with subrecipients to design meaningful, culturally appropriate family engagement approaches and practices that meet their individual needs. This position also works with subrecipients to identify strategies and promising practices around outreach and recruitment of eligible children, issues of inclusion and serving children with disabilities and supporting a seamless birth-to-third grade continuum.

Part of the 5% allowable funds for infrastructure has also been used to enhance the quality of child-teacher interactions through the use of the CLASS. The CLASS tool measures adult-child relationships in three domains and 10 dimensions to help teachers and classroom staff identify areas of strength and areas of improvement as they support children's learning. In year one, PDG

funds were used to train observers in PDG communities in use of the CLASS instrument as well as t
myTeachstone myTeachstone

As of February 28, 2018, 136 pre and post CLASS observations had been completed using the online tool. While the initial thinking was that the myTeachstone online application would be helpful in collecting and sharing CLASS data, several barriers have been realized since its implementation.

The first is that the system must be manually updated whenever there are changes to classroom staff being observed. In most instances, staff changes are not known until CLASS observers log into the system to conduct their observations and do not find the correct staff names listed in the system. The OEC is currently setting up protocols to update the system just before the time period CLASS observations are conducted to ensure all staff are in the system before observations occur.

Additionally, due to the above mentioned staff changes, CLASS scores and growth cannot be tracked overtime as post-scores of one individual cannot be compared with pre-scores of another individual. The OEC is currently trying to decipher which staff have been consistent over time in PDG classrooms to provide richer data on growth within CLASS domains, this information will be available in the summer of 2018.

Overall however, regardless of the individual, CLASS observations continue to reveal that most low-range designations are within the Concept Development dimension, which relates to “how teachers use instructional discussions and activities to promote student's higher-order thinking skills in contrast to a focus on rote instruction.” This is consistent with national CLASS scores rankings.

It is important to note that the OEC is not coaching specifically to increase CLASS scores, but rather uses CLASS to explore the meaning of the actual dimensions as they relate to teacher practice. For example: In providing program support, coaches work within the Instructional Support domain of the CLASS tool to highlight each indicator and embed the structures of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling into individual professional development plans and in relation to the priority area goal that was selected (Promoting social/emotional development, addressing special education, response to intervention, dual language learning, CT ELDS). This is done regardless of how high or low a CLASS score is within the Instructional Support domain.

Individualized coaching that integrates CLASS has also proven to be difficult given the staff turnover that occurred within PDG classrooms. Coaches and consultants have noted that the delivery of high-quality professional development that builds on year-over-year learning has not gone according to the original plan in light of having to ‘start over’ as new teachers are assigned to PDG classrooms. The OEC is currently compiling data on teacher turnover in PDG classrooms --this information will be available in summer 2018.

As CLASS scores are not the focus on coaching, the OEC does not set targets in relation to CLASS scores nor does the state use the scores to monitor classrooms. Rather, they are used as just one piece of information available to coaches and teachers to improve their practice as it relates to one of the professional learning content areas outlined in the OEC's original application: CT Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Social emotional development, Response to Intervention and Special Education Referral.

Infrastructure funds were used to train staff to conduct Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHVs) with PDG families. PTHVs promote a relational home visit model that “jump starts” relationships between families and teachers by focusing on what families have to say about their hopes and dreams for their children rather than on delivery of program information. National research shows that PTHVs can dramatically improve preschool quality indicators like attendance, behavior, and family engagement.

In year 3, 189 relational PTHVs were conducted at the beginning of the school year. Informational PTHVs focusing on the transition to kindergarten will be conducted in the spring. And “receiving” kindergarten teachers will conduct relational PTHVs with families of PDG children transitioning to kindergarten.

Staff and family members who participate in fall relational and spring informational visits in year 3 will be surveyed in June to assess the impact of the visits on their capacity to support their children's learning. The surveys will be repeated in June of PDG year 4. Results of both surveys will be shared in subsequent APRs.

In January 2018 Interim Reports, we collected data on PTHV quality indicators - improved attendance, decreased behavior problems, and increased family engagement.

Given the number of variables relative to service provision in PDG, we can't make definitive statements regarding the impact of PTHV based on this data. However, further analysis may determine what services have contributed most to improved rates of attendance, decreased behavior challenges, and increased family engagement.

The data analysis includes the following observations.

- Sixty-nine percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had better average daily attendance than those who did not receive PTHVs.
- Fifty percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had fewer classroom behavioral interventions than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Sixty-two percent of PDG programs reported that children in families who received PTHVs had fewer referrals to school districts for further evaluation than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Eighty-five percent of PDG programs reported that PDG families who received PTHVs participated more in family classroom activities than those whose families did not receive PTHVs.

Additionally, grants funds have allowed the OEC to partner with the University of Connecticut (UConn) Neag School of Education, to conduct the third-party evaluation and support the data collection and analysis efforts of the PDG, including student assessments on kindergarten readiness.

Funds have also been used to allow OEC staff, subrecipients and others to attend PDG related meetings and peer exchanges. The OEC has taken full advantage of the technical assistance provided by entities that has helped ensure best practices, information and lessons learned are shared with other states to improve and ensure quality within the PDG program.

2.

*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***

- 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.

Connecticut's ambitious and achievable plan, funded by the federal Preschool Development Grant, was built on the OEC's existing state preschool infrastructure. PDG has allowed Connecticut to expand access to high-quality state preschool programs and improve the quality of existing State Preschool Programs in 13 high-need communities throughout the state for 712 eligible preschoolers in year one, and 730 in year two and 740 in year three. In Year one, 430 of the total 712 total spaces were committed to expanding new preschool program spaces that met the definition of high-quality as defined by the grant. In years two and three, that number slightly increased to 439.

According to recent data compiled via PDG Interim Reports, all 37 PDG early learning sites reported that all structural elements of high-quality defined in the grant were fully-operational in every PDG classroom within their site.

All PDG classrooms, including those with expansion spaces, are meeting the high-quality structural elements defined in the grant including the state-funded mandate of a class size of no more than 18, as well as a child-to-staff ratio of no more than 9:1. Additionally, all PDG funded classrooms are in either school-day, school year programs (6-hour days), or full-day, full-year programs (10-hour days).

All programs reported compensating instructional staff with salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff as well as staff meeting the high qualifications. In September 2017 however, the OEC issued four Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) related to issues of noncompliance with regard to high-staff qualifications. After review of data in the Early Childhood Professional Registry, four classrooms had not designated a Qualified Staff Member (QSM) in a PDG classroom that met the PDG requirements for high staff qualifications. CAPs were issued and all issues were quickly resolved by the submission of additional documentation to the Early Childhood Registry (including one expired teacher certification and a transcript with a degree conferral date). In one instance, the QSM did not have a bachelor's degree and was replaced by another teacher in the program that met the qualification requirements. In one instance, PDG funds were withheld for several months until the program became compliant in one classroom that also received a CAP in 2016. The issue was resolved in February 2018 and funds have since been released.

Each PDG program and classroom also participates in evidence-based health and safety standards as measured by either OEC's licensing division, NAEYC accreditation and/or ECERS assessments. Every PDG funded early learning provider must be NAEYC accredited, or attain accreditation within three years of being funded. Interim measures include an ECERS rating within the classroom at least once per year. 25 of 37 PDG funded programs are NAEYC accredited or Head Start approved --of the 12 not accredited, all are on track to receive accreditation by June 30, 2018 in line with the allowable three-year window.

Every PDG program site also reported that on-site comprehensive services have been implemented and are accessible to all eligible children and their families. As an example, 59% of programs reported that children are screened within 45-days of program enrollment. 19% reported screening children within 30 days and another 7% reported screening within 60 days. The remaining 15% reported screening more than once, regularly and periodically. 50% of programs used the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) or ASQ-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE) tool, 15% use the Brigance, 11% use the Early Screening Inventory Revised (ESI-R), and the remaining 24% use a variety of screening tools including the Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment Program (DECA), the

Another comprehensive service common across PDG programs is their participation in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program to provide nutritious meals and snacks for children. Many programs also reported that PDG funds have allowed them to introduce or enhance this structural element by increasing a nutritionist position as well as launching various food and physical fitness activities for children and families in year one, which have continued into year two. Many programs, too, have been able to hire additional case managers, social workers or family engagement outreach workers to provide referrals and linkages to families as well as coordinate onsite services such as SNAP.

A key comprehensive service delivered in each PDG classroom is high-quality professional development in the form of job-embedded coaching, professional learning communities and/or topical training when needed focusing on four key areas: CT Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Social Emotional Development, Response to Intervention and Special Education Referral. This high-quality professional development ensures that developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula and learning environments are present and aligned with the Connecticut ELDS. The high-quality professional learning model was designed specifically for the PDG and is delivered and evaluated based on adult learning theories and current research and practices. It tests a unique professional learning delivery model, supported by best practices and peer-reviewed literature on teacher effectiveness, that includes highly individualized coaching and consultation as the primary medium to influence knowledge, understanding and practices within a classroom as opposed to the 'cookie-cutter' large group trainings which are more commonly utilized. The design, delivery, and assessment of the high-quality professional learning are rooted in core competencies and delivered by approved facilitators and coaches that hold the competencies needed to address adult learning needs.

In year three, the high-quality professional development continues to be delivered, but is being altered slightly to include leadership elements for the purposes of sustainability once the grant ends. Much of the professional learning has focused on one-on-one coaching and learning at the teacher level. Planning has begun to incorporate leadership elements into the professional learning to include directors and/or build up the leadership skills of teachers to carry on the work once coaches are no longer available at the site-level.

Additionally, the PDG professional development model is also being reflected in some of the larger QRIS work for the state, in particular, the model is informing state-wide professional development system of delivery for QRIS technical assistance

Also available at the program level are enhanced opportunities to engage families. PDG family engagement community teams have been established in all 13 communities. The teams meet on a quarterly basis to reflect on their practices, review promising strategies and frameworks, and develop their own plans for deepening family engagement locally.

As described previously, these teams have identified the Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships as the compass to guide their work in employing meaningful, culturally appropriate strategies to deepen their family engagement efforts. The Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement Toolkit describes the "roadmap" process for developing community-specific family engagement plans. The Parent Teacher Home Visits Model (PTHV) promotes the relational home visit that "jump starts" the all-important relationships fundamental to high-quality high-impact family engagement. The work to deepen family engagement begins where communities are, identifies where they want to be, and determines how they want to get there.

Prior to PDG, only 18% of programs in PDG's 13 communities used an evidenced-based family engagement framework to inform their ongoing family engagement efforts. Use of the Dual Capacity Building Framework provides the opportunity for PDG programs to deepen their family engagement efforts by ensuring they are relational, build the capacity of both teachers *and*

Prior to PDG, only 29% of PDG programs offered home visiting to families. While all 13 communities conducted PTHVs in year 2, 12 of 13 communities are offering PTHVs in year 3. (The community not participating in year 3 will be offered the opportunity to participate again in year 4.) PTHV stipulates that home visiting be voluntary for both program staff and families. PTHV's relational home visit can be transformative for families and staff, given staff visits families in their homes with no agenda other than to hear from families about their hopes and dreams for their children. PTHV offers programs like Head Start and Family Resource Centers, who already do home visits, an additional tool in their home visiting toolbox

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- Eighty-five percent of PDG programs reported that PDG families who received PTHVs participated more in family classroom activities than those whose families did not receive PTHVs.

We will share this data with UCONN third party evaluators to incorporate into their evaluation of child outcomes in PDG, and perhaps they will be able to offer additional analysis relative to the impact of PTHVs.

We will collect comparable data in the January 2019 Interim Reports for year 4 and report that data in the 2019 APR.

Additionally, all sites are licensed by the state of Connecticut and receive an annual, unannounced visit from licensing professionals to inspect their health and safety standards including staff ratios and class sizes.

A PDG monitoring tool was also developed for use in years three and four of the PDG. Locally, these tools are used by liaisons to monitor the high-quality elements and every site receives a visit annually and no later than April of the program year. Tools are then submitted to the OEC at random to be reviewed and follow up is done as necessary to ensure all elements are being implemented.

Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

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

As described in Connecticut's application, per-child costs were determined for two main space types:

- Six-hour, school-day, school-year spaces
- Ten-hour, full-day, year-round spaces

Both spaces were calculated as a percentage increase to existing state preschool program rates. Rates for both expansion and improved spaces are approximately 2.1 times the state preschool program rates to support the high-quality elements described in the grant. All costs are based on the state-funded teacher-child ratio of 9:1, with no more than 18 children per classroom.

In order to build a per child rate, the OEC first determined what elements were needed to promote a high-quality preschool classroom. These elements included staff, administration and oversight, comprehensive services, professional development, transportation and physical space.

Staff costs include head teachers as well as assistant teachers, floaters and even substitutes. Salary calculations were based on data and reports provided by the Connecticut Department of Education, the OEC, the Department of Labor and directly reported by subrecipients. Teacher salaries were calculated using local public school K-12 Teacher data. The average salary included for public school teachers was \$52,419, per salary ranges reported by the Subgrantees in their school districts. According to the State Department of Education's report "2012-13 Average Teacher Salary for New Teachers Working Full-time, by Degree Level - Bachelor's," starting salaries for new teachers ranged from \$40,883 to 46,483, with a statewide average of \$44,743.

Benefits were calculated at 28% which, after research and discussion with subrecipients, was typical of communities included in the grant. All program administration costs were budgeted low to minimize local administration costs as stipulated in Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the NIA.

Comprehensive service cost estimates included additional staff and consultants at percentages ranging from 5% to 20% of full-time equivalents (FTE) for PDG classrooms. Comprehensive service costs also included those costs stipulated by providers such as the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP), to provide early childhood mental health consultation to each PDG classroom. Also included in the cost per child rate were education consultants, health consultants, social workers, family outreach workers, coordinator/assessment staff and nutritionists.

The following expenses were calculated for 10-hour, full-day/full-year costs, all calculations include 28% benefits:

Teacher: 100%

Assistant Teacher: 138% FTE at \$50,600

Floater: 138% FTE at \$36,520
 Administration, Fiscal & Audit: 8% FTE at \$8,995
 Clerical & Data Collection: 20% FTE at \$12,811
 Coordinator/evaluator/monitor: 20% FTE at \$16,640
 Education Specialist: 15% FTE at \$16,320
 Health/Mental Health/ECCP: 5% FTE and 18% FTE at \$19,136
 Social Services/Family Coordinator: 20% FTE
 Outreach Worker/Parent Activities: 20% FTE at \$7,168
 Nutritionist: 8% FTE at \$7,488
 Meals & Snacks: 100% at \$27,855
 Classroom Instruction & Assessment: 100% FTE at \$6,750
 Professional Development: 100% FTE at \$3,750
 Substitutes: 100% FTE
 Transportation: 100% FTE at \$1,350
 Travel: 100% FTE at \$660
 Rent: 100% FTE at \$22,680
 Utilities: 100% FTE at \$2,400
 Custodian/Security: 8% FTE at \$2,688
 Playground Space: 100% FTE at \$4,536
Cost per classroom: \$328,370
Cost per child: \$18,243
Rate per child: \$18,200

The following expenses were calculated for 6-hour, school-day/school-year costs, all calculations include 28% benefits:

Teacher: 100% FTE at \$67,096
 Assistant Teacher: 138% FTE at \$36,800
 Floater : 138% FTE at \$18,592
 Administration, Fiscal & Audit: 8% FTE at \$5,996
 Clerical & Data Collection: 20% FTE at \$9,609
 Coordinator/evaluator/monitor: 20% FTE at \$12,480
 Education Specialist: 15% FTE at \$8,704
 Health/Mental Health/ECCP: 5% FTE and 18% FTE at \$19,136
 Social Services/Family Coordinator: 20% FTE at \$10,301
 Outreach Worker/Parent Activities: 20% FTE at \$7,168
 Nutritionist: 8% FTE at \$4,992
 Meals & Snacks: 100% FTE at \$17,552
 Classroom Instruction & Assessment: 100% FTE at \$6,750
 Professional Development: 100% FTE at \$3,000
 Substitutes: 100% FTE at \$2,100
 Transportation: 100% FTE at \$1,350
 Travel: 100% FTE at \$660
 Rent: 100% FTE at \$18,900
 Utilities: 100% FTE at \$2,000
 Custodian/Security: 8% FTE at \$4,480
 Playground Space: 100% FTE at \$3,780
Cost per classroom: \$261,446
Cost per child: \$14,425*
Rate per child: \$12,800

*School-year rates were reduced by the anticipated in-kind contribution in school district locations of \$1,725 per space supporting line items such as rent, utilities, playground space and custodial and security.

In addition to the per space rate, Connecticut proposed in its application to significantly increase the opportunity to improve outcomes for children by providing individualized training, professional development and coaching as described earlier in this APR. These rates were calculated in partnership with EASTCONN and totaled \$5,000 per classroom and \$8,000 per community.

Start-up funds for expansion classrooms were also included in the per child cost at a rate of \$25,000 per expansion classroom in year one only. Local infrastructure support in the form of increasing the hours of local School Readiness Liaisons was also included and differed based on the current salaries and increased hours of each Liaison position --on average the position was increased 17 hours per week.

After all expenses were calculated, target costs per child included:

- Expansion, 6-hour day, school-year: \$12,800
- Expansion, 10-hour day, year-round: \$18,200
- Improved, part-day to 6-hour-day, school-year: \$8,300
- Improved, existing 6-hour-day, school-year: \$6,800
- Improved, existing 10-hour-day, year-round: \$9,530

Total average costs per space type:

- Expansion Average Rate per Space: \$16,194
- Improved Average Rate per Space: \$9,710

Since its originally proposed application, target rates have not changed and no substantive changes are planned for years three and four.

3.

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

The OEC continues to utilize effective strategies to ensure collaboration with each sub-recipient to successfully implement PDG. Key strategies include:

- two full-time staff to manage relationships specific to PDG
- bimonthly meetings with subrecipients to review PDG implementation, successes, and challenges
- regular phone calls with subrecipients to check on individual progress
- an open-door policy that encourages subrecipients to contact OEC staff at any time to discuss successes or concerns related to PDG
- quarterly family engagement community team meetings
- MOUs outlining roles and responsibilities of both subrecipients and OEC
- monitoring protocols to ensure accountability of both subrecipients and OEC

Collaboration and partnerships between OEC and subrecipients is founded on the existing school readiness council infrastructure set forth by the state both in statute and in written policies and guidance. Specifically for PDG, OEC has built on this infrastructure and created MOUs that specify the roles, responsibilities, goals, and objectives of PDG. The MOU and existing guidance and policies include items and assurances for both the state and subrecipients. When a grant of this scale is implemented, MOUs are critical resources to ensure strong collaboration so that each entity is aware of, and held accountable for, its role in successful implementation.

PDG has augmented program monitoring, accountability, and evaluation of PDG programs by increasing the capacity of the school readiness liaisons (SRLs). The SRLs continue to serve as the central points of contact between subrecipients and OEC. Enhancing these positions has facilitated a stronger focus on collaboration to ensure program quality and accountability, standards implementation, program evaluation, and financial management. In collaboration with the two project managers, school readiness liaisons monitor local progress towards goals outlined in the grant.

Professional program staff within OEC have a long-standing history of working collaboratively with the school readiness councils that serve as PDG subrecipients. OEC, school readiness councils, and early learning providers, each have proven track records working together to provide high-quality services that meet the needs of our youngest learners. OEC's long-term relationships with the councils and community early learning providers and its history of supporting quality preschool spaces in Connecticut have been invaluable in ensuring the successful planning, development, and implementation of PDG during years 1, 2, and 3.

As noted previously, OEC hired two full-time staff members to manage the day-to-day activities of PDG. The project manager for data and accountability works solely on issues related to PDG and coordinates monitoring, payments, supervision, data collection, accountability, and federal reporting. To ensure strong partnerships, the project manager for data and accountability meets with subrecipients regularly to discuss local monitoring efforts as well as to receive input and guidance on documents created by OEC to support compliance with PDG requirements.

The project manager for family and community engagement collaborates with PDG pre-k providers, school readiness liaisons, and families in implementation of PDG's family engagement quarterly meeting process. Together these stakeholders review promising strategies and frameworks and

develop community roadmaps (plans) to deepen family engagement.

The project manager for family and community engagement also supports PDG communities in recruiting eligible children including children with disabilities and children who are experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, and/or in foster care. Recruitment strategies have been formalized in PDG's Outreach and Recruitment Plan utilized by communities to implement and document their recruitment efforts.

Together, the project managers for data and accountability and family and community engagement have been effective in enhancing and extending existing relationships with subrecipients, and both have open door policies which have allowed subrecipients to freely discuss their successes, challenges, and concerns regarding PDG. This open door policy has been critical in building the mutually respectful trusting relationships necessary to successful collaboration between OEC and subrecipients. This successful collaboration allows OEC and subrecipients to address issues in real-time and overcome barriers to high-quality implementation.

The OEC and its partners believe strong collaboration is key to successful implementation of PDG and will continue to strongly support efforts that exemplify quality and partnership to better serve children and families.



4.

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).

OEC is committed to supporting a seamless birth through third grade continuum *through across* PDG's family engagement efforts including Parent Teacher Home Visits and a focus on the transition to kindergarten will strengthen the birth to third grade continuum across PDG communities and align with other OEC initiatives that similarly strengthen the continuum on a statewide basis.

Activities include the following.

- focusing on developing mutually respectful trusting relationships between families and teachers, home and school that will achieve the first milestone in the developmental process of family engagement for PDG families
- initiating those relationships with the Parent Teacher Home Visit (PTHV) relational visits in the fall to begin to work with families as full and equal partners in their children's education
- strengthening those relationships with Parent Teacher Home Visit informational visits
- transitioning those relationships to kindergarten with PTHV relational visits provided by the receiving kindergarten teachers to PDG families in the summer prior to entry to kindergarten
- providing opportunities for preschool and kindergarten teachers to support and learn from each other through co-trainings to include:
 - PTHV training
 - PDG December Family Engagement Strategy Sessions during years 3 and 4
- identifying ongoing opportunities for interaction and co-training that include PDG pre-k and

kindergarten teachers who will be receiving PDG children transitioning to kindergarten

- supporting development, piloting, and implementation of an online toolkit for transition to kindergarten to be accessed on an independent web site that can be directly promoted to families
- ongoing promotion of Ready4K! a free texting program designed for families with pre-k children that shows families how to use their regular routines and activities to support their children's kindergarten readiness. Ready4K! is a high-impact family engagement strategy with capacity to reach all families, utilizing a preferred mode of communication. Ready4K! provides families, whose schedules make visits to school rare, a way to engage as co-educators of their children on their own time and accommodating their specific schedules.

Update on Implementation of Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHVs)

The first round of relational PTHVs for year 3 were conducted at the beginning of the school year. There were 189 relational home visits conducted in Bridgeport, Derby-Seymour, East Haven, Griswold, Groton, Hamden, Killingly, Manchester, Torrington, and Vernon. With 65 home visits, Torrington was the community with the most visits. Monica Valente from Torrington was the teacher who conducted the most home visits

During year three, kindergarten teachers in PDG communities were invited to participate in PTHV training and to conduct relational home visits with incoming PDG children transitioning to kindergarten. Fifteen kindergarten teachers were trained, and seven of those trained conducted 24 relational home visits prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

Staff and family members who participated in fall relational visits and spring informational visits during the 2017-2018 school year will be surveyed in June to assess the impact of the visits on their capacity to support their children's learning.

Interim Report Data on Impact of PTHVs

January Interim Reports collected data on indicators from the national research documenting the significant impact of PTHV on child outcomes. Indicators are increased attendance, decreased behavior problems, and increased parent participation in school activities.

Given the number of variables involved relative to service provision in PDG, we can't make definitive statements regarding the impact of PTHV based on this data. Further analyses will be conducted to determine what services may have contributed most to rates of attendance, behavior challenges, and engagement.

The data analysis includes the following observations.

- Sixty-nine percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had better average daily attendance than those who did not receive PTHVs.
- Fifty percent of PDG programs reported that PDG children in families who received PTHVs had fewer classroom behavioral interventions than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Sixty-two percent of PDG programs reported that children in families who received PTHVs had fewer referrals to school districts for further evaluation than children in families who did not receive PTHVs.
- Eighty-five percent of PDG programs reported that PDG families who received PTHVs participated more in family classroom activities than those whose families did not receive

PTHVs.

We will share this data with UCONN third party evaluators to incorporate into their general study relative to child outcomes in PDG, and perhaps they will be able to offer additional analyses relative to the impact of PTHV.

Update on December Family Engagement Strategy Sessions

Co-training of pre-k and kindergarten teachers in PDG communities in high-impact family engagement strategies occurred in December when 2.5 hour trainings on four different strategies were offered as part of the PDG's quarterly meeting process.

1. Parent Camp, the “unconference” that levels the playing field for teachers and families to learn together in the best interest of their children presented by the Anne Mead, the Executive Director of the Family and Community Engagement Center in the Danbury Public Schools.
2. Family Engagement Through Multiple Lenses, presented by three school districts implementing family engagement grants from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; Veronica Marion from East Hartford Schools, Latasha Turnquest from Manchester Public Schools, and Cynthia Zingler from Vernon Public Schools.
3. Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors Framework - when protective factors are strong, families thrive presented by Suzanne Clement, Instructional Coach, EastConn.
4. Family Engagement in a Formative Assessment Process - families as full partners in their children's learning and development beginning with formative assessment presented by Michelle Levy, Educational Consultant at OEC.

Nearly 100 PDG community team members attended the sessions. Seven kindergarten teachers and three principals participated. (Kindergarten teachers represented 9% of participants overall.) The kindergarten teachers and principals made enthusiastic comments regarding the quality of the sessions, so we anticipate our kindergarten participants in co-training will increase in year 4.

One hundred percent of the feedback forms collected indicated participants were satisfied with the trainings. Only 31% offered any suggestions at all for improvement. The most prevalent suggestion was “more!”

- The following are representative quotes from the feedback forms.
 - “I'm thinking about how we might implement a Family Camp in our district, perhaps in partnership with our early childhood schools' pre-k & pre-k-1 schools.”
 - “I became aware of the importance of recognizing our biases and how we came to have them
 - “I like the idea of *strengthening* families as opposed to *fixing* them. I made note of strengthening families by getting parents involved with other parents in the classroom.”

Participants will be surveyed in June to determine how many of them took action steps relative to family engagement inspired by the December trainings and to collect ideas for desired topics for the December family engagement strategy sessions in year 4.

Progress Re: the Online Toolkit for Transition to Kindergarten

OEC and PDG are collaborating to design “Hello Kindergarten!” an online toolkit for transition to

kindergarten.

Given PDG's emphasis on reaching families who are particularly challenged by life circumstances and/or have a general resistance to institutions and social services, we have proceeded with development of a simple web site that will be accessible, intuitive, and user-friendly. Families will view a visually interesting and colorful menu of resources they can access with one click and print with another. Content will be direct and simple, featuring tips, checklists, books, and action steps.

Professional development for teachers will be designed to support use of the toolkit.

The design for the web site is complete and is currently being tweaked in response to the first round of feedback. The resources for the site have been collected, and staff are currently writing the verbiage for the various topics that will be featured. The work will be shared with and feedback collected from PDG and SDE staff and PDG family engagement community teams in the spring.

UCONN PK-3 Leadership Program

The UCONN PK-3 Leadership Program was developed in cooperation with the UCONN Neag School of Education and OEC. To develop collective responsibility and advocacy for leading PK-3, central office leaders, private preschool leaders, and school and teacher leaders are encouraged to participate. To ensure optimal learning, the cohort size is limited to twenty. The program offers three, thirty-hour modules

PDG participating communities have been represented in each of the three cohorts to-date, and this year is no exception. The current fourth cohort has representation from Bridgeport and Wolcott.

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 **Table 7(a)** Year 3 Target Year 3 Actual*

In year three, as of December 1, 2017, match funds totaled \$2,118,962. This match is achieved through support of the state's early care and education infrastructure including additional licensing staff hired for the OEC's Child Care and Licensing Division and support of the implementation of ECE-ECIS. Additionally, in order to promote integration of eligible children in economically diverse and inclusive settings, the OEC has also contributed state quality enhancement funds to support non-eligible children in PDG classrooms due to age or income ineligibility. Also included in the state's match was support provided to existing state preschool spaces improved by PDG.

During year one of the PDG, eight licensing staff were hired for the OEC Child Care and Licensing Division. These licensing staff help to ensure more regular visits to inspect the health and safety standards of PDG and other state preschool classrooms. These positions are part of the state match and were hired at an annual average salary of \$63,000 plus 80% benefits. In year one, \$1,182,126 was expended on these positions. In year two, \$964,454 was spent on supporting these positions and in year three and as of December 31, 2017 \$493,878 was expended on these positions.

The ECE-ECIS also supports the infrastructure for high-quality early care and education. State funding for ECE-ECIS in year 1 totaled \$1,720,475, higher than the estimated \$1,025,000 in year one. This was due to the added time spent on building out the system as well as fixing technical glitches that delayed its launch. In year 2, 1,698,785 had been contributed towards the OEC's match through ECE-ECIS and as of December 31, 2017 \$337,046 has been expended.

Additional matching funds include state supported preschool spaces that are being improved through PDG and state QE funds. These state funds totaled \$3,384,797 in year 1, \$3,085,731 in year 2 and as of December 31, 2017, \$1,288,038.

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

The OEC is committed to maintaining a seamless progression of supports and services for families of birth-third grade children. To achieve this goal, the OEC is building upon existing collaborative efforts with the State Department of Education, the United Way, local school districts, school readiness councils, early care and education providers, home visitors, families, and other community partners.

The OEC's MIECHV- and state-funded home-visiting contractors including Parents as Teachers, the Nurturing Families Network, the Nurse-Family Partnership, Child FIRST, and Early Head Start are well

informed regarding high-quality state- and federally-funded preschool options in their communities. These providers can then, in turn, ensure the families with whom they work are also well-informed regarding preschool options for their children. Information can be shared with families relative to:

- the importance of preschool
- the importance of attendance in preschool
- available state- and federally-funded preschool options
- the importance of meeting teachers and visiting prospective programs prior to transition to preschool, kindergarten, etc.

Given the long-term relationships that home visitors establish with their families during the first three years of their children's lives, they are in an excellent position to inform families about the value and impact of high-quality preschool experiences and to facilitate successful transitions. In order to maximize the impact of their home visiting programs and smooth the transition to the next developmental learning experience, staff promote retention of families in their programs until children are three.

Similarly, Birth to 3, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Family Resource Center providers are also in an excellent position to share information with families that will facilitate their children's transition to the next quality early learning setting. Birth to 3 is an OEC program, so opportunities to leverage connections and communication opportunities are maximized within the agency.

School Readiness, Smart Start, PDG, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Family Resource Centers are state- and/or federally-funded educational settings available to families. There is a need for communities, through their School Readiness Councils, school districts, and grant-funded programs, to manage community enrollment and waiting lists to ensure that families are informed and children are enrolled in the most appropriate setting. During the past two years, PDG has made some progress in this area.

As previously mentioned, the OEC is committed to collaborating with school districts in PDG communities to deliver special education and related services directly to the PDG classroom, fully integrating those supports and services into the typical routines and activities of the pre-k classroom. Clearly, this level of collaboration would support smooth transition of children and families from preschool to kindergarten.

Ten of the thirteen PDG communities are delivering special education and related services integrated into the normal routines and activities of the PDG classroom. In one classroom in each of two communities, there are currently no children with IEPs enrolled, although both had children with IEPs enrolled earlier in the school year. There is only one community where children with IEPs are not receiving services integrated into classroom activities. The school district is pulling children out of the classroom to receive services.

The relational and informational Parent Teacher Home Visits, described in detail elsewhere in this APR contribute to a seamless continuum by supporting relationships between families and teachers and facilitating the transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten.

As indicated elsewhere in this APR, PDG funding is being used to provide opportunities for pre-k and kindergarten teachers to receive co-training in Parent Teacher Home Visits and promising family

engagement strategies. Co-training can be a way to bridge the disconnect that often occurs within the birth-third grade continuum at the transition to kindergarten. Pre-k and kindergarten teachers often perceive differences in values and goals between them. This disconnect, these perceived differences, need to be addressed in order to facilitate good transitions from pre-k to kindergarten. Good communication between sending and receiving teachers needs to be maximized and co-training creates opportunities for connections that can result in additional opportunities for that communication.

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a free statewide program that serves families of children from birth to eight years. HMG connects Connecticut children and their families to community services and resources related to child health, behavior, development, and learning. The program serves parents, caregivers, social services agencies, child health providers, as well as early care and education providers.

Help Me Grow also helps families support their children's development by signing up to receive free Ages & Stages screening questionnaires regularly. Families administer the screens at home, mail them back to Help Me Grow for scoring, and are contacted by HMG Care Coordinators who share the scores and what they mean, help families connect to supports and services they may need subsequent to screening, and provide families with helpful fun activities to support their children's development until the next screen.

Facilitating the identification of children who are at-risk and connecting those who need them to supports and services to support their learning and development is a critical component of the birth through third grade continuum.

OEC's Care 4 Kids Program provides subsidies for families who cannot afford the cost of high-quality child care for their children. Recent cuts in the program resulting from a dire financial landscape in the state have put children and families at-risk in recent months. The legislature has just reopened Care 4 Kids to all families in all four priority groups rd

OEC is also proud to support the University of Connecticut's Pre-K-3 Leadership Program, which has graduated three cohorts of Pre-K-3 fellows and enrolled a fourth. Pre-K-3 participants focus on understanding special considerations relative to curriculum, instruction, and assessment of children who are preschool through grade 3. PDG actively promotes the program to its community partners and community teams within PDG. Eleven of the fellows to-date are from PDG communities

The State Department of Education, the OEC, and the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative have embarked on a collaboration that will result in a common statewide definition of family engagement for birth through high school. The definition and framework will ensure that families, teachers, school staff, community partners, and funders are all on the same page regarding high-impact family engagement that supports children's learning and development.

The definition and framework focus on the mutually respectful, trusting relationships prerequisite to high-impact family engagement and reflect the belief that family engagement happens when families and teachers are full and equal partners in supporting children's learning and development.

Ensuring adequate high-quality infant-toddler care is both a priority and a challenge for OEC. Infant-toddler care as well as other high-priorities are being addressed in a "big tent process" initiated this month to seek ongoing feedback on OEC's successes, challenges, and priorities. Four public sessions were held in February to review, update, and prioritize accomplishable goals for the agency during the next 12 months.

The announcement promoting the process highlights the 31,000 infant/toddler space shortage for

financial assistance. (Eighty percent of families cannot afford the cost of care) In addition to the significant shortage of financial assistance, there is also an inadequate number of high-quality slots. Predictably there are also disparities in access to these services. Only 6% of black and Hispanic families can afford infant/toddler care. Furthermore, 40% of providers report that funding is a major barrier to enrolling children who are living in poverty, are experiencing homelessness, are in families involved with DCF, are survivors of domestic abuse, have developmental delays, or are children of teen parents. These challenges will be addressed through the Big Tent Process in the category of access and rates as the process moves forward.

OEC's Early Care & Education Division is collaborating with the Early Childhood Funder Collaborative to create opportunities for early childhood programs to experiment with *Shared Services Shared Services*

Shared Services is a framework that allows a network of centers and/or homes to share staff and costs, usually through a "hub" or central office. Shared Services strengthen an organization's capacity, by pooling needs and sharing resources, and reinvesting the time and dollar savings into improving program quality.

The TA session was followed by dissemination of an RFP through OEC and the United Way of Connecticut to identify organizations that currently support family child care providers who are interested in expanding technical assistance and shared service business alliance functions or launching a new shared service business alliance for family child care providers. The OEC will manage the awarded proposals and establish and monitor reporting requirements including outcome measures for all awarded proposals.

This initiative addresses the need for family choice in terms of child care options. An increase in the number of family day care homes, their financial viability, and the quality of care they provide will strengthen the Birth-Third Grade Continuum by supporting and sustaining high quality service options for families.

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. not

Connecticut's ambitious and achievable plan, funded by the federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG), was built on the OEC's existing state preschool infrastructure. PDG has allowed Connecticut to expand access to high-quality state preschool programs and improve the quality of existing State Preschool Programs in 13 high-need communities throughout the state for 712 eligible preschoolers in year one, and 730 in year two and 740 in year three. In Year one, 430 of the total 712 total spaces were committed to expanding new preschool program spaces that met the definition of high-quality as defined by the grant. In years two and three, that number slightly increased to 439.

As outlined in other sections of this report, the PDG was implemented using existing state preschool infrastructure through School Readiness Councils. Each Council is charged with the responsibility of making recommendations on issues related to the state's School Readiness program.

At the close of year three, Connecticut was successfully partnering with 13 Councils to deliver high-

quality preschool to 721 eligible four-year olds in 37 programs and 55 classrooms throughout the state. Of those eligible children, 59% were being served in expansion spaces and 41% in improved spaces.

According to recent data compiled via PDG Interim Reports, all 37 PDG early learning sites reported that all structural elements of high-quality defined in the grant were fully-operational in every PDG classroom within their site including teacher qualifications, child-adult staff ratios and classrooms sizes, teacher salary requirements and the delivery of comprehensive services.

Every PDG classroom is receiving high-quality professional development that focuses on five key areas: CT Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), Social emotional development, Response to Intervention, Special Education Referral and Dual Language Learners.

Each PDG program and classroom also participates in evidence-based health and safety standards as measured by either OEC's licensing division, NAEYC accreditation and/or ECERS assessments. Every PDG funded early learning provider must be NAEYC accredited, or attain accreditation within three years of being funded. Interim measures include an ECERS rating within the classroom at least once per year. 25 of 37 PDG funded programs are NAEYC accredited --of the 12 not accredited, all are expected to receive their accreditation by June 20, 2018.

All programs have also reported that they are implementing some form of individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning. The OEC will gather additional data to understand specifically how programs are defining and meeting this high-quality standard.

Each PDG program site has reported that on-site comprehensive services have been implemented and are accessible to all eligible children and their families including screenings, nutrition services, physical activity and practices to deepen family engagement.

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.

The figures reported in the APR Data Tables are based on the State Fiscal Year July 1-June 30. All year three figures are actuals-to-date as of December 31, 2018. At the close of the state fiscal year, the OEC will be better able to analyze and report any discrepancies between the state's approved budget and its total expenditures for year three.

In year three, very minor adjustments to budgets were made. The largest change over the life of the grant is to line 7-Training Stipends. Originally proposed in its grant application was the provision of family engagement activities to communities to deepen the interaction between families and programs to support children's learning. In the original grant application, the OEC did not budget funds specifically for these activities and has since provided minimal funds to train programs in the Parent Teacher Home Visit model and to conduct other trainings around special education delivery and the subscription of *myTeachstone*

10 new spaces were added in year three which minimally raised total funding in line 11 --these new spaces were created with unspent funds from years one and two.

The OEC will continue to monitor budgets and expenditures according to all appropriate state and federal laws and will notify its federal project officer of any substantive changes.

2.

At this time, the OEC is still planning for year four, which includes budgeting. The OEC does not foresee any substantive changes to its budget in the upcoming year but will notify its federal project officers if changes occur.

Minor revisions include continued support and possible expansion of Parent Teacher Home Visits to support more relational and informational home visits in year 4 --specifically to include Kindergarten Teachers in the model. Actual calculations have not yet occurred as to what these costs may be, but the OEC will have a better understanding once information is gathered from subrecipients in April 2018 about the number of each type of visit they would like to conduct. Estimates range anywhere from \$65,000 to \$80,000 in year four to cover the total costs of all Parent Teacher Home Visits.

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.

Connecticut is firmly committed to sustaining high-quality state preschool programs after the grant period ends. The OEC is currently investigating ways in which available state funding for state preschool programs can ensure that at least some of the originally proposed 428 expansion and 284 improved spaces in the 13 subrecipient communities continue and in particular, the elements of high-quality can be infused into its state funded preschool programs.

The OEC was awarded \$1.375 million in PDG Supplemental Award funds to focus on the sustainability and replicability of the PDG with the goal of improving and expanding access to high-quality preschool for more eligible children throughout the state. To accomplish this, the OEC would target supplemental funds towards the infrastructure and systems-level changes necessary to enhance and sustain the high-quality elements and eligibility requirements from CT's PDG. An additional result of

some of the proposed infrastructure and systems investments will be that CT begins to integrate our PDG quality and eligibility priorities into the state's broader Early Care and Education (ECE) system.

The OEC is confident that with additional supplemental award funds, CT will continue to build upon its PDG successes in four key activities:

- A. Create more long-term sustainability and replicability of the PDG model in PDG communities and to begin to align the state's existing preschool funding infrastructure with PDG priorities
- B. Build upon the state's ability to track, analyze and share data from its Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) to better serve PDG children and families
- C. Enhance PDG evaluation efforts to better understand, improve and tell the story of the impact of PDG on child and family outcomes
- D. Expand on parent and community engagement successes in existing PDG communities

To fast-track further outcomes-oriented state funding integration, efficiency improvements, and closer alignment with PDG quality and eligibility standards, the OEC will use these supplemental funds to invest in the sustainability and replicability of the PDG model using state preschool funds both within existing PDG communities as well as statewide. The OEC will more fully incorporate the PDG model priorities as it implements reforms in its early care and education system, including eligibility, quality, compensation and other key elements like the targeted outreach and recruitment of hard-to-reach families such as those served by PDG (e.g. families at or below 200% FPL, families who are homeless, dual-language learners etc.).

An incredible amount of support exists for the increased state investment in the PDG model. In light of the strong support both internal and external, as well as the resources that have already been assembled, the OEC is confident core systems change efforts will be completed by December 2018.

To support existing staff and continue to build on internal momentum and expertise, the OEC has recently been awarded a technical assistance grant to work with a nationally recognized consulting firm that will guide these efforts. The firm, Third Sector, specializes in driving government resources toward high-performing social programs, as well as tracking their effectiveness over time, to ensure that funding is directed toward programs and services that succeed in measurably improving the lives of people most in need.

Through the UCONN evaluation, as well as continuous monitoring efforts, the OEC will continue to analyze costs and expenditures by subrecipients to determine whether proposed rates are sufficient in funding high-quality preschool programs and for the purposes of planning universal access for all high-need three and four year-olds in the state. While the actual cost-analyses will not begin until the end of state fiscal year 2018, in order to compare two years' worth of data, the OEC has recognized where some costs have been overestimated or underestimated such as transportation costs (overestimated) and liaison salaries to support infrastructure (underestimated). The OEC has based year two spending on some high-level cost analyses which will better prepare the state to understand the total cost of high-quality preschool and move towards understanding sustainability.

In order to enhance the existing evaluation, supplemental funds will be used to collaborate with the Partnership for Early Education Research (PEER), based at the Yale School of Medicine. PEER is a research-practice partnership involving early childhood stakeholders across three CT communities, along with the OEC, UCONN and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Funds will be used to support a small research team at PEER to examine the association of PDG enrollment with child outcomes in grades K, 1 and 2, beginning with the first cohort of PDG children in school year 2015-2016.

Initial plans for sustainability include absorbing components of the high-quality professional learning being delivered in PDG classrooms into the state's quality improvement system. Initial conversations have begun, and a third-party evaluation is being conducted, to understand what areas of professional learning have the highest impact and are the most sustainable.

The OEC will continue to work with subrecipients through the grant period to discuss methods of sustainability to maintain or increase access to high-quality preschool programs and continue to serve

eligible children after the grant period.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year.

The figures reported in the APR Data Tables are based on the state fiscal year beginning May 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016 for year one, July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017 for year two and July 1, 2017-December 31, 2018 for year three.

Through the Year 3, interim reporting process, the OEC was able to project a more than 70% decrease in unspent funds from year two when subrecipients returned just under \$200,000 in PDG funds from various categories within their budgets. According to current budget analyses and review of interim report budgets, subrecipients are on target to return only \$3,000 in unspent funds in year three.

Year two unspent funds came from a variety of categories within subrecipient budgets, including underutilized transportation funds and unspent funds from Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHVs).

Unspent PTHV Funds

The PTHV model stipulates that home visits are voluntary for both teachers and families.

In PDG year 2, all 13 communities participated in PTHVs, but in some communities, as per the model, some teachers and/or some parents chose not to participate.

We anticipate that all schools programs that participated in PDG year 2 will also participate in year 3 except for Naugatuck Day Care and Salem Community Child Care Center in Naugatuck. These two programs have opted out for year 3, but they will be given the opportunity to opt in again in year 4. Relational PTHVs have already been conducted, but informational PTHVs will be conducted in the spring. When the second round of home visits have been completed, we will know the amount of unspent PTHV funds for PDG year 3.

The OEC has been able to reduce the amount of unspent funds year-over-year due to increased budget training for subrecipients as well as basing year three funds on previous year expenditures in certain categories. For example, one subrecipient returned \$74,000 in transportation funds in year 2 and \$186,000 in year 1, when total awarded funds in this category were \$183,900 and \$332,500 respectively. In year three, the OEC capped the amount of transportation funds released to this subrecipient at \$130,000 and interim reports revealed they are on target to utilize all funds.

At the close of the current state fiscal year in June 2018, the OEC will be better able to analyze and report any discrepancies between the state's approved budget and its total expenditures as well as that of subrecipients for year three. It is projected, as in years one and two, that budget changes to subrecipient budgets will not affect the state's ability to achieve approved project activities or objectives.