



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # NV-5023

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CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	20
<p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Nevada demonstrates past commitment to and investment in high quality services for children with high needs as evidenced by increasing its State's investment in early learning and development programs. Financial investment is seen in its commitment to Early Learning Outcomes (ELO) through the passage of State legislation in 2001 which created a statewide early childhood education program. The state has increased funding allocation for this project to approximately \$3 million per year for State-funded pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) programs. Children with special needs have been served by such programs as Pre-kindergarten funding (Pre-K), Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding, the Child Care Development Fund, Head Start, Even Start and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Infant Toddler Early Intervention and Part B, Preschool Special Education Programs. Although funding for programs servicing children with high needs in early learning and development programs has increased (for example, a 26% increase in participation for Head Start and Early Head Start programs) it is not documented what the amount of these investments is in relation to the size of the state's population of children with high needs. The Nevada Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines, the Pre-K Content Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) and Healthy Child Care Nevada (HCCN) partners have collaborated to improve child care standards and support the structure for a high quality early learning and development system. The current status of family engagement strategies is evident in the Nevada State Parent Information & Resource Center (PIRC), a federally funded program through the United States Department of Education, Office of Innovation & Improvement. This project began in 2003 and was expanded in 2006 to cover the entire state and increase the number of programs and services to children throughout Nevada. Nevada Legislation requires that all state Pre-K programs must include longitudinal measures of the developmental progress of children and parental involvement in the program before and after their completion of a preschool program. Nevada has the necessary statewide infrastructure on which to build a comprehensive, integrated ELD system for young children and their families. Nevada does not currently have a state-wide comprehensive assessment system to coordinate data collection of the ELD Programs. This project will implement a common statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment no later than the 2014-2015 school year. Upon implementation the common assessment will determine the level of mastery that a child has attained which is

aligned with selected Kindergarten Common Core State Standards and will eventually serve as the Standard-Based Report Card. Nevada was recently chosen to be one of two partner states in the Federal Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI). This project will provide professional development opportunities. In April 2002, a voluntary Career Ladder and a set of Core Knowledge Areas were formally adopted by the Nevada State Child Care Advisory Committee. Development of the infrastructure necessary to implement the Career Ladder began at that time. The infrastructure was named The Nevada Registry and it was officially launched in January 2004. In April 2009 participation with The Nevada Registry was adopted into State Child Care Licensing regulations. All caregivers working in licensed child care settings are now required to apply to The Nevada Registry by the end of 2012. Data use policies and procedures are well defined by both The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Nevada Department of Education (NDE), the two state agencies partnering in this project. Nevada's longitudinal data system within NDE includes the 12 elements described in section 6401 (e) (2) (D) of the American COMPLETES Act in accordance with Indicator (b) (1) of Nevada's State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The project plans to develop a transparency policy that simultaneously informs the public of the existence of data systems housing personally identifiable information, explaining the data elements within that system, enables parental or legal guardian consent to disclose personally identifiable information as appropriate, and describes how it will or may be used.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(2)

Nevada supports a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious and has achievable goals for improving outcomes for children with high needs statewide. The Nevada's Silver State Stars tiered QRIS model is based on common program standards and the applicant proposes to expand it statewide. Alignment is proposed to link between formal (higher education) and informal (non-credit bearing) training for early childhood educators. A statewide progression of credentials and degrees which include a state credential aligned to Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies for early care and education professions and teacher-child interactions are measured by the CLASS assessment tool is proposed in the project. Supports for early childhood educators to attain early childhood degrees, earn a livable wage, and improve environments for and interactions with children and their families are clearly presented. A performance contracting system ensures that most publicly funded programs incorporate family engagement strategies based on the Five Protective Factors in the Strengthening Families approach. Well-documented health and safety standards for children are implemented. It is unclear how programs such as: Caring for our Children and the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CDEFEL) are evidence-based health promotion practices. Goals for closing the readiness gap between children with high needs and their peers are clearly articulated and include the administration of a common, statewide kindergarten entry assessment that generates data. Educators will be trained to use this data in order to improve program outcomes for children. Details on how these educators will be trained are lacking. In this project a rationale specifically justifies Nevada's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E). Statewide, some high-quality ELD Standards are planned to be developed and utilized, while others are missing for Preschool (C-1). The effective use of comprehensive assessments systems is supported and identified (C-2). The health, behavioral and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness is identified (C-3). Families are engaged and supported such as in the Strengthening Families Program (C-4). The workforce knowledge and competency framework and a progression of credentials are planned to be developed (D-1). The project proposes that early childhood educators will be supported in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities, such as in the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps Programs (TEACH) (D-2). It is proposed that the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry will be better understood by studying it through the funding made available (E-1). The project describes the proposed enhancement of an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies (E-2). A rationale clearly includes why these selected criteria will best achieve the goals.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	7

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

Nevada's Promise has established a high-quality plan, strong participation and commitment by participating state agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders. The project demonstrates a governance structure for working together that facilitates interagency coordination which builds upon existing interagency governance structures. The Nevada Departments of Education (NDE) and Health and Human Services (DHHS) will provide primary leadership and support for Nevada's Promise. The reform agenda is guided collaboratively by both departments and will be managed by the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office. An organizational flow chart clearly shows the associated leadership responsibilities of each entity which are under the direct supervision of the Governor. The governance-related roles and responsibilities do streamline decision making, effectively allocating resources, and create long-term sustainability. Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), established in 2009, will serve as the lead and liaison between the Governor's office and the public. Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council will serve as the accountability agent for the reform agenda. Leadership roles within the reform agenda are not clearly articulated and there is no mention made how supervisors will reach their decisions during a dispute. It is stipulated that the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office will serve as the liaison between local Early Childhood Advisory Councils and other critical entities with a role in the implementation of the project. This Office will supervise and manage all activities associated with Nevada's Promise and will work closely with the NDE and within the DHHS to guide the implementation and evaluation of the efforts of the reform project. The MOA between the DHHS and NDE with scope of work and terms and conditions is signed and included in the Appendix E. The plan for when and how Nevada will involve representatives from participating programs, early childhood educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of children with high needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities are not adequately

described in the narrative of the project. The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the participating state agencies are clearly defined in Table (A) (3)-1. Additional information on the amount of funds budgeted for participating state agencies and other partners would be helpful to better understand the project. Letters of support from a broad group of stakeholders are included in the Appendices. These letters are not persuasive and do not adequately define their roles in the project. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	11

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(4)

Nevada will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., State Advisory Council (ARRA)), Child Care Development Fund, Nevada Early Intervention Services, Home Visiting, Head Start State Collaboration, Early Childhood Comprehensive systems, NDE Striving Readers, and State Pre-KNED Leadership Staff, etc.) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the project. Total investments in support of the project equal over \$31 million. It would be helpful if more details were provided which show the support of these programs for Nevada's Promise. To achieve the goals outlined in Nevada's plan, significant commitment has been made by DHHS and NDE to align funding, data collection and policies to support early learning and development. The budget tables and budget narratives generally describe how the project will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the project outcomes. The narratives describe in some detail how the budget will adequately support the activities of Nevada's Promise. It was not clearly defined how existing funding would be used to support the state plan. In Table (A) (4) in the Fiscal Year 2013 within the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, there is a statement, "Unknown whether funding will continue". Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 are blank. Likewise, in Fiscal Year 2013, 2014 and 2015 within the Nevada Early Intervention Services, no amount of local funds are entered; these cells have been left blank. An explanation of these blank cells would be helpful. The budget demonstrates that a significant amount of funding is being devoted to this project. There are several areas which need further details, such as why the three proposed staff members do not receive an annual increase in salary and yet the early childhood data system manager does receive an annual increase of \$1,000, per year. More description would be helpful supporting the equipment expense of \$85,000, and the training stipends of \$30,000, once a year over the course of the project. More information is needed to demonstrate that this project can be sustained after the project period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of children with high needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in Nevada will be maintained or expanded. The project anticipates that by 2015 there will be enough evidence collected which will result in a combination of legislation to support additional state general fund investment in early childhood. More information on how this evidence will be collected, by whom and through which funding source would be helpful. This is of medium quality.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(1)

The state of Nevada has developed and adopted a clearly articulated common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System called the Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS model. It is a 5-star model developed using a set of Tiered Program Standards that clearly includes the following: Early Learning and Development Standards, a Comprehensive Assessment System, Early Childhood Educator qualifications, Family engagement strategies, Health promotion practices, and Effective data practices. Nevada developed Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Content Standards in 2004. These standards are directly linked to Nevada's K-12 Standards. By the end of 2012 the Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS model will be enhanced to include family child care homes and friend, family and neighbor care. Additional details and descriptions of these programs would be helpful. Currently, all child care centers involved in the Silver State Stars pilot project are assessed using the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) specifically the ITERS-R (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised). The proposed Tiered Silver State Stars will incorporate use of the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) tool as a measure of teacher-child interactions. Currently, a statewide early learning data system to collect child assessment data and review formative assessment tools currently used by Early Childhood and Development Programs does not exist. It is anticipated in this project that all sectors of service will be engaged to determine one specific assessment or a list of tools that will be included in Nevada's Silver State Stars Tiered QRIS model. More information on how the list of tools will be developed or why one specific assessment is to be implemented would be helpful. One realistic goal of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is to increase the criteria of Early Childhood Education Qualifications by linking qualifications to star levels. Nevada follows an Early Childhood Education Career Ladder containing seven levels. Level 1 meets the child care licensing requirements and Level 7 is accreditation by NAEYC. 50% of the teaching staff must have a minimum placement of Level 4 on the Career Ladder. The Tiered Silver State Stars model aptly describes numerous quality indicators related to the Strengthening Families approach to parent, family and community engagement. The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) which is used for assessment and Silver State Stars Star levels includes the latest health and safety practices from Caring for Our Children. A commitment to young children is seen in the 2011 Legislative session when SB 27 was passed, requiring employees of a child care facility to complete at least two hours of training each year related to nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention. The legislated two hours of training is minimal and it is unclear whether this project will make available more than 2 hours of training per year. This project includes participation in the national Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI). Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is linked to the state licensing system for ELD programs. The administration agreed to issue joint license certificates that will indicate both the graded license and the star rating when the statewide tiered Silver State Stars is implemented. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	8

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(2)

This project promotes participation in Nevada's tiered quality rating and improvement system, the Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars which is a plan to maximize program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. This project implements effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate including programs in each of the following categories: State-funded preschool programs, such as Early Head Start, Head Start and ELD Programs funded, Parts B and C of IDEA, Title I of the ESEA and the State's CCDF programs will participate in the development of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars and expressed support for full participation when Silver State Stars is statewide. This is an ambitious plan which needs more descriptions, specificity and details for its implementation. Plans were discussed in the project for Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars to become a mandatory requirement for receiving child care subsidies or quality set aside funding (programs to be phased in over a four year time frame). This has a four year time frame is briefly described needs more elaboration. This project implements effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain this supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of children with high needs. Communities with high levels of children will be targeted for seeking contractors to provide high quality care. It is unclear what the guidelines will be for choosing these communities and the contractors. These target communities require additional outreach and technical assistance to develop four or five star early childhood development programs during the second year of Nevada's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, FY 2012. It is unclear if this project has sufficiently made adequate provisions for outreach and technical assistance. There are currently 11 state funded preschool programs. By the end of the second year three would participate; during the third year six would participate, and in the fourth year ten would participate in Nevada's tiered Silver State Stars system. These goals for the number of preschools involved during these years do not seem ambitious. A higher number of preschools involved during these years would be a worthy goal. There are currently eleven Early Head Start and Head Start grantees in Nevada. One Head Start program participated in the pilot study. There is insufficient information concerning the pilot study and its implications for this project. By the end of the second year three would participate, by the end of the third year six and during the fourth year ten would participate. There are currently nine programs funded by IDEA, Part C. By the end of the second year five would participate and all nine would participate by the end of the third year. There are 17 programs funded by IDEA, Part B. By the end of the second year three would participate during the third year. There are currently nine programs funded by IDEA, Part C. By the end of the second year 5 would participate and all nine would participate by the end of the third year. There are 17 programs funded by IDEA, Part B. By the end of the second year three would participate; during the third year six would participate; and in the fourth year ten would participate in Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars system. There are 367 programs and an additional 297 family child care homes receiving subsidy funds. By the end of the second year 73 programs would participate, by the end of the third year 147 programs and 60 family child care homes would participate and during the fourth year 220 and 60 family child care homes participate. These targeted involvement goals are not ambitious for a project of this magnitude. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	9

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(3)

Nevada and its Participating State Agencies have a plan to develop and implement a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars. Though ambitious more details are needed to specify and describe the goals of this project. This project uses the Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS-R and ECERS-R) which are valid and reliable tools for evaluating the global quality of child care programs. A level of inter-rater reliability above 85% on the ERS will be used by Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars. The project clearly describes how ERS raters will be required to obtain a reliability level of 85% or higher. Once there is a network of strong raters is created, the project will move toward exact reliability of raters. How these raters are selected and trained needs to be included in this project. Another valid and reliable tool that will be used to assess programs is CLASS. The child care programs participating in this project will be required to be reevaluated every two years. To ensure accuracy with regard to data entry, initially the project will have double data entry until an accuracy level of 95% or higher is obtained and then thereafter 30% of the data will be double checked. Nevada's project clearly states that it will provide quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs. This communication with parents is commendable. Nevada's project described that it has a strong taskforce of over 40 members from community organizations and child care programs that will initiate the promotion of public awareness of Nevada's Silver State Stars. Additional details on what community organizations and the types of child care programs involved in this taskforce would be helpful. Public service announcements, news release and flyers will proudly relate their joint license indicating their graded licensing level and their star rating. Workshops on Silver State Stars will be presented at programs targeting children with high needs. The project describes the need for all of the information to be presented in English and Spanish. Nevada's project clearly states that the resource and referral specialists will share information on the Silver State Stars with parents currently involved in the program and for those inquiring about child care options for their children. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	12

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(4)

Nevada and its participating state agencies plan to develop and implement a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement, Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars project. This project clearly details how it will develop and implement policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation). Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars supports reasonable proposals to pay staff livable wages at parity with school districts depending on degrees earned, classroom (CLASS), program (ERS scores) and child outcomes. It is unclear whether all directors of child care centers are required to attend a three-hour orientation and seven-hour training that covers documentation requirements for each of the star levels and an overview of the ERS rating scales every year or every few years. Additional information relating to the training of directors, lead teachers and understanding of the ERS is needed. Mini conferences are planned periodically to child care program staff. A coach visits each child care program weekly to guide and facilitate the completion of program and classroom improvement action plans. The project states that the coach guides and facilitates the child care program weekly to collaboratively develop action plans. It is unclear how the action plans are developed and their contents which are loosely described as based on the results of ERS assessments and program priorities. Details on the role and substance of the mini conferences proposed and the role and responsibilities of the coaches are needed to better understand this project. Achievable but not ambitious targets for increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs are included in the project. Higher levels of tiered reimbursement are currently part of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars plan. Programs at the three stars level receive a 6% increase, four stars level receive a 9% increase and five stars level a 12% increase. Through Nevada's Child Care Resource and Referral system the project will help families in finding programs that meet their specific needs. The mechanism for helping these families is not detailed. It is anticipated that once the final

structure of Nevada's comprehensive assessment system including a common kindergarten entry assessment are established, competitive contracts to whom will begin implementation in the Fall of 2012. These contracts will include requirements to describe how full-day, full-year-care, transportation, meals and family supports will be provided. Some of these descriptions require more details to fully understand the project. The target goals for the number of ELD Programs at the top two tiers (four and five stars) of Nevada's Silver State Stars are as follows: Year 1-10% of programs; Year 2-15% of programs; Year 3-18% of programs; and, Year 4-20% of programs. These goals appear achievable but 20% of programs at the top two tiers do not seem ambitious. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	13

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (B)(6)

Nevada has a high-quality project to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-state evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the Nevada's Early Learning and Development Programs. The applicant proposed to validate the Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars using research-based measures to determine differential levels of program quality. The level of required ERS scores at the three stars and higher levels is one factor that differentiates the top three levels. The project assesses, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness. It is unclear the role and responsibility, in detail, of this external evaluator. The applicant proposed that the Kindergarten entry assessment will be used to see whether the new system improves skills of children at kindergarten entry. Data to be collected will include child and family demographics, educator information, preschool program-level data, child-level program participation and attendance data. This data will be entered into the statewide early learning database and then an analysis will be conducted to determine the correlation between child kindergarten readiness and attendance at early learning programs. One aspect which is missing from these assessment plans is data collected to correlate family collaboration and participation to child-level program participation and learning. Once this data is collected it will be analyzed and entered into the statewide early learning database. The project describes that a longitudinal approach to data collection will be conducted. The children will be followed throughout their school careers. The Early Childhood Development Programs will be required to participate in the evaluation as part of their contract and agree to participate in a longitudinal study which would allow children in their center to be given assessments related to school readiness, learning and development at regular intervals to measure student improvement over time. At the end of a two year period the centers would be re-assessed and assigned a new star rating. This is an ambitious plan yet more details and descriptions are needed to fully understand it.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C).
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	4

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(1)

Nevada has a plan to put in place early learning and development standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs. Evidence is partially included that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate across the age groups of infants and toddlers, but not preschoolers. In Appendix A the Nevada Pre-K Standards are not included although there is a heading that is worded, "Nevada Infant Toddler Learning Guidelines and Pre-K content Standards". What is included in this document is a focus on the development and standards for children birth-three years of age. Since the Nevada Pre-K Standards are not included in Appendix A, they cannot be reviewed for their developmental, cultural and linguistic appropriateness. Since the applicant did not provide evidence in the narrative or elsewhere, it is not clear if all the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards. There is no evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in the Comprehensive Assessment systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and professional development activities. Nevada does not present evidence, or propose a plan on the supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment of the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs. This is of low quality partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(2)

Nevada proposes a plan for the effective use of a comprehensive assessment system in Nevada's Promise. The framework for this selection process for a comprehensive assessment instrument is unclear. It is not clear if the comprehensive assessment system builds on tools already commonly used by ELS Program. This project proposes a comprehensive assessment system which includes screening measures, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality as well as measures of the quality of adult-child interactions. Multiple assessments are used by early childhood educators. Part B 619 providers can choose from a list of five child assessment instruments including the following: Teaching Strategies Gold; the Brigance; the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS); Get it Go It Go; and the Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC). The applicant did not provide evidence that the tools being considered are appropriate for the

target population. The most recently adopted Nevada licensing regulations include a requirement that licensed early childhood educators assess an enrolled child's development within three months after enrollment and biannually thereafter. Nevada will incorporate multiple professional development and in-service opportunities for educators and program administrators to learn how to determine what to teach to whom (curriculum) and to measure whether or not children are learning and developing to expectations. This project does not adequately describe the content and duration of the in-service opportunities. The first statewide professional development opportunity designed to train early childhood educators on the use of the ERS, CLASS, Five Protective Factors Survey and ASQ-3 will be held in January 2012, as part of a School Readiness Summit already committed to using ECCS funding. The purpose and goals were not clear, for example, the applicant did not state whether the School Readiness Summit would be held once or annually. An approach is briefly described which articulates an aligning and integrating of assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for children with high needs who are served by multiple early learning and development programs. It is planned that a unique Nevada identifier will link to the K-12 longitudinal data system. This is of high quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to Improve school readiness.	15	9

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(3)

Nevada proposes a plan to identify and address the healthy, behavioral and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness. For example, Nevada has been awarded a Center for Social Emotional Intervention and Expanding Opportunities Technical Assistance grant in recent years. This grant will address the support and blending it will have with current efforts to develop plans for sustainability and integration of systems to support children with developmental delays, behavioral challenges and special needs. The project promotes children's physical, social and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards. Nevada is making progress toward establishing a progression of health standards that align with its ELD program standards. The state works effectively with early childhood programs across the state to incorporate Strengthening Families' Five Protective Factors into a progression of program standards. Specific strategies are described for incorporating these standards. A clear description of the progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety which ensure that health and behavioral screening and follow-up is needed. Screenings using screening measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA) are clearly described. The applicant states that the referral for services is based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, receives follow-up. Increasing the number of early childhood educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards is clearly described. Healthy eating habits, improving nutrition and expanding physical activity are promoted are detailed in the project. It is planned that existing resources will be leveraged to meet achievable annual targets to increase the number of children with high needs who are screened using screening measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic screening, diagnostic and treatment benefits and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provision in IDEA. An important portion of the project is the clearly defined Nevada State Health Division Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program which contracts with three agencies to implement evidence-based home visiting programs, enrolling families/children from two identified at-risk communities in its first year of implementation. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	9

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(4)
<p>Nevada's Promise includes a plan to provide statewide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of children with high needs. This project promotes school readiness for their children. The project states that it provides linguistically appropriate information and support for families but there is very little evidence that linguistic sensitivity and training is implemented. The activities that the project includes are appropriate and enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development. Some of the strategies that are included in this project include the national five protective factors which is a preventive and strength-based approach to working with families, training and technical assistance to providers in all service sectors (health, parenting education, etc.) and the broad implementation of the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Adoption of the Strengthening Families Model into early childhood programs has been demonstrated to diminish the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has established research-based National Standards for Family-School Partnerships that will also be woven into Nevada's early childhood program standards. It is unclear how this weaving will be implemented. This project describes how it will increase the number and percentage of early childhood educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards. The number of trained home visitors will increase to approximately 17 FTE's by the end of the 2011 calendar year and grow by about 15% each year thereafter. This is an ambitious yet realistic goal. The Nevada Registry promotes training across the state and a recent review indicates 80 trainings have been provided since January 2011 on family/community relationships. Some of the training includes such events as, the NevAECY annual Early Childhood Conference and the upcoming School Readiness Summit. Descriptions of the key elements of family engagement as a prerequisite for helping family's achieve their goals are detailed in the project. This is included by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and by outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers. The Nevada State Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program have pledged its ongoing commitment to the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge by allocating \$10,000 per year to further the objectives and outcomes of this continuing work. Additionally, a number of programs are employing strategies to engage families across the state. These strategies include Early Head Start and Head Start, State Pre-kindergarten, United Way, Family Resource Centers and state and local home visiting programs. This is of high quality and partially implemented.</p>

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows.

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	16

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(1)

Nevada has a high-quality plan to develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes. In 2007, Nevada published its Core Knowledge Areas (CKA) and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals through a contract funded by CCDF quality dollars. These provide documents form the basis for Nevada's statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The CKA and Core Competencies were developed in response to research indicating that professional education for Early Care and Education (ECE) practitioners is essential to the quality of care and education provided. These competencies are clearly detailed and described in the project. Most of the competencies identified in this framework relate to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) regarding the direct care and education of young children. This project was carefully designed to have a self-assessment tool that can be used in a variety of ways. CKA are the content areas that define what caregivers should know and understand in order to provide quality experiences for children, regardless of the setting in which care and education of children is provided. The project states that knowledge of the Pre-K Standards is embedded within the Core Competencies. Unfortunately, this cannot be verified since the Pre-K Standards were not included in Appendix A. Core Competencies are the observable skills that show a caregiver's knowledge and understanding of the CKA. Both the CKA and Core Competencies are clearly used in a variety of early childhood documents which are discussed in the project, for example, the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (NAEYC), and NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation: Associate Degrees. This project develops a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. In the Fall 2005, a small group of early childhood professionals representing a number of agencies/organizations from across Nevada initially volunteered to assist with the development of Core Competencies for Nevada's early childhood education professionals. From there, more professionals in the field, along with representatives from higher education, were recruited to assist with the process. Worthy participation from all six Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions was actively sought in order to ensure alignment with the content of formal higher education coursework offered in the state. The CKA are an important part of Nevada's training approval system and are reflected in all training that is approved by The Nevada Registry. The Nevada Registry has created a clearly written professional development plan, "Cultivating Your Growth as a Professional: Creating a Professional Development Plan to Guide Your Career in Early Care and Education" which, together with Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, is a descriptive guide designed to help increase knowledge, skills and expertise for working with children and their families over time by helping educators determine their areas of interest and strength, as well as areas where further growth and development may be needed. Professional development opportunities are aligned with Postsecondary institutions, with Nevada's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework Representatives from all NSHE institutions in designing the Career Ladder, core knowledge areas and core competencies. It is unclear how the Postsecondary degrees line-up with the Nevada's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Nevada's relatively small population and limited number of higher education institutions maintain a high level of engagement and participation among early childhood degree faculty and administrators statewide. All six Nevada higher education institutions have aligned their coursework with the Core Knowledge Areas but not necessarily with the Core Competencies. However, while common course numbering aligned with core knowledge areas exists across institutions, there is a stated need in this project to align specific core competencies. The challenge to establish commonly numbered coursework and course descriptions across institutions in Nevada is a stated need for this project in 2012. Faculty from all six institutions will be involved in reviewing the plan to ensure that consensus exists and any potential issues are promptly identified and addressed. This is of high quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	16

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(2)

Nevada has a strong infrastructure from which to expand and improve the effectiveness and retention of early childhood educators working with children with high needs so that child-related education, social and health outcomes are improved. There are three primary components at the heart of Nevada's early childhood workforce development plan that are accountable for supporting educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. These three primary components are the Nevada's Career Ladder, The Nevada Registry, and Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood@ Nevada. Each of these components is an excellent component and is clearly detailed in the project. Nevada's Promise provides an expanded access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The high-level strategies built into Nevada's Promise for expanding access to and aligning professional development opportunities with Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework need some additional explanation. Some of these opportunities include online training and additional levels to be added to the bottom three levels of the current career ladder to accommodate progress of early childhood educators in informal settings such as family, friend and neighbor care. This project needs to describe in more detail how it will implement policies and incentives that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway. Additional information on how Nevada is attracting, retaining and developing child care professionals for its ELD workforce needs to be included. Nevada's Promise is aimed at increasing the retention and quality of the early childhood workforce over the next four years, with the ECAC working with DHHS, NDE and local programs to develop a blueprint to improve recruitment and retention, and open up pathways that reward and support the best workers and raise the level of qualifications. To accomplish this, the ECAC will convene an Early Childhood Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Workgroup to explore best practice or innovative models to support workforce development. The project provides a descriptive description how Nevada will build on the strengths, resources and incentives that it already has in place, including T.E.A.C.H. In the summer of 2005, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood NEVADA began its pilot run of a scholarship program. Since T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada began providing scholarships and the supports previously described, 384 early childhood educators have received scholarships. This grew from fiscal year 2007, when 70 educators participated, to fiscal year 2011, during which 259 early childhood educators participated. That means that the number of participants almost quadrupled during that five year span, quite a worthy increase of early childhood participants. By providing additional support through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funding. It is estimated that 1,420 early childhood educators may participate by 2015. This is a realistic and achievable target for 2015, although not particularly aggressive. Nevada's program began by offering associate level scholarships for those working towards a Teacher's Certificate, Director's Certificate or Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Currently, scholarships are available through all Nevada community colleges, colleges, and universities. This project describes how it will publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement and retention. Per State Child Care Licensing regulations R112-06, participation in The Nevada Registry is now a requirement for all caregivers working in licensed child care settings. The Nevada Registry is in the process of phasing in mandatory registration on the Career Ladder. All personnel working in licensed facilities must be registered by December 31, 2012. Currently, only 20% of early childhood professionals registered with The Nevada Registry are placed on career ladder levels four or above (levels reached by attaining a higher education degree). Nevada details achievable targets for increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Early childhood educators who receive credentials from post-secondary institutions and professional development providers have credentials aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. During the first year of implementation of Nevada's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, all early childhood degree coursework will be aligned to the core competencies identified for each core knowledge area. The core competencies will also be aligned with the CLASS and Child Development Associate (CDA) competencies. More information on these alignments would be helpful in better understanding this project. At this time, all of the seven institutions align early childhood coursework with core knowledge areas. They will be convened to align early childhood coursework with the core competencies defined in each core knowledge area. The number and percentage of early childhood educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is increasing. This will be facilitated by developing credentials within the lower three levels of the Career Ladder that are linked to incremental increases in skills as indicated by CLASS. This is of high quality and partially implemented.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	14

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(1)

Nevada has a high-quality plan to be a part of a cross-state consortium to implement a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades. It is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness. Nevada will implement a common statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment no later than the 2014-15 school year, which will evaluate readiness in a manner that covers multiple dimensions of a child's abilities, beyond simply tracking literacy skills. The primary goals of the assessment are to inform State efforts to close the readiness gap and to inform instruction and services in the early grades of elementary school utilizing data related to the essential domains of school readiness, including: a) language and literacy development, b) cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), c) approaches toward learning, d) physical well-being and motor development, including adaptive skills, and e) social and emotional development. The Nevada's data system will enable the applicant to look at data on student growth and development before children reach third grade, when they typically participate in their first statewide standardized tests. Particular attention is warranted to those needs of Native American and other minority populations in Nevada. There is very little said in this project directly relating to these minority populations of children in need. Upon implementation, the common assessment will determine the level of mastery that a child has attained which is aligned with selected Kindergarten Common Core State Standards and will eventually serve as the Standard-Based Report Card. Nevada's approach to adopting a common kindergarten entry assessment tool and process will be based on a thorough review and evaluation of current kindergarten assessments being used. The project states that these tools will be shared to help inform, develop and select a common assessment tool that measures all domains of readiness. The manner of sharing these tools and how a common assessment tool will be selected needs additional information. It states that the data collected through the kindergarten entry assessment project will be reviewed to determine the most appropriate statewide tool to be implemented. All seventeen school districts will be surveyed and invited to participate in a pilot project beginning Fall 2012 with selected assessment tool(s), in order to ensure that the measures are valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and meet the goals of assessment as intended. The number of schools involved in this pilot study, its purposes and manner of facilitating need to be explained. Nevada will create performance measures for their early learning system that will relate to readiness scores, in addition to other indicators. To facilitate this, the data will be disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, and English learner status. It is anticipated that these tools and the data captured will help programs and localities better understand how children are progressing developmentally, their level of ability, and in what areas they are struggling. Statewide partners including the DHHS MIECHV program, the NDE longitudinal data system and the Nevada ECAC have committed financial resources to assure the timely development and implementation of a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment and corresponding statewide data collection and reporting system. The project states that the system will follow the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws. This is of high quality and is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

(a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;

(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;

(c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the

various levels and types of data:

(d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and

(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(2)

Nevada describes a high-quality plan to build and enhance an early data system to improve instruction, practices, services and policies. The data system seems to have all of the essential data element, yet this is unclear as the goals and timeline of the data system needs clarification. The Nevada ECAC will fund the coordination and development of a comprehensive plan to implement an integrated statewide early childhood data collection system. The Council's key goal is to build a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood data collection and tracking system linked to the existing K-12 longitudinal data collection system, based on recommendations of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC). These statements are quite general and more details and descriptions of these elements are needed to better understand the scope of this work. The ECDC has identified 10 fundamentals of coordinated state early care and education data systems, which include the data elements identified in the DHHS/ED definition in this application. A few of these important elements are as follows: A single, unduplicated unique state child identifier linked to the NDE longitudinal data tracking system and the child level demographic and program participation data including age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and participation. The planning process will include focus groups in all seventeen counties to determine their current data collection efforts, software currently used and the willingness to participate in the effort to collect data statewide. This plan will be completed by Summer 2012, with the initial implementation steps scheduled to begin in Fall of 2012. Key policy questions and confirmation of data elements that will answer those questions will be addressed in the planning process. This integrated data will be used by Nevada's policymakers and funders at state and local levels to inform policy and decision-making related to performance-driven public and private investment in programmatic efforts. By ensuring that data are accessible and stakeholders have the capacity to use data appropriately, coordinated early care and education (ECE) data systems will be used to promote data-driven decision-making in Nevada. Focus groups will be held across Nevada to attain public input and confirm policy questions, enabling determination of data elements to include as well as ease of entry. The final plan will define in a clear manner how uniform data collection can be achieved while allowing ease of entry to the frontline service provider. Nevada's Promise facilitates the exchange of data among participating state agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data. How these are implemented is not included in the project. NDE and DHHS will work with the Governor's Office to ensure development of voluntary, common standards for the key education data elements that align with the National Center for Education Statistics. It is unclear why the final system design will either be one cohesive data collection system, or a separate, coordinate early learning data system that aligns with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System is unclear. The data system is to be designed for ease of use by ELD programs and early childhood educators for tracking development and learning skills of students enrolled in public and private programs. Ease of access and use of development and child outcome data by early childhood educators and programs will be a priority for Nevada's Early Learning Challenge. Local ELD programs, whether public or private will have access to development and outcome level data on their children for curriculum and child development planning purposes. It will also aptly support the ability of licensed early childhood and development programs to design curricular approaches and lessons to include all children in lesson planning. Data use policies and procedures are well defined by both DHHS and NDE. The applicant states that Nevada's coordinated early childhood data collection system plan will adhere to all applicable local, state and federal laws as the plan is designed. This is of medium quality and partially implemented.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	196

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (P)(2)

Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS is clearly linked to the State licensing system for ELD programs. At the time of this writing, Washoe County is the only jurisdiction in Nevada that has maintained its jurisdictional right to regulate child care facilities within the county. The remainder of the State, including Clark County, where the majority of the State's population resides is regulated by state child care licensing. Nevada State Child Care Licensing regulations require any individual caring for five or more children for a fee to have a child care license. During the first year of Nevada's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge project, changing the State requirements to match those of Washoe County so that providers caring for two or more children for a fee would have to be licensed statewide will be explored. The key word here is, "explored" not regulated, or adopted. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is designed to maximize program participation by implementing effective policies and practices that will promote the participation of all ELD Program in the system. An extensive plan is described in detail in section B of this proposal. It is proposed that during FY12 while the current Silver State Stars is in its final year of evaluation, the expanded Silver State Stars proposed herein to include the comprehensive assessment system will be revised in such a way as to allow public or private ELD programs to apply for contracts.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

This project addressed selection criterion (E) (1) and earned a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

Nevada's Promise comprehensively and coherently addresses how the state will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for children with high need so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. For example, Nevada proposes a plan for the effective use of a comprehensive assessment system which includes screening measures, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality as well as a measure of the quality of adult-child interactions. Nevada's application demonstrates how it will promote school readiness for children with high needs by developing some high-quality standards for children's health, behavior and development. The development of a common statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment is planned which will determine the mastery that a child has attained which will be aligned with select Kindergarten Common Core State Standards and will eventually serve as the Standard-Based Report

Card. This project will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies. In addition it will improve the quality of children by designing and implementing a common statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System identified as the Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars Project. This project clearly details how it will develop and implement policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve. Nevada will make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for children with high needs. Nevada's Promise addresses those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that will best prepare Nevada's children with high needs for kindergarten success.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # NV-5023

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 1:52 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	15

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period.

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs:

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The State provided a medium-quality response, therefore received 15 points or 75% of the total points. The State of Nevada committed to Early Learning Outcomes (ELO) through the passage of State legislation in 2001, which created a statewide early childhood education program. The State has increased funding allocation approximately \$3 million per year for State-funded pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) programs. The major goal of this funding is to promote school readiness for children in Nevada's publicly funded Pre-K environments through high-quality early education with a strong focus on parent involvement. What is extremely encouraging is that state's early childhood education programs have not been cut. Nevada's Early Learning Programs have experienced an increase in the number of children with high needs. The State indicated participation in programs funded under Title I of Child Care Development Fund (ESEA) have nearly doubled; State-funded Pre-K programs and programs receiving CCDF funds have increased the number of children participating by nearly a third; programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 have grown by over 20%; and Nevada has experienced a 26% increase in participation for its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Nevada Educational Reform Act (NERA) of 1997 was implemented as an educational reform to improve student performance. NERA was amended to ensure that teachers received the professional development needed to sustain student mastery of content standards through the creation of Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDP). The State lacked in the high quality response area as it relates to key areas that form the building blocks across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs. The State's Legislators implementation of solid Early Childhood Legislation is ongoing from previous years, which indicates a positive for the State. The State's infrastructure appears to have the components to build a high-quality early learning and development system. The State will follow their current Nevada Promise document that lists these components. The State's ELD Standards must be aligned with the providing extensive plan. The State indicated that the use of Environmental Rating Scales follows the latest health and safety practices from Caring for Our Children under their health promotion practices. The State's health promotional practices were unclear to the reviewer with the ERS reference. Nevada must use a more comprehensive and extensive tool than the ERS practices for this component.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	16

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(2)

The State listed 10 comprehensive goals for building a plan for an Integrated Early Childhood Learning System. These goals are ambitious and achievable indicators of the State Plan being an effective reform agenda that is of quality. The State's Promise will build a connected infrastructure of effective, integrated services, and systems. The State was clear and effective, providing a vision for their capacity of the early childhood workforce that will be strengthened in order to provide a complete array of educational, social, emotional, and environmental supports to young children and their families that are family-centered, culturally competent, and evidence-based. The specific rationale for the State's justification to address the criteria in the Focused Investment Areas C, D, and E is that they represent critical elements of the comprehensive system that is fundamental to fulfilling Nevada's Promise. Each of the focused investment areas are directly tied to Nevada's goals as articulated above, such as, the Nevada's Pre-K Standards described appropriate outcomes for children at the end of their preschool experiences and entering kindergarten. The States standards provide a framework for curriculum and instruction for all of Nevada's early childhood classrooms. In addition, the State's Comprehensive Assessment Systems are an essential component of all programs serving children birth to eight years, and an indispensable practice for all early childhood educators.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	8

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

- (a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--
 - (1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;
 - (2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;
 - (3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and
 - (4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;
- (b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--
 - (1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

The State provided a medium/high quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 6 points. The State will build upon existing collaboration with multiple State departments. The leaders will be managed by the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office. The Council will serve as the external monitor of the plan for reform articulated in the Nevada Promise and will report to the public on the progress of the State's reform efforts. The early childhood experts and other policymakers on the Council will ensure communication amongst the agencies remains constant to help leverage ongoing support. The Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office will serve as the liaison between local Early Childhood Advisory Councils and other critical entities with a role in the implementation of the plan. This Office will supervise and manage all activities associated with the State Plan, and work with NDE and within DHHS to guide the implementation and evaluation. Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will serve as the liaison between the Governor's office and the public in engaging communities across the state in creating and implementing the vision for this initiative and incorporating public input into program and policy. The State clearly indicates the DOE and DHHS will be collaborating in this endeavor. The State was clear about the role and responsibilities of each agency. The reform agenda will be guided collaboratively by both departments, and managed by the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office. The State is relying solely on two MOUs to provide a strong/full commitment to the State Plan, but the State has demonstrated experience in excelling in planning, forecasting, and replenishing vital educational needs of every ECE component. The State has letters of support from a majority of entities in the State. The State did provide support from all entities to warrant a high quality score for this section. The State of Nevada addresses a full alliance to ensure their State Plan excels in formulating and executing strategies. The State Plan is to have the Early Childhood Advisory Council to be the buffer to the Governor's Office, and the State's Department of Education and HHS will be the top-line participating State Agencies. There are other key Participating State Agencies (PSA). What did not appear clear were the inputs from the private sector and the non-profit organizations and other stakeholders.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	10

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(4)

The State provided a medium/high quality response receiving 10 points or 67% of the total points for this response. The Nevada Department of Education has committed vital resources to implement their data system through the recently awarded Striving Readers project and State Pre-kindergarten funding, and the entire 15% allocated for children 0-5 will align with the standards outlined in this application, as related to literacy and language skills. The State addressed clearly in their tables how existing funds are used to support ELDP. Additionally, as NDE prepares its competitive application for the next round of state longitudinal data systems, early childhood and kindergarten entry assessment data systems will be included. The State claims and validates that almost 40% of the budget for implementing Nevada's Promise comes from existing sources within each department. The State's commitment during some of the worst budget shortages in the history of the state, combined with the capacity building activities designed to result in lasting reforms to Nevada's early childhood comprehensive system, assures sustainability of that reform. The first two line items of the State's Budget Spending Plan are acceptable, although the fringe benefits line item must provide more detail and 37% needs to be justified. Travel expense for two employees is not clearly explained. The Contractual line items could use more details and justifications. The State's 1.5 million for training every Kindergarten teacher in the state could use some clarity. The State did not clearly address details concerning the amount of funds budgeted for participating State agencies. If the MOUs and the participating agencies work together as designed, the State's program could easily be sustained after the grant period ends. If the State is relying totally on outcomes to produce future funding for this initiative as stated, the submitted plan likely will not be maintained or expanded.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(1)

The State provided a high quality response to a fully implemented plan receiving 9 points or 90% of the total points for this response. The state of Nevada completed a two-year pilot study of its Tiered QRIS Model called the Silver State Stars QRIS in June 2011. The model was revised summer 2011 based on the evaluation of the initial pilot, and a third-year pilot of the revised model began on September 2011. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS model is a 5-star model developed using a set of tiered program standards. ELDP Pre-K Standards are linked to Nevada's K-12 Standards and are designed to assist parents and teachers in supporting children's attainment of necessary skills in language and literacy, math, science, social emotional development, physical development, and health and creative arts so that children are ready to make a successful transition to school. All child care centers (including the largest Head Start grantee in the state) involved in the Silver State Stars pilot project are assessed using the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) specifically the ITERS-R (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised) and the ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised). The Environmental Rating Scales provide a global assessment of child care quality within specific child care settings. The proposed tiered Silver State Stars will incorporate use of the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), a nationally recognized standard tool as a measure of teacher-child interactions. In conjunction, a pilot P-3 (A continuum of curriculum centered around literacy, reading, math, science and social emotional supports, enveloped in family engagement practices from birth to third grade in local communities) project will use the

CLASS with K-3rd grade teachers. The State's child care licensing requires child care programs to conduct, within three months after a child enrolls, an assessment or screening. The screening or assessment will be conducted and repeated biannually. The State of Nevada's Senate Bill requires employees of child care facility to complete at least 15 hours of training (with at least two hours of training on wellness, including childhood obesity, nutrition and physical activity). The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) has been overseeing the collection of data in relationship to Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars pilot project. Data including Environmental Rating Scale scores have been collected and analyzed. The goal of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is to connect the level of program standards to the star quality levels. Nevada currently has a data warehouse with a searchable database of state reports. The Tiered Silver State Stars has clear and measurable standards that differentiate program quality levels based on the required criteria and the number of documented, quality indicators. These standards reflect high expectations of program excellence. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars model is an accreditation plus model and is linked to the state licensing system for ELD programs. The one star level requires a child care program to have a current child care license. Great care was taken during the development of Nevada Tiered Silver State Stars model not to duplicate but to enhance Nevada's child care licensing requirements. The State's Child Care Licensing within the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance (BHCQC) in the DHHS Health Division plans to advocate for graded licenses in the coming year. The administration agreed to issue joint license certificates that will indicate both the graded license and the star rating when the statewide tiered Silver State Stars is implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	9

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(2)

The State provided a medium quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 9 points. As the State moves forward with its Silver Stars program, their State Plan is designed to sustain long-term growth, and exceed expectations. The State's response is planning for their future development and accomplishment. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is designed to maximize program participation by implementing effective policies and practices that will promote the participation of all ELD Programs in the system. The State Plan presents great steps to achieve their goal. This state is proposing to incorporate a landmark endeavor by inserting that participation in Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars, it will become a mandatory requirement for receiving childcare subsidies or quality set aside funding. The State's plan to promote participation is to reduce the barriers and increase the incentives (childcare subsidies and scholarships) for participation. This is a great step towards ensuring increasing participation. The State is to implement a great plan to increase access to high quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs providing scholarship and child care vouchers to families. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars will include programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start and State Pre-K programs by aligning Silver State Stars documentation with the comprehensive assessment system previously described. The current Silver State Stars pilot is in progress. In order to complete the State's evaluation of this third pilot and develop the plan for integrating all ECDPs, no current QRIS participants will be counted as "participating" or receive funding through this application in the first year except for TA. The State's performance measures for increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide TQRIS indicated no baseline data and no targets for FY12. The State has set ambitious growth goals that are obtainable and supported by the State's Nevada Promise.

	Available	Score
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The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and
- (b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(3)

The State provided a high quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 11 points for this response. The State has demonstrated a tremendous plan to incorporate several different assessment tools to display flexibility in adapting to changing conditions in the State. The State currently has the ERS in place and plans to incorporate CLASS, another assessment tool. Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS model currently uses the Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS-R and ECERS-R) for assessing program quality. The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are valid and reliable tools for evaluating the global quality of childcare programs. A level of inter-rater reliability above 85% on the ERS will be used by Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars. All ERS raters will be required to obtain a reliability level of 85% or higher. Raters will be monitored and periodically conduct parallel ERS assessments to ensure reliability is maintained. In addition, the State will add another valid and reliable tool, CLASS, that will be used to assess programs. The same model the State is currently using will be followed to ensure rater reliability for this tool. The level of acceptability for inter-rater reliability will also be set at 85% with a movement toward exact reliability of raters. CLASS raters will be monitored and provided training and support. The State indicates a strong intent to disseminate information to the public about quality care and ratings. Currently, Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars has a strong task force of over 40 members from community organizations and childcare programs that will initiate the promotion of public awareness of Nevada's Silver State Stars. Public service announcements and news releases will share information on Silver State Stars to increase the public's information. The Programs participating in Silver State Stars will proudly display their joint licenses indicating both their graded licensing level and their star rating. Flyers on the Tiered Silver State Stars will be available for parents at childcare and community sites.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	16

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);
- (b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and
- (c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--
 - (1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
 - (2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(4)

The State provided a high quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 16 points or 80% of the total points for this response. The State provided high-quality practices and policies. For example, Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars will support reasonable proposals to pay staff livable wages at parity with school districts depending on degrees earned, classroom (CLASS), program (ERS scores) and child outcomes. The State's writes that quality improvement of childcare programs is an essential component of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars as childcare programs are provided with training, coaching, other technical assistance, financial incentives, and higher subsidy reimbursement rates for eligible children. All directors of childcare centers involved in Silver State Stars are required to attend a three-hour orientation and seven-hour training that covers documentation requirements for each of the star levels and an overview of the ERS rating scales. Lead teachers are required to attend a six-hour training on coaching, creating classroom action plans and understanding the ERS. The State can meet quality indicators by completing specific training requirements. The State's Child Care Resource and Referral system is a great component to assisting families. There appear to be no shortfalls in the State's Plan to link working families who have Children with High Needs with ELD programs. A strong bridge to coordinate state entity programs to local entity programs to family needs is critical. The targets set by the State are ambitious and achievable as required for the number of Early Learning and Development Programs to increase in the top tiers of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, but the State could have benefited chiefly by expanding on their response. In addition, the State's targets set for the number and percentages of children with high needs ambitious and achievable as required for the number of Early Learning and Development Programs to increase in the top tiers of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (B)(5)

The State provided a medium quality response receiving 12 points. The State was vague in identifying the specific measures that would be used and how they will accomplish their outcomes. The State indicates an evaluation of the Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars model will be conducted to validate that the different star levels equate to different levels of quality. The State states an external evaluator will develop a plan using the early childhood data collection system developed as part of this proposal. The researcher will use data from the comprehensive assessment system to measure increased quality of early childhood environments, teacher child interactions, screenings, and child outcomes as indicated by formative assessments. The State's kindergarten entry assessment will be used to see whether the new system improves skills of children at kindergarten entry. The State provides a medium-quality component to their plan to assessing programs. The State will involve a longitudinal approach to data collection on both participating centers as well as the children in those centers. The Nevada Department of Education will assist with assigning children unique identifiers that will follow them throughout their school career and enable longitudinal data collection. The expectation would be that as centers improve their overall quality and move up in their star rating within the tiered system, children in those centers would also demonstrate increased gains in measures of school readiness, learning and development.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	6

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (c)(f)

The State provided a medium quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 6 points for this response. The State did not address or include information about the standards for children four and five years of age, which is extremely critical for ELD Programs. a) The State provides evidence that supports the Essential Domains of School Readiness, emphasis on culturally and linguistically appropriate standards, and to addresses school readiness in a context relevant for the growing diverse population in Nevada. The State includes that early childhood programs that model acceptance and respect of a child's native language will help them to feel more included in the classroom. A program that supports the use of a child's home language sends the message that their culture is important while exposing them to an enriched bilingual environment. b) The State provides limited evidence that their ELDS are aligned with their K3 standards. The State plan is to support a crosswalk that is currently being developed to align the revised Pre-K Standards with the new Common Core Standards in literacy and mathematics. This work will be supported through the Nevada State Literacy Plan and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant. c) Nevada entities developed a mission and vision plan for the State, which included increased collaboration, communication, determination of data collection tools and reporting systems, and professional development. This plan is an integral component of the Nevada State Literacy Plan. In addition, the Nevada Registry, which is currently mandatory for all childcare programs, supports the work of an integrated professional development system and standards for all early childhood professionals. The State did not clearly address or provide evidence that clearly focused or defined their curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities. d) The State provided a limited response. The State's investment and support of their work of implementing the statewide Silver State Stars system will help ensure that all early childhood programs are included in these initiatives including but not limited to early intervention, early childhood special education, NV State Pre-K, local Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and childcare. Moreover, supporting the facilitation of this collaboration across programs is the work of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council and Nevada State Literacy Team with includes all appropriate representatives.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(2)

The State provided a medium quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 8 points. The State articulates a better than average plan to develop a future data system that will use sophisticated methods to measure productivity. The State has available at least five assessment tools for screening and outcome measurements: Teaching Strategies Gold; the Brigance; the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS); Get it Got it Go; and the Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC). Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) uses the Hawaii Early Learning Profile statewide as both a screening and child outcome measure. The State did not provide how the five assessment tools will be used for the State. NEIS is piloting the AEPS, which is also used by University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Early Head Start, one of 10 recently designated Centers of Excellence. The most recently adopted state licensing regulations include a requirement that licensed early childhood educators assess an enrolled child's development within three months after enrollment and biannually. The commitment by the State to strengthen ECE CAS knowledge is evidenced by The School Readiness Summit, which is the first planned event to work with early childhood educators to raise understanding of the purposes and uses of the Comprehensive Assessment Tools on which Nevada's Comprehensive Assessment System is being built. The event, which will occur in 2012 and annually thereafter, will orient participants to how the ECERS-R, CLASS, Five Protective Factors Survey, and ASQ-3 help them meet their children and family's needs. Training sessions on several commonly used formative assessments will also be provided, and conversations regarding the pros and cons of the various formative assessment tools currently used by the Nevada's Promise will be launched at this event. Subsequent training and targeted technical assistance will be collaboratively co-sponsored to deepen learning. Since the commitment has been made to use Environmental Rating Scales, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, the Protective Factors Survey, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, training will begin around those as soon as possible. The State's approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs has limited support and minimum evidence. The State could have benefited from providing more information to support their position. The first statewide professional development opportunity designed to train early childhood educators on the use of the ERS, CLASS, Five Protective Factors Survey and ASQ-3 will be held in January 2012, as part of a School Readiness Summit already committed to using ECCS funding.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (c)(6)

The State provided a medium quality response and a partially implement plan receiving 8 points for this response. a) The State's Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance (BHCQC) and the Silver State Stars program will combine efforts to implement a graded and star rated license to appropriately address health and safety standards, developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening. The programs will provide referrals, and follow-ups; health promotion including healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and increased physical activity; oral health; and social and emotional development; and health literacy among parents and Nevada's Promise. b) The State bureau has begun issuing graded licenses for groups it regulates in recent years and has seen a tremendous jump in compliance rates as a result. The State will ensure licensed child care providers are required to complete a minimum of two hours of training each year on topics related to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention. c) The State's Nevada's Promise will build stronger alignment between the State Health Division.

which is responsible for ensuring the basic health and safety standards of licensed family child care homes and centers, and statewide ECE professional development activities. Additionally, current licensing protocols will be reviewed and modified as appropriate in order to streamline the process for obtaining licenses, including the possibility of allowing local agencies to conduct licensing reviews and site visits to support the state system. The State did not clearly address how they would increase the number of ECEs who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards. c) The State accepts the need to focus directly on promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, and expanding physical activity. The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's (UNCE) educational efforts and the inclusion of four programs are sound strategies to "jump start" this initiative for the State. d) The State indicated that the percentage of Number of Children with High Needs screened of the total population in the baseline year 2011 is 43.16%. The State's Percentage of Children with High Needs referred for services who received follow-up/treatment for baseline year 2011 is 83.12%. In the future, the number of children who receive follow-up/treatment will be determined by increasing the target percentages 84%, 86%, 88%, and 90% for the subsequent years. The Number of Children with High Needs screened decreases for the target year 2012 because the total number of children ages 0 to 5 years decreases. Children ages 0 to 4 years decreases by about 2,000 while children age 5 years increases by only 1,000. Baseline data is based on the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare Medicaid Services annual EPSDT Participation report (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). Targets are based on the percentage of children with high needs as estimated by the number of low-income children (National Center on Children in Poverty). The State of Nevada indicated, by the end of 2015, their data should be better tracked by their Health Information Technology system, relative to the State's current status of integration.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	7

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(4)

The State provided a medium quality response that is minimally implemented, receiving 7 points for this response. a) The State did not specifically address culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement, but did address strategies and activities that will be implemented as part of Nevada's Workforce Development, Silver State Stars QRIS, and the P-3 Initiative. b) The State plans to include the Adoption of the Strengthening Families Model into early childhood programs that will promote family engagement across the State. The State did not provide evidence that indicates their State Plan will reach the rural community families. c) Nevada's Promise will implement program standards that establish appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age and trains educators to help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Programs will be expected to meet standards that address the social and emotional competence of children, using early identification and assistance for both parents and children to keep development on track and work to improve the ability of each child to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior, and effectively communicate their feelings. c) The State programs will be trained and supported to offer concrete supports to vulnerable children and families in times of need to meet basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing, and health care. The focus of this reform agenda on integrating programs and resources across agencies and systems, and aligning expectations and standards, will strengthen the entire early childhood system's ability to respond quickly and appropriately to children and families.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(1)

The State provided a medium quality response receiving 12 points for a partially implemented plan for this response. a) Nevada published its Core Knowledge Areas (CKA) and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals to provide the basis for Nevada's statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that will be developed to support fulfillment of Nevada's Promise. The CKA and Core Competencies were developed in response to research indicating that professional education for Early Care and Education (ECE) practitioners is essential to the quality of care and education provided. Caregiver actions have also been shown to make a difference to the future learning capabilities and success of children. The vast majority of the State's competencies identified in this framework relate to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) regarding the direct care and education of young children. b) The State did not address how it would develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The Nevada Registry has created a professional development plan, "Cultivating Your Growth as a Professional: Creating a Professional Development Plan to Guide Your Career in Early Care and Education" which, coupled with Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, is a guide designed to help increase knowledge, skills and expertise for working with children and their families. c) State representatives from five of the six institutions participated on the Early Care and Education Committee, and the impact of their involvement is now evident in the coursework and curricula of the majority of the Nevada State Higher Education (NSHE) institutions, which incorporates the CKA in their programs that result in licensing, credentialing, and ECE degrees. The Core Knowledge Area (CKA) are also an important part of Nevada's training approval system and are reflected in all trainings approved by The Nevada Registry. This allows the State to create a unified approach to statewide professional development opportunities as well as afford trainers the opportunity to identify gaps and offer trainings in areas where there is limited availability. The Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC)'s statewide conference provides an annual forum to address issues from across the state, and consensus on decisions and problem solving is typically easy to establish. All six higher education institutions in Nevada have aligned their coursework with the Core Knowledge Areas but not necessarily with the Core Competencies. However, while common course numbering aligned with core knowledge areas exists across institutions, specific core competencies must still be aligned. Faculty acknowledge the challenge involved in establishing commonly numbered coursework and course descriptions across institutions, but have committed to achieving this in 2012.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in Improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	15

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

- (a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;
- (b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;
- (c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and
- (d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--
 - (1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
 - (2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(2)

The State provided a medium quality response to a substantially implemented plan receiving 15 points. a) The State response to providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities was vague, but the State did express the Nevada Department of Education will work with institutions of higher education to assess and align course content and teacher effectiveness measures to create a potential statewide P-3 (prenatal to 3rd grade) teaching credential. The State might benefit from working with their home visitation programs. b) The State clearly addresses the multiple challenges faced by ELD workforce. The State currently uses TEACH to provide scholarships to childcare providers, and the State plans to continue this practice. Moreover, the State faces a number of challenges in attracting, retaining and developing child care professionals for its ELD workforce, including: staff shortages, particularly in remote and disadvantaged areas and Indigenous communities; relatively low pay and variable working conditions; a high proportion of staff without formal qualifications; and low status and standing. Nevada's Promise is aimed at increasing the retention and quality of the early childhood workforce over the next four years, with the ECAC working with DHHS, NDE and local programs to develop a blueprint to improve recruitment and retention, and open up pathways that reward and support the best workers and raise the level of qualifications. The State has demonstrated a commitment to investing in and implementing policies and incentives through the Nevada's Promise aimed at increasing the retention and quality of the early childhood workforce over the next four years. The State could benefit from giving proper attention to evaluating both new and long-term employees in EC to achieve invaluable data on retention. The State indicates coursework is currently aligned to the core knowledge areas, but has not aligned the core competencies defined within each core knowledge area explicitly and consistently with course numbering and content. The State states their core competencies will also be aligned with the CLASS and Child Development Associate (CDA) competencies. These targets are ambitious and certainly achievable for the State, and the State's table measuring institution performance over the next five years is aggressive and indicates a strong commitment to the six entities. c) The State's response to public reporting is high quality. Per State Child Care Licensing regulations R112-06, participation in The Nevada Registry is now a requirement for all caregivers working in licensed childcare settings. The Nevada Registry is in the process of phasing in mandatory registration on the Career Ladder. All personnel working in licensed facilities must be registered by December 31, 2012. Currently, only 20% of Early Childhood professionals registered with The Nevada Registry are placed on career ladder levels four or above (levels reached by higher education degree attainment). The baseline number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an "aligned" institution is based on the current total number of EC educators placed on the Career Ladder. All providers regardless of career ladder level must take informal or formal training that is aligned with the Core Knowledge Areas. Targets are based on the deadline for mandatory registration on the Career Ladder of December 2013. d) The State plan to increase AA degrees by 70 per year and BS by 35 per year over the next five years is solid, but the State does not indicate where these aspiring educators will come from. The State's expansion on this comment would have enhanced their score. The State did not clearly address increasing the number of post-secondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators. Nevertheless, they were ambitious yet achievable with their targets increasing the number of ECEs in the State. The State has an articulation agreement that was signed and implemented between Great Basin College (GBC) in Elko and UNLV allowing graduates from GBC's early childhood associate degree program to matriculate all coursework in that degree toward a bachelors degree from UNLV. The upper division coursework through UNLV is all available online to facilitate early childhood teachers in this remote area of Nevada to complete early childhood 4-year degrees for the first time ever.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	8
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p>		

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(1)

The State provided a medium quality response to a minimally implemented plan receiving 8 points. a) The State plans to implement a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). This common assessment tool will determine the level of mastery that a child has attained, which is aligned with selected Kindergarten Common Core State Standards. The State will eventually serve as the Standard-Based Report Card. Nevada's plan will ensure that assessments evaluate the multiple domains of readiness, including social-emotional development, but are not the sole determining factor for kindergarten entry. b) The State's measures of environmental quality and teacher interactions will provide information on whether pre-kindergarten or childcare programs are offering quality environments and to what extent educators are able to enrich language development by engaging English Learners in conversation and interesting activities. The Kindergarten Entry Assessment process that Nevada implements will be based on valid, reliable, appropriate, and multi-dimensional assessment tools. The State's early childhood educators will be able to use the information they impart to make informed instructional and programmatic decisions that improve the outcomes and outlook for children with high needs. c) The Statewide partners including the DHHS Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visits (MIECHV) program, the NDE longitudinal data system and the State of Nevada have committed financial resources to assure the timely development and implementation of a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment and corresponding statewide data collection and reporting system. As stated previously, this will occur no later than the beginning of the 2014-15 school years for children entering a publicly funded kindergarten program. To support timely implementation, a priority focus, along with appropriate planning and training activities, will be strategically incorporated. d) The State is in the planning phase of this development. The Nevada ECAC will use funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to study the feasibility of using one kindergarten entry assessment with a statewide data collection system linked to the Nevada Department of Education longitudinal data system. The eventual linking of Nevada's Early Learning System with NDE's longitudinal data system will be achieved either by directly integrating the two systems, or by building data bridges to translate and/or communicate data directly to the NDE K-12 longitudinal data system. e) The State did not provide evidence to support this response. The State did report all 17 school districts in Nevada currently assess children at kindergarten entry with some kind of tool that costs them money. The planning process for the kindergarten entry assessment will include developing consensus so that local school districts will fund their own use of the kindergarten assessment tool after the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funding is no longer available.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(2)

The State provided a medium quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 12 points for this response. The State Council's key goal is to build a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood data collection and tracking system linked to the existing K-12 longitudinal data collection system, based on recommendations of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC). The ECDC has identified 10 fundamentals of coordinated state early care and education data systems. The State did not clearly support their uniform data collection plan. The existing data systems will be studied to determine ease of use and ability to combine all early childhood systems into one coordinated data collection system. Nevada's interoperability will be paramount to implementation and thus will be addressed during the planning phase. NDE and DHHS will work with the Governor's Office to ensure development of voluntary, common standards for the key education data elements that align with the National Center for Education Statistics. The final system design will either be one cohesive data collection system, or ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data. The State indicates key points to ensure success for this endeavor and participating state agency support. The State's vague response to their plan indicates that Local ELD programs, whether public or private will have access to development and outcome level

data on their children for curriculum and child development planning purposes. It will also support the ability of licensed early childhood and development programs to design curricular approaches and lessons to include all children in lesson planning. This will help with removing the more subjective perspective, enhancing the provider's ability to use current time data to plan daily activities. Again, the State responded vaguely, data use policies and procedures are well defined by both DHHS and NDE. Nevada's coordinated early childhood data collection system plan will adhere to all applicable local, state, and federal laws as the plan is designed.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	180

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (P)(2)
The State provided a medium quality response to a partially implemented plan receiving 6 points for this response. The State provides a quality response indicating that Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars QRIS is linked to the State licensing system for ELD programs. The one star level requires a child care program to have a current child care license. Many state licensing requirements are minimal; therefore the implementation of the Tiered Silver State Stars model is moving Nevada toward higher quality care and professionalism. Additionally, the Nevada state child care licensing office within the BHCQC in the DHHS Health Division is working to institute graded licenses. The bureau chief agreed that joint license certificates could indicate both the graded license and the star rating when the statewide tiered Silver State Stars is implemented. Additionally, the bureau agreed to work with the Silver State Stars and other publicly monitored programs (such as Head Start and State Pre-Kindergarten) to eliminate duplication and increase effective monitoring practices. The Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars is designed to maximize program participation by implementing effective policies and practices that will promote the participation of all ELD Programs in the system. An extensive plan is described in section B of this proposal. Representatives from State-funded preschool programs, Early Head Start, Head Start, and ELD Programs funded under section 619 of Part B and C of IDEA, Title 1 of the ESEA and the State's CCDF programs have participated in the development of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars and expressed support for full participation when Silver State Stars goes statewide.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met, or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

The State chose to refer to (E)(1) and did not expand on or provide any information for this section to be evaluated. The State listed every entry in Table (A)(1)-(12) as N/A. Nevertheless, the State demonstrated in (E)(1) key elements to partially understanding the status of children's learning and development at Kindergarten entry. The State ineffectively establishes truly relevant objectives and performance standards in their KEA. The State has a plan that is designed to increase the number of children ready for school. The State scored less than 70% in the (E)(1) section, which qualifies them for the zero points.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The State of Nevada's application demonstrates a commitment to eventually implementing a high quality Early Learning and Development Program for Children with High Needs. The Participating State Agencies excel in developing mutual development expectations from each entity. Partners in Nevada's commitment to school readiness communicate an immediate desire to improve the quality of ELDPs. The State's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) has developed a clear and operative plan for building an integrated system of early learning and development (ELD) for children from birth through age five. This plan is integral to Nevada's comprehensive agenda for education reform that is known as Nevada's Promise. The State of Nevada is committed to a unified approach that links early childhood programs to kindergarten through third grade (K-3) so that young children and their families have better access and successful transitions to high quality early learning and education. The State has expressed a commitment to ELD which is reflected in Nevada's agenda, which leverages existing resources and infrastructure across the state and articulates those that are needed in order to collaboratively plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and ultimately sustain Nevada's Promise to current and future generations. The State's Tiered Silver State Stars is linked to the state licensing system for ELD programs and will produce measurable results. The one star level requires a childcare program to have a current childcare license. Great care was taken during the development of Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars model not to duplicate but to enhance Nevada's childcare licensing requirements. Many State licensing requirements are minimal; therefore, the implementation of the Silver State Stars model is moving Nevada toward higher quality care and professionalism. This will allow the Silver State Stars model to produce more than expected results, exceed normal output standards, and become the pinnacle of professional excellence. The State has made improvements in specific reform areas that will improve the State's program quality and produce high levels of outcome for children with high needs without sacrificing quality. The State has multiple key components and elements to assess the continuous development and effectiveness of the ECE Workforce. Their TORIS has enormous promise and will eventually enhance the State's core strengths.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # NV-5023

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: **11/17/2011 - 12:17 PM**

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	19
<p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

(A) (1) (a) The State Plan demonstrates a very high and sustained commitment to Early Learning and Development Programs. The Early Learning Outcomes (ELO) and 2001 statewide early childhood education program influenced the state's funding, which increased approximately \$3 million per year for state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. The State's commitment to funding priorities are numerous and appropriate, and include a statewide needs assessment, a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and comprehensive Early Childhood Services. With the exception of supplemental State funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, Nevada has increased its spending for each of its pre-kindergarten programs since 2007. This commitment to investing in pre-kindergarten programs is commendable, and reflects a concern that is increasingly aligned with the current need for servicing, given the growing population of children identified with special needs in the State. Particularly commendable, given the national rise in autism, is the State's increase in spending to over one million dollars in 2010 that is dedicated to serving children with this syndrome. Further increases in state contributions to IDEA, rising from no funding in 2007 to over \$19 million in 2011 are very significant. (b) Without exception, the participation of children with high needs has increased in every pre-kindergarten program. Most programs, such as State-funded Pre-K programs and programs receiving CCDF funds have increased from 20-33 percent. However, infants and toddlers are not included on the Table; therefore, it is not possible to determine the extent of spending for these populations, either initially or at present. (c) Beginning with the 1997 Nevada Educational Reform Act (NERA) of 1997, Nevada has initiated several promising and influential reform policies and programs. Including the Striving Readers Program for children aged birth through 5, and continuing to the Teacher and Parent Guidebooks in developmentally appropriate areas, and the reestablishment of the Nevada Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS), Nevada has demonstrated a strong commitment to early learning and development. The State Plan explains that the Early Learning and Development Standards, which were originally aligned with the K-12 Standards, are in the process of alignment with the new Common Core State Standards. This updating and alignment is appropriate, given the nationwide movement toward Common Core Standards in education. Assessment is an important, key component in the state's Striving Readers Program. Through assessing children in grades K-2, appropriate interventions and differentiation will be possible. In addition, the

proposed Nevada Comprehensive Assessment System includes a number of informative, well-established assessment tools, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Teaching Strategies GOLD, the PPVT, the Environmental Rating Scale (ECRS-R), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring (CLASS). Collectively, these tools will provide a looking glass into the effects of the high quality learning and development system. Using the results of the assessment will also allow for increased reflection and informed decision making. Health Promotion: Four recent health promotion practices provide evidence of the State's commitment to health as a foundation for learning and development. For example, the State has implemented a Home Visiting program in two communities. The State also now requires training for all individuals working with infants or toddlers on SIDS, CPR, and child abuse/neglect. By the end of 2011, Nevada's CACFP (Child Adult Care Food Program) recently created Wellness Guidelines will be distributed to Nevada's child care centers and family child care homes. Finally the TQRIS, Silver State Stars, includes Health and Safety Quality indicators. Family Engagement: Through technology, Apple Seeds home visits, and Adult Learning Programs (Classroom on Wheels), the State demonstrates a strong and state-of-the-art commitment to family engagement. Early Childhood Training: (page 24) An interesting and appropriate State/TACSEI Partnership fosters professional development in an effective manner. Child development specialists train early childhood caregivers in seeking NAEYC (or another agency's) accreditation, observation, and training. In addition, the Office of Early Care and Intervention pays for all costs of accreditation materials and fees and provides a one-time accreditation bonus incentive. Data Practices: The two State agencies that are participating in this project, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) provide tentative longitudinal data use policies and procedures. Currently less than 62 percent of all possible applications of the data system are applied in the State's Early Learning and Development Programs. Also, it is difficult to discern exactly how and when information will be entered and accessed. Further, the information that will be contained in the data system is not provided. This response was scored at the high quality range.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes—

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(2)		
<p>(a) The State Plan, Nevada's Promise, includes nine specific goals that are housed under three main categories: Improving Program Quality, Improving Outcomes for Children with High Needs, and Closing the Readiness Gap Between Children with High Needs and their Peers. These broad and sub-categories are well aligned with the priorities of the RTT, including kindergarten entry assessments, family involvement, health promotion, data practices, program monitoring, early childhood educator training, higher education-informal training alignment, and expanding the statewide TQRIS. The State Plan is well delineated in the Table and includes specific and realistic dates for implementation. Therefore, the State Plan is rated as both ambitious and achievable in closing the readiness gap. (b) The summary and timeline of the State Plan articulate how the various aspects of the Plan form an effective reform agenda for Nevada. Three plans are delineated at the State level, including cross-system coordination, service integration, and strong leadership. At the local level, plans include strengthening the early childhood workforce, increasing family, school and provider awareness, and fostering positive social and emotional development. Thus, a statewide infrastructure is planned. However, clarity is missing regarding information on how each of the goals will be realized. (c) The State Plan, Nevada's Promise, provides a very sound rationale, justifying the State's choice to address the following priorities for (C), (D), and (E): Developing/using high quality ELD Standards; Engaging and supporting families; Developing workforce knowledge and competency; Supporting early childhood educators; Understanding children's learning and development at kindergarten entry; and Building/supporting a data entry system. Each of these focused investment areas is directly and clearly linked to Nevada's goals. This response was scored in the high quality range.</p>		

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	6

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

- (1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;
- (2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;
- (3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and
- (4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

- (1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;
- (2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and
- (3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

- (1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and
- (2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

(A) (3) (a) (1-2) The State Plan includes a networking System graphic that displays how all of the partners collaborate and interact to form an effective State network supporting early childhood. This System indicates that it builds upon existing interagency structures, including higher education degree programs, non-State agencies and providers, and Advisory Councils. Especially commendable in this system is the fact that the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will serve as the lead between the governor's office and the public. This key role will allow for the establishment of state-wide early childhood committees that are unified in their goals and actions. The three main bodies that filter down to the other offices and agencies are the Department of Education, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and the State Department of Health and Human Services. Collectively, these three main bodies impact the Head State State Collaboration and the Early Childhood's Comprehensive System. However, the graphic does not convey the link between the Governor's Office and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, nor the fact that the lead agency for this State Plan is the Department of Health and Human Services, as stated in the MOU and in Table (A) (3) (1). (3) A very clear, four-tiered plan is specified for the resolution of disputes. First, The ECAC and its members will resolve its own disputes that may arise. Second, if disputes remain, supervisors will be brought into the resolution of these disputes. Third, if these disputes continue, the NDE superintendent and the DHHS Director will meet to resolve issues. Fourth, the State governor and the DHHS Director will have the final say on any remaining conflicts. Decisions are made by the ECAC, as the governing body for policy making and priority setting. (4) The State Plan contends that it has involved parents and families in creating many of the documents in the appendices; however, it is unclear as to what documents are addressed and the extent or type of family involvement. Likewise, the Plan states that additional efforts will be made to involve representatives from Participating Programs, including early childhood educators. However, this information is very general, and provides few specifics about types of involvement from families (including those with children

with high needs), early childhood educators. Also missing are specific, intended goals for representative involvement, and the means of soliciting and involving additional these representatives. (b) (1-3) The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the lead agency (Nevada's Department of Health and Human Services and the participating agency (Nevada's Department of Education) delineates terms and conditions, and demonstrates a strong commitment from both parties. A signature from both the lead agency and the State Agency is included in this MOU. However, the "scope of work" descriptions that follow are very general and do not clearly specify the roles of other State Agencies such as the ECAC, which is previously described as one of the State Plan's lead agencies. Also, descriptions of the efforts to increase the number of Participating Programs and the efforts to maximize existing funding are not included. Therefore, a weakness of this response is that it only includes the MOU between two State Agencies, and the general goals for involvement of the other Agencies; thus, (b) (1-3) are only partially addressed. (c) (1) A total of eighteen letters are included in Nevada's Promise. These letters express strong support for the State Plan. However, except for a new, inserted paragraph in the letters, that in some cases specifies the agency's role, many of the letters are duplicates of a form letter. As a result, the letters are less persuasive than if they had been entirely unique and had addressed more fully the roles of the specific agencies. (2) Representatives of Early Childhood Educators and Association of Young Children (NAYC), the Nevada PTA, and post-secondary educators in Early Childhood programs are a few of the stakeholders who have submitted support letters. However, because many of the letters are modified "form letters," they do not clearly designate how they will collaborate on the proposed RTT grant. A few of the letters (for example, the University of Nevada's Cooperative Extension letter) do add information about the roles of their organization in the proposed RTT grant and provide promise for networking and alignment between higher education and the other organizations who will play a role in this RTT grant. Some of the higher education support and networking roles include coaching and training related to Nevada's TQRIS, professional development for child care providers, and statewide family literacy programming. This response fell in the category of partially implemented and medium quality.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	10

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(4)

(A) (4) (a) Totalling over \$31 million, the State's investment in funding is impressive. Collectively, the DHSS (the lead agency) and the DOE (the participating agency) will invest nearly 40 percent of the total funding for this grant through existing sources. This funding is especially poignant in light of the bleak economic picture which is very evident in Nevada's home foreclosures and joblessness figures. Existing funding for Nevada's Promise is available from the Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council, CCDF (via Silver State Stars, workforce development, and training and technical assistance), Early Intervention Services, and the Maternal Infant and Child Home Visiting program. The Nevada Department of Education (DOE) will allocate 15 percent of its budget to children ages 0-5, indicating a strong commitment that includes the Striving Readers project and State Pre-kindergarten funding. (b) (1) Given the relatively large amounts of State funding (40%), and the reasonable requests for RTT funding, the requested and existing funding is adequate to support all of the activities described in the State Plan. (2) All of the listed costs are explained in the narrative and appear reasonable and necessary with the exception of the Travel Budget. At \$21 thousand per year for each of four years, the total travel expenses (at \$84 thousand) seem excessive, especially given the fact that the majority of the travel is specified for in-state trips, including rural areas and Las Vegas, and that only one trip per year (for very few staff members) is scheduled for Washington, D.C. The Table of Existing State funds and the budget narrative clearly delineate that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the localities. In fact, over 50 percent of the total requested funding for this RTT grant is designated for Early Learning Organizations, Participating Programs, and Other Partners. (c) The funding for

several State Plan programs remain constant each year of the proposed RTT grant, and the CCDF set aside will provide continual funding. However, the funding for other important programs is eliminated. For example, funding will end in 2013 for the State Advisory Council (ARRA), which plays a key role in Nevada's Promise. Nevada's Early Intervention Services, likewise, receive no funding after 2012, nor is funding indicated for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services. Therefore, it is difficult to determine from the narrative and the information on the table whether legislation and "cultivating local relationships" will be sufficient to continue the programs that serve children with high needs. This response was scored at the medium-high quality range.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(1)

(B) (1) (a)(1) Nevada's Promise has developed a TQRIS called Nevada Silver State Stars that is based upon its existing Pre-K Standards. With the advent of the Nevada Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, Nevada offers a comprehensive and integrated set of standards that are all housed under the umbrella of the Nevada Core Competencies. (2) Participants in the Silver State Stars will expand to include the comprehensive assessment system. Among the highly useful and appropriate tools that will be used for summative and formative purposes are the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) that examines teacher-child interactions. Also, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS-R) serve to provide high quality and comprehensive indicators of the quality of child care and children's progress in the programs. A priority for Nevada that is stated in the State Plan is that of establishing one specific assessment, or a set of tools, that will be consistently used across all of Nevada's pre-K programs. However, this assessment or set of tools is not yet selected or implemented. (3) The State Plan clearly and in a well organized manner, using a Table, describes the early childhood educator qualifications and the Career Ladder as they relate to higher ratings on the TQRIS. In addition, the Silver Star TQRIS enlists six distinct features that, collectively, maintain its integrity and usefulness: 1. Early childhood educators' credentials are tied to their star levels; 2. Staff is monitored to conform to percentages of star levels and Career Ladder indicators; 3. Centers must be a TEACH site; 4. Written professional development plans are required for all levels beyond level II; 5. Directors and staff also participate in professional development and this participation affects Silver Star levels; and 6. Observation and feedback on staff by directors helps to meet Silver State Stars quality indicators. This sub-criterion is fully met. (4) The State Plan comprehensively addresses Family Engagement and links this engagement with the TQRIS. High quality examples of family involvement include regular parent-teacher conferencing, written plans for family involvement, including families on an Advisory Board, and translating school-home materials into the parents' home language. Further, the Nevada Family Engagement Framework outlines and promotes six important areas of family engagement that are used in all child care programs in the State. (5) Besides the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) which are used at pre-K Silver Stars programs, the State Plan describes the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) that provides guidelines that will be distributed to child care programs this year. Further, children's social-emotional development is screened using the ASQ-SE. Child care facilities have Star Health expectations, also, regarding referrals, safety, emergency planning, and the promotion of oral health for children. The consistent use of these health screening measures and practices is monitored for increased levels on the Silver Stars Program which is very well described and organized in the appendix. (6) Nevada's Promise includes the development of a state-side Data System that will include child care facilities and data about children and their families, assessment information, enrollment statistics, and program standards and related quality ratings. This Data System has been piloted, and is nearing the readiness stage for widespread implementation. This System will greatly benefit State Plan by providing a central location for housing essential program data. (b) The Silver Stars TQRIS is extremely clear and user-friendly, thereby encouraging widespread use and fostering understanding. Each of the levels is distinct from

the others, and project participants can easily determine how to move to the next levels, thereby increasing realistic goal-setting and goal-achievement. (c) In addition to the TQRIS in Nevada, graded/tiered licensing procedures, that are linked to the TQRIS, are planned for the State in the near future. Because the licensing requirements are minimal, at present, these two important practices will vastly improve the State's quality of services for all children, including those with high needs. This response was scored in the partially implemented and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	9

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(2)

(B) (2) (a) (1) Nevada has a High-Quality Plan to enlist all of the State's Early Learning and Development programs in the TQRIS. Programs that have expressed commitment to participation include Early Head Start and Head Start, ELD/IDEA programs, State-funded pre-school programs, and the State's CCDF programs. Because representatives from each of these programs have played a role in the development of the TQRIS, the programs are invested in this tiered system. The TQRIS System, Silver Stars, has already been implemented on a pilot basis, and grants have been awarded for program participation. Additional funding for meals and transportation will be provided to programs that enroll high needs populations. These grant and pre-implementation efforts and commitment indicate a high potential for success when the TQRIS is fully implemented. (b) The sub-criterion is only partially met for this response. While a brief mention of a "practical strategy" for increasing access for children with high needs is included, this strategy is not described as a State Plan goal. Very little information is provided to describe how increased access will transpire. Likewise, communities serving children with high needs will be targeted and supported by outreach and technical assistance. While this is an admirable goal, the mechanisms and means of providing this outreach and technical assistance are not provided. Finally, "ensuring that parent co-pay requirements are not a barrier" is a very vague statement, and lacks specifics about how deserving, high needs families are identified, how the co-pay is provided, and to what extent the co-pay is provided. No information is provided in this sub-criterion regarding incentives to high quality providers to participate in subsidy programs. Additional information is provided in section B (4)(b) that addresses this criterion; however, the response is limited in detail. (c) A Table is included that very clearly demonstrates the targets for each year of the RTT grant implementation. The targets are realistic and yet ambitious, projecting approximately 30 percent expected increases in numbers of statewide programs per year. By the year 2015, 90 percent of the programs (including IDEA, State-funded preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, and Title I/ESEA) will be enrolled in a TQRIS system, rising steadily from 0 percent in 2012 to 30 percent in 2013 to 60 percent in 2014. This response was scored in the partially implemented, medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	9

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(3)

(B) (3) (a) The State Plan specifies excellent and well-monitored procedures for ensuring the validity and reliability of its program effectiveness assessment tools. Establishing a reliability level of 85 percent or higher per rater, with a goal of exact reliability, is a commendable goal for the Plan. However, no specifics are provided regarding how this exact reliability will be established. Reliability and validity measures for the three assessments that will be implemented, CLASS, the ITERS-R, and ECERS-R, are already well established. Ensuring data entry accuracy is another priority that is well-described in this sub-criterion. (b) In order to inform the parents of children enrolled in ELD programs, the State Plan clearly lists and defines several highly effective, practical, and yet state-of-the-art procedures. For example, programs will receive Silver State Star ratings from child care providers and administrators at their program sites, through community roll-out events, through public service announcements, and through workshops that will be held at the various child care program sites. In addition, the programs and flyers that are distributed will be printed in both Spanish and English to meet the needs of Nevada's high population of Spanish speaking families. The use of a website indicating current Star level ratings and including a component for FAQ are other high quality means of involving and informing families. Another means of ensuring continuity of program quality is by programs' displaying their graded licensing level and their star ratings. This response was scored in the partially implemented and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	14

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(4)

(B) (4) (a) The State Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting access of programs to children with high needs. For example, the State Plan defines several incentives for Silver State Stars ELD Programs. These incentives include training, coaching, financial incentives (6, 9, and 12 percent increases for 3, 4, and 5 Star Ratings, respectively), and higher subsidy rates for eligible children. Another novel and commendable approach is offered in the State Plan, involving data-driven Action Plans that involve the collaboration of the coaches, child care directors, and teachers. These Action Plans are based upon the results of the ERS. Provisions are also described for improving children's environments and schedules, based upon the ERS results. (b) Several effective and appropriate supports are described that will assist working families who have children with special needs. Such supports include Nevada's referral system, providing full day/full year programs, transporting children with disabilities to and from programs, and mental health screenings. Future plans for competitive contracts will also require full-day, full-year care and transportation provisions, meals, and other needed family supports. (c) (1-2) The State Plan uses a Table to illustrate its plans for projected increases in program enrollment in the top two tiers of the TQRIS (Silver State Stars). With only 10 percent of the programs meeting the 4 and 5 Star levels in 2012,

the increase to 20 percent by the year 2015 certainly seems an attainable goal, especially in consideration of the incentives and training that this State Plan will offer. By fiscal year 4, 20 percent of children with high needs will be enrolled in programs with 4 or 5 Star ratings, mirroring the expected increase for programs at these levels. These increases in serving numbers of children with high needs with programs that have higher Star ratings do not seem sufficiently ambitious. The number of children served will double in four years, from just over 10,000 to over 20,000. By the year 2015, 50 percent of all of the State's programs will have 3, 4, or 5 Star ratings. This goal seems attainable, but not especially ambitious. No narrative justification is included regarding the rather modest expectations in program and child enrollments in programs at the top tiered levels. This response was scored at the partial implementation and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	14

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (B)(6)

(B) (5) (a) The State Plan describes four means by which the tiers in the Silver State Stars (TORIS) will accurately reflect differential levels of program quality. For example, the required ERS scores is the first determinant; a second means of determining the accuracy of tiers is through the NAEYC accreditation-plus model; a third means is through the use of an external evaluator who will enlist the new comprehensive data system and the formative assessments to determine the alignment of the different tier levels with increased quality of early childhood environments and teacher-child interactions. Fourth, the results of the kindergarten entry assessments will be used to determine the accuracy of the program tier levels. (b) The Nevada State Plan involves collecting longitudinal data on all children enrolled in a TORIS center that will follow these children throughout their school careers. This long-term data collection method will serve to determine the effects of high quality centers. This data collection method will inform practice and policies in centers serving young children for many years, as a result. However, additional information is needed regarding who will collect and disseminate these longitudinal data. As incentives to moving to higher Star levels, centers will be funded to improve their Star ratings. This response was scored at the high-quality level.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(1)

(C) (1) (a) The five included domains in the ELD Standards are appropriate to the population, and include Health and Physical Development, Social/Emotional; Approaches to Learning-Creative Arts; Communicative Skills-Language and Early Literacy; and Cognition & General Knowledge-Math & Science. However, all age groups (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) are not included in these standards. For example, the Standards list that is located in the appendix does not contain any Standards for four and five-year-olds. (b) All of the Nevada Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-12 standards and the School Readiness Domains. Nevada also plans to support the alignment of the Pre-K Standards with the new Common Core Standards through a State Literacy Plan and a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant. Including a computer-based assessment system, curricula and instruction materials, and job-imbedded professional development, alignment across standards will become even more in evidence. However, this proposed assessment system is not yet implemented. (c) This response contains little detail to support the fact the ELD Standards are incorporated into widely disseminated and widely used documents. Examples that are included are the Nevada State Literacy Plan, which is partially aligned with the Program Standards. In addition, the Nevada State Registry supports the professional development system and standards for all early childhood professionals. However, no evidence is presented that indicates support for the Pre-K standards in the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Further, no information is presented that delineates how the Registry offers support for the Pre-K standards nor how the State Literacy Plan is distributed or enforced. (d) This response is limited in detail. The State Plan does discuss the supports that are in place in the form of the TORIS that promote understanding of the Pre-K standards in Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K programs, and child care. Further, the response states that the State Literacy Team and the Early Childhood Advisory Council will also disseminate the Pre-K standards. However, the means and extent of dissemination are not provided in sufficient detail. This response was scored at the fully implemented and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(2)

(C) (2) (a) Children's development must be assessed within three months of enrollment and biannually thereafter, according to State licensing requirements, thereby assuring that children's needs are addressed in a reasonable and timely manner. Currently, a variety of assessment tools is used in pre-K programs in Nevada. Recognizing the lack of continuity across programs that is a consequence of having many assessment measures, approved, valid and reliable tools will be entered into the longitudinal data system and linked to key program elements. However, the lack of specificity and the lack of certainty in plans for using fewer assessment tools, and the means by which these tools will be selected, is a weakness in this response. (b) This response is clear and well described in the following ways: First, early childhood programs across the State have partnered to support statewide implementation of the TACSEI project (Center for Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning). Second, the State has planned a School Readiness Summit to inform early childhood educators about the purposes and implementation of the Comprehensive Assessment Tools, including the ECERS-R, CLASS, Five Protective Factors Survey, and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3). Third, higher education faculty in Nevada address the appropriate use of assessment tools at least once each semester. Fourth, higher education institutions will offer credit for program child care providers who participate in training sessions; participation in these training sessions will be tracked by the Nevada Registry. (c) As discussed previously, the unique state identifier will link to the new K-12 longitudinal data system. This approach will effectively and conveniently integrate assessments and sharing of assessment results. This state identifier and the longitudinal data system are not yet implemented. (d) This response is thin on detail regarding training dates for Early Childhood Educators. The response does explain that early childhood educators will have the opportunity to participate in a School Readiness Summit; however, no explanation is given as to how educators will be informed of this Summit, how they may take advantage of this opportunity, or why this Summit is offered, but not required. Thereafter, State and local Advisory Councils will collaborate to co-sponsor assessment training events. Also, training will revolve around the Strengthening Families Framework and the Five Protective Factors survey. However, because the formative evaluation tools have not yet been determined, they are not specified in this response. Therefore, the content of the curriculum for these training sessions cannot yet be determined. This response was scored at the partially implemented and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	7

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up, and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(3)

(C) (3) (a) Nevada has not yet established an aligned progression of standards. Programs that use all of the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently limited to State funded Preschool and Head Start/Early Head Start. However, the Silver State Stars Program includes relevant health standards, and the State BHCQC includes standards; therefore, the two programs will collaborate to form a progression of standards. In addition, the State Plan explains that it will work with programs across the state to incorporate Strengthening Families' Five Protective Factors (from the Pyramid Model) into this progression of standards. These collective efforts will result in a useful set of state-wide standards. (b) The Health Table that is included in the State Plan details the areas of the high-quality health plan that are now being met in the State of Nevada. However, no information was found in any of the Tables that indicates how an increasing number of Early Childhood Educators will be trained and supported on health care matters on an on-going basis. The Silver State Stars programs will support health training in the areas of physical activity, obesity prevention, and nutrition, and licensed care providers must complete training each year, although the training is limited to only two hours per year. Specificity regarding the required levels of training for other health-related areas, such as CPR and child abuse, is not provided. (c) A number of programs are in existence in Nevada that promote healthy eating habits, improve nutrition, and expand physical activity. Examples of these programs include Childhood Obesity Prevention in Nevada (COPIN), Enough is Enough, TV Moves Me, Nurturing Partners, and Follow My Lead. However, these

plans are separate, and not used by all programs on a consistent basis. (d) (1) The State Plan describes how children are screened with measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis. However, no information regarding Child Find provisions in IDEA was provided. (2) Follow-up procedures are delineated for instances in which follow-up treatment is needed; treatment requires federally authorized Medicaid service. As another advantage to the follow-up system, the child for whom problems are suspected is required to have an inter-periodic screen. (3) The Baseline and Annual Targets Table indicates that only 43 percent of children with high needs are currently screened. In 2015, an increase of 2 percent, or 45 percent of children with high needs will be screened. This increase seems very modest, with 55 percent of Nevada's children with high needs still not receiving screening. Similar figures for referrals and ongoing health care are provided in the Table, and no numbers are available or presented for participating children who are up-to-date in a schedule of well child care. This response was rated at the partial implementation and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(4)

(C) (4) (a) This proposed State Plan offers various and separate means of supporting families. For example, the Five Protective Factors database will support the tracking of family involvement across programs, as will enlisting the National Standards for family-school partnerships. The Silver State Stars model will also address family engagement standards. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has established standards that are intended to be woven into Nevada's early childhood program standards. However, Nevada's State Plan does not yet offer a progression of Family Engagement practices, nor a set of Family Engagement Standards across the Program Standards that support children's education and development. (b) Although the State Plan indicates that training of Early Childhood Educators related to Family Engagement Strategies will increase from 12.5 FTE to 17 FTE by the end of 2011, the increase is very modest. The State Plan also states that, according to the Nevada Registry, 80 parent involvement training sessions have transpired in the 2011 calendar year; however, the locations and content of these training sessions is not specified. A clear plan for systematically increasing the training of Educators is not provided, although some training will be offered at the NEVAEYC and the School Readiness Summit. Therefore, this sub-criterion was awarded partial credit. (c) \$10 thousand per year is pledged to the RTT grant from the Nevada State Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program for each fiscal year of the grant, thereby leveraging existing resources. The PTA has also offered its continuing support. A comprehensive approach is not yet in place, however, and the various State agencies are networking together to provide family outreach and support. This response was scored at the partial implementation and medium quality range.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(1)

(D) (1) (a) The State Plan delineates its Core Knowledge and Core Competencies Plans for children and early childhood educators. It is commendable that these competencies align closely with the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Standards and Professional Preparation Standards that are widely used throughout the nation, and that these standards address the focal areas of this RTT grant. Likewise, the Core Knowledge and Core Competencies were informed by Nevada's Pre-Kindergarten Standards, ensuring continuity among the competencies and the standards. However, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework has not yet been designed nor implemented. (b) The Core Knowledge Areas (CKA) are included in the curricula of the majority of Higher Education Institutions in Nevada. Also, the Nevada Registry's Professional Development Plan will help to publicize and distribute the CKA's and Core Competencies. However, information is not provided as to how, when and to whom the Registry's Professional Development Plan, "Cultivating Your Growth as a Professional" will be distributed. However, the State Plan indicates that the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is not yet in place. (c) Because Institutions of higher education helped to develop the Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies, they now integrate the Core Knowledge Areas into their course numbering across institutions. This alignment indicates a high degree of support for the Core Knowledge Areas on the part of the Nevada's universities and colleges. However, the Core Competencies are not yet aligned with course work at institutions of higher education. Also, the State Plan does not address the distribution or use of the CKA and Core Competencies with other professional development providers. Further, a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework does not yet fully exist, so complete alignment at this time is not possible. Therefore, this response was scored at the minimally implemented and high quality response range.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

- (a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;
- (b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;
- (c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and
- (d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--
 - (1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
 - (2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(2)

(D) (2) (a) Five forward-thinking and promising strategies will be added to the Nevada Plan to align with the developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. These competencies include additional levels on the career ladder, informal training on improving children's social-emotional domains, university and college training linked to CLASS (children's social-emotional domains), online training linked to credit, and the creation of a statewide P-3 (pre-natal to third grade) teaching credential. A consistent system of mentoring and coaching will be used to scaffold the progress of early childhood professionals. Finally, on an interesting and unique note, a career ladder for family, friends, and relatives, who also serve as children's caregivers, will be integrated into the existing career ladder. Adding these resources and personnel will considerably strengthen the professional

development arena. However, specific information about the roles and location of these family, friends, and relatives is not provided, nor is a Knowledge and Competency Framework implemented. (b) A blueprint is planned with the State's DOE, DHHS, and ECAC to convene a work group to explore best practices to promote professional improvement and career advancement. Although the topic areas are relevant to professional development, the specifics of this group, including when the plan will reach fruition and which individuals will become part of this planning group, are not provided in the State Plan. A promising scholarship program has been offered by T.E.A.C.H. These scholarships are available to all teachers working toward a degree in Early Childhood Education through all Nevada's colleges and universities. As a result of these collaborative scholarships, many more teachers will enter the field and receive support and incentives for retention. (c) Nevada's Career Ladder is a work in progress. By December 2012, Nevada's Career Ladder will require registration for all individuals working in licensed childcare settings. However, because the ladder is not yet in place, no information is available or provided in the State Plan regarding development, advancement or retention of Early Childhood Educators. (d) (1) The State Plan illustrates that all six higher education institutions in Nevada are aligned with the forthcoming Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and that this number is expected to remain consistent throughout the RTT grant period. Further, since all providers must register on the Career Ladder by the end of 2013, the targeted number of Early Childhood Educators who are credentialed by an aligned institution is expected to more than double by the year 2015. This projection seems ambitious and yet achievable. All of the institutions are aligned with the Core Competencies; however, the institutions are not yet aligned with the Core Knowledge Areas (CKA). (2) Ambitious and yet realistic and achievable targets are set for increasing the numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who progress to higher levels of credentials from 2012 through 2015. With an approximately one percent increase per year for the lower degree levels, and an approximately .5 percent increase at the Bachelors and Masters levels, the predicted numbers seem well aligned with the incentives, reciprocity agreements, scholarships, and Silver State Star participants that are offered in the Nevada State Plan. However, because the State Plan states that the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is not yet completed, it is difficult to determine the alignment of the credentials of the Educators with this incomplete Framework. This response was scored at the partial implementation and medium quality range.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	8
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>(E) (1) (a) The State Plan thoroughly discusses the formation of a kindergarten entry assessment that will be created from a careful and systematic examination of the existing kindergarten entry assessments from three school districts. These existing assessments and standards-based report cards align with English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Common Core Standards. The essential domains of school readiness are addressed, and include Language and Literacy, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches Toward Learning, Physical/Motor Development, and Social/Emotional Development. (b) In Fall, 2012 17 school districts across the State will ascertain the validity and reliability of selected assessment tools. After implementation, and in order to address the needs of English Language Learners and children with disabilities, the performance data will be disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, and English Language status. A weakness in the response lies in the fact that a</p>

single tool has not yet been created, and existing tools that will be examined for possible implementation are not described nor discussed. (c) The Kindergarten Entry Assessment will be administered at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. Logical phase-in and training plans are offered, such as professional development offerings, the Striving Readers Summer Institute, and other major State Conferences. However, very little information is provided regarding as to how and when these professional development opportunities and Institutes will be offered. (d) Logical plans are detailed that include linking the Kindergarten Entry data with the Early Learning System and also with the Nevada longitudinal data system. Efficiency, privacy and cost-efficiency will be determined as the systems develop. (e) Because the Kindergarten Entry data will be built into the State's longitudinal data system, the State will be able to significantly fund the project upon the cessation of the RTT grant cycle. However, little information is provided regarding how the longitudinal data system will operate and how data will be collected from the various agencies and child care centers. This response was scored at the minimally implemented and medium quality response range.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	11

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(2)
(E) (2) (a) The State's Early Childhood Data collaborative (ECDC) has provided 10 fundamentals of early care and education data systems, upon which the new longitudinal data system will be designed. All of the Essential Data Elements are included. (b) Although the State Plan does briefly mention the formation of Focus Groups to be held across Nevada to attain public input regarding data input and ease of entry, this response is vague in terms of details regarding the members of the Focus Groups, the frequency and locations of the meetings, and the expected time frame for uniform data collection. (c) Two major State agencies will work with the Governor's Office to ensure that common standards are used for the key education data elements. Interoperability will be ensured by the installation of one common data collection system or the use of several systems that have interoperability. However, details about this system or these systems are not provided. (d) Relevant and timely information in the System includes child development and outcome data, which will support Early Childhood Educators in designing appropriate curriculum plans and lessons that will, in turn, support all children. Although the response states that ease of access is a priority, the response does not indicate how this ease of access will be accomplished, the extent of technical support, and how child care providers will access this data system. (e) The State Plan provides a very thoughtful and clear picture of how it will comply with privacy laws. Seven governance policy provisions are listed, and a transparency policy is well described. However, since the data system is not yet implemented, the State is not yet able to meet the Data System Oversight Requirements or comply with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws. This response was scored at the partially implemented and medium quality range.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	179

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (P)(2)

(a) The State licensing system applies to all counties except one large county, Washoe. While Nevada State licensed programs require a license for providers who care for 5 or more children, the majority of the State programs do meet this licensing requirement. However, firm plans are not delineated for changing the State requirements to meet the "two or more unrelated children" RTT-Early Learning Challenge requirement by the year 2015. Washoe County, which is not State-licensed, requires a license for providers who care for 2 or more children. Therefore, this second largest county in the State may provide an exemplary model that the rest of the State may follow, thereby increasing the quality and tighter regulations of child care throughout the State's counties. However, no clear plans for following this Washoe model and meeting the RTT requirements are discussed. (b) Section B of the State Plan clearly describes the TQRIS for Nevada. All ELD programs in the State are expected to participate in the Silver State Stars System, including Early Head Start. Head Start, ELD programs affiliated with IDEA, Title 1, and the State's CCDF programs. Moreover, in order to receive set-aside funds or child care subsidies, program participation is mandatory. Silver State Stars is a highly motivating and well planned tiered system. However, the State Plan does not specify that all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs will participate in the TQRIS. This response is scored at the partially implemented and medium response range.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--		
(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or		
(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.		

Comments on (P)(3)

(b) The application fully addresses (E)(1) and has scored 15 out of 20 points, and has exceeded the required 70 percent for this criterion. Therefore, the Competitive Priority 3 response meets the criteria for the 10 available points.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs:	Yes
To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.	
The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and	

Note: this response has been amended by the reviewer. Because the reviewer gave 40% of available points in criterion E(1), he/she has amended this response to "no". Amended March 20, 2012.

(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The State Plan demonstrates a promising plan for aligning resources and policies across the main State Agencies, the Department of Education, the Early Childhood Advisory Office, and the lead agency—the Department of Health and Human Services. These three agencies are strongly invested in the Plan, and will coordinate servicing, resources, and existing funding to maximize the RTT grant. Children with high needs will be addressed and serviced by an effective Family Involvement Plan, by enlisting the services of family, friends, and neighbors in tier-rated programs, and by the full implementation of the Nevada Silver State Stars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TORIS). Nevada's system of tracking Family Involvement is linked with its Silver State Stars, as well as with the proposed longitudinal data system. This new data system will prove invaluable in collecting and tracking data on children's and family's demographic data, children's assessment scores, and areas of special needs. These data will be used for program improvements and will help to identify and reach children with special needs. Early Childhood Educators will receive mentoring and coaching in the State Plan. Educators will receive scholarships and credits from institutions that share reciprocity with other institutions of higher learning. The Silver State Stars System will provide incentives for programs that rise to higher tiers or levels on the System. Teachers who earning degrees beyond the Associates Level enable Child Care facilities at which they work to receive additional set-aside funding. In summary, this State Plan holds potential to provide a solid foundation of learning for Nevada's children with the highest needs. This potential will be fully realized when the Kindergarten Entry Tests are determined, the workforce competency framework is firmly established, and the longitudinal data system is implemented.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # NV-5023

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 11:15 AM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, Available: 20, Score: 17. Includes detailed description of the core area, a list of four sub-questions (a-d), a 'Scoring Rubric Used: Quality' note, and a 'Comments on (A)(1)' section with a detailed paragraph about Nevada's early learning programs.

Virtual Pre-K that offers activities for parents to do at home with their children in both English and Spanish, a mobile classroom that offers training for parents and caregivers and a home-based, bilingual parent education program that uses family advocates. Nevada shows its commitment to the development of early childhood educators through its status as one of only two states chosen to participate in the federal Technical Assistance Center on Social and Emotional Intervention. In addition, the Nevada Registry has since 2004 provided the infrastructure necessary to implement the Nevada Early Care and Education Professional Career Ladder. Participation in the Nevada Registry is now required for licensing. Nevada's systems of core knowledge areas and core competencies have been aligned with national standards. Nevada has an existing longitudinal data system within the Nevada Department of Education and presents detailed plans to improve its early childhood data collection system.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	8

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(2)
Nevada does not sufficiently articulate a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda. Goals are not specified to the extent that they can be judged as ambitious yet achievable. Nevada states goals for improving program quality in the areas of statewide adoption of the TQRIS, alignment between professional development and Nevada's workforce knowledge and competency framework, strengthening the workforce through incentives and supports and in rating and monitoring programs. However, in each of these cases, the proposal does not sufficiently describe the current situation and set measurable targets for improvement. Similarly, Nevada states goals for improving outcomes for children with high needs by focusing on effective data practices, family engagement strategies and health promotion practices, but does not set measurable targets for improvement or provide sufficient detail to describe how they will accomplish these goals. Nevada also sets goals for closing the readiness gap between children with high needs and their peers by focusing work in the areas of a statewide kindergarten entry assessment and support for families. Again, the proposal does not clearly describe the current situation in these areas, nor does it state measurable targets for improvement. Nevada does not provide an overall summary of the state plan that clearly articulates how the plans proposed under each selection criterion constitute an effective reform agenda. General statements of goals for state level and local level reform are accompanied by a very vague timeline. Much more detail is needed to constitute a clear articulation of an effective reform agenda. Nevada provides a specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	2

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

- (a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--
 - (1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;
 - (2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;
 - (3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving

disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

Nevada provides a low quality response to the request for information about the proposed governance structure. The governance structure is minimally implemented. The proposal describes a complex organizational system in which "The Nevada Departments of Education and Health and Human Services will provide primary leadership and support for Nevada's Promise. The proposal also states that the reform agenda will be managed by the Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office, and that, "Nevada's Early Childhood Advisory Council will serve as the accountability agent for the reform agenda". The proposal also includes an organizational chart and descriptions of each organization's leadership roles. Neither of these is sufficiently detailed. Different, and potentially conflicting, aspects of leadership for the project seem to be shared among too many agencies to meet the goal of interagency coordination and streamlined decision making. No method is described for making policy or operational decisions. It is stated that disputes will be resolved by involving supervisors and ultimately relying on the decision of the governor. No mention is made of the methods that supervisors will use in attempting to resolve disputes. Nevada plans to solicit public input during the planning of the kindergarten entry assessment tool. Nevada also mentions, in an overly general statement, that it will involve all stakeholders in planning and implementing grant activities. Strong letters of support are provided from all stakeholders. The MOU provided in Appendix E states that all agencies will provide a scope of work agreement within 90 days of the grant's being funded. Scope of work documents are included for the two lead agencies. No other scope of work documents are included in the proposal. The MOU is signed only by two lead agencies. No information is provided to indicate how any of the participating state agencies will align and leverage state funds to support the plan.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	13

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
 - (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
 - (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and
- (c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(4)

Nevada clearly demonstrates how the state will use existing funds to support activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the Nevada's Promise plan. It is stated that "total investments in support of this project equal over \$31 million." Nevada provides budget tables and narratives that clearly describe how the state will use grant funding to achieve the outcomes of the plan. Particular strengths of the budget include training stipends to support the kindergarten entry assessment project and the workforce development project and significant levels of support provided to programs serving children with high needs to allow them to reach the top two tiers of Silver Stars ratings. Nevada indicates that it will use funds such as CCDF set aside to support those programs not in the top two tiers at the conclusion of the RTT-ELC grant. It also states that by 2015, evidence collected from the project will result in legislation to support additional general fund investment in early childhood. Finally, Nevada plans to secure local private and community foundation grantors. These ideas do not constitute an adequate plan for sustainability. Nevada adequately addresses all requirements of (A)(4)(b)(3) in the budget tables and narratives provided.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

- (a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--
 - (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
 - (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
 - (4) Family engagement strategies;
 - (5) Health promotion practices; and
 - (6) Effective data practices;
- (b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and
- (c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(1)

Nevada presents a medium quality, partially implemented plan to develop and adopt a Tiered Quality Rating System. Partial implementation is seen both in the existence of pilot programs for the Silver State Stars QRIS and in the proposed development of a plan for a statewide early learning data collection system. Nevada's Silver Stars QRIS, now in its third-year pilot, was developed based on all program standards stipulated in (B)(2)(a) (1-6). However, in many instances, the program standards cannot currently be described as functioning Tiered Program Standards. (B)(1)(a)(1): Nevada's Pre-K Standards are currently being aligned with the common core standards recently adopted by the Nevada Department of Education. (B)(1)(a)(6): All of the child care centers involved in the Silver State Stars Pilot project are assessed using the ITERS-R and the ECERS-R. No information is provided to indicate the number of classrooms, or children, participating in the pilot. Plans are outlined to include additional assessments in the final version of the Silver Stars QRIS. (B)(1)(c): Nevada Senate Bill 27 now requires (as of July 1, 2011) that all employees of a child care facility complete at least 15 hours of training. (B)(1)(b): Nevada currently has a seven-level Early Childhood Education Career Ladder (Appendix K) At the end of 2010, half-way

through the phase-in process of mandatory registration on the Career Ladder, "80% of licensed providers placed on Career Ladder levels three or below (none of these are attained by degree requirement in early childhood). While plans are outlined to increase levels of education through motivating programs to achieve higher levels of Silver Star Ratings, the current level of educational qualifications for Early Childhood Educators in Nevada is very low. (B)(1)(a)(4): It is stated that "Family engagement is promoted at all childcare programs in Nevada". No detail is provided to support this statement. The narrative details many plans to improve family engagement through adoption of the tiered Silver Stars model. (B)(1)(a)(5): Nevada currently has requirements for basic health promotion practices and professional development for all child care programs. Recently created Wellness Guidelines will be distributed to all programs by the end of 2011. Many health-related quality indicators are included in the now-piloting Silver Stars TQRIS model. (B)(1)(a)(6): No statewide early childhood data collection system is currently in place. RTT-ELC funds will be used to develop such a system. Nevada currently has a searchable database of state reports. Nevada's plan to develop a TQRIS system is not adequately explained. Information provided states that the percent of classroom meeting QRIS group size standards increases from 25% to 100% as centers increase from a rating of 2 to 5 stars. Level 5 on the now-piloting Silver Stars QRIS model wisely requires NAEYC accreditation. However, no information is provided to indicate what Silver Stars QRIS group size standards are for ratings of 1-4 stars. Thus, it cannot be determined if all Silver Stars Standards are commensurate with nationally recognized program size standards. Nevada requires licensing for a program to earn a rating of one star in the Silver Stars QRIS system.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	8

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(2)

Nevada presents a partially-implemented, medium quality plan to maximize program participation in the state's TQRIS system. Nevada's current TQRIS system is partially implemented, as a pilot program. A strength of Nevada's TQRIS incentive design is a system of bonuses based on star levels and a tiered reimbursement schedule. Another strength is Nevada's proposal to make participation in Nevada's Tiered Silver State Stars mandatory in order for programs to receive child care subsidies. Nevada states that it plans to increase the supply of high-quality childcare programs in areas with high concentrations of children with high needs by targeting providers. However, insufficient detail is provided to judge if this effort is likely to be successful. Also, it is not clear why Nevada proposes to change the family eligibility determination period from six months to one year. Targets set for participation of programs in the TQRIS do not seem sufficiently ambitious. For example, the 11 current state funded preschool programs have as a target 90% participation by the fourth year of implementation. An ambitious goal would ask for full participation of state funded preschools earlier in the implementation.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	8

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

Nevada presents a partially implemented, medium quality plan for a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Nevada currently uses the ITERS-R and the ECERS-R Environmental Rating Scales to assess program quality for the pilot of the Silver State Stars QRIS model. It plans to also use the CLASS as a monitoring tool; this part of the plan is not yet implemented. It is stated that all raters will be required to attain 85% inter-rater reliability on both instruments; no detailed plan for achieving this level of reliability is presented. It is stated that "Once a network of strong raters is created, Nevada's Silver State Stars will move toward exact reliability of raters." No details are provided to explain how this will be achieved. No mention is made of using, in the TQRIS, instruments other than those listed above. It is not clear if these instruments will provide all of the data needed for the Silver Stars TQRIS. Programs participating in TQRIS will be required to be reevaluated every two years, which is not a sufficiently frequent monitoring schedule. No mention is made of providing ongoing technical assistance on assessment instruments. Nevada does not provide implementation timelines or designate specific individuals who will be responsible for any aspects of the implementation of its plan to assure adequate rating and monitoring of early learning and development programs. Nevada presents a plan to use workshops, print material and websites to inform parents of quality ratings and licensing. All materials will be available in English and Spanish. No aspects of this plan are currently implemented. The rating of medium quality is given due to the many incompletely detailed plans.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	12

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

Nevada presents a partially implemented, medium quality plan for improving the quality of the programs participating in the TQRIS. Aspects of this plan designed to support Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve include training, coaching, technical assistance and financial incentives. These incentives are likely to improve program quality, since they are supported by nationally accepted research. During Nevada's initial Silver Stars pilot project, sites that received coaching demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in ERS scores. Incentives have been implemented only in the sites participating in the pilot program. The proposal leaves it up to successful contracting early childhood development programs to delineate how they will support working families who have children with high needs. Since programs are likely to have varying degrees of knowledge about family support strategies, this approach does not seem likely to be successful, unless it is accompanied by technical assistance. No plan for technical assistance was presented. It is stated that guidelines will be developed to assist the contractors. However, no guidelines accompany the proposal. Goals set for

increasing the percentages of programs in the top two tiers, and of children with high needs enrolled in these programs, to 20% by the fourth year of the grant, do not seem sufficiently ambitious. Nevada documents a large percentage of Children with High Needs among their population. It seems possible for Nevada to develop a system that more quickly begins to serve these children in high quality programs.

	Available	Score
(B)(6) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	3

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations—working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium—of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State’s Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children’s learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (B)(6)
Nevada presents a low quality plan to validate the effectiveness of the state’s TQRIS. Insufficient detail is provided and no criterion or research-based measures are presented. It is stated that, "An external evaluator will develop a plan using the early childhood data collection system developed as part of this proposal." No information is included concerning the experience of the evaluator or the parameters of the plan. Nevada plans to involve participating programs in a longitudinal study of the relationship between star ratings and measures of school readiness. Again, very little detail is presented about this plan. No information is provided concerning the research design. The low quality rating is given in response to Nevada’s lack of detail in responding to (B)(5) (a) and (b).

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	2

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State’s K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(1)

Nevada presents a partially implemented, low quality plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs. A copy of Nevada's Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines accompanies the application. While the narrative states that a copy of the Nevada Pre-K Standards is found in Appendix A, no document so titled accompanies the application. Instead, the Infant and Toddler Guidelines end with a very brief section titled " Three Years" that is divided into three headings: " Guideline", " For example, the preschooler may:" and " The supportive practitioner/caregiver can:". It is not clear if this section is intended to constitute the Pre-K Content Standards". While the state acknowledges the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards, no evidence is provided that the standards meet this criteria. No section of the Nevada Infant and Toddler Early Learning and Development Standards mentions the use of the child's first language. It is stated that the Pre-K Content Standards have been aligned to Nevada's K-12 Standards, but no evidence of this alignment is included. Nevada responds to the request for evidence in (C) (1) (c) by referring the reader to appendix M, an executive summary of The Nevada State Literacy Plan, Improving Literacy for a Strong Nevada, developed as a result of attendance at an October, 2010 conference, "Pre-K-grade 3: Foundation for Education Success Institute", held at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. However, the executive summary does not provide any evidence that Early Learning and Development Standards have been incorporated into the areas requested in (C) (1) (c). The application mentions that the work of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Nevada State Literacy Team will support the understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Programs. However, no details are provided as to the nature of the support.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	2

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(2)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, low quality plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems. A table is provided to summarize the wide range of assessment types in current use. The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council plans to conduct a needs assessment to determine which child assessment tools are currently being used and study the feasibility of linking child assessment tools and kindergarten assessment tools. Nevada plans to complete the design of the statewide data collection system by December of 2012. No detail is provided to outline the steps necessary to accomplish this plan. Nevada plans a 2012 School Readiness Summit to raise educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of the tools on which Nevada's Comprehensive Assessment System is being built and to begin training educators on specific assessment tools. No detail is provided as to who will provide the training on selected instruments, or what incentives will be provided to early childhood educators to attend trainings. Also, no proposal is made to include follow-up technical assistance or coaching to teachers as they begin to use the assessment tools. Nevada plans to use RTT-ELC funding to develop training approved by the Nevada Registry that links to college coursework. Again, no details are provided to explain how the linkage will be accomplished. (C)(2)(c):Nevada presents a plan to use RTT-ELC funding to gradually align and integrate assessment and share assessment results. The plan calls for infrastructure development during years one and two, piloting in year three and implementation during year four. No details concerning the infrastructure have as yet been decided upon. None of the above described initiatives to support the implementation of a Comprehensive Assessment System have as yet been begun. Inadequate detail is provided to assure the probable success of these initiatives.

	Available	Score
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(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.

15

6

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(3)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, medium quality plan to identify and address the health, behavioral and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. Nevada plans to implement a graded and star rated license to address health, behavioral and developmental needs. Nevada also plans to work with early childhood programs to incorporate Strengthening Families' Five Protective Factors into a progression of program standards. No evidence is provided that either of these efforts has been begun. No detail is provided as to how the goals will be accomplished. Nevada plans to increase the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported in meeting the health standards by distributing the recently created Wellness Guidelines to child care programs by the end of 2011. No training on the Wellness Guidelines is proposed. Currently, licensed child care providers are required to complete a minimum of two hours training each year on topics related to nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention. Two hours per year is not adequate training in these important areas. Nevada describes a number of innovative efforts to promote healthy eating habits, improve nutrition and expand physical exercise. Enough is Enough was pilot tested and 25,000 copies of a visual teaching tool for parents were printed. TV Moves Me was field tested with 40 mothers. Nurturing Partners works with 5200 teens at 11 schools. Follow My Lead piloted training on the Pre-K Education Standards for Physical Development. None of these preliminary efforts have been widely implemented. Nevada presents information about how it will leverage existing resources to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, referred for services and participate in ongoing health care. Nevada plans to use RTT-ELC funds to coordinate with Nevada's Medicaid Office to implement a stronger screening and referral system. RTT-ELC funds will also be used to provide training and technical assistance to physicians and care providers to encourage interperiodic screenings to monitor suspected problems. Neither of these programs is currently implemented. The Nevada State Health Division Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs currently contracts to implement evidence-based home visiting programs that promote nationally accepted health care practices. (C)(3)(d)(1)(2)(3). Targets set do not appear sufficiently ambitious. For example, the number of Children with High Needs who participate in ongoing health care is projected to decrease from a 98,909 baseline to 98,307 at the end of the 2012 calendar year. In addition, the proposal includes no information concerning plans to leverage existing resources to meet these needs.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	0

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and

neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(4)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, low quality plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children. No mention of a progression of culturally or linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement is made in Nevada's plan to promote school readiness. No specific plans are presented to support Nevada's Native American families, bilingual families, or families living in isolated rural areas. Nevada plans to include the Five Protective Factors and the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, which are nationally accepted models of excellence, into Nevada's early childhood program standards. No evidence is presented to indicate that any work has begun on this alignment of standards. Nevada plans to provide training on the aligned standards at the NevAEYC and the School Readiness Summit. Neither of these trainings have been implemented. No information is provided concerning who will deliver the trainings or any proposed system of technical assistance or coaching to accompany the trainings. Nevada plans to involve the Parent Involvement Resource Council in collaborating with RTT-ELC to promote family support and engagement. The Nevada State Maternal, Infant and Home Visiting Program has demonstrated support for the plan by allocating \$10,000 per year to further the objectives and outcomes of RTT-ELC. No details are provided concerning the type of collaboration to be developed.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	10
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--</p> <p>(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;</p> <p>(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and</p> <p>(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(1)

Nevada presents a partially implemented, medium quality plan to develop a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials. Nevada published its Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in 2007. Both of these documents were informed by nationally recognized standards. They will support the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that will be developed as part of Nevada's Promise RTT-ELC. No detail is provided concerning who will develop this document or when it will be developed. The curricula of all six Nevada State Higher Education institutions has been aligned to the Core Knowledge Areas. No plan is presented to align the curricula, degrees or certificates to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, once it has been developed.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	8
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--</p> <p>(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;</p> <p>(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional</p>		

improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (b)(2)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, medium quality plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes. Minimal implementation is seen in the fact that the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework has not yet been developed. Once the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework has been developed, Nevada plans to add additional levels to the current career ladder, offer informal training to help educators improve social emotional and instructional supports, as measured by the CLASS, align college credit with CLASS training, develop online training linked to credit and develop a P-3 teaching credential, and implement mentoring and coaching as part of the system. These ideas have the potential to improve the effectiveness of the early childhood educators. Nevada does not address the question of improving the retention of early childhood educators. Nevada plans to convene an Early Childhood Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Workgroup to study how best to support workforce development. Nevada hopes to build upon the work of TEACH Early Childhood Nevada in this effort. Nevada will use RTT-ELC to increase funding of TEACH and sets an ambitious goal of increasing participation from 259 in 2011 to 1,420 by 2015. Currently, all caregivers must participate in the Nevada Registry. All personnel working in licensed facilities must be registered on the Career Ladder by December 31, 2012. No goal is stated for increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. It is stated that during the first year of RTT-ELC implementation, all early childhood degree coursework will be aligned to the core competencies identified for each core knowledge area. Again, no plan is provided to achieve this goal. Goals set for increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework are not sufficiently ambitious. For example, the percentage increase for educators obtaining a Bachelor's degree is forecast to increase from the current 3.06% to 5% by 2015. In addition, it is not clear how the baseline was set, since the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework has not yet been developed.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	6

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(1)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, medium quality plan to implement a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades. Nevada plans to implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment by 2014-2015 school year. (E)(1)(a): Currently, its three largest school districts have developed kindergarten entry assessments that align with English Language Arts and Math Common Core Standards. (E)(1)(b): A pilot project will begin in fall, 2012 to ensure that selected assessment tools are valid, reliable and appropriate to the target population. A detailed description of the pilot project activities is provided. Nevada plans to use funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to study the feasibility of linking data from one Kindergarten Entry Assessment to the Nevada Department of Education's Longitudinal Data System. This project has not yet begun. Nevada does not stipulate a funding source for the development of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. (E)(1)(e).

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(2)

Nevada presents a minimally implemented, medium quality plan to enhance the Statewide Longitudinal Data System to improve instruction, practices, services and policies. The planning process for a statewide early childhood data collection and tracking system, to be linked with the existing K-12 longitudinal data system, will include focus groups in every county to "determine their current data collection efforts, software currently used, and their willingness to participate in the effort to collect data statewide." The focus groups have not yet begun to meet. Nevada does not specify any questions for which data will supply the answer to guide educators in decision making. No mention is made of technical support or coaching for educators to learn to collect and use data. Thus, it cannot be judged that the data system will generate information that is "timely, relevant, and accessible". Goals stated for the creation of the data system meet all the requirements of RTT-ELC specified in (E)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e). However, no implementation timeline is included to reach these goals and it is not clear whose responsibility the implementation will be.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	119

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (P)(2)

Nevada presents a partially implemented, low quality plan to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the state's licensing system and quality standards. Currently Washoe County requires licensing for any provider accepting fees for two or more children. The rest of Nevada, including Clark County, where the majority of the state's population resides, is regulated by state child care licensing and requires a license for any individual caring for five or more children. The proposal states that during the first year of Nevada's RTT-ELC, changing the state licensing requirements to match those of Washoe County will be explored. No detail is provided as to how this change will be accomplished. Thus, Nevada does not meet the criteria stated in Competitive Priority 2 (a) of having a plan to implement licensing for two or more children by June 30, 2015. Nevada does not present a plan to implement a TQRIS in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs will participate by June 30, 2015. Nevada provides incentives for participation, but does not detail a timeline of events and responsibilities through which participation will become mandatory.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

Table (A)(1) (12) indicates that Nevada has not met any of the indicators of current status in the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Nevada did not earn 70% of the total points in E1 and consequently does not qualify for any points under competitive Priority 3.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	No

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # NV-5023

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 11:03 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 17

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--

- (a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;
(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;
(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and
(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The applicant documented a history of State commitment to early learning and development programs and services for Children with High Needs as evidenced by the State's increased financial investment in ELDP since 2007, which includes Pre-K funding (from \$3,152,479 in 2007 to \$3,338,875 in 2011) and CCDF/TANF funding (from \$12,932,850 in 2007 to \$14,065,080 in 2011), and State contributions to IDEA Part C (from \$0 in 2007 to \$19,255,832 in 2011), and State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry (from \$12,445,832 in 2007 to \$14,550,316 in 2011). The applicant demonstrated a significant increase in the number of children with high needs participating in ELDP within the state since 2007. As stated by the applicant all ELDP have experienced an increase including: Title 1 (ESEA) programs have nearly doubled; State funded Pre-K programs and programs receiving CCDF funds have increased by nearly one-third; IDEA Part B & C programs and services have increased by 20%; and Head Start/Early Head Start programs have increased by 26%. Existing State early learning and development legislation includes Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997 (NERA), which the applicant stated, ushered in a new era of standards-based instruction, assessment, and accountability. As noted, the NERA was amended in 1999 to ensure teachers received professional development opportunities needed to sustain student mastery of content standards through the creating of Regional Professional Development Programs. Also noted, was that the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council was established by Executive Order in 2009, to develop a clear and credible plan for building an integrated system of early learning and development for children birth through 5. The current status of key areas for a high quality early learning and development system include Early Learning and Development Standards, which have been adopted and published (Nevada Infant and Toddler Learning Guidelines and Pre-K content Standards), and are in the process of being aligned with the newly adopted Common Core State Standard (the ELDS were originally aligned with K-12 standards). Comprehensive Assessment Systems, another key area, is in the development stage. It is noted that the State proposed to develop a system that will include screening measures, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality and adult-child interactions. The applicant documented numerous Health Promotion Practices, Family Engagement Strategies and current systems/support for the Development of Early Childhood Educators. It is

noted that Kindergarten Entry Assessments will be implemented statewide no later than the 2014-2015 program year. Also noted is that the State has a clear and coordinated early childhood data collection system plan. The applicant demonstrated the State's past commitment to early learning and development and presented current and planned related systems, enhancements and activities. However, many of the key building blocks for high quality early learning systems are currently being developed.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for the early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	15

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(2)

The applicant presented clearly outlined goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers. The rather ambitious goals included: 1) Expand statewide adoption of Nevada's Silver State Stars Tiered QRIS model based on common program standards; 2) Build alignment between formal (higher education) and informal (non-credit bearing) training for early childhood educators that is linked to Nevada's workforce knowledge and competency framework; 3) Strengthen incentives and supports for early childhood educators to attain early childhood degrees, earn a livable wage, and improve environments for and interactions with children and their families; 4) Rate and monitor programs using valid tools, trained monitors, and sufficient frequency. Make ratings readily available and easy to understand; 5) Implement effective data practices that link to a statewide Early Childhood Development Data System and support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments; 6) Implement a performance contracting system to ensure that most, if not all, publicly funded programs incorporate family engagement strategies based on the Five Protective Factors in the Strengthening Families approach; 7) Implement and expand evidence-based health promotion practices (including behavioral health, nutrition, and physical activity) that are based on well-documented health and safety standards; 8) Administer a common, statewide kindergarten entry assessment that generates data which educators are trained to use in order to improve program outcomes for children; 9) Help more families access high-quality child care at low or no cost and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs. The identified strategies and activities to reach each goal, including specific timelines, described by the applicant indicate a high probability of successful achievement. Though the applicant provided a summary of anticipated outcomes resulting from the implemented State Plan, an overall summary of the plan that clearly articulated how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criteria, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda, was not fully articulated. Specific rationale that justified the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), was included in the narrative.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	7

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

- (a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--
 - (1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;
 - (2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

The applicant presented a substantially implemented plan to establish strong participation and commitment to the State Plan/Reform Agenda by participating agencies and other ELD stakeholders that supports aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. The Nevada Departments of Education and Health and Human Services were identified as the primary leadership and support for the plan/agenda. It was noted that the plan/reform agenda would be guided collaboratively by both departments, and managed by the Head Start State collaboration and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Office (HSSCECCSO). The HSSCECCSO will also serve as the liaison to the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and other related entities. The State's ECAC, was identified, to serve as the accountability agent, and will serve as the external monitor of the plan. The ECAC will also serve as the governing body for policy making and prioritizing related activities. It was also noted that daily operations would be performed and managed by the primary leadership Departments' staff and that activities and decisions will align with goals and activities. A detailed dispute resolution process has been detailed by the applicant even though they do not anticipate having to use it. Staffing information, a detailed organizational chart, followed by a description of associated leadership responsibilities were also included. The applicant also demonstrated that the participating state departments, agencies and the community support, and are committed to the State Plan/Reform Agenda, through the signed MOU with included terms and conditions and scope of work descriptions, and through numerous signed letters of support from various stakeholders and organizations. While the applicant stated an intention to use this all-inclusive approach in planning and implementing the activities carried out under the project, and intends to make additional efforts to involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators, Children with High Needs and other key stakeholders no detailed plan was presented as to how or when this involvement would occur other than to say public input would be sought.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	15

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use

funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
 - (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
 - (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and
- (c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(4)

The applicant has clearly shown the State Plan is supported by funds from existing sources [State Advisory Council (ARRA), Child Care Development Fund, Nevada Early Intervention Services, Home Visiting, Head Start State Collaboration, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, NDE Striving Readers, and State Pre-K] which equals nearly 40% of the plan's total budget and demonstrates the intention and commitment to use existing state departments (Education, Health/Human Services) funding to support development and implementation of the State plan's seven projects. It is noted that the applicants' CCDF quality set aside has and will continue to support workforce development, Silver State Stars (TQRIS), and training and technical assistance. This level of state commitment during some of the worst budget shortages in the history of the state certainly indicates a clear intention to support the plan throughout the grant period, and when combined with the plan's capacity building activities, designed to result in lasting reforms to the early childhood comprehensive system, indicates a high probability of sustaining that reform. The applicant has effectively (by creating specific budgets supporting the 7 projects designed to achieve the outcomes) demonstrated efficient use (reassigning existing staff for example) of all available resources in addition to aforementioned existing funding support. The applicant has presented clear detailed budgets for the state agencies participating with clear support evident for the plans' projects and activities. It is notable also that some 70% of grant funding is targeted for local implementation of the State Plan. The applicant asserts that "...enough evidence collected from this project will result in a combination of legislation to support additional state general fund investment..." and the past demonstrated support indicates the likelihood of this continuing support. The applicants' goal of having 90% of federally funded ELDPs participating in the TQRIS by 2015 is quite ambitious (given a baseline of 0) yet reasonable to expect given the momentum for participation generated by building upon a two-year pilot study of its Tiered QRIS Model completed in June 2011. The Model was revised summer 2011 based on the evaluation of the initial pilot, and a third-year pilot of the revised model began on September 2011.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	7

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

- (a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--
- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
 - (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
 - (4) Family engagement strategies;
 - (5) Health promotion practices; and
 - (6) Effective data practices;
- (b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and
- (c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(1)

The applicant presented a partially implemented plan to develop and adopt a common, statewide TQRIS. The State had developed and implemented a two-year pilot study of the State's TQRIS model. The study was completed in June 2011 and the model was revised, and a pilot of the revised model began in Sept. 2011. The applicant did not include information regarding numbers of participants in the pilot studies. The State's TQRIS is a 5 tiered model using program standards that include Early Learning and Development (Pre-K) Standards developed by the State, and will be expanded to include a comprehensive assessment system including the Environmental Rating Scale assessment (currently in use), to measure environmental quality, and the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), which is a tool to measure the quality of teacher-child interactions. The TQRIS also includes quality indicators related to on-going child assessment using valid and reliable screening tools as well as formative assessment instruments. The TQRIS has clear and measurable standards that differentiate program quality levels based on the required criteria (such as ERS scores) and the number of documented quality indicators.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	10

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(2)

The applicant presented a partially implemented plan that demonstrated an effective practice of stakeholder involvement/collaboration to assist in reaching the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning Development Programs participate in the TQRIS. As noted, representatives from State-funded preschool programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, ELD programs funded under section 619 of IDEA part B and C, Title 1 of ESEA and the State's CCDF programs all participated in the development of the TQRIS, which clearly demonstrates their commitment to the system. The applicant noted that all of these entities have expressed support for full participation in the TQRIS. The applicant cited current and planned practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply in areas with high concentration of children with high needs. Current examples include child care programs at two stars or higher are required to serve children on the Child Care Subsidy Program. Planned practices include targeting communities with high levels of children with high needs, to identify contractors to provide high quality care. The targeted communities would be supported through outreach and technical assistance to develop four or five tiered ELDP. It is also noted that targeted centers would receive funding to support NAEYC accreditation. The applicant also set ambitious targets for TQRIS participation, including incremental increases resulting in 90% of all State-funded preschool programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, ELD programs funded under section 619 of IDEA Part B and C, Title 1 of ESEA programs, and 60% of programs receiving CCDF funds, participating in the TQRIS by the end of 2015. Though the State presented ambitious targets for participation and included current and planned related incentives and strategies to increase involvement, specific key goals, related activities, rationale, milestones and timelines for implementing each key activity were not specifically noted.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	9

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(6)

The applicant identified the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS, ITERS) as valid and reliable tools that are currently used and will continue to be used to assess program quality in the TQRIS. Also noted is that all ERS raters will be required to obtain a reliability level of 85% or higher. The CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) was also identified as a second valid and reliable assessment tool that would be used, and that inter-rater reliability would also be set at 85%. The frequency of reevaluation was identified as every two years. The monitoring/assessment tools identified are highly effective instruments/systems for evaluating program quality, and the frequency of reevaluation is both reasonable and achievable. Methods identified for providing TQRIS and licensing information to parents enrolled in ELDP included providing information on these topics at each child care program site, community roll out events, public services announcements and news releases. Workshops at programs serving children with high needs, was also an identified method. It was noted that all such programs would receive information to share with families in both English and Spanish. A TQRIS website and Child Care Resources and Referral website were also identified formats for providing easily accessible information. Though the applicant provided the important information referenced above, related to the partially implemented plan, specific key goals, related key activities to be undertaken, related rationale, milestones and timelines for implementing each key activity, were not specifically addressed.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	16

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (B)(4)

The applicant identified many effective practices that are currently implemented to provide support for ELDP to continuously improve. Staff training requirements for TQRIS program participants include a 3 hour orientation and 7 hour training for directors that covers documentation requirements for each level of TQRIS, and an overview of the Environmental Rating Scale. As noted, lead teachers are required to attend a 6 hour training on coaching, creating classroom action plans and understanding the ERS. Staff can also meet quality indicators by completing specific training requirements. A variety of training opportunities are provided including mini-conferences that target specific quality indicator training requirements, inclusion training, and trainings that are provided on request based on program needs and interest. Technical assistance and coaching are additional methods identified that are currently available to programs involved the TQRIS. Coaches guide and facilitate (through a collaborative process) the development of classroom improvement action plans that are data driven and include measurable outcomes, as applicable. Current incentives to increase quality include a reference to tiered reimbursement practices. As noted by the applicant, programs at the three star/tier level receive a 6% increase, four star level participants receive a 9% increase and five star level receive a 12% increase. Increases are related to one-time

initial grants, one-time application bonus, advancement bonus at renewal and tiered reimbursement (specific information about applicable program funding sources for tiered reimbursement was not included) The applicant provided general information regarding providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality ELDP that meet those needs. The State's Child Care Resource and Referral system was noted as helping families find programs that meet their special needs. Also referenced were Head Start/ Early Head Start and services they provide, as well as school district programs for children with disabilities. Though the applicant noted that when the State's comprehensive assessment system is established, competitive contracts will include requirements to describe how full-day, full-year care, and other support will be provided, no other planned supports/strategies were identified. Target goals and timelines for increasing the number of ELD Programs in the top two tiers were both reasonable and achievable.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	10

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (B)(5)

The applicant presented a plan for validating the effectiveness of the State's TQRIS. Specific steps include the selection or development of a statewide assessment tool that is aligned with ELD standards including all essential domains of school readiness. Information gathered through the assessment process would include child, family, education information, program level data, child level program participation and attendance data, which would be entered into a statewide early learning data base. As stated by the applicant an analysis of the data would focus on the correlation between kindergarten readiness, program participation and the differentiation of TQRIS levels. One of the key determinants of quality that the State will use to validate the TQRIS model and associated tier levels, using research-based measures, is the Environmental Rating Scale. Specific ERS scores are required at the top three tier levels. The applicant identified a process that will be utilized to determine the extent to which changes in quality rating are related to children's learning, development and school readiness. The State Dept. of Education will assist in a longitudinal approach to data collection and analysis for this purpose, and for ongoing data collection. Children, in participating centers, would be assessed over time to measure gains in school readiness, learning and development, which would be measured against improvements in the center's overall TQRIS rating. While the plan, presented by the applicant, provided a clear overview of general goals and general implementation strategies, specific information regarding key activities and timelines, overarching research questions, data analysis, and appropriate research design and measures, was limited.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (c)(1)

The applicant demonstrated that the State's recently revised Early Learning and Development Standards (Nevada Pre-K Standards) are developmentally appropriate and cover all essential domains of early learning and development, however only briefly addressed for children 4 and 5 years old, in the Early Learning Guidelines & Pre-Kindergarten Standards Alignment Crosswalk document. The applicant noted that Pre-K Standards alignment with the State's new Common Core Standards in literacy and math is currently under development, and supported through the Nevada State Literacy Plan and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant. The applicant included detailed description of the elements of this initiative which focuses on elements of effective literacy and language instruction for children birth to third grade. However there was no specific reference to math alignment in this description nor did any additional text documenting math alignment with the State's K-3 standards and no description of a specific plan to do so was provided. The applicant cited that ELDS incorporation throughout program standards, curricula and activities, comprehensive assessment systems, and state's workforce knowledge and competency framework, to be key components of the State's professional development initiatives. Previous narrative sections of the application had addressed specifics regarding these areas. It was noted that seven representatives attended a Pre-K-Grade 3; Foundation for Educational Success Institute at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, which focused on four important drivers of early learning foundations, that were closely linked to the State's ELDS. This resulted in the development of a mission and vision plan. A guidebook that accompanies the ELDS was developed for teachers, parents and other early childhood professionals as a means of support to promote understanding of the Pre-K Standards.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	11

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

- (a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;
- (b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;
- (c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and
- (d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(2)

The applicant presented a partially implemented plan that demonstrated commitment to its comprehensive assessment systems. The State recently adopted a state licensing regulation requirement that licensed early childhood educators assess an enrolled child's development within three months after enrollment and biannually thereafter. Environmental Rating Scales have been a foundational element of the TQRIS since its inception and the CLASS will be integrated into the TQRIS. The State Plan also identifies The Five Protective Factors survey that will be used by ELD providers which, it is noted, will be used to validate and build upon strengths already present in settings. The ASQ-SE will also be integrated into the system. A feasibility study will be conducted regarding the use of a common statewide formative assessment tool. It is noted that data collected from these instruments will be used to guide training and quality improvement efforts at the site level, community level and statewide. The State Plan identified a School Readiness Summit (to take place annually), as a forum to raise

understanding of comprehensive assessment tools and the statewide system of use, and orient participants on how to use the assessment tools to help them meet the needs of the children and families served. Subsequent trainings and targeted technical assistance is also planned. Information regarding the assessment system and the specific assessment tools used in the comprehensive assessment system will also be integrated into degree coursework. The State Plan also identifies a phase-in approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing results which is scheduled to begin the first year of the grant cycle. Children enrolled in licensed or publicly funded ELD programs, including home visiting programs, will be linked to the K-12 longitudinal data system. Infrastructure development for data collection is also addressed.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	11

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(3)

The applicant identified a partially implemented plan to build upon current structures for identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness. Specific activities noted in the plan include the implementation of a graded and star rated license that addresses health and safety standards; developmental, behavioral, sensory screening, referral, and follow-up, health promotion including healthy eating habits, improved nutrition and increased physical activity; oral health and social and emotional development and health literacy among parents and children. The issuance of graded licenses in recent years is said to have resulted in a tremendous jump in compliance rates. The plan would include both the licensing rating of (A to D) and TQRIS rating (1 to 5). Both ratings would appear on the same certificate which would be posted at each licensed facility. The State Plan also includes incorporating Strengthening Families: Five Protective Factors into a progression of program standards. Strategies to incorporate these standards include the use of the ASQ-3 as a tool to ensure health and behavioral screening. As noted in previous sections within the application, all licensed early childhood education programs must assess an enrolled child's development within three months after enrollment and biannually thereafter. Methods for promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition and expanding physical activity were included. The State has demonstrated a high level of commitment to this through a requirement that all licensed child care providers must complete a minimum of two hours of training each year on topics related to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention. Teachers working with infants/toddlers must complete SIDS training and all child care staff training requirements include CPR, signs and symptoms of illness/blood borne pathogens, and child abuse reporting laws. Child care programs participating in TQRIS are trained on health and safety practices such as personal care routines. Training enhancements are also planned for early education staff including community-wide training on the importance of using EPSTD. Through the RTT-ELC grant the State plans to implement a stronger screening and referral system which, as noted, which will involve close coordination with the State's Medicaid offices. Performance Measures for leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable goals and annual statewide targets for increasing numbers of children with high needs screened and referred for treatment, and who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care were also included. The applicant noted several initiatives and efforts currently underway that will be leveraged to meet its goals related to increasing the number of children with high needs who are screened, referred and enrolled in appropriate health care services as part of a developmentally appropriate schedule of well-child care. The applicant has presented specific strategies for meeting the criteria of this section with the exception that data on existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support in meeting the health standards was not found, even though the narrative of the application references a Table in section A for this specific data. And there was no plan described for how they will derive their data.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	9

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (C)(4)

The applicant presented a minimally implemented plan that outlines a number of strategies that focus on enhancing the capacity of families to support their children's education and development. Strategies include working with programs to promote the use of the national Five Protective Factors database, incorporating use of the Five Protective Factors as a preventive and strength-based approach, supporting training and technical assistance to providers in all sectors for implementing the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships across the continuum of community and school based services, for children prenatal to third grade. The Plan includes integrating the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships into the States early childhood program standards. Specific data on existing and projected numbers and percentages of Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program contractors/home visitors who are defined as highly trained to serve their families /children, was included, though related data for the remaining early childhood educators, or a plan for how they will derive this data, was not included. Data regarding the Nevada Registry training on Family/Community relationships was included that indicated that 80 trainings have been provided on this topic since January 2011. As part of the Plan all training opportunities for ECE providers to access training on the Five Protective Factors, as well as on strategies for engaging families will be inventoried and promoted. The upcoming School Readiness Summit will be a forum for additional related training as well as regularly scheduled statewide training events. Promoting family support and engagement statewide, through leveraging existing resources was evidenced by the MIECHV program commitment to the RTT-ELL by allocating \$10,000 per year to further the objectives and outcomes referenced. The applicant addresses local initiatives and resources that could be leveraged to promote family support and engagement. The applicant noted that during the first year of the grant cycle, partners would come together to adopt a statewide approach that incorporated the PTA Standards and Strengthening Families strategies for engaging families, including specific strategies for engage fathers, grandparents, and other care givers. Also noted was that during the first year of this grant cycle different family engagement strategies used throughout the state would be analyzed and the Dept. of Health and Humans Services and Dept of Education will adopt a plan with a comprehensive P-3 approach that incorporates PTA Standards and Strengthening Families strategies. Statewide training would be provided. The applicant has outlined important planned activities and strategies that are part of the state's plan for engaging and supporting families, and references current structures and practices including the statewide Parent Involvement Resources Council that works with PTAs across the state.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	15

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(1)

The applicant presented a partially implemented plan for developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials. The applicant published its Core Knowledge Areas (CKA) and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in 2007 and noted that: 1)...most of the competencies identified in this framework relate to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) regarding the direct care and education of young children and 2)... Knowledge of the Pre-K Standards is embedded within the Core Competencies. The strategy of using them as the basis for development of its statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is clearly stated and efficient in that the core competencies focus on the preferred outcomes for the adults who care for young children. The applicant has described a professional development planning tool, "Cultivating Your Growth as a Professional: Creating a Professional Development Plan to Guide Your Career in Early Care and Education" (available on The Nevada Registry's website) which, coupled with Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, is a guide designed to help increase knowledge, skills and expertise for working with children and their families. It is unknown how this specifically will relate to or support the development of a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework since the narrative of D-1 does not address this. However, the applicant has stated a goal ...to develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees, including a state credential aligned to Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies for early care and education professionals and teacher-child interactions as measured by the CLASS in section A-2. This is supported by the established Career Ladder and the planned entry level additions to it as documented in the D-2 narrative. It is commendable that all six higher education institutions in the state have aligned their coursework with the Core Knowledge Areas but not necessarily with the Core Competencies as stated by the applicant. Higher education faculty will be convened by the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office to develop consensus on alignment of those competencies with the currently aligned course numbers and core knowledge areas during the first half of 2012, and to develop a plan for completing this final level of alignment which clearly demonstrates both engagement and support for the applicants plan.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators In Improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	16

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (D)(2)

The applicant presented a partially implemented plan for supporting EC Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. As noted by the applicant, there are three primary components at the heart of the State's early childhood workforce development plan that are accountable for supporting educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities: Nevada's Career Ladder, The Nevada Registry, and T.E.A.C.H., which form a strong infrastructure of support for early childhood educators working with children with high needs so that child-related education, social and health outcomes are improved. The applicant has identified 5 specific strategies for expanding access to and aligning professional development opportunities with the planned Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. They are: 1) Additional levels will be added to the bottom three levels of the current career ladder to accommodate progress of EC Educators in informal settings such as family, friend and neighbor care, 2) Informal training will be developed to assist EC Educators to improve social emotional and instructional supports as measured by the CLASS, 3) Early Childhood degree faculty will assist with

the design of informal training linked to the CLASS to align it with college coursework for credit upon entry into degree programs, 4) Online training linked to credit will be developed and promoted. Existing online training programs will be explored to determine appropriateness of fit and expense, and 5) The NDE will work with institutions of higher education to assess and align course content and teacher effectiveness measures to create a potential statewide P-3 (prenatal to 3rd grade) teaching credential. These strategies form a strong basis for likely success in expanding access to very effective professional development supports. In order to improve recruitment and retention, and open up pathways that reward and support the best workers and raise the level of qualifications the applicant plans to convene an Early Childhood Workforce Best Practice and Innovation Workgroup to explore best practice or innovative models to support workforce development and build on the strengths, resources, and incentives that it already has in place. This is a reasonable approach to the applicants' stated challenges in attracting, retaining and developing child care professionals for its ELD workforce, including: staff shortages, particularly in remote and disadvantaged areas and Indigenous communities; relatively low pay and variable working conditions; a high proportion of staff without formal qualifications; and low status and standing. Participation in The Nevada Registry is now a requirement for all caregivers working in licensed child care settings and the Registry is in the process of phasing in mandatory registration on the Career Ladder. The Career Ladder provides an opportunity to collect data on education and training levels of the early childhood workforce, and incorporates the eight CKAs to help assess training needs. As noted previously all six higher education institutions in the state have aligned their coursework with the Core Knowledge Areas which will form the basis for the planned Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The applicant has set ambitious targets for increasing the number and percentage of EC Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The applicant has presented a well coordinated and comprehensive plan which demonstrates full integration of high quality key resources (listed above), and innovative strategies for supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills and abilities.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	16
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>The applicant demonstrated a plan to effectively implement a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), no later than the 2014-2015 school year. Currently all school districts in the State assess children at kindergarten entry, using a variety of assessment instruments. The goals of the proposed assessment system are noted to be, to inform State efforts to close the readiness gap and to inform instruction and services in the early grades of elementary school, utilizing data related to the essential domains of school readiness. The plan for adopting a common KEA includes a process that is based on a thorough review and evaluation of kindergarten assessments currently being used within the State, to assist in determining the most appropriate statewide tool to be implemented. All school districts will be invited to participate in a pilot project, in which a selected assessment tool/s will be implemented. Performance measures will be created that are related to readiness scores and other indicators. It is noted that during the pilot phase baseline numbers, annual targets and final goals for improving performance of children with high needs related to kindergarten entry measures, will be tracked and/or developed.</p>

Also noted is that incentives will be provided to programs and localities that meet or exceed established targets for improving school readiness among children with high needs. The associated data will be disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, and English learner status to assist programs and localities to better understand how children are progressing. Environmental quality and teacher-child interactions measures will provide additional information regarding whether programs are offering high-quality environments including the extent educators are engaging English language learners to enrich language development. The State has demonstrated a strong commitment to the development and implementation of the statewide KEA as evidenced by Dept. of Health and Human Services, MIECHV program and the Dept. of Education committing financial resources to assure the timely development and implementation of a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment and associated statewide data collection and reporting. Also noted were specific activities to support timely implementation including Kindergarten Readiness Processional Development offerings; The NevAEYC annual Early Childhood Conference; An early childhood track at NDE's Statewide Mega Conference; Striving Readers Summer Institute; and Established P-3 model sites within selected districts. The applicant also presents a plan to eventually link the State's Early Learning Data System with the Dept. of Education's longitudinal data system. To be determined through a feasibility study is whether the linkage will be achieved by directly integrating the two systems or by building data bridges to translate and or communicate data directly to the NDE K-12 longitudinal data system. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding will be used to study the feasibility of the options referenced. Funding for this project includes Dept. of Education funding to build the data collection system into its longitudinal data collection system. As noted by the applicant the planning process for the KEA will include developing consensus so that local school districts will fund their own use of the assessment tool after the RTT-ELC funding is no longer available. The applicant outlined a comprehensive partially implemented plan for building upon the Kindergarten Entry Assessment system currently implemented. Specific supporting strategies/activities are also included in the plan. The party or parties responsible for implanting each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity were not included.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	10

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (E)(2)

The applicant presented a plan to implement an integrated statewide early childhood data collection system. The development of the plan will be funded by the Early Childhood Advisory Council. The applicant identified the key goal of the Council to be to build a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood data collection and tracking system that is linked to the K-12 longitudinal data collection system, based on recommendations from the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC). Ten fundamentals of coordinated state early care and education data systems, identified by the ECDC, are included. These fundamentals, which include the data elements identified in this application, meet all required essential data elements. It is noted that the planning process will include focus groups in all counties to identify current data collection efforts, software currently being used and the willingness to participate in the effort to collect data statewide. A target date for the completion of the plan and anticipated first steps for implementation were included. Focus groups will also be used to gain public input and confirm policy questions to determine data elements and easy entry by participating agencies and programs. It is noted that existing systems will be studied and the final plan will define how uniform data collection can be achieved. During the planning process the applicant notes that common data structures, formats and definitions will be confirmed and interoperability will be addressed. The applicant states that the final system design will either be a cohesive data collection system, or ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data, and that the system will be designed for ease of use by ELD providers, will meet data system oversight requirements and will adhere to all applicable local, state and federal laws. The applicant presented strategies and a timeline to begin the development of a comprehensive plan to address this criterion. Currently the plan has not or minimally been implemented.

	Available	Score
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Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs In the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

- (a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and
- (b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (P)(2)
The applicant does not have a licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting since the majority of the state is governed by State Child Care Licensing regulations which only require any individual caring for five or more children for a fee to obtain a license; and there is no description of any unlicensed provider inspection program. It is noted that only one county has in place a requirement for any individual caring for two or more children for a fee to obtain a license and be regularly inspected. Furthermore, the applicant does not describe any specific plan to change the state regulation from five to two children being cared for other than to state the change "will be explored" during the first year of the grant. The applicant has presented an extensive plan described in section (b) of this proposal for implementing effective policies and practices that will promote the participation of all ELD Programs in the TQRIS. One of main objectives for promoting participation is to reduce the barriers and increase the incentives for participation which is anticipated to increase access to high quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs. The plan has effective strategies (examples being: stakeholder participation in development, incentives for participating, phasing-in of mandatory participation) which should solidly support implementation and participation.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

- (a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or
- (b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)
The applicant provided a clear description of the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry in the response to E-1 but did not earn the required 70% of points possible.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

Note: this response has been amended by the reviewer. Because the reviewer gave 80% of available points in criterion E(1), he/she has amended this response to "yes". Amended March 20, 2012.

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The applicant has presented a comprehensive plan for promoting school readiness for children with high needs, identifying kindergarten readiness and linking appropriate services to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The plan calls for a uniform assessment tool, an enhancement of their TQRIS, and provides for consistent data reporting and analysis. Critical strategic actions (such as involving all higher education institutions for alignment with the planned Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework or the extensive training opportunities being promoted) planned will ensure support and full implementation of the plan.