

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-5335



APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE

Preschool Development Grants - Expansion

CFDA # 84.419B

PR/Award # S419B150035

Grants.gov Tracking#: GRANT11769577

OMB No. 1810-0718, Expiration Date: 02/28/2015

Closing Date: Oct 24, 2014

Table of Contents

Form	Page
1. Application for Federal Assistance SF-424	e3
2. Assurances Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)	e6
3. Disclosure Of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	e8
4. ED GEPA427 Form	e9
Attachment - 1 (1236-GEPA_427)	e10
5. Grants.gov Lobbying Form	e11
6. ED Abstract Narrative Form	e12
Attachment - 1 (1235-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart2Abstract)	e13
7. Project Narrative Form	e14
Attachment - 1 (1240-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart3Narrative)	e15
8. Other Narrative Form	e16
Attachment - 1 (1237-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart5bBudget)	e17
Attachment - 2 (1238-App_Assurances _Certifications_AND_Accountability_Transparency_Reporting_Assurances)	e18
Attachment - 3 (1239-Appendix)	e19
9. Budget Narrative Form	e20
Attachment - 1 (1234-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart4BudgetNarrative)	e21
10. Form ED_524_Budget_1_2-V1.2.pdf	e22
11. Form ED_SF424_Supplement_1_2-V1.2.pdf	e24

This application was generated using the PDF functionality. The PDF functionality automatically numbers the pages in this application. Some pages/sections of this application may contain 2 sets of page numbers: one set created by the applicant and the other set created by e-Application's PDF functionality. Page numbers created by the e-Application PDF functionality will be preceded by the letter e (for example, e1, e2, e3, etc.).

There were problems converting one or more of the attachments. These are: 1234-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart4BudgetNarrative.pdf, 1240-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart3Narrative.pdf, 1235-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart2Abstract.pdf, 1239-Appendix.pdf, 1238-App_Assurances_Certifications_AND_Accountability_Transparency_Reporting_Assurances.pdf, 1236-GEPA_427.pdf, 1237-LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart5bBudget.xls

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 1. Type of Submission:**

- Preapplication
- Application
- Changed/Corrected Application

*** 2. Type of Application:**

- New
- Continuation
- Revision

* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

* Other (Specify):

*** 3. Date Received:**

10/24/2014

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Louisiana Department of Education

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

72-6000745

* c. Organizational DUNS:

8059209980000

d. Address:

* Street1: 1201 North Third Street

Street2:

* City: Baton Rouge

County/Parish:

* State:

LA: Louisiana

Province:

* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

* Zip / Postal Code: 70802-5243

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Office of the Superintendent

Division Name:

Early Childhood

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

Ms.

* First Name:

Jenna

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Conway

Suffix:

Title: Assistant Superintendent, Early Childhood

Organizational Affiliation:

* Telephone Number: 225-342-3462

Fax Number:

* Email: Jenna.Conway@la.gov

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

*** Other (specify):**

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

U.S. Department of Education

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

84.419

CFDA Title:

Preschool Development Grants

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ED-GRANTS-102314-002

*** Title:**

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Preschool Development Grants: Expansion Grants CFDA Number 84.419B

13. Competition Identification Number:

84-419B2015-1

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Increasing Early Childhood Choice for Louisiana Families

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant

* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date:

* b. End Date:

18. Estimated Funding (\$):

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="32,000,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="32,000,000.00"/>

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on
- b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

Yes No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an Internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: * First Name:
Middle Name:
* Last Name:
Suffix:

* Title:

* Telephone Number: Fax Number:

* Email:

* Signature of Authorized Representative: * Date Signed:

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

NOTE: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee-3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.
19. Will comply with the requirements of Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104) which prohibits grant award recipients or a sub-recipient from (1) Engaging in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect (2) Procuring a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect or (3) Using forced labor in the performance of the award or subawards under the award.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL <input type="text" value="John Hanley"/>	TITLE <input type="text" value="State Superintendent of Education"/>
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION <input type="text" value="Louisiana Department of Education"/>	DATE SUBMITTED <input type="text" value="10/24/2014"/>

Standard Form 424B (Rev. 7-97) Back

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Complete this form to disclose lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C.1352

Approved by OMB
0348-0046

1. * Type of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. grant <input type="checkbox"/> c. cooperative agreement <input type="checkbox"/> d. loan <input type="checkbox"/> e. loan guarantee <input type="checkbox"/> f. loan insurance	2. * Status of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. bid/offer/application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. initial award <input type="checkbox"/> c. post-award	3. * Report Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. initial filing <input type="checkbox"/> b. material change
4. Name and Address of Reporting Entity: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prime <input type="checkbox"/> SubAwardee * Name: Louisiana Department of Education * Street 1: 1221 North Third Street Street 2: _____ * City: Baton Rouge State: _____ Zip: 70802-5243 Congressional District, if known: _____		
5. If Reporting Entity in No.4 is Subawardee, Enter Name and Address of Prime: _____		
6. * Federal Department/Agency: U. S. Department of Education	7. * Federal Program Name/Description: Preschool Development Grants CFDA Number, if applicable: 84.419	
8. Federal Action Number, if known: _____	9. Award Amount, if known: \$ _____	
10. a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant: Prefix: _____ * First Name: N/A Middle Name: _____ * Last Name: N/A Suffix: _____ * Street 1: _____ Street 2: _____ * City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____		
b. Individual Performing Services (including address if different from No. 10a) Prefix: _____ * First Name: N/A Middle Name: _____ * Last Name: N/A Suffix: _____ * Street 1: _____ Street 2: _____ * City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____		
11. Information requested through this form is authorized by title 31 U.S.C. section 1352. This disclosure of lobbying activities is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed by the fier above when the transaction was made or entered into. This disclosure is required pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352. This information will be reported to the Congress semi-annually and will be available for public inspection. Any person who fails to file the required disclosure shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.		
* Signature: John Hanley * Name: Prefix: _____ * First Name: N/A Middle Name: _____ * Last Name: N/A Suffix: _____ Title: _____ Telephone No.: _____ Date: 10/24/2014		

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Standard Form - LLL (Rev. 7-97)

PR/Award # S419B130035

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct

description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.

Optional - You may attach 1 file to this page.

GEPA 427.pdf

Add Attachment

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View Attachment

Section 427 of GEPA

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age.

LDE will provide equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted programs to students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

LDE will respond in a timely, reasonable and equitable manner to overcome any barriers that might limit equitable access, as described above.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION Louisiana Department of Education	
* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Prefix: Mr.	* First Name: John Middle Name:
* Last Name: White	Suffix:
* Title: State Superintendent of Education	
* SIGNATURE: John Hanley	* DATE: 10/24/2014

INCREASING EARLY CHILDHOOD CHOICE FOR LOUISIANA FAMILIES**Louisiana Department of Education**

Background: Louisiana believes children thrive in a unified, high-quality early childhood care and education system where there are high expectations for children's achievement and progress; families who are able to choose the option best suited for their children; and knowledgeable, skilled teachers who support children's learning and development toward kindergarten readiness. As a result of groundbreaking state legislation (Act 3, 2012), Louisiana is unifying preschool, Head Start, and child care programs through local early childhood networks (Community Network Pilots) that ensure at-risk children have equitable access to high-quality preschool. With close support from the state, half of Louisiana's parishes have already established these local networks, or consortium of early learning providers, and have made demonstrable progress in three areas:

- **Collaborative Leadership:** Developing a collaborative leadership structure including child care, Head Start, public preschool, and nonpublic preschool leaders that develops plans, tracks progress, and continually strives for better kindergarten readiness outcomes;
- **Teacher Support:** Providing training, coaching, and evidence-based professional development to help all teachers improve interactions and instruction of young children;
- **Coordinated Enrollment:** Coordinating information and applications across all programs to make it easier for families to access quality options.

The remaining communities are currently learning from existing Community Network Pilots and are expected to launch their own in early 2015.

Project Overview: Louisiana seeks \$32 million over 4 years to expand the state's existing high-quality preschool programs in high-need communities through a parent choice model, and build a technology system to consistently measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers. As part of Louisiana's ambitious and achievable plan, the state will work to achieve the following goals:

- **Increased Access through Choice:** Provide families of more than 4,500 at-risk children in Louisiana equitable access to high-quality early childhood choices in diverse settings including child care, Head Start, nonpublic and public schools;

Louisiana: Project Abstract

- **A Unified System:** Unify the early childhood system by empowering local leaders to coordinate efforts to improve child outcomes;
- **Sustainable Funding:** Transition to sustainable funding for high-quality programs; and
- **Improvement and Accountability:** Improve quality and access, measure success with outcomes-based program report cards, and hold local leaders accountable.

Project Outcomes: Louisiana has an ambitious and achievable plan that will decrease the four-year-old access gap in the state and provide more families choices for preschool. Louisiana will use \$23.7 million to open 1800 new preschool seats, serving more than 4,500 at-risk children (Table 1). In addition, Louisiana will use \$7.4 million to improve services for nearly 6,000 children (Table 2). To support this work, Louisiana will leverage \$ [] in state matching funds that support Community Network Pilots, representing a [] % match of federal funds.

Table 1: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
Continued from Prior Year	---	340	1000	1440
Total Seats Funded	340	1000	1440	1800

Table 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Improved Seats Funded	442	1300	1872	2340

High-Need Communities: In year 1, the state will subgrant with high-need communities: Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita), Iberville, Lincoln, Orleans, and Rapides to provide 340 new slots. These communities were chosen based on three factors:

1. **Demonstrated Success as a Consortium of Early Learning Providers (Community Network Pilot):** Capacity to coordinate enrollment and implement a parent choice model as demonstrated by participation as lead agency in a consortium of local providers;
2. **Demonstrated Need through Unmet Parent Demand:** Demonstrated need for additional preschool seats, as determined through an annual application process; and
3. **Communities Most At-Risk:** Designation as a high need community according to the Louisiana State/Tulane University’s state report on *Early Childhood Risk and Reach*.

In years 2-4, the state will continue to support existing slots funded by the grant as well as run a competitive process to add up to 660 new slots each year, using the three criteria above.



Abstract

The abstract narrative must not exceed one page and should use language that will be understood by a range of audiences. For all projects, include the project title (if applicable), goals, expected outcomes and contributions for research, policy, practice, etc. Include population to be served, as appropriate. For research applications, also include the following:

- Theoretical and conceptual background of the study (i.e., prior research that this investigation builds upon and that provides a compelling rationale for this study)
- Research issues, hypotheses and questions being addressed
- Study design including a brief description of the sample including sample size, methods, principals dependent, independent, and control variables, and the approach to data analysis.

[Note: For a non-electronic submission, include the name and address of your organization and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person for this project.]

You may now Close the Form

You have attached 1 file to this page, no more files may be added. To add a different file, you must first delete the existing file.

* Attachment:

LouisianaPreschoolGrantPart2Abstract.pdf

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

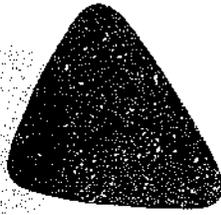
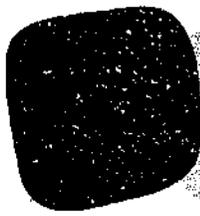
View Attachment

Close Form

Project Narrative File(s)

* Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename:

To add more Project Narrative File attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.



Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

(b)(6)

Preschool Development Grant – Expansion Grant Application: Louisiana
Increasing Early Childhood Choice for Louisiana Families

October 15, 2014

John White, State Superintendent of Education

 DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION
Louisiana Believes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables and Figures..... 3

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms 4

A. Executive Summary 9

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Increasing Early Childhood Choice for
 Louisiana Families 20

 Louisiana Plan: Goals..... 22

 Louisiana Plan: Scope of Work 23

 Louisiana Plan: Timeline..... 24

B. Commitment to State Preschool Programs..... 25

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Commitment to State Preschool Programs 38

C. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs 39

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs..... 48

D. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs 49

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs 56

E. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships 57

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and
 Ensuring Strong Partnerships 67

F. Alignment within a Birth through Third Grade Continuum..... 69

 Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Coherence Across a Birth through Third Grade
 Continuum 76

G. Budget and Sustainability 77

List of Appendices 84

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table A. 1: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant	14
Table A. 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant	15
Table A. 3: Program Quality Components of LA 4 and NSECD	16
Table A. 4: Louisiana Matching Funds.....	20
Table B. 1: Early Learning and Development Standards Domains	26
Table B. 2: Four Year Funding History of State Preschool Programs.....	27
Table B. 3: Funding Community Network Pilots	28
Table C. 1: Benefits of Early Childhood Accountability Technology System.....	42
Table C. 2: Program Quality Components of LA 4 and NSECD	43
Table C. 3: Early Learning and Development Standards Domains	46
Table D. 1: Statewide Need for Early Childhood Services	49
Table D. 2: Community Characteristics of Subgrantees.....	50
Table D. 3: Reduction in Gap between Demand and Supply with Grant Funding.....	51
Table D. 4: Selection Process for High-Need Communities	53
Table D. 5: Projected New Seats with Preschool Development Expansion Grant.....	53
Table D. 6: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Development Expansion Grant.....	54
Table E. 1: Roles of the State and Subgrantees	58
Table E. 2: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant.....	62
Table F. 1: Louisiana’s Strategy to Increase Coherence between Early Childhood and Early Elementary Systems.....	71
Table G. 1: Louisiana Matching Funds.....	78
Table G. 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant	79
Table G. 3: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant	80
Table G. 4: Reduction in Gap between Demand and Supply with Grant Funding.....	81
Table G. 5: Total per Child Funding.....	81
Figure B. 1: Distribution of Quality Rated Child Care Centers.....	33
Figure D. 1: Geographical Diversity of Subgrantees	50
Figure G. 1: Comparison of Per Child Funding.....	77

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

8(g) Preschool Program: Created by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) in 1988 as the Model Early Childhood Program, the 8(g) preschool program is a block grant to school districts serving approximately 2,500 at-risk-four-year-olds. The 8(g) preschool program maintains the same high-quality standards as the primary state preschool program, LA 4.

Act 3: Act 3 (2012), the **Early Childhood Education Act**, creates an Early Childhood Care and Education Network to improve kindergarten readiness in Louisiana. Act 3 requires BESE to unify the early childhood system under a set of high expectations for all publicly-funded early learning providers serving children from birth to age five. Act 3 also requires a uniform early learning assessment and accountability system, using letter grades to measure program quality, and must be fully implemented by the start of the 2015-16 school year.

At-risk: Children in families with income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, with disabilities, in foster care, who are English language learners, and/or experiencing homelessness.

BESE: The **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE)** is the policymaking body for all Louisiana public elementary and secondary schools, now with oversight for all publicly-funded early childhood programs.

CCDF Transition: Refers to the transition of lead agency authority for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), a federal program that assists low-income families in obtaining child care, from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to the Department of Education (LDE). The CCDF transition will be completed by July 2015.

CDA: The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally-recognized credential for early childhood teachers. The credential is based on a core set of competency standards, field-based experience, a portfolio submission, an assessment, and an observation.

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: Child Care Resource & Referral agencies support families in finding appropriate child care, and support child care centers through training and technical assistance.

Children's Cabinet: The Children's Cabinet, located in the Office of the Governor, coordinates policy across the multiple state departments providing services for young people. The state's

Louisiana: Glossary

Early Childhood Advisory Council is currently delegated to the Children's Cabinet by executive order.

CLASS: The *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*, or *CLASS*, is an observation-based instrument that assesses teacher and child interactions that indicates child outcomes. Louisiana is field-testing an early childhood accountability system that bases ratings on *CLASS* observations.

Community Network Pilot: Community Network Pilots are the local consortia implementing Act 3 (2012). These consortia of early childhood providers must represent public and nonpublic preschool programs, child care, and Head Start, with a coordinating partner that serves as fiscal agent. Community Network Pilots have launched in cohorts, with cohort 1 launched July 2013; cohort 2 launched April 2014; and cohort 3 expected to launch January 2015.

CONNECT: To support teachers to implement the state's Early Learning and Development Standards (*ELDS*), the LDE offers *CONNECT*, a free, online course that provides an overview of the *ELDS* and how the standards connect to instruction and assessment.

Coordinated Enrollment: Coordinated enrollment is a locally managed system where Community Network Pilots coordinate across the four areas of enrollment to reduce burdens on families and maximize access.

1. **Coordinated Information Campaign:** Inform families about the availability of publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs serving children four years of age or younger;
2. **Coordinated Eligibility Determination:** Coordinate enrollment, eligibility criteria, and waiting lists to ensure that families are referred to other available publicly-funded early childhood programs should they be ineligible for or unable to access their primary choice;
3. **Coordinated Application:** Conduct a unified application process so families can easily indicate their enrollment choices for publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs; **AND**
4. **Matching Based on Preference:** Enroll at-risk children, using available public funds, based upon stated family preferences. (*e.g., a family ranks their preference of sites and communities match the family to their highest ranked preference available*).

DCFS: The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the state agency currently responsible for oversight of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), which is transitioning to the Department of Education.

Demonstrated Need: Determined based on a community's requests for LA 4 and NSFCD seats that the state was unable to fund.

Developing Skills Checklist: The Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) evaluates the skills that children develop from preschool through the end of kindergarten. BESE currently requires all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to administer the DSC as a kindergarten entry assessment within the first 30 days of the start of school.

DHH: The Department of Health and Hospitals (DHII) leads the IDEA Part C program as well as the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council: Act 868 (2014) created the Advisory Council to provide input and guidance to BESE on matters pertaining to the development and implementation of rules, regulations, bulletins, policies or standards related to all publicly-funded early care and education programs. The Advisory Council will be established October 2014.

Early Childhood Risk and Reach Report: *Early Childhood Risk and Reach in Louisiana* is a report created by the Louisiana State University/Tulane Early Childhood Data and Policy Center to illustrate the areas in the state where children are most at-risk for being unhealthy and entering kindergarten already behind.

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS): The Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are Louisiana's comprehensive standards for children birth to age five.

ECERS-R/ITERS-R: The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised and Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised are assessment tools used to measure the process quality of early childhood settings. Louisiana currently uses ECERS-R and ITERS-R as part of its Quality Rating and Improvement System.

IDEA Part B: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B provides funding for children age three to five with special needs.

IDEA Part C: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C provides funding for infants and toddlers with special needs.

Louisiana: Glossary

LA 4: Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program with high-quality components:

teachers compensated at rates equal to local kindergarten teachers; small classroom sizes of 20 children; 10:1 child to adult ratios; full day program; professional development for teachers, and support services for children and families. LA 4 serves more than 16,000 at-risk four-year-olds each year.

LDE: The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) is currently responsible for all public and nonpublic preschool, elementary, and secondary school programs. In July 2015, the LDE will be responsible for all publicly-funded early childhood programs, including child care and Head Start.

Louisiana Believes: *Louisiana Believes* is the state's strategic plan for education from birth to 12th grade, with the vision that every one of Louisiana's children should be on track to college or a professional career.

Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA): An assessment administered upon entry into kindergarten to determine what children know and are able to do, including their disposition toward learning. Louisiana state law mandates the use of a KEA at the start of kindergarten, and currently the KEA in Louisiana is the *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)*.

Mental Health Consultation: A research-based coaching model targeted to developing social-emotional and executive function skills in children by working with teachers through weekly visits.

MIECHV: Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program supports pregnant women and families and helps parents of children birth to five tap the resources and develop the skills they need to raise children who are physically, socially and emotionally healthy and ready to learn.

NSECD: The Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD) provides high-quality four-year-old preschool programs in approved nonpublic schools or child care centers. NSECD meets the same high-quality standards as LA 4 and serves more than 1,500 at-risk four-year-olds each year.

PLCs: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a group of educators that meet regularly, share expertise, and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills and child outcomes.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care

Louisiana: Glossary

and education settings, primarily in child care and Head Start. In Louisiana, the QRIS is called Quality Start.

Quality Start: see Quality Rating and Improvement System

School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC): A series of tax credits for families, child care providers, child care directors and staff, and businesses that support child care. The SRTC are incentives for families to choose quality-rated centers and for providers to participate in the state's QRIS program, Quality Start. SRTC provide approximately \$12 million each year to support child care.

Teacher Leaders: Highly-effective educators who serve as school leaders assisting other teachers to plan high-quality lessons, reflect on student data to inform instruction, and improve professional practice.

Teaching Strategies GOLD: *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is an authentic, observation-based assessment system for children birth through kindergarten for all areas of development and learning. Louisiana is currently piloting *Teaching Strategies GOLD* with the Community Network Pilots.

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: Louisiana believes promoting quality schooling starts with fostering an environment in which quality thrives: high expectations for children’s achievement and progress; families who are able to choose the option best suited for their children; and knowledgeable, skilled teachers who continue to learn and grow throughout their careers. These conditions are the hallmark of Louisiana’s premiere preschool programs – known as LA 4 in public schools and NSECD in nonpublic schools and child care.

However, thousands of at-risk Louisiana families are unable to choose a high quality preschool option that best meets their children’s needs. To maximize new funds such as the Preschool Development Expansion Grants, the state must ensure not only that new seats are provided, but that they are offered in a way that assures both quality and access for the most high-need communities.

Louisiana is currently in a multi-year effort to unify its early childhood system and improve kindergarten readiness. To address a fragmented early childhood system that prepares only 54% of children for kindergarten, Louisiana passed a law (Act 3, 2012) to unify preschool, Head Start and child care programs into a statewide early childhood network (Appendix A. 1). By empowering families with choice and ensuring easy access to high quality options, the state seeks to start every child on track for success. To build on this effort, Louisiana seeks \$32 million over four years from the Preschool Development Expansion Grant to enable high-need communities, representing both rural and urban populations, to expand preschool choice models where parents can choose a high quality option from an array of public school, nonpublic school, Head Start, and child care settings.

In implementing Act 3, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) established an ambitious and achievable plan to create local early childhood networks (Community Network Pilots) comprised of child care, Head Start, publicly funded private preschools, and public school pre-kindergartens under a unified system of academic and development standards, enrollment, and teacher preparation expectations. These local networks, which are expected to serve all publicly-funded at-risk children birth to five, are empowered to pilot innovative approaches to increasing quality and improving access. Louisiana believes those closest to children and families are best positioned to improve outcomes. Each network functions as a consortium of

Louisiana: Section A

early learning providers, with a coordinating partner serving as fiscal agent. As a consortium, they are expected to:

- **Lead Collaboratively:** Develop a collaborative leadership structure that represents child care, Head Start, public preschool and nonpublic preschool leaders;
- **Support Teachers:**
 - Observe and provide feedback to teachers using a highly-regarded, research-based tool (*CLASS*) and ensure teachers have access to evidence-based professional development; and
 - Use a common assessment to evaluate all children (*Teaching Strategies GOLD*); and
- **Coordinate Enrollment:** Coordinate information and applications across all programs for families.

These Community Network Pilots are also informing the state's efforts to develop a consistent way of measuring program quality using program-based report cards to provide useful information for families and providers.

Louisiana is poised to address gaps in preschool quality and access as half of the state's parishes have already launched Community Network Pilots and the other half intends to join in early 2015 (Appendix A. 2). Now the challenge is to secure funding to address unmet need. Currently in Louisiana, families of approximately 2,300 at-risk four-year-olds have requested seats, but are not being served. An additional 2,700 at-risk four-year-olds could qualify, but are not being served. The Preschool Development Expansion Grant will increase choice and access for those families seeking high-quality preschool, but unable to get it, starting with high-need communities. Following implementation in these communities, Louisiana will expand to other high-need communities through a competitive process.

Through the Preschool Development Expansion Grants, Louisiana will capitalize on the strengths of its existing preschool programs and innovative work to unify the state's early childhood system, specifically building on:

1. **Existing Quality:** Louisiana's preschool programs (LA 4 and NSECD) already meet high-quality criteria;
2. **Current Efforts to Unify Early Childhood Through High Expectations:** As a result of Act 3, Louisiana is unifying its early childhood system under uniform high-quality

Louisiana: Section A

standards developed by Louisiana educators, teacher expectations, and early learning assessment practices, thereby ensuring effective use of grant funding;

3. **Coordinated Access through Choice:** Louisiana already offers a choice model for families seeking high-quality preschool. Louisiana is in a unique position to leverage existing state and federal school-based and community-based preschool programs to accomplish even more with the Preschool Development Expansion Grant; and
4. **Community Network Pilots:** These local consortia of providers, already in place, have the infrastructure and capacity to maximize grant funding through serving more children and improving existing preschool quality. The Community Network Pilots have the infrastructure and relationships to train and support teachers to improve.

Louisiana requests \$32 million to expand the state's existing high-quality infrastructure and preschool programs in high-need communities, and build a technology system to consistently measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers. **Louisiana's ambitious and achievable plan will accomplish:**

1. **Increased Access through Choice:** Provide families of more than 4,500 at-risk children in Louisiana access to high-quality early childhood choices;
2. **A Unified System:** Unify the early childhood system by empowering local leaders to coordinate enrollment and support teachers;
3. **Sustainable Funding:** Transition to sustainable funding for high-quality programs; and
4. **Improvement and Accountability:** Support improvements to quality and access, and hold local leaders and programs accountable.

A. 1. Building on State Progress

Louisiana's ambitious and achievable plan builds upon the state's progress in providing voluntary, high-quality preschool programs through public and nonpublic providers. In 1988, BESE began the 8(g) Model Early Childhood Program to serve at-risk four-year-olds. Prior to Act 3, Louisiana created its primary state-funded preschool program, known as LA 4, in 2001. Although 8(g) and LA 4 are supported by different funding sources, the LDE has established identical program quality requirements; thus this application typically just references LA 4. In addition to LA 4, the state provides parents of at-risk children with access to quality nonpublic school and child care classrooms through the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development

Louisiana: Section A

(NSECD) program. NSECD demonstrates that high-quality preschool can be offered in community-based settings.

Both LA 4 and NSECD have a history of quality and achievement, with research demonstrating lasting cognitive benefits to children through the eighth grade (Appendix A. 3). Together, these programs serve more than 17,000 four-year-olds in high-quality preschool annually (41% of at-risk four-year-olds in Louisiana), but have done so through multiple, fragmented funding streams and applications for families. The Louisiana Legislature enacted Act 3, to address the fragmentation and unify the system to drive better child outcomes across all programs, and create a coordinated enrollment system for families.

The LDE, which has oversight for both programs, recently unified both child eligibility and program requirements for these two programs. As a result, both are tightly aligned with the quality requirements of the grant, with program components including:

- High staff qualifications - teachers must have a bachelor degree and be certified;
- Low child to teacher ratios and small class sizes, 1:10 with a group size of 20; and
- Full day 6-hour program with comprehensive services (Appendix A. 4).

In addition, the LDE conducts an annual shared process for all communities to indicate family demand for seats in high-quality preschool, which will be done through coordinated enrollment in every community in the future. The state will use this process to ensure new seats provided through this grant will be offered through diverse delivery, based on parent preference. Community Network Pilots bring together early childhood leaders from schools, Head Starts, and child care centers to ensure resources support quality in diverse delivery.

A. 2. Providing Voluntary, High-Quality Preschool in High-Need Communities

To build on Louisiana's current progress and expand access to high-quality preschool, the state will subgrant funds to high-need communities where:

1. Families are asking for more preschool seats, and
2. The lead agency for the local early childhood consortium is prepared to scale and offer new seats through a parent choice driven model.

In year 1, this includes subgrantees that represent both rural and urban communities from different areas of the state: Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita), Iberville, Lincoln, Orleans, and Rapides. These communities are leading the state in coordinating enrollment, improving the

Louisiana: Section A

quality of teaching and learning through local coaching and support systems, and developing collaborative leadership structures. The subgrantees were chosen based on three factors:

- 1. Demonstrated Success as a Consortium of Early Learning Providers (Community Network Pilot):** Capacity to lead collaboratively, support all teachers to provide quality, coordinate enrollment and implement a parent choice model as demonstrated by participation as lead agency in a consortium of local providers, specifically known as Community Network Pilots in Louisiana;
- 2. Demonstrated Need through Unmet Parent Demand:** Demonstrated need for additional preschool seats, as determined through the annual application for LA 4 and NSECD; and
- 3. Communities Most At-Risk:** Designation as a high need community according to the Louisiana State University/Tulane University Early Childhood Policy and Data Center's statewide report on *Early Childhood Risk and Reach* (Appendix A. 5).

By partnering with these communities in year one, the grant funds will be expediently deployed to offer choice to high-quality preschool to families in high-need communities, through a coordinated early childhood system, as early as Spring 2015 so that children can enroll in August 2015. Louisiana can quickly and confidently fund these communities to offer parents high-quality preschool choices because these organizations have the relationships, capacity, and experience from participating as a Community Network Pilot to increase the quality of and access to their preschool programs. Finally, four of these communities are actively working with the state to field test the new program report cards, meaning that they will be prepared to offer more valuable information about program quality to families, starting as early as 2015 (Appendix A. 6).

For years two through four, Louisiana would partner with additional subgrantees through a competitive process. These additional subgrantees would have to meet the same criteria as the original communities (e.g., Demonstrated Success as Local Consortia, Demonstrated Need, and Communities Most At-Risk). Because every community is expected to have local consortia in place by July 2015, more communities would qualify under Demonstrated Success as a Local Consortia.

Louisiana: Section A

A. 3. Increasing Number of At-Risk Children Served in High-Need Communities

As a result of the grant funding, Louisiana will increase preschool seats to serve more than 4,500 additional at-risk children in high-quality preschool programs over the four year grant period, as shown in Table A. 1. Closing the gap between parent demand for and availability of quality preschool seats is key to improving kindergarten readiness in Louisiana; therefore the state intends to use more almost three-fourths (\$23.7M) of the grant to create new seats. At full scale in year four, the grant funding will reduce the statewide gap between seats requested by parents and seats provided by 36%, and completely eliminate it in one of the subgrantees (Rapides).

Equally important, Louisiana intends to fund these seats at a level equitable to that of kindergarten to ensure quality, whether the seat is in a public school, nonpublic school, Head Start or child care program. These seats will be funded at the target rate for quality, which in Louisiana is \$5,185 per child, per academic year for four-year-olds. Currently, the LDE is working on a multi-year effort through Act 3 to improve all publicly-funded seats by creating a sustainable funding model that addresses the gap between parent demand for and the availability of high-quality preschool options. Using this grant to fund seats at the target rate will help ensure quality outcomes and support the state’s transition to a funding model that sustains quality for all children.

Table A. 1: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
Continued from Prior Year	---	340	1000	1440
Total Seats Funded	340	1000	1440	1800

In addition to creating new preschool seats, the subgrantees will improve the overall quality of preschool programs by:

- Providing comprehensive services to families served in the new seats; and
- Providing evidence-based coaching to teachers in new classrooms and existing classrooms.

The subgrantees will be able to leverage existing local funding and Community Network Pilot funding, along with grant funding (\$7.4M), to provide coaching to teachers serving an additional 30% of children. These efforts will ensure that children and teachers in classrooms outside of the grant funding will benefit from the additional supports and investments, the benefits of which

Louisiana: Section A

will endure beyond the life of the grant. Table A. 2 shows the number of improved seats impacted by the grant, with almost 6,000 children benefitting from the improved seats over the four year grant period.

Table A. 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Improved Seats Funded	442	1300	1872	2340

To ensure equitable access to the new seats, the state will support the subgrantees in their outreach and communication efforts to provide families with information and coordinate enrollment processes. Currently, Community Network Pilots are implementing coordinated enrollment, which involves:

- **Coordinated Information Campaigns:** Informing families in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way about the availability of publicly-funded early childhood care and education programs, serving children four years of age or younger;
- **Coordinated Eligibility Determination:** Coordinating enrollment, eligibility criteria, and waiting lists to ensure that families are referred to other available publicly-funded early childhood programs should they be ineligible for or unable to access their primary choice;
- **Coordinated Applications:** Conduct a unified application process so families can easily indicate enrollment choices for publicly-funded early childhood education programs; and
- **Matching Based on Preference:** Enrolling at-risk children, using available public funds, based upon stated family preferences (e.g., a family ranks their preference for a provider and communities match the family to their highest ranked preference available.).

Coordinated enrollment will help to ensure that providers meet families where they are at: families will be provided with useful information about programs in a language they understand in ways that are familiar to them, whether through a website or a trusted community institution like a church. Doing so will help ensure all available seats are filled by eligible children, and that families are provided with simplified methods for determining their eligibility and expressing their choice. This work will lead to increased access, even for families that may be traditionally hard to reach (Appendix A. 7).

Louisiana: Section A

A. 4. High-Quality Preschool Components

The state of Louisiana’s preschool programs, LA 4 and NSECD, currently meet all of the characteristics specified in the definition of high-quality preschool programs, as shown in Table A. 3 (Appendix A. 4). Any early learning provider receiving new seats funded through the grant would meet the same quality requirements and undergo the same state monitoring processes (Appendix A. 8). The state will monitor the quality of new seats created through this grant in the same way it currently does for LA 4 and NSECD programs.

Table A. 3: Program Quality Components of LA 4 and NSECD

High-Quality Components	LA 4	NSECD
High staff qualifications, including teachers with a bachelor degree	✓	✓
High-quality professional development for all staff	✓	✓
Child-to-instructional staff ratio of 10:1	✓	✓
Class size of no more than 20	✓	✓
Full day program	✓	✓
Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities	✓	✓
Research-based, age appropriate instruction, curricula, and learning environments aligned to the state’s Early Learning and Development Standards	✓	✓
Individualized accommodations and supports for children	✓	✓
Instructional staff salaries equal to local public kindergarten teachers	✓	✓
Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement	✓	✓
Comprehensive services for children	✓	✓
Evidence-based health and safety standards	✓	✓

Through Act 3, quality in Louisiana now extends beyond the preschool program requirements. The Community Network Pilots are improving quality through teacher supports and increased focus on:

- Planning high-quality lessons based on the *ELDS*;

Louisiana: Section A

- Adult-child interactions; and
- Reliable assessment on an ongoing basis.

The Community Network Pilot system situates Louisiana in a unique position to ensure grant funding is maximized and achieves high-quality outcomes for children (Appendix A. 2).

A. 5. Expectations for Kindergarten Readiness

In 2011, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) established a statewide comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness (Appendix A. 9). All of the state's work to unify the early childhood system is intended to improve kindergarten readiness for all children. As required by law, the state annually assesses kindergarten readiness against the definition, using the comprehensive *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)* as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) (Appendix A. 10). In addition, the state requires *DIBELS-Next* to be used in kindergarten to support early literacy improvement statewide.

As required by Act 3, Louisiana is building a report card system to measure the quality of all early childhood programs as well as the support provided by the Community Network Pilots (Appendix A. 6). To ensure all programs are conducting ongoing, authentic assessment of children to help them make progress towards kindergarten readiness, the LDE is developing a comprehensive early learning assessment system using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. In 2014-15, the state is field testing a report card system that demonstrates whether programs are using assessment in an appropriate, authentic, and accurate way to support children's learning and development.

Louisiana will build on its current strengths, the momentum of the Community Network Pilots, and the state's intensive focus to improve kindergarten readiness in order to sustain gains earned in early childhood through the third grade. The strategy reflects the state's approach to supporting teachers through a continuous loop where teachers:

1. **Set Goals:** Set ambitious goals for child achievement;
2. **Plan & Teach:** Prepare lessons based on the *ELDS* and having high-quality interactions with children; and
3. **Evaluate:** Reflect on student learning based on observation and assessment and adjust plans.

Louisiana: Section A

A. 6. Stakeholder Support

As evidenced by the diverse letters of support, the state's ambitious and achievable plan is strongly supported by a broad range of stakeholders (Appendix A. 11). The guiding approach for this grant will leverage the deep partnerships and community support created through the Community Network Pilots, which is supported by legislators, early childhood leaders, school district staff, the Head Start community, child care centers, community and advocacy organizations, Department of Health and Hospitals, Department of Children and Family Services, the Child Care Association of Louisiana, higher education leaders, and others. Through the pilot effort, these stakeholders are continually engaged in implementing a unified early childhood care and education system.

A. 7. Allocating Grant Funds

Louisiana will allocate nearly 98% of grant funds to Community Network Pilots to implement voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for at-risk children (children in families with incomes at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level). Louisiana will use \$23.7 million to fund new seats for preschool programs over the four years, with new seats being offered for the 2015-16 school year in all communities (Table A. 1). Louisiana will use \$7.4 million to fund enduring program improvement efforts, including providing comprehensive services and evidenced-based coaching (Table A. 2).

Offering new seats through coordinated enrollment will help ensure that providers meet families where they are at and communicate effectively with them, that all available seats are filled by eligible children, and that families are provided with simplified methods for determining their eligibility and expressing their choice. This work will lead to increased access, even for families that may be traditionally hard to reach (Appendix A. 7).

Louisiana will set aside 2.3% to build state preschool program infrastructure, specifically the early childhood accountability system technology. By ensuring parents receive accurate, meaningful information about program quality and providers are held accountable for achieving outcomes, this investment will support all future investments in early childhood programs (Appendix A. 12). This accountability-based system will support a broader set of improvements to quality and access, such as assuring the state can address family demand for quality, the state can track how many children are enrolled in each program and what services they receive, and

Louisiana: Section A

the state can closely monitor children's progress toward being prepared for kindergarten.

Collecting comprehensive, de-identified data (while assuring child privacy) will improve the state's ability to evaluate program quality, thus aiding the effort to produce report cards for all providers and communities so that families can make more informed choices (Appendix A. 6). Ultimately, this accountability system will interface with the K-12 accountability system, enabling the state to sustain children's progress from early childhood throughout their school careers.

Louisiana demonstrates its commitment to increasing access to high-quality preschool by contributing matching funds that represent (b) % of the potential four year award. The state will leverage recent investments in these communities as well as other Community Network Pilots. Specifically, the state has a credible plan for providing foundational training, funding for job-embedded professional development, and technical assistance on coordinating enrollment. From 2014 to 2018, this represents a \$(b)(4) new investment in these communities, as shown in Table A. 4 (Appendix A. 2). In addition, the LDE currently oversees all critical support systems for early childhood, including Child Care Resource and Referral programs, Head Start collaboration, Quality Start (QRIS), mental health consultation, and field-based technical assistance. This enables Louisiana to leverage multiple resources to support quality improvement efforts at local level.

Table A. 4: Louisiana Matching Funds

Louisiana State Match	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total Match
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 1)					
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 2)					
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 3)					
Community Network Pilot Technology					
State Level Infrastructure					
Total State Match					

Louisiana’s Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Increasing Early Childhood Choice for Louisiana Families

Louisiana is committed to unifying its early childhood system and ensuring at-risk families can choose a high-quality option best for their children. Three years after the passage of the state’s landmark legislation to address kindergarten readiness through unification of standards, accountability, and enrollment, Louisiana has made, and continues to make, significant progress in designing and implementing a unique solution to poor early childhood outcomes. In partnership with local pioneering communities, Louisiana will use the grant funding to expediently serve more at-risk four-year-olds in high-quality preschool programs.

Louisiana's application meets the following competitive preference priorities:

1. Contributing Matching Funds

- Louisiana will contribute approximately (b)(4) in state funds, representing an (b) % match of potential federal funds.

2. Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development

- Louisiana will improve 2,340 preschool seats and leverage the existing Community Network Pilot structure, impacting nearly 6,000 children.

3. Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Seats

- Louisiana will add 1,800 new high-quality seats, serving more than 4,500 children.

Louisiana Plan: Goals

Increasing Early Childhood Choice for Louisiana Families	
Increased Access Through Choice	<p>GOAL: Provide families of more than 4,500 at-risk children in Louisiana access to high-quality early childhood choices over four years (1,800 new seats)</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Louisiana has 5,000 at-risk four-year-olds currently unserved annually. In early childhood, quality thrives when families are enabled to choose the high-quality program best suited for their children.</p>
A Unified System	<p>GOAL: Unify the early childhood system by empowering local leaders to coordinate</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> To improve kindergarten readiness, Louisiana is unifying preschool, Head Start, and child care programs into a statewide early childhood network. The state empowers local leaders to improve outcomes and services for families through coordinated enrollment.</p>
Sustainable Funding	<p>GOAL: Transition to sustainable funding for high-quality programs</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The state has invested in unifying early childhood education and funding seats for at-risk children through diverse providers. The state must be able to fund at quality levels long-term in order to achieve and sustain improvements.</p>
Improvement and Accountability	<p>GOAL: Support improvements to quality and access, and hold local leaders and programs accountable</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Through improved monitoring, evaluation, and accountability systems, the state seeks to hold programs and networks responsible for providing high-quality learning experiences that prepare all children for kindergarten.</p>

Louisiana Plan: Scope of Work

Goal	Key Activities	Parties Responsible	Financial Resources
Increased Access Through Choice	Fund 1,800 new seats through Community Network Pilots, serving more than 4,500 children over four years	LDE Subgrantees	Grant funds
	Improve 2,340 seats through Community Network Pilots, impacting nearly 6,000 children over four years	LDE Subgrantees	Grant funds
	Use diverse delivery methods to ensure access to high-quality choices for families	Subgrantees	Grant funds
	Provide comprehensive services for at-risk children	Subgrantees	Grant funds
A Unified System	Transition CCDF from DCFS to LDE	LDE	Federal funds
	Coordinate enrollment and support teachers	Subgrantees	Pilot funds
	Support remaining communities to form Community Network Pilots	LDE	State funds Federal funds
Sustainable Funding	Develop funding model	LDE	State funds
	Secure local investment for funding high-quality early childhood programs	Subgrantees	Pilot funds
Improvement & Accountability	Monitor quality of setting, instruction, and care through CLASS and QRIS	LDE	State funds
	Develop statewide early childhood accountability technology system	LDE	Grant funds State funds
	Field test, revise, and conduct learning year for early childhood report cards	LDE Subgrantees	State funds

Louisiana: Section A

Louisiana Plan: Timeline

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018
Increased Access Through Choice	Add 340 new seats	Add 660 new seats	Add 440 new seats	Add 360 new seats (Total:4580)
	Improve 442 seats	Improve 1300 seats	Improve 1872 seats	Improve 2,340 seats (Total: 5984)
A Unified System	Develop policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Enrollment • Teachers • Accountability • Child Care Licensing • Child Care Subsidy Transition CCDF from DCFS to LDE	Teachers pursue ancillary teaching certificate Implement full coordinated enrollment	Teachers pursue ancillary teaching certificate	Teachers pursue ancillary teaching certificate
Sustainable Funding	Propose Funding Model	Phase-in funding	Phase-in funding	Phase-in funding
Improvement and Accountability	Request for Proposals for accountability technology system Report card field test	Design and build accountability technology system Learning Year for report cards (final year for QRIS)	Revise system First year of report cards with stakes	Fully implement system Revise report cards as needed

B. COMMITMENT TO STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Louisiana believes promoting quality schooling starts with fostering an environment in which quality thrives: high expectations for children’s achievement and progress; parents who are able to choose the option best suited for their children; and knowledgeable, skilled teachers who continue to learn and grow throughout their careers. These conditions are the hallmark of Louisiana’s premiere preschool programs – known as LA 4 in public schools and NSECD in nonpublic schools and child care (Appendix A. 4). However, thousands of at-risk Louisiana families are unable to choose a high quality preschool option that best meets their children’s needs. To maximize new funds such as the Preschool Development Expansion Grants, the state must ensure not only that new seats are provided, but that they are offered in a way that assures both quality and access for the most high-need communities.

B. 1. State Early Learning and Development Standards

Background: Prior to 2013, Louisiana’s expectations for children’s learning and development were inconsistent across ages and programs. There were different sets of expectations for infants and toddlers, three-year-olds, and four-year-olds, making it difficult for providers and communities to plan collaboratively, develop comprehensive teacher support systems, and establish seamless transitions for children, whether between early childhood programs or from preschool to kindergarten.

Recent Efforts: To unify expectations for what children should know and be able to do, Louisiana developed comprehensive *Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)* in 2012 (Appendix B. 1). Led by Dr. Catherine Scott-Little, a national expert, a stakeholder group examined current Louisiana standards and policies, other state and national policies, and research literature to ensure that expectations were inclusive of all children regardless of circumstances, levels of ability, and life experiences. Additionally, the *ELDS* are aligned with the Head Start Performance Standards and Child Development and Early Learning Framework. In addition to these stakeholders, who included representatives of public and nonpublic schools, Head Start, child care, higher education, early interventionists, teachers, administrators and parents, state and national experts also examined the draft *ELDS* and provided

Louisiana: Section B

feedback on the content, overall structure, format, and alignment across the age ranges. Finally, the state published the draft standards and collected feedback from practitioners prior to their approval by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) in 2013.

Table B. 1: Early Learning and Development Standards Domains

Louisiana's Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards				
Five Domains of Learning				
Approaches to Learning	Cognitive Development and General Knowledge	Language and Literacy Development	Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	Social Emotional Development

Current Practice: All publicly-funded early childhood providers in Louisiana are now using the *ELDS*. To support implementation, the state created a free, dynamic online training course on the *ELDS, Foundations: CONNECT – Standards, Instruction, and Assessment* (Appendix B. 2). To supplement the online training, both Community Network Pilots and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies offer training and technical assistance on the *ELDS* to help teachers understand what children should know and be able to do at each age, and apply that learning to practice in order to support ongoing development.

To support consistent use of and assessment on the *ELDS*, Louisiana is piloting a research-based, ongoing and authentic assessment across settings. Based on its alignment with the *ELDS*, the state selected and has begun implementing *Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD)*, a comprehensive, observation-based assessment system in all Community Network Pilots. A third-party study demonstrated that *GOLD* is 95% aligned with the *ELDS* (Appendix B. 3).

B. 2. State’s Financial Investment

Background: In the previous three decades, Louisiana has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing state-funded preschool programs, as evident by LA 4, NSECD, and another state preschool program that is identical to LA 4, 8(g). In 1988, BESE began the 8(g) Model Early Childhood Program to serve at-risk four-year-olds. 8(g) continues to provide more than 2,500 at-risk four-year-olds access to high-quality preschool. Although 8(g) and LA4 are supported by

Louisiana: Section B

different funding sources, the LDE has established identical program quality requirements; thus this application typically references LA 4, the larger, more well-known program.

During the 2000-01 school year, the Louisiana Legislature funded the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program (LA 4), to expand access to high-quality preschool to at-risk four-year-olds. The following year, the Legislature created the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD), providing public funds on a scholarship basis for at-risk four-year-olds to attend high-quality programs in nonpublic schools and child care centers.

Recent Efforts: All publicly-funded early childhood programs in Louisiana, including LA 4, NCECD, and 8(g), among others, are targeted for children in families with income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In addition, both LA 4 and NSECD are open to above-income families with sliding scale tuition. Table B. 2 provides the funding for LA 4, NSECD, and 8(g) from 2011 to the present:

Table B. 2: Four Year Funding History of State Preschool Programs

Years	LA 4		8(g)		NSECD		% Children Served
	# of Children	Funding	# of Children	Funding	# of Children	Funding	
2011-12	16,019	\$	3,201	\$	1,210	\$	45.97%
2012-13	16,028	\$	2,643	\$	1,174	\$	44.78 %
2013-14	16,283	\$	2,256	\$	1,185	\$	43.88%
2014-15	16,283	\$	2,569	\$	1,544	\$	48.41%
TOTALS	64,613	\$	10,669	\$	5,113	\$	

*Indicates % of children served in LA 4, NSECD, and 8(g) out of the state's total "at-risk" population. Funding includes both state and federal funding. Data does not include four-year-olds in federally-funded programs (Head Start, IDEA, Title I, REAP) or those not "at-risk."

Tax Credits: As an additional state investment in early childhood, Louisiana has led the nation in its innovative use of state tax credits to support quality improvement. In 2007, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 394 to provide a package of tax credits known as the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC). The tax credits provide refundable credits, based on the quality of the child care center, for families, child care providers, child care directors and teachers, and businesses that support child care (Appendix B. 4). A unique feature of these tax credits is a dollar-for-dollar, \$5,000 refundable credit to businesses that donate to Child Care Resource and Referral



Louisiana: Section B

Agencies. Two of the proposed subgrantee organizations also serve as Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (City of Monroe (Ouachita) and Orleans) and have led the state in securing tax credit funding to improve quality in child care. Overall, the tax credits inject nearly \$12 million each year into the child care system in Louisiana, providing a great incentive for centers to join the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, called Quality Start (Appendix B. 5).

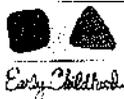
Current Practice: Resulting from Louisiana's groundbreaking legislation to unify the early childhood system (Act 3, 2012), Louisiana is consolidating and maximizing its investments in early childhood (Appendix A. 1). These recent investments constitute Louisiana's match for the purposes of this grant.

To help communities build their coordinated local community networks or consortia of early childhood providers, the state provides start-up funding for three years. These dollars are shared by all publicly funded providers that are part of the Community Network Pilots, including child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and public and nonpublic preschool providers. The funding has been used to help build collaborative leadership structures, support job-embedded professional development, and build a local coordinated enrollment system.

Thirteen communities launched Community Network Pilots in cohort 1 in 2013. In 2014, an additional 16 communities launched Community Network Pilots for cohort 2. The rest of the state (34 communities) is expected to join cohort 3 in early 2015, meeting the requirement to fully implement Act 3 by August 2015 (Appendix A.2). Table B. 3 shows current and projected investments in Community Network Pilots, including state and federal funds. This funding, and the work of the Community Network Pilots, will impact more than 60,000 children birth to five directly, with the potential to impact up to 200,000 at-risk children in the state.

Table B. 3: Funding Community Network Pilots

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cohort 1 (13 communities)	\$ []	\$ []	\$ []	---	---
Cohort 2 (16 communities)	---	\$ []			---
Projected Cohort 3	---	---	\$ []	\$ []	
TOTALS	\$ []				



Louisiana: Section B

In addition to funding early childhood programs and Community Network Pilots, the state provided an (b)(4) grant opportunity to improve early childhood inclusion by maximizing the state's use of IDEA funding (Appendix B. 6). The inclusion grants were provided to school districts to develop strategies to increase the number of children with disabilities served in regular education programs. Louisiana will continue to work with communities to ensure all children have access to the services and supports they need, in the most appropriate setting.

B. 3. Enacted and Pending Legislation

Hallmark Legislation: All of the work currently underway in Louisiana in early childhood is in response to the legislature's recognition with Act 3 (2012) that too few children in Louisiana enter kindergarten ready to succeed, due to fragmentation and lack of coordination of efforts at the state and local levels. Act 3 created the Early Childhood Care and Education Network to improve kindergarten readiness in Louisiana and provide more families access to high-quality options. Act 3 requires BESE to:

1. Set uniform, high expectations across all publicly-funded programs;
2. Link public funding with performance to support high-quality programs;
3. Provide clear information to empower families to make informed choices; and
4. Fully implement the unified early childhood system by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year (Appendix A. 1).

As required by Act 3, Louisiana is building a report card system to measure the quality of all early childhood programs as well as the support provided by the Community Network Pilots. To ensure all programs are conducting ongoing, authentic assessment of children to help them make progress towards kindergarten readiness, the LDE is developing a comprehensive early learning assessment system using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. In 2014-15, the state is field testing a report card system that demonstrates whether programs are using assessment in an appropriate, authentic, and accurate way to support children's learning and development (Appendix A. 6).

The statewide network is being implemented through local Community Network Pilots. The pilot approach means that every community will opt into the unified system without being required to, an unprecedented approach and show of commitment. For the first time in Louisiana, providers in each community, including child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, public and nonpublic preschool programs, are working together as a network to:

Louisiana: Section B

- **Lead Collaboratively:** Establish collaborative leadership structures, ensuring resources are maximized to improve quality for publicly-funded programs in the community;
- **Support Teachers:** Support teachers across program types through training and coaching on planning, delivering, and refining high-quality lessons based on the *ELDS* and ongoing observations of children using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*; and
- **Coordinate Enrollment:** Coordinate enrollment to maximize access and reduce burdens on families who currently have to apply at multiple programs through different applications.

As noted earlier, twenty-nine Community Network Pilots have led the state in designing and implementing a unified local early childhood network to improve kindergarten readiness. The remaining communities (34) have indicated they will join cohort 3 and the state will begin funding this work in early 2015 (Appendix A. 2).

Strengthening the Legislative Framework: Since the passage of Act 3 (2012), the Legislature has strengthened the legal framework for unifying the early childhood system in Louisiana in each subsequent legislative session (Appendix B. 7). The additional pieces of legislation relate to:

1. Statewide unification through transferring administration of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE);
2. Ensuring families have equitable access to early childhood programs; and
3. Determining a sustainable model for early childhood funding.

1. CCDF Transition: Louisiana is currently transitioning administration of CCDF from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). The transition will help unify state programs under one governing body, ensuring all are focused on preparing at-risk children for kindergarten.

- **SCR 76 (2013) – CCDF Transition:** Requires the LDE and DCFS to create a transition plan for the LDE to serve as lead agency for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). The plan was submitted to the Legislature in January 2014.

Louisiana: Section B

- **Act 179 (2013) - Licensing:** Establishes new license types for early childhood learning centers and calls for a stakeholder group to streamline licensing regulations. Establishes an academic approval for licensure for publicly-funded providers.
 - **Act 868 (2014) – CCDF Transition:** Outlines the transfer of lead agency authority for CCDF from DCFS to the LDE. Child care licensing transitioned on October 1, 2014. The provider registration function in addition to the career registry for child care will transfer February 1, 2015. Lead agency and responsibility for the subsidy program will transfer July 1, 2015.
- 2. Coordinating Enrollment:** Currently, families have to travel to multiple programs, at different times, and complete different applications to know what they are eligible for and apply. Louisiana is working to improve coordination of enrollment activities in each community.
- **Act 717 (2014) – Enrollment:** Defines the areas of coordinated enrollment (information campaigns, eligibility determination, application, and matching families to the program of their choice). The law also allows for the state to contract with a local enrollment coordinator in the event a community does not or does not want to coordinate enrollment. The results of the 2014 community self-assessment show how well communities are currently coordinating (Appendix A. 6).
 - **Act 787 (2014) – Homeless Priority:** Allows homeless families to be prioritized for child care subsidies, thus helping the state better serve hard-to-reach families. These families will receive up to a 180 day grace period to receive child care subsidy while they seek work, enroll in school, or participate in a transitional living program.
- 3. Sustainable Funding:** Funding for early childhood in Louisiana is extremely fragmented, with nine funding sources paying for four-year-old preschool. Most funding sources have different eligibility criteria and provide different funding levels per child. In response to current funding complexities and the desire to ensure funding is being used to support high-quality providers, the Legislature has taken several actions.

Louisiana: Section B

- **Act 406 (2013) - SRTC:** Requires BESE to recommend School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) legislative changes by January 2015, to support ongoing improvement efforts.
- **Act 644 (2014) – Equitable Funding:** Creates a vehicle for equitable preschool funding at a sustainable level, overhauling outdated legislation for the LA 4 program and encouraging diverse delivery models that meet the high-quality program components that make LA 4 successful.
- **HCR 61 (2014) – Funding Model:** Directs BESE to create a funding model for early childhood and submit the model to the Legislature by January 2015.

This legislative framework demonstrates the broad commitment across Louisiana to support unifying the early childhood system.

B. 4. Quality of Existing State Preschool Programs

Background: Louisiana’s LA 4 and NSECD programs are high-quality early childhood programs meeting the requirements specified in the grant (Appendix A. 4). In fact, the LA 4 law establishes these requirements in statute, demonstrating the legislative commitment to high-quality preschool. Moreover, these preschool programs have a history of demonstrated results across diverse settings. Longitudinal studies show a profound impact as indicated by (Appendix A. 3):

- Improved child outcomes measured by pre- and post-assessments;
- Higher scores on statewide tests in the 3rd and 8th grades (*LEAP* and *iLEAP* in 2012); and
- Fewer retentions and a reduction in referrals for special education services

LA 4 and NSECD providers must adhere to assurances stipulating program requirements and are monitored each year against those program requirements to ensure quality standards are maintained (Appendix B. 8). Both programs are consistently rated highly in the annual NIEER report (Appendix B. 9).

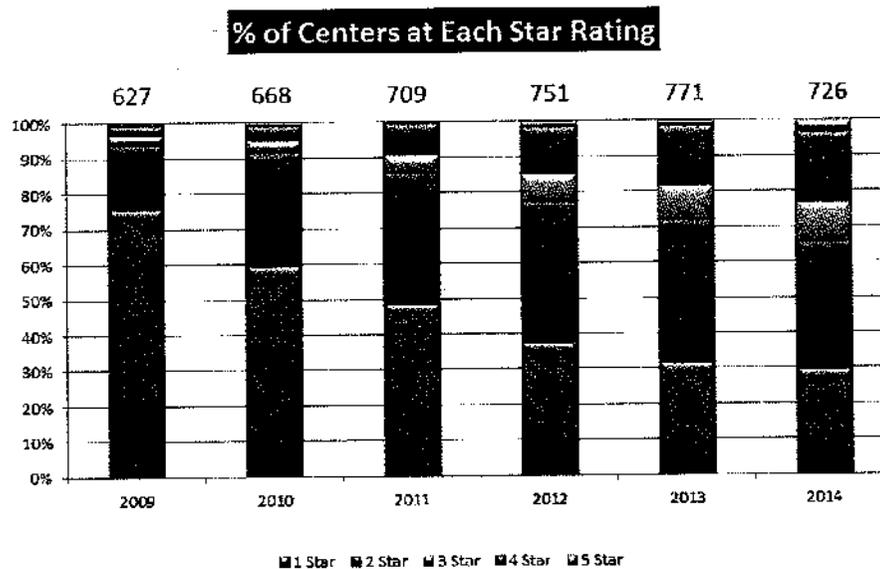
Quality Rating and Improvement System: Quality Start, the state’s voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System, assesses quality in child care settings based on a one to five star rating. Participation in Quality Start is strong, with an increased number of centers reaching three to five stars, as shown in Figure 1. Quality Start is a hybrid building blocks and point

Louisiana: Section B

system that examines quality at three stars and higher using environment rating scales, *ECERS-R* and *ITERS-R* (Appendix B. 5).

The state has recognized quality child care centers by expanding the NSECD preschool program to child care centers rated three stars or higher. This increases parent choice and enables quality providers to access more stable and increased per-child state funding than the typical child care subsidies. To promote quality improvements and incentivize participation in Quality Start, Louisiana provides tiered bonuses based on star ratings to centers serving children receiving child care subsidies. In addition, the state tax credits increase financial support for providers, teachers, and families, with higher tax credits for centers with a higher star rating. Recently, the state has provided additional bonuses to star-rated centers participating in the Community Network Pilots, effectively increasing their subsidy payment to the 75th percentile (Appendix B. 10).

Figure B. 1: Distribution of Quality Rated Child Care Centers



Developing Early Childhood Report Cards to Promote Quality Improvement: As part of Act 3 implementation, the state is developing early childhood report cards. All publicly-funded providers, child care, Head Start, and schools, will be required to participate in the report card system. Each provider as well as each community network will receive an annual report card (Appendix A. 6). The state is field-testing the report card system in 2014-15 and will launch a Learning Year for all publicly-funded providers in 2015-16. Through this transition, Quality

Louisiana: Section B

Start, in its current form, will phase out by summer 2016 as the report card system is fully implemented.

In the 2014-15 field test, the state is working with seven Community Network Pilots to determine the best tools and reporting structures to determine and communicate provider quality. Four of the subgrantees who are partners in this grant are also in the field test, demonstrating their commitment to measuring, communicating, and improving program quality. Going forward, any seat funded through this grant would be evaluated for quality through the report card system, starting in the 2015-16 Learning Year.

The primary component of the report cards is observation results from the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*. As demonstrated by research, programs with higher *CLASS* scores have better child outcomes. Therefore, the state is focused on measuring what matters most to improving kindergarten readiness: adult-child interactions. To support high-quality interactions and promote positive child outcomes, each Community Network Pilot is developing a system of feedback and ongoing support for teachers based on the results of local *CLASS* observations. The report card will also provide families and communities with actionable information regarding elements of high-quality programs such as:

- Teacher-child ratios;
- Teacher credentials;
- Use of a quality, research-based curriculum;
- Use of assessment in an appropriate, authentic, and accurate way to support children's progress towards kindergarten readiness; and
- Family satisfaction survey results.

The report cards will be a key factor in assessing provider quality as well as determining which providers receive preschool funding in future years (Appendix A. 6).

B. 5. State's Coordination of Preschool Programs and Services

Louisiana has committed to consolidating state early childhood care and education functions into one agency, the Louisiana Department of Education.

- All Quality Start (QRIS) functions and child care licensing have moved to the LDE.
- The Head Start Collaboration Office is now housed at the LDE.
- By July 2015, all CCDF functions will be consolidated into the LDE

Louisiana: Section B

The only state early childhood services operated outside of education are the IDEA Part C and MIECHV programs, both operated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, with whom the LDE coordinates to ensure alignment.

The state also works with local providers to coordinate the myriad early childhood funding streams. The LDE provides technical assistance on increasing access and maximizing services to children through coordination of state and federal funds.

- In Louisiana, providers are coordinating federal Title 1 funding, IDEA Part B 619 and REAP in addition to state preschool funding. Preschool classes across all of these funding streams adhere to the rigorous LA 4 program requirements (Appendix A. 4).
- The state has been incredibly successful at working with providers to use funding to support inclusion practices, with each of the subgrantees providing inclusive settings (Appendix B. 6). The state has increased the percentage of children with special needs receiving services in regular education programs from 36.5% (2004) to 87.5% (2013) (Appendix B. 11).

The state will continue to work intensively with subgrantees to leverage all funding available to maximize quality and access for early childhood services. Through the continued implementation of Act 3, the state will empower local Community Network Pilots to coordinate preschool programs and services.

Evolving the Advisory Council: Louisiana has a strong tradition of stakeholder engagement through the state's early learning advisory council. In 2009, Governor Jindal formed the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), called BrightStart. BrightStart provided a strong foundation for the implementation of Act 3 by convening experts and practitioners to design coordinated, interdisciplinary approaches to improving care, education, health, and social outcomes for young children. Interdisciplinary BrightStart workgroups:

- Developed workforce competencies (Appendix B. 12), which are now leading to a new birth to kindergarten teaching certificate (Appendix B. 13);
- Provided guidance on enhancing inclusive settings for children with disabilities (Appendix B. 6);
- Helped design a birth to kindergarten assessment system; and
- Advised the launch and first year of Community Network Pilots.

Louisiana: Section B

In response to Act 868 (2014), the state is creating a new Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council that will be designated as the early childhood advisory council by the end of 2014. This new council will be under BESE and will review and help craft all early childhood policies prior to their submission to BESE for final approval. This council will also help ensure the Preschool Development Expansion Grant funds are resulting in high-quality preschool services for children. The law requires this group to receive quarterly reports on all activities related to increasing the quality of and access to preschool, including the creation and implementation of the report card system. Members of this advisory council, which will include representatives from all types of child care, Head Start, schools, advocacy organizations, families, and others, will be installed mid-October. When the application was released for this council in summer 2014, more than 110 individuals applied for 13 seats, demonstrating the interest and belief in engagement on early childhood in Louisiana.

Because this new Advisory Council has not yet been established, Louisiana is providing a letter of support from the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board, an operational State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Care and Education that has a membership that meets the requirements of section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (Appendix B. 14).

B. 6. State's Role in Promoting Coordination with Other Sectors

The three state agencies with direct interest in early childhood care and education, the Department of Education (LDE), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), have worked collaboratively to support the state's birth to five programs and have collaborated to implement Act 3 (Appendix A. 1). Most notably related to the CCDF transition, as well as for many other initiatives, state agency staff work together to coordinate support services for children and families.

- The IDEA Part C coordinator from DHH and the IDEA Part B 619 Coordinator from LDE work closely together to ensure the seamless transition and development of IEPs for children with disabilities moving between the two programs.
- Through a partnership with state agencies and local Community Network Pilots, the state will ensure foster care children continue to receive priority access to child care subsidies.
- The LDE is partnering with the state's higher education governing board to create new pathways for early childhood teacher preparation. The work will result in a new birth to

Louisiana: Section B

kindergarten bachelor degree as well as a new ancillary teaching certificate, based on attaining the Child Development Associate (Appendix B. 13).

Locally, early childhood leaders are ensuring coordination of services through Community Network Pilots. Community Network Pilots are required to include partners such as the state's IDEA Part C providers (Early Steps) and most also include a range of other service providers (Appendix A. 2). Preschool programs, including LA 4, NSECD, and Head Start, provide families with support services for child health, parenting practices, and adult education options as well as providing health screenings for children. Head Start continues to provide other community partners with a model for how to serve families comprehensively. As part of developing coordinated enrollment systems, Community Network Pilots are building stronger relationships with community partners who can provide supportive services to families, including health clinics, social service programs, and other community-based organizations. The state continues to emphasize the importance of leveraging local resources to meet the diverse needs of families.

Louisiana: Section B

Louisiana's Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Commitment to State Preschool Programs

Criteria	Key Activities	Parties Responsible	Performance Measure
B. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train all teachers on <i>ELDS</i> using CONNECT • All programs use <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> to assess child progress against the standards 	Subgrantees	Quarterly Progress Report
B. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue funding LA 4, 8(g), and NSECD 	LDE	Seats funded
B. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Act 3 (2012) fully • Transition CCDF • Develop coordinated enrollment policy 	LDE	Community Network Pilots Statewide; Policies Approved
B. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in report card field test, which includes: <i>CLASS</i> observations, use of <i>GOLD</i>, family surveys, and other quality measures • Build local capacity for <i>CLASS</i> observations • Continue participation in QRIS 	Subgrantees	Report Card Field Test Results; QRIS Statistics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plan for transition from QRIS to Report Cards • Continue monitoring of state preschool programs 	LDE	Accountability Policy; Monitoring
B. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch new Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council, which will receive quarterly reports on the progress of grant implementation 	LDE	Advisory Council Quarterly Reports
B. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LDE, DHH, and DCFS continue collaborative work to serve at-risk children and families 	LDE, DHH, DCFS	Inter-agency Work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Network Pilots coordinate services for families through coordinated enrollment 	Subgrantee	Coordinated Enrollment Results

C. ENSURING QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Background: As evidenced throughout this application, Louisiana has operated high-quality preschool programs in diverse settings for more than a decade. The state is in a multi-year effort to unify its early childhood system and improve kindergarten readiness for all children.

Louisiana's ambitious and achievable plan includes designing and procuring a statewide accountability technology system for early childhood, because the state already has in place:

- ✓ C. 1(a): Comprehensive early learning and development standards (*ELDS*) (Appendix B. 1);
- ✓ C. 1(b): High-quality preschool through LA 4 and NSECD (Table A. 3, Appendix A. 8);
- ✓ C. 1(c): Coordinated supports for children with disabilities through partnerships between IDEA Part C and B programs and an innovative approach to support inclusive practices (Appendix B. 6);
- ✓ C. 1(d): An analysis of need for high-quality preschool services showing unmet demand potential of 5,000 at-risk four-year-olds (Table D. 1);
- ✓ C. 1(e): A framework for increasing licensure expectations by requiring all lead teachers in child care to pursue an ancillary teaching certificate based on earning the Child Development Associate (CDA) and plans to provide scholarships to help teachers meet the higher expectations (Appendix C. 1);
- ✓ C. 1(f): Partnerships with Community Network Pilots to improve professional development and with Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to improve training programs. The state will also launch a Request for Proposals for innovative teacher training on the CDA (Appendix C. 1);
- ✓ C. 1(h): A field test with seven communities to determine the best way to measure program quality, particularly through *CLASS*, and align the state's early learning assessment systems. In 2015-16, all communities will participate in this work through a Learning Year (Appendix A. 6);
- ✓ C. 1(i): Structures to engage families through the Community Network Pilots, particularly through using family reports provided in *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, so providers can plan with families for their child's growth and development;

Louisiana: Section C

- ✓ C. 1(j): Extensive efforts with Community Network Pilots to coordinate enrollment and support families with referrals to community-based support services (Appendix A. 7); and
- ✓ C. 1(k): A unique approach through local Community Network Pilots to unify the early childhood system and improve kindergarten readiness (Appendix C. 1).

To be successful in all of these efforts, the state needs to build a technology system to consistently measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers. Louisiana will use its 2.3% set-aside to help design and procure such a system (Appendix A. 12).

C. 1(g). Implementing a Statewide Early Childhood Accountability Technology System to Link Preschool, Elementary and Secondary School Accountability

Louisiana proposes to create a statewide early childhood accountability technology system that will serve as a single source of information for state oversight, planning, and support for providers and families while protecting children's confidential information (Appendix A. 12). This will enable the state to ensure preschool quality and access statewide as well as provide a portal for families to access meaningful information about programs.

This accountability-based system will support a broader set of improvements to quality and access, such as assuring the state can address family demand for quality, the state can track how many children are enrolled in each program and what services they receive, and the state can closely monitor children's progress toward being prepared for kindergarten. Collecting comprehensive, de-identified data (while assuring child privacy) will improve the state's ability to evaluate program quality, thus aiding the effort to produce report cards for all providers and communities so that families can make more informed choices (Appendix A. 6). Ultimately, this accountability system will interface with the K-12 accountability system, enabling the state to assure children's progress from early childhood throughout their school careers.

Through a rigorous Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the state will develop governance and transparency policies to maintain data privacy and security. The state will seek a vendor to provide a technology system that:

1. Demonstrates capability to guarantee complete protection of confidential child data;
2. Can meet the timing requirements for project completion by 2018;

Louisiana: Section C

3. Has successfully completed projects similar in size, scope, and technical requirements;
4. Has experience in implementing early childhood technology systems (e.g., for Child Care Development Fund, Head Start, preschool programs, etc.);
5. Has sufficient staff to manage the project;
6. Is capable of developing a technology system that complies and interfaces with LDE and Louisiana system requirements;
7. Can develop a technology system that complies with all legislation and policies related to technology systems and privacy, including tying into the unique identifier system Louisiana is currently building.

With a more longitudinal accountability system, Louisiana will be better positioned to assess the quality of programs, have real-time information needed to drive support and allocation decisions, and better partner with families and other organizations to improve services for children while ensuring utmost privacy of data.

Though the state plans to use 2.3% of the grant funds to develop and build this early childhood accountability technology, it is expected that the costs related to this project may exceed (b)(4). The state plans to pursue private, philanthropic dollars to support this effort, leveraging a recent gift from the (b)(4) to support the LDE to develop and begin implementing a strategic plan for information technology.

To maximize the federal funds, the state is both matching a percentage of these funds and leveraging other resources to strengthen and unify the early childhood system. Specifically, the state has provided or will provide to Community Network Pilots foundational training, funding for job-embedded professional development, and technical assistance on coordinating enrollment. From 2014 to 2018, this represents a \$(b) million new investment in communities in Louisiana, thus matching (b) % of the potential federal grant. In addition, the LDE will oversee all critical support systems for early childhood, and currently oversees:

- Child Care Resource and Referral programs (b)(4);
- Head Start collaboration; and
- Quality Start (QRIS), which includes mental health consultation and field-based technical assistance (more than (b)(4) per year).

Louisiana: Section C

These investments enable Louisiana to leverage multiple resources to support quality improvement efforts at the local level for all early childhood providers. Table C. 1 outlines the benefits of the early childhood accountability technology system Louisiana would develop.

Table C. 1: Benefits of Early Childhood Accountability Technology System

Families Will Be Able To:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to one portal to explore and compare their community’s early learning providers, getting information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quality rating report card (letter grade, use of quality practices, family satisfaction) – Licensure type, along with reported violations, services/amenities, meal service, etc. – Location, ages served, contact information, application/registration requirements, transportation options, etc. • Submit Family Satisfaction Surveys
Providers Will Be Able To	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and track enrollment, class assignments, instructional time and attendance • Submit and review assessment results (used to determine professional development needs, drive instruction, develop IEPs, etc.) • Submit and review teacher observations • Submit and track teacher preparation credentials • Submit Teacher Satisfaction Surveys
State Will Be Able To:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children’s learning by using consistent, de-identified data to evaluate and improve outcomes from early childhood through third grade • Analyze de-identified assessment results and staffing, among others, in order to determine letter grades, identify gaps, and determine program compliance • Analyze enrollment demand for providers and seats • Review assessment information, screening data, teacher effectiveness results through CLASS, etc. • Support transitions for children in IDEA Part C to Part B 619 Services (link IFSP to IEP) • Evaluate teacher preparation programs and align tax credits and scholarships

Louisiana: Section C

C. 2. Implementing a System for Monitoring and Support

a. Capacity: Quality in Louisiana has been measured in two ways:

1. Monitoring for state preschool programs (Appendix A. 8), and
2. Through the Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care (Quality Start) (Appendix B. 5).

Monitoring of preschool programs will continue, with a focus on ensuring programs meet the high-quality program components, as shown in Table C. 2.

Table C. 2: Program Quality Components of LA 4 and NSECD

High-Quality Components	LA 4	NSECD
High staff qualifications, including teachers with a bachelor degree	✓	✓
High-quality professional development for all staff	✓	✓
Child-to-instructional staff ratio of 10:1	✓	✓
Class size of no more than 20	✓	✓
Full day program	✓	✓
Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities	✓	✓
Research-based, age appropriate instruction, curricula, and learning environments aligned to the state's Early Learning and Development Standards	✓	✓
Individualized accommodations and supports for children	✓	✓
Instructional staff salaries equal to local public kindergarten teachers	✓	✓
Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement	✓	✓
Comprehensive services for children	✓	✓
Evidence-based health and safety standards	✓	✓

This year, the state is field testing a report card system for early childhood providers and communities that will inform future policy on how best to measure kindergarten readiness and program quality (Appendix A. 6). The report card system will base provider letter grades on teacher observation results, as measured by *CLASS*. As shown nationally with Head Start,

Louisiana: Section C

CLASS observations can be done reliably by different observers and provide simple and clear information on how effective teaching practices are. Most importantly, *CLASS* provides a framework for effective professional development to support continuous improvement. The report card will also provide families and communities with actionable information regarding elements of high-quality programs such as:

- Teacher-child ratios;
- Teacher credentials;
- Use of a quality, research-based curriculum;
- Use of assessment in an appropriate, authentic, and accurate way to support children's progress toward kindergarten readiness; and
- Family satisfaction survey results.

Seven Community Network Pilots are participating in the field test, including four of the proposed subgrantees. Through the Community Network Pilot program, the state has provided funding for communities to develop a cadre of *CLASS*-reliable observers, and the state is contracting to conduct third party observations. During the 2014-15 school year, these Community Network Pilots are asked to ensure that each teacher receives a *CLASS* observation twice a year and then report the results to the state. A major focus of the field test is determining the best method for state oversight of observations (i.e., does the state conduct observations on all teachers, a portion of the teachers, observations at the same time as local observers, etc.). The state will use observation data to promote fidelity to the *CLASS* tool and process in order to make decisions for statewide implementation of the report card. The results of the field test will inform the roll-out of the 2015-16 Learning Year, when all publicly-funded providers participate in the report card system with no consequences.

Until the report card system is fully developed following the Learning Year, the state will continue Quality Start. Quality Start requires child care centers and Head Start providers electing to participate to undergo a rigorous application and review process. Staff monitor and support centers applying for a star rating and center must reapply every two years. In addition, for centers applying for three to five stars, an environment rating scale observation is conducted (*ECERS-R* or *ITERS-R*). Participation in Quality Start is strong in Louisiana, thereby giving the state and families good information on the quality of most programs (Figure B. 1, Appendix B. 5).

Louisiana: Section C

In addition to the field test and Learning Year, ongoing monitoring, and Quality Start, the Curry School at the University of Virginia (Curry) is working in Louisiana through an Institute for Education Sciences grant. Curry is conducting *CLASS* observations in the field test classrooms to measure program quality and local implementation of the teacher observation and support system. Curry is also conducting a family satisfaction survey. The Curry research will be used in finalizing decisions about the state's report card system for early childhood programs. Most importantly, the Curry research will help Louisiana identify the best strategies, both for support and accountability, to ensure all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

b. Early Childhood Accountability Technology System: As discussed in section C. 1, Louisiana needs to build a technology system to consistently measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers (Appendix A. 12). This system will help the state manage and continually improve its comprehensive early assessment system, ensuring preschool quality and access statewide. Moreover, the state plans to integrate accountability systems as well as assessments and tools so as to monitor and ensure children's progress from early childhood through the third grade. Currently, early assessment in Louisiana involves diverse assessment tools, including the *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)* and the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* (Appendix A. 10). Though Community Network Pilots are using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, it is not used in kindergarten or beyond. The grant will be instrumental in unifying the comprehensive early learning assessment system and developing a more longitudinal accountability technology system.

c. Measurable Outcomes: Historically, child outcomes, based on pre- and post-test measures using the *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)* for the LA 4 and NSECD programs, have been reported to the Legislature, advocacy groups, and the public. Through Act 3, Louisiana has taken steps to measure outcomes consistently across programs to improve kindergarten readiness for all children. Outcomes under this grant would be assessed through the state's report card system, which measures:

- Teacher practice (as determined by *CLASS* observation results, backed by research showing that programs with higher *CLASS* scores have better child outcomes);
- Evidence of key items needed to achieve positive child outcomes, such as:

Louisiana: Section C

- Teachers trained to reliably conduct assessments;
- Teachers assessing all children on an ongoing basis;
- Teacher-child class ratios;
- Education preparation of teachers;
- Use of a quality, standards-based curriculum; and
- Family satisfaction.

The state will work with subgrantees to ensure all classrooms funded through this grant are high-quality, as measured through the report card metrics.

C. 3. Measuring Outcomes across Five Essential Domains of School Readiness

The LDE and BESE recognized the need for a state definition of “kindergarten and school readiness,” and in 2009, a representative group of stakeholders created a definition of kindergarten readiness aligned with the state’s *ELDS* (Appendix A. 9, B. 1).

Table C. 3: Early Learning and Development Standards Domains

Louisiana’s Birth to Five <i>Early Learning and Development Standards</i>				
Five Domains of Learning				
Approaches to Learning	Cognitive Development and General Knowledge	Language and Literacy Development	Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	Social Emotional Development

The Legislature mandates assessing children within thirty days of entering kindergarten for the purpose of placement and planning instruction. The *Developing Skills Checklist* was adopted by BESE in 2011 as the state’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). Additionally, children entering kindergarten are administered the *DIBELS-Next* assessment in order to measure children’s acquisition of early literacy skills. Schools also have to conduct ongoing authentic assessments to assist with planning and meeting individual children’s needs.

As a result of Act 3, Community Network Pilots are using a common assessment to measure child outcomes (*Teaching Strategies GOLD*) in birth through preschool programs. The state plans to use the information from these assessments, the field test, and Learning Year to

Louisiana: Section C

determine next steps in selecting an appropriate KEA that covers all five essential domains and is part of a comprehensive, birth-to-five early learning assessment system. Selecting a new KEA will be based on whether the instrument:

- Aligns with the state's *EIIDS* (Appendix B. 1);
- Is appropriate, valid, and reliable for the population of children served (including children with disabilities and English language learners);
- Can be administered at the beginning of the kindergarten entry period (first 30 days of school) with the capacity for continued ongoing assessment throughout the year;
- Provides results that can be linked to the state's proposed early childhood accountability technology system;
- Covers all essential domains of school readiness; and
- Supports teachers to help children transition from preschool to kindergarten.

The state is preparing to review platforms employed by other states that are using *Teaching Strategies GOLD* as a KEA. The state is particularly interested in exploring what states have done to utilize a modified version of the tool (i.e., subsets of the *Objectives for Development and Learning*) that still aligns with National Research Council recommendations to provide teachers quick and easy-to-use guidance on how to best help children transition to kindergarten. This review, along with results from the field test, will enable Louisiana to make decisions on how to select and implement a more robust KEA tool.

Louisiana: Section C

Louisiana's Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs

Criteria	Key Activities	Parties Responsible	Performance Measure
C. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an Early Childhood Accountability Technology System to ensure preschool quality, access, and integration with K-12 accountability 	LDE	Technology System Built
C. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor state preschool program quality • Monitor child care quality through QRIS • Analyze <i>CLASS</i> observations from multiple sources to drive improvements • Develop and implement an early childhood report card system • Participate in Curry research project 	LDE	LA 4/NSECD Monitoring; QRIS Monitoring; Report Card Field Test & Learning Year Results; Curry Results
C. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> in birth to preschool classrooms to measure ongoing child progress 	Subgrantees	Quarterly Progress Reports; Report Card Field Test & Learning Year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use information and feedback from Community Network Pilots to select a new KEA 	LDE	KEA

D. EXPANDING HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Background: Prior to Act 3, early childhood leaders assumed there was more demand for high-quality preschool than there were seats available. But they rarely quantified or developed collaborative plans to address this need. In contrast, Community Network Pilots are counting children, estimating family demand, and working together to maximize resources to close the gaps. Still, as shown in Table D.1, statewide there are more than 5,000 at-risk four-year-olds that could qualify for preschool, but currently cannot be served because funding is not available. The Preschool Development Expansion Grant provides the opportunity to help communities that have quantified their need to address these gaps.

Table D. 1: Statewide Need for Early Childhood Services

		Infants	Ones	Twos	Threes	Fours	Totals
Estimated Need	At-Risk Estimate <i>(Census 2012, FRL Rate 67.1%)</i>	42,233	42,585	41,810	41,699	43,183	211,510
Estimated Served	Child Care (CCAP 10 Mth. Avg. 08/13-5/14)	1,467	2,747	3,273	3,040	1,886	12,413
	Early Head Start (2012-13 cumulative)	268	363	633			1,264
	Head Start (2012-13 cumulative)				9,938	7,440	17,378
	LA 4 (2014-15)					16,283	16,283
	Title I (2012-13)					8,309	8,309
	8(g) (2014-15)					2,569	2,569
	NSECD (2014-15)					1,544	1,544
	IDEA Part B (2013-14 self-contained)				101	140	241
	Total Served Estimate		1,735	3,110	3,906	13,079	38,171
Percent Served		4.1%	7.3%	9.3%	31.4%	88.4%	28.4%
Estimated Unmet Demand	Gap Estimate	(40,498)	(39,475)	(37,904)	(28,620)	(5,012)	(151,509)
SPED*	IDEA Part B (2013-14) inclusive & home-based				1,810	3,493	5,303
	IDEA Part C (Dec. 2013)	718	1,440	1,987			4,145

**these counts may be reflected in the counts above*

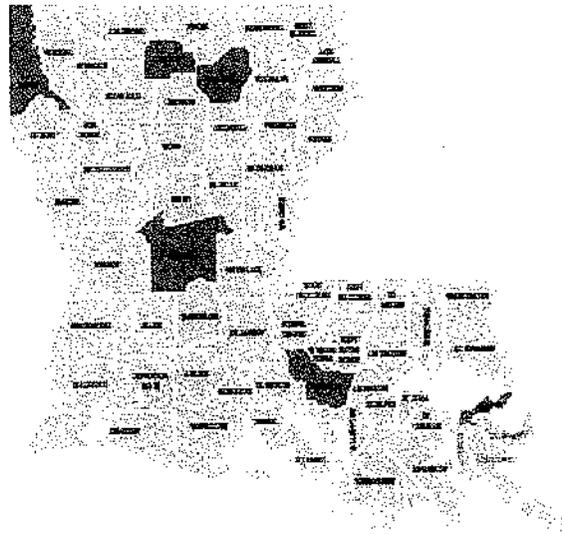
D. 1. Selection of Subgrantees in High-Need Communities

In year 1, Louisiana will partner with Community Network Pilots, which are a consortium of early learning providers, as the subgrantees (Appendix A. 2). These pilots serve Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita), Iberville, Lincoln, Orleans, and Rapides, a mix of rural and urban parishes as well as representing geographical diversity in the state (Table D. 2, Figure D. 1). The state selected these subgrantees to ensure new preschool seats will be allocated to high-need communities that will be able to increase family choice and access to high-quality programs.

Table D. 2: Community Characteristics of Subgrantees

Caddo	254,887	53.3%	\$40,497	19.3%	
City of Monroe (Ouachita)	156,220	41.3%	\$38,899	23.2%	
Iberville	33,367	52%	\$44,037	17.9%	✓
Lincoln	47,414	47%	\$35,433	28.5%	✓
Orleans	378,715	69%	\$36,681	27.2%	
Rapides	132,723	38.2%	\$40,945	19.9%	
Louisiana	<i>4,625,470</i>	<i>40.4%</i>	<i>\$44,673</i>	<i>18.7%</i>	

*Data taken from 2013 Census reports. Rural designation according to Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

Figure D. 1: Geographical Diversity of Year One Subgrantees

D. 2. High-Need Community Gaps between Demand and Supply

As shown in Table D. 3, all subgrantee communities have unmet need for serving at-risk four-year-olds. The grant will dramatically reduce the gap between parent demand and availability of quality preschool seats in Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita), Iberville, Lincoln, and Orleans and fully eliminate it in Rapides. If the state is selected for the Preschool Development Expansion

Louisiana: Section D

Grant, Louisiana will be able to reduce the gap across the state even further, including in these communities. At full scale in year four, the grant funding will reduce the statewide gap between seats requested by parents and seats provided by 36%, and completely eliminate it in one of the subgrantees (Rapides).

Table D. 3: Year One Reduction in Gap between Demand and Supply with Grant Funding

Caddo	2533	2287	10%	2307	9%	8%
City of Monroe (Ouachita)	1930	1615	16%	1665	14%	16%
Iberville	360	260	28%	310	14%	50%
Lincoln	450	397	12%	417	7%	38%
Orleans	3600	3110	14%	3230	10%	24%
Rapides	1415	1335	6%	1415	0%	100%

D. 3. State Outreach

Building on existing state process and infrastructure, the LDE conducted outreach through two statewide, competitive mechanisms:

1. Through the annual LA 4 and NSECD application process to solicit interest and need for preschool seats; and
2. Through the Request for Applications (RFA) process for communities to apply to be a Community Network Pilot (Appendix D. 1).

Both of these processes informed the selection of the potential subgrantees. The competitive process for Community Network Pilots demonstrates the willingness of communities to work closely with the state to establish unified, local consortia with the shared goal of increasing the quality of and access to preschool (Appendix D. 1). Within each Community Network Pilot leadership structure, a coordinating partner acts to convene providers and determine parent

choice through outreach and engagement with the parents and community. Subgrantees were selected using a three tiered process (Table D. 4):

1. Demonstrated Success as a Consortium of Early Learning Providers (Community Network Pilot): The state's first cohort of Community Network Pilots have demonstrated experience implementing the improvements required by Act 3 (2012). These communities are best positioned to implement the new, high-quality preschool seats because they are closest to unifying their local early childhood system. To improve kindergarten readiness, these communities are piloting innovative approaches to:

- **Lead Collaboratively:** Building a collaborative leadership structure to maximize funding and resources;
- **Support Teachers:** Designing training and support systems for teachers and leaders; Reviewing teacher observations and assessment results to inform professional development; and
- **Coordinate Enrollment:** Implementing a local, coordinated enrollment system to better serve families (Appendix A. 7).

The cohort 1 Community Network Pilots are best positioned to leverage available federal, state, and local resources to serve their at-risk families in high-quality settings (Appendix A. 2).

2. Demonstrated Need through Unmet Parent Demand: Through the annual LA 4 and NSECD provider application process, communities request the number of preschool seats they need to serve their at-risk children for the following school year. Based on these projections, which reflect family demand for seats, eight cohort 1 Community Network Pilots have demonstrated need through the application for 2014-15 seats.

3. Communities Most At-Risk: In 2012, the Louisiana State University/Tulane University Early Childhood Policy and Data Center released a statewide report entitled *Early Childhood Risk and Reach in Louisiana*, which illustrates the areas in the state where children are most at-risk for being unhealthy and entering kindergarten already behind (Appendix A. 5). For purposes of this grant, the state looks at where children are in the most need based on children under age five living in poverty. Of the eight cohort 1

Louisiana: Section D

Community Network Pilots with demonstrated need, only the subgrantees are identified as most at-risk in the report based on being in the bottom 50% for children under age five living in poverty.

For years two through four, Louisiana will partner with additional subgrantees through a competitive process. These additional subgrantees would have to meet the same criteria as the original communities (e.g., Demonstrated Success as Local Consortia, Demonstrated Need, and Communities Most At-Risk). Because every community is expected to have local consortia in place by July 2015, more communities would qualify under Demonstrated Success as a Local Consortia.

Table D. 4: Selection Process for High-Need Communities

Demonstrated Success as a Consortium of Early Learning Providers	Ascension, Caddo, Calcasieu, Cameron, City of Monroe (Ouachita) , Iberville, Lafayette, Lincoln/Jackson/Union, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. Tammany, West Baton Rouge
Demonstrated Need through Unmet Parent Demand	Caddo, Calcasieu, Cameron, City of Monroe (Ouachita) , Iberville, Lafayette, Lincoln/Jackson/Union, Orleans, Rapides, St. Tammany
Communities Most At-Risk	Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita) , Iberville, Lincoln/Jackson/Union, Orleans, Rapides

D. 4. Creating New Seats and Improving Others

To decrease the gap between parent demand for and availability of high-quality preschool seats, Louisiana has an ambitious and achievable plan that will use \$23.7 million of its \$32 million grant to open new seats and will use \$7.4 million to improve existing preschool programs. The ambitious and achievable targets are laid out in Tables D. 5 and D. 6.

Table D. 5: Projected New Seats with Preschool Development Expansion Grant

New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
Continued from Prior Year	---	340	1000	1440
Total Seats Funded	340	1000	1440	1800

Table D. 6: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Development Expansion Grant

Improved Seats Funded	442	1300	1872	2340
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Over the four year grant period, 1,800 new seats will be added, decreasing the state’s gap between parent demand for and availability of quality preschool seats by 36%. As the table shows, new seats will be added each year of the grant, resulting in over 4,500 four-year-olds served over the four year grant period, a direct response to family demand.

Additionally, as the LDE works to improve all publicly-funded seats through its development of an early childhood funding model, all new seats created with the grant will be funded at the target rate for quality in preschool, which in Louisiana is \$5,185 per child, per year for four-year-olds. That also reflects the same per child state funding provided for kindergarten. Funding at the target rate will help ensure quality outcomes and support the state’s transition to a funding model that sustains quality for all children (Appendix D. 2).

Though the state will focus on expanding preschool programs, grant funding will also be used to improve current preschool programs. All state preschool program seats, including those provided through diverse delivery:

- Offer full day programs;
- Have small child to staff ratios of 10:1;
- Include teachers with a bachelor degree compensated at the same level as local kindergarten teachers; and
- Require high-quality professional development (Appendix A. 4).

Subgrantees will enhance these quality components by improving professional development and providing coaches that will support the growth and development of teachers, particularly their understanding of *CLASS* and use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. These efforts will ensure that classrooms outside of the grant funding will benefit from the additional supports and investments, the benefits of which will endure beyond the life of the grant. The subgrantees will also use the funding to provide comprehensive services, working with local community partners to ensure family needs are addressed.

Louisiana: Section D

D. 5. Sustainability

Louisiana intends to sustain new preschool seats funded through this grant so no seats disappear after the four year grant period. As Act 3 calls for, Louisiana is working to provide a high-quality seat for all families of at-risk four-year-olds who want one. Community Network Pilots have already stepped up to the challenge of securing local financial and in-kind investments to improve early childhood. Specifically, the subgrantees are already working to secure resources to sustain their unifying work.

The state will partner with each subgrantee to develop a plan for sustainability for the new seats. In these plans, subgrantees will identify potential local (e.g., school district, local government, and philanthropic) funds that could be raised to sustain the seats and support services. At the state level, the funding model due to the Legislature in January 2015 will outline a strategy for providing state funding in phases to increase the high-quality LA 4 and NSECD programs (Appendix D. 2). This grant will help the state transition to its ultimate goal of serving all at-risk four-year-olds whose families request a quality preschool option.

Louisiana's Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs

D. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with subgrantees to offer 340 new seats in high-need communities in year 1 Select additional subgrantees for years two through four of the grant 	LDE	Competitive Selection
D. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually assess statewide need for preschool seats Conduct regular outreach with all Community Network Pilots 	LDE	Demand Analysis
D. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund 1,800 new preschool seats using \$23.7 million to serve more than 4,500 children over four years Fund 2,340 improved preschool seats using \$7.4 million to impact nearly 6,000 children over four years 	LDE	Increase Access and Quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subgrant seats to Early Learning Providers Provide comprehensive services and coaching for improvement 	Subgrantees	Increase Access and Quality; Progress Reports
D. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop funding model to sustain seats after grant period 	LDE	Funding Model
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential local funds that can be raised to sustain seats and support services 	Subgrantees	Sustainability Plan

E. COLLABORATING WITH EACH SUBGRANTEE AND ENSURING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Background: Louisiana is advancing a bold and ambitious agenda to prepare children for kindergarten with the Community Network Pilots leading the way (Appendix C. 1). Louisiana is uniquely positioned to work effectively with subgrantees to implement the Preschool Development Expansion Grant for three reasons:

- 1. LDE Mission:** As a result of Act 3 (2012), the LDE has adopted a birth to twelfth grade mission and is supporting local school districts to do the same, thereby meeting the needs of children from birth to college and career.
- 2. LDE Strategy:** *Louisiana Believes*, LDE's strategic plan, emphasizes decision-making by those closest to children in order to achieve the best outcomes. The LDE entrusts the process and progress of implementation to these local leaders, who are essential for sustainability and continued improvement for early childhood in Louisiana (Appendix A. 2, E. 1).
- 3. LDE Early Childhood Innovation:** LDE has strong, dynamic relationships with the subgrantees as a result of collaborative efforts to launch these local consortia of early childhood providers through Community Network Pilots. The LDE has invested in local leadership capacity to implement and sustain improvements to quality and access. The pilot approach means that every community will have opted into the unified system without being required to, an unprecedented approach and show of commitment (Appendix A. 2).

E. 1. Roles and Responsibilities of State and Subgrantees

The state has taken on the responsibility to transform a fragmented system of early childhood, with different expectations from one place to the next, and to work closely with stakeholders to unify that system so no child falls through the cracks. By fully implementing Act 3 through the coordination of all publicly-funded early childhood providers in every community, Louisiana will create a unified system that allows greater choice, greater access, and greater equity, and leads to improved child development. The LDE views its role in this work as:

Louisiana: Section E

- Setting high expectations for achievement;
- Providing support and guidance to local communities to meet those expectations; and
- Holding providers and communities accountable for child outcomes.

Louisiana will use lessons learned from the Community Network Pilots and continue to engage stakeholders in meaningful ways to improve the early childhood system.

The state is currently working collaboratively with the coordinating partners of the Community Network Pilots, some of whom who will serve as the subgrantees for the grant. The role of subgrantees is to work closely with the state to fund high-quality preschool seats, to train on and utilize key educational improvement tools (e.g., *CLASS* and *Teaching Strategies GOLD*), and to use teacher observations and child assessment results to measure progress and inform improvements. Subgrantees are responsible for implementing plans to (Appendix E. 2, E. 3):

- Increase access to high-quality, full day preschool;
- Provide professional development and technical assistance to teachers and leaders to improve and maintain quality;
- Provide additional, comprehensive supports for families, including helping families secure child care assistance for before- and after-care; and
- Strengthen community partnerships to sustain high-quality preschool services.

Table E. 1: Roles of the State and Subgrantees

Role of the State	Role of the Subgrantee
Subgrant funds to subgrantees, (coordinating partners for Community Network Pilots in year one)	Allocate funds to diverse delivery providers to ensure all seats are in high-quality settings
Monitor subgrantee progress and work related to grant expectations	Ensure all programs meet all grant expectations
Determine expectations for quality and monitor quality of programs (e.g., Report Card Field Test and Learning Year)	Provide training and support to meet all expectations for quality
Analyze de-identified data to provide evaluation of quality and improvements	Ensure that de-identified data on all expectations for quality is reported to the state

E. 2. State's Plan to Implement High-Quality Preschool Programs

Louisiana's ambitious and achievable plan builds upon the state's progress in providing high-quality preschool programs through public and nonpublic providers, since 2001. Louisiana's primary state-funded preschool program, LA 4, has a history of quality and achievement, with research demonstrating lasting cognitive benefits to children through the eighth grade (Appendix A. 3). In addition to LA 4, the state provides parents of at-risk children with access to quality nonpublic school and child care classrooms through the Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) program. Together these programs serve more than 17,000 at-risk four-year-olds in high-quality preschool annually.

More recently, the state's plan for implementing high-quality preschool programs has been informed by the work and success of the Community Network Pilots (Appendix A. 2). The Community Network Pilots already coordinate training and support, leadership collaboration, and other aspects of the early childhood work, increasing the capacity of the subgrantees to direct these resources and seats appropriately. Additionally, as cohort I Community Network Pilots, these communities have taken on the task of training the bulk of their teachers on important measures, including the *ELDS*, regular assessment of children, and quality teacher-child interactions. These communities are prepared to train any additional teachers quickly and effectively, and increase seats at a quality level in a timely fashion. As part of the grant, the state will work closely with subgrantees and early learning providers to:

- Identify and implement evidenced-based practices for preschool programs;
- Create tools to more fully implement clear, consistent expectations for learning across preschool programs and settings, as supported by the *ELDS* and *Teaching Strategies GOLD* (Appendix B. 3);
- Develop, field test, and implement a fair and transparent report card system that will base letter grades on teacher practice, using *CLASS* observations, to provide simple, clear information on how programs are teaching and ways to improve (Appendix A. 6);
- Provide a system of support for all teachers that considers credentials and equitable access to training, tools, feedback, and coaching, and includes:
 - Increased time and support for teachers to set goals, plan daily activities, adjust teaching based on ongoing assessment of children's progress, and collaborate with colleagues;

Louisiana: Section E

- Scholarships for teachers to obtain certifications or credentials, including by offering a competitive process for innovative providers to offer training and Child Development Associate courses; and
- Incentives to hire and retain effective and highly-effective certified teachers;
- Upgrade organizational capacity and infrastructure to strengthen connections between early childhood and K-3 and achieve coherence in areas such as standards, curriculum, and assessment;
- Provide comprehensive services to meet the needs of at-risk children;
- Engage parents and families, including isolated or hard-to-reach families; and
- Pursue equitable funding between preschool and kindergarten to ensure sustainability of quality four-year-old programs.

To ensure success, the state has established regular review points with the Community Network Pilots. The state and Community Network Pilots have monthly forums where the state provides technical assistance. In addition, Community Network Pilots submit quarterly progress reports which the state uses to direct coaching and supports. Finally, the state hosts year-end reviews where Community Network Pilots reflect on their strengths and challenges and plan for improvements the following year.

E. 3. State's Plan to Minimize Local Administrative Costs

The state already contracts with and monitors the subgrantees for multiple functions, including:

- Provision of four-year-old preschool seats;
- Building the local Community Network Pilots, or consortia of providers; and
- Operating Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (City of Monroe (Ouachita) and Orleans).

Subgrantees will be allowed to charge indirect costs at their approved rate; however, they will be expected to minimize administrative costs so that the amount available for program activities can be maximized. To support subgrantees in minimizing administrative costs, the state will:

- Provide information and resources to help subgrantees distinguish between administrative and indirect costs;
- Cap administrative costs at 5%;

Louisiana: Section E

- Use the state's highly-acclaimed electronic grant management system and appropriate fiscal tools to help subgrantees identify and leverage other available funds and resources that can be used to cover necessary and reasonable administrative costs;
- Review subgrantee budgets and provide targeted feedback, if necessary; and
- Connect subgrantees with peers elsewhere to share successful strategies for minimizing administrative costs.

All commitments will be secured through MOUs and assurances (Appendix E. 2, E. 3). The state will monitor all subgrantee activity to ensure local administrative costs are minimized and opportunities for children are maximized.

E. 4. State's Plan for Monitoring Early Learning Providers to Ensure Delivery of High-Quality Programs

To assure quality, Louisiana will implement a robust monitoring system that builds on strategies used in successful initiatives, and includes multiple opportunities to collect program quality data to inform teacher and program quality improvement efforts. In addition, the state will secure assurances from each early learning provider (Appendix E. 3). State monitoring strategies will include:

- **Quarterly check-in calls** with subgrantees and providers to collect de-identified data on factors research shows matter most in improving children's learning and development, such as quality of teacher-child interactions, using *CLASS*, and types of supports provided to teachers to help them improve their practice (i.e., through the report card field test and Learning Year). The state will provide a reporting template to gather de-identified data and track progress prior to each call to ensure productive discussions.
- **Onsite monitoring visits** when more in-depth information is needed to determine and support progress.
- **Annual monitoring** in line with LA 4 and NSECD to ensure compliance with high-quality program components (Appendix A. 8).
- Development of a **report card system** that will assign letter grades and provide clear, simple information on how programs are teaching and ways to improve (Appendix A. 6).
 - Included in the report card system is a **family survey**, designed to monitor the perception of quality of communication and services to families.

Louisiana: Section E

In addition, the LDE will prepare progress reports on the implementation of this grant to be included in the quarterly reports that will go to the new Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council (Appendix B. 14).

E. 5. State’s Plans to Coordinate

Louisiana recognizes, through the work of the Community Network Pilots and other successful reforms, the importance of coordination at multiple levels to increase efficiency and achieve desired outcomes. Coordination through the grant will build on successful strategies used to coordinate with the Community Network Pilots, such as:

- Ongoing training, support, and guidance, including providing a toolbox for leaders to unify their local early childhood system (Appendix E. 4, E. 5);
- Routine collaborative planning through leadership forums;
- Regular communications through electronic newsletters and onsite visits; and
- Building on the report card field test and Learning Year.

The state and subgrantees will work continuously to strengthen and maintain coordination of all preschool program components and activities so teachers and children benefit.

E. 6. State’s Plans to Coordinate, but not Supplant, Delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs

Through coordinated enrollment, the LDE and BESE have oversight to ensure the most at-risk children have the opportunity to participate in high-quality early childhood programs. Louisiana proposes to use funds to:

- Create at least 340 new preschool seats for at-risk families in high-need communities in the first year, with 1800 seats serving over 4,500 children over the four year grant period

Table E. 2: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
Continued from Prior Year	---	340	1000	1440
Total Seats Funded	340	1000	1440	1800

- Improve existing preschool programs in high-needs communities by:

Louisiana: Section E

- Providing job-embedded, evidence-based professional development, including coaching;
- Partnering with local social service and community partners to provide comprehensive services; and
- Providing additional supports for families, including helping families secure child care assistance for before- and after-care.

E. 7. Approaches to Inclusive Settings

The NSECD program in Louisiana has a history of successfully integrating high-quality preschool programs within diverse settings, in which publicly-funded preschool is offered in private child care centers and nonpublic schools, demonstrating the capacity of child care to deliver high-quality preschool. Children enrolled in NSECD are in classes with children who are not at-risk. LA 4 also provides an economically diverse setting by providing access to above-income families through sliding scale tuition. The subgrantees are committed to providing the new seats created through the grant in a mixed delivery system. The state will expand parent choice through this grant by enhancing the mixed delivery model.

The state is also working with Community Network Pilots to explore more ways to expand inclusion, including through reverse mainstreaming (with services provided within the regular education class). In reverse mainstreaming, regular education students are brought into special education classrooms for part of the school day or for the full school day. Reverse mainstreaming provides key benefits for children:

- Provides opportunities for children with disabilities to learn alongside regularly developing peers, which helps to improve oral language proficiencies;
- Maximizes seats for regular education students; and
- Addresses social and emotional development by creating an environment that encourages tolerance and acceptance of others and removing the social stigma of disabilities.

For teachers, reverse mainstreaming deepens processes for collaboration and coordination between regular education and special education program staff. The LDE has already provided incentives for Community Network Pilots to use reverse mainstreaming mechanisms through state Preschool Inclusion Grants to selected communities (Appendix B. 6).

E. 8. Delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs to Children Who May be in Need of Additional Supports

As a result of the grant funding, Louisiana will increase preschool seats to serve more than 4,500 additional at-risk children in high-quality preschool programs over the four year grant period, as shown in Table A. 1. At-risk children are defined in Louisiana as children in families with income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, with disabilities, in foster care, who are English language learners, and/or experiencing homelessness. As evident from the at-risk definition, Louisiana is focused on serving the state's most vulnerable children. Closing the gap between parent demand for and availability of quality preschool seats is key to improving kindergarten readiness in Louisiana, therefore the state intends to use almost three-quarters (\$23.7M) of the grant to create new seats (Table D. 1).

To ensure these children receive quality services, subgrantees participate in local leadership teams through their Community Network Pilot who meet monthly to plan professional development opportunities for teachers and develop, discuss, and adapt instructional supports for students. Professional development will be designed to target both teacher and student need. Teachers will use *Teaching Strategies GOLD* and other available assessment data and screening tools to identify children who need additional support. Leaders will use *CLASS* data to determine teacher needs. Finally, because the LDE is responsible for Child Care Resource and Referral agencies as well as quality supports, including mental health consultation, the LDE can direct supports quickly based on subgrantee and child needs.

E. 9. Strategies to Ensure Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Outreach and Communications Efforts

The state will work closely with subgrantees to implement effective communication and outreach strategies to:

- Increase enrollment of eligible children from isolated or hard-to-reach families through robust local coordinated enrollment efforts;
- Help families build protective factors through referrals to local community support organizations; and

Louisiana: Section E

- Develop the capacity of parents and families to support their children's learning and development, specifically through providing information from *Teaching Strategies GOLD*.

Their efforts to coordinate enrollment, which includes implementing coordinated information campaigns designed to reach isolated or hard-to-reach families, also includes developing the capacity of parents and families to support their children's learning and development by unifying fragmented providers and processes at the local level (Appendix A. 7). To achieve these goals, the state will monitor the subgrantees on providing these services and provide technical assistance to them as needed.

E. 10. Plans to Ensure Strong Partnerships

Achieving strong outcomes requires strong partnerships. The Community Network Pilots demonstrate the state's commitment to building lasting partnerships with local leaders. To support Community Networks Pilots to build a robust local leadership team, the state has provided:

- Guidance on how to build a successful local leadership team, developing a quick start guide and rubric (Appendix E. 4, E. 5);
- Support through dedicated LDE staff to assist Community Network Pilots, with five staff leaders throughout the state working side-by-side with local leadership teams;
- Ongoing progress monitoring and collaborative de-identified data reviews;
- Annual review of the community's coordinated enrollment plan; and
- Expectations for age-appropriate facilities.

Because of the innovative approach Louisiana is taking to implement Act 3, whereby local consortia are empowered as Community Network Pilots, Louisiana has a robust infrastructure for the subgrantees to maintain strong partnerships (Appendix A. 2). Specifically, the Community Network Pilots are:

- Strengthening local transitions from preschool to kindergarten by including kindergarten teachers in some of the trainings on the *ELDS*, *CLASS*, and *Teaching Strategies GOLD*;
- Providing integrated professional development where teachers and leaders from child care, Head Start, public preschool, and nonpublic preschool train and learn together;

Louisiana: Section E

- Strengthening family engagement, and leveraging local Head Start engagement strategies, through coordinated enrollment;
- Improving inclusion practices, specifically through the state's innovative grant initiative (Appendix B. 6); and
- Continually reporting and analyzing community-level, de-identified data to make professional development and allocation decisions.

Louisiana has long championed the engagement of stakeholders to inform state preschool efforts. The LDE knows that partnerships are essential for ensuring all aspects of early childhood care and education are addressed appropriately. The LDE and BESE will announce a new early childhood advisory council in mid-October (Appendix B. 14). In response to Act 868 (2014), the state is creating the new Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council that will be designated as the early childhood advisory council by the end of 2014. This new council will be under BESE and will review and help craft all early childhood policies prior to final BESE approval. Members of this advisory council, which will include representatives from all types of child care, Head Start, schools, advocacy organizations, families, and others, will be installed mid-October. When the application was released for this council in summer 2014, more than 110 individuals applied for 13 seats, demonstrating the broad interest and belief in engagement on early childhood in Louisiana.

The state has already invested significant time, effort, and resources to ensure strong partnerships at the local level, and the state will continue to work closely with subgrantees to model and foster a learning culture where all partners are able to learn from and support each other.

Louisiana: Section E

Louisiana's Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships

Criteria	Key Activities	Parties Responsible	Performance Measure
E. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgrant funds to subgrantees • Provide support and guidance to subgrantees • Hold providers and communities accountable 	LDE	Grant Report; Report Cards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to high-quality preschool • Provide professional development and technical assistance • Provide comprehensive supports for families • Strengthen community partnerships 	Subgrantees	Increase Access and Quality; Coordinated Enrollment Results; Sustainability Plan
E. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance and coaching to subgrantees • Create a toolbox of supports for teachers and leaders 	LDE	Monthly Forums, Year-End Reviews, Toolbox
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen teacher support system • Collect and analyze local de-identified data • Subgrant with Early Learning Providers 	Subgrantees	Support Plan; Data Reviews; Increase Access
E. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure subgrantee MOUs and assurances • Monitor subgrantee activity in line with MOUs and assurances to minimize administrative costs 	LDE	Grant Report
E. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct quarterly check-in calls • Conduct onsite monitoring visits • Develop Report Card system, including family survey 	LDE	Monitoring; Report Card Field Test and Learning Year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure MOU with Early Learning Providers 	Subgrantees	Grant Report; Monitoring

Louisiana: Section E

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor subgrantee activity in line with MOUs and assurances 		
E.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and support for <i>CLASS</i>, <i>GOLD</i>, and <i>CONNECT</i> • Host Leadership forums for routine collaborative planning • Engage in feedback around report card field test and Learning Year 	LDE Subgrantees	Progress Reports
E.7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use diverse delivery mechanisms and NSECD to serve at-risk children • Leverage existing Community Network Pilot infrastructure 	Subgrantees	Increase Access; Progress Reports
E.8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement robust coordinated enrollment systems 	Subgrantees	Coordinated Enrollment Results
E.9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement robust coordinated enrollment systems • Refer families to local community support organizations • Provide families actionable information from <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> to develop their capacity to support their children's learning and development 	Subgrantees	Coordinated Enrollment Results; Progress Reports
E.10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance and coaching to subgrantees • Create a toolbox of supports for teachers and leaders 	LDE	Monthly Forums, Year-End Reviews, Toolbox
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop data-driven support plans • Strengthen coordinated enrollment system 	Subgrantees	Support Plan; Year End Reviews; Increase Access

F. ALIGNMENT WITHIN A BIRTH THROUGH THIRD GRADE CONTINUUM

F. 1(a). Coordinating to Build a Strong Continuum

As a result of Act 3 (2012), the LDE has adopted a birth to twelfth grade mission, focused on supporting children's development and success across this continuum. Yet, Louisiana recognizes that no single provider can serve all of the state's at-risk children: it takes a diverse system of child care, Head Start, and preschool to serve all at-risk children birth to five. Through Community Network Pilots, Louisiana is ensuring a continuum of learning from birth to age five within every community that:

- Empowers families with choice;
- Increases access to high-quality options;
- Engages families, including isolated or hard-to-reach families, that might not participate otherwise;
- Ensures resources, including curricula and assessments, support quality in diverse delivery settings;
- Supports seamless transitions across programs birth to five; and
- Supports all at-risk children in that community so they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

With Community Network Pilots well underway, the LDE is now working to ensure coherence between these two systems: birth to five systems and K-12 systems.

F. 1(b). Ensuring No Increased Cost to Families or Diminution of Other Services

Louisiana will ensure enhancements do not result in additional costs for families or diminution of other important services. Because the LDE and BESE oversee local coordinated enrollment efforts, the state is in a unique position to reduce burdens on families (Appendix A. 7). For all the seats that will be funded through this grant, there will be no increased cost to families or diminution of other services, even as the state funds these seats at the higher rate of quality. As the state is preparing the funding model for early childhood as required by HCR 61 (2014), extensive consideration is being given to drastically reducing, if not eliminating, parent co-pay rates associated with child care subsidies, if permitted by the anticipated revised federal regulations governing CCDF (Appendix D. 2).

F. 2(a). Ensuring Children are Well-Prepared for Kindergarten

In 2011, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) established a statewide comprehensive definition of kindergarten readiness (Appendix A. 9). All of the state's work to unify the early childhood system is intended to improve kindergarten readiness for all children. As required by law, the state annually assesses kindergarten readiness against the definition, using the comprehensive *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)* as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) (Appendix A. 10). In 2014-15, the state is field testing a report card system for early childhood providers that will inform future policy on how best to measure kindergarten readiness and program quality (Appendix A. 6). The Community Network Pilots are testing the use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD* and other resources to determine a more complete kindergarten readiness measure that would be part of a comprehensive early learning assessment system. In addition, the report card field test and Learning Year includes assessing program quality using *CLASS*, which will give great insight into how well programs are preparing children for kindergarten.

F. 2(b). Sustaining Educational and Developmental Gains in K-3

Louisiana is taking a comprehensive approach to sustaining gains earned in early childhood through the third grade. Overall, the state is ensuring coherence between the early childhood and early elementary systems of resources and support, as shown in Table. F. 1. The strategy reflects the state's approach to supporting teachers through a continuous loop where teachers:

1. **Set Goals:** Set ambitious goals for student achievement;
2. **Plan & Teach:** Prepare lessons based on the *ELDS* and having high-quality interactions with children; and
3. **Evaluate:** Reflect on student learning based on observation and assessment and adjust plans.

Table F. 1: Louisiana’s Strategy to Increase Coherence between Early Childhood and Early Elementary Systems

Group	Responsibility	Resources	Direct Support
Community Network Pilots and Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan: Develop community vision and plans to guide providers • Build Systems: Support teachers through observation and collaboration 	District Support Toolbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative planning with other networks • State staff support, both in central office and in the field
Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Vision: Set vision, goals, and curricular and programming plans • Manage Site: Ensure teachers are supported to improve and children achieve • Reflect: Identify strengths and challenges, makes plans to adjust 	District Support Toolbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Network Pilot leadership team • Community collaboration • Child Care Resource & Referral
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Goals: Set ambitious goals for student achievement • Plan & Teach: Prepare lessons based on the <i>ELDS</i> and having high-quality interactions with children • Evaluate: Reflect on student learning based on observation and assessment, adjust plans 	Teacher Support Toolbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Network Pilot – coaches • Teacher Leaders • Professional Learning Communities • Child Care Resource & Referral • Mental Health Consultation

In addition, Louisiana will:

- Ensure structures exist to support meaningful collaboration for all teachers, including expanding its innovative use of Teacher Leaders. Teacher Leaders are highly effective educators who serve as school leaders assisting other teachers to plan high-quality lessons, reflect on student data to inform instruction, and improve professional practice (Appendix F. 1).

Louisiana: Section F

- Continue providing full day kindergarten, as required by Louisiana law.
- Create a report card system that ensures early childhood providers are preparing children for K-3. Through the field test and ongoing work to improve the K-12 accountability system, the state is working to incentivize and measure sustaining the educational and developmental gains children will be making in publicly-funded early childhood programs (Appendix A. 6).

By connecting processes and programs across the birth through third grade spectrum, Louisiana will increase the percentage of children reading and doing math at grade level by the end of third grade will increase. The proof of this sustained achievement is evidenced by the success of the state's LA 4 and NSECD programs, which show lasting benefits through the eighth grade (Appendix A. 3).

F. 2(c). Sustaining Parent and Family Engagement

Community Network Pilots have developed strong family engagement strategies, building on the success of local Head Starts in this effort. The Community Network Pilots are further working to engage families, particularly through coordinated enrollment and discussing child growth and development through *Teaching Strategies GOLD* (Appendix A. 7). To enhance this work, the state will release a family survey, currently being field tested this year. The survey will communicate expectations about family-school and school-family engagement and interactions and measure family satisfaction with their children's early childhood experiences. Family satisfaction data will be a component in the early childhood report cards for both providers and Community Network Pilots. The results of the survey will also help the state monitor and support the subgrantees.

Subgrantees will build on successful practices from Head Start, LA 4, NSECD, and Community Network Pilots and use a variety of strategies to sustain parent and family engagement into the elementary years, such as:

- Helping all families by providing:
 - Communication and support materials that support learning at each grade level;
 - Partnerships with local providers of adult education;
 - Support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services; and

Louisiana: Section F

- Information fairs to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families;
 - Designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress;
 - Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities;
 - Including parents in school decisions, possibly through developing parent leaders and representatives; and
 - Identifying resources and services from the community to strengthen family practices.

F. 2(d). Steps to Ensure K-3 Coherence

Louisiana will build on its current strengths, the momentum of the Community Network Pilots, and the state's intensive focus to improve kindergarten readiness to ensure coherence between early childhood care and K-3 systems. The state will:

1. Define cohesive expectations for child growth and development;
2. Provide tools to support learning and help implement them; and
3. Build an accountability system to measure performance.

Defining cohesive expectations for child growth and development: To establish unified expectations for growth and development, Louisiana will:

- **Create Early Learning and Development Standards:** The Louisiana state Early Learning and Development Standards (*ELDS*) are well aligned to BESE's definition of kindergarten readiness (Appendix A. 9, B. 1). Additionally, *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, which is used by Community Network Pilot teachers to assess children's growth and development, is 95% aligned to the *ELDS* (Appendix B. 3).
- **Establish Expectations for Teacher Preparation:** The LDE firmly believes that to improve child outcomes, children must have access to a high-quality teacher. Louisiana recently announced plans to create a new Birth to Kindergarten bachelor degree credential and to increase the credential requirement to teach in publicly-funded child care. Louisiana is preparing to require all lead teachers in publicly-funded child care hold an ancillary teaching certificate, which is dependent upon earning the Child

Louisiana: Section F

Development Associate (CDA, Appendix F. 2, E. 1). To support teachers to meet the higher expectations, the state is working to expand its scholarship program significantly, from \$500,000 to \$5 million over three years (Appendix F. 3).

Providing tools to support learning and helping to implement them: Louisiana is building structures for all ages that will:

- **Review Curriculum:** To support early learning providers to deliver high-quality lessons, the LDE will review early childhood curricular materials to support providers in selecting instructional materials aligned to the *ELDS* and kindergarten readiness. The LDE will do the curricular review as part of the report card field test and Learning Year (Appendix A. 6).
- **Provide High-Quality Professional Development:** Community Network Pilots ensure that professional development is designed to meet the needs of teachers. Community Network Pilots provide teachers with training on the *ELDS*, ongoing assessment of children, and improving teacher-child interactions. Professional development structures also provide increased time and support for teachers to set goals, plan daily activities, adjust teaching based on ongoing assessment of children's progress, and collaborate with colleagues.
- **Support Assessment:** The state will build on its support system for K-12 assessment by developing similar supports for early childhood. To support formative assessment, LDE provides teachers with EAGLE, an online K-12 formative assessment system loaded with ELA, math, science, and social studies questions (Appendix F. 4). The system provides Louisiana teachers the ability to build online tests and receive student and class performance reports.

Building an accountability system to measure performance: For Louisiana to achieve its goal of having every child ready for kindergarten, the state needs an accountability system that will:

- **Align Assessment:** The state is working to ensure that teachers are using appropriate assessments to support and measure learning from early childhood through the third grade. Currently, early assessment in Louisiana involves diverse assessment tools,

Louisiana: Section F

including the *Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)* and the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* (Appendix A. 10). Though Community Network Pilots are using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, it is not used in kindergarten or beyond. The report card field test and Learning Year will help bring cohesion to the state's assessment approach.

- **Revise the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA):** The Legislature mandates assessing children within thirty days of entering kindergarten for the purpose of placement and planning instruction. The state will work to ensure the KEA intentionally connects the expectations for early childhood to the expectations for early elementary students. The state plans to use the information from the field test and Learning Year to determine next steps in selecting an appropriate KEA that covers all five essential domains of development and would be part of a comprehensive early learning and assessment system.
- **Engage Families:** The LDE encourages and supports local leaders to build family engagement structures that will support the ultimate goal of every child entering kindergarten ready to learn, and sustaining those benefits throughout a child's academic career. Community Network Pilots will continually enhance family engagement through their coordinated enrollment efforts and discussions with families on child growth, through the use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. The Community Network Pilots demonstrate the benefits of having school districts partner with child care and Head Start to better serve families.

Need for an Early Childhood Accountability Technology System: To have the information needed to make continual system enhancements, Louisiana will use grant funds to build an early childhood accountability technology system to consistently measure program quality using program-based report cards and provide useful information for families and providers (Appendix A. 12). The system will serve as a single source of meaningful information for state agencies, providers, and families and allow linkages between early childhood programs and elementary school education.

Louisiana's Ambitious and Achievable Plan: Coherence Across a Birth through Third Grade Continuum

Criteria	Key Activities	Parties Responsible	Performance Measure
F.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop funding model that supports and sustains high-quality birth to five system 	LDE	Funding Model
F.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase coherence between early childhood and early elementary academic strategy Use 2015-16 Learning Year with all publicly-funded providers to finalize early childhood report card system Build Early Childhood Accountability Technology System 	LDE	Academic Strategy; Report Card Field Test and Learning Year; Accountability Technology System
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage families through coordinated enrollment and comprehensive support systems Partner with families to support children, using <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> Identify resources and services from community to strengthen family practices 	Subgrantee	Coordinated Enrollment Results; Family Survey

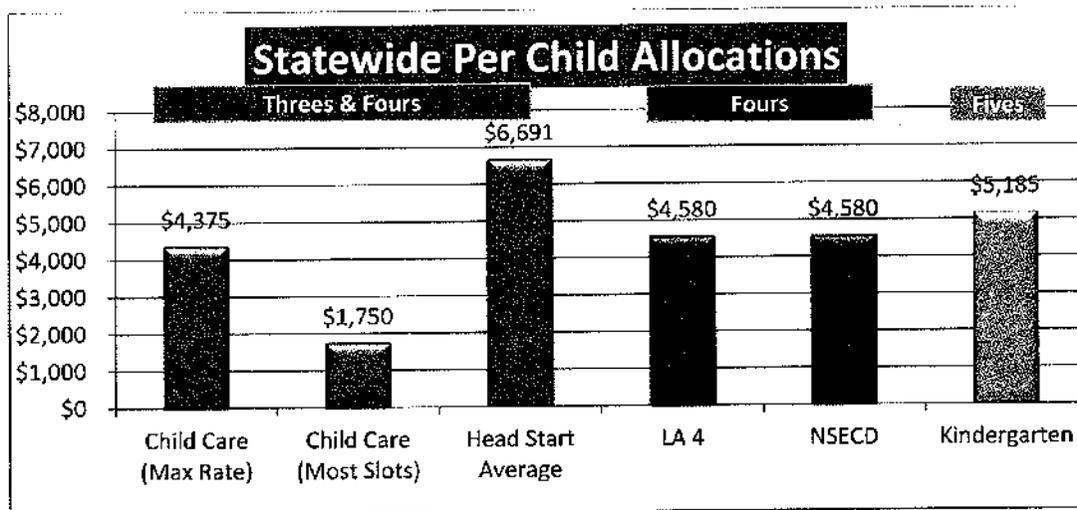
G. BUDGET AND SUSTAINABILITY

G. 1. Funding High-Quality Preschool

Background: In implementing Act 3, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) established an ambitious and achievable plan to create local early childhood networks comprised of child care, Head Start, publicly funded private preschools, and public preschool under a unified system of academic and development standards, enrollment, and teacher preparation expectations. These networks, which are expected to serve all publicly-funded at-risk children birth to five in their communities, are piloting innovative approaches to increasing quality and improving access (Appendix A. 2).

To assist Community Network Pilots with planning to serve all children in high-quality settings, Louisiana has done extensive analysis of current funding for preschool in the state. As shown in Figure G. 1, current funding varies widely based on the preschool program. Notably, child care receives the least amount of public funding, resulting in families having to contribute the most. Head Start is the best funded program in the state, followed by LA 4 and NSECD; in each of these, families do not have any out-of-pocket costs.

Figure G. 1: Comparison of Per Child Funding



Louisiana: Section G

Contributing Matching Funds

The state will leverage recent investments in these communities as well as other Community Network Pilots. Specifically, the state is providing foundational training, funding for job-embedded professional development, and technical assistance on coordinating enrollment. From 2014 to 2018, this represents a \$(b)(4) new investment in these communities, as shown in Table G. 1 (Appendix A. 2). This represents a (b)(4)% match of the potential federal grant. In addition, the LDE currently oversees all critical support systems for early childhood including Child Care Resource and Referral programs, Head Start collaboration, Quality Start (QRIS), mental health consultation, and field-based technical assistance. This enables Louisiana to leverage multiple resources to support quality improvement efforts at local level.

Table G. 1: Louisiana Matching Funds

Table G. 1: Louisiana Matching Funds	
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 1)	(b)(4)
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 2)	
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 3)	
Community Network Pilot Technology	
State Level Infrastructure	
Total State Match	

Louisiana: Section G

Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development

Improved Seats: The Community Network Pilots are actively working to improve all early childhood programs in their community, specifically by:

- **Leading Collaboratively:** Develop a collaborative leadership structure that represents child care, Head Start, public preschool and nonpublic preschool leaders;
- **Supporting Teachers:**
 - o Observe and provide feedback to teachers using a highly-regarded, research-based tool (*CLASS*) and ensure teachers have access to evidence-based professional development; and
 - o Use a common assessment to evaluate all children; and
- **Coordinating Enrollment:** Coordinate information and applications across all programs for families (Appendix A. 7).

The subgrantees will improve seats by:

- Providing comprehensive services to families served in the new seats; and
- Providing evidence-based coaching to teachers in new classrooms and existing classrooms.

The subgrantees will be able to leverage existing local funding and Community Network Pilot funding, along with grant funding (\$7.4M), to provide coaching to teachers serving an additional 30% of children. These efforts will ensure that classrooms outside of the grant funding will benefit from the additional supports and investments. Table G. 2 shows the number of improved seats impacted by the grant, with nearly 6,000 children benefiting from the improved seats over the four year grant period.

Table G. 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

Improved Seats Funded	442	1300	1872	2340
-----------------------	-----	------	------	------

Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Seats

New Seats: Louisiana believes high-quality child outcomes depend upon having access to a high-quality teacher. LA 4 and NSECD both require bachelor degree, certified teachers, compensated on the same scale as kindergarten teachers (Appendix A. 4). However, the state's K-12 education funding formula provides more state funding for kindergarten than the state

Louisiana: Section G

provides for preschool (\$5,185 vs. \$4,580) despite similar costs. As the state develops a funding model for early childhood in response to HCR 61 (2014), the state will work to transition to equitable funding between preschool and kindergarten (Appendix D. 2). Since the state will expand LA 4 and NSECD through the Preschool Development Expansion Grant, the state will fund new seats at the \$5,185 per child funding level, further supporting the cost of high-quality care and education.

To decrease the gap between parent demand for and availability of high-quality preschool seats, Louisiana will use \$23.7 million of its \$32 million grant to open new seats for eligible children. The ambitious and achievable targets are laid out in Table G. 3.

Table G. 3: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
Continued from Prior Year	---	340	1000	1440
Total Seats Funded	340	1000	1440	1800

Over the four year grant period, 1,800 new seats will be added, decreasing the state's gap between parent demand for and availability of high-quality preschool seats by 36%. As the table shows, new seats will be added each year of the grant, resulting in more than 4,500 four-year-olds served over the four year grant period, a direct response to family demand. As shown in Table G. 4, the grant will dramatically reduce the gap between parent demand for and availability of quality preschool seats in Caddo, City of Monroe (Ouachita), Iberville, Lincoln, and Orleans and fully eliminate it in Rapides. If the state is selected for the Preschool Development Expansion Grant, in years two, three, and four, Louisiana will be able to reduce the gap between parent demand for and availability of quality preschool seats across the state even further. These communities, as well as others across the state, will be able to apply for more seats by meeting the same criteria used in year one (Demonstrated Successes as Local Consortia, Demonstrated Need, and Communities Most At-Risk).

Table G. 4: Year One Reduction in Gap between Demand and Supply with Grant Funding

Caddo	2533	2287	10%	2307	9%	8%
City of Monroe (Ouachita)	1930	1615	16%	1665	14%	16%
Iberville	360	260	28%	310	14%	50%
Lincoln	450	397	12%	417	7%	38%
Orleans	3600	3110	14%	3230	10%	24%
Rapides	1415	1335	6%	1415	0%	100%

Total per Child Funding: Through the grant, Louisiana will:

- Provide funding for new seats on par with state funding for kindergarten; and
- Provide improvement funding that will ensure families receive comprehensive services and teachers receive evidence-based professional development.

Table G. 5: Total per Child Funding

New Seats	\$5,185
Improved Seats	\$1,245
Total	\$6,430

Total funding per child is on par with the Louisiana Head Start per child average funding, as shown in Table G. 5. The overall funding strategy, detailing how the state will provide new seats and improve others, including specifically how many seats and funding each subgrantee will receive, is in Appendix G. 1.

Louisiana: Section G

G. 2. Coordinating Existing Funding

Louisiana has committed to coordinating all early childhood funding to improve kindergarten readiness outcomes. The state is currently consolidating state early childhood care and education functions into one agency, the Louisiana Department of Education.

- All Quality Start (QRIS) functions and child care licensing have moved to the LDE.
- The Head Start Collaboration Office is now housed at the LDE.
- By July 2015, all CCDF functions will be consolidated into the LDE.

The only state early childhood services operated outside of education are the IDEA Part C and MIECHV programs, both operated by the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). Coordination between DHH and the LDE will continue. The IDEA Part C coordinator from DHH and the IDEA Part B 619 Coordinator from LDE work closely together to ensure the seamless transition and development of IEPs for children with disabilities moving between the two programs.

The state also works with local providers to coordinate the myriad early childhood funding streams. The LDE provides technical assistance on increasing access and maximizing services to children through coordination of state and federal funds.

- In Louisiana, providers are coordinating federal Title 1 funding, IDEA Part B 619, and REAP in addition to state preschool funding. Preschool classes across all of these funding streams adhere to the rigorous LA 4 program requirements.
- The state has been incredibly successful at working with providers to use federal funding to support inclusion practices, with each of the subgrantees providing inclusive settings. The state has increased the percentage of children with special needs receiving services in regular education programs from 36.5% (2004) to 87.5% (2013) (Appendix B. 11).

Louisiana is in a unique position to maximize existing funds because of the Community Network Pilot structure. In addition to the ongoing work noted above to coordinate existing resources, particularly federal funding, the state is partnering with Community Network Pilots to transform early childhood and develop a unified system. Louisiana's commitment to this work is evident in the \$ (b)(4) the state will contribute over the four-year-period of the grant (a % match) (Table G. 1). The state will continue to work intensively with subgrantees to leverage all existing funding to maximize quality and access for early childhood services.

Louisiana: Section G

G. 3. Sustainability

Louisiana intends to sustain new preschool seats funded through this grant so no seats disappear after the four year grant period. As called for by Act 3, Louisiana is working to provide a high-quality seat for all families of at-risk four-year-olds who want one. Community Network Pilots have already stepped up to the challenge of securing local financial and in-kind investments to improve early childhood. Specifically, the subgrantees are already working to secure resources to sustain their unifying work.

The state will partner with each subgrantee to develop a plan for sustainability for the new seats. In these plans, subgrantees will identify potential local (e.g., school district, local government, and philanthropic) funds that could be raised to sustain the seats and support services. At the state level, the funding model due to the Legislature in January 2015 will outline a strategy for providing state funding in phases to increase the high-quality LA 4 and NSECD program. This grant will help the state transition to its ultimate goal of serving all at-risk four-year-olds.

Louisiana is submitting an application for each of the following competitive preference priorities:

1. Contributing Matching Funds

- a. Louisiana will contribute approximately \$ (b)(4) in state funds.

2. Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development

- a. Louisiana will improve 2,340 preschool seats and leverage the existing Community Network Pilot structure, impacting nearly 6,00 children.

3. Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Seats

- a. Louisiana will add 1,800 new high-quality seats, serving more than 4,500 children.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- A. 1. Act 3 (2012)
- A. 2. Community Network Pilots
- A. 3. Picard Research on LA 4, 8(g), and NSECD Quality
- A. 4. LA 4, 8(g), and NSECD Requirements and Guidelines
- A. 5. Early Childhood Risk and Reach in Louisiana Report
- A. 6. Early Childhood Accountability System
- A. 7. Coordinated Enrollment Report
- A. 8. LA 4 and NSECD Monitoring Tools
- A. 9. Louisiana Kindergarten Readiness Definition
- A. 10. DIBELS-Next and Developmental Skills Checklist (DSC)
- A. 11. Stakeholder Letters of Support
- A. 12. Early Childhood Accountability Technology System Information

- B. 1. Early Learning and Development Standards
- B. 2. CONNECT
- B. 3. Teaching Strategies GOLD and ELDS
- B. 4. School Readiness Tax Credits
- B. 5. Quality Start (QRIS)
- B. 6. State Inclusion Grant
- B. 7. Louisiana State Laws Related to Early Childhood
- B. 8. LA 4, 8(g), and NSECD Assurances
- B. 9. NIEER Report
- B. 10. Incentives for Quality - Bonus Payment System
- B. 11. Federal Indicator Report
- B. 12. Work Force Competencies
- B. 13. Birth to Kindergarten Teaching Certification
- B. 14. Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council

- C. 1. Early Childhood Policy Blueprint 2014-15
-

Louisiana: List of Appendices

D. 1. Community Network Pilots Request For Applications & Process

D. 2. Cost Modeling for Louisiana's Funding Model

E. 1. Louisiana Believes Plan

E. 2. Subgrantee MOU, Assurances, and Exhibit 1

E. 3. Sub-subgrantee Assurances

E. 4. Quick Start Guide

E. 5. Rubric: Guide to Building Successful Local Leadership Teams

F. 1. Teacher Leader Overview

F. 2. Child Development Associate

F. 3. CCDF Scholarship Information

F. 4. EAGLE

G. 1. Detailed Funding Strategy

Other Attachment File(s)

* **Mandatory Other Attachment Filename:**

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To add more "Other Attachment" attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

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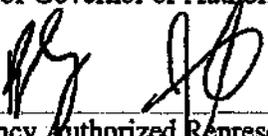
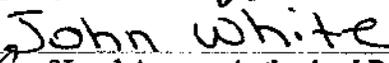
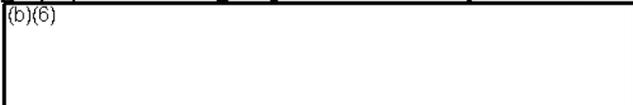
Table A

Expansion Grants										
PART I. Absolute Priority 1										
Instructions: For each year, please fill out the expected Federal Preschool Development Grant Funds for 1A, 1C, and 1D. Nothing else should be filled out in this section. The other cells will self-populate with information, those should not be modified.										
Allocation of Federal Preschool Development Grant Funds	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Cumulative \$	%
	\$	% Funds	\$	% Funds	\$	% Funds	\$	% Funds		
1A: State-Level Infrastructure	\$100,000	4%	\$100,000	4%	\$250,000	2%	\$100,000	1%	\$750,000	2%
1B: High-Quality Preschool Programs	\$2,312,982	96%	\$6,802,889	96%	\$9,796,160	98%	\$12,245,200	99%	\$31,157,231	98%
1C: New Preschool Slots	\$1,762,900	73%	\$5,185,000	73%	\$7,466,400	74%	\$9,333,000	76%	\$23,747,300	74%
1D: Improved Preschool Slots	\$550,082	23%	\$1,617,889	23%	\$2,329,760	23%	\$2,912,200	24%	\$7,409,931	23%
Total Federal Funds	\$2,412,982	100%	\$7,102,889	100%	\$10,046,160	100%	\$12,345,200	100%	\$31,907,231	100%

PART II. Competitive Priority 1										
Instructions: For each year, fill out the expected Matching Funds for 2A, 2C, 2D. Also, provide the increased State funding in Fiscal Year 2014 at the bottom of this section. The other cells will self-populate with information, those should not be modified.										
Allocation of Matching Funds	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Cumulative \$	%
	\$	% Funds								
(b)(4)										

Application Assurances and Certifications
AND
Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting
Assurances

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Honorable Bobby Jindal Governor, State of Louisiana	Applicant's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004
Employer Identification Number: 72-6000745	Organizational DUNS: 8059209980000
Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Education Contact Name: Jenna Conway (Single point of contact for communication)	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 225.342-3462 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: jenna.conway@la.gov
Required Applicant Signatures (Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.): To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Governor Bobby Jindal	Telephone: 225-342-7015
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 10/15/14
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): John White 	Agency Name: Department of Education
Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative: (b)(6) 	Date: 10/15/14

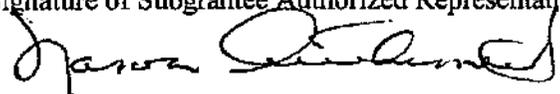
Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards, including Davis-Bacon prevailing wages; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.

- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State and other entities will comply with the following provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74 -- Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 76 -- State-Administered Programs, including the construction requirements in section 75.600 through 75.617 that are incorporated by reference in section 76.600; 34 CFR Part 77 -- Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81 -- General Education Provisions Act--Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82 -- New Restrictions on Lobbying; and with the debarment and suspension regulations found at 2 CFR Part 3485.

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Governor Bobby Jindal	
Signature:	Date:
	10/15/14

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

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To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.	
I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Subgrantee Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Nason "Tony" Authement	Agency Name: Rapides Parish Schools
Signature of Subgrantee Authorized Representative: 	Date: 10/15/2014

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Honorable Bobby Jindal Governor, State of Louisiana	Applicant's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004
Employer Identification Number: 72-6000745	Organizational DUNS: 8059209980000
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<p>Required Applicant Signatures (Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p> <p>Subgrantee Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Edward Cancienne</p> <p>Signature of Subgrantee Authorized Representative:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 300px; height: 80px; margin-left: 20px;"> <p>(b)(6)</p> </div> <p>Agency Name: Iberville Parish Schools</p> <p>Date: 10-13-14</p>	

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Honorable Bobby Jindal Governor, State of Louisiana	Applicant's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004
Employer Identification Number: 72-6000745	Organizational DUNS: 8059209980000
Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Education Contact Name: Jenna Conway <i>(Single point of contact for communication)</i>	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 225.342-3462 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: <u>jenna.conway@la.gov</u>
<p>Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i></p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p> <p>Subgrantee Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Anthony Recasner</p> <p>Signature of Subgrantee Authorized Representative: (b)(6)</p> <p>Agency Name: Agenda for Children</p> <p>Date: 10/14/14</p>	



Louisiana: Assurances and Certifications: City of Monroe (Ouachita)

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Honorable Bobby Jindal Governor, State of Louisiana	Applicant's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004
Employer Identification Number: 72-6000745	Organizational DUNS: 8059209980000
Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Education Contact Name: Jenna Conway (Single point of contact for communication)	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 225.342-3462 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: jenna.conway@la.gov
<p>Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i></p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p> <p>Subgrantee Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Agency Name: Dr. Lynn Clark Children's Coalition of (b)(6) Northeast Louisiana</p> <p>Signature of Subgrantee Authorized Representative: Date: (b)(6) 10-14-14</p>	



APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Preschool Development Grants --Development Grants Competition
(CFDA No. 84.419A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Honorable Bobby Jindal Governor, State of Louisiana	Applicant's Mailing Address: Post Office Box 94004 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004
Employer Identification Number: 72-6000745	Organizational DUNS: 8059209980000
Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Education Contact Name: Jenna Conway <i>(Single point of contact for communication)</i>	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 225.342-3462 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: jenna.conway@la.gov
Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Subgrantee. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i>	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Subgrantee Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Theodis Lamar Goree	Agency Name: Caddo Parish Schools
Signature of Subgrantee Authorized Representative: (b)(6)	Date: October 14, 2014

Budget Narrative File(s)

* Mandatory Budget Narrative Filename:

To add more Budget Narrative attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

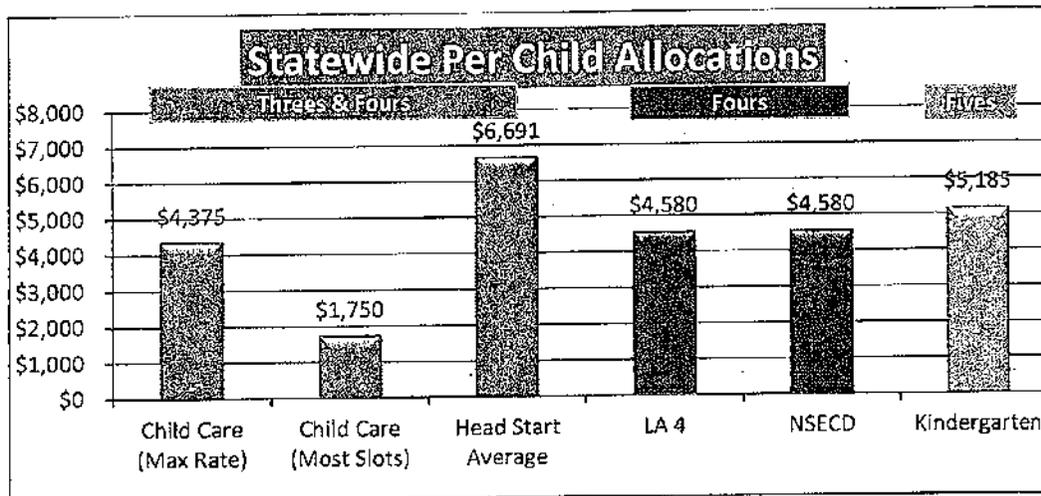
G. BUDGET AND SUSTAINABILITY

G. 1. Funding High-Quality Preschool

Background: In implementing Act 3, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) established an ambitious and achievable plan to create local early childhood networks comprised of child care, Head Start, publicly funded private preschools, and public preschool under a unified system of academic and development standards, enrollment, and teacher preparation expectations. These networks, which are expected to serve all publicly-funded at-risk children birth to five in their communities, are piloting innovative approaches to increasing quality and improving access (Appendix A. 2).

To assist Community Network Pilots with planning to serve all children in high-quality settings, Louisiana has done extensive analysis of current funding for preschool in the state. As shown in Figure G. 1, current funding varies widely based on the preschool program. Notably, child care receives the least amount of public funding, resulting in families having to contribute the most. Head Start is the best funded program in the state, followed by LA 4 and NSECD; in each of these, families do not have any out-of-pocket costs.

Figure G. 1: Comparison of Per Child Funding



Louisiana: Section G

Contributing Matching Funds

The state will leverage recent investments in these communities as well as other Community Network Pilots. Specifically, the state is providing foundational training, funding for job-embedded professional development, and technical assistance on coordinating enrollment. From 2014 to 2018, this represents a \$(b)(4) new investment in these communities, as shown in Table G. 1 (Appendix A. 2). This represents a []% match of the potential federal grant. In addition, the LDE currently oversees all critical support systems for early childhood including Child Care Resource and Referral programs, Head Start collaboration, Quality Start (QRIS), mental health consultation, and field-based technical assistance. This enables Louisiana to leverage multiple resources to support quality improvement efforts at local level.

Table G. 1: Louisiana Matching Funds

Louisiana State Match	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total Match
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 1)	(b)(4)				
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 2)					
Community Network Pilot (Cohort 3)					
Community Network Pilot Technology					
State Level Infrastructure					
Total State Match					

Louisiana: Section G

Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development

Improved Seats: The Community Network Pilots are actively working to improve all early childhood programs in their community, specifically by:

- **Leading Collaboratively:** Develop a collaborative leadership structure that represents child care, Head Start, public preschool and nonpublic preschool leaders;
- **Supporting Teachers:**
 - o Observe and provide feedback to teachers using a highly-regarded, research-based tool (*CLASS*) and ensure teachers have access to evidence-based professional development; and
 - o Use a common assessment to evaluate all children; and
- **Coordinating Enrollment:** Coordinate information and applications across all programs for families (Appendix A. 7).

The subgrantees will improve seats by:

- Providing comprehensive services to families served in the new seats; and
- Providing evidence-based coaching to teachers in new classrooms and existing classrooms.

The subgrantees will be able to leverage existing local funding and Community Network Pilot funding, along with grant funding (\$7.4M), to provide coaching to teachers serving an additional 30% of children. These efforts will ensure that classrooms outside of the grant funding will benefit from the additional supports and investments. Table G. 2 shows the number of improved seats impacted by the grant, with nearly 6,000 children benefitting from the improved seats over the four year grant period.

Table G. 2: Projected Improved Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Improved Seats Funded	442	1300	1872	2340

Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Seats

New Seats: Louisiana believes high-quality child outcomes depend upon having access to a high-quality teacher. LA 4 and NSECD both require bachelor degree, certified teachers, compensated on the same scale as kindergarten teachers (Appendix A. 4). However, the state's K-12 education funding formula provides more state funding for kindergarten than the state

Louisiana: Section G

provides for preschool (b)(4) despite similar costs. As the state develops a funding model for early childhood in response to HCR 61 (2014), the state will work to transition to equitable funding between preschool and kindergarten (Appendix D. 2). Since the state will expand LA 4 and NSECD through the Preschool Development Expansion Grant, the state will fund new seats at the (b)(4) per child funding level, further supporting the cost of high-quality care and education.

To decrease the gap between parent demand for and availability of high-quality preschool seats, Louisiana will use \$23.7 million of its \$32 million grant to open new seats for eligible children. The ambitious and achievable targets are laid out in Table G. 3.

Table G. 3: Projected New Seats with Preschool Expansion Grant

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Seats Created	340	660	440	360
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Table G. 4: Year One Reduction in Gap between Demand and Supply with Grant Funding

	Potential Demand (At-Risk Population)	Current Four-Year Olds Served (All program types)	Gap	Projected Seats with Grant	Projected Gap	Reduction in Gap
Caddo	2533	2287	10%	2307	9%	8%
City of Monroe (Ouachita)	1930	1615	16%	1665	14%	16%
Iberville	360	260	28%	310	14%	50%
Lincoln	450	397	12%	417	7%	38%
Orleans	3600	3110	14%	3230	10%	24%
Rapides	1415	1335	6%	1415	0%	100%

Total per Child Funding: Through the grant, Louisiana will:

- Provide funding for new seats on par with state funding for kindergarten; and
- Provide improvement funding that will ensure families receive comprehensive services and teachers receive evidence-based professional development.

Table G. 5: Total per Child Funding

	Per Child
New Seats	\$5,185
Improved Seats	\$1,245
Total	\$6,430

Total funding per child is on par with the Louisiana Head Start per child average funding, as shown in Table G. 5. The overall funding strategy, detailing how the state will provide new seats and improve others, including specifically how many seats and funding each subgrantee will receive, is in Appendix G. 1.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 04/30/2014

Name of Institution/Organization
Louisiana Department of Education

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. Fringe Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3. Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5. Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6. Contractual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8. Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10. Indirect Costs*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. Training Stipends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

- (1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No
- (2) If yes, please provide the following information:
 Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: _____ To: _____ (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify): _____
 The Indirect Cost Rate is _____ %

- (3) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? or, Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is _____ %.

Name of Institution/Organization
Louisiana Department of Education

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION B - BUDGET SUMMARY
NON-FEDERAL FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. Fringe Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3. Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5. Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6. Contractual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7. Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8. Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10. Indirect Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. Training Stipends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

SECTION C - BUDGET NARRATIVE (see instructions)

ED Form No. 524

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
FOR THE SF-424

OMB Number: 1894-0007
Expiration Date: 07/31/2014

1. Project Director:

Prefix:	First Name:	Middle Name:	Last Name:	Suffix:
Ms.	Jenna		Conway	

Address:

Street1:	1201 North Third Street
Street2:	
City:	Baton Rouge
County:	
State:	LA; Louisiana
Zip Code:	70802-5243
Country:	USA; UNITED STATES

Phone Number (give area code)	Fax Number (give area code)
225-342-3642	

Email Address:

Jenna.Conway@la.gov

2. Novice Applicant:

Are you a novice applicant as defined in the regulations in 34 CFR 75.225 (and included in the definitions page in the attached instructions)?

Yes No Not applicable to this program

3. Human Subjects Research:

a. Are any research activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed project Period?

Yes No

b. Are ALL the research activities proposed designated to be exempt from the regulations?

Yes Provide Exemption(s) #:

--

No Provide Assurance #, if available:

c. If applicable, please attach your "Exempt Research" or "Nonexempt Research" narrative to this form as indicated in the definitions page in the attached instructions.

	Add Attachment	Delete Attachment	View Attachment
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