



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # WI-5037

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 12:38 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: Criteria, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 15. Includes detailed description and sub-points (a) through (d).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

a) The applicant provides evidence of financial investment from 2007 to the present in Early Learning and Development Programs that substantiates the investment based on the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period. The applicant is systematic in blending federal, state, and local dollars to support evidence based programming that aligns with improved outcomes for children. In its development of collaborative relationships it has built with Tribal partnerships, the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, and each of the state agencies, the applicant has maximize the use of dollars from discretionary, state allocated, and ARRA funds to advance the agenda of serving those children most in need. It has systematically increased the number of children with high needs enrolled in Early Learning Development by implementing existing legislation, polices and practices which impact children that would fall in the low income category. Based on its research the applicant has determined that at least 39% in each category from Infants through Kindergarten entry fall under the category of low income. The total number of children (307,333) illustrates the state's commitment to broker the achievement gap for those children with high needs that also represent children with the Highest Need with the allocated dollars to accomplish this with. Evidence: The applicant has based its definition of children with high need, on those children it states are most vulnerable, from low income families and low income children being defined as: infants and toddlers in foster care, Native American children, migrant children, children who are homeless, and children with disabilities. Evidence: i. The state's most notable investment in Early Learning and Development since 2007 has been: the doubling of funding for their (QRIS) YoungStar rating and improvement system from \$7 million to \$16 million for FY 2011-13; combination state discretionary dollars for four year old kindergarteners with the state's standard per-pupil K-12 state allocation and with public schools direct 4K match; ii. The doubling of universal access to state funded 4K programs resulted in an increase annual state investment of \$74,000,000 in 2007 to \$140,000,000 in 2011 (which does not include additional funds from federal or local resources); iii. \$7.5 million in start up grant monies from the State legislature to develop new 4K programs in priority areas using community approaches through partnerships with child care and Head Start programs; iv. in 2010 evidence suggests investment from the State Supplement of \$6.9 million for 1,219 additional slots and ARRA dollars to support six new Early Head Start programs (two of which were designated for the Native American community). v.

In 2010 \$800,000 was allocated from TANF for home visitation, and \$3.1 million awarded from the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant to reduce child abuse and improve birth outcomes. vi. ARRA funding of \$1,272,323 was designated to fund the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, chaired by the State Superintendent and the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. b) The applicant's progressive no waiting-list policy for eligible families readily increased the number of children served as well as the proportion of children with high needs in participating program. Furthermore, the no wait list policy supports and substantiates the allocation of resources based on the usage of these serves which is cross-substantiated by the raw numbers that the applicant can aggregate from each of the state agencies it has partnered with. Evidence: i. With the available partnerships from the various state, federal and census resources the applicant has used the data enrollment system(s) to determine utilization patterns of families as well as ages of children. Policy analysis of the PIR from Head Start support this activity. ii. In 2010 414 elementary school districts served 41,192 or 52% of four year olds which reflected a 48 % increase since 2007 iii. Since 2007, IDEA Part B services has grown 10 % iv. The 2011-2012 federal MIECHV grant allocation of \$4.7 million reflects a 45% increase from 1,100 children. c) The applicant's understanding of bipartisan cooperation will increase service delivery and is evidenced by its ability and willingness to maximize and align its standards to support the compendium of services it proposes. This is driven by the number and types of high needs of children identified in their proposal, and driven by the numbers in their state. Evidence: The applicant demonstrates a coordinated, integrated and sustainable system of services for and with Native communities, all the while articulating its understanding of the sovereignty and different policy and practice structures between governments and there relationships. - The state's Wisconsin Shares subsidy are progressive policies in that they provide an additional reimbursement for care of children with special needs. Subsidy co pays are waived for children in foster care. The state's constitution includes a commitment to free public education for four year olds. d) It is evident through different structures in the past 8 years (Early Childhood Comprehensive System, the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, the Ready to Lead Task Force, and both the Department of Public Instruction and Department of Children and Families) that the applicant has been deliberate in structuring formal alignments, using evidence based programs and structures throughout the state that would support regional and local level of coordinated services and across funding streams including the use of effective data practices to validate the services and outcomes of children and providers in their programs. Evidence: i. The Wisconsin Model Early learning Standards align with the work of the national Research Council, NAEYC and NIEER and address the National Education Goals Essential Development domains of school readiness. There is alignment of this structure with the Technical Colleges and university system that introduces this to pre-service teachers through curriculum and articulation. The standards are available in English, Spanish and Hmong online. ii. The state has three programs that form a complete assessment platform. Head Start (Early Learning Framework), the Current Quality Rating and Improvement System and the State licensing requirement - Professional Education Preparation Program's Content Guidelines. iii. The applicant embeds a health promotion strategy that includes many of its state-funded pre4school, Early Head Start and Head Start, IDEA Parts B and C, CCDF program, its QRIS, state licensing and home visiting, and it does require programs have a physical activity requirement, health screening and the provision to provide nutritious meals. iv. Wisconsin has a unique parent engagement strategy that provides fiscal incentives to school districts operating 4K programs. The applicant also piloted a Strengthening Families in Early Care and Education Initiative in 2003 that identifies and enhances parents' capabilities in five protective factors. Additionally, the state has implemented the SEARCH Institutes 40 Developmental Assets for Early Childhood and Families and Schools Together which provide family strengthening practices and connections between schools and communities. v. the applicant has an established Professional Development Initiative that requires a knowledgeable workforce and competency framework that is based on a continuum of standards, such as; competencies, qualifications career progressions, professional development and incentives. The state's institutions of higher learning also align their course program with this framework. Additionally, the state has an early childhood educator registration and credential tracking office which offers 17 career levels based on credentials, training and professional development, course work credits and degree attainment. This investment of dollars into this structure accounts for nearly 7,000 providers participating in training opportunities and utilizing the scholarships offered. This has increased the credential acquisition. vi. Wisconsin does not require a Kindergarten assessment at entry and the applicant states that schools and districts are free to administer local screening and assessment to inform instruction at kindergarten entry. Currently two of the largest school districts use two different tools, and it is the intent that the Governor's Read to Lead Task Force help to standardize this practice. vii. The applicant has provided evidence that supports the 2009 Wisconsin Statutes Act 59 stipulating the required establishment and maintenance of an interoperable P20 Longitudinal Data System that integrates K-12 and higher education data. The applicant also states that the Department of Children and Families recently upgraded its childhood data system allowing for linkages among Child Care Licensing, QRIS, Registry, Child Care Provider Information and Income Maintenance. Though these elements are in place, the evaluation outcome of this system recommended an improved system. The applicant has established evidence that supports its comprehensive approach in some areas of an early learning and development reform agenda and yet it also is transparent and offers information that allows the reader to understand areas that are yet not fully developed. It has a strong professional development registry and credentials structure that aligns with current post secondary institutions, a robust family engagement strategy, an adequate health promotion structure, a State Comprehensive Assessment System that is still developing uniformity on all of its elements across programs, a quasi State Kindergarten Entry Assessment structure and a data systems that is not currently complete in its sophistication to support the compilation of data from all systems the aggregation of data. In summary, the applicant provides evidence that demonstrates its past commitment to an investment in high quality early learning development programs.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its 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)

a) The applicant has established evidence that supports its comprehensive approach in some areas of an early learning and development reform agenda and yet it also is transparent and offers information that allows the reader to understand areas that are yet not fully developed that require serious focus. It has a strong professional development registry and credentials structure that aligns with current post-secondary institutions. The applicant states it has to improve outcomes for children with high needs by improving its ability to identify children, ensure high quality programs are available where children live and outreach to families to select high quality programs. In its reform agenda the applicant is clear that its priority to increase student achievement will require an overhaul of its entire system as it currently stands. Ambitious yes, achievable not sure all of the pieces are in place or will be in place by the end of the RTT-ELC comes to a completion. The applicant has three monumental obstacles. One is the lack of a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment system, an incomplete evaluation structure and strategy and the other is a committed philanthropic commitment. a. The applicant proposes to improve program quality by instituting a comprehensiveness QRIS, Young Star system whose goals include increasing Wisconsin Shares participation from 90 % to 100; increase the number of Early Head Start and Head Start programs, particularly migrant and tribal to 100% participation; building on current inclusion of community based prekindergarten programs, and increase the participation of regulated child care programs no otherwise required to participate. The need for this structure to be in place requires policy discussions that leading to agreements, which include the financial allocations, training structures, and tracking mechanisms to augment a system that currently has not determine it is a priority. The second concern is the lack of a public/private partnership strategy. This is not evident at the moment and directly relates to the sustainability of services and systems after the end of the contract period. The applicant does however claim that the three State Partnership agencies are committed to allocating base level funding to the on-going work in each of the project areas. b) The applicant has provided information to support that it is prepared and poised to engage in a reform agenda that articulates its key components to actualize this plan. It is cognizant of increasing the ability of program and services, participation and efficiencies that streamline services and foster a level of sustainability to reduce the school readiness gaps. There is however, a concern on the shortcoming of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment discussion (yet) and philanthropic commitment and or sophistication of the applicant at this point to ensure these two monumental structural pieces are defined and in place with the precise players who can advance the issue to effectuate a change, including the political and financial resources to support it. Evidence: i. To support the attainment of an effective reform agenda the applicant breaks down the key components of its tasks to be management and administration; improving its state Quality Rating System; expand and build the capacity to impact the sectors for an informed and qualified structure to support the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards that includes the alignment with the Common Core State Standards, training, address and incorporate the linguistic and cultural strategies to work with children and engage stakeholders. ii. Based on the evidence provided by the applicant the Family Engagement strategy is well developed but will look at better alignment standards and removing any barriers to inclusive participation, including that of fathers. iii. Its early learning workforce retention, acceleration of degrees and cross articulation statement constitutes an effective approach; acknowledges an understanding of the degree of inter-agency operability as it pertains to shared data; ensures it works with licensed and state regulated programs to have access by increasing their quality capacity to access Wisconsin Shares (subsidy dollars) and "seed" a public private partnership. c) The applicant makes a reasonable argument as to the rational of its decision in selecting the particular Focused Investment Areas. (C-1,2; D-1,2; and E 1,2). It presents a transparent response of both its strengths and weakness along with evaluation of its current components as outlined in the Tables (A)(1) 6-13 and the recommendations per the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. It recognizes what it has in place and can build on successfully and where the hard lifting will be to support an achievable goals. Evidence: i. The applicant is aware that it must address and correct the discrepancies in providing family engagement strategies that are inclusive, evidence based, and culturally and linguistically competent and consistent throughout its service areas. ii. As a result of the recent implementation of the state YoungStar system it has become evident that demand for high quality training has both increased and is needed. And, very clearly stated, the applicant wants to ensure that increasing the education of its workforce includes ensuring that racially and ethnically diverse providers are represented in this strategy. iii Because of the applicant's awareness of the diffused data collection efforts, its priority is to begin the implementation of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment to ascertain how large the school readiness gaps are for children with high needs upon kindergarten entry. Additionally, the applicant's 3rd edition of its standards provides the path for alignment with the Common Core State Standards for four and five year olds. Overall the applicant demonstrates its comprehension of what constitutes and early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable and builds on its progress to date

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)

A) The applicant demonstrates it has established a strong commitment and participation from the Participating State Agencies and other stakeholders as referenced in its application. Based on the evidence it has provided there appears to be a joint or shared governance structure with an administrator that reports to the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families, who is one of the co-chairs that lead the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council. The applicant demonstrates it has thought through the administrative aspect, policy making and quality assurance across state agencies. The plan is structured within the current governmental departments which would prove to support a more integrated and responsive approach to the current system in place and which would also account for an easier redistribution of funds to support the grant. It is evident within the structure that it is difficult to have a hierarchical approach to leadership amongst state agencies who have a similar autonomous role from one another, but the applicant has stipulated that the DCF will be accountable for the outcomes identified in their reform agenda. While this is clear, the act of taking any enforcement measure may prove to be lengthy as well as costly to the program. An interesting element within its structure is the development of a 501 © 3 organization that would act as the agent to see" (\$75,000 proposed from RTT-ELC dollars) the development of a public private partnership that would leverage public investment with private resources. This funding will be structured as a challenge grant for a dollar for dollar match. The applicant does not state why it would consider this structure nor does it currently name a contender to take this role. The establishment of yet another non-existing entity to engage in the significant role of fund raiser for sustainability is of concern since there appears to be no mention of any other statewide or philanthropic commitment to champion this portion of the

proposal. a) 1 The applicant provides a structure of accountability of the three major entities involved in managing the deliverable, as delineated in the MOUs, as well as an inter-agency governing structure of shared governance and the role of an coordinator that will act as the facilitator to meet the objectives outlined in the proposal. 2) The applicant provides the reader with the breakdown of the roles of the State Partnership Agencies as one of shared governance, autonomous entities working on the agreement of deliverable, the staffing role and function within the shared governance and the final oversight from the Governor's office. It states that a contact person from each State Partnership Agency will be designated for the project. 3) Because the structure of the applicant's RTT-ELC partners is one of State agency's, the method of decision making will fall under three sub areas: i. The lead agency accountability to ensure all goals are met, using appropriate enforcement actions available under the state or federal law; ii. Shared governance structure between DCF and DPI; iii. Independent decision within each of the state departments based on the agreements of the MOU. 4) The applicant provides minimal information that supports a plan with representatives outside of its existing structure. It makes reference to ensuring reports that are made to the Early Childhood Advisory Council but does not demonstrate an articulate process on how or when this is to occur. b) (1) The applicant provides MOUs with deliverable that support agreement of the specific funds which are commitment to increase dollars for child care services as well as dedicated staff to leverage the programs administration by each State Partnership Agency. Budgets also reflect the actual numbers by years of the dedicated funds to ensure the collaboration. (2 and 3) The applicant has included all of the requirements under this stipulation of signatures, scope of work, and MOUs to support the maximum contributions for the launching and duration of the proposed grant by dollars amounts and programs. c) There is evidence to suggest that the applicant has done due diligence to include a structure for stakeholders to be included in the launch of the state plan. The applicant provides a list of the Wisconsin Governors State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care which upon looking at the names and affiliations appears to have a representative from a large group of stakeholders who are community based and affiliated with established organizations. 1) The applicant has secured letters of support from the local Tribal Council, the Alliance for Infant Mental Health, Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition that is made up of over 13 different groups representing Head Start, Parents, disability rights, families, Infant and Mental Health and others. 2) The application includes persuasive letters of support from various entities including the governor's office, the Wisconsin Governors State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the chairs of the legislature, the Inter-agency Coordinating Council, the School Readiness Philanthropy Group, the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council and the Zilber Family Foundation. In reviewing the response of the applicant to this section it would appear that they have made a pledge to securing and establishing the commitment of the broader early learning community to ensure they have an understanding of the proposed plan. Having said that, it is evident in the design of the proposal most of the work will fall in the lap of the State Partnership agencies as it is currently described. The applicant demonstrates alignment and coordination of its early learning and development structures across the state and within the State Partnering Agencies.

	Available	Score
(A){4} Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	12

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) The applicant provides information to demonstrate the complexity of alignments from different departments to support the endeavor of a state early education plan. Chart (Table A-4) lists five different funding streams with which to guide the reader of what existing funds from key funding strategies such as Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Title V, or private funding sources will be included in the dedicated resources to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan. The applicant did provide information to support a complete picture of how the historical data and funding were going to continue based on the new configuration of infused dollars it provides information on the proposed number of children it will serve with the specific state dollars. Three state agencies have approved use of base funding resources for the implementation phase of this grant. After grant implementation is complete, all three State Partnership Agencies will continue to allocate base level of funding for the implementation phase of the grant at 70% and will continue to allocate base funding for these position after RTT-ELC dollars have been exhausted. b)1 The applicant provides information to support the expenditures and cost associated with the implementation of this plan by outline the specific allocations from each of the three government agencies contribution and allocating year by year the costs associated with the program implementation. 2) The applicant provides a breakdown of each of the State Partnership Agencies state share across each of the line items. This breakdown allows the reader to understand what components each of the agencies are covering and which are aligned with the objectives and the number of children to be served. 3) The applicant provides narrative budgetary amounts to support the details of the budgeted amounts for personnel costs associated with State Partnership Agencies as well as detail service allocations; it provides information to support contractual obligations for service delivery, convening, incubating, and the local implementation throughout the grant period. c) The applicant provides a broad response to the sustainability requirement for each of the major sections within this application, making it difficult to determine its realistic and viable options as creditable. It states that many of the functions will continue with baseline funding and proposed cost are directed to either one-time allocations and or specific investment made over the four year grant period but that would later be subsumed under the baseline funding of the current State Partnership investment, or re-purposing funding for key positions or activities. The applicant estimates that \$1-2 million will be needed to sustain the kindergarten standards. The applicant did reference support from the public/private partnership investment to promote grassroots outreach and the media campaign but in looking at the letters of support and the statement of involvement that the applicant lists in the application one can only infer that this might be a possibility, since no concrete dedicated action is listed on any of the letters from the philanthropic community to support this need. Overall the applicant demonstrates its commitment to use existing funds and creating budgets and budget allocations that will support the implementation and sustainability of the work outlined in this application. The Longitudinal Data System sustainability plan has not been developed. While there is an estimated \$3 million dollar annual cost to maintain it, the applicant was not able to elaborate further on the sustainability since there effort is still at the identification level for determining how to sustain it.

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 applicant provides a rational and evidence of the development and adoption of its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, recently in place as of 2010. The applicant's information suggest an organization structured that links the subsidy and standards framework. In describing the structure or organization of their system the providers (or center/fcc directors) are all aware and informed of what they are being rated on and what the value of the outcomes are. This structure offers a forum of deliberate decision making on behalf of the center directors to determine what their next goals are and what elements of assistant they might access from the contracted agency, (the Consortium) to move towards the next goal. The structure of having a separate entity to facilitate the rating, monitor, training and offer technical assistance activities to the sites is useful because it supports a

non-biased evaluation with an objective and professional opinion. With 90% current uptake of providers participating in Wisconsin Shares they only have to reach an additional 10% growth to meet 100% providers participation. This will streamline quality of program services because of the improvement indicators required of all subsidy providers. Evidence: A 1 The early learning standards in place are the Wisconsin's Model Early Learning Standards which cover all key domains and align with the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. 2. The applicant provides a listing of all the types of programs or systems, including migrant and tribal Head start located in the state where a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required. The State licensing, the QRIS and the Head Start all fall within this category. This is important as the applicant currently has 90% participation of centers who are categorized as QRIS eligible to be implementing a comprehensive assessment system. 3. The applicant has in place three structures to support the attainment and retention of qualified providers. The Registry Career Ladder which aligns with the Wisconsin T.E.A.C.H pays for a large share of credit based education and Wisconsin R.E.W.A.R.D is a stipend based strategy to provide stipends as retention bonuses to programs and teachers. However, due to the demand of REWARDS based on the increase demand of credit based education there appears to be a waiting list through mid 2013. This situation presents a problem and contributes to the pitfalls of dissatisfaction and out of compliance issues within the structure the applicant have set up. 4. The applicant has presented an established commitment to family engagement strategies throughout the proposal. They also have allocated funds to secure both a Family Engagement Project Director and a Family Engagement Performance Planner to provide statewide leadership of the strategy through re-purposing funding from the DCF. This position will add additional value to the earn points for programs as they outreach and involve parent. 5. The applicant has provided an inter-connectedness of the health Promotion practices which include the Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (pyramid model modules); incorporating Strengthening Families materials in staff preparation, participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, ensuring 60 minutes of daily physical activity and demonstrating the capacity to care for children with special health or developmental delays. And, have in place a model to support Project LAUNCH – meeting needs for unmet health needs of children. 6. The applicant provides information to support current data practices of a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, which consists of Kid Stat which collects and monitors Young Star data related to program demographic; Young Star data on training a technical assistance provided, the use of TEACH and REWARD, and quality improvement plans and micro grants received. As stated throughout this proposal, the applicant is transparent to share that most data is collected within programs located in a number of different state departments and as of yet unable to provide aggregated, non-duplicative, new and useful information. b) The applicant has provided evidence to support that its Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards provide a common language and guidance for families, professionals, and policy makers. They standards are evidence based and align with the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, hold true to the necessary developmental domains required of the program standards, performance standards and developmental continuum. c). The applicant has met the requirement of its State licensing system by linking to the Early Learning and Development Programs. This is evident by the role it plays within the Young Star program. Its regulatory, compliance and licensing standards are at the foundation of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and programs can only be eligible to received Wisconsin Shares subsidies if they are in good standings. Overall the applicant demonstrates a high quality level of developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	11

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)

a) The applicant submits evidence that supports publicly funded early learning and development programs participate with the exception of the IDEA part B and part C programs that are explained below. The applicant is transparent in recognizing the alignment work it must focus on in order to bring and align federal, state and local resources, policies, protocols and standards that will support a unified structure and system. There is some significant work yet ahead for the applicant on reaching this goal. The strategy that the applicant uses to gain program participation, is the link to the Young Star subsidies access which includes the training and technical assistance as well as the access to the TEACH and REWARD incentive and bonus programs. With the outreach and marketing campaign targeted to parents it is evident that the providers want to stay competitive in securing a regular flow of consumers (children and their families) by promoting the high quality in their environments, and thus they must participate in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System out of either need to stay opened or intentionally of bringing quality up to improve outcomes for children. Currently, the applicant has an active participation of 90% of publicly funded programs who access Wisconsin Share subsidies, and their goal is to have 100% by 2012. Pg 121-123 1) State funded preschools operate within school districts have a current participation rate of 25%, and only 5 are currently participating in the TQRIS. Based on the information provided, this service is in partnership with either a child care or Head Start Program. If it is a child care program and children are enrolled receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies the program is required to participate in Young Star. If the program is Head Start and the majority of the day's programming may elect to participate through an alternative route (usually meeting the monitoring review of no deficiencies). Based on the projections of the target for the end of the program, the applicant proposes that 60% of the state funded preschool offered by school districts will be participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System. 2. Head Start programs, which include migrant and tribal programs are currently participating at a rate of 10% and expect to have full participation of 100% by 2015. 3/4. The Early Learning and Development Programs funded under IDEA part B and part C are not currently part of this structure. IDEA Part B and Title I services are offered through the public pre-kindergarten, and while the applicant claims the standards are in close alignment with the Young Star standards, their child-staff ratios vary by school district. 5. Currently the State's CCDF programs are at a 90% participation rate and 100% is expected by 2012. b) The applicant states that its eligibility strategy has always worked since they have no wait list as long as family income is at or below the 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold or does not rise above 200 %. Additionally, co-pay rates are based on family income and household size not the cost of care. What the applicant fails to state is if they have accounted for all eligible families who might otherwise be eligible? This question is necessary to determine since many informal providers are used in target communities of ELL, migrants and other disenfranchised groups. In its response to ensure incentives to high quality providers participate in the subsidy program it has linked tiered reimbursement, micro-grants, one time star increase bonuses and the TEACH and REWARD access together. Additional reimbursement will be offered to providers that offer services for children with special need; and all Foster Care families are exempted from co-pays in the Wisconsin Shares program. Responding to language needs identified in this grant was not mentioned as a link to support effective policies and practices. c) The goals outlined in the application are ambitious and yet achievable for the numbers and percentages of participating programs in the Tiered QRIS by designated types of programs. There is evidence to support a link with the major federal programs and the understanding of what it will take in order to secure participation. Additionally, as the major state governmental systems which coordinate the regulatory obligations and over site are part of the State Partnership Agencies, it will be a matter of time (hopefully within the project timeline) that this agreement and alignment occurs. Overall the applicant demonstrates how it has maximized and capitalized promoting participation in the state Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	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 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 applicant has provided evidence that it has and supports a rating and monitoring structure for its Early learning and Development Programs which meets and is in compliance with the regulatory Wisconsin licensing system. The rating system is a structure that currently is used nationwide by a majority of states and programs to ensure the current level rates of quality. In so doing, the applicant ensures that it is using an evidence based model that can inform and produce data to produce informed and thoughtful intervention in the case of improvements and accountability impacting child outcomes. a) The program, Young Star currently works with licensed and certified providers. The relationship within the regulatory system and Young Star offers access and incentives to other program rewards such as training and technical assistance, subsidy access, teacher stipends and bonus rewards. Additionally, the network of providers are regularly rated by raters who have valid and reliable inter-rater reliability within the ECERS, FCCRS, ITERS and SACRS to ensure that environment are meeting the standards set forth by the program and this is done yearly. It ensures unbiased reports as raters. (Technical

Consultants and Rating Observers) each have their distinct function and are prohibited from performing both functions to a program. However, this applicant does not speak to an instrument that evaluates the child-adult interaction, such as the current instrument, CLASS or curriculum which would define a more comprehensive lens.

b) The applicant currently has used media, social marketing forums and word of mouth to outreach to parents on the quality of specific child care settings. It has used the established structures of its current partners, the Consortium and child care resource and referral and the Wisconsin Inter-tribal Child Care Council and different organizations that represent Hmong child care providers to get this information out to parents. There is a media campaign, "I Am Young Star" launch last years that provides information on child care quality and states that culturally relevant, customized materials are available in multiple language and targeted to these populations. What the applicant does not state is what alternative strategies were used to outreach or how these materials are being disseminated and use. The utility of the materials may not have yet been evaluated to determine their effectiveness. There is no evidence to suggest parent feedback on the use of its website to determine what structural barriers may exist. The applicant has stated that in order to reduce structural barriers to children enrolling in programs they need to identify the barriers families face in making these choices. One effort is to simplify the enrollment process and tap into the the Nutrition Assistance program to provide information. A new initiative by the Children's Trust Fund, who historically supported the development of the office of DCF, is working on piloting an evidence based strategy that builds on resilient communities. While this is necessary and forward in thinking, the applicant does not elaborate how they will tie this in to their strategy or provide a timeline associated with it. Overall the applicant demonstrates it has developed and implemented a rating and monitoring early learning and development system.

	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 is aware that current and future funding is and will be tied to structures and systems that use an evidence based approach to quality rating and outcomes for children in order to address the achievement gap currently understood. The applicant has worked to align a high quality approach by establishing a State Partnership Agency MOU and partnering agencies to support the governmental state approach to dollars, resources, policy, governance and programmatic outcomes. To that end, the applicant's system for improving the quality is also targeting the provider community and consumer to ensure that it meets its obligation to support a high participation rate of providers, families and that yields improved results for children who have traditionally fallen behind in the achievement gap results. a) The applicant developed and implemented policies and practices to support continuously improved efforts in the early education field. It has initiated local investments of \$1.5 million in start up training and technical assistance to prepare its workforce for Young Star. Additionally, it provides access online for informational materials, access to financial resource to improve programs and overall program incentives. Its work and efforts of working with higher education institutions and technical colleges is critical to ensure clear and acceptable articulation agreements that will ensure that teachers course credits are viable at another institution. The tiered reimbursement rate is used as an incentive program to improve and maintain quality and is scheduled to take effect in June 2012. It plans to structure an incentives package to help improve program quality by increasing the TEACH scholarships to an additional 1,200 providers, underwrite the cost of registry or re-certification by 500 providers annually, offer on-time bonuses to programs that move up the Star rating. The infrastructure for this effort is in place however, because of the huge demand of the teacher scholarships and bonus rewards, they have had to institute a wait-list through mid 2013 since the start up funds have been exhausted. b) The applicant stipulates its supports to help working families who have children with high needs by extending eligibility for subsidies for children with special needs; waving co-pays for children in foster care; incentivizing programs who participate in the CACFP; offering free transportation to children with special needs to and from preschool. While the applicant provides information on more traditional services to parents, it does not mention any relationships with employer sponsor child care efforts, or non-traditional hour supports, or hub child care locations that would most likely be beneficial to low income working parents and could potentially also be rated as high quality environments. c) The applicant's targets are very ambitious and achievable, with the infusion of dollars to support the infrastructure. It is evident that they have secured consultation from national experts to help them think through the design and strategy to support an improved workforce that is linked to

better quality programs. This clarity will assist the applicant determine where interventions will need to happen, where replicable strategies will need to be considered and where losses will need to be eliminated. 1) The state projects that 30 percent of enrolled children will move to higher star programs with 40 percent in programs at star level four or five by the end of the grant period. It plans to offer an incentives package to providers who improve program quality: i. by increasing the TEACH scholarships to an additional 1,200 providers, ii. underwrite the cost of registry or re-certification by 500 providers annually, and iii. offer one-time bonuses to programs that move up the Star tables. Currently the applicant has about 250 providers that fall within the classification of a 3-5 star rating and their goal is to have 2,750 by the end of the project period. Greatest growth will be reflected in the 3 Star category, and currently in the pipeline they have 2,408 waiting for an inter-rated evaluation (most of these programs opted out of being rated a 2 level star linking this rationale to the bonus offered) to increase their programs to move up more quickly, this one time. How they will accomplish feat is of concern because it is unclear what the caseload for raters will be able to accomplish this monumental task. It is the applicant's belief that most programs will fall within the 2-3 star rating. After this first year, Star rating 2 classification will no longer be an option and programs will have to work to stay at a 3 and above or be slated for removal of participating in Young Star. 2) The applicant has set what appear to be low numbers for the target population of children in high need communities to access programs of higher quality. There appear no numbers or missing information to support any inference for children in the IDEA B,C and Title I of ESEA programs. For Head Start the targets are 100%, for state funded preschool they will have 50% projections by the end of the grant period and for CCDF and child care licensing environments the projections are 40%. Overall the applicant demonstrates it has developed a plan to promote access to high quality early learning and development programs for children with high needs.

	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)(5)

The applicant has taken the time to think through the reason for its evaluation to determine internal and external capacity to take it on. It is also evident from its thinking the applicant wants to insure its investment of whether higher quality programs are actually linked with better child outcomes to determine the best approach to validate what will actually be prime indicators that will show gains in school readiness across children in higher and lower rated child care programs. a) The DCF, which is where the applicant sits as the coordinator to this proposal, has been directed to conduct a child outcome evaluation of YoungStar to determine whether the investment in higher quality programs are linked with better child outcomes. However, this has not been done and is noted by the applicant that requires an outside research expert and an independent study. The applicant also designed YoungStar to improve the quality of children's early care and education settings and articulated three process to ensuring that the Young Star strategy is poised to prepare children to enter formal school structures. i. that the rating system distinguishes among levels of program quality that matter for children's school readiness; ii. That low-rated programs will use technical support and other resources to improve their program quality; and iii. That parent's will use the rating information to select high or higher quality programs for their children. While the applicant will consult other evaluators and evaluation tools they have not yet select the tools, and this does impact the type of data that they will collect. b) The applicant has contracted with a national expert to conduct an independent child outcome evaluation of the Young Star program. It will compare gains in school readiness across children in higher and lower rated child care programs. The rating system will be validated if there is a statically significant relationship between high quality programs and school readiness gains. The applicant has deliberately determined its need for comparison information and has decided it will randomly select 160 providers in select regions. This is interest in validating the rating systems among high need and vulnerable communities. The applicant also wants to align the school readiness assessment and other survey instruments used in previous studies. Overall, the applicant demonstrates that its plan will ensure the validation and effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. information provided

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.	30	23
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (C)(1)		
<p>The applicant has submitted evidence that they have State Early Learning and Development Standards in place. The applicant has also provided evidence to support the alignment of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards with Wisconsin Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. They identify the age span to be birth through age 5; state that the tool is both culturally and linguistically appropriate and is offered in Hmong and Spanish. What is not evident are the following two points. Nowhere in the proposal did the applicant speak to the appropriateness of the Standards to English Learners and does not reference another tool to support this constituent. Since Kindergarten Assessment Entry data is not currently available, the applicant cannot ascertain the language ability of second language learners until third grade. The responsiveness of having the tool in both Hmong and Spanish is a helpful step to ensure that for teachers who speak that child's language can administer it without interpretation. Because the state does not have a Kindergarten Assessment Entry strategy, the standards cannot be aligned to a system that is not existent. The applicant has stipulated that it is the intent to do so with RTT-ELC support. In reviewing its structure and tool, it is evident, as stated earlier they still have significant work to complete in order to have an achievable plan that will yield increased program outcomes for children in all programs. The standards have recently been revised, 2011, adopted and the state is aligning the Wisconsin them to the Wisconsin Core Standards. Evidence: a) The applicant provides information to support and substantiate that the standards are evidence based and address the Essential Domains of School Readiness, for infants, toddlers and preschoolers in a developmentally, culturally and linguistic (available in Hmong and Spanish) manner. However, there is no section or additional tool to address the school readiness for second language learners as it pertains to English acquisition. b) The applicant demonstrates its Early Learning Standards align with the State Model Academic Standards. This alignment supports the alignment and formal direction advising school districts to consider the ELS and Common Core State Standards as they plan for kindergarten. As noted in previous sections, the state does not currently have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment strategy. c) The applicant provides evidence that its early learning standards are used across the majority of programs statewide. Licensing requires programs to connect the standards with quality experiences for children. This is supported by programs that align their curriculum to the standards are eligible to receive points in the state's QRIS. Additionally, the college system incorporates the standards in its core courses further aligning and building professional development capacity within the workforce. d) Currently the applicant promotes the understanding and commitment through its network of inter-agency early childhood braided funding initiative cooperation by program alignment and also by program funding which has been in existence for 10 years. This structure along with the established program components within each of the State agencies further the promotion of the Early learning and Development Standards through training in other program component like the Pyramid Model training, the Social and Emotional training model and is available in three languages. Overall the applicant demonstrates a its ability to develop a using statewide a high quality early learning and development standard framework.</p>		
	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	24

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 has demonstrated evidence to support its commitment in engaging and supporting families but is cognizant of the short falls it has as it pertains to a statewide alignment with its strategies and implementation across programs. The applicant is aware that it has cultural and linguistic needs to address but currently this is not reflected with the exception of some written materials translated into Hmong and Spanish. Evidence: a) There is minimal information in the proposal that details any specifics of linguistically appropriate activities that may support families with their child's development. It has identified that it needs to establish and embed cultural and linguistically appropriate family engagement standards across systems and has a multicultural advisory group that will also include parents. b) The applicant identifies that currently there are three ways to record family engagement training. This is through the Family Services Core Knowledge trainings, the Strengthening Families in Early Care and Education training and the Family Services credential. However, this system appears to have only about 1/3 of the training is documented. The applicant proposes to improve the data registry system to account for all training, will increase the availability of cross system training on family engagement and cultural linguistic competencies and target resources to enhance program quality, including in FFN and evaluate the family engagement strategies to improve school readiness across systems. A specific and strong family engagement plan was not clear, thus the activities to determine success is difficult to determine. c) The applicant has multiple commitments and structures established to support family engagement. Some efforts are home visiting, network of family resource centers, Project LAUNCH plus 7 others all aimed at promoting family success. The program strategies range from approaches, planning, activities, assistance and training, home enhanced activities, training tailor to work on child abuse and neglect prevention strengthening families through foster care. They will use these established programs across the state to support providers with the integration and alignment to a cohesive delivery system. Overall the applicant demonstrates it has a strategy and capacity to engage and support families in a culturally and linguistically appropriate format.

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	20

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 provides evidence that it has an established structure to support its Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of Credentials that dates back two decades, through its creation of the Professional Development Initiative (PDI). They have operated under a framework of i. core knowledge and competencies; ii. Qualifications, licensure & certification; iii. Pathways & progression; iv. Incentives & rewards, and v. Publicly Reported Data. In staying current and recognizing the need to determine next steps, the state identified a set of emerging opportunities in key policy areas to work towards. This approach allows the braided structure of funding and policy to be deliberate and calculated in its essential policy areas for a more integrated professional development system. Its plan is to create an Office of Early Learning to provide a statewide effort. It currently has ARRA dollars to pay for a professional development Coordinator through June 2013 for the cross sector professional development system. a) The applicant has Core Competencies but will work towards unifying the sectors to align the Core Competencies that are linked to licensing or certification. The standards align to core competencies for professional working with children across sectors which is linked to the licensing system. b) The applicant proposes to work on the career pathways and career opportunity between two and four year institutions, work on crediting CDA training to be used at the college(s); support on-line courses; and courses offered in other languages. The state's Registry is a recognized system that awards a certificate verifying that entry legal and continuing education requirements are met. The registry has a tiered licensed system and offers practitioners credentials in: Administrator, Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Inclusion and Leadership. Parallel to this the state provides licenses too. And, the pathways and Progression is supported by the Registry Career Ladder which are based on credentials, training/professional development, coursework credits and degree attainment. This is important as this aligns with the Wisconsin TEACH and REWARD incentive programs. c) The applicant has been working on post secondary engagement with the purpose of alignment, intervention and transition services. The convening of public and private institutions of higher education to improve the recruitment, preparation and alignment issues is expedited by standards review committee that will ensure college level alignment, align educator preparation program requirements to the Common Core Standards as well as to the Read to Lead Task Force literacy recommendations. Overall the applicant is well positioned to implement its plan to develop a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	19

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 has strong supporting evidence and an established record to account for its Early Childhood Educators improving their knowledge, skills and abilities. The structures, systems and data results of its current systems have been well documented throughout the proposal. Work with higher education is in the pipeline. However, the applicant noted a setback in its current system due to the lack of money to support the REWARD and TEACH stipends, thus the increase of college credit bearing courses has been pushed back. With RTT funding this obstacle would be eliminated. Evidence: a) The current structure aligns and operates under the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (which is a clearinghouse of information) and the Professional Development Initiative, (which approves the reliable trainers for the Young Star QRIS) and they are affiliated with the Early Childhood Advisory Council – which comes out of the Governor's office. b) The applicant has an articulated career pathway that aligns to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and also has a structured incentives component. TEACH is the statewide scholarship program designed to help staff meet their professional development goals while still working. The applicant also has in place REWARD which is a compensation and retention initiative which provided incremental yearly salary supplements to individuals based on their educational attainment and longevity in the field. c) The applicant established a performance management system, KidStar, which tracks Registry levels of providers, percentages of providers at each level and is link to determine how this effort is impacting the progression toward the goal that children attend high quality care and education programs. The applicant does not provide information as to any results to date of its system. d)1) The applicant has set both ambitious and achievable goals in its target to increase post-secondary institutions

and professional development opportunities that align with Competency and Framework. The Applicant and institutions have expanded the capacity in response to the TEACH recipients, which educational opportunities align with the state's early learning standards, core competencies and approved ECE instructional strategies. The applicant will target resources to support high need geographic area in Year Two in order to support more directly those providers where high need children are centered in. The applicant will also work with WAICU to expand credit articulation agreements across colleges and universities, prioritizing campuses in high need geographic areas. And create an ECE Registry that is faster, more efficiently reducing redundancy and allowing an automatic cross certification of degree obtainment with Registry credential. e) The applicant proposes three specific strategies to increase the number of providers in the workforce: Create a Community of Practice that aligns to expanded credential and degree available; offer different types of professional development activities to be organized by the Office of Early Learning; stabilize scholarship programs to ensure that providers can afford to pay for the courses they take and need; and underwrite the cost of Registry Certification of 500 providers. This is a natural incentives to ensure programs can meet the obligations without too much added financial out of pocket on their end. Overall, the applicant clearly outlines and addresses the supports to improve early childhood educators abilities and skills.

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	12

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)

a) Currently, the state does not have a Statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment system that is uniform or required. b) There are few school districts that offer a form of assessment but they are not currently aligned or part of a statewide longitudinal data system to inform instruction. Criteria for children with disabilities or English Language Learners is not addressed. The Governor's, ECAC and Read to Lead Task Force both recommend an assessment structure to standardize practices across state to inform instruction, and provide data to inform state policy decisions. c) The current plan is to convene a KEA implementation team and review the literature on best practices in assessment of young children, and conduct a detailed analysis of current tools by 2012-2013. Determination of tools will happen 2013-2014 and pilot selection of districts to begin 2013-2014. d) The applicant currently has a PZ20 longitudinal data system KidStat that integrates K-12 and higher education data which allows linkages between Child Care Licensing, QRIS, Registry, Child Care Provider information and Income data but the state is cognizant that this is only an initial grouping of data and does not provide them with the necessary information and identified the need to create a comprehensive Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System. The applicant has presented a plan of action and timeline to implement a planning strategy to preparing for a KEA. After the initial ground work of participation from the various stakeholders on implementation and communication steps, the review, research and analysis the applicant will determine in (2012-2013) what instruments and data information will be necessary to put in place. e) Funding has been identified from various sources, but a sustainability approach has not been identified. Overall the applicant demonstrates a low medium response from the applicant on this question.

	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)

a,b)The applicant has elements of a Statewide Longitudinal Data System located in different agencies, that collect many of the Essential Data elements defined in the RTT-ELC application. Its structure is not currently integrated to evaluate data across programs. c)The applicant has identified the creation of a comprehensive Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System for planning, evaluation and decision making. Given the past history this applicant has with its recent upgrade of its early childhood data system and the inter agency agreements with the State Partnership Agencies this task while huge, is achievable. Several data connections exist between the DHS and DCF regarding home visiting and Child and Adult Food Program. d)The data is currently collected in an isolated manner and the applicant proposes to have an integrated approach that will support a single platform for schools and districts to collect data elements. e) The applicants LDS and the proposed expansion comply with the federal, state and local privacy laws. It has a secured access model with three distinct levels of report, access, and Heracles purposes. Overall the applicant demonstrates a low to medium plan to build and enhance an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services and policy.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	221

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	7

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 is in a unique situation that it sits in the state department that administers the Child Care Licensing and Certification. Licensing serves as the foundation for Wisconsin's Young Star program which includes regulatory policies and practices aligned with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Evidence: a) The state has a licensing and inspection system that covers all early education programs that are not exempt from licensing. The applicant provides information that outlines a timeline with increases of baseline numbers and percentages throughout the life of the proposal that shows the increased number of participating regulated programs that are regulated and part of this project target. b) The applicant's strategy of program participation links all licensed participants with both access to participate in Wisconsin Shares (subsidies) and YoungStar, the TQRIS model. The applicant is projecting 75 percent participation rate of the 3,575 programs licensed in Wisconsin but are not accessing Wisconsin Shares.

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)

The applicant does not have a complete Kindergarten Entry Assessment structure in place that meets the criterion in (E)(1) to support the value of any points.

Note: this response has been amended by the reviewer. Because the reviewer gave 60% of available points in criterion E(1), he/she has amended this response to "no". Amended March 20, 2012.

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 applicant has designed a model based on inter-state agency agreements to conduct inter-operations, shared governance, braided funding and streamlined policy standards and in the future data alignment. All this said, these structures, policies and resources all speak to the applicants comprehensiveness in building a seamless system that will increase the Early Learning and Development for children with high needs. The applicant's evidence supports that they have a State Early Learning and Development Standard in place that covers the required criteria for an early education accountable structure, that is evidenced based. The state TQRIS is solid and will be able to meet the policy, program standards and outcomes and evaluation. The Program Standards align with the Core Standards which in turn make up the Young Star which links with Wisconsin Shares, TEACH and REWARDS. All of these components are directly linked to licensing which is housed in the same department as the lead agency for the proposal. While the applicant does not have a Measure Outcome and Progress structure in place, it does stipulate that it has a plan to effectuate if funded. And while the Kindergarten Assessment Entry data is not available, the applicant has a designed a plan to concertize this through RTT-ELC funds.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # WI-5037

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 1:45 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, 15. Includes detailed text and sub-points (a) through (d) regarding financial investment, participation numbers, legislation, and system status.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Wisconsin's application demonstrates a longstanding and strong commitment to the development and implementation of a high-quality early learning system. The grant competition is an opportunity build on and expand on the many strengths in its current early learning system and serving children with high needs and their families. Table A-1-1 shows that there are over 160,000 young children in the state (birth to kindergarten age), about two-fifths (39%) living in poverty (based on 2009 data), with poverty in Milwaukee, the state's largest city at 52% and 44% in some rural regions. Over 22,000 children with disabilities are served in IDEA early intervention and preschool special education programs, almost 21,000 (5.7%) are dual language learners, over 5,000 are homeless, and over 4,000 live on "Indian lands" (Table A-1-2). Table A-1-3 shows that significant numbers of high needs children are served in a variety of programs: 41,192 in state-funded preschool programs; 21,349 in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs; 22,201 in IDEA programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities; 14,597 in Title 1 programs, and 56,646 in programs funded by CCDF child care subsidies. Across all the programs laid out in Table A-1-3, a little over 142,000 children are served (likely not an unduplicated count). Wisconsin as shown a strong commitment to serving children with high needs. Data on Table A-1-5 show increases between 2007 and 2010 in the number of high needs children served in state-funded preschool programs (27,759 to 41,192, a 48% increase), a several thousand increase in the number served in IDEA programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities, a 13% increase in the numbers served in Early Head Start and Head Start programs (from 18,889 to 21,349), and a 36% increase in the numbers served in Title programs (from 10,750 to 14,597). The numbers served by programs receiving CCDF funds was fairly similar for 2007 through 2010, but had dropped in 2011 (from 55,432 in 2007 to 74,873 in 2011, a nearly 14% drop). Wisconsin's fiscal investments in early learning and development programs since 2007 are substantial (Table A-1-4), increasing from \$417,985,183 in 2007 up to \$432,445,601 in 2011), but the number was even higher in 2010 (\$473,371,583), likely due to the economic downturn. Until last year, Wisconsin showed increases in state contributions to home visiting programs (from about \$693,000 in 2007 to over \$711,000 in 2011). TANF spending on early learning programs has gone up and down between 2007 and 2011, but the 2011 level of almost \$182 million is higher than the almost \$154 million in 2007. In contrast, state contributions to CCDF has dropped

significantly between 2007 and 2011 (i.e., a little over \$131 million in 2007 to a little over \$52 million in 2011), a worrisome development. Supplemental funding to Early Head Start and Head Start programs has been at about \$7 million for the last 4 years, dropping a bit in 2011 to about \$6.9 million from about \$7.2 million in 2007. State contributions to preschool special education (ages 3 to kindergarten) have also been substantial at about \$14-\$15 million over the past 4 years as has state funding to the IDEA infant/toddlers program for children with disabilities (ranging from about \$19 million to almost \$22 million per year). Given the state's 4-year old kindergarten program, the highest amount of state funding is for the state 4K program which has increased a huge amount from \$74 million in 2007 to \$140 million in 2011, nearly doubling. All of this state's spending shows Wisconsin's strong investment and commitment to serving the state's high needs young children. The business community and several foundations have contributed to early learning activities/initiatives in the state (e.g., Children's Trust Fund, Buffett Early Learning Fund), showing broad stakeholder support for pushing the early childhood agenda. Many policies and pieces of legislation are in place that serve to strengthen the state's early learning system and serve children with high needs. For instance, the 4-year old kindergarten program has resulted in 52% of 4-year-olds participating last year in 84% of the state's 414 elementary school districts, state funds support Head Start programs in 70 of the state's counties, a number of professional development registries exist to track and support providers getting credentials or licenses, and there are many excellent requirements for the YoungStar system, Wisconsin's TQRIS, being implemented since 2010. As another example, the state also recently set up an Memorandum of Understanding between DHS and DPI which oversee the IDEA early intervention program for infants/toddlers with disabilities and the IDEA preschool special education, respectively, to provide more coordination across these two programs and make transitions go more smoothly. This is an important new development demonstrating how state level staff are removing barriers to a more coordinated system, common in many states due to the multiple state agencies involved in early childhood programs/services. Wisconsin also has policies for blending of federal, state, and local funds to support home visiting programs, another excellent strategy, working statewide through the Family Foundations Initiative, and jointly run by Department of Child and Families (DCF) and DHS, again showing state-level cross-agency collaboration. Finally, DCF, the grant lead, was set up in 2008 with bipartisan support to focus particularly on high needs children and their families, overseeing child care regulation, the CCDF subsidy program, child welfare and Wisconsin Works (the state TANF program), home visiting, refugee services, and services for victims of domestic violence. This should streamline administration, allow for better coordination and efficiency across different types of programs and services. There is also a coordinated structure for early childhood activities in the multiple tribes (the Great Lakes Inter-tribal Council (GLITC)) which coordinates with the 3 state agencies, and the Children's Trust Fund operates across the state to address child abuse and has created a statewide network of Family Resource Centers. Data in Table A-1-6 indicate that Wisconsin has a set of early learning standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers that include the 5 Essential Domains of School Readiness (also included in Appendix 6). Data for a comprehensive assessment system shown in Table A-1-7 shows that some, but not all, types of programs use all the different kinds of assessments included in the table. For instance, state-funded preschool requires the programs to screen and assess children, but the practices are locally-decided on, and no data are reported to the state. This is a serious omission for a state-funded preschool program, especially since such a large percentage of high needs children attend these types of programs. Only the 3-5 star programs in YoungStar, the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), conduct screenings and assessments of children. Similarly, health promotion practices shown in Table A-1-8 are common for most programs, with a few exceptions, however (e.g., not included in Title 1 program; developmental, behavioral, and sensory screenings are not required in state licensing requirements). The state looks better on family engagement requirements that seem to be in place across the whole range of program types shown in Table A-1-9. These practices are embedding the TQRIS and most program types incorporate health promotion and family engagement practices in their programs. The application describes the state's longstanding commitment to improving the quality of the early learning workforce. In 1995, the state created a Professional Development Initiative (PDI). In 1998 brought together representatives from Head Start, 4K (their state-funded 4-year old kindergarten, child care, and others). Since then, under the auspices of the PDI, Wisconsin has done many activities to promote a quality workforce: a Registry Career Ladder (that is periodically revised; development of 5 professional credentials; creation of a statewide core curriculum used for common courses for preservice training for the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), development of 12 articulation agreements between WTCS and the state's 4-year higher education institutions to promote higher degrees; and development of a cross-sector comparison of the core competencies. These are all excellent activities that have strengthened the state's PD opportunities for providers. It is difficult to understand the status of the credentials of the workforce from the data shown in the application. That is, Wisconsin has a well defined set of 5 credentials with information contained in the Wisconsin Registry (i.e., administrator, infant/toddler, preschool, inclusion and leadership), with a total of 1,817 individuals in the Registry currently. The numbers shown in a table in section D1 (Table 8) seem low given the expected size of the workforce (e.g. 91 for preschool, but 923 for administrators), so it appears that not all providers statewide are listed in the Registry (these data must be about new credentials issued in each of the years shown, 1998-2011). In contrast, data in Table A-1-10 about credentials of the workforce seem to indicate rather low percentages with credentials or higher education degrees, with the exception of teachers in public schools who all must have a BA degree and a valid Wisconsin teacher license (e.g. 8,863 center-based staff in the workforce, with 3,500 shown with credentials of a CDA or higher, and all teachers in public school with licenses and BA degrees). This looks like the state only has maybe around 42% of center-based staff in the Registry, so the state really does not know the credential and training status of over half of this sector of the workforce. This is a weakness in this state system. The application also describes the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners, a "cross-sector collaborative structure" (with a list of all partners, their program goals, target populations, settings, and interventions provided in Appendix 3). It looks like these are local regional collaboratives, but the application does not provide enough detail to fully understand how they function at the local and regional levels. This is a serious omission because, as seen in the budget section, much work of the grant will be done within these local structures; we need to know how well established they are, how funding is allocated, how decisions are made, and how programs and providers are accountable. To date, Wisconsin has established a solid foundation and made some good progress in all of the key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system that are requirements for this competition. Wisconsin currently does not have a statewide kindergarten entry assessment, but several areas of the state with the largest populations of high needs children have had kindergarten entry assessments, but they have focused mainly on early literacy skills. This is a serious gap because the state cannot really know the status of incoming kindergartners and determine how well the early learning programs and efforts to improve quality and increase access for high needs children are working. The state has begun a pilot of one this year and has chosen this area for one of its Focused Investment Areas, with a plan to have one in place statewide by 2015 (which may

be overly ambitious since the state is really starting from scratch, E1).

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its 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)

Wisconsin's application describes a reform agenda that will aim to "make strategic improvements in its current system", with a diagram in the application that shows how 3 major areas of the system should support children being "ready to succeed (all areas highlighted in this grant competition: Family Engagement and Parent Support, Quality Program Standards, Comprehensive Early Learning Standards, Workforce and Professional Development, and Assessment and Accountability. The state also wants to further its "effective, collaborative governance and robust financial support" to carry out the proposed grant activities. In other sections, the application describes how Wisconsin already has in place some features of these broad components, and they describe goals to make improvements in every area. In particular, for example, the reform agenda calls for: 1) improving program quality (e.g., increasing participation in YoungStar by 75% and moving many programs to the top star ratings of quality; 2) building the workforce by doubling the number of providers with credentials and increasing the numbers of providers who advance through the Registry's certification progression and career ladder from 31% currently to 56% by 2015; and expand the number of early childhood education programs from 49 to 53 and degree programs from 33 to 37, all reasonable and perhaps achievable goals (see D1 and D2); 3) increasing family engagement by developing a framework for family engagement [although multiple existing frameworks are already in use across the state (see section C4)], and the application is unclear and vague and lacking in enough details about the specific types of activities that will be undertaken and what will be the measure or measures of success for this area; 4) getting the early learning standards (Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards-WMELS) to be widely and effectively used, a laudable goal, but only vaguely described in terms of specific activities (see C1); and 5) accelerate the development of an early childhood longitudinal data system (ECLDS) resulting in an early childhood "dashboard" by 2015, again a laudable and ambitious goal that may not be possible to reach by 2015, given the status of current early childhood data across multiple databases under the auspices of the 3 state agencies, with much incomplete data (based on the data presented in the tables in section A1) (see section E2). There is no kindergarten entry assessment in place to date (section E1), but the reform agenda activities show a clear plan, with specific steps in a logical order, for moving ahead and getting this component firmly implemented statewide by 2015. The main problem with the plan is that the state is essentially starting from scratch to get this component of their early learning system in place by 2015. This seems to be an ambitious goal, but it is questionable whether it is actually attainable in 4 years. The budget for this particular project is about \$6.1 million (12% of the total funds), allocated more heavily in Years 3 and 4 since the state expects to implement statewide by Year 4. This might be an adequate amount of money, but the timeline is questionable. Wisconsin did not write to Focused Investment Area C2, Comprehensive Assessment Systems. The application is somewhat weak in descriptions of the types of child assessments that are done across the state in various programs, and how child assessment data is used at various levels (e.g. child level, individual classroom, program level, regional or local level, district level, state level, cross-sector level as in comparing children in Head Start and 4K programs, for instance). What the application does say is that assessment and curriculum must be aligned to the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). Given that the state describes how it needs to "improve its capacity to measure progress, by building an early childhood longitudinal data system (ECLDS) that will provide data on service need, availability, and take-up; and track child outcomes across developmental domains", a major foundation of its reform agenda, it was notable that the area of child assessment was hardly described throughout the application. This seems to be a significant weak area of the state's reform agenda. The Focused Investment Areas that Wisconsin has chosen are well selected areas that they need to work on, ones that are not as well developed as they can be, and are areas where the state can make progress, moving from good to very good with the support for this grant. In some sections, the details about what specific activities will be undertaken are well formulated, but in other areas, somewhat vague planning activities are described. For instance, many of the sections about activities related to the YoungStar system, the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), are detailed and specific, and clearly this area has been more well developed and thought through than others. In contrast, the section E2 that describes a plan for the major goal of having a well functioning early childhood longitudinal data system (ECLDS) by 2015 seems less well thought out and realistic given the 4 year timeline. Thus for each Core Area and Focused Investment Area, the application contains tables with goals and activities, and some are better developed (e.g., B5, D1)and more specific than are others (e.g., C1, C4, E2). This makes it difficult to know how ambitious and achievable the entire set of plans may be, as well as some for specific areas. The strengths are clearly in the YoungStar rating system activities and the workforce area. It is also worth noting that the descriptions of the uses of data were also rather vague and nonspecific throughout the application. Given

the sizable projected budget for data systems development, it would have been appropriate to focus a bit more attention on describing the many important ways that data will be used at a variety of levels of the early learning system. In summary, Wisconsin's application shows that this state has been working on all of the areas addressed in this competition, (some more than others), has made steady progress over the past decade in many areas, and knows where it needs to go to continue making progress (although some description of plans are more well developed and feasible to achieve than are others). Overall, the application lays out a number of clear goals with generally measurable indicators to track program towards the goals. However, as will be seen in comments about other specific sections of Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas, it is hard to evaluate the state's proposed plans because the specific activities or approaches to reach goals are somewhat vague for some of the plans.

	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)

Wisconsin's application makes it clear that for the past several decades the state has been thinking about, planning, and working on its early childhood system statewide both strategically and systemically. The application shows that there is strong agency and stakeholder support for the work proposed in the application [appropriate letters of support and Memoranda of Understanding of participating state agencies and partners, with specific scopes of work are provided; a few other letters of support (in Appendix 11) from stakeholders such as Wisconsin state legislators who chair the Senate and Assembly Education Committees, representatives from state early childhood professional organizations and programs (Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition), tribal leaders, business leaders, several philanthropies, and the Birth To Three Interagency Coordinating Council]. Missing are letters of support from representatives of the local regions and partners who work on parent engagement activities including parents, which would have been helpful. Since much work is to be done by the local coalitions, there is not enough specific detail about how families with children with high needs are involved (i.e., not enough specific details in the application). In addition, all the Early Learning Advisory Council members were listed on one letter, but without signatures (so it looks like a broad range of relevant stakeholder support is there, but it would have been good to have actual signatures). The state appears to have a strong governance structure with a history of positive collaboration and cooperation, jointly working on all of the policies and practices around issues related to early learning services and programs across the state. The proposed lead agency for the grant will be the Department of Children and Families (DCF), but the application indicates that there has been and will continue to be a strong collaboration between DCF with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The other major state partner is the Department of Health Services (DHS). The state has a strong and inclusive Early Learning Advisory Council (membership is shown in Appendix 11, and includes all of the right partners across many kinds of agencies, organizations, including foundations and business leaders, higher education representatives, early learning program organizations). The organizational chart in Table A-3-1 lays out the programs and fund administered by the 3 state agencies that will partner on this grant. Based on a recent 2010 state level review of the professional development (PD) system, a set of recommendations for improving the early learning system were made, including that the state DPI should create a new Office of Early Learning that will coordinate the state PD efforts, work to promote better use of the early learning standards [Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)], and work closely with the Head Start Collaboration Office. This is an excellent idea that will serve to better integrate and coordinate across all early learning programs in the state. Even though this Office of Early Learning is a new office with no track record, Wisconsin's structure and past history of working together suggest that the activities of the grant should proceed efficiently within a well functioning governance structure already in place. This appears to be a positive feature of Wisconsin's application. However, details about how decisions are made are somewhat vague; the application states that each agency administers its own programs and funds, but that for this grant, DCF as the lead agency will enforce the MOUs. Thus a reviewer of this application is left to trust that a truly effective collaborative process is in place. The application lays out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency and all partners, with their respective scopes of work, tasks, and activities laid out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by each participating agency or partner. For each MOU, a table is provided that identifies the specific selection criteria from the application that the participating party is agreeing to, with specific tasks described in a Statement of Work section of the table. For instance, DHS will work on activities under Core Area B2 around training about health promotion, while DCF has major roles in implementing many of the YoungStar rating system activities (Core Area B), while DPI will play the major role in Focused Investment Area C1 related to expanding professional development on the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS), workforce activities (Focused Investment Area D), and family engagement activities (Focused Investment Area C4). This distribution of work scope maps well onto areas that have already been the responsibility of each of these 3 state agencies, suggesting that the prior collaborations bodes well for their future success during the grant period. There are no named intermediary organizations, although in the application, it looks like the regional coalitions will be very involved in many of the activities, particularly with relation to YoungStar and professional development activities [i.e. the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP)] since these run many programs at the local level. It is hard to tell how well these local regional coalitions function and how well they abide by statewide requirements (e.g., state authority to enforce participation in statewide grant activities). The application should have provided a little more information about the effectiveness and efficiency of the functioning of these local coalitions/collaboratives.

	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)

In its application, Wisconsin is requesting a total of \$45,002,778 for the 4 years of the grant, and the state is investing funds totaling \$5,161,057 from other sources to support the state's early learning activities (for a total of \$50,563,834 for all the funds combined). For the overall budget, about 63% of the requested funds are allocated under "Contractual", and are distributed fairly evenly across years with about 25% in Year 1, 24% in Year 2, 22% in Year 3, and 28% in Year 4. About \$7.8 million has been allocated to Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, participating programs and other partners (about 17% of the total funding (Budget Table 1-1), the majority of which is in the DCF budget (so it looks like these funds will go to program in the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP), but this is not really clear in the budget section). Budget Table 1-2 shows how the over \$50 million is distributed across the 3 state agencies, with about 51% of funds going to DCF, 39% to DPI, and about 10% to DHS. This distribution is well matched and appears to be appropriate to the scopes of work, activities, and responsibilities assigned to each of these 3 state agencies. Budget Table 1-3 shows how the funds for the 13 projects identified in the narrative to match each Core Area and Focused Investment Area are to be distributed. The amounts for each project, appropriately mapped on to the specific Core Areas or Focused Investment Areas described in the application narrative, seem to be adequate and reasonable to carry out the proposed work, and are well matched to the proposed activities in the narrative, further described in the budget narrative section. For instance, many activities relate to expanding the YoungStars program (section B), which is budgeted at about \$16.5 million, about 33% of the total funds, with the next highest amount of funding devoted to development of the data system (E2- about 28% of the total funds), followed by activities to support a kindergarten entry assessment (E1), family engagement (C4), use of WMELS (C1), with about 12%, 11%, and 8.5% of the total funds, respectively. There is one important exception about the quality of the budget related to E2, data systems. Given that the section in the narrative that describes the data systems plans are somewhat vague, it is hard to really know if the amounts proposed for E2 might be somewhat high. Sizable proportions of each state agency's budget have been allocated to "contractual", which looks like the funds to be allocated for all the regions to carry out much of the proposed work. Here again, it would have been helpful to know more about the effectiveness and efficiency of the local regions (i.e., the extent to which they are well functioning and coordinating currently). The historical fiscal data in Table A-1-4 show substantial commitments in the past. In addition, Table A-4-1 shows significant existing funds to be able to implement the state reform plan (i.e., over \$5.1 million). Based on the historical data and the history of activities to date, sustainability after the grant ends seems likely. In the past, Wisconsin has received financial support from several foundations (e.g., Children's Trust Fund, School Readiness Philanthropy Group, Buffett Early Childhood Fund -- all with representatives on the Early Learning Advisory Council). It is not clear that they are continuing to make financial contributions for the early learning work in the state, but it is highly likely that they will (based on the fact that they are on the Early Learning Advisory Council). This kind of support (assuming it continues in the future also) attests to their commitment to the state's early learning agenda and also to thinking about sustainability, but future fiscal commitments are unclear in the application and the letters of support.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

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.

Comments on (B)(1)

Wisconsin initiated its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) in 2010, known as YoungStar, with the 2011-13 state budget more than doubling funding for child care from \$7 million to over \$16 million. Further, the state mandated that all child care programs that receive Wisconsin Shares payments (the state child care subsidy program) must participate in YoungStars, and the application mentions that the system has bipartisan legislative support. This shows the state's strong commitment to supporting quality in its early learning programs, particularly those programs that serve high needs children. The YoungStars program is a well designed TQRIS, with appropriate evidenced-based criteria in its 5 star levels that represent a combined point and block system (shown in Appendix 12). The system has associated professional development opportunities for providers and programs (training, technical assistance, on-site coaching and mentoring), provided financial incentives and rewards to providers and programs, and disseminates information about the ratings to parents and others via a web site and a variety of other reasonable mechanisms. The components of the YoungStars program do seem to cover all the relevant areas that are considered to be best practices in nationally recognized standards (e.g., NAEYC, Division for Early Childhood, licensing regulations). The assignment of star levels is based on 4 main areas that are evidence-based practices with specific indicators that are appropriate measures of program quality and well matched to the priorities and key features of this grant competition [i.e., provider/teacher education (which matches to increasingly higher levels of staff qualifications using the state's professional credentialing system and career ladder, Wisconsin's Registry System, a set of competencies that includes 17 levels – described more fully in section E)]; learning environment and curriculum [that includes use of a curriculum aligned with the state early learning standards [Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)]; requirements for appropriate child assessments and informing parents of the results (e.g., many use the validated Ages & Stages screening tools as well as other assessment tools and individual child portfolios)]; health and wellness [nutrition (participation on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and physical activity requirements)]; emphasis on social-emotional development via training on the well validated Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Learning (CSEFEL)]; ability to care for children with special needs; and business and professional practices [which includes professional development plans for each program; criteria for retention of well qualified staff, optional points for specific staff benefits and parent involvement practices, including points for having staff trained on the evidence-based Strengthening Families framework about working with families to support the protective factors that support young children's early learning and well being]. The validated Environmental Ratings Scales (ERS) are used to assess particular criteria within these areas with high standards for the highest levels (e.g., an ECERS-R average score of 5 is needed in the Learning Environment and Curriculum area for the 4 or 5 star levels, an appropriate score for these highest levels of the system). Thus, the levels do seem to be appropriate and show increasingly differentiated degrees of quality. Data about YoungStar ratings and other program information are contained in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) data system (KidStat). This system also tracks data on training and technical assistance provided to programs, use of the scholarships and bonus incentives and micro grants provided to providers and programs, other professional development activities by program, and the quality improvement plans developed by each participating program. This is an especially positive feature of Wisconsin's system which can allow the state to monitor and hopefully examine how the training, TA and other incentives programs take advantage of related to improvements in their star quality ratings over time. According to Table B-1-1, all the different types of early learning programs in Wisconsin address all the required program elements (i.e., early learning standards, comprehensive assessment systems, qualified workforce, family engagement, health promotion, and effective data practices). The star levels differentiate increasing levels of quality, from no license at 1 star to high quality at the 4- and 5-star levels. The actual rating process involves the program choosing one of 3 rating options: automatic; technical (for 1 and 2 stars), or formal with observation (for 3, 4, or 5 stars). A table in the application shows how the 5 levels range from 1 being out of regulatory licensing compliance to 5 stars being the highest rating based on review of documents and formal observations or having other accreditations that serve as a proxy for getting high scores on the ERS observation. The 4- and 5-star programs actually do have good evidence of high quality based on the ERS criteria (e.g., for a 4-star rating, the ERS scores must be an average of 5 with no subscale less than 3; a 5-star rating, the ERS scores must be an average of 5 with no subscale less than 4). It would have been good to perhaps have a specific criterion about the teacher Interactions subscale being high because research shows that the quality of the teacher-child interactions is especially important for promoting children's school readiness. One significant concern with the system is about these "alternate paths" (automatic ratings) for some programs to earn a 4- or 5-star rating (high ratings) if they meet particular accreditation requirements. For instance, family child care programs that meet National Association for Family Child Care accreditation can get a 4-star rating. Similarly, Head Start programs that meet Performance Standards with no deficiencies, or the city of Madison Accreditation (not well defined in the application, although it says that they "exceed these accrediting bodies") can receive a 5-star rating. This is an important problem with the system because it means that they system is really not a statewide consistent set of standards. Such a system can also create rifts across the different program types, and it may create unpredictable problems for implementing a consistent statewide professional development system when providers know that different types of programs have different standards. This state of affairs can also be confusing for families who are being informed about the rating system. Different Wisconsin Shares' rates are associated with each of the 5 star levels, with being not eligible at all (1 star), a 5% reduction in rate for 2, the same rate for a 3; a 5% increased rate for a 4, a 10% increased rate for a 4, which is proposed to go up to a 25% increased rate in 2013). This represents a good set of financial incentives that should influence programs to attend to and improve quality over time. The application describes a study done in 2004 by the Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership that indicated that many of the features of the state's YoungStars rating system are important ones for producing good child outcomes. For instance, that study found that teachers with more education had higher quality interactions with their children than did teachers with less education; several characteristics of family child care correlated with quality – level of regulation; training in child development; business practices; and professional commitment. The study also reported data to support the need for YoungStars: centers with higher densities of children receiving child care subsidies had fewer degreed teachers, higher turnover, and lower wages than did centers with lower densities of these high needs children. While these data are suggestive, they cannot substitute for more studies to specifically validate the YoungStars ratings system, which have not been done to date. This is a weakness of the current implementation of this TQRIS. Individuals who evaluate and monitor the programs are well trained, with detailed reliability checks used to insure interrater reliability of the evaluations of programs, an excellent feature of Wisconsin's TQRIS (described more

fully in B3). It was not clear from the application if programs are reevaluated over time once the initial rating is done to assure that the quality is maintained over time. This is a critical consideration in these TQRISs to assure that quality is sustained over time, especially since staff turnover can be a huge problem for many early learning programs and the quality of teaching is such a critical feature of program quality. The plan for the grant outlined in the application calls for a number of specific activities to expand participation in the YoungStars rating system across Wisconsin. These are all appropriate and achievable, given the current status of the system in Wisconsin: increase providers use of comprehensive child assessments, including with trainings and more on-site coaching and mentoring services; strengthen the family engagement features of program's work, by more trainings on this area, and also by modifying YoungStar to include family engagement a required point (not optional) in the Business and Professional Practices component, needed to earn 3 stars; reinforce and expand the Health and Wellness areas of YoungStar by developing and implementing more trainings in this area, which also include attention to inclusion of children with special needs. Like all areas of Wisconsin's application, a detailed table with activities and a reasonable and achievable timeline is presented, matching the proposed goals described to specific relevant activities.

	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)

Wisconsin has made a strong commitment to getting early learning programs serving high needs children to participate in the YoungStar rating system, its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). Table B-2-c shows that currently, 90% of programs receiving CCDF child care subsidies (Wisconsin Shares) participate, and the application states that by 2012, all 100% will do so. Similarly, only 1% of Early Head Start and Head Start programs currently participate, but the state proposes to have all 100% participating by 2015. In contrast, only 9% of all licensed child care programs participate, but the state expects to increase that to 75% by 2015, an ambitious and probably achievable goal. Similar low participation is seen currently in state-funded preschool programs (5%), which the state hopes to increase to a 60% participation rate by 2015. In Wisconsin, school districts can serve children in community-based programs so many of these programs are included in the rating system, but it is hard to really know how many do so. While it is reported that about one-fourth of school districts offer collaborative community-based programs in partnership with Head Start or child care programs, it looks like only those programs serving children in Wisconsin Shares participate (which are programs that serve high needs children). The application is unclear about the preschool children served under IDEA (those with disabilities), but states that since many of these children are served in other types of programs that do participate in YoungStar (e.g., state-funded prekindergarten programs; also true for children in Title 1), many of them are in the system. It is difficult to know, however, from the information presented in the application what the numbers actually are. In the plan for the grant period, the state proposes to explore how other states have used alternate paths to star ratings for public pre-K programs and decide whether or not to change this feature of their rating system. Again, having different standards for public preK programs is a problem (e.g., the application notes that school districts define their own child-teacher ratios, which may be too much variability is a critical quality indicator). One concern about participation rates of Early Head Start and Head Start program is that these programs receive an automatic high rating if they meet Head Start Performance Standards with no deficiencies (1% currently, Table B-2-c). While this seems to be a good idea to reduce the burden of observing so many programs, Head Start programs may not have high quality for some important indicators of quality based on some of the important rating system requirements (e.g., high ERS scores on areas like Teaching Interactions subscales). (See also comments under B1 about other problems with having automatic ratings.) Wisconsin has intentionally developed focused strategies and incentives to promote participation in YoungStars, their Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). These are described more fully in section B4. Briefly, they have in place excellent incentives which

include training and technical assistance and financial incentives to providers and programs to help them upgrade their program quality and the quality of the early learning workforce, as well as tiered reimbursement policies that pay high-star rated programs higher child care subsidy rates. The application provides a specific set of goals to increase participation in the YoungStars program, focusing efforts on those programs that serve high needs children (i.e., school-based preK programs, including those funded locally or with Title 1, Head Start programs, and child care programs receiving child care subsidies as well as those that do not). Multiple activities to promote access for families with children with high needs. For instance, information about ratings is provided to parents and others via a website and a media campaign (i.e., "I Am YoungStar", launched in 2010), demonstrating the state's high-quality dissemination plan with regards to the rating system. As another example, the application also describes how various agencies that serve high needs children have been the target of outreach to inform parents about the rating system. One strong feature of the outreach is to use the regional office that administer program serving families with young children who are high needs (e.g., WIC offices, resource and referral agencies, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to inform parents about the rating system. Whether or not Wisconsin can increase the number of programs rated, the number in top tiers, and the numbers of children with high needs served in top tier programs is hard to tell because the decisions about the alternate/automatic ratings will impact how many programs will need to be rated in the next 4 years.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	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 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 rating, monitoring, and training/technical assistance for YoungStars, Wisconsin's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) takes place at the regional level through the Consortium, a contracted agency that coordinates services at the local levels throughout the state (e.g., local child care resource and referral agencies, postsecondary education institutions). Wisconsin has a very well functioning system in place to rate and monitor early learning programs, and programs that are out of compliance with licensing standards cannot receive high quality ratings (get one star, the lowest rating). Well trained and certified raters (28 in place currently) collect program information and make observations with the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS), well validated tools, and observe one-third of classrooms in each program (randomly selected to represent each age grouping in the program), an excellent feature to get a sense of the entire program. These measures do not address the area of intentional teaching interactions, which are stronger predictors of school readiness outcomes. Another great feature of the rating system is that the raters (called Rating Observers) are a different set of individuals from the individuals who provide programs with technical assistance to improve their ratings (called Technical Consultants). An appendix lays out the kinds of trainings these individuals get, all appropriate types of experience and expertise to do the ratings or TA. There is a detailed TA manual for the Technical Consultants, with state level oversight of their work. These kinds of feature show Wisconsin's commitment to having a high-quality rating system. The application does not state how often programs are reevaluated, which is an important omission. Information about ratings is provided to parents and others via a website and a media campaign (i.e., "I Am YoungStar", launched in 2010), demonstrating the state's high-quality dissemination plan with regards to the rating system (also described in section B2). The description of the web site and media campaign does not provide enough information to see how user-friendly it will be for families with children with high needs (e.g., providing a link to www.access.gov may not be so user-friendly and easy to navigate for families). The application also describes how various agencies that serve high needs children have been the target of outreach to inform parents about the rating system. One strong feature of the outreach is to use the regional office that administer program serving families with young children who are high needs (e.g., WIC offices, resource and referral agencies, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to inform parents about the rating system. Part of the plan for the grant is to expand YoungStars from 90% of all programs currently to 100% of all child care programs that receive funds through Wisconsin Shares, the state child care subsidy program. This is an ambitious but perhaps achievable goal that focuses on high needs children's access to quality programs. The plan calls for increasing the number of trained raters from 28 currently to add another 20 raters and to expand the outreach activities described above, with a range of key appropriate organizations and agencies laid out in the application (e.g., Early Childhood Tribal Child Care Council, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Disability Tights Association – all of which should reach more families with high needs children). Specific details for these activities are somewhat vague and it is hard to see how adding 20 raters can lead to universal participation in 4 years without a schedule showing how this can reasonably be achieved.

	Available	Score
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(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 (3)(1)

Wisconsin has intentionally developed focused strategies and incentives to promote participation in YoungStars, their Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TORIS). Briefly, they have in place excellent incentives which include training and technical assistance and financial incentives to providers and programs to help them upgrade their program quality and the quality of the early learning workforce, as well as tiered reimbursement policies that pay high star rated programs higher child care subsidy rates, all described in the application detail. Of particular note, is how the YoungStar program is so fully integrated into the Wisconsin Shares program, the state's child care subsidy program. For example, the state invested \$1.5 million in the start up of YoungStar in 2010, provided over 7,000 trainings of providers across the state, provides ongoing training and technical assistance to programs and providers to work on specific aspects of quality, and has very good financial incentives for providers to upgrade their training through scholarship and bonus programs (e.g., T.E.A.C.H.® that gives providers funds that pay for a large share of credit-based education; R.E.W.A.R.D.™ stipends that provide retention bonuses to programs and providers who meet high quality standards; micro grants to programs to develop and implement individualized quality improvement plans). These are excellent incentives that show how the state has been strategically thinking about quality and investing in upgrading the quality of programs, the workforce, and especially retention of providers who meet high quality standards. A new tiered reimbursement system tied to the level of program ratings will go into effect in 2012, another excellent and appropriate incentive. No details about the different rates in this new plan are provided so it is not possible to know how well it will work to incentivize programs to increase quality and enroll children with high needs. Wisconsin has also given much thought and made efforts to make sure that high needs children can access high-quality early learning programs. As mentioned above, the YoungStar ratings system is fully integrated into Wisconsin Shares, also extends eligibility for children with special needs, has done good outreach, and incentivizes the Child and Adult Care Food Program to participate, provides extra incentives to community-based partnerships with the state preK programs that offer high need children access to full-day, full year child care, and provides free transportation to preschool programs for children with special needs. Here again, these are excellent incentives and outreach activities, showing Wisconsin's thoughtful approach to implementing the YoungStar program widely and with considerable attention to access for high needs children and their families. The data in Tables B-4-c-1 and B-4-c-2 show that the current numbers of programs in high-quality programs and high needs children in them are pretty low and in need of substantial improvements and increases. For instance, as seen in Table B-4-c-2, only 5% of those high needs children in state preK programs are in top-tier programs, with a goal to get this number up to 50% by 2015; for Early Head Start and Head Start programs, the numbers are 25% currently, with a goal of 100% of children by 2015. For programs serving children receiving CCDF funds, currently only 21% of children are in top-tier program, with the 2015 goal being 40%; this seems to be a rather modest goal, which seems like a weakness of the state's plan. Table B-2-c-2 does not have numbers and projections for Title 1 and IDEA programs because the data are really not available for these groups of children, another weakness in the Wisconsin system currently. Overall, the state currently has 4,113 programs in the YoungStar system, with 2,408 pending ratings that should be complete by 2012 (Table B-2-c-1). The state projects moving the pending programs to at least a 3 star rating, which is a good goal, but it is unclear if it really can be met by 2015 (i.e., the state has 32 3-star programs now and plans to move that number to 2,000 by 2015, a seemingly impossible goal with a total of 48 raters (28 in place now, and 20 new raters that need to be identified and trained), unless many of these are programs that get the automatic ratings, which it seems they are). As mentioned, the alternate rating feature of Wisconsin's YoungStar rating system may be a problem to achieving the goal of more high-quality programs. Together, these are weaknesses of Wisconsin's reform agenda for this area moving forward. The plan moving forward is an ambitious one, and may not be achievable. That is, the outcome of the proposed reexamination of the alternate path to rating that is described in section B may result in many more programs needing to go through the rating process, an added burden and a delay in more top-tier programs for children with high needs. That is, many programs that are proposed to participate and/or receive high ratings are those that follow the "alternate path" which give them automatic high ratings based on existing accreditation and performance standards. Whether all of these programs are actually of high quality may not be a good assumption. The application does lay out a specific and detailed set of goals to get more programs rated, get more programs being rated with high ratings, and increasing access for high needs children to top-star programs. These include, for instance, increasing the number of degreed teachers in the workforce by expanding education opportunities (using the financial incentives described earlier) (also

described in section D); expanding training and TA for providers; developing a community of practice for programs to share experiences about improving quality (an excellent suggestion); and expanding outreach to increase family engagement (also described more in Section C4; e.g., give more trainings to programs and providers about family engagement). In other sections of the application, the state describes how it plans to use data to further the agendas for improving the YoungStar TQRIS. In general, this is a weakness of the application because the workforce data that currently exist is very incomplete, there was little discussion of child assessment data (which does not seem to be available for any program type statewide, and there are no kindergarten entry data statewide or even regionally that are available to the state), so saying that data will be used is too vague when the linkages needed to address important questions are not yet in place (see section E2).

	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)(5)

Wisconsin's main approach so far to validating its YoungStar system, its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) has been in the design of the system, using evidenced-based criteria (e.g., provider qualifications and training experiences) and validated observation tools (e.g., the Environmental Ratings Scales). Most of the description in the application for this area consists of 2 main plans for the future: (1) contracting for a validation study with a national expert, Katherine Magnusson, Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and (2) conducting additional validation studies and analyses. In the application, a well thought out and well designed proposed study that will be conducted by Dr. Magnusson is very well described. The proposed sampling, data collection, comparison groups, and analysis strategies described are all appropriate. For instance, the study will look at the relationship between the different star levels of quality and children's performance on a number of school readiness measures with a rigorous cluster randomized design that should yield strong evidence about the state's TQRIS (e.g., appropriate, valid and reliable, nationally-normed measured and teacher report checklists that cover the range of school readiness domains). To date, Dr. Magnusson has consulted with some of the leading nationally well respected TQRIS researchers to see how other states have been conducting validation studies and what they are finding, another excellent approach for this area. One very important feature of the proposed study is that it will allow the state to learn more about the automatic rating pathway and whether it was a good decision to waive in, in a sense, certain types of programs, determine the validity of the 4- and 5-star automatic path (e.g., Head Start programs that meet Performance Standards) and how well the levels of credentialing are actually associated with observed program quality (since minimum education requirements may or may not actually be associated with quality). The additional set of proposed studies and analyses that would be undertaken with grant funds would address several gaps in the above described study: 1) it contains no additional validation with other global measures of programs quality (use of ERS for those programs that do not have these observations done in the current system; presumably the state may consider the CLASS, a validated measure of teaching interactions that are more closely linked to children's school readiness outcomes, but not explicitly named in the application); 2) that study does not look at quality for infants and toddlers, who, it is stated, experience the lowest quality of care; and 3) that study does not get at information about how satisfied parents are with the YoungStar system. The methods and descriptions of these additional studies look good, and will definitely advance the information that Wisconsin will have about how well the TQRIS is working to differentiate levels of quality, across both infant/toddler and preschool-age programs. Again, the application lays out in a table the specific goals, activities, and timeline for the proposed activities to conduct these validation studies; for this area, they are detailed, appropriate, and achievable.

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.	30	18

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)

Wisconsin has an excellent set of early learning standards, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) that covers infants/toddlers and for preschoolers. The actual WMELS document is an excellent resource for parents, providers, and anyone who wants to know about what young children should be able to do. The WMELS comes with a set of guiding principles that strongly emphasize the diversity of young children, their development along a continuum, respectful for cultural and linguistic diversity (e.g., "All children are capable and competent"; "Children are individuals who develop at various rates."). This is a wonderful feature of the WMELS. The WMELS address all the essential school readiness domains: Health and Physical; Social and Emotional; Language and Communication; Approaches to Learning; and Cognition and General Knowledge, with relevant sub-domains for each domain. The WMELS documents describe various samples of child behavior associated for specific items, and examples of what adults can do to support the child's development in that area. The developers say that they paid particular attention to making the standards culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate, but evidence of specific example of how they address this diversity is missing in the application. The standards were developed as a cross-agency collaboration, and they are continued to be reviewed and updated to edited as needed. Since the original version in 2003, two revisions have been done to add a developmental continuum and add emphasis for infants and toddlers, with a third one in the works currently in order to expand the professional development structure and content so they will be used more effectively especially with high needs children. All of these features of the WMELS attest to their high quality, and show what great care the state of Wisconsin has had in developing these standards. The WMELS document also has an excellent set of appendices that provide resources that providers, program, parents and others can use to 1) see how the standards map onto or, more appropriately, provide the foundational skills and competencies for later academics, 2) find key articles, books and other reports about early development, including resources for teachers and parents for specific areas of early development [e.g., web site for the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), a strong evidence-based model; online newsletters; information specifically for parents], 3) and early care and education resource guide that lists the main types of early learning programs and agencies in the state and some national associations (e.g., NAEYC, Zero To Three). The application states that Wisconsin paid attention to aligning the WMELS with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for the early grades of the K12 system (but few additional details are provided in the application about this process). It is also stated that the standards are used across all the types of early learning programs (e.g., Head Start, child care, home visiting, public school 4-year old kindergarten, 5-year old kindergarten programs, and IDEA Part B preschool programs for children with disabilities, program must train staff on their use, and have curriculum that are aligned with the WMELS. However, more specific details are lacking so it is hard to know what all this alignment actually looks like in the programs. One strong feature of the WMELS document is that in one of its appendices (B), the specific standards have been appropriately cross-walked with the IDEA child outcomes for early intervention and preschool special education that all states must report annually to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). This feature shows Wisconsin's strong and clear commitment to including children with disabilities fully and inclusively in its early learning system. This sends a strong message about inclusion of this group of high needs children and their families. There is a WMELS website with resources that help programs align "curriculum, instruction, and assessment", which if well done should be an excellent resource that would be evidence-based and state-of-the art and could make resources widely available. The application states that moving forward, Wisconsin wants even better alignment of these three areas, in order "to promote intentional planning and individualized service delivery in programming", with an emphasis on children with special needs as one key high needs group of children. But no further details are provided. WMELS training is very well included in Wisconsin's cross-department professional development offerings (with content modules, regional delivery of training, only use of approved certified trainers, and local communities of practice to provide ongoing support for

both trainers and providers). As mentioned in other sections, use of the WMELS is a required item on the YoungStar rating system and the state has been working to align the WMELS with the K12 Common Core State Standards. But details and examples of alignment are not provided. Wisconsin's ambitious and possibly achievable plan for this area is laid out in a table with associated narrative, with a set of reasonable goals, specific sets of activities for each goal, with a timeline for completion of the activities. Like most states, it is not clear how well the standards are actually known to and used by early learning providers across all of the early learning programs. Thus, the main thrust of the plan is to expand and increase professional development about the standards and their use via the new Office of Early Learning, including developing some new training modules. This will involve increasing the number and amount of time of regional coaches who conduct training and TA, which the state has seen a particular increase in the need for training as the YoungStar rating system has expanded. The state also wants to work on the new revision with an eye towards improving the language and communication area with appropriate links to early reading (an emphasis of the Governor recently). Additionally, the state proposes to help high needs families and communities to better understand children's early developmental and learning needs so they can better support young children's school readiness skills and competencies. But there are no details to know what specific activities will be undertaken. The application states that all the training materials should be based on the Department of Public Instruction's State Professional Development Model (described more fully in section D). Without more information about the types of child assessments and curricula being used in different types of programs, it is hard to know how providers or teachers actually use the standards.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	16

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)

In its application, Wisconsin is proud that it has been implementing a number of strong evidence-based programs and services to support family engagement, with a detailed table in the application showing 12 of these efforts, with the number of programs or sites for each effort. This table shows that a number of specific and evidence-based frameworks have been implemented in different types of early learning programs to support and engage families [e.g., the SEARCH Institute's 40 Developmental Assets framework, the Epstein framework about 6 types of parent involvement approaches (also shown in an appendix), Families and Schools Together (FAST); Brazelton's Touchpoints approach to parent partnerships; the Educare model used in Early Head Start and Head Start]. Another table showed the kinds of resources Wisconsin has to support family engagement, all of which are impressive and appropriate (e.g., UW-Cooperative Extension conducts trainings on the Touchpoints model; the Children's Trust Fund Family funds family resource centers, home visiting programs, and parenting classes; the Honoring Our Children is a tribal program for parents). These data about current efforts for family engagement and resources in place to support the state's plans moving forward show Wisconsin's strong commitment to support families as they support their young children. Wisconsin also described in its application how there are currently 3 ways that information about specific types of provider training with regards to family engagement is recorded in the Professional Development Registry: Family Services Core Knowledge training; Strengthening Families training (an evidence-based model); and the Family Services credential. But there is little discussion of how these data are used by the state or local communities/regions, and how completely they are entered into data systems. This is a weakness in this section of the application. It is also not clear what kind of saturation of trained individuals there are across different regions of the state [e.g., Table 5 indicates that 65%, 7,842 of 12,061 providers have completed Registry-approved training (Family Services Core Knowledge training), but very few have the Strengthening training (3.9%)]. This also seems to be a weakness since the state hopes to be using one or more of these kinds of evidence-based frameworks more consistently and universally across providers and programs. Thus, having so many frameworks is confusing. The state's plan for this area will build on the strengths of the existing evidence-based approaches in the state. The goals of the plan are well thought out and are based on several observations made in the application about the current state of affairs and the needs that still exist in the state's early learning system. First, the application states that the reach of the existing evidence-based program and services is limited, so more attention and effort must be made to reaching more high needs families. The state plans to expand parent participation, and plans to create a multicultural parent advisory group, but the specific activities of this group are not fully described making it hard to know how well they will be able to implement these good ideas. Having such a group is an excellent plan, however, because getting broad diverse parent input should help the state learn what can be done to improve access. Second, the state really has not established one set of family engagement standards that are used across systems/program types, thus having a need for a more 'unified approach to culturally competent and linguistically diverse family engagement strategies'. To meet these goals, once again, the application lays out a set of goals, with specific activities and timeline for accomplishing the activities and meeting the goals, but the details are somewhat vague raising

question about their implementation plan. Finally, the application describes plans to "increase the availability of cross system training on family engagement" including creating a community of practice, but no further details are provided making it hard to know what success will look like for this particular goal. The plan also calls for conducting some evaluation of the efforts to increase and improve family engagement, and notably to see how it relates to family and child outcomes. This is a laudable goal, but again details and specifics are lacking (i.e., the steps in a table for Goal 2 for C-4-b are really generic activities not described in enough detail to know how achievable they will be). It is clear from Tables 4 and 6 in this section that Wisconsin has many family support programs and resources, but it is hard to see how there is a very strategic, well integrated, coordinated or focused plan for this area. Thus, compared to some other features of Wisconsin's early learning system, the application did not seem as strong in having a specific strategic plan in this area of family engagement. Many of the proposed activities are described in rather vague and general terms, with a lack of clear indication of how the state will actually know if it is being successful (a partially implemented plan of about medium quality).

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)

Wisconsin's application clearly demonstrates a longstanding interest and commitment to developing a high-quality early learning workforce. There is a diagram that shows how Wisconsin has used the NAEYC Policy Blueprint for an integrated Professional Development System, one that is a cross-sector system, with use of standards, core knowledge areas for providers and administrators, other competencies, credentials, career pathways, incentives and quality assurance procedures, all aimed at improving services for young children and their families. In 1995, the state created a Professional Development Initiative (PDI). In 1998, the state brought together representatives from Head Start, 4K (their state-funded 4-year old kindergarten, child care, and others). Since then, under the auspices of the PDI, Wisconsin has done many activities to promote a quality workforce: a Registry Career Ladder (that is periodically revised); development of 5 professional credentials; creation of a statewide core curriculum used for common courses for preservice training for the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS); development of 12 articulation agreements between WTCS and the state's 4-year higher education institutions to promote higher degrees; and development of a cross-sector comparison of the core competencies. These are all excellent activities that have strengthened the state's professional development opportunities for early learning providers. The application states that Wisconsin has been recognized nationally as a leader in its professional development system by the NAEYC Professional Development Institute. Recently in 2010, the state reviewed its entire professional development (PD) system and made a number of excellent, critical and appropriate recommendations for improving its systems (outlined in detail in the application). These include suggested activities in 7 major areas: state structure (e.g., create an inter-departmental center for PD); professional standards (e.g., update the Wisconsin Core Competencies; link PD across sectors to the Wisconsin Core Competencies); career pathways (e.g., support new credit-based and online options to help providers attain higher education degrees); articulation (e.g., engage in a number of activities to promote development of a more diverse workforce, such as credit for prior learning, more bilingual courses, seek increased compensation parity); advisory structure (e.g., develop communication systems to track and coordinate progress on PD efforts across sectors); data (e.g., continue to develop a longitudinal data system so data can be used in planning and decision-making); and financing [e.g., use many of the existing mechanisms such as scholarships (T.E.A.C.H.®, R.E.W.A.R.D.™), Initial Educator Mentoring Grants, to increase compensation, diversity, and inclusion; continue to use braided funding to conduct PD across sectors]. Again, this shows how Wisconsin has been thinking and working systemically to build and retain a high-quality workforce. However, because these are now recommendations, they are not really well implemented statewide yet. These recommendations also led the state DPI to propose the creation of a new Office of Early Learning that will coordinate the state PD efforts, promote better use of the early learning standards (WMELS), and work closely with the Head Start Collaboration Office, and excellent idea to better integrate and coordinate across all early learning programs in the state. Since this is a brand new agency, it is not really possible to evaluate how quickly and well it can get up and running and making key changes across the

state. Wisconsin's application also describes many other important activities in place now or in early planning phases. There is a set of core competencies that are outlined in detail in a PD Registry and in the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) (see also section C1), the state began training in 2009 with the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for early learning (CSEFEL), a strong evidence-based model which is aligned with the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system that is used in the K12 system in Milwaukee; in 2011, the University of Wisconsin-Madison established an Infant, Early Childhood and Mental Health Certificate Program. The application contains a table that shows the core competencies which are comprehensive, appropriate and well organized (Table 7), a positive feature for this area. As for credentials, Wisconsin has a well defined set of 5 credentials with information contained in the Wisconsin Registry (i.e., administrator, infant/toddler, preschool, inclusion and leadership), with a total of 1,817 individuals in the Registry currently. The numbers shown in a table (8), however, seem low given the expected size of the workforce (e.g., 91 for preschool, but 923 for administrators), so it appears that not all providers statewide are listed in the Registry. In Table A-1-10, however, it looks like many more individuals have credentials (e.g., 8,663 center-based staff in the workforce, with 3,500 shown with credentials of a CDA or higher; and all teachers in public school with licenses and BA degrees). This looks like the state only has 42% of center-based staff in the Registry, so the state really does not know the credential and training status of over half of this sector of the workforce. The combination of data across table presented in the application indicates that the workforce databases and systems are not well coordinated. The state also has both an Early Childhood and Early Childhood/Middle Childhood educator license as part of the K12 licensing system, with detailed educations and training requirements. Finally, the state has a career ladder with 17 levels showing pathways based on credentials, training and PD, coursework credits, and degree attainment requirements associated with the different levels. Table A-1-11 indicates that all the higher education institutions that train early learning providers and teachers are programs that are aligned with the state Core Competencies. These include 13 campuses of the University of Wisconsin system, 14 independent colleges and universities, 16 technical colleges, and 4 other types of PD providers. In the application, the state notes that the plan for the grant period will be to build on these efforts, expand the YoungStar rating system, and continue work on the early learning longitudinal data system. This solid foundation should help the state achieve its goals. In particular, the state wants to continue its work that aligns the early childhood WMELS with the K12 Common Core Standards and with the Governor's Read to Lead Task Force recommendations to strengthen early literacy skills and the skills of early learning providers to do a good job with early literacy, especially with high needs children. The application is rather vague, however, in descriptions of the specifics of this plan (and many states are struggling with these kinds of alignment activities). For instance, the plan is weak in describing how the state will get the rest of the workforce entered into the Registry so it can identify PD needs and track progress in increasing the credentials and training of the entire workforce. As another example, more specific information is needed about how the state might use data from the Registry to plan PD activities, target areas of the state with high needs for more Professional development. This is a weakness of the descriptions provided.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	14

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)

Wisconsin's application describes a wide range of strong and appropriate activities, policies, incentives, and practices that have been supporting the development and retention of a high-quality early learning workforce. A diagram in this section (Figure 7) shows a PD framework (most recently developed and reviewed in October 2009) with all the many excellent components of Wisconsin's PD system that operate under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) and the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) which are affiliated with the state early learning Council [Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)]. Among the key areas are the following: 1) the state has a Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) to provide quality assurance of PD activities (e.g., YoungStar trainers must be approved to engage in any training of providers); 2) the state has 4 scholarship models using T.E.A.C.H. © for child care center staff, Head Start

teachers, family child care providers, center directors and administrators to advance their PD; 3) the state promotes retention of highly qualified staff with an incentive program called R.E.W.A.R.D.™, stipends to increase compensation; 4) the state has an excellent, comprehensive credentialing system (described in section C1); 5) state and regional level content specialists, consultants, PD trainers, and coaches in a variety of areas (e.g., infant mental health, the CSEFEL model, the WMELS, etc.) must be certified. The plan moving forward is to continue with all the above activities (with much of the who and what shown in the diagram in Figure 7), but to increase the number of providers with credentials by expanding the T.E.A.C.H.® scholarships and for DCF to use the data they are collecting in the YoungStar rating system to better target state resources and support to local regions and programs. This plan is based on the fact that so many programs are being rated by YoungStar in 2012 (see section B) and once that has occurred, the state will have a better idea about the PD needs of these newly rated programs across the state. The state also just completed a scan in 2011 of the PD offerings across the state and plans to use this information to better target high needs areas. Thus, the plan is to expand certification and degree opportunities in targeted areas. More specific details of the plan are not really provided. Table D-2-d-1 shows that the state plans to move from 1,826 credentialed providers from "aligned" institutions currently to 3,590 in 2015, an ambitious goal of a 97% increase, and for licensing, the plan calls for 22,531 licensed providers in 2015, up from 19,571 currently, a goal of a 15% increase. It is unclear how these numbers match with those contained in Table A-1-10 and A-1-11. Without a few more specific details on how the state really plan to reach such ambitious goals, it is hard to see how they can nearly double the number of credentialed providers in 4 years. The application also notes that the plans to expand the incentives and bonuses associated with the YoungStar rating process (e.g. bonus for increasing star levels, higher reimbursement rates with higher star ratings) will contribute to higher levels of workforce quality (described in section B). There is also a description of a plan to "underwrite Registry certification" in order to get more providers listed in the registry which in turn allows the state to have better data about its early learning programs and their quality. The description of this activity in the application was somewhat vague, making it hard to see how it fits into the larger picture, but it does seem to be part of the goal to increase the number of individuals participating in the Registry and the percentage participating at each level (since higher levels of credentials are required for higher star ratings – shown in a table in this section, Table 11). The goals for increasing credentials and licenses shown in Table D-2-d-2 are pretty ambitious (e.g. doubling the number with administrator credentials, increasing the number with infant/toddler credentials by 59%, and increasing the numbers with preschool credentials by 150%). In sum, while the workforce Registry has some information about credentials, it is still unclear if the state actually knows the total number of early learning providers statewide, based on the tables and the descriptions in the narrative (e.g., the Registry seems to contain information on less than half of the workforce, as mentioned above, in Table A-1-10, only 36% of the workforce is listed). And information on retention does not appear to be available. How the state really plans to improve this situation is not specifically spelled out in the application. Also missing in the descriptions of workforce PD is how the state uses technology to enhance interest in PD of providers and reach those in the state's rural and sparsely populated regions. Thus, while many seemingly great ideas are presented, it does not look like the state actually has complete enough current data about the workforce to truly know what strategies may be most successful for developing a high-quality workforce. In summary, the proposed planned strategies and activities for workforce development and improvements contains a mixture of really good ideas and approaches with other more vague suggestions that may not lead to achievable improvements that are aimed for by the state.

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	10

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)

While Wisconsin has K12 data to show significant challenges with the achievement gap, currently, Wisconsin does not have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment. This state of affairs is a weakness of Wisconsin's application because the state currently and in the near future will have no credible way to see how high needs children are doing as they enter kindergarten compared with their peers. Furthermore, perhaps more importantly, many questions about how well high needs children's participation in early learning programs prior to kindergarten cannot be examined and data used for improving the early learning programs and system. These conclusions were also apparent to the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ELAC) which began deliberations in 2008 and in 2010 recommended (rightly so) that the state "Create a comprehensive screening and assessment system", including a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment. Wisconsin's application demonstrates that the state has made some progress in this area. For example, they note 4 kinds of relevant activities: 1) the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), provided extensive professional development on best practice in screening and assessment across the state (with no further details provided making it hard to know the outcomes of this work); 2) some local districts have conducted kindergarten entry assessments; notable, in Milwaukee, the state's largest district, with many high needs children, there is a district-wide universal assessment of math and literacy skills, and the Madison Metropolitan School District also conducts a kindergarten entry assessment, but neither assessment includes other essential domains of school readiness, (e.g., social and emotional, physical development), nor are the resulting data reported to the state, and these are no descriptions even about how the local districts use these data; 3) districts in several other communities (e.g., Milwaukee, Brown county, Racine) have received TA from DPI to develop screening and assessment systems for ages birth to first grade; 4) in April 2011, the Governor formed a Read To Lead Task Force to promote competent reading skills. One of the first recommendations to come out of this task force is that the state needs to develop and implement a kindergarten entry assessment to understand the literacy level of its incoming kindergartners. For the plan going forward, the application notes that the kindergarten entry assessment to be developed should build on the state's early learning standards, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMEELS) which are currently being revised to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards that the state has adopted for K12 education. This is a positive feature of the plan. The state also wants to make sure any kindergarten entry assessment takes into account special considerations for dual language learners, a growing population in this state. Since this is just a plan with a set of steps at this time, the application is not very detailed on decisions that have not yet been made. Since most of the initial efforts on some districts have not included all Essential Domains of School Readiness, it will be important to know if future plans will have a strong commitment to being a broad assessment approach that will appropriately accommodate diverse populations. The proposed plan for this area has a set of strategic steps laid out. The state has a detailed table listing the goals and specific activities for achieving its goals. However, given that the state has no statewide assessment in place now, the timeline proposed for the ambitious set of activities is unrealistic. It is not clear that full statewide implementation can be accomplished by 2015. For instance, the state plans to convene a stakeholder group (the application outlines a set of very appropriate and inclusive types of members), the state plans to review literature on this topic and learn what other states have been doing with regards to a kindergarten entry assessment, but also to learn what districts across Wisconsin are currently doing and map the assessment tools or procedures being used to the 5 essential school readiness domains early in year 1. This extensive list of tasks will need much more time to complete. The application also states that Wisconsin is willing to take part in a cross-state consortium about kindergarten entry assessment, and would bring to such a consortium many of its state resources that could be extremely help to such a collaboration (e.g., Wisconsin Center for Education Research and the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. These kinds of resources are can help the state in implementing their plan if they participate in a cross-state consortium. One significant omission in the plan is that it does not specify how decisions will actually be made and what authority the state agencies will have to mandate the assessment statewide and obtain universal participation from all districts across the state. These kinds decisions can take considerable time, which will make it hard for the state to have full statewide implementation by 2015. The budget for this particular project is about \$6.1 million (12% of the total funds), allocated more heavily in Years 3 and 4 because the state expects to implement statewide by Year 4. This might be an adequate amount of money, but the timeline is questionable. Statewide implementation by year 4 seems to be unrealistic.

	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)

Currently, the state of Wisconsin does not have one coordinated centralized early learning data system. Rather, the state comments that it "collects a wealth of information about young children, early learning programs, and providers, including many of the Essential Data Elements". But these data are in state data systems within major state agencies [Department of Public Instruction (DPI); Department of Children and Families (DCF); Department of Health Services (DHS) and not all agencies have all the Essential Elements for each type of program for which they collect data. That is, while all agencies and departments listed in Table A-1-13 indicate that each system has unique child identifiers, there is no evidence that there is any cross-system integration; thus it is impossible to get unduplicated counts of children served in each program or combinations of programs. Likewise, it would not be possible to answer many questions that require matching children, providers, and programs, and seeing how various factors predict child progress or outcomes, or to track children over time to learn more about their entire history of early care and education and family services throughout the entire early childhood period from birth to kindergarten entry. Even within state departments, data cannot be linked across different programs because the child identifiers are unique to the particular program (e.g., DHS early intervention data for infants/toddlers served under IDEA cannot be linked to vital records birth data or to Medicaid eligibility and administrative data). There is some suggestion in the application that there have been recent upgrades to make these data systems be more "interoperable" (e.g., DPI's state longitudinal data system which is described as P20 integrates K12 data with higher education data). Or some improvements have been made [e.g., DCF has recently upgraded its early childhood data system to allow linkages between child care licensing, the TQRIS Registry, Child Care Provider Information (e.g., attendance), and Income Maintenance Program data]. These are all good linkages that should allow the state to begin to ask and answer some important questions about the early learning system and how well it is serving high needs children and their families. There were other examples where 2 state departments were collaborating to establish data sharing agreements that would allow for better data connections across program for which data sharing would be extremely important and useful [e.g., DHS which oversees Part C of IDEA for infants and toddlers with disabilities and DPI which oversees IDEA preschool special education services and programs now have a cross-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for data sharing; one between DHS and DCF about home visiting data]. Table A-1-13 shows that many programs collect data on multiple elements, but many databases are incomplete with low rates of participation so the data contained in them do not contain 100% of what should be entered. For instance, it is not clear that the state's workforce registry really has an accurate count on the entire statewide workforce (a problem that it must be acknowledged is common for many, if not most, states currently) (numbers in tables D-2-d-1 and D-2-d-2). In the absence of a statewide state level agency devoted exclusively to early learning and early learning programs and services, these kinds of interagency agreements and developments attest to Wisconsin's budding interest and commitment to having more statewide integrated and coordinated data systems to use to understand the early learning system, who is served, what the quality of programs and workforce really is, and how data can be used to improve the entire early learning system statewide. Some of these efforts can fall under the newly created Office of Early Learning in DPI (see section A3), but how this office might help in better data systems integration, alignment, and coordination is not well described. Wisconsin's application indicates its pride in its "legacy of national recognition for its early childhood data collection and actively uses these data to improve programs and services." For instance, the application describes the Wisconsin Child Care Research partnership (WCCRP) which operated from 2000 to 2005, and had a research team at the University of Wisconsin-Extension that conducted surveys, studies, and administrative data reviews related to early care and education. This is a positive feature of this area of the application. Appropriately so, the Wisconsin application recognizes the need for a better data system and indicates that there is great interest and broad stakeholder support for building a state-of-the-art, comprehensive and integrated early learning data system. This was an excellent choice by Wisconsin as one of its Focused Investment Areas. The state has made considerable progress with its State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) for K12, but currently has no linkages with the early childhood period. With its most recent SLDS grant, Wisconsin now plans to include early childhood data into the SLDS (grant awarded in July 2010). This effort has also been supported with Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) funds (via AARA funds), having been strongly endorsed by the ECLC. To begin this work, a state interdepartmental Early Childhood Longitudinal Data Systems (ECLDS) Project team has begun work, with all relevant agencies included, and a well thought out, clear, and very appropriate set of 4 major objectives: 1) analyze what current early childhood data are available; 2) establish data sharing agreements; 3) create a work plan to share and analyze existing data; and 4) develop governance strategies, plans for long term data usage and sustainability. For additional specific activities of the plan going forward, the application once again has a table with accompanying narrative to identify goals, detailed and specific activities, and a timeline to complete the activities during the grant period. By year 4 of the grant, Wisconsin propose to have a well functioning early childhood data system with a 'dashboard' and expects to have the first year of kindergarten entry data to be collected and analyzed. The 'dashboard' is not described in enough detail to effectively evaluate the adequacy of the plan to have it finalized and functional by 2015. This proposed plan is clearly quite ambitious. However, there are questions about how achievable it is within 4 years. Wisconsin plans to have each state agency maintain its current data systems, but via MOUs and data sharing agreements, all early learning system data from multiple state and local agencies and programs will be integrated. Such a plan cannot be completed effectively in a 4 year period of time. For instance, there is no discussion in the application about how data will be mapped across data bases, or how the state plans to develop a set of common data standards that all state agencies will use (e.g., some level of standardized data elements, indicators, naming conventions, definitions, codes, and formats for improved data quality). Additionally, proposed plans to address privacy and confidentiality issues are mentioned, but not enough details are provided to evaluate their adequacy. The state has selected this Focused Investment Area because they want to make significant progress in this area over the course of the grant years. It is not clear whether all members of the committee formed to work on data systems have the requisite expertise to design an effective strategy for a coordinated and integrated early learning data system that can cut across early learning data about workforce, program quality, child demographic and outcome data, and information about parent education and family support programs. Some of them are data and program experts who are from state agencies who have worked on the State Longitudinal Data System, but others are Early Learning Advisory Committee members. Thus, it is not clear from the application how all the

different types of data now in multiple databases will be coordinated or fully integrated with other (so that clear and unduplicated data can be obtained and all the essential elements laid out in Table A-1-13 are cross-walked and coordinated across state databases). The application does not have much description of how it might create reports that either the state agencies or local agencies or programs might use data from the integrated data system. This may very well be part of the plan moving forward, but the lack of consideration of this issue in the application is an important omission.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	190

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)
<p>Programs that receive subsidy payments must be regulated, and the state aims by 2012 to have 100% involvement (up from 90% now) in the YoungStar TQRIS for all programs that receive Wisconsin Shares. There also is a goal to move Head Start programs from 25% currently to 100% participation by 2015. (Table B-1 shows that only 1% of Early Head Start and Head Start programs currently participate, but the state proposes to have all 100% participating by 2015). This plan as described in the application is unclear since these programs receive automatic high ratings if they meet Performance Standards, as questionable practice (see section B1 and B2). For all other non-Wisconsin Shares and Head Start programs, the state is projecting a 75% participation rate by the end of the grant, with a 60% participation rate for the 4K programs that are community-based-collaborative approaches. The rating, monitoring, and training/technical assistance for YoungStars, Wisconsin's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) takes place at the regional level through the Consortium, a contracted agency that coordinates services at the local levels throughout the state (e.g., local child care resource and referral agencies, postsecondary education institutions). To expand participation, the state's plan calls for increasing the number of trained raters from 28 currently to add another 20 raters and to expand the outreach activities described above, with a range of key appropriate organizations and agencies laid out in the application (e.g., Early Childhood Tribal Child Care Council, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Disability Rights Association – all of which should reach more families with high needs children). Specific details for these activities are somewhat vague and it is hard to see how adding 20 raters can lead to universal participation in 4 year without a schedule showing how this can reasonably be achieved. In sum, many, but not all, programs will be rated by 2015.</p>

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 has selected E1 to meet this priority. As described in section E1, Wisconsin does not have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment. Wisconsin's application does demonstrate that the state has made some progress in this area. For instance, two of the larger school districts have a limited kindergarten entry assessment in place for a few years (only measures literacy skills, not all 5 essential Domains of School Readiness). However, the state plan for moving forward is overly ambitious to achieve full statewide implementation by 2015. The state is essentially starting from scratch to get this component of their early learning system in place by 2015, and the timeline presented in E1 is unrealistic since so many complex tasks must be completed in 4 years. The plan has an ambitious goal, but it is questionable whether it is actually attainable in 4 years. Many details of the plan are lacking and the score for E1 is less than 70% of the points available.

Absolute Priority

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

Comments on Absolute Priority

Wisconsin's application meets this absolute priority. As described above for sections B, C, D, and E, the planned activities should result in more high needs children being served in high-quality early learning programs, more providers receiving appropriate training and getting credentials, more programs being rated and being of high-quality using the state's TQRIS, expanded use of the state's early learning standards, better family engagement in children's early learning due to more and better trained staff working in early learning programs across the state, and more complete and linked data for use in program planning and improvement activities. Wisconsin has been thinking about and working on building a statewide integrated and high-quality early learning system for a while, investing time and money into all features of a high-quality early learning system. Specifically, for instance: a) Wisconsin has many policies and pieces of legislation in place that serve to strengthen the state's early learning system, improve quality of program, services, and workforce, enhance the collection and use of data for planning and decision-making, and develop more integrated and coordinated approaches to assuring that program and providers use the strong evidence-based standards, professional development, and other supports put in place by state agencies and delivered at local regional levels. b) Wisconsin initiated its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) in 2010, known as YoungStar, with the 2011-13 state budget more than doubling funding for child care from \$7 million to over \$16 million. Table B-2-c shows that currently, 90% of programs receiving CCDF child care subsidies (Wisconsin Shares) participate, and the application states that by 2012, all 100% will do so. c) Wisconsin has an excellent set of early learning standards, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) that covers infants/toddlers and for preschoolers. The actual WMELS document is an excellent resource for parents, providers, and anyone who wants to know about what young children should be able to do. d) Wisconsin's application describes a wide range of appropriate activities, policies, incentives, and practices that have been supporting the development and retention of a high-quality early learning workforce. A diagram in this section (Figure 7) shows a PD framework (most recently developed and reviewed in October 2009) with all the many excellent components of Wisconsin's PD system. e) Recently in 2010, the state reviewed its entire professional development (PD) system and made a number of excellent, critical and appropriate recommendations for improving its systems (outlined in detail in the application). f) Wisconsin does not have a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment. But the state has made some progress in this area, with 4 kinds of relevant activities described in section E1. And the state's application outlines a plan for developing a kindergarten entry assessment, although some features of the plan are not well specified. g) Appropriately so, the Wisconsin application recognizes the need for a better data system and indicates that there is great interest and broad stakeholder support for building a state-of-the-art, comprehensive and integrated early learning data system. This was an excellent choice by Wisconsin as one of its Focused Investment Areas. The state has made considerable progress with its State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) for K12, but currently has no linkages with the early childhood period. To make improvements, the reform agenda calls for a range of important activities and goals such as for example: 1) improving program quality (e.g., increasing participation in YoungStar by 75% and moving many programs to the top star ratings of quality; 2) building the workforce by doubling the number of providers with credentials and increasing the numbers of providers who advance through the Registry's certification progression and career ladder from 31% currently to 56% by 2015; and expand the number of early childhood education programs from 49 to 53 and degree programs from 33 to 37; 3) increasing family engagement by developing a framework for family engagement; 4) getting the early learning standards (Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards-WMELS) to be widely and effectively used; and 5) accelerating the development of an early childhood longitudinal data system (ECLDS) resulting in an early

childhood "dashboard" by 2015, again a laudable and ambitious goal that may not be possible to reach by 2015, given the status of current early childhood data across multiple databases under the auspices of the 3 state agencies, with much incomplete data (based on the data presented in the tables in section A1.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # WI-5037

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 2:10 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

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 demonstrates the state's increase in population of children with High Needs; concurrently, the state has increased their total financial investment for ELD (Early Learning and Development) programs substantially from \$417,985,183 in 2007 to \$432,445,601 in 2011. This is, in part, directed to the state's mandatory kindergarten for four-year-olds. In addition, the state is one of only thirteen that supplements Head Start funding. These two programs demonstrate the state's strong commitment to young children, particularly those with High needs. The proposal demonstrates a history of collaboration and success in the development of a high quality ELD system. This provides building blocks on which future work can be based. The state has multiple programs designed to meet specific needs of young children, particularly those with High needs. The application describes those programs and indicates an increase in participation in each of the programs over the past few years; some were only modest gains, others doubled their enrollment. The reform effort outlined in this proposal is based on existing ELD legislation, policies and practices. The applicant references legislative support, but specific supporting details are not provided. Stronger evidence is provided for local policies and practices that are supportive of high quality service provision and supports. Specifically, DHS provides a staff person to support work with infants and toddlers and has an established Tribal Equities Work Group. Efforts to enhance ELD across a wide variety of areas of special need are described. Among these programs are: child care, services for children with disabilities, children in Early Head Start and Head Start, and Tribal Partnerships. Health practice promotion is embedded into work that is done across the various aspects of the ELD system. Policies and practices described in the proposal are, in general, consistent with current best practice. The state currently provides guidance for high quality service provision for young children with early learning standards (WMELS), which are aligned with recommendations of learned societies that influence the provision of high-quality, appropriate services to young children and their families. The standards have been in place since 2003 and have been updated in the interim. These standards are available in English, Spanish and Hmong, in both web-based and paper formats. Family engagement strategies identify and enhance parents' capabilities in five key areas that are linked to promoting a child's social-emotional development. Family support plans are required for home visiting programs, which may be more difficult to monitor than center-based programs. Another strength of the state's work is the development of early childhood

professionals. Postsecondary education prepares educators to understand and incorporate early learning standards. Five professional early learning credentials allow professionals to tailor their preparation to their needs and ongoing in-service training helps professionals currently working in the field to learn and incorporate techniques into their work in a wide variety of areas. Additionally, support such as coaching and individual contacts through a variety of means are available to professionals. Some effective data practices that are currently being used are described and a plan to enhance the system is provided. The state does not currently have a statewide KEA. Some school districts are implementing a KEA, but only a few districts address kindergarten assessment. The application addresses the need to develop and implement a KEA across the state; plans for this work are discussed more fully in other areas of the proposal.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	19

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 outlines ambitious, yet achievable goals to enhance the quality of services for PreK children, particularly for those with High Needs, to prepare them to enter school ready to learn. These goals are further supported by a clear logic model for the scope and sequence of the work proposed. The state addresses ambitious, yet achievable goals for improving quality, improving outcomes and closing the readiness gap by increasing YoungStar participation. YoungStar participation, which will be measured by the improved TQRIS, will help to ensure that all children, particularly those with high needs are being served in high quality ELD programs. Additionally, the state will increase the number of Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Since these programs traditionally serve high needs children, this increase will have a direct effect on the numbers of high needs children who have access to high quality programs. Additionally, the state outlines a plan for substantially increasing the participation of regulated child care programs in the TQRIS program. Again, this is a direct way to ensure that high quality programs are available for young children, especially those with high needs. These ambitious yet achievable goals address needs across many areas for both children and their families. Some of these goals directly address the needs of children and their families, others – such as enhancing educational opportunities for professionals and improving the QRIS system – are less direct but no less important. This application outlines a plan to implement a reform agenda to strengthen the ELD system in a generally clear, comprehensive manner. Developing and refining the state's infrastructure, strengthening the QRIS, enhancing services to families and implementing efficiencies are all described, an important first step in rating and monitoring the ELD system is to develop and implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) statewide. This work is part of the state plan. The state plan includes enhancing the current infrastructure to support the reform agenda. One key activity is to establish an Office of Early Learning within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to coordinate and direct reform efforts. The state will strengthen its TORIS system to address interagency collaboration and sharing of information. The enhanced TQRIS will also be used to rate programs and make that information accessible to families in ways that help them to make decisions about choosing high quality care for their child. Activities for engaging and supporting families are woven throughout the ELD system. This is a comprehensive approach that will lead to improved services for all children, especially children with High Needs, and their families; the specific activities addressed by the state are well-chosen to help them achieve the goal of reducing the achievement gap between children with high needs and their peers so that all children enter school ready to learn. The proposal clearly outlines the High Quality Plans to address specific areas of the selection criteria, based on work that has already been done in the state and the state's most pressing ELD needs. These criteria appear to be the most appropriate for making the changes needed and will have a positive impact on the goal of having all children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Specifically, the applicant outlines the plan to improve the Early Learning State Standards (WMELS). Some modules will need to be developed, others will need to be expanded or modified. The framework will be expanded to more fully align with the Common Core State Standards. The standards need to be revised and validated to align with evidence-based practice, local and regional capacity to deliver training needs to be expanded. The Office of Early Learning has worked with various advisory groups to ensure that the standards address developmental, cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The Office of Early Learning will monitor to ensure consistency in the delivery of services. Closely aligned to this will be improvement of skills, knowledge and competencies for the workforce and the development and implementation of a KEA. Engaging and supporting families is integrated into many of the tasks that are outlined in the proposal. In particular, emphasis will be placed on developing and implementing skills that support culturally and linguistically diverse families. Additionally, workforce development is a key task. Alignment of educator preparation programs with the Common Core, expanding articulation agreements, streamlining preparation time and credentialing processes and aligning incentives to encourage participation will be addressed. The state will build the infrastructure needed to implement the early childhood longitudinal data system; this will require

interagency collaboration. This collaboration is outlined in MoU's and letters of support. In addition, licensing and regulating programs will be a key task to ensuring that all children, including those with High Needs, enter school ready to learn. Finally, the state will work to increase stakeholder buy-in and to further develop public-private partnerships. The state's overall approach includes a plan that both builds on past successes and addresses key areas of need. The proposal provides clear rationales for the work proposed and supports the plan with budgetary information that clearly links to the work that is needed to fill the needs. Roles and responsibilities of the partners are well articulated in MOUs and the scope of work provided.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

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 proposal outlines a clear and appropriate organizational structure to address the goals outlined in the proposal. The Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council exemplifies a collaborative structure that supports regional and local service providers to deliver best-practice services to children and families. This advisory council will build on the long-standing inter-agency work that has been accomplished in the state over the past two decades. A single agency, CDF (Department of Children and Families) will serve as the lead agency for the scope of work outlined in this proposal. A grant administrator, hired by CDF will have the responsibility to work with a wide variety of agencies to streamline services and avoid duplication while overseeing the implementation of the scope of work outlined here. Three key agencies and their respective responsibilities are clearly identified.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will provide funds such as federal child care and development block grant, TANF and general state funds and will have primary responsibility for the child care subsidy program, child care licensing and certification and home visiting. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will contribute general state funds and Part B funds, among others. Primary DPI responsibilities include 4-year-old kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education. Finally, the Department of Health Services (DHS) will provide funding from IDEA Part C and WIC. DHS programs include early intervention and the EPSDT program, among others. These responsibilities are well-suited to the individual agencies and will take advantage of expertise that already exists within agencies. Governance and decision making are clearly articulated. As lead agency, DCF will have the authority to execute and fill the terms of the MoU's, but other agencies have important roles in decision making. This collaborative model will enhance the agencies' joint efforts while simultaneously providing clear lines of authority. Participating agencies have demonstrated their commitment to the work outlined here by either signing MOUs or providing letters of support. Some of these agencies will commit funds to joint projects, thereby leveraging funds rather than duplicating services. The letters of intent, which come from a wide variety of entities, speak of working relationships among agencies and indicate a willingness to continue working collaboratively for the duration of the funding period. Appropriate signatures are included. The Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care includes individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds who represent stakeholders who may not otherwise have a voice in the ELD system. This high level support is a way to enhance stakeholder buy in that is vital to enacting the changes and enhancements in this proposal. This is a high quality response with substantial implementation.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	14

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 proposal clearly addresses the use of existing funds to develop and implement portions of the scope of work outlined. These funds come from a wide variety of entities including CCDF, Head Start and the state's current ARRA ECAC grant. DPI and DHS funds will also be used to address activities of the grant. Roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies that are making financial contributions are clearly outlined in the budget narrative. In general, these funds appear to be adequate to successfully complete the scope of work, and are reasonable and necessary. While the overall focus of much of the grant work is in building infrastructure, adequate funds are allocated for local implementation of the parts of the plan that will directly influence service provision and personnel preparation. The budget narrative indicates that the CCDF quality set aside funds will be used for stipend and bonus programs to provide incentives for ELD providers to enhance the quality of care provided. These set-asides will support the overall focus of the grant. Details of funding by various programs, consistent with the state plan, are provided and explained. Further, the proposal demonstrates that the scope of work will either be completed during the grant period or can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure continued high quality services for young children. The proposal articulates venues through which continued funding will be secured.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
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(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	5
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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's TQRIS (YoungStar) was initiated in 2010 with bipartisan legislative support. The primary purpose was to improve the quality of child care for all children. YoungStar is based on tiered program standards that include all the required areas, but not each of these areas is systematically implemented statewide. This state provides stable, non-discretionary financial support for 4-year-old kindergarten; this is a substantial commitment to high quality ELD programming statewide. Program standards are clearly outlined in the proposal. YoungStar includes all recommended program elements and is fully aligned with the WMELS, Head Start and Early Head Start, and IDEA Parts B and C. The exception is that health promotion is not addressed for IDEA Part B programs. This comprehensive alignment demonstrates building blocks that have been put into place through years of collaborative work throughout the state. The state's Early Learning Standards (WMELS) is aligned with the TQRIS. Personnel preparation and inservice training are provided to help providers implement the aligned curriculum. The proposal indicates that child assessment are being conducted and parents are being informed, but supporting evidence does not clearly indicate that all children are being assessed using appropriate tools and/or strategies. Family engagement strategies, such as newsletters and encouragement to serve on boards of directors, are listed. Specific strategies to engage families of high needs children are not delineated. The state has initiated a career lattice to address early childhood educator qualifications which can be achieved in various ways. Education levels are tracked for center directors as well as direct care providers. Health promotion activities are also included in the YoungStar system and are embedded into early learning and development standards and practices rather than being presented as stand-alone requirements. These are all important activities that contribute to a high-quality system to enhance the development of young children. Data is collected to track areas of highest need geographically and to track care provider data such as training and technical assistance, use of scholarship and bonus incentives and quality improvement plans developed. Further work to enhance the TQRIS is addressed in the proposal. The applicant describes the process through which the QRIS system was built; representatives from 21 organizations were involved in the process which increases the comprehensive nature of the system and subsequently, the buy-in of various programs and organizations. Consultants and trainers in the system must be assessed and verified to ensure that the training being delivered is of high quality. In addition, on-site coaching and mentoring are offered, which is an excellent way to ensure that the strategies learned in training are being implemented correctly. This clearly links training to implementation that positively influences child development. The proposal indicates that the TQRIS system is designed to help families choose meaningfully from among services at different quality levels. Supporting evidence for how this will be accomplished is unclear. The application does not clearly outline how services to children in infant-toddler settings and some preschool settings are currently being supported. The application does indicate that an inclusion consultant will be hired to develop training modules and serve as a liaison to birth to three and early childhood special education programs. This is a positive step, but it does not seem sufficient to address all the needs of children with disabilities throughout the state. This is a medium quality response with partial implementation.

	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)

The application states that 90% of ELD programs that receive subsidies are enrolled in the YoungStar system. This number is projected to be 100% within a year when tiered reimbursements take effect. The state has developed alternate pathways for Early Head Start and Head Start programs, and programs that have received national accreditation, to participate in the system. While this may be a more complex system, it will encourage programs to participate in unique ways while still meeting the needs of the children who are enrolled and their families. The state's PreK ELD's, including some children being served under Part B of IDEA, are also included in the system. The system does not currently include children being served under Part C (infants and toddlers with disabilities), but these services are addressed in the High Quality Plan. Currently, one fourth of elementary school districts offer collaborative community-based programs in collaboration with child care and/or Head Start programs. Early Head Start and Head Start serve children with High Needs; their inclusion in the TQRIS helps to ensure that children who may be most at risk for entering school unprepared to learn. Further work to include infants and toddlers with delays or disabilities will further strengthen the state's work in this area. Of some concern is the state's varied child-staff ratios in ELD programs. This can lead to significant variance in the quality of services that are being delivered to young children and their families and can especially negatively impact high needs children. The state has in place a child care subsidy program. The sliding scale allows families to enter if they earn 185% (or less) of the federal poverty guidelines, but they are allowed to stay in the system until they earn more than 200% of the guidelines. This allows families to move slightly up the income ladder without losing support; this would encourage families to do better financially without penalizing them. The state has a no-waiting-list policy, which would allow a family to qualify for the subsidy immediately if they are offered a job; a parent who is not assured of high quality child care may not be able to take a job if they do not have quality care for their child or children. Children in such circumstances are certainly at a higher risk of entering school with delays or challenges. This assurance is a way to support families and children, specifically families living in poverty - a high need population. Early Head Start and Head Start programs will be expanded in the state; these programs traditionally serve children and families living in poverty - a high needs population. Expanded and enhanced services for this population will help more children with high needs enter school ready to learn. The state's high quality plan will increase YoungStar participation for (a) licensed child care programs that do not serve subsidy-eligible children, (b) Early Head Start and Head Start programs and will develop and implement an alternate path for public PreK programs. The proposal addresses the need to increase the number and percentage of programs that are included in YoungStar. Exclusion of Part B and Part C programs is of concern since these programs are primarily focused on children with high needs and their families. Target increases for other programs are ambitious and achievable. This is a medium quality response with partial implementation.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	10

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)

those incentives will target diverse providers. The goal of moving at least 1,200 programs to a higher rating is seen as ambitious, yet achievable. Maintenance of this work will be enhanced by the coaching and communities of practice strategies outlined in the proposal, thereby ensuring that children with High Needs continue to receive services after the grant funding period. This is a high quality response with substantial implementation.

	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)
The state currently uses environmental rating scales to assess levels of program quality for environmental and interaction aspects of ELD programs. The applicant includes recognition that while they are good measures of the quality of childcare settings, these measures are not good predictors of child development outcomes. As such, the state has contracted for a study to compare the gains of children in various levels of quality in the YoungStar system. The application outlines several factors that will be considered in the design and implementation of the study; each of these factors is important to ensure that the result truly reflects differences. Additionally, the state plans to contract a study that will compare gains in school readiness among children from higher-and lower-tiered programs. If a statistically significant finding results the state can use this information to either reward high quality programs, provide incentives to lower quality programs to improve, or both. Either outcome will enhance service quality, and child development outcomes for all children, especially those with High Needs.

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.	30	27

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;

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

This application comprehensively and coherently address the state's plan to build on the existing system to enhance the quality of Early Learning and Development programs for all children, including those with High Needs, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The applicant clearly outlines a plan to integrate and align resources and policies across agencies; tracking improvements through the TQRIS will be an important part of that plan. Letters of support and memorandums of agreement indicate that statewide support for this work will be supported by a wide variety of stakeholders. The needs of the state will be addressed systematically to build a system designed to increase the quality of PreK programs to help children, especially those with High Needs, to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The application addresses the integration and alignment of resources to address the state's needs. Further, the application provides evidence of years of work by interagency groups to bring the state to its current system and outlines further work building on these accomplishments to continue this work. Alignment and oversight of the state's PreK programs will be accomplished by a common, statewide TQRIS. Groundwork for the TQRIS has been laid but the system is not currently being implemented. The focused investment areas are addressed in the proposal. Promoting Early Learning Outcomes for Children is a relative strength of the proposal. The state's early learning and development standards are high quality and appropriate for PreK children. They are comprehensive, cover all essential domains of school readiness, and are aligned with the state's K-3 academic content standards. These Early Learning Outcomes are incorporated into program quality standards for children and also drive the workforce knowledge and competency framework. The proposal outlines strategies and supports to help both professionals and families understand and use the standards. A great early childhood education workforce is also addressed. The state will build on a framework to align standards across various PreK programs to promote children's learning and developmental outcomes. The state's current progression of credentials and degrees, along with supports to help professionals move up the career lattice, is clear and designed to help professionals to enhance their skills. Letters of support from post-secondary institutions and a description of the requirements for in-service training are an indication of the state's support for professionals. The state does not yet implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), but the proposal outlines a plan to find or develop a KEA that meets the criteria outlined. When this is implemented, findings will be used as part of the state's longitudinal data system to continue to improve the state's PreK programs. The state's longitudinal data system is being enhanced and updated to ensure that the data that are collected are available appropriately and will be used to enhance the quality of programs that directly influence the development of PreK children and to improve the programs that serve them.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WI-5037

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 12:00 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: Criteria, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 20

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's financial investment has increased over the past decade including the past five years for which they should be commended during this current economic situation with so many programs begin cut. For example, funding for young children was at about \$418 million in 2007 and is now at over \$432 million. The annual investment in the four year old kindergarten program (4K) doubled from 2007 to 2011. Wisconsin also supplements Head Start and Early Head Start. All of this indicates a strong commitment from Wisconsin for early childhood learning and development. Wisconsin is responding to the need to create quality programs for children with high needs, especially those in poverty. For example, in 2009 39% of the children in the state below the age of six lived in poverty and about 1/3 of these children were below the age of 3. Moreover, 52% of the children living in the largest city and 44% living in the rural north are in families that are 200 percent below the federal poverty level. Other information included in the proposal indicated that children in the high needs population (American Indian, Black, Hispanic) are falling behind other children (white & Asian) in math and reading by third grade. Other initiatives support the focus Wisconsin has on increasing quality in early childhood: • the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) was instituted with the 2011-2013 budget, almost doubling the child care budget • an early childhood advisory council was created using ARRA funds • State longitudinal data system for early childhood was also initiated with ARRA funds. Wisconsin has had several initiatives supporting high quality services for young children over the past five years. For example, Wisconsin Shares is a program to support families choices for child care, especially those from poverty. This is the type of program that will support children with high needs and Wisconsin is to be commended for this program. Likewise, Children's Trust Fund addresses child neglect and has received national recognition. Legislation has also supported the early learning and development plan. In December 2008 the Governor's ECAC was established by executive order. The role of this group is to assist in building a comprehensive early childhood system. These initiatives and practices are strong indicators of the commitment Wisconsin has to the early learning and development initiative. Wisconsin has had early learning standards (WMELS) since 2003 which are based on National Research Council, NAEYC, NIEER and address the national Education Goals Panel's essential domains. These are national groups that support early learning and development of young children, however, one of the major groups for young children, that of

the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) is missing. DEC/CEC has standards that are specific for young children with disabilities ages birth through 8. Wisconsin continuously reviews and aligns the WMELS and is currently doing so with the national Common Core Standards as well as literacy recommendations with an anticipated completion date of 2013. Wisconsin has an assessment system for young children including those with high needs (IDEA programs, YoungStar participants, Head Start and Early Head Start and home visiting programs) and ongoing training is provided to early educators. This assessment system is not currently comprehensive as some programs do not include environmental assessments and adult child interactions. However, they do have a system that includes all of the critical elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System but they are not implemented across all programs. Health promotion practices are embedded in most of the early childhood programs and is part of the TQRIS (YoungStar). YoungStar has been nationally recognized for requiring programs to have physical activity requirements and nutritious meals to attain the highest ratings (3-5) which is a strength of this program. Wisconsin has demonstrated strong commitment to families through their activities that have been ongoing for decades. For example, Family Engagement strategies have been implemented for a number of years and since 1991 has provided a fiscal incentive to school districts with 4K programs that have an outreach program for families. YoungStar also includes extra points of family engagement. The development of early educators has been a long time focus for Wisconsin as they have had professional development standards required by the Department of Public Instruction and in 2000 the Quality Educator Initiative (QEI) shifted these standards to being performance based. The Registry tracks training opportunities and certifies early childhood staff and oversees the career ladder. This is a comprehensive system for which Wisconsin should be commended as being a leader in the field. A comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEA) is not required by the state, although many school systems use screening and assessments tools to inform instruction. Two of the State's major school systems currently use a comprehensive system. The ECAC and the Read to Lead Task Force has both recommended that the KEA be implemented state wide. While the KEA is not currently being implemented statewide, there is great support for it and Wisconsin has a plan to implement it state-wide. Wisconsin has many different systems for collecting data, such as, the 2009 Act 59 requires the establishment and maintenance of a P20 longitudinal data system (LDS), although this does not currently include early childhood; early childhood data is currently collected by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). KidStat among others. ECAC recently suggested that a comprehensive longitudinal system be created in the State so that is currently being planned. Each state agency has an assessment system and one of the goals of RTT-ELC is to integrate these systems into one state-wide system so that it can be accessed by all programs and families. Wisconsin has all of the RTT-ELC components in place with variations regarding full implementation or under revision. Consequently, they are in a very good position for increasing the kindergarten success for young children who have high needs.

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

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)

Wisconsin's vision for developing a strong early childhood system is based on workforce development, quality program standards, assessment and accountability, early learning standards and family engagement which is graphically summarized in a figure. This graphic provides a clear vision of the State's plan. Wisconsin plans to do this with three overall goals: improving program quality, improving outcomes for children with high needs and closing the readiness gap. These are ambitious goals yet considering the initiatives that Wisconsin already has in place or is revising, they are doable. Wisconsin's reform agenda to meet these goals include: increasing the quality of the early learning standards; increase access and participation in high quality programs; increase family engagement and create systems for sustainability. To address this reform agenda and supported by the Wisconsin legislature, they will establish an Office of Early Learning within DPI to address professional development initiatives; hire a grant manager located in the lead agency DCF to oversee all of the project activities and goals; create a liaison position with the 11 tribes to build capacity; expand and increase the capacity of YoungStar (TQRIS) (the 2001-2013 budget allocated double the funds for YoungStar); develop procedures for expanding the WMELS under the guidance of the OEL; enhance family engagement (especially including develop culturally and linguistically appropriate standards); expand incentives for professional development; fast track the alignment of the ELD with Common Core; implement a plan for comprehensive assessment at kindergarten entry; fast track development of early childhood longitudinal data system; increase participation in YoungStar; establish a public-private partnership. The logic model provides an overall view of their reform agenda. Wisconsin has identified Focus areas C1 to more comprehensively increase capacity for all programs to implement and utilize the early learning standards. The focus area; C 4 will enable Wisconsin to embed areas of cultural and linguistic competence and family support strategies for children with high needs. Focus areas D1 & D2 address the state

workforce competencies and expansion of their knowledge and skills through training. These four focus areas are interrelated as they are placing a strong emphasis on developing a competent workforce that is based on the professional competencies and provides quality services to young children, especially those who have high needs. The State also provides a strong plan for addressing these focus areas. Wisconsin also plans to address focus areas E1 & E2 because of their need to develop a statewide KEA and also to develop a statewide early childhood assessment system. Both of these are partially implemented in different parts of the State and with different early childhood agencies so, by placing an emphasis on these, Wisconsin will be positioned to better prepare young children with high needs for kindergarten readiness.

	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)

Wisconsin has a shared governance structure. The lead agency for the RTT-ELC project will be DCF who will be responsible for all of the program, policy and fiscal decisions. DCF will be responsible for the final decisions. A grant manager will be responsible for the implementation of all of the activities, liaison to the ECAC, coordination of the MOUs, direction to the family and tribal consultants. DCF manages the YoungStar (TQRIS) system and supports the development of ECLDS. DPI will be responsible for developing the KEA, EC LDS, improvements to the WMELS, prekindergarten and professional development and develop the Office of Early Learning (OEL) which will primarily be responsible for training and professional development. DHS will coordinate and align the physical and health standards and activities. Three agencies in the State will be responsible for implementing the RTT-ELC project, DCF, DPI and DHS and have developed and signed an extensive MOU delineating the scope of work for each agency. This involvement of three agencies will minimize the confusion of responsibilities and will make the process for implementation of this project more efficient. Seven letters of support were included in the proposal with several letters having multiple constituents sign. The table indicated 27 individual letters were included, however, 22 of these listed are part of the ECAC. While all of the expected constituents were listed on the table, many of these are on the ECAC. Individual letters from each of these individuals would have indicated a stronger interest in the RTT-ELC initiative. Stakeholder involvement will be facilitated through the ECAC which is an advisory group for early childhood. Wisconsin has a clear governance structure with specific activities delineated across agencies with the MOU. Support for the project appears to be comprehensive, however, the list of the ECAC members was included on the letter from the ECAC when separate letters would have provided more wide spread support. These members were supporting it as an ECAC member but by supplying a separate letter, their agency support would have been more apparent. There is no indication of support for the project from families of children with high needs. There is not apparent support from family organizations so this criterion is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	14

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)

Wisconsin plans to allocate over \$5 million of current State funds to this project. These funds extend across all agencies and programs (this information was included in a table). The RTT-ELC funds will be used to accelerate the implementation of the reform agenda. A little over \$50 million will be used for this project with just over \$45 million being requested from RTT-ELC funds and over \$5 million from state funds. Over \$9 million of the funds are being allocated to support the increase in quality for children with high needs to be successful which is a strength of the grant and shows a strong commitment from Wisconsin to address the needs of these children. Over \$14 million is being allocated for the comprehensive data system. Since this system is not currently in place this amount will be necessary to develop the infrastructure. The lead agency DCF will receive the majority of the funds over \$23 million as they are the agency that oversees the activities, including the grant manager and their staff, implementation of goals related to increasing services for children with high needs and developing the data system. DPI will be using a little over \$15 million of the funds with one of their major activities is expansion of the KEA. Finally DHS will utilize approximately \$5 million for their primary responsibility to expand the TQRIS (YoungStar). The request of approximately \$45 million seems very reasonable given the major goal is to implement the proposed goals on a state wide level. Consequently the RTT-ELC funds will be used to do the state wide implementation so, future need for funds will be substantially less. This budget is reasonable given the number of children with high needs served. Sustainability: Many of the activities in the RTT-ELC proposal are to bring them to capacity. For example, YoungStar (TQRIS) has already been partially implemented but not state-wide so the funds will be support state wide implementation; ELS funds will provide curriculum development and application of the standards statewide so ongoing funds will not be needed. KEA & ECLDS will involve costs

after the grant period. Between \$1-2 million will be needed for KEA and plans are to use reallocated state funds. Likewise, ECLDS will need approximately \$3 million so, the ECAC and ECLDS advisory groups will identify additional funding sources, such as federal funds and local funding. While they articulate that funds will be sought out for sustainability, it is still unclear how these funds will actually be obtained.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

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)

YoungStar was legislatively initiated in 2010 and currently has 90% enrollment with all programs participating by 2012. Currently YoungStar is being implemented in Early Head Start, Head Start, ELD programs under CCDF and state funded preschools. It is not being implemented in ESEA or IDEA (Part B and Part C). There is no plan to implement it in ESEA and IDEA programs as these programs have a specific set of requirements, however, they are early childhood programs and therefore should be included in the YoungStar program. Points on the YoungStar are allocated in the following areas: provider, teacher, director qualifications; learning environment & curriculum (WMELS), professional practice and health and wellness. The ELS, CAS, workforce qualifications, family engagement, health promotion and data practices are all aligned with the TQRIS and programs gain additional stars based on points allocated for each of these areas. The YoungStar system is based on five stars with clear criteria for achieving each star. For example, 1 star means they are out of compliance and receive no reimbursements. Level four includes formal classroom observations and interviews, 50% of lead teachers have infant toddler or inclusion credential, average score on the ECERS must be five, etc. There are specific criteria delineating the different levels of stars. The criteria seems reasonable but the level 1 star seems to be given to all centers who are out of compliance when it might make more sense to provide a star if they are in compliance as a first step. In 2004 the Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership conducted research on child care programs and the results were used to inform the development of the YoungStar program criteria. With RTT-ELC funds Wisconsin plans to increase provider support for YoungStar and to enhance the use of assessment measures in programs, improve on the family engagement strategies, and expand the health care component. A clear timeline was included that describes how it will be implemented over the four years. Wisconsin discussed a plan for increasing the quality of early learning and development programs through YoungStar with the expectation that more families who have a child with high needs will have access to these programs. Specific plans for supporting families in accessing these high quality programs was not discussed. All ELD programs, except IDEA and ESEA programs will participate in TQRIS (YoungStar) by the end of 2012. YoungStar is linked to Wisconsin's licensing system for early development and learning programs with level 1 designating those out of compliance and level 2 those who are in compliance. Wisconsin has developed a good TQRIS and has a clear plan for revising and enhancing the TQRIS within four years. It is not currently fully implemented within the state but the plans indicate that it will be by 2012. There is no discussion as to whether the IDEA Part C and Part B programs will participate in the TQRIS.

	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)

Some of the programs in Wisconsin are participating in YoungStar (TQRIS) with a plan for full implementation. For those in Wisconsin Shares (subsidy program), currently 90% are participating in YoungStar (TQRIS) and by 2012 100%; Head Start and EHS at 75% rate by 2015; 60% of the State funded preschools (4K). There are no plans to include IDEA (Part C & B) programs and those under Title 1 (ESEA). For the State to have a comprehensive early learning and development program, all of the programs should be included in the TQRIS. This is a weakness of the proposal. While it could be justified that these programs are under the federal regulations and requirements, they are still part of the early childhood system in the State and the children served in these programs are high needs. Wisconsin shares is the program the State uses to support families and there has never been a waiting list which is very amazing. There were no plans discussed for increasing opportunities for families with children who have high needs to access higher quality programs. All of the CCDF (Wisconsin Shares) programs will be participating in the TQRIS but at level 1 or 2 which are at the lowest levels of the system. Wisconsin has ambitious targets and given their commitment to early learning and development and the activities they are proposing, they are reasonable. The two major areas of concern are 1) the process used to recruit families of children with high needs to enroll their child in child care programs and 2) the omission of including children participating in Part C and Part B programs as part of the TQRIS. This criterion is partially implemented and is scored accordingly.

	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)

The accountability program implemented by Wisconsin includes classroom observations and rating scales (ECERS, ITERS, SACRS, FCCRS). Interrater reliability is at 85% which is a standard rate. There are 28 individuals across the State who are raters for programs and there are plans to increase it another 20 for a total of 48 assessors. Only 1/3 of the classrooms in a center or program are actually observed and assessed which could result in some of the classrooms who are not assessed as being either higher or lower quality. It is important that all classrooms have assessments to determine quality in a program. There is also no information about how often these assessments will occur. It is good that they use independent raters to reduce bias in the observations. The ECERS, ITERS, SACRS & FCCRS are all environmental rating scales and do not assess the quality of teacher child interactions or of the quality of the classroom instruction so the measures used are not comprehensive. Classroom environment is just one component of the classroom and program. Providing information to parents is completed through media, word of mouth and social marketing forums and networking through agencies and organizations. There is also a website available for families to access information about child care programs ratings, the areas where programs received points on and other relevant information about licensing. While the website is a great idea, it doesn't meet the needs of families of children with high needs or those in poverty. These families would not likely have access to technology or have the time to go to a library or other location with internet access. The State plans to work with family organizations, the Tribal child care council, the Hmong association among others to develop strategies for providing this information to more families. The specific strategies for working with the family organizations was not described. The rating and monitoring of the early learning and development programs is partially implemented across the state. The measures used to assess program quality are not comprehensive and this provides a partial picture of quality programs.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	15

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 plans to implement several strategies to increase participation in higher quality programs for children with high needs. These include tiered reimbursement where programs will receive more support at each of the higher levels of the TQRIS with 25% at the five star level, additional reimbursement for serving children with disabilities; TEACH scholarships and REWARD which provides a pay supplement. The only strategy directly related to high needs children is that of providing additional financial support if a child with disabilities is enrolled in the program. There was no discussion of strategies for including other children with high needs. Wisconsin provides supports for working families, especially those with disabilities through additional subsidies for child care programs and free transportation. There are incentives for programs to provide full day child care for working families. While there are supports for families who have a child with disabilities, there are no other supports mentioned for other families who have a child with high needs. Wisconsin plans to have 30% of the programs enrolled in levels above 2 with 40% of them in level 4 or 5. They plan to do this by: expanding training through the coaches for WMELS and Pyramid Model; expand training that will address services for children with high needs; training on family engagement strategies; develop and implement a 'community of practice' to enhance overall training for YoungStar. They will also provide an incentive package for providers that enroll children with high needs (expand TEACH funding; free re-certification for 500 providers; one time bonuses for programs that move to a higher level). Incentives for families include those families at 185% of the poverty level will be served and this will continue to 200% of the poverty level; there will not be a co-pay for families with children in foster care. Wisconsin plans to move 1200 programs to a higher level on the TQRIS with fewer programs at levels one and two. It is projected that 30% of enrolled children will be in higher rated programs and 40% at levels four or five by 2015. This is reasonable given that over 2,000 programs are currently under review with TQRIS and will receive a rating in 2012. Wisconsin has developed a plan for increasing the number of programs in TQRIS (YoungStar), especially for children with disabilities. It is not clear how this plan will also address the needs of children from other high need areas, such as Hmong, Tribal and poverty. They have an ambitious and achievable target for increasing the number of programs in the top 3 tiers but it is partially implemented.

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

Wisconsin has been using environmental rating scales to determine the different levels for YoungStar but based on a child outcome study conducted by DCF it was determined that these measures were inadequate and that an outcomes measure is needed. A further child outcome study was commissioned and this is currently underway. The validation study will focus on programs with children who have high needs. Selection of instruments has not been determined but there will be reliable, valid and nationally normed. Currently Head Start programs automatically qualify for level 4 because of the high standards required. This evaluation will provide more specific evidence if this is the case. The research design for evaluating whether high quality in YoungStar is related to child readiness for kindergarten has specific goals to address and is thorough. The instruments they are considering are Bracken, Woodcock Johnson, Pencil Tap test, and teacher reports of progress. While these instruments are reliable, valid and normed, they are not sensitive in addressing child progress during the early childhood years. There are other measures that could more accurately assess child progress. The overall design is thorough but it is not clear how the instruments they are considering will be used as there is mention of the environmental rating scales but not of these instruments.

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.	30	24

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 ELD standards cover birth through five and include the areas of: health and physical, social and emotional, language and communication, approaches to learning, and cognition and general knowledge. The standards are divided into sub categories with developmental expectations, programs standards, performance standards, developmental continuum and examples of how adults could support learning at the different levels. The ELD standards are comprehensive and they report that they are aligned with the kindergarten readiness essential domains, however, there is no evidence to support it. A strength of the standards process is that the State leadership continues to update them based on the most current research. For example, the Standards have been revised twice since 2003 and are focusing their next review to include the expansion of the WMELS professional development structure and content, especially including the improvement of outcomes for children with high needs. No date or deadline for the next revision was discussed. The WMELS are aligned with the WMAS (Wisconsin Model Academic Standards); DPI is currently revising language and communication content to reflect literacy with an emphasis on reading. This indicates alignment with K-3 standards. WMELS is also aligned with the TORIS (YoungStar). Wisconsin recognizes that a structure for moving policy, practice and procedures is needed and has developed four goals to support it: expand the WMELS professional development structure, revise current WMELS, expand content specific training modules, and strengthen coaching. These are appropriate goals and are feasible given the current State of the standards. The WMELS are used in all early childhood programs (Head Start, 4K, 5K, IDEA Part B, child care, home visiting) and points in the YoungStar are assigned accordingly. Training is cross-department to prevent duplication in training which is a strength. The WMELS are in Spanish, English, & Hmong and available online for download or for purchase from CCIC. While they have a good plan for implementing WMELS and aligning it with WMAS, it is not currently aligned and used in some programs, thus it is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	22

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)

Wisconsin has a commitment to family engagement, however, family engagement strategies across all systems still needs to be developed. Funds from RTT-ELC will be used to support the expansion and integration of the family engagement strategies. A multicultural advisory group will support the development and implementation of these activities. Without information on the specific composition of this group, it is unclear what role family members will have in this group. Wisconsin's efforts in family engagement are to be commended as they include some of the current national initiatives, such as, Touchpoints, Strengthening Families and FAST. As they indicated, they are applied individually across the systems so a goal is to integrate them throughout. Wisconsin also recognizes that training in family strategies is also not occurring state-wide but in individual programs or systems. RTT-ELC funds will also be used to support additional training opportunities in family engagement. Wisconsin already has a system for supporting families through home visiting, family resource centers, and federal funding. The RTT-ELC project will increase support for families of children with high needs and assist providers in becoming more knowledgeable of family resources to share. It is good that Wisconsin plans to build upon an already existing program and expand it to families who have children with high needs. Wisconsin plans to hire a family engagement consultant to assist with the development and implementation of the activities and goals. There is no discussion of the credentials of this person or the specific duties of this person. Currently family engagement is individualized across selected programs but Wisconsin has developed a plan to support family engagement across all programs. Family engagement activities are partially implemented.

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	19

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)

Wisconsin has had a comprehensive approach to professional development and in 1995 developed the Professional Development Institute (PDI). It includes career ladder, professional credentials, articulation agreements with Wisconsin Technical College System and four year universities. Their system has been recognized by NAEYC. In 2010 Wisconsin did a review of their plan and identified several areas for improvement but basically the system needed to be consistent state-wide. To facilitate this process, Wisconsin will create an Office of Early Learning (OEL) to coordinate and implement plans for state-wide consistency. This office is a strength and will assist in the alignment of the standards across all agencies and programs. There is a state wide registry of core competencies and professional standards that has been in existence for a long time. The core competencies for professionals are aligned with all of the state systems, such as, Registry of Core knowledge, infant mental health, early childhood program outcomes, family life education, children's trust fund and teach standards. Wisconsin has several types of credentials and licenses for professionals and each has specific expectations and criteria. For example, early childhood educator license requires certain coursework to receive this license. Program ratings in YoungStar align with TEACH and REWARD and this incentive has increased the number of individuals seeking credentials. There are 17 levels in the career ladder which seems like too many for early educators to navigate. One way the early educator advances through the licensure system is documentation of child outcomes. This is a very advanced procedure but is currently considered the most effective way to measure child progress. To align the professional development activities with the State's workforce knowledge and competency framework, DPI will convene a program standards review committee to complete this alignment. In subsequent years (2 and 3), the State will use this alignment for program approval. While this is one way to achieve compliance for this focus area, it doesn't include active involvement of faculty from the IHEs so, potential buy-in will be forced and not collaborative. The state currently has a workforce knowledge and competency framework and is in the process of aligning it with professional development activities. This criterion is substantially 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)

Wisconsin has a network of professionals providing technical assistance, professional development and training (WECCP). They also have a number of incentives to participate in professional development activities, such as, TEACH (scholarship program), REWARD (bonus program). KidStat tracks data on providers and their level in the TORIS which is one way that DCF determines if it is reaching the goal for children to attend high quality programs. DCF plans to work with the colleges and universities and two year institutions to increase articulation agreements and to create a state wide credential to streamline advancement in the Registry. This is a strength as many early childhood educators feel more comfortable attending community colleges before going to the four year institutions so the articulation agreements will increase the number of educators attending the four year institutions which will ultimately increase quality. Finally Wisconsin will create a community of practice for YoungStar technical consultants to improve their overall skills in mentoring and coaching. It is anticipated that the number of professionals registered will increase and Wisconsin shared data in a table to project numbers. Specific information about the number of post secondary institutions who are aligned with the Workforce knowledge and competency framework was not included. DCF annually reports on the KidStat measures which provides information on provider educational levels among other information but the mode of sharing this information is not discussed. It is unclear that this information is available to the public. YoungStar also has a data base that links to the DCF licensing data base. Wisconsin currently does not have a public system for reporting on early educator development, advancement and retention but has plans to develop this system. There is a system, Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) that includes all of the approved and qualified trainers for YoungStar. By the end of the RTT-ELC funding period, Wisconsin will have approximately 97% of their workforce working towards higher credentials with an increase of 67% at level one and 100% at level 17; an estimate of 15% increase in the number of professionals seeking early educator licenses. While it is appropriate to consider more individuals seeking credentials, only 15% are seeking licenses. This is not an ambitious target given the needs of young children with high needs described in section A. Wisconsin has a good plan for implementing this focus area. Some of the activities identified are implemented but there are others proposed that are not implemented so this focus area is 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)

In Wisconsin children are not currently assessed at kindergarten entry. As a result of the Governor's ECAC recommendation to develop a comprehensive assessment system, of which a kindergarten entry assessment (KEA) is one aspect, this recommendation is now being explored. Three school systems are currently using kindergarten assessments so they are viewed as pilots. The Governor has allocated \$1.2 million to implement the ECAC's recommendations and the KEA is one part of this which indicates a commitment on the State's part. The ELD standards are aligned with the essential domains of school readiness which positions Wisconsin to be in a strong position for developing a quality KEA program. Since Wisconsin does not currently have KEA, and is just beginning the planning process, they do not have assessment measures identified. They plan to use instruments that are reliable and valid and is available in multiple languages and is sensitive to ELL and children with disabilities. These are relevant aspects that they are considering, however, there was no reference to specific instruments as these instruments are difficult to find. The State has a comprehensive plan for developing the KEA through the development of an implementation team (representatives of multiple perspectives, including families and other individuals representing diversity). Assessment instruments being considered will be piloted in 2013-2014 and fully implemented in 2014-2015. Programmers will develop the reporting system and integrate it with the longitudinal data system in Wisconsin. DPI will be responsible for implementing the KEA. Additional funding is anticipated with the full implementation of KEA; the state plans to reallocate funds from other sources to cover this expense and also to seek additional funds. Wisconsin has a state-wide data system called KidStat and the Kindergarten entry assessment will be linked to this system. Wisconsin has a good plan for developing and implementing the KEA statewide, however, it is ambitious as it is proposing that all of the school districts will be fully implementing the KEA only one year after the pilot; also, the number of teachers and administrators who need to be trained and the number of families that will need to be provided information are substantial. While Wisconsin's plan is very good, it is partially implemented at this time.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	15

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)

Wisconsin does not currently have an early learning and development data system but has plans based on the ECAC's recommendation to develop one. There are a number of data systems currently operating in some agencies in the State. For example, WCCRP has a data collection system that is used to improve programs and services; DCF recently upgraded their data system to link licensing, QRIS registry, etc. to monitor progress. Interagency data sharing agreements are currently in place so there is precedent for sharing data across agencies in preparation for the statewide system for data. Therefore, state agencies already have a commitment to work together on this project. There is also a P20 data system in place so a model is available. In July 2010 DPI received a grant to include birth through age 5 in the State data system and an interdepartmental team has been providing guidance in the development of this system. Funds from RTT-ELC will enable the project to be developed more quickly. Wisconsin has a strong plan for implementing their ELDS that includes all of the essential data elements, involves all participating agencies, will be a uniform system across agencies, provides relevant information for continuous improvement and decision making. The system they are implementing includes oversight requirements that comply with requirements of Federal, State and local privacy laws that would be part of the data system. The data system will be connected to the current P-20 program so, information between early childhood programs and school year programs can be consistently understood. The P20 system provides data for educators to make ongoing educational decisions. The longitudinal plan they have developed is very clear with responsibilities and specific activities identified so it has a very good chance of being developed in a timely fashion. While there are several data systems currently in place in Wisconsin, a comprehensive program across all programs is in the planning. This criterion is partially implemented at this time.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	225

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	9
<p>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--</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (P)(2)		
<p>All programs in Wisconsin that receive subsidy payments are licensed and have strong licensing requirements in place. It was not clear but implied that all programs are licensed including those with two or fewer children. All programs will be participating in YoungStar (TQRIS) and many already do (90% of Wisconsin Shares) with 100% required by 2012 which is a very strong commitment. Currently, teachers in the public school systems (4K and disabilities programs) are not included in the TQRIS and no plan is to include them. A crosswalk with YoungStar and 4K requirements illustrated the alignment between the two. There are many similarities so the two systems could easily be integrated. This criterion is substantially implemented at this time.</p>		

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (I)(6)		
<p>Wisconsin has plans to develop a Kindergarten entry assessment and there are three school systems currently implementing the assessment. These systems did it individually and on their own and will need to make the appropriate changes once a statewide system is implemented. In considering the points allocated for this priority, score from E1 is over 70% so the response is yes.</p>		

Absolute Priority

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

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

Wisconsin has a strong plan for developing a comprehensive system that will increase the quality of early learning and development programs for children with high needs so they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. All of the state agencies responsible for early learning and development programs (DFC, DPI, DHS) are committed to this plan which has been demonstrated through the MOU that they developed collaboratively as well as the collaborative efforts and activities they have engaged in previously. Wisconsin is in a position to be successful based on the activities and plans they are proposing in the focus areas they chose. For example, C1, they have developed ELD standards and have plans for all state early childhood programs to use. C4: The State has had a history of strong family participation but not consistently across the state so, this focus area will enable this to happen. D1: Wisconsin has been using a workforce knowledge and competency framework but again it is not consistently implemented across the state which is planned; likewise, it will be revised to be consistent with current research and practice. D2: The state has a number of initiatives for supporting early educators to receive additional training and will be expanding these initiatives to increase the quality of the workforce. E 1&2: While Wisconsin does not currently have a kindergarten assessment system, they have plans to develop one. So, overall, with the identified focus areas, Wisconsin is in a good position for developing a strong early childhood workforce that will prepare young children to be successful in kindergarten, especially those who have high needs. >



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WI-5037

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 6:26 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

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 of Wisconsin has indicated that it has a diverse population and that the number of children with high needs is increasing. Due to the current recession there has been an increase in poverty not only in the urban areas but is now impacting the other communities in the state. The state provided data on one of the largest city in Wisconsin with 52% and the rural northern part of the state 44% with in-come below 200% of the federal poverty level. Wisconsin awareness of the poverty levels and the impact it will have on the achievement gap across all groups has increased the total of investments in Early Learning Development programs from \$417,985,183 in 2007 to \$434,445,601. The state uses of child care subsidies programs will provide a wide impact on families by assisting them in coming out of the poverty level. The state investments in the subsidies and the Wisconsin Shares Program has ensures that children will have access to the programs they need. The state's budget is receiving funds from TANFS and General Purpose Revenue funds. The state has indicated sufficient funding from other agencies and matching funding was reported through the following data and percentages as well as the programs that will benefit from new projects that will increase the funding investments and most importantly increase the services and programs for children with high needs. Some of the funding and programs are listed below: Child care quality from \$7 million to over \$16million, assist in implementing a new YoungStar quality rating and improvements system (QRIS) Subcontract private child care centers, Head Start agencies or other community based programs to provide preschool. 84% of the public district schools provide preschools, with one-third offering community-based programs. 4K programs have doubled which increased the annual state investment from \$74,000,000 in 2007 to \$140,000,000 in 2011. Legislature provided \$7.5 million in grants for developing new 4K programs in various districts. Matches funds for the Head Start funding. Funds to support six new Early Head Start programs two of which are American Indian programs. The state's awareness of the Native American and their cultural and educational needs will make a great impact in closing the achievement gap as well as providing early intervention programs to meet these children's needs. The state's use of funds for home-visiting and foster care is another increase in services. The funds from the MIECHAV grant will provide guides for providers to assist with information that will reduce child abuse and improve birth outcomes. The contributions from various agencies and programs will provide the following services that will enhance the state's plan. The state's directed funding will

impact many of the efforts of the grant to provide quality programs and educational opportunities for many communities in Wisconsin. The funds are aimed at extending the programs that will provide continuous services for families of high needs. Some of the funding was earmarked to address the rural communities and some large cities that have high issues and needs that impact the families and children in their areas. The use of funds from ARRA (\$1,272,323) through the ECAC has demonstrated the importance of early childhood programs and services as well as build Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System. An early childhood component that addresses the Culturally Responsive Education for All (CREATE). Eleven Native American Tribes will have preschool programs for young tribal children with disabilities. The state will have a support staff person funded through DHS that will work only with infants and toddlers with disabilities. The grants funding to support the tribes with services that will help their children with special needs will make an impact on the early learning development. The state of Wisconsin has provided information on the increase of preschool, Head Start, other services for children with Disabilities or Developmental Delays through the Wisconsin Shares and Home-Visiting Programs. The Wisconsin Shares maximize participation for children from low-income families. The state's funding Preschool has a 48% increase in student enrollment since 2007. The Head Start Program has an increase in enrollment of 13% and Early Head Start 26% (including the tribal programs). The Home Visiting Program has made increases by 57 percent, the state has 1,100 children in programs, a projected increase of 45% by 2011-2012. The state's legislation policies, and practices have provided support for children with high needs by providing high quality programs through the following procedures, such as certification programs that monitor non-licensed providers, meet basic health and safety requirements, working families are provided with information on licensed and quality care, families with language barriers have materials translated to assist with applying for programs. The grant's strong emphasis on special needs and the support of the Native American tribes are essential services for these communities that are often overlooked. The state indicates the various councils and stakeholders that will provide support through data or services. The state has created strategies and activities that will focus on the states assessments, standards, health family involvement, and the development of kindergarten Entry assessments. The grant has provided how each area for assessment will be developed by using various researchers, agencies, and other sources such as the preschool programs and Strengthening Families program. These are the focus areas of the state: The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) has the essential domains of school readiness. Comprehensive Assessment System provides screenings and assessment, Health Promotion Practices is incorporated into many of the programs, Family Engagement provides parental outreach and family involvement their children educational experience Development of Early Childhood Educators. The state workforces and competency framework developed and implement. Kindergarten Entry Assessments does not exist currently, but are using alternate assessment tools at kindergarten level such as the ECER. The research study will administer the Woodcock Johnson assessment. Effective Data Practices are provided through the Essential Data Elements that will develop a P20 Longitudinal data system. The state indicated that in providing eligible subsidies families with cost support has provide the state with a no waiting list. The use of having a kindergarten entry assessment provides continuity across all districts entering kindergarten. The state uses the essential data practices to collect information on children, early childhood programs, and educators as well as maintains the P20 longitudinal data system that integrates K-12 and higher education data. The state use of this data provides the necessary information on young children that other agencies can access this data. These system help to monitor the progress of the Division of Early Care and Education. This data will assist the programs in making the necessary improvements of services. This is a high quality response.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	17

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 will create an early childhood education plan that will meet all the special needs of the population it services by following goals Establish an effective tiered QRIS system Develop a comprehensive learning and development standards Provide practices and support for family engagement Create a strong early childhood education workforce Establish accountability assessment systems that assist with measurement of outcomes and progress. The state comprehensive QRIS system YoungStar will provide systems that assist in measuring and improving of ELD program and services for high quality. The state outlines the goals that will be used to enhance the YoungStar participation by providers and other programs as well as looking at improvements on program quality. The state use of funds to increase the rating process for programs under the Wisconsin Shares increase the number of children from 90% to 100% by July 2012. The YoungStar data system has develop rating levels from 1-5 in which programs, providers, and educators must meet the requirements to reach various levels of the system. The rating from the data system will prove incentives and educational opportunities that will impact the quality of the programs and staff. The increase of other programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, migrant,

and tribal to participate in the YoungStar program. The state will target the community-based kindergarten in school districts; regulated child care programs, and providers/programs who move to a higher rating. The YoungStar system has a tier based rating for providers and programs 1 to 5 levels, the higher the level the more programs receive opportunities. The state understands the need for high quality standards in the educational requirements for staff. The state addresses this through a four year reform agenda that includes some of the following which also included the measurements: Increasing the number of ECE credentials through postsecondary institution and professional development providers. Increase the number and percentages of ECE's who advance through the Registry certification progression career ladder. In order for the state to effectively implement these goals there will be a focus on giving providers from diverse, racial and ethnic culture professional strategies. The state will focus on three areas that will accomplish meeting the children with high needs, first to identify the children that have high needs, and that need services and secondly, programs are targeted in the areas where high needs are, and finally direct funding and resources as well as the outreach services will be provided. The state's awareness of the needs of diverse groups such as: African American, Native Americans, Hispanic, low-income children with a cultural and linguistic development standards across the state will enhance the closing of the achievement gap in these communities. The state standards will also support foster care, immigrants and children with disabilities. The state has indicated the lack of a kindergarten entry assessment that limits the data that will assist in closing the achievement gap. This is such an essential tool that governs the progress of children as they enter into any early childhood education program. The state will continue to seek the best instrument for the kindergarten entry assessment. They will establish a group of stakeholders that will review literature and research from other states and analyzing tools currently in the field. Once the tool has been developed the state will pilot the instrument in selected districts. The state's reform agenda will also use other agencies and services that will enhance the plan such as Secure a Grant Manager to oversee the implementation of the reform agenda. Establish with the lead agency DCF to select another agency to work with the eleven tribes to implement EC strategies as well as family engagement. Additional planned programs will be added to the YoungStar system such as family engagement practices, a child assessment inclusion for children with disabilities and developmental delays and health/wellness practices. The state plan for incentives to increase providers education levels, scholarships, one time quality and retention bonuses for programs that move up the star levels. The use of the state standards will ensure that all providers, communities and families programs will understand and apply the standards and best practices on early childhood development. The state's awareness of the barriers that are being faced by parents and the necessary supports needed to solve these problems are provided in the parent engagement. The state will ensure that parents have an equal part in the early development stages of their children and the appropriate information needs to assist them. The state recognized the need to focus on the credential issues and focus on a plan that will address the current issues is important. Some of the state's activities and services are to work with institutions on the two and four year ECE degree programs, as well as aligning and expand T.E.A.C.H. and R.E.W.A.R.D. incentives for providers to improve their YoungStar rating and the waiving the certification fee for participating in the Registry. The states QRIS system will encompass agencies, programs, services, schools, and providers with the necessary data and information to help drive their programs to success. The system will provide feedback on the challenges that the state's provide services and programs face. Wisconsin will have a lag in reaching achievement gap due to the lack of kindergarten assessment data as children enter into kindergarten, especially children with special needs, low-come and English Language Learners; there is no former data to instruct a plan for these students before entering into kindergarten that will assist in meeting the need in achieving success. The stakeholders were established to revise and develop the kindergarten entry assessments and this group will be make decision on the development of this assessment. The state failed to include if groups from special needs, teachers, providers, and families are represented. The state did not indicate the target areas for the pilot such as the tribes, or rural areas. This is a high quality response.

	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)

A (3) Aligning and Coordinating Skills Wisconsin The state of Wisconsin has created a strong collaboration force that coordinates and supports goals, strategies, and initiatives as well as policies on the early learning and development. The state's braided funding will assist in the efforts to implement the plan and the initiatives. The state has a governance structure that targets the early development with the concerns of specific programs or funding streams for school readiness goals, and ensures the reform agenda will move forward. The state has indicated agencies and services and their designated persons roles and responsibilities: The DCF lead agency oversee the operation of the grant. The Grant Manager will monitor implementation of the reform agenda(MOU). The DCF will conduct hiring of staff as well as regulating the state tiered ORIS Young Star and Wisconsin Shares. The DHS will ensure that there no oversight of training and technical assistance activities(Health/wellness). The state has indicated other agencies and the leaders' roles and responsibilities in the grant. The DCR and other participating state agencies will appoint a key contact person for the RTT-ELC grant to provide communication and facilitate cooperation under MOU. The ECAC will be used as an advisory group for state agencies by ensuring stakeholder participation and that regular reporting is being done from lead agencies. This group will also monitor the improvements on planning implementation of activities. Also, the group will meet with steering committees and RTT-ECL project manager for recommendations on activities. There are many checks and balances provided in the grant to oversee each operation and the goals/ strategies. There needs to be a review that some are not being duplicated in roles and responsibilities by monitoring of systems to assure that each branch has a single focus that will contribute to the implementation of the reform agenda. The state's governance ensure that best practices will be followed for early development and that the readiness skills are clear as well as monitors the achievement of the reform agenda. The use of the stakeholders will assist in monitoring the program goals and objects are being implement as to the state reform agenda, the use of the DHS agency that will provide will be responsible ensuring any over sights and align the training, technical assistance and health/wellness along with the competencies for early learning development programs and the development of implementing parts of an EC LDS. The response was high and the implementation substantially. The response was high quality and substantially implemented.

	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)

The state has indicated continuous funds that are provided in tables depicting information. The use of the existing funds supports the reform agenda. Wisconsin has stated that they will meet its four percent quality investment requirements for quality expansion. The applicant provides other percent increases in other programs such as Infant and Toddlers services and YoungStar QRIS and state licensing. The scope of the work from the YoungStar and state licensing will exceed the quality set aside requirement by \$11.4 million each of the next two years. The state has developed a solid framework for the building activities. The use of one time federal funds to invest in their key components such as the early learning and development system. The state use of one time investments has afforded them to increase in their capacity to serve children with high needs in high quality early leading development programs. The state has indicated in each program and services the funding sustainability and the impact it has as well as the role it plays in meeting the state reform agenda goals. YoungStar system's impact on children and families in providing information and data on child care programs and the quality rating of the centers that will assist them in making the appropriate selection for their children. The system will provide access of training for providers for licensing, and the incentive programs for the educators. Early Learning Standards the planning of the curriculum development and the early learning standards with activities and training as well as technical assistance. (no Cost to continue activities) Family Engagement Standards communication and media will reach the grass-root communities and also the align programs services and the standards available for public and families (one time cost) Workforce and Professional Development this is a no cost to continue activities. The program provides incentives, credentialing and educational levels for providers and educators. Participation in the Registry is another means for credential, and higher education attainment. Provide on-going stipends and bonuses for programs that are implemented. Kindergarten Entry Assessment the cost will continue at an estimated \$1-2million to administer the new assessment to all children entering kindergarten statewide. Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System will be on going due to the staff that will be engaged by the agency funds. The state will continue to pursue federal funding opportunities fund the systems. The use of a table that explains the funding of federal, state, private, and ocal funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan. The state has state that there will be no continuing costs for the YoungStar data system that allows for other funds to assist in activities to improve the quality of programs. The use of stipends will continue after the grant's funds that will continue to support the workforce. The use of the state's one time funding support from investment will provided added support for activities or projects for sustainability and assist the children in federal programs such as Head Start, title I, TANF and CCDF. Response is quality

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

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) High-Quality Accountable Wisconsin The state has a bipartisan legislative support for the YoungStar QRIS that is to improve child care quality for all children and children with special needs. The YoungStar QRIS purposes are as follows: Assist providers with training, technical assistance, onsite coaching, mentoring of practices, and financial incentives and rewards for improving quality. The use of the system will provide information for parents about the quality of child care for school readiness. The YoungStar displays information on high quality care providers for parents' selection, and use data for the public. The YoungStar consist of five star levels, using a matrix for points and a block system for providers to accumulate points in four areas: teacher/provider education, learning environment and curriculum, health and wellness and business and professional practices. As reported before in previous sections of (A-1-2) the programs receiving Wisconsin Share participate in the system. The trainings that are provided through the system are contracted and delivered in regional areas. A consortium has been developed with agencies such as the child care resource and referral and postsecondary institutions. This state effort begins the coordination of regional strategies to support quality child care and private resources. The YoungStar system has a clear rating systems that will help providers increase the quality of their programs as well as target the needs for cultural and language education with a focus on outreach for parents. (Chart included showing points ratings) The various agencies that will benefit from the YoungStar system are outlined in each program or agency along with the purpose or service: Early learning and development standards focuses on all the implementation of the assessments for curriculum align with WMELS. One of the assessments that will be implemented is the ECERS for the environment mention in appendix 12 Comprehensive assessment will use the YoungStar system to implement the point system. The L.A.U.N.C.H project will partner with the YoungStar system to enroll child care centers to use the Ages and Stages screening. Early Childhood educator qualification will use the career ladder to develop a Registry system for credentialing of providers and provide information on the education levels of providers as well as directors and staff. The Family engagement strategies for parent outreach as well as involvement activities, newsletters, day to day activities of the children in the programs. Health Promotion practices provide training for child care providers on health issues that relate to children's physical and emotional health and well-being. CSEFEL agency will develop modules and strategies for centers to use in their training of staff. The agency ensures that children receive at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Effective data practices use the KidStar to collect and monitor the system so that children with needs are located in the state and quality level of childcare programs is available in these geographic areas. Wisconsin Rating Process -Enrollment ensure that all children have access to high quality childcare and providers that are participating in the Wisconsin Share are engaged in the YoungStar. Other childcare providers that are not participating in the Wisconsin Share can sign a contact agreeing to a list of items provided that about seven items. Rating Process the providers have the option of selecting what level of training and assistance they will receive and the type of rating wanted there a three options: automatic, technical, or formal with observation. A table is developed depict the levels. Wisconsin has developed standards that are measurable and will assist providers and parents with various program quality levels. The use of research on the state's child care programs conducted by the Wisconsin Research partnership 2004 indicated the following factor affected quality: education counts, director qualification matter, four family child care characteristics correlate with quality, decline in education credentials and centers with high density of subsidy have poorer quality. The state used these findings in developing the YoungStar criteria. The state has a stakeholder's event that provided feedback on the rating system and the impact it will have on programs and services. And review the systems strategies are being achieved. In order to have a solid system there must be valid and verified technical assistant that will be able to provide the necessary training, mentoring and coaching. The state licensing system has been recognized by other national licensing resources and agencies which is what the YoungStar system is founded upon. The state's licensing includes regulatory policies and practices aligned with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Information regarding the system is available online database that parents can access. The state will continue to provide necessary support for YoungStar by increasing providers support and training child assessments, the ability to engage families and integrate practices to improve children's health and wellness, and increasing services for children with developmental delays and disabilities. These are important factors ensuring that children needs are first and can be identified for direct services needed. Under the centers with high density of subsidy that have poorer ability that indicates that lower educated teachers and high turnovers as well as lower paid are impacting these areas, the focus on upgrading these areas and centers through the star levels point system would be difficult. The number of areas impacted is not indicated and the areas. The response is high quality and substantially implemented

	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 state has indicated that the YoungStar has increased services in the wide range of early learning development programs by: The increase of 57,000 children receiving child care subsidies were served by 4,100 participating YoungStar programs in 2010. Nine out ten programs serving children receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies are enrolled Youngstar with a projection by 2012 100 percent. Early Head Start and Head Start 204 or 25% are participating in YoungStar via an alternate pathway, receiving a five star rating. The city of Madison Wisconsin which is another alternate pathway has 378 child care programs are participating with YoungStar. YoungStar enrolls child care programs that partner with public preschool programs that offer full day, full year services. One in four (105 or 414) elementary school districts (ESDS) offer collaborative community-based programs in partnership with child care and/or Head Start programs. The state is developing school age child care model standards that align with the birth to five program standards and will require those programs participation in YoungStar by 2012. Wisconsin has establish through the subsidy programs, Wisconsin Shares to assist the low income working families in finding the best child care for their children in full day programs. The state has included a table depicting the increase by numbers and percentages for programs using the YoungStar system. The state will expand the child care options for children with high needs by making changes in the Youngstar requirements by providing other accreditation process so that they may become a part of the YoungStar system. The tribal programs are not mentioned in the YoungStar system increase of programs. There are lots of barriers and challenges that may cause the tribal programs failure to meet the needs of the system. High Quality response and partially implemented

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	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 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's YoungStar system understands the need to have a valid rating and monitoring systems that will provide data on high quality services, early childhood programs for children with high needs. The state requires that data be dispense immediately so parents can have access to information as soon as possible, this assist in the selection of the best child care program that meets the needs for their children. It is essential that programs receive accurate ratings on their services for meeting high quality standards and services; the Youngstar systems will rate these programs on annual bases. If a program does not meet the ratings, they may be re-rated by proving its accredited or reach milestones or all out of regulatory compliance. This is a key factor that the system provides for programs and for parents. In order to participate in the YoungStar system, programs must be in regulatory complainant with Wisconsin's licensing system. The rigorous standards that the state has established are the foundation for the YoungStar system. The use of the data system licensed and certified on providers requires monitoring the programs that are out of compliance and are reported DCF and is re-rated. Programs that have evoked or denied re-certification will also reported DCF and the same process for licensing a rated level. The state uses raters in administering the various assessment tools and they will work with the YoungStar system. The instruments that the raters will be using for observations an ECERS and FCCRS which is geared towards family child care. Infant Toddler Scales (ITERS) and School Aged Child Care (SACRS) these instruments will observe the environment for children. The ratings of centers for observation are unscheduled for child care programs, including having the director interview. All classrooms that will be assessed will only be one third of and randomly selected from each age groups. The use of Youngstar parent outreach will focus on providing information on the quality child care settings to assist them in making the appropriate choices for choosing their child care. The outreach efforts have been through the media, social marketing forums and word of mouth. The system relies on child care resources and referral to ensure that families with high risk receive the information that may not reach their areas. The DCF also provides parent outreach through non-traditional ways. The media campaign focusing

on outreach methods has provided significance attention to strategies to reach families with high needs that included Tries, African American, Hmong Families, foster families and families of children with special needs. Also, materials were adapted so information was made available for these families. The state's use of a website that will provide parents with the details on child care programs and with online licensing information will assist in finding the appropriate center that will services their children's needs This website was designed for providers to easily understand and access the explanation of the point levels of the system. The collaboration of agencies for referrals and resource provides outreach for parents, and child givers with hospital and birthing groups, phone and walk-in consultations, lending libraries, community events and fairs. Every region has agencies that will provide family and child centers with access to these programs. Many times parents do not have the knowledge or information to obtain services from many of the groups and the resources available to work with their children at home and to access the proper health care for their families. Wisconsin has become aware that all parents will not have access to the Youngstar systems, and the mission will be to help parents with the enrollment of their children into high quality programs. The state will develop strategies that will focus on this mission of serving the population of people without access such as the migrants, tribes, and children with disabilities. The applicant did not indicate the assessments for informative and observational assessments. This is an indicator that is of great important in achieving the educational gap. The state did not include the other outreach methods for providing parents with information. High quality response and partially implemented

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	17

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 Wisconsin Shares Program provides parents with full day, full year childcare as well as provides additional reimbursement to providers who care for children with special needs. Foster Care families are exempted from Wisconsin Shares co-pay. Families are given assistance in understanding the subsidy programs. Materials are made available in other languages. Child care providers participated in 7,000 training opportunities and use of scholarships. A clearing house for improvements resources are available through child care information center. The use of technical assistance is available in person, by phone and online for each region on YoungStar. The incentive programs such as T.E.A.C.H and R.E.W.A.R.D. are scholarships and bonus programs and provide for retention bonuses. The tiered reimbursement will provide incentives for programs to make improvement and maintain high quality programs. The Wisconsin Share provides assistance to working families with reductions in co-pays. The state' goals is to motivate at least 1,200 programs to higher ratings. The state will make all the necessary efforts to move more children with high needs into higher rated programs. The promoting training on the WMELS and a pyramid Model for social and emotional development. The state will provide training that is appropriate for English Language Learners and protect the culture facts for children. The state is developing a package that will provide incentives for diverse child care providers. The state has many tables and charts that depict the numbers and percentages and key activities. The state use of a learning package for diverse providers is important, but other providers that need the same attention that work with migrant and special needs who may not qualify for the rating incentives are not included. The movement of child care centers into higher quality is a goal, the agenda addresses that the focus is that the state will convert all centers into high quality. Also the centers that reaches the 4 to 5 level will receive the recognition but there are levels that will have no recognition or support for incentives, there may be outstanding challenges that have been described in the grants application previously sections. The state's goal that all programs will reach levels 4 and 5 is not realistic measure, a timeline for achieving this goal should be indicated. high quality response 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)(1)

The state YoungStar system is created to assist in making high quality child care and education environments for children that will be entering into the preschool early learning experiences. The state indicates that for their system to be successful the following things must occur, making sure that the levels of quality of programs matters to children for school readiness, that programs that have low rating will use the technical support and other resources to improve their program to high quality and that parents will utilize the rating information to select the best settings for their children's needs. The state developed a question to guide them in answering if the YoungStar system rating levels are effective. The state reflected on the fact that outcomes are the answer and that they needed to research the high quality instruments that would provide them with the measures to gauge the success of the system in their programs. After reading and studying various assessments they selected several instruments such as ECERS, ITERS, FCERS to evaluate and found that these instruments are not strong and not aligned with the appropriate age development of young children and school readiness. These instrument do not assess the domains of the academic skills for young children, they are used to evaluate the environment of the classroom. The findings revealed that the best indicator for ratings is effective outcomes. The DCF will have an independent study done by the University of Wisconsin-Madison by Dr. Katherine Magnuson who is a national expert. The study will encompass the comparison of gains in school readiness from age's three to five in high and low child care programs. The study will randomly use 610 providers in three regions of Wisconsin that services the ages indicated. The areas that will be involved in his comparison will come from two different backgrounds, the city of Milwaukee region was selected due to the large number of poor children and the large number of children receiving child care subsidies and the other two regions will based on high needs in the communities such as the tribal communities. The Youngstar system will provide the type of provider such as family care and group-based centers. After the providers have been selected then parents must consent for their children to participate in the study. The study will work with approximately 800 children. The researchers and assessors have not selected the instruments that will be implemented but they will be nationally known and developmentally appropriate such as Woodcock Johnson Achievement Tests and others were listed. The use of the gains in school readiness over the course of the year for children in low-rated programs will be compared with high rated programs. The children that are enrolled in programs that are not quite at the high quality level will make the background impact the children's school readiness. The use of an independent study will provide feedback to the grant on the effectiveness of the QRIS in program variation in programs or differentiation in programs for various needs. The use of a parent interview will be given and the collection of the environmental instruments to provide quality of the programs environments. The feedback from the study will drive instruction, programs changes; make the necessary improvements for the early learning and the outcomes of the state children. The use of a researcher to do a random study on the programs educational quality is a reflective tool that will guide the programs for improvement. The questions regarding the strength of the environmental tools in early stages of the grant proposal, were justified, now that the study is designed there are questions, is the state informed of the purposes of the instruments being administrators. There are tools for developmental skills and environmental settings that will impact the children differently. The state has not indicated a timeline for meetings with programs, providers, preschool teacher, stakeholders, and parents in regards to the progress of the study. The state selections of the regions that will be engaged in the study are indicated in two areas, to make the study compare the other area based on income levels indicated. The state's TQRIS has developed a rating levels for 1-5, being first level as low. The various levels that are reached such levels 3-5 provide incentives, bonuses, and educational opportunities for educators and preschool programs. The use of a research-based study provided feedback on the measures that are being established. high quality response

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.	30	25

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 state has developed standards that have been researched for using best practices and reviewed by various groups. The standards are composed of all the learning domains including physical and emotional development outcomes for children from birth to first grade. The standard use of observable samples of what children may do to accomplish each level and what the adults may do to assist the child at each level will assist in the learning process for the children and parents. The state created the standards to reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of children which will support them in achieving the various developmental levels. Also, the state has included a development component for the infants and toddlers and will do a revision including the professional development on implementing the WMELS to assist in meeting the outcomes for the children with high needs. The effort to continue to revise the standards based on the changing needs of the population that is served will impact the outcomes of the children as well as professional staff. The state inclusion of the infant and toddler development is needed for early intervention and to make early identification of any needs the children have. The state has aligned their standards with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards to ensure that the standards meet the development of four and five year old kindergarten children. Also the state will include the national Common Core Standards to assist with align the preschool programs into kindergarten programs. The state felt that the standards should include improvements in the language, communication, and reading. There is a continuous need for assisting our children to meet the reading levels, by the early reading readiness skills in the preschool programs will assist in this effort. The use of the standards is implemented in the child care, Head Start, home-visiting, public preschool and kindergarten programs. The state licensing requires that the standards be utilized to promote early learning interventions for our young children. The standards that have been developed and reviewed by various groups will be implemented through training for teachers. The most important factor is that the standards are aligned with the curriculum ensuring the developmental skills will be addressed. The staff that participates in the training of the standards can receive points for the YoungStar system levels. The standards are placed on a website that explains the foundation of the standards and the purpose such as curriculum, instruction, and assessment and how these standards help children with special needs also a video has been created for conferences on the standards and the assessments. The funding sources to support the state standards and the implementation are: Early childhood braided funding initiative existing close to ten years Three state departments DPL, DCF, and DHS Six different funding streams IDEA Part B 619, McKinney Vento Homeless, Child Development Fund, Head Start Collaboration Office, Early Childhood System Change Grant and IDEA State Professional Development Grant Regional mini grants Some programs provide one-time funds The funding will assist the following provide: Six regional coaches and two process coaches (one coach leads the WMELS). Professional development structures Trainers in the YoungStar technical assistance contract Cooperative Educational Services Agency Early Childhood Program Support Teachers to assist in training on the standards and the Pyramid Model. Materials on the standards will be translated in English, Spanish, and Hmong. The state ensures that the standards are available to child care providers, families, and communities and will be trained on the application of the standards in their practice. The state efforts to align the standard through all programs and agencies will assist the children with high needs and focus on the outcomes. In order to ensure that all components of the grant will have the services needed to implement the standards for staff, children and communities it will need various positions, ensuring that the alignment between standards and the YoungStar system increase training and stakeholders that will provide the topics for professional development and models of implementation are sustain and the movement of the practices. The state has design and outlined a plan for expansion of the standards how they are aligned with the curriculum development and early childhood practices. Also, ensuring the parents of high need children are informed about the developmentally appropriate practices and the learning domains that are needed for their children to have early school success. There is a list of strategies and services that will help to meet the goal of expanding the WMELS professional Development component. This list include trainings, publications, staffing, technical assistance, funding from agencies, monitoring and alignment that will assist in achieving the expansion of the standards.(chart with key activities for expansion) The state indicates that the increase need of training will be a challenge for the YoungStar system to provide and this will

impact the children with high needs, the focus is on the children with high needs receiving the necessary services in order to participate in early learning centers needs to be addressed first. The state stakeholders will identify a variety of topics for the professional development modules, the use of teachers who will be modeling need to provide input on the alignment and how it affects the programs for children. The indication of not being able to have a consisted system that will make sure policies practices and procedures are available for programs and services to make sure all projects, standards, and activities are followed as describe by the state's plan are not addressed with a solution, high response and partially implemented

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	25

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>The state uses a variety of family supports that connect with the early learning and development programs being offered. There are some long term and short term benefits for children such as school readiness and a family support components. The state indicates a long commitment to working with the communities and parents in providing support programs and services. The state has provided a table depicting some of the programs, descriptions, and the numbers to support their commitment. The state has developed three approaches for family engagement that will increase the number of parents involved; is through family training recorded in the Registry, Family Services Core Knowledge training, and the Strengthening Families in early care and education training, and the family services credential. The state recognized the importance to have parents of other cultures and languages be involved through the use of a Community of Practice that target resources to enhance the quality of early learning and development programs and enhance the skills of early care educators. The use of investments to provide resources in home visiting and network of family resource centers are funded by the Children's Trust Funds. The project LAUNCH that services children with developmental delays and disabilities through birth to three work with families on promoting learning success for their children, this is federally funded. (a table providing information on existing resources) The state will make efforts to align and integrate the resources that are provided through their initiatives and to eliminate the inefficiencies and to strive for more uniform approaches. The feedback from the approaches will guide in making the necessary changes so that everyone is on the same plain. The design of a high quality plan will consist of four areas that focus on continuous support of families that speak other languages participation in activities; families and communities input on the services for their children with special needs such as delays, low-come and disabilities; parents will have access to high quality programs in their communities; and to ensure that providers have the resources to assist families of various backgrounds and needs. The use of a consultant will ensue that the activities and services for the families are being implemented (table depicting the key activities and the timeline) The concern of the reporting process of staff development that only a one third make the reports, the data and success of these training are in questions and also the percentage that participate no cross attendance records are indicated. The state's commitment on family engagement has created standards that are in certain areas, but other areas did not have standards the continuity is a challenge. The data will show a variation of how the program's impacts on families. There is no identification of the areas without standards (rural, urban)The state has not developed a a family engagement standards across systems. The state's has provided a table that address the activities and timeline of culturally, and linguistic standards for family engagement. 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	17

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 (b)(1)

The state has indicated that many revisions have been made to accommodate the changes that impact the children in their communities. The effort to provide high quality programs is a commitment that will provide a functional early childhood professional development system. The current changes were directed to the Registry Career Ladders that has development five professional credentials, and a statewide core curriculum that will align with the coursework in Wisconsin Technical College System. Wisconsin has been recognized for the creation of a National Registry Alliance that attracts over 30 states in an annual conference. Also the state conducts a professional development policy scan in 2010 to identify areas of great need and the next steps in the system building process. This recognition speaks volume for the grant, the expertise that has be share with other states on the quality of the planning of their professional development for staff. The quality of training for staff will drive centers to become centers of excellence. The state has devised a policy that provided a list of recommendations which is included the state structure, professional standards, Career Pathways, Articulation, Advisory Structure, Data, and Financing. Each of the areas outlines their purpose and the services that are provided to programs, families, teachers, communities, agencies and children with high needs. Due to the continuous work of the state to provide these recommendation an office will be established the Office of Early Learning that will oversee the statewide early childhood professional development, and WMELS and other agencies. The impact of the state's professional development along with the YoungStar QRIS and the early childhood longitudinal data system will provide new opportunities for professional development, credentialing and incentives. The use of the grants funding will assist in achieving the following goals: Align educator program requirements to the Common Core Standards and new state literacy recommendations. Expand and increase in numbers the opportunities to have access to ECE certification and degree programs in targeted geographic areas Increase the numbers and percentage of ECE educators to utilize the Registry career ladder and certification. The state has established pyramids and tables indicating the competencies and professional standards that are correlated to the Registry and the states standards. The Department of Public Information (DPI) makes the alignments of the competencies, and standards available for professional workers with young children and their families including early childhood sectors and public schools. This is another system of providing continuity across the statewide systems for the available of educators. The DPI also an educator license system that provides the knowledge and competencies for early childhood educators and this is a monitor tool that is needed for our centers and children. The various agencies, services, and programs have been listed with their purpose, roles, responsibilities that will meet the professional competencies that the state initiates. Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Pyramid Model for Social/Emotional Well-being Cross Sector Competencies The state provides information on the qualification, licensing, and certification and using many channels to implement programs for educators in achieving the professional development to obtain the necessary education credentials. The list of components as follows: The Wisconsin Registry – highlights the training and provides a certificate to entry level and continuing education requirements. The registry also provides materials, resource guides and commission meetings on their website to assist the applicants. Early Childhood Credentials – developed credentials that meet the unique needs of early childhood care and teachers such as administrator, Infant/Toddler, Preschool, and Leadership Each educator must complete a credit-based course work series. PK-12 Early Childhood Education License (EC/MC & EC) to receive license educators must complete a state-approved educator preparation program of at least 22 semester's credits. There is a list of credits available. Pathways and Progression includes the Wisconsin Registry Career Ladder table. Also the use of the TEACH and REWARD programs that provide incentives for programs and staff through the YoungStar system. Postsecondary Engagement – the creation of an on line professional development hub. The support of the federal State Personnel Development Grant that provide support with postsecondary for ECE staff. The state's common core standard and the Read to Lead Task Force that provide new educators with the literacy skills they will need to implement the comprehensive strategy is targeted to help reduce the achievement gap. The state has provided tables with key activities and a timeline for implementing the common core standards and the new state literacy recommendations. The state did not indicate the educators that work on the literacy initiative. high quality response and partially implemented

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	17

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 of Wisconsin has provided information on the agency that will be responsible for overseeing the professional development which is Wisconsin Early childhood Collaborating Partners and the Professional Development (PDI). This team will provide websites that can be access for career guides, information on core competencies, technical assistance and a professional dictionary, license renewal information, and other resources. The state's extensive network on support for educators and other services are indicated in the plans and initiatives that are being established. The use services from the network will assist programs find the necessary information to keep their programs and services at high quality and meeting all the standards of the state. The state has provided information under each approach that will address the professional development opportunities such as: Professional Development Approval System – all trainers are approved through this system as well as ensure that instructors are qualified and have the expertise in the areas of instruction. The access of the number of professional development providers. Incentives and Rewards – the T.E.A.C.H for statewide scholarships to help child care centers and teaching staff and other preschool educators. The R.E.W.A.R.D – directed at wages, and respect for dedication stipend program, this is such a meaningful program that will keep quality staff and keep the retention rate high. The staff needs to know that what they are doing for our children is valuable. Accountability and Public Reporting – the use of the KidStat which tracks Registry levels of providers, percentage of providers at each Registry level and uses this information with DCR which is to watch the progress towards the goal that children attend high quality care and education program. The feedback provides the types of quality needs and outcomes are being met. The state will use the Wisconsin Technical College System and four-year public private institutions to assist in providing the educators with opportunities to further their education that will benefit their income levels. Also the state will provide in-services training programs that provide educators and providers with aligned with educational standards and to receive income incentives. The state is working on providing an associate degree through the WTCS this will be a great advantage for educators who want to increase their educational level by receiving a degree in their field, and opens the door for many for educators to earn this degree with the incentive to continue on for a full four year degree. The plan to increase the ECE Registry through the career ladder and expand Community of Practice to improve technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to improve child care quality. Expand funding for scholarship programs by using RTT-ELC funds to provide scholarships to early childhood program staff or providers that are diverse. This is a major target that needs incentives to staff to continue to work in child care settings. Many centers that have a high number of English Language Learners need staff to reach the children and provide the services they need. Also the children in these centers need to see someone who represents them. Under Registry certification- will underwrite the cost of Registry certification for 500 providers to increase the participation in the Registry with the target being diverse providers. Through the increase of providers especially diverse providers to participate in the Registry will make significant increase in the YoungStar levels to become higher and this indicated that improvements will occur in the educational quality of the children with high needs. The state lists the changes that will be evident: Administrators credential will grow from 927 today to 1,840 in four years The Infant and Toddlers will grow from 764 to 1,214 an increase of 59 percent The Preschool Credential will more than double, growing 150 percent The Inclusion Credential will grow from 31 to day to 156 in four years, nearly 500 percent increase The state has provided numerous charts and tables throughout this section displaying data information. The state's commitment to under cost the Registry certification for 500 providers is a large number; no indication on the timeline and if there is a need for additional providers an alternative plan. The use of the website will provide information on the licensing and history for parents. The state indicates the challenge of providing access to quality EC educators and programs are constantly changing in the system and is not able to give current updates as needed especially for the areas where high mobility is an issue so tracking the needs for children in many areas will be impeded by the lack of information on programs and providers. 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
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(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	16
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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)

The state has indicated that it does not have a kindergarten entry assessment so this section will reflect on the kindergarten assessment and early childhood LDS. The state has indicated that the state is in the progress of closing the achievement gap. They have found this gap to be among the white and students of color as well as economically disadvantage and non-disadvantage children the gap can be as large as 45 percent. This is a large gap that will need to be addressed in order for the children to have a successful school experiences. The state indicated not having a Kindergarten Entry Assessment is needed to provide early intervention with students that may have high needs. The state will do some back mapping by reviewing their longitudinal studies and establishing new strategies to meet the achievement gap. These gaps will occur before the children enter into kindergarten, they are detected in the early development stages and in the preschool or child care centers. The state will review the assessment instruments that will implement to be used in the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The tool will provide data on the child's development and the guidance for professional development as well as communication for parents. The main factor will be that the assessment will emphasize the important of children success on all the learning domains for school readiness. The state will initiate that the assessment be administered statewide which provides continuity throughout the educational programs and services. The state is realizing that assessments provide benchmarks that measure the children outcomes and what they have learned. Wisconsin has provided continuous training on assessment implementation and on best practices. The state will use the MAP and other assessments that will be administer in the school districts kindergarten programs. The state has developed a high quality plan that will include: The Kindergarten Entry Assessment will be administered the first two month of school. All essential domains will be covered of school readiness including language and literacy development. Follow the recommendations of National Research Council's report on early childhood. Assessment meets the needs of a target population and aligned with the state standards. Use information in closing the achievement gap in kindergarten Key Goals of the plan. The use of the information to be analyze for disaggregated and gauging how different groups of children are progressing in the different domains. There will be input from the families on the results, questionnaires, and the family partnership that is a critical part of closing the achievement gap, the more families invest in education the more prepare their children will be. In the states key activities plan a wide variety of stakeholders will be established for involvement and recommendations. The stakeholders will provide advice on selecting assessments that will be administered in the programs, the reviewing of literature on best practices, research what other states have develop for their KEA, these are just a few of the roles they will play in making sure that the key activities and goals are met. The state has provided several tables indicating the key activities and the timeline for the assessments. The state has indicated the funding cost of the assessment that will be done annually \$7.3million in federal funding and 2.8% in state funding for FY12. There is no cost amount on the additional assessments that are being established. In selecting a stakeholders group the state did not indicated teachers, parents, providers, to participate in the Kindergarten Entry assessments ;also the makeup of the group will determine how needs will be met and the areas that will be impacted by the assessment. (tribal, rural, Hispanic.) There is no budget cost that has been determine for the assessment that will be developed or an indication of what the cost maybe (projection) high quality response and 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)
<p>The use of several data systems to provide information on assessments, program and services progress, professional development and career opportunities have been outline in other sections of C and E. The state will provide the following to ensure that continuous building and enhancing of systems to improve practices and services such as: The state tracking system of children's progress as well as the use of Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System for planning, evaluation, and assisting in making the necessary decision. Data collection from the Registry the QRIS Registry, the Child Care Provider Information, KidStar, YoungStar all of these system provide data on the effective of services and programs that are providing for children with high needs and the effectiveness of the outcomes. Data Exchange which provides the ability of agencies to share data and information. The monitoring of agencies that oversee various operations and the commitments of the MOU. Also the data sharing with the university and other educational institutes the data exchange will provide links for agencies and educational systems to develop data. Data Privacy Protection complies with the federal, state, and local privacy laws. The protection of student's privacy while providing necessary data. The state realizes that the LDS system does not entirely capture information on the youngest learners. A high quality plan was developed to address this need by forming of a team and steering committee that establish a charter plan that will: Analyze the current early childhood data environment Establish data sharing methodologies Create a work plan to being data sharing and analysis process Develop strategies for data and long term use and sustainability The state key goals for developing an interoperable system so that data can be exchange will follow All of the essential data elements Uniform data collection and easy entry to the data elements and many other strategies and services to support this effort There are so many data checking data systems in so many agencies it is difficult to see what agencies data is being effective and is providing data for the correct purpose of the plan. There seems to be a lot of effect on developing systems that seem to not be able to cover all data for our younger children and other systems are then developed, there are some overlapping of data services. There needs to be some coordination of data systems in the plan where there is a one stop process. The use of so many positions that occur from another system that is not meeting a need for providing information to other systems, this is a cost factor that will impact the budget. With so many data systems and activities which are sometimes hard to find with so many agencies on top of agencies and positions on top of positions to see if the activities will benefit the purpose of the grant for ensuring that children with high needs . With so many data systems that staff and parents must use may be confusing in finding the correct system, the grant indicated very little personal contact for teachers, providers, and parents. There are many flaws in some of the systems that will impede the programs and services as well as for staff, the lack in credential, and the 1-5 point systems for professional development in order to receive incentives. The use of subcommittee, ad hoc, steering committees, stakeholders many other committees it does not mention the use of other committees, such as the tribal, diverse associations and communities leaders in the hard hit areas for their input that will benefit the services and needs of the children in their special population. low quality response and minimally implemented</p>

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	229

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	8

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)

Priority 2 Wisconsin The state of Wisconsin has established a YoungStar QRIS system to assist in providing technical assistance for the states agencies, providers, preschool programs, and assessments. The wealth of information regarding the systems and their mission to provide data information that will assist the achievement of many of the goals and initiatives that the state proposed for the high quality programs for our children with high needs was demonstrated. The systems provide a support for child care programs regarding licensing, certification and incentives for staff. The most important factor of the YoungStar system is that parents can access the early childhood programs for selecting the best quality program for their children needs. The other programs and services that are on this data system also provide necessary services for parents in obtain health and wellness information for their families. The state has indicated programs available for Title I. The lack of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment will impede the progress in closing the gap, for the early learners need the intervention as soon as they enter into our preschool programs. The state will utilize other assessments in the kindergarten that will create a portfolio of current students; this is needed as well as in driving the instruction and providing for the various needs in the classroom. The states reflection on how important the outcomes of the assessments and the programs are what gauges the success and they answer by having a study conducted that will bring feedback for improvement in the programs being offered through the state, especially the preschool programs. The state has demonstrated the increases in providers and parents that participate in programs involvement and work incentives. The tiered systems have addressed the data of increases of programs and the services that will increase high quality programs. The state's mandate and legislature that has been developed that state have qualified teaching staff and child care; was indicated by the rating systems points. Also the various incentive program such as T.E.A.C.H. and the R.E.W.A.R.D. and the LAUNCH were this targets children with developmentally delay and support for the parents. The state shared many investments and matching funds that will support the tiered systems in the grant. The use of tables that depicted the growth and the expansion due to the increase in funding provided evident that their findings were increasing. The state has created many ways to obtain funding through their one-time invests to support the technical assistance programs. The state has been recognized for the professional development Registry and also for its webcasts featuring the best practices or early care and education has been referenced in the Pre-K Now which is a segment of the PEW Foundation.

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)		
(a) The state has no Kindergarten Entry Assessment. (b)The state addressed in E(1) and score at least 70 percent		

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 has a wealth of support for the grant from many public and private agencies which is evident in the letters of support. The use of investments from various funding source has afforded the state to provide many innovative activities and services to meet the needs of the children with high needs. The commitment from many organizations and partners that understand early learning development and professional development are essential in having a successful plan. The support from various partners and funding sources will assist in keeping services and programs that are already being implemented on going. Many funds will assist after the end of the RTT-ELC grant and that indicates the sustainability of the grants programs and services. The programs that will continue to help in expanding and increasing the number of children with high needs and their families. The state's joint efforts to provide funding for the Native American community in supporting the programs services as well as educational aims will impact for their children and families. The state's in-sight on providing incentives through various programs and the focus on retention of high quality staff, that will assist in having high quality programs to meet the children with high needs