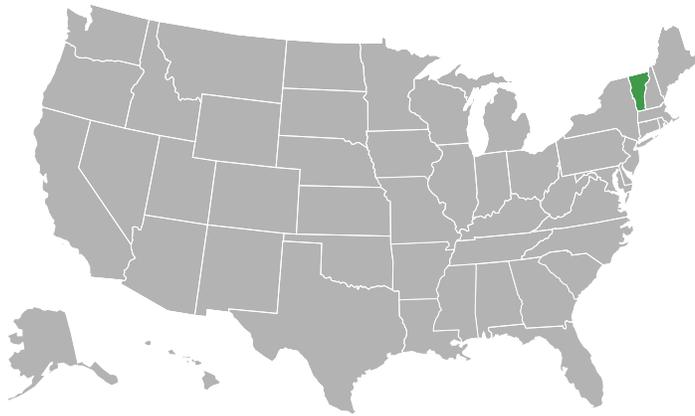


# PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

## FY2017 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### Vermont



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 #: S419B150008                      2. Grantee Federal Information Processing Code: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Project Title: 84.419B PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS-EXPANSION

4. Grantee Name: VERMONT AGENCY OF EDUCATION, INTREGRATED SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

5. Grantee Address: 219 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 402

City: BARRE                                      State: Vermont                                      Zip: 05641

6. Project Director Name: KARIN EDWARDS

Title: DIRECTOR

Phone #: (802) 479-1407                      Ext.: 1407                      Fax #: (802) 479-1829

Email Address: KARIN.EDWARDS@VERMONT.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	\$7,313,193.00	\$11,018,085.00
b. Current Budget Period	\$7,840,061.00	\$5,639,000.00
c. Entire Project Period (For Final Performance Reports only)		

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

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant?  Yes  No
- b. If yes, do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government?  Yes  No
- c. If yes, provide the following information:
- Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 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: PREDETERMINED
- 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: VT

PR/Award #: S419B150008

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.

Vermont has continued to progress in achieving the Preschool Development Grants two goals: 1) Implementing and sustaining high quality preschool programs (HQPPS) that reach and serve 2,302 eligible students during the grant's period of performance and, 2) Enhancing preschool program infrastructure and capacity to deliver HQPPS. Between 1/1/17 and 12/31/17, Vermont subgrantees increased the number of improved slots by an additional 36 slots for four-year-old students whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. In SY16-17 Vermont served 412 eligible students in high quality preschool programs. Increasing the number of students served from 412 to 448 is a great success of the grant for Vermont's students and families.

As per PDEG program requirements, all PDEG eligible students currently being served (448) are supported in inclusive early childhood programs. 106 of the 448 PDEG eligible students being served have an identified disability. This amounts to 23.7% of the students served through this grant which far exceeds the national percentage of 6.4%.

The Agency of Education reviewed the students who were in PDG high quality preschool programs during the 2016-2017 school year with the data of R4KIS compiled in Fall 2017. Of the 412 PDG eligible students served in 2016-2017, 148 had an R4KIS score submitted, 105 were deemed "ready for kindergarten." This equates to 71% of eligible students served in PDG high quality preschool programs were determined "ready for kindergarten."

In March 2017, AOE hired a PDG Program Manager to oversee grant management, monitoring, and outreach. The PDG Program Manager is the first point of contact for subgrantees and potential applicants to answer questions of the 12 program criteria. This position has increased the technical assistance and support subgrantees and potential applicants receive and has helped ensure program compliance of all subgrantees. For example, a guidance and instructions document was completed that provides information for applicants and subgrantees around program requirements, fiscal requirements, and general grant processes. The document compiled all of the memos, technical assistance, and frequently asked questions into one accessible booklet.

Another success of this year was the increase in subgrantee monitoring. Between June 2017 and December 2017 all seventeen PDG subgrantees were monitored by the PDG Program Manager through desk and onsite monitoring activities. During these monitoring activities subgrantees were required show evidence that all twelve PDG program criteria were being implemented in all classrooms receiving PDG funds. Public school, community based, and Head Start programs were all monitored to the same standards, procedures and protocol.

The AOE has offered significant professional development opportunities throughout the school year to support early childhood professionals in expanding their skills and knowledge to support students who are English language learners and students who have disabilities. These included collaborations with Puentes Culturales, the University of Vermont, and Metropolitan State University of Denver. Topics of these opportunities included: *Supporting Young Children and Families Who are Racially, Ethnically, and Culturally Diverse*, *Supporting Young Children Who are Dual Language Learners and Their Families*, and *Supporting Learners of Diverse Abilities and Their Families*.

Through PDG, Vermont's subgrantees have committed to serving eligible students in high-quality preschool programs, but also students who may need additional supports. Of the 448 PDG students being served in high-quality preschool programs: 106 of those students have an identified disability, 33 are English language learners, 77 are in the child welfare system, 7 are from military families, 23 are experiencing homelessness, and 3 who

are from migrant families.

Vermont has continued our commitment to ensuring that subgrantees are only using funds for eligible PDG students and families. Applicants of PDG are required to complete a highly detailed application packet. This includes a scope of work, budget narrative and budget table. In the scope of work applicants were expected to discuss all 12 program criteria and the specific activities and tasks they will complete to support the criteria during the grant's period of performance. Furthermore, year four application materials were updated for the 2018-2019 school year. Applicants will need to break down each expense in even further detail to ensure funds are only being used for four-year-old students whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. The eight steps in the updated application materials include: 1) Application Information, 2) Program Requirements 3) Classrooms, Enrollment, and Eligibility, 4) Scope of Work, 5) Other Funding Sources, 6) Budget Narrative, 7) Budget Table, and 8) Sustainability Plan. The budget narrative portion of the application materials are the most comprehensive as it includes eight pages of excel sheets with multiple tables that require applicants to break down each expense being requested. Applications are then reviewed by the PDG Leadership Team to ensure all applicants have appropriate plans in place to ensure each classroom receiving PDG funds meets all twelve program criteria. PDG budgets and expenses are then reviewed during monitoring activities.

Year four applications have been made available to the public. Supervisory unions, supervisory districts and Head Start programs are welcome to apply. The AOE is expecting previous subgrantees to apply for the final school year of PDG funds. Barriers for current and applying subgrantees continue to be the strict budgeting and allowable expenses of this grant. Applicants and subgrantees want to continue to ensure classrooms are not segregated based on student income and have shared this is a challenge due to the proration on all expenses. Vermont continues to work with applicants and subgrantees to find creative way to ensure inclusive and diverse classrooms across the State.



**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: VT

PR/Award #: S419B150008

**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.

Between the 2016-2017 school year and 2017-1018 school year, State of Vermont subgrantees increased the number of improved slots by 36. In SY16-17 Vermont served 412 eligible students in high quality preschool programs across 17 different supervisory unions, supervisory districts, and Head Start programs. For the current 17-18 school year, subgrantees are serving 448 eligible students in high quality preschool programs across 17 different supervisory unions, supervisory distractions and Head Start Programs. The 448 eligible students are being served in 60 different classrooms in public, private, and Head Start settings.

Of the 17 subgrantees supporting the 448 eligible students, four of those programs are Head Start programs.

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

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

As per PDEG program requirements, all PDEG eligible students currently being served (448) are supported in inclusive early childhood programs. 106 of the 448 PDEG eligible students being served have an identified disability. This amounts to 23.7% of the students served through this grant which far exceeds the national percentage of 6.4%.

The Agency of Education has overarching responsibility for compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the corresponding Vermont state regulations regarding the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. To accomplish this task, the Agency of Education employs a team of highly skilled professionals charged with assuring that all Vermont public and independent schools and early childhood education programs educate students with disabilities consistent with the content and intent of the law.

Early Childhood Special Education Services (ECSES) supports children ages 3 up to 6 years. ECSES is administered through local school districts to ensure access and participation in early childhood programs for each and every child who is determined eligible for services. ECSES enables young children with disabilities to

be full participants in everyday routines and activities across a variety of settings (in their homes with their families, in child care, preschool or school programs, and in the community) throughout the early childhood years.

Vermont ECSES defines the three ECO (Early Childhood Outcomes) as functional outcomes. Functional outcomes describe children's mastery and appropriate application of 1) behaviors, 2) knowledge, and 3) skills in an intentional and meaningful way across daily routines, activities and settings. The overarching goal for each and every child is to be an active and successful participant in his/her own learning and development. Vermont ECSES measures three ECO as defined by Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR).

In June 2017, Vermont released a Early Childhood Outcomes Practices and Procedures manual. This resource aims to assist professionals in identifying and developing an understanding of the early childhood outcomes process and measurement system. The purpose of the ECSES' early childhood outcomes measurement is to collect and analyze high-quality child outcomes data to meet federal reporting requirements as well as to inform state and local program improvement efforts, including:

1. Improving policies, procedures, and practices;
2. Informing focused monitoring and quality assurance;
3. Informing professional learning opportunities;
4. Informing research and funding; and
5. Gathering philanthropic and political support for early childhood special education services.

TSGOLD™ is an assessment tool which allows providers to gather meaningful information on children using multiple methods including observations, portfolios, and developmental profiles. A TSGOLD™ formative assessment is required for all children participating in Vermont's universal Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) which includes all PDEG supported classrooms.

Vermont recognizes the importance of having a comprehensive early childhood curriculum and assessment system and has worked to implement systems and procedures for gathering information to measure the ECO. TSGOLD™ was selected as one of the tools for measuring child outcomes, not only because it meets federal data collection and reporting requirements, but also because it is a research-driven, criterion-based tool which utilizes authentic assessment practices; is aligned with the VELs; and can be used to inform instruction which prepares children for school success both academically and socially. The use of TSGOLD™ allows special education teams to measure the three outcomes within a comprehensive assessment process informed by families and community partners that improves teaching and therefore, learning.

Additionally, the Vermont Early Learning Standards were adopted and approved by the Vermont State Board of Education in August 2015, and were subsequently revised to include children ages birth through grade 3 in order to address the full continuum of development and learning across the ages. The approved VELs were written through a cultural, linguistic, and diverse ability lens. VELs is foundational for school district teams to use in the development of age appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives, and to support the education of all children with their same age peers in high-quality, early childhood 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.

Between the 2016-2017 school year and 2017-2018 school year, State of Vermont subgrantees increased the number of improved slots by 36. In SY16-17 Vermont served 412 eligible students in high quality preschool programs across 17 different supervisory unions, supervisory districts, and Head Start programs. For the current 17-18 school year, subgrantees are serving 448 eligible students in high quality preschool programs across 17 different supervisory unions, supervisory districts and Head Start Programs. The 448 eligible students are being served in 60 different classrooms in public, private, and Head Start settings.

Of the 17 subgrantees supporting the 448 eligible students, four of those programs are Head Start programs.

**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.

The 2016-2017 school year was the first school year of complete statewide implementation of universal PreK under Act 166. Act 166 entitles every three, four, and five year old student not yet eligible for Kindergarten, to 10 hours per week of 35 weeks of state-funded PreK education during the school year.

Total number of students served in publicly funded PreK which includes 3, 4, and 5 year old students

2016-2017 school year: 8,752

2017-2018 school year: 9,067

Increase: 315

For the 2017-2018 school year, 3,887 4-year-old students are being served by the universal PreK state-funded program. 448 of those slots are PDEG served students.

Total number of 4-year-old students served in publicly funded PreK.

2016-2017 school year: 3,578

2017-2018 school year: 3,887

Increase: 309

**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.

Since 2000, Vermont has gathered information on the readiness of children entering kindergarten by surveying kindergarten teachers about the "readiness" of their students within the first six to ten weeks of school. This effort to measure school readiness is a collaborative project of the Vermont Agency of Education, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Health. There are many interpretations of what constitutes "readiness." Vermont's concept of children's readiness is multidimensional; it includes social and emotional development, communication, physical health, as well as cognitive development, knowledge, and approaches to learning (e.g., enthusiasm for learning, persistence, curiosity).

Since the fall of 2013, The American Institutes for Research (AIR) has completed two studies for the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Kindergarten Entry Assessment Work Group of the Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (BBF SAC)'s Data and Evaluation Committee. The studies assessed the validity of Vermont's Kindergarten Readiness Survey (KRS) and recommended revisions to, the original Vermont Kindergarten Readiness Survey. Those results were acted upon in March of 2014, changes made accordingly, and the revised Survey administered in the fall of 2014.

During 2015, a collaborative interagency decision was made at the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge's Implementation Team to extend the contract with AIR in order to identify additional health and wellness

indicators\* to be incorporated in the KRS. We wanted to make sure that the KRS aligned with the new Head Start Program Performance Standards, the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Ages Birth to Five*, the *Birth through Grade Three Vermont Early Learning Standards*, as well as the Bright Futures recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. AIR was able to do this work within a tight timeframe. They utilized KEAs from other states and found measures that had proven reliable in their own contexts and gave the work group a comprehensive table that included a list of questions, where they had been used, and what level of reliability each one had. From this work, the task force was able to choose additional questions to be included in the newly revised KRS.

In October of 2015, AIR completed a KRS alignment with the *Birth through Grade Three Vermont Early Learning Standards*. The purpose of the alignment was to examine how well the early learning constructs measured by the KRS fit with the content and constructs that the state used measure as evidence of kindergarten readiness. AIR aligned the VELs goals to the KRS items and examined the examples for 'older preschoolers' to ensure accurate alignment with the intention of the standards is for children to acquire skills by the end of the preschool year and enter kindergarten with these skills. AIR reported that the revised KRS and VELs had strong alignment of 91% of items and 81% of standards. Changes to the KRS and VELs since 2013 led to greater alignment of constructs across both documents. The alignment of the 2015 KRS and revised VELs was strong (91% of items and 81% of standards) and much improved compared with 2013 KRS alignment with the prior VELs in which only 50% of the standards aligned to KRS. The reliable and validated kindergarten readiness survey will continue to assess progress of incoming kindergarten students over the course of the grant and beyond.

The 2015-2016 KRS was renamed as the Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4K!S). Vermont's new Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4K!S) is a 34-item survey kindergarten teachers complete for each kindergartner in their class during the first 6-8 weeks of school during the 2015-2016 school year. Responses are based on the teacher's observation of the child. The domains included in the R4K!S are:

1. Social and Emotional Development
2. Approaches to Learning
3. Communication
4. Cognitive Development - General Knowledge
5. Physical Health and Development

The health and wellness indicators incorporated in the R4K!S are aligned with the new Head Start Program Performance Standards, the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Ages Birth to Five*, the *Birth through Grade Three Vermont Early Learning Standards* as well as the Bright Futures recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Agency of Education reviewed the students who were in PDG high quality preschool programs during the 2016-2017 school year with the data of R4K!S compiled in Fall 2017. Of the 412 PDG eligible students served in 2016-2017, 148 had an R4K!S score submitted, 105 were deemed "ready for kindergarten." This equates to 71% of eligible students served in PDG high quality preschool programs were determined "ready for kindergarten."

**For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:**

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

N/A

## Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

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

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

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

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

(a) The Vermont Early Learning Standards were developed by a cross-section of early childhood development and education stakeholders, and approved by the State Board of Education, to better capture the essential areas of development and learning in the early childhood years from infancy through grade three. VELs is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as Next Generation Science Standards. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year AOE has facilitated multiple VELs trainings and workshops for early childhood professionals. In addition, during monitoring activities all PDG supported classrooms are asked to show evidence that their curricula was aligned with VELs.

(b) The Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services published two sets of child care licensing regulations for all regulated child care programs in Vermont: 1) *Licensing Regulations for Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs* and 2) *Licensing Regulations for Registered and Licensed Family Child Care Homes*. The changes include higher standards for health and safety, program curriculum, family support and teacher qualifications and development. All qualified PreK programs must meet program licensing standards as well as the prequalification standards outlined in Act 166.

(c) The AOE has offered significant professional development opportunities throughout the school year to support early childhood professionals in expanding their skills and knowledge to support students who are English language learners and students who have disabilities. These include collaborations with Puentes Culturales, the University of Vermont, and Metropolitan State University of Denver. Topics of these opportunities includes: *Supporting Young Child and Families Who are Racially, Ethnically, and Culturally Diverse*, *Supporting Young Children Who are Dual Language Learners and Their Families*, and *Supporting Learnings of Diverse Abilities and Their Families*.

(d) The Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, VT Agency of Human Services hosts the Bright Futures Child Care Information System which includes an online search engine of all regulated child care programs in VT, including all public and private prequalified prekindergarten education programs. Families and professionals can use this system to search for all types of programs, including for the availability of prequalified (high-quality) preschool programs.

(e) In late summer of 2015, revisions to the AOE requirements for Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education licensure requirements were adopted. The ECE endorsement was modeled on the NAEYC's 2010 standards for initial early childhood professional preparation and the ECSE endorsement is based on the Division for Early Childhood Council for Exceptional Children's initial preparation standards. The AOE, in collaboration with our community partners at Vermont Birth to Five, have developed a process for Early Childhood teachers in community-based programs otherwise meeting the Act 166 prequalification criteria to apply to be awarded Early Childhood Provisional licensure (valid for 2 years) and provided mentoring support to attain a VT Level 1 teaching license with ECE or ECSE endorsement. One cohort of 23 teachers was filled fall of 2015. A second cohort of 25 teachers has begun as of September 2016.

(f) During the 2017-2018 school year, improvements were made to teacher and administrator early education training and professional learning. They include: Early Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Teaching Strategies GOLD, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Ages and Stages (ASQ-3), Ages and Stages-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE), Environmental Rating Scale (ERS), Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (TEACH) and Vermont Early Learning Standards.

(g) The data governance structure incorporates a hierarchical set of committees and workgroups, including an executive leadership team, the Data Governance Council, and designated data stewards workgroups as deemed necessary. The Data Governance Council is composed of data "owners" from the Agency of Education, the Health Department, the Department of Mental Health, the Child Development Division, the Agency of Human Services as well as a representative of the Governor's Office, the Early Learning Challenge grant and Building Bright Futures. The data governance structure also includes external advisory committees that focus on policy, data and evaluation, and the SLDS system. AOE continued to make progress during 2017. The Agency of Education continues to verify the mapping of data elements to SLDS and to develop requirements with the goal towards having integration of early childhood data into SLDS by November of 2018.

(h) The Vermont Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (VECCAS) is in the final stages of approval. The VECCAS will be disseminated by the end of March 2018.

(i) The AOE released the VELS family engagement modules which include family activities, calendars, and resources on how to use the VELS.

(j) PDG subgrantees have been a priority group for AOE and AHS systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources. The PDG Leadership team which includes AOE and AHS officials have ensured to invite PDG subgrantees to early childhood trainings, meetings, and workgroups. Additionally, the PDG team facilitates an online community of practice that connects PDG subgrantees to resources, webinars, and professional development opportunities.

(k) To ensure subgrantees are delivering and meeting the high quality program criteria of PDG, significant technical assistance and one-on-one meetings have provided subgrantees with the support needed to implement and expand their high quality programs.

## 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.

Vermont has put in place highly detailed systems to ensure that all classrooms that are receiving PDG funds meet all of the 12 program criteria of a high-quality preschool program.

In March 2017, AOE hired a PDG Program Manager to oversee grant management, monitoring, and outreach. The PDG Program Manager is the first point of contact for subgrantees and potential applicants to answer questions of the 12 program criteria. The Program Manager works with subgrantees to ensure the program criteria are understood and ensure they are being implemented in each PDG supported classroom.

Applicants of PDG are required to complete a highly detailed application packet. This includes a scope of work, budget narrative and budget table. In the scope of work applicants were expected to discuss all 12 program criteria and the specific activities and tasks they will complete to support the criteria during the grant's period of performance. Furthermore, year four application materials were updated for the 2018-2019 school year. Applicants will need to break down each expense in even further detail to ensure funds are only being used for four-year-old students whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. The eight steps in the updated application materials include: 1) Application Information, 2) Program Requirements 3) Classrooms, Enrollment, and Eligibility, 4) Scope of Work, 5) Other Funding Sources, 6) Budget Narrative, 7) Budget Table, and 8) Sustainability Plan. The budget narrative portion of the application materials are the most comprehensive as it includes eight pages of excel sheets with multiple tables that require applicants to break down each expense being requested. Applications are then reviewed by the PDG Leadership Team to ensure all applicants have appropriate plans in place to ensure each classroom receiving PDG funds meets all twelve program criteria. PDG budgets and expenses are then reviewed during monitoring activities.

In addition to highly detailed application materials, AOE created a twelve page guidance and instructions document that is a resource for applicants and subgrantees. The document is posted on the AOE website and provides information around grant participation, program and fiscal requirements, the application process, the monitoring process, and additional resources. This document is another way that AOE ensures applicants and subgrantees have the necessary information to implement a high-quality preschool program using PDG funds.

Before applying to be a PDG subgrantee, all applicants must meet Vermont Act 166 requirements. These include having an Agency of Human Services, Department of Children and Families child care license that is in good regulatory standing, curricula that are aligned with VELs, professional development standards, and a licensed ECE or ECSE endorsed teacher by the State of Vermont. It is required under Act 166 that the public or private program receives and maintains at least one of the following quality program recognition standards:

- (i) National accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
- (ii) A minimum of four stars in Vermont's Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS), with at least two points in each of the five arenas; or
- (iii) Three stars in Vermont STARS if the program has a plan approved by the Department for Children and Families and the Secretary of Education to achieve four or more stars within two years, including at least two points in each of the five arenas.

All qualified programs are required to adhere to all applicable federal and state laws including, but not limited to, Part B of the Individuals With Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Many of the PDG program requirements are already required by child care licensing requirements and the Act 166 requirements including student to staff ratios (10:1), maximum class size (20 students), evidence based health and safety standards, coordinated IDEA Part B Section 619 services, and high-level staff qualifications. As an addition to Act 166 program requirements and child care licensing requirements, all subgrantees are required to complete a CLASS observation of each PDG supported classroom, as well as have instructional staff complete the CLASS introductory training.

Between June 2017 and December 2017 all seventeen PDG subgrantees were monitored by the PDG Program Manager through desk and onsite monitoring activities. During these monitoring activities subgrantees were required show evidence of all twelve PDG program criteria were being implemented in all classrooms receiving

PDG funds. This included confirming a full-day program that follows the local public school year calendar. Public school, community based, and Head Start programs were all monitored to the same standards, procedures and protocol.

In December 2017 PDG subgrantees met at the Agency of Education for the annual subgrantee meeting. During this time the twelve program criteria of PDG were discussed and subgrantees shared how they ensure each classroom is meeting these requirements.

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

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

Seventeen subgrantees are currently supporting 448 eligible PDG students in high-quality preschool programs. The cost per slot ranges from \$2,478.80 to \$19,223.09 with the average cost per slot being \$12,932.32. The large range in cost per slot is due to the diverse ways subgrantees are using PDG funds to implement high-quality preschool programs. For example, the smallest cost per slot (\$2,478.80) supports 25 students. This subgrantee only uses PDG funds for comprehensive services and transportation services. While our highest cost per slot (\$19,223.09) supports 22 students and uses PDG funds to extend to full day services which include salaries, benefits, supplies, and comprehensive services.

### 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.

1. As discussed above, the PDG Program Manager is responsible for the grant management of PDG. The PDG Program Manager coordinates directly with Early Childhood Directors, Program Coordinators, Superintendents, and Administrative Leadership who are subgrantees of PDG. During 2017, both parties communicated regularly with each other regarding program and fiscal requirements of the grant.
2. Subgrantees in Vermont have used the requirements of Act 166 and child care licensing to begin and sustain PreK programs in their communities. Subgrantees have used PDG funds to make drastic changes and updates to the infrastructure of their PreK programs to expand upon state requirements to create high quality preschool programs as defined by PDG. Many subgrantees have used funds to build the qualifications and knowledge of teaching staff through professional development and coaching, expand to full-day, hire highly qualified teachers, and introduce and expand comprehensive services and supports to families.
3. Vermont requires applicants to complete a highly detailed application process to ensure applicants are limiting administrative costs.
4. Between June 2017 and December 2017 all seventeen PDG subgrantees were monitored by the PDG Program Manager through desk and onsite monitoring activities. During these monitoring activities subgrantees were required to show evidence that all twelve PDG program criteria were being implemented in all classrooms receiving PDG funds. Public school, community based, and Head Start programs were all monitored to the same standards, procedures and protocol.
5. The State and subgrantees connect and collaborate through regular one-on-one technical assistance via phone and email communication, the online community of practice forum, annual subgrantee meeting, and through onsite monitoring visits.
6. Applicants of PDG are required to complete a highly detailed application packet. This includes a scope of work, budget narrative and budget table. In the scope of work applicants were expected to discuss all 12 program criteria and the specific activities and tasks they will complete to support the criteria during the grant's period of performance. Furthermore, year four application materials were updated for the 2018-2019 school year. Applicants will need to break down each expense in even further detail to ensure funds are only being used for four-year-old students whose family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. The eight steps in the updated application materials include: 1) Application Information, 2) Program Requirements 3) Classrooms, Enrollment, and Eligibility, 4) Scope of Work, 5) Other Funding Sources, 6) Budget Narrative, 7) Budget Table, and 8) Sustainability Plan. The budget narrative portion of the application materials are the most comprehensive as it includes eight pages of excel sheets with multiple tables that require applicants to break down each expense being requested. Applications are then reviewed by the PDG Leadership Team to ensure all applicants have appropriate plans in place to ensure each classroom receiving PDG funds meets all twelve program criteria. PDG budgets and expenses are then reviewed during monitoring activities.
7. As a part of the application process, all applicants are required to breakdown each classroom that is requesting PDG funds and provide estimates for the number of eligible PDG students to the total number students in a classroom. If an application shows all classrooms are 100% PDG eligible students, that applicant would be asked to provide further detail. For this data collection, subgrantees shared that 210 of the 448 PDG students currently being served were in economically diverse classrooms, which include students whose family income is above 200% of the federal poverty line.
8. Through PDG, Vermont's subgrantees have committed to serving eligible student in high-quality preschool programs, but also students who may need additional supports. Of the 448 PDG students being served in high-quality preschool programs: 106 of those students have an identified disability, 33 are English language learners, 77 are in the child welfare system, 7 who are from military families, 23 who are homeless, and 3 who are from migrant families.

9. As a rural state, recruitment in Vermont can be very challenging. Therefore, subgrantees have used PDG funds to hire Family Engagement Coordinators, Family Support Workers, and Social Workers to help with find hard-to-reach families. Additionally, these positions have then supported families by providing interpretation services, facilitating family engagement events, guiding families to appropriate social services, and supporting the involvement of families in their child's education.

#### **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).

The Vermont Early Learning Standards were developed by a cross-section of early childhood development and education stakeholders, and approved by the State Board of Education, to better capture the essential areas of development and learning in the early childhood years from infancy through grade three. VELs is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as Next Generation Science Standards. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year AOE has facilitated multiple VELs trainings and workshops for early childhood professionals which included professionals who work with infant and toddlers to elementary school teachers.

In December 2018, the Agency of Education hosted a *PreK to 3rd Grade Summit*, which invited different groups around the state including three current PDG subgrantees. This collaborative meeting discussed what it would take for Vermont to embrace a PreK to grade three approach throughout the state. What would be needed to build systemic capacity to cultivate effective educators and leaders? What would be the responsibilities at the local, regionals, and state level? This summit was another step is creating and implementing a comprehensive PreK to 3rd grade system in the state of Vermont.

## 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 Vermont did not meet the target of 713, subgrantees increased the number of improved slots by 36. Vermont continues to work with supervisory unions, districts and Head Start programs to apply to become a PDEG subgrantee. Many potential applicants have been hesitant due to the restricted use of funds for only 4-year-old students at or below 200% of the federal poverty line, while also ensuring classrooms are not segregated by income. Vermont is contributing matching funds over four years of this grant. The match includes VT General Fund Dollars, VT Education Fund Dollars and private philanthropic support. These matching funds will support the state level infrastructure related to the PDG including monitoring and technical assistance for subgrantees, and PreK direct services.

### **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.

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In December 2018, the Agency of Education hosted a *PreK to 3rd Grade Summit*, which invited different groups around the state including three current PDG subgrantees. This collaborative meeting discussed what it would take for Vermont to embrace a PreK to grade 3 approach throughout the state. What would be needed to build systemic capacity to cultivate effective educators and leaders? What would be the responsibilities at the local, regional, and state level? This summit was another step in creating and implementing a comprehensive PreK to 3rd grade system in the state of Vermont.

In addition, VT AOE released the VELs family learning modules and resources including a calendar, handouts, and activities to support families understanding and use of the VELs.

### **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.

Act 166 of 2014 provides for universal access to publicly funded prekindergarten education. All public and

private prekindergarten (PreK) education programs, including Head Start and public school operated programs, must meet specific requirements to operate a PreK program in Vermont. Each prekindergarten child whose parent or guardian enrolls the child at the child's district of residence is entitled to no less than ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually of publicly funded prekindergarten education at an available qualified prekindergarten education program operated by a public school or private program. PDG subgrantees are required to be qualified under Act 166, therefore the first ten hours of all PDG applicants budgets must account for the first ten hours of PreK services in their application. As seen in Vermont's workbook all 448 PDG slots are labeled as improved slots due to universal PreK.

## 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.

Of the \$7,313,193.00 that Vermont was awarded for Year 3, Vermont has expended \$4,284,409.06. Of the \$4,284,409.06, \$4,136,015.52 was distributed to subgrantees to support high-quality preschool programs.

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).

As subgrantees will only be applying for funds for the 2018-2019 school year from 7/1/18 to 12/31/18, we are expecting a lower amount being spent by subgrantees, as opposed to the expenses related to a full school year.

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.

Subgrantees have used PDG funds to build internal infrastructure for their PreK programs with their best effort that these programs can continue after the end of the grant's period of performance. Though this has been a significant challenge, the State will continue to support subgrantees in finding ways to maintain their high-quality programs.

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.

After an onsite monitoring visit of one subgrantee, the subgrantee was asked to amend their grant which included revising their budget narrative and budget table to accurately represent the classrooms being supported by PDEG. The subgrantee amended their grant and it was approved the the AOE. The subgrantee will continue to be monitored.