GRANTEE ABSTRACT

Kentucky

KENTUCKY'S RTT-ELC PROPOSAL, KNOWN AS Kentucky All-STARS, expands upon the state's robust ongoing early learning reform efforts, working within its already existing model that is structured around three main building blocks:

(1) High-Quality Early Learning Environments

(2) Supporting Families

(3) Access to Data

Guiding these three building blocks and Kentucky's RTT-ELC agenda is one simple idea: that kindergarten readiness begins with quality and clarity in early learning programs. As such, Kentucky's reforms and improvements through RTT-ELC use as their foundation the expansion and improvement of the STARS rating system, to provide families with valuable information to understand, select, and engage with early learning providers. In fact, 93 percent of Kentucky's proposed program budget is dedicated to expanding and improving its rating system.

Kentucky will work through the three building blocks of its existing business model—High-Quality Learning Environments, Supporting Families, and Access to Data—by achieving the following goals:

- We will redesign and shift the current rating system to include all public preschool, Head Start, and early learning and development programs. The state will require (by 2016) that all providers who receive a license participate in the redesigned STARS system. Additionally, all programs will be required to display their rating in a prominent location within their facility, giving every parent an objective way to assess the relative quality of a program.

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) discretionary grant program supports states in building statewide systems that raise the quality of early learning and development programs and increase access to high-quality programs for children with high needs, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Information in this abstract is drawn from the state's RTT-ELC grant application.

- We will expand the current professional development network to create a responsive system designed to support a skilled early childhood workforce.

- We will directly engage and support families by implementing two new strategies statewide to help families better understand the needs of their young child and ensuring that they are connected with a network of resource providers.

- We will integrate data systems for a usable, informative birth to workforce information system to guide future decisionmaking.

Kentucky addressed the following focused investment areas in its application:

Early Learning and Development Standards	**(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards.** Kentucky already utilizes early learning and development standards and builds the foundations for K-3 learning. It will continue to include the standards in all professional development and will also develop online training modules to ensure that all early learning and development programs use the standards. Use of the standards is already tied to the monitoring of public preschools and Head Start programs. Kentucky will also include the intentional use of the standards within its STARS expansion as an indicator of increasing quality.
Family Engagement	**(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.** Kentucky has proposed two strategies—Toyota bornlearning® Academies and the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework—that will engage and support families, especially those with children with high needs, in comprehensive and innovative ways.
Establish Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework	**(D)(1) Developing a workforce knowledge and competency framework and a progression of credentials.** Kentucky has in place an extensive system to provide professional development through partner agencies statewide. That system will become more formalized and focused through an early childhood education workforce knowledge and competency framework and through unifying professional registries for all early childhood educators.
Kindergarten Entry Assessment	**(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.** In 2013, the Kentucky Department of Education implemented a universal kindergarten entry assessment. Data from the statewide assessment will be released in November 2013 and will be analyzed and shared through a network of partners.
Build or Enhance Data Systems	**(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.** Kentucky's Office of Early Childhood continues to build systems to bridge early childhood data to

Kentucky's longitudinal data system. This will provide more than just access to the entire early learning universe, it will also build a data system for birth to work.

Kentucky has 177,228 children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families. The state reports that it leveraged $226,279,937 in 2013 and anticipates that future fiscal years will provide similar funding amounts in other funding sources to support this effort.