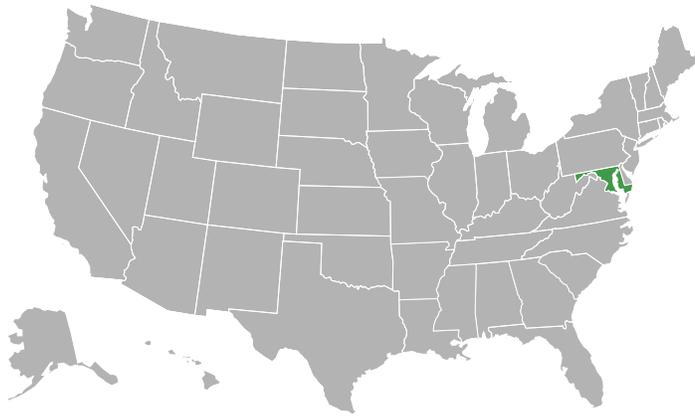


PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Maryland



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 #: S419B150034 2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: _____

3. Project Title: Preschool Development Grant - Expansion

4. Grantee Name: Maryland State Development of Education

5. Grantee Address: 200 West Baltimore Street

City: Baltimore State: Maryland Zip: 21201

6. Project Director Name: Steven Hicks

Title: Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood Education

Phone #: (410) 767-0342 Ext.: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: steven.hicks@maryland.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. See instructions.)

Budget Period	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	\$15,098,061.00	\$5,219,725.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$16,591,383.36	\$8,891,725.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

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

a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant? Yes No

b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No

c. If yes, provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2017 To: 06/30/2018

Approving Federal agency: ED Other Specify other: _____

Type of Rate: (Final Performance Reports only) Provisional Final Other Specify other: _____

d. For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

10. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? _____



U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

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

Grantee State: MD

PR/Award #:

S419B150034

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.

Maryland's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) implementation plan builds on the strength of its well-developed early childhood education infrastructure. The three key components that made an expansion of prekindergarten for low-income children possible are:

Consolidated governance: By law since 2005, Maryland's early childhood education programs are all under the auspices of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The Division of Early Childhood Development, the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, and Division of Family and School Support (which houses Title 1) provides an ideal structure for aligning policies for services birth to kindergarten and coordinating practices for a modern P-20 education system.

Long-standing prekindergarten track record: Maryland's State Board of Education established a prekindergarten program in public schools as early as 1980. Since then, high quality prekindergarten has been provided as the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) until 2007. At minimum, all 24 local school districts provide access to a half-day prekindergarten education program for all economically disadvantaged four-year olds. In 2014, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014 which provided \$4.3 million for new PreK slots. Maryland's plan builds on this Prekindergarten Expansion model by creating a mixed delivery system for early education programs based in high-quality community-based early learning settings, such as child care, Head Start, and nursery schools in addition to public schools and public charter schools.

Successful implementation of Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant: Through the RTT-ELC, Maryland created two critical elements that enhanced Maryland's plan for expanding prekindergarten - a robust Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) and well-developed early childhood comprehensive assessment system. Since its inception in July 2013, Maryland EXCELS, the State's TQRIS, received registrations from early childhood programs at a rate 3-times higher than expected. Such expectations are being articulated by a focus on improving school readiness skills through targeted intervention and supports for prekindergarten children. The Maryland comprehensive assessment system continues to measure school readiness skills, thereby informing early learning providers about the effectiveness of their programs. Maryland's long-term goal is universal access to high quality prekindergarten for all four-year olds. While public schools provide such access to economically disadvantaged four-year olds, defined as those whose families' household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion Act extended access to families with income levels up to 300% of FPG. Maryland's 4 year plan for this grant includes strategies to identify and recruit four-year olds at 200% of FPG into prekindergarten slots at public schools and community-based programs. In addition, the state raised the income eligibility to 300% of FPG through matching state funds to support grant funded programs. The scope of Maryland's implementation plan is statewide, thereby including many high-need communities in all regions of the State, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City and expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model.

All LEA subgrantees' elementary schools have a 65% or greater free and reduced meals (FARM) rate and recruit income eligible four-year olds into their prekindergarten classrooms. MSDE uses four additional needs assessment criteria in awards to subgrantees:

- Elementary schools in school improvement, i.e., Focus or Priority schools;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with the highest number of income eligible four-year olds who are not enrolled in prekindergarten;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with high numbers of low-income and Hispanic four-year olds enrolled in informal care arrangements; and
- Subgrantees that provide specialized services for income-eligible four-year olds who are medically fragile or need therapeutic nursery services.

Casting such a wide net for identifying and recruiting income eligible four-year olds ensures that a significant number of families with four-year old children in high-need communities across the State have access to high quality prekindergarten. Maryland has been successful in increasing efforts to meet or exceed the target number of slots since year 1 of the grant. In year 1, the target number of new slots was 1,210 and improved slots 1,623. Maryland recruited 1,459 new slots and 1,273 improved slots. In year 2, the target number of slots new slots was 1,210 and improved slots 1,623. Maryland was successful in recruiting 1,327 new slots and 2,203 improved slots. For the current year, the target number of new slots is 1,610 and improved slots 1,723. Maryland has been successful in exceeding its target for the overall number of slots for year 3. Maryland's year 3 target was 3,333 and 4272 slots were filled as of the December 1, 2017 reporting period.

Maryland's plan requires that all subgrantees meet the definition of High Quality Prekindergarten criteria required by the PDG. All subgrantees must hire lead teachers that hold a Maryland State teaching certificate in early childhood education. MSDE has established policies by regulation and State law that define the quality of publicly funded prekindergarten. Based on the grant program under the Prekindergarten Expansion Act, the Maryland plan adopted the following eligibility for subgrantees:

1. Prekindergarten operated by local boards of education must comply with the State's prekindergarten regulations;
2. Community-based programs must be:
 - Published at Level 5, the highest level, in Maryland EXCELS;
 - State or nationally accredited as a program of quality;
 - MSDE approved non-public nursery school.

The rationale for subgrantee eligibility among community-based programs is based on MSDE's accountability principles when using public funds, which call for reducing the risk of failure among programs that have demonstrated continuous program improvement, stability of program quality, and have the capacity to meet the Expansion Grant's criteria of High Quality Preschool programs.

Maryland's plan includes the use of a recently developed Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) as part of the RTT-ELC funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. The first cohort of four-year olds in prekindergarten funded under this grant were assessed using the KRA in school year 2016-17, thereby setting the baseline for all and subgroups funded by this grant. However, in the General Assembly, Senate Bill 794 was passed in spring 2016 and it provides school systems with a choice in administering the KRA to a representative sample of students or to all students. In addition, each principal has the option of administering the KRA to all of their Kindergarten students. For the 2017-2018 school year, 12 of the 24 systems elected to assess all students. Several of the systems that elected to administer to a representative sample have also elected to administer to all students in their Title I schools or Judy Center schools only. Therefore, not all students that participated in the PDG were assessed in fall 2017 as they entered Kindergarten.

Maryland set a per-child cost allocation of \$7,344 per child for new slots and \$3,672 for improved slots and has maintained the same cost allocation throughout the grant period. Maryland also sought and received permission from the Department of Education to raise the per-child cost allocation for programs specializing in

therapeutic or extensive comprehensive services (physical therapy, psychiatric or autism services). Maryland identified jurisdictions for high-needs children and used data from the following MSDE databases in an effort to help subgrantees recruit income-eligible four-year olds:

- Child Care Subsidy data management system; and
- Prekindergarten waitlists with local school systems.

In addition, the Judy Centers and their partners in selected jurisdictions, assisted in identifying families with income-eligible four-year olds.

Although Maryland has been successful in recruiting eligible families, a barrier for Maryland is the complicated income eligibility for Maryland's Prekindergarten Programs. Locally funded PreK is available to families that are at or below 185% of FPL. The Federal PreK Expansion Program is available to families that are at or below 200% of FPL. The State PreK Expansion Program is available to families at or below 300% of FPL. Each year Maryland creates PreK flyers for each jurisdiction in Maryland, distributed by Local Departments of Social Services, which directs income eligible families to free Prekindergarten in the area in which they live. The flyers were created in response to legislation "HB 1095 Education Prekindergarten Program --Notification of Eligibility by Local Department of Social Services." Subgrantees in Maryland's PreK Expansion Programs have indicated this has helped with enrollment. In addition, technical assistance meetings were held to help subgrantees with recruitment strategies and collaboration among the public school and community based settings.

During the 2016 General Assembly session, House Bill 668, which provides a state match for the PDG in the amount of \$3.7 million in grant year 3 and \$7.3 million in grant year 4, was passed. As a result, Maryland plans to expand access to a total of 1,000 children in Grant Years 3 & 4, i.e., SFY18 and SFY19.

Maryland's model includes programs that offer specialized services such as programs that specialize in therapeutic and extensive early intervention services as well as programs that specialize in supporting children who may be homeless. These programs actively recruit for these inclusive settings. The Directors of these specialized programs network with each other to share recruitment strategies and assist in filling any openings. Maryland requires community based programs and local education agencies (LEA) to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). These MOUs include a partnership between LEAs and the community based programs to help support them in providing services for students with special needs or who may need ELL resources. The MOUs also ensure that community based program staff are included in professional development opportunities offered by the local school system.



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: MD

PR/Award #: S419B150034

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.

Maryland's plan includes many high-need communities in all regions of the state, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City and by expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model.

The plan uses communities with schools that have a 65 percent FARM rate as the cut-off for determining prioritized needs, but it also recruits income eligible four-year olds into high quality prekindergarten by using four additional needs assessment criteria:

- Elementary schools in school improvement (e.g., Focus or Priority schools);
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with the highest number of income eligible four-year olds who are not enrolled in prekindergarten;
- Subgrantees in jurisdictions with high numbers of low-income and Hispanic four-year olds enrolled in informal care arrangements; and
- Subgrantees that provide specialized services for income-eligible four-year olds who are medically fragile or need therapeutic nursery services.

Maryland served 4272 Prekindergarten students in these high needs communities in year 3 through the PDG grant and State matching funds. All subgrantees reflected in the APR met the definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten. Approximately 20% of subgrantees are not at full capacity due to reported transportation issues of families, changing community demographics, and the transient nature of some low-income families. The subgrantees that are not at full capacity are continuing to recruit eligible students beyond the reporting period of December 1st for the APR. In addition, they receive technical assistance on additional recruitment strategies from PreK grant monitors.

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

The PDG served 6.3% of eligible children with disabilities in high quality preschool programs in year 3, though we expect this number to rise as more children are identified during the year. Students enrolled in PDG sites have to meet both the low income and the special needs criteria. Also, there are PreK students with disabilities that were directed to non PDG funded programs for services. Maryland also funds therapeutic nursery school programs with PDG funds. The therapeutic nursery school programs provide intensive, on-site services to support the school readiness of children with severe needs and their families.

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

Under the PDG in year 3, Maryland was able to add 1,571 (37%) new slots and 2701 (63%) improved slots. Of the total number of PreK slots, 1041 slots are in community based programs (includes Head Start). Establishing additional slots in the community based programs has continued to create new collaborations for professional development and sharing of curriculum between the local public elementary schools and the programs. Community based programs and public elementary schools planned transition to Kindergarten activities for families so that parents and students become familiar with their future school and staff. In turn, PreK staff have learned the expectations of the Kindergarten teachers at the elementary schools and are working to prepare their PreK students for the transition to Kindergarten.

In year 3, there were 438 new slots in Maryland Head Start programs. Head Start programs improved these slots from half-day to full-day. Just like community based centers, Head Start programs have continued professional development and transition activities with elementary schools in their communities under the PDG grant. Head Start programs include the offering of services to children and their families, as well as parent engagement activities.

Through the Judy Center partnerships, PreK children were served and directed to early childhood development services, such as, high quality child care, WIC and Medicaid in year 3. Children receive developmental screening, access to early interventions, connections to dental, vision, hearing, mental health, and health department services, service coordination and family support. Judy Centers offer access to extended day and year services through community based child care and ensure those partners are meeting high-quality standards by providing accreditation support and professional development. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent engagement activities, including kindergarten readiness activities, play groups, adult education, and family literacy.

Maryland PreK Monitors worked with subgrantees to provide them with additional recruitment strategies. Additionally, lists of PreK programs by jurisdiction were distributed to the local Departments of Social Services to ensure that social workers could direct eligible families to programs in their jurisdiction.

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.

In year three, 30,418 students were enrolled in public prekindergarten. Of this number 3186 students were served through the PDG and State funding model. Forty-five (45) students were served in Public Charter Schools for a total of 3231 served in public settings. The remaining 1041 students were served in community based programs that include private schools (both faith and non-faith based), Head Start programs, non-public nursery schools, and college child development centers, which totals 4272 as reported in GPRA 1(b) in the APR workbook. PDG slots represent 15.30% of all state Preschool.

1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.

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

In the Year 3 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
 - Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
 - School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

Research shows that children who enter kindergarten not demonstrating the social-emotional, cognitive, and physical skills needed for success will continue to struggle academically throughout their school years. School readiness includes the stage of early development that enables a child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences in the following areas: social and emotional development, cognition and general knowledge, language development, and physical well-being and motor development. School readiness acknowledges individual approaches toward learning as well as the unique experiences and background of each child.

To align with the Maryland's PreK-12 College and Career Ready Standards, Maryland introduced Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. R4K builds on and advances the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), which was the statewide kindergarten assessment tool in use from 2001 to 2013. R4K provides a single coordinated system for recognizing the needs and measuring the learning progress (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) of young children from 36 to 72 months (3 to 6 years of age) across seven domains that align to the state standards. The R4K is comprised of two components: the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). The KRA

is administered each year from the first day of school to October 10th to kindergarten students in public schools. In accordance with State Law, local school systems may administer the KRA to a representative sample of students. The ELA, developed for children 36 months to 72 months of age, is optional and became available to all child care programs, Head Start, and public PreK and K teachers in fall 2016.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) defines demonstrating readiness as a child demonstrating the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards. The KRA uses age-appropriate performance tasks and observational items that measure essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors of children's work and play to determine what each entering kindergarten student knows and is able to do in four specific domains - Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Well-being and Motor Development, and Social Foundations. The ELA, which is a formative assessment, includes three additional domains - Science, Social Studies and the Arts.

Maryland provides KRA training before school starts to all Maryland Kindergarten teachers through online training, face to face training or a combination of both. The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology Education developed the training materials and provided a Training of Trainers model to be used throughout the state. To ensure fidelity, teachers complete a content assessment and simulator in order to be approved to administer the KRA. Additional professional development resources are provided to teachers through the R4K system's online platform. Access to a Help Desk is also provided to teachers during the assessment window.

Teachers in each LEA send home individual student reports to parents/guardians. The reports are also discussed with parents during individual parent-teacher conferences. Teachers use the student level data to support classroom instruction and monitor progress. Each LEA receives its data disaggregated by district and for each elementary school which administered the KRA. The KRA statewide data report is presented to the State Board of Education annually and then released to the public. The KRA data report provides information about kindergarten readiness and promotes well-informed programmatic, policy, and funding decisions.

Statewide data from the 2017-2018 KRA administration show that 31% of all Kindergarteners from low-income households are demonstrating readiness and 69% are not. When compared to students from low-income households statewide, PDG students scored higher (39% demonstrating readiness, 41.6% approaching readiness, and 19.3% emerging towards readiness).

Kindergarteners from low-income households demonstrating readiness in 2017-2018 by domain is as follows:

- 26% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Language and Literacy
- 24% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Mathematical Thinking
- 48% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Physical Well-being and Motor Development
- 45% of Kindergarteners demonstrated readiness in Social Foundations

In 2016, the General Assembly passed the Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Assessments Administration Bill, which established a shorter testing period for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and allowed local school systems to choose to assess only a representative sample of students and not all kindergarten students in their elementary schools in order to limit the amount of time students spend being assessed throughout the school year. These requirements have limited the information that can be gleaned from the KRA to the representative statewide sample. Since the KRA represents a sample, not all students that participated in Prekindergarten (including PDG) in school year 2017-2018 were assessed in fall 2017.

For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:

1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Not Applicable.

Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.

The four-year olds enrolled in publicly-funded prekindergarten programs are benefiting from Maryland's revised early learning standards in terms of content and scope. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) were aligned to Maryland's *Healthy Beginnings* guidelines for Birth to Four in order to create the Early Learning Standards document. In fall 2015, Maryland contracted with the University of Maryland to develop a curriculum that is aligned with the standards for Infants and Toddlers through age 4 PreK. The 4-year old prekindergarten curriculum is in the final stages of development, training will begin this summer, and the curriculum will be available at no cost beginning fall of 2018. The 3-year old and infant/toddler curriculum will follow in subsequent years.

The program standards for public school prekindergarten and community based programs are defined by Maryland EXCELS, the State's TQRIS, which has five levels of quality, Level 5 being the highest. Level 5 includes program accreditation by MSDE or a nationally accrediting organization. A third set of quality program standards is defined by the education program in nursery schools certified by MSDE (COMAR 13A.17.14). These program standards comprise the eligibility for participation as a subgrantee under this grant. Eligible prekindergarten subgrantees are either:

- Operated by a local boards of education and in compliance with prekindergarten regulations; or
- Published at Level 5 of Maryland EXCELS and
- Accredited by MSDE or a national accrediting organization recognized by MSDE; or
- Certified by MSDE as a non-public nursery school.

Maryland EXCELS provides program standards for public prekindergarten and licensed child care centers that are based on nationally recognized indicators of quality in five areas:

- Licensing Compliance/School Approval;
- Staff/Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development;
- Accreditation/Environmental Rating Scales;
- Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice /Child Assessment; and
- Administrative Policies and Practices.

The Maryland EXCELS validation process ensures that programs are implementing activities consistent with high-quality preschool programs by:

- On-site monitoring of published programs to view evidence of implementation regarding the standards of Maryland EXCELS;

- Providing technical support for areas identified in need of improvement as a result of monitoring visits;
- Incorporating a Continuous Quality Improvement framework in all aspects of the TQRIS;
- Requiring programs to create and implement Program Improvement Plans at the higher levels of Maryland EXCELS (i.e., Levels 3, 4 and 5), and to include school readiness goals and objectives aligned with jurisdictional data on Maryland's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment;
- Providing multiple layers of program support for participating programs in meeting high-quality preschool standards within the TQRIS. The types of support come from three primary sources offered online, by phone and through on-site visits:
 - Child Care Resource and Referral Staff
 - Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education Program Coordinators; and
 - MSDE Quality Assurance Specialists.

Outside of Maryland EXCELS, the following is a list of technical assistance offered to subgrantees:

- All programs receiving PDG funds must have a Maryland certified teacher in the PreK classroom that is paid comparable to the PreK teacher in that LEA. Programs must ensure vision and hearing screening, health care referrals and developmental screenings. During their on-site visits, program specialists are monitoring to ensure these services are provided. Additionally, each subgrantee signed a Memorandum of Understanding with their LEA agreeing to partner for professional development opportunities and transition planning activities each year of the grant. LEAs are working with subgrantees to ensure that students requiring individualized accommodations are supported in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Program Specialists provide on-going technical assistance throughout the year. They conduct check-in visits in the fall to assess the needs of the program and develop a TA plan. Monitoring occurs in the spring of each school year. The monitoring consists of a review of programmatic and fiscal documents to ensure the subgrantees are meeting the grant criteria. Additionally, the program specialists also observe the classrooms to ensure the children are receiving a developmentally appropriate, high-quality prekindergarten experience. Programs receive feedback on the monitoring tool to include commendations and any areas needed for improvement. If it is determined that a program requires improvement, a written program improvement plan is provided to the program that sets forth the areas of improvement needed and a time-line in which to improve. Programs not in compliance with the grant requirements could have their funding level reduced or terminated.

Technical Assistance webinars and meetings were held during Grant Year 3. On September 12th, a PreK Expansion Manual & Grant Criteria webinar was held for all subgrantees to provide an overview of grant criteria, recruitment strategies, and the grant schedule. On September 27th, a PreK Expansion Data File Instructions webinar was held to provide instructions on how to collect and submit data on all eligible students to the State. On October 24th, a PreK Institute was held to provide PreK subgrantees with training and technical assistance on supporting students with disabilities, executive functioning skills, and other strategies to implement high quality prekindergarten. Additionally, PDG subgrantees attended the School Readiness Symposium: Equity in Literacy Must Start Early with support from PDG funds.

2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

The following definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten is required for all PDG subgrantees. These requirements are detailed in the grant application and notice of grant award. All subgrantees are monitored regularly to ensure compliance.

(a) High staff qualifications, including a teacher holding a State certification for teaching in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field pursuing residency through a Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP), a State-approved alternate pathway, which includes coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, as well as teaching assistants with appropriate credentials. Teacher Assistants must hold a minimum of a high school diploma, but preferably a CDA or equivalent training. Teaching credentials are reviewed during the monitoring visits. Teachers are also observed and provided with written feedback from the PreK monitors. If needed, monitors work with the teaching supervisors to develop professional development and technical assistance plans.

(b) High-quality professional development for all staff must be provided by the subgrantees. Community based programs are required to have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with their LEA which includes participation in LEA professional development. Subgrantees provide professional development plans in their applications. In late winter, each subgrantee submits a collaboration form detailing their activities with other subgrantees and their LEA.

(c) A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1 is also required as part of Maryland's PreK & Child Care regulations

(d) A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a) and one assistant teacher is also required as part of Maryland's PreK & Child Care regulations

(e) A Full-Day program (6.5 hours minimum)

(f) Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities.

(g) 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. Subgrantees must use a State recommended curriculum and list their curricula in their grant applications for approval.

(h) Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities.

(i) Instructional staff salaries that are commensurate with the starting salaries of LEA K-12 instructional staff.

(j) Program evaluation to ensure continuous quality improvement: Monitoring and technical assistance visits ensure that both the structural and process elements of quality are in place in subgrantees' programs. Maryland is already positioned to meet the High-Quality Prekindergarten definition as many of the elements are already a part of Maryland's Prekindergarten regulations.

(k) 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 is available in all programs (i.e. screening and referral services covering at least vision, hearing, and health). In Maryland, 21 Judy Centers are funded through the PDG. All Judy Centers are located in or near Title I elementary schools. PreK children and their families living in the designated Title I school zones are eligible for Judy Center services and activities.

Most of the work of the Judy Centers is accomplished through community partnerships that include local agencies, organizations and businesses. Judy Centers must meet 12 Component Standards that result in the delivery of comprehensive services. The 12 Component Standards necessitate close collaboration with the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, food sources, health providers, as well as case management providers such as DSS, Healthy Start, and Healthy Families. Judy Centers and its partners sponsor ongoing rich family engagement activities that promote school readiness. Adult Education programs and local colleges and universities also work with Judy Centers to ensure parents have opportunities to increase their educational levels and career advancement. Judy Centers coordinate with teachers in all early education settings, including child care providers, Head Start and prekindergarten to ensure high quality programming.

(I) Evidence-based health and safety standards:

Health and safety are ensured in community based programs through their child care licensing monitoring visits. All subgrantees are required to participate in Maryland EXCELS (TQRIS) at level 5. Maryland EXCELS standards incorporate criteria to promote children's physical, social, and emotional development as well as promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, and expanding physical activity. The TQRIS standards include the following criteria:

- Serving fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and limiting fat, sugar, and salt in food served by the program;
- Monitoring foods from home and supplementing as needed, to ensure children are receiving nutritious meals and snacks;
- Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program;
- Providing information to families on the program's policies for nutrition, health and physical activity;
- Providing information to families on the program's policies and practices regarding promoting positive behavior and guidance to children;
- Requesting information from families upon enrollment, regarding any special needs, or health care needs, and information from an IEP or IFSP, if available;
- Incorporating information from the child's IEP or IFSP, when provided by the family, for individual planning related to the child's health, physical, social, and emotional development and the child's activities;
- Limiting Screen Time according to AAP and Caring for Our Children guidelines;
- Recognizing programs that meet higher requirements for Health and Safety by awarding an Achievement in this area for programs certified in Let's Move! Child Care. Programs receiving this achievement are featured on the Maryland EXCELS website to highlight their commitment to health and wellness.

Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

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

Thirty-Nine percent of all four year olds in Maryland are being served in a publicly-funded prekindergarten program. Maryland's year 3 target was 3,333, and 4,272 students were served through PDG and State Prekindergarten funds. Maryland served 96.6% of the target number of eligible children in year 3. The cost per slot for new slots is \$7,344 and the cost for improved slots is \$3,672.

While 20% of the subgrantees overall are not meeting their enrollment target, MSDE PreK monitors provide technical assistance by helping subgrantees with additional recruitment strategies.



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

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

MSDE provides on-going technical assistance to each subgrantee to successfully implement a high-quality prekindergarten. Initially, technical assistance webinars are conducted to provide an overview of the RFP requirements and submission procedures for potential grantees. At the completion of the grant application process, subgrantees submit grant applications which specify how they will meet the definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten and include a budget narrative on how the funds will be utilized. Grant applications are reviewed and scored by multiple reviewers. Applicants who are awarded the grant receive the PDG Administrative Manual which outlines all of the grant requirements for effectively implementing high quality PreK. A technical assistance webinar is conducted with new awardees to review processes and procedures for implementing high quality PreK, provide clarification on grant requirements, and answer questions. All subgrantees receive an initial visit from MSDE PreK monitors at the beginning of the school year to meet with program staff, observe classrooms, and develop a technical assistance plan, at which point on-going technical assistance begins. MSDE PreK Monitors conduct technical assistance visits multiple times throughout the year; however technical assistance is individualized based on the needs of each subgrantee. All subgrantees are monitored annually to ensure they are meeting the grant requirements, spending according to approved budget and plan, and meeting definition of high quality prekindergarten. Any community-based program receiving more than \$100,000 of Federal funds falls under the State's annual auditing requirements.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required between each LEA and the community-based PDG sites in its jurisdiction. The MOU establishes a partnership between the LEA and community-based PDG sites and may address the following: professional development opportunities, transition planning, support for ELL students and students with disabilities, data sharing, and parent support. In addition, each subgrantee is required to submit a collaboration check-in form twice per year which outlines the collaboration activities during a specified reporting period.

4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

Maryland has developed early learning and development standards that align with the State's K-3 academic standards.

Maryland's Early Learning and Development Standards:

- are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each defined age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers;
- cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- align with the State's PreK-3 academic standards; and
- are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities.

The Maryland Early Learning Standards reflect the alignment of two resources - Healthy Beginnings' indicators from Birth to Age 4 (used prior to 2014) and the Prekindergarten through Grade 2 Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. The Maryland Early Learning Standards have been disseminated to our early childhood stakeholders in a variety of ways such as an Appendix to our Supporting Every Young Learner- Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy Birth to Age 8, online on the MSDE website, and presented to various stakeholders at conferences and workshops. Over the past few years, professional development has been provided statewide to support implementation and alignment of standards. In addition joint professional developed opportunities have been offered to PreK- Grade 2 teachers and administrators through a summer symposium held at multiple locations throughout the state.

MSDE included strategies and activities in its ESSA plan that will begin to build a more robust Birth to 3rd grade continuum. Strategies are being included that will focus school districts on strengthening and improving the instructional quality of PreK-grade 2 classrooms in order to improve student outcomes by the next statewide data point in 3rd grade. Additionally, in 2017 MSDE began participating in a multi-state Birth to 3rd Grade Workgroup through Education Counsel in order to support and further develop the Birth to 3rd grade continuum work.

Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 3 Target* differs from the *Year 3 Actual*.

While public schools provide access to economically disadvantaged four-year olds, defined as those whose families' household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion Act extended the access to families with income levels up to 300% of FPG through state matching funds. Additionally, access was expanded beyond public schools to include community-based programs. Maryland's four-year plan for this grant includes strategies for identifying and recruiting four-year olds at 200% of FPG into prekindergarten slots at public schools and community-based programs across the state.

PDG funds allow for improved slots. In Maryland, these slots are generally used to increase from half-day to full-day PreK. In year three, 1474 slots were increased from half-day to full-day. Maryland also uses the improved slots to fund Judy Centers to provide extensive comprehensive services to children aged birth to four. In Year 3, Maryland improved slots in Judy Centers for 945 children using PDG funding.

The scope of Maryland's plan is statewide, thereby including many high-need communities in all regions of the State, but with a special emphasis on high-need communities in Baltimore City and expanding the highly effective Judy Center comprehensive services model. There are 21 Judy Centers under the PDG, and 31 funded by state and private funds.

In FY 14, the Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore City Public Schools and the Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF) entered into a public-private partnership agreement to increase the number of Judy Centers in Baltimore City. The partnership expanded rapidly and the Federal Preschool Development Grants (PDG) helped leverage philanthropic contributions allowing BCF to raise more funds through private support to open eight centers in Baltimore City within a 3-year period. Baltimore Community Fund contributed \$1,320,000 for 3 years. There are 12 Judy Centers in Baltimore City, nine of which receive PDG funds. In 2016, the legislature passed HB 668 "Preschool Development Grants -Expansion Grants-Required State Funding" that provides an additional \$3.7 million in FY 18 and \$7.3 million in FY 19 in state matching funds to support the PDG.

In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 516 "Workgroup to Study Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year Olds." MSDE convened a workgroup of stakeholders representing various early childhood interests to follow-up on a previous PreK Adequacy Study and make recommendations for implementing universal prekindergarten in the state. The recommendations were submitted to The Maryland Governor's Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education on September 1, 2017. The plan for implementation and continued funding beyond FY 2019 will be decided by the Maryland legislature.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, full-day kindergarten, and before and after care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of eligible children and their families within each high need community served by each Subgrantee. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

The strategic approach to Maryland's plan builds on the comprehensive systems development as implemented by the RTT-ELC. The key drivers for system stability and sustainability are:

- ***Establishing Maryland EXCELS as the state's quality rating and improvement system.*** Voluntary participation in Maryland's TQRIS program, Maryland EXCELS, applies to all early education and care programs in Maryland. It offers five check levels of quality with Level 5 being the highest. At Level 1, programs must be in good standing with State licensing requirements. Currently, 72% of all licensed child care centers and 40% of all registered family child care providers are participating in EXCELS. While not all licensed programs will join Maryland EXCELS, MSDE, through regulation, mandated that child care subsidy will only be available to licensed child care programs that participate in Maryland EXCELS. EXCELS also incorporates the program accreditation process, either facilitated through a national organization recognized by MSDE or MSDE's own program accreditation program for prekindergarten.
- The MOU between MSDE and all subgrantees includes a condition by which any subgrantee currently not participating in Maryland EXCELS (i.e. LEA prekindergarten subgrantees, subgrantees with a MSDE certified nursery schools, and State or nationally accredited community-based programs) is obligated to participate in Maryland EXCELS by July 1, 2018.
- Maryland EXCELS describes the coordination of early childhood education programs by standardizing the quality levels of all participating early learning providers and by including criteria that define specific practices in terms of early learning, family engagement, inclusion of children with disabilities, and updated business practices in administering the programs. As part of the RTT-ELC, the PDG plan establishes four types of supports for early learning providers entering EXCELS:
 - Johns Hopkins University - Center for Technology of Education, as the vendor supporting the online system, provides technical support in terms of guiding programs through the online enrollment process;
 - MSDE's quality assurance specialists, serving 15 regions of the state, support the quality improvement process, i.e. assisting programs to move from one check level to the next and to monitor the maintenance of quality;
 - Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Centers build the capacity of programs to participate in Maryland EXCELS; and
 - The PreK Education Monitors provide technical support to PreK subgrantees; this includes supports for teachers in need of professional development, curriculum, and/or classroom management support.
- The Judy Centers which support birth through kindergarten offer comprehensive services such as:
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, including pediatric consultation;
 - Vision and hearing testing;
 - Health care referrals;
 - Service linkages programs in public schools;
 - Home Visiting services; and
 - Public libraries' outreach services (i.e. book mobiles, family centers).

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Maryland exceeded the enrollment target set in the grant application for Year 3 by 28% overall. MSDE accomplished this by working with the 24 local Departments of Social Services which provided informational PreK flyers to eligible families. Technical assistance was provided to subgrantees on recruitment strategies and specifically partnering with local school systems to support enrollment as a partnership between the public and private sectors by jurisdiction. In addition, Maryland also reviewed the PreK data from last year and determined that the school systems typically served students at or below 200% of FPL whereas community based partners typically draw families between the 200-300% FPL. A funding strategy was developed to use Federal funds in the higher poverty communities and State funds in the communities in the 200-300% FPL range.

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.

Maryland did not spend as much as budgeted in Personnel and Fringe Benefits due to staff turnover and delays in hiring staff. Additionally, Maryland did not spend the budget for Contractual due to the R4K activities being completed using other funding sources.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018).

No substantive changes anticipated.

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.

In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 516 "Workgroup to Study Universal Access to Prekindergarten for 4-Year Olds." MSDE convened a workgroup of stakeholders representing various early childhood interests to follow-up on a previous PreK Adequacy Study and make recommendations for implementing universal prekindergarten in the state. The recommendations were submitted to The Maryland Governor's Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education on September 1, 2017. The plan for implementation, the number and percentage of eligible children that will be served, and continued funding beyond the PDG will be decided by the Maryland legislature.

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

An amount of \$292,602.54 from year 2 was returned by Prince George's County Public Schools due to several personnel changes in the finance department. These funds will be a carry-over to year 4.