

Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge
Application for Initial Funding
CFDA Number: 84.412



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Paperwork Burden Statement

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**APPLICATION FOR INITIAL FUNDING UNDER
RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE
RHODE ISLAND**

Table of Contents

IV.	APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS	3
V.	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	7
VI.	SELECTION CRITERIA	9
VII.	COMPETITION PRIORITIES	236
VIII.	BUDGET	248
IX.	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS	325
X.	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	327
XI.	PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	328
XII.	CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES	330
XIV.	SCORING RUBRIC	331
XV.	APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES	338
XVI.	APPLICATION CHECKLIST	341
XVII.	APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS	344
XVII.	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS	347

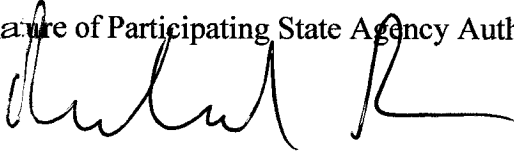
IV. APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
(CFDA No. 84.412)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): Stephen Hourahan, Office of the Governor	Applicant's Mailing Address: 82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903-1196
Employer Identification Number: 05-6000522	Organizational DUNS: 183956978
Lead Agency: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Contact Name: Deborah A. Gist (Single point of contact for communication)	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 401-222-8700 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: Deborah.Gist@ride.ri.gov
<p>Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i></p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p> <p>Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Telephone:</p> <p>Lincoln D. Chafee Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: Date: <i>Oct 11, 11</i></p> <p>Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Agency Name:</p> <p>Deborah A. Gist Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative: Date: <i>10-7-11</i></p> <p>Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Agency Name:</p> <p>Sandra M. Powell Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative: Date: <i>10-7-11</i></p>	

Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Michael Fine, MD

Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:



Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Dr. Janice Frances

Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:



Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

Steven Costantino

Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:



Agency Name:

R.I. Department of Health

Date:

10/7/11

Agency Name:

R.I. Department of Children,
Youth, and Families

Date:

10/7/11

Executive Office of Health and
Human Services

Date:

10-7-11

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Application

State Attorney General Certification

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation:

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General (Printed Name):

PETER F. KILMARTIN

Telephone:

(401) 274-4400

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General :

Peter F. Kilmartin

Date:

12 Oct, 11

Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting Assurances

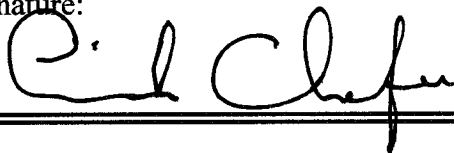
The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to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

- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State and other entities will comply with the following provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74 -- Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 76 -- State-Administered Programs, including the construction requirements in section 75.600 through 75.617 that are incorporated by reference in section 76.600; 34 CFR Part 77 -- Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81 -- General Education Provisions Act—Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82 -- New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 85 -- Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):

Lincoln D. Chafee

Signature:



Date:

Oct 11, 11

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The State must meet the following requirements to be eligible to compete for funding under this program:

(a) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement that the State must attach to its application, describing the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant. (See section XIII.) At a minimum, the MOU or other binding agreement must include an assurance that the Participating State Agency agrees to use, to the extent applicable--

- (1) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A set of statewide Program Standards;
- (3) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (4) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

List of Participating State Agencies:

The applicant should list below all Participating State Agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development, including at a minimum: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State's Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency.

For each Participating State Agency, the applicant should provide a cross-reference to the place within the application where the MOU or other binding agreement can be found. Insert additional rows if necessary. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	MOU Location in Application	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
Rhode Island Department of Education*	Appendix 12	State Education Agency; State Pre-K; Part B of IDEA; Title I of ESEA; ACF ARRA funds supporting the RI Early Learning Council
Rhode Island Department of Human Services	Appendix 12	Child Care Development Fund; Head Start Collaboration Grant
Executive Office of Health and Human Services	Appendix 12	Part C of IDEA
Rhode Island Department of Health	Appendix 12	Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant; Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families	Appendix 12	Child Care Licensing
Rhode Island Early Learning Council	Appendix 12	

(b) The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education that meets the requirements described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b).

The State certifies that it has an operational State Advisory Council that meets the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

☒ Yes

☐ No

(c) The State must have submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (see section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)).

The State certifies that it submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding, consistent with the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

☒ Yes

☐ No

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the focal point of the application and peer review. A panel of peer reviewers will evaluate the applications based on the extent to which the selection criteria are addressed.

Core Areas -- Sections (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(1):

- The completed background data tables providing the State's baseline data for--
 - The number and percentage of children from Low-Income families in the State, by age (see Table (A)(1)-1);
 - The number and percentage of Children with High Needs from special populations in the State (see Table (A)(1)-2); and
 - The number of Children with High Needs in the State who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs, by age (see Table (A)(1)-3).

- Data currently available, if any, on the status of children at kindergarten entry (across Essential Domains of School Readiness, if available), including data on the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.
- Data currently available, if any, on program quality across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs.
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-4).
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-5).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, by age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (see Table (A)(1)-6).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-7).
- The completed table that describes the elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-8).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-9).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development workforce credentials currently available in the State, including whether credentials are aligned with a State Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have each type of credential (see Table (A)(1)-10).
- The completed table that describes the current status of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators (see Table (A)(1)-11).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Table (A)(1)-12).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State (see Table (A)(1)-13).

Successful State Systems**(A)(1) Demonstrating Past Commitment to Early Learning and Development**

Rhode Island is a state of 1 million people, with 53,562 young children from birth to kindergarten entry. Our demographics mirror those of the nation, with a very diverse child population, a large immigrant population, a large number of English learners from across the globe, and a growing population of young minority children – many of whom live in poverty or in low-income families. A full 44 percent of Rhode Island infants are born to mothers with a high-school diploma or less. Latino children now comprise more than 20% of Rhode Island's child population, with many speaking Spanish as a first or only language. Rhode Island ranks 22nd (with 1st being best) in the nation and 6th in New England for childhood poverty, with 19% of children living in poverty. According to the 2010 Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 19% of Rhode Island children live in families with income below the federal poverty threshold. With 41 percent of children living in poverty, Providence was the third-poorest city for children in America, tied with New Orleans as of the 2000 U.S. Census.

Rhode Island's families have been particularly hard hit with the deep and long-lasting national and state economic recession. The recession began earlier in Rhode Island and is lasting longer than in many other states. Rhode Island continues to have higher than average unemployment at 10.6 percent, as of August 2011 (6th highest in the nation, down from 1st and 2nd highest at the height of the recession). Experts estimate that between 20 percent and 25 percent of Rhode Islanders have been out of work long-term. Home-foreclosure rates are also higher than the national average, with Rhode Island placing in the top five (with 1st being worst) for new-home foreclosures during the first quarter of 2011.

Rhode Island's response to the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge outlines a bold agenda to close the significant learning and health disparities that place so many children at risk for academic, behavioral, and social challenges throughout their school career and limit their economic prospects as they enter adulthood. Rhode Island is an ideal laboratory when it comes to implementing policies and programs that improve child outcomes. A small state with a strong track record for leadership on early childhood learning and development, Rhode Island will be able to show how systems that are aligned can go to scale quickly and lead to measurable progress in achieving equity and closing the gaps in school readiness and child outcomes. With

one statewide community foundation and one statewide United Way that have both shown exemplary leadership and investment in early childhood, Rhode Island is in an ideal position to leverage private sector resources that will accelerate the progress that we will be able to make with the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge investment.

Rhode Island's Track Record of Leadership

Rhode Island has a long history of leadership in developing policies and programs that improve access, quality, and affordability of early learning programs for young children from birth through the early school years. Rhode Island was the first state to enact Head Start only legislation, in 1986, providing contributive support to existing federal programs, and in 1988 fully funded a five hundred child Head Start expansion. Our strategic vision to improve children's school readiness began in earnest in 1998 with the passage of *Starting Right*, a comprehensive piece of legislation that included strong licensing regulations, an entitlement to child-care subsidy for working families with incomes at or below 225 percent of the federal poverty level, reimbursement rates set at the 75th percentile of the market rate, health-insurance subsidies for center-based and family child-care providers, and comprehensive services provided to the lowest-income children. Out of this legislation came investments that supported core components of a comprehensive early childhood system, including early learning standards for children ages 3-5, professional development, and program-quality improvement. Demonstrating its strong commitment to funding high-quality child care as a critical foundation for early learning and development for the state's youngest children, Rhode Island dramatically increased its investment in the child-care subsidy program between 2000 and 2006. By 2006, Rhode Island was providing more state funding for child care on a percentage basis than any other state.

The State has been facing major budget deficits since 2004, as well as historically high unemployment rates, declining tax revenues, and a high number of home foreclosures. While our statewide budget crisis has resulted in reduced state funding for child care, Rhode Island continues to invest a significant portion of TANF funds into the child-care subsidy system, ranking among the top 13 states for TANF transfers to the child-care subsidy system. Rhode Island also has a history of investing State funds to supplement the federal investment in Head Start, enabling more low-income children to access Head Start services.

While state economic and budget conditions resulted in reduced State funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program and Head Start programs in 2007 and 2008, over the past few years we have seen state funding for early learning programs stabilize - with a stronger focus on quality. It is important to emphasize that, despite major budget deficits since 2007, Rhode Island leaders have continued to lead the way in improving the quality of early learning programs across the state, with a particular emphasis on programs that serve Children with High Needs. Two important system-building initiatives were developed during these lean budget years: 1) the design, pilot phase, and statewide implementation of BrightStars, Rhode Island's research-based Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS); and 2) the planning and design of the State Pre-K Program and the work to include the State Pre-K Program as a categorically funded program in Rhode Island's newly adopted Education Funding Formula, which successfully passed the General Assembly in 2010. Funding for the State Pre-K program, as a categorical program in the school funding formula, will start to flow in State FY 2013 and will ultimately expand over ten years to \$10 million per year, serving 1,100 children in full-day (6 hour), high-quality State Pre-K programs in Rhode Island's highest need communities.

These critical system-building efforts have led to lasting change by emphasizing increased access to *high-quality* early learning programs. Rhode Island will build on its strong foundation to create the coordinated, comprehensive State system envisioned by State leaders and described in this application – specifically, a system that promotes school readiness for Children with High Needs by increasing access to high-quality early learning programs. Through the implementation of the Starting Right law and other collaborative interagency efforts over the past decade, Rhode Island has built a comprehensive infrastructure for the early learning and development system that includes strong collaboration across the State agencies accountable for early learning and development programs, a commitment to broad community and provider participation in planning and implementation of new initiatives, strong child-care licensing regulations that have been ranked among the best in the country and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) policies that have prevented waiting lists and have encouraged families to choose licensed care over unregulated care.

Successful Interagency Initiatives for Young Children

Rhode Island has a long and successful history of cross-agency collaboration to improve

the school readiness of young children with high needs, including children who are low-income, who have special needs, who are English-language learners, or who are vulnerable due to homelessness or involvement in the child-welfare system. In 1996, the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet, made up of all department directors from State agencies serving children and families, adopted a set of goals for children, including the goal that "All children will arrive at school ready to learn." That goal set the stage for an unprecedented policy collaboration that continues today. In the mid-1990s, all State departments that serve young children and their families came together to prioritize the policy steps that needed to be taken to achieve the goal of school readiness for all children, with a particular focus on high-need children. A public-private partnership, consisting of State agency directors (Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department for Children, Youth, and Families) and staff and community leaders from the early care and education field came together to craft *Starting Right*, the comprehensive initiative described above. This strong base of collaboration across State agencies in Rhode Island continues today and is strengthened and formalized through the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*, Rhode Island's Statewide Early Education Advisory Committee, as defined in the federal *Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007*.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council

The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* is made up of 24 key leaders representing all the sectors of the early learning and development field and is co-chaired by the Commissioner of Education, Deborah A. Gist, and by Elizabeth Burke Bryant, the Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, an independent children's policy and research organization. The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council's* overarching goal is "to expand access to ensure that more children, particularly from low-income and vulnerable families, participate in high-quality early learning programs, including high-quality child care (both center-based and family child-care homes), Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K, Early Intervention, preschool Special Education, and full-day kindergarten." A list of Early Learning Council members is in Appendix 1 – *Rhode Island Early Learning Council Ensuring Access to High-Quality Early Learning and Development Programs*.

The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* focuses its work on eight key areas, including: Quality Incentives and Supports; Early Learning Access; Early Learning Data System; Early

Learning Standards; Kindergarten Assessment; Alignment of Program Standards; Professional Development; and, Higher Education. The State capitalized on the recent opportunity to use federal resources to support the work of its *Early Learning Council* and developed a strategic plan that aligns well with the criteria outlined in this application. This strategic plan positions the State well because planning, community consensus, and work for key projects that are proposed in this application are already underway. The Council receives regular updates and reports on current enrollment and participation in State early learning programs, has formed an Early Learning Access Team, and, in March 2011, approved a list of priority strategies to expand access for young children. More information on these priority strategies can be found in Appendix 2 – *Rhode Island Early Learning Council Access Priorities*.

The *Early Learning Council* has spearheaded the development of the RTT-ELC application and will work with all of the State agency directors to ensure that the work is implemented according to the goals. Between August 19th and October 5th there were four meetings of the Council to develop this application, two public forums to get input on the reform strategies, as well as meetings with all key committees/organizations working on early learning.

Successful Start – Rhode Island’s Early Childhood Comprehensive System

Building on the ambitious foundation of Starting Right, Successful Start is Rhode Island’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan, adopted by the state in 2005 after a planning process that involved more than 200 State department and community leaders representing all domains of child development. The Successful Start Plan describes goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that will improve and coordinate services, resulting in improved child and family outcomes. Successful Start partners work collaboratively and across State departments to ensure that all young children reach their full potential, through a system of services that promotes healthy social-emotional development, quality early care and education, coordinated medical homes, and effective parent education and family-support services.

This strong base of interagency collaboration and community input into policy and planning is an excellent foundation for the work that will proceed as we implement the Race to the Top Early Learning Reform Plan proposed here. Rhode Island has a history of collaborative work that will ensure that we will achieve an aligned and effective early learning and development system that includes resources and accountability across all state agencies as well

as across the public and private sectors. Establishing a state tiered quality rating system (BrightStars), establishing the TEACH scholarship program, and investing in evidence-based home visiting, including the start-up and implementation of the Nurse Family Partnership in Rhode Island, were key strategies in Successful Start that have all been implemented since the plan was published in 2005. More information on Successful Start can be found in Appendix 3 – *Successful Start, Rhode Island's Comprehensive Early Childhood System Plan, 2005*.

Evidence-Based Home Visiting

As a result of the Successful Start planning process as well as Rhode Island's successful application in 2008 for the Administration for Children and Families, *Evidence-Based Home Visiting Initiative*, Rhode Island launched the state's first Nurse-Family Partnership program, with a blend of state and federal funding, as a strategy to reduce child maltreatment and improve child and family outcomes. The Nurse-Family Partnership program is a nationally recognized, intensive and comprehensive home visiting program for families of young Children with High Needs. The Nurse-Family Partnership program was launched in Rhode Island in 2010 with 100 families and is funded at a level of \$6,500 per family per year to cover the cost associated with hiring and retaining qualified nurses to deliver the program and a dedicated Spanish-English-Portuguese interpreter fully trained in the model to meet the needs of our diverse young families.

The launch of the NFP program resulted from Rhode Island's state agencies working with non-profit advocates and providers to reach a clear goal – to offer evidence-based home visiting to Rhode Island's highest needs children. Rhode Island is a recent recipient of a competitive development grant through the federal *Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program*, which will enable Rhode Island to more than double the capacity of the existing Nurse-Family Partnership program (to 225 families) as well as to provide funds to start up the evidence-based Healthy Families America program as a new resource for families of infants and toddlers and to provide support to some existing Parents as Teachers programs.

Pre-K as Part of the Rhode Island Education Funding Formula

Despite difficult economic times, Rhode Island continues its commitment to expanding access to high-quality early learning and development programs and to building high-quality, evidence-based system components of our early learning and development system. Under the

leadership of our Governor, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Rhode Island General Assembly, Rhode Island has become one of a handful of States to prioritize early education by including funding for the State Pre-K program as a core part of its new education funding formula. The funding formula legislation passed in 2010 and Pre-K will be funded as a categorical program within the funding formula beginning in 2012 pursuant to a ten-year Pre-K expansion plan. This achievement has been the result of extraordinary interagency collaboration coupled with deep and focused input from a wide range of stakeholders across all parts of the early learning and development community.

In both State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011, State funding for Pre-K was built into the Rhode Island Department of Education's budget. These State funds, coupled with Title I funding from two local school districts, Providence and Central Falls, supported the implementation of seven Pre-K Demonstration Project classrooms. Rhode Island's Pre-K program uses a mixed delivery system that includes public schools, child-care centers, and Head Start programs, providing high-quality, six-hour Pre-K programs for 4-year-olds. Funding for the State Pre-K program is designed to support high-quality program standards and competitive staff salaries, with funding levels set at \$9,300 per child per year. Rhode Island's State Pre-K program is one of only five public Pre-K programs in the country that meet all ten of the National Institute for Early Education Research quality benchmarks. In State Fiscal Year 2012 (school year 2011-2012), the Pre-K Demonstration program has continued with six classrooms, funded with bridge funding provided through a combination of state funds, District Title I funds and private funds. This bridge funding supports the Pre-K program classrooms during the transition from being a program funded within the Rhode Island Department of Education's Budget to being a program funded within the new school funding formula that will begin in State Fiscal Year 2013 (school year 2012-2013). The ten-year expansion plan for Pre-K as part of the Education Funding Formula will grow the State investment in Pre-K to \$10 million per year, beginning with communities with the highest concentrations of low-income children.

RItE Care – High-Quality, Comprehensive Health Care for Rhode Island Children

Rhode Island uses a “whole child” approach to school readiness, especially when attempting to improve outcomes for Children with High Needs. Rhode Island's work during the past 15 years has centered on the core premise that if we are too close the preparation gap that is

evident at school entry, we must use a range of strategies and interventions, including high-quality early learning opportunities beginning at birth; access to health, mental health, and child-development services; and the engagement of families to put young children on the path for success. Rhode Island has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to ensuring all children have access to high-quality, comprehensive health-insurance coverage through the State's nationally recognized RItE Care/RItE Share program. Between 2007 and 2009, 7.7 percent of Rhode Island's children under age 18 were uninsured, compared with 10.3 percent of children in the nation. Children who have health-insurance coverage are more likely to receive preventive care, be screened for developmental milestones, miss fewer days of school, and get treatment for common illnesses, chronic conditions, and emergencies. RItE Smiles is a dental-benefits manager program that has dramatically increased access to regular preventive dental care for low-income children. Another key asset is that Rhode Island provides universal newborn screening to all infants and enters the data into KIDSNET, a public health data system that is used by primary care providers to identify the need for follow-up on areas of concern. This database will be linked with Rhode Island's PK-20 database as we develop the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System using a unique child identifier so that there is the ability to track progress and child outcomes over time.

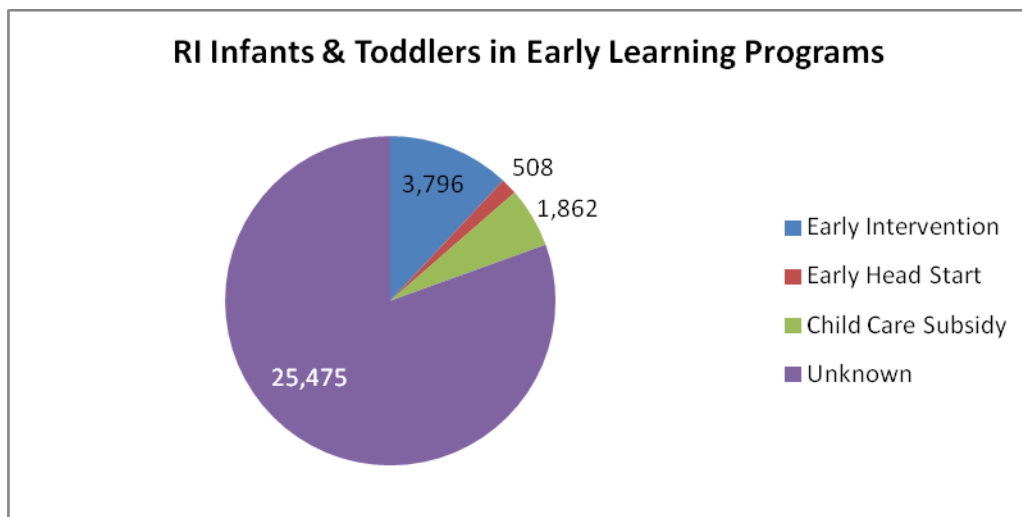
Children with High Needs Participating in Early Learning and Development Programs

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers in Rhode Island have access to early learning programs through Early Intervention (IDEA Part C), through the Child Care Subsidy Program, and through federal investments in Early Head Start. In 2010, the State's Early Intervention program served 3,796 children under age 3. Data from December 2010 show that the Child Care Subsidy Program served 1,862 infants and toddlers. Data from October 2010 show that Rhode Island Early Head Start programs served 508 children under age 3. In the chart below, the "unknown" category includes infants and toddlers in child-care centers and family child care homes in the private market as well as children in the care of families, friends, and neighbors who are not licensed by the state. At the current time, the data are not available to know what type of setting children are in unless they are in a publicly funded program, such as Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Head Start, or the child-care subsidy system. While we know the total licensed child care

capacity in every community in the state, we do not currently have data on actual enrollment numbers.

The State has also recently established a Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) home-visiting program to serve 100 vulnerable low-income families in the core urban region. NFP will soon be expanded to 225 families, through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. Through the successful competitive application for MIECHV funding, Rhode Island will sustain and expand the Nurse-Family Partnership program and will establish a Healthy Families America program to serve 350 additional Children with High Needs and their families.



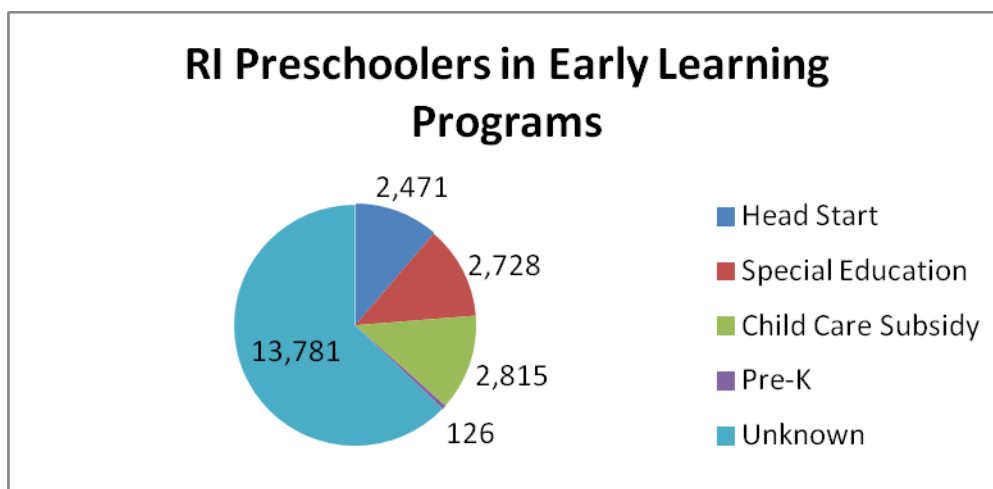
Early Intervention Program (IDEA Part C)

Rhode Island receives national recognition for strong participation in Early Intervention (IDEA, Part C). Our IDEA, Part C program is ranked first in the nation for both children under age 3 and children under age 1 receiving Part C services, among States with moderate eligibility standards, and 4th nationally in both categories among all states. Children eligible for Rhode Island's Early Intervention program include children with a "single established condition," a diagnosed medical disorder bearing relatively well-known expectancy for developmental delay, and children exhibiting or who have been professionally determined to have a "significant developmental delay" in one or more areas of development (cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive). In addition, children in Rhode Island may be eligible for Early Intervention through a "multiple established conditions" category, which includes children with a history of biological and environmental issues that could negatively impact the developing

nervous system and/or early life experiences that indicate a high probability for atypical or delayed development. As part of Rhode Island’s Early Learning Reform Plan proposed in this application, Early Intervention Programs across the state will be trained to use Teaching Strategies GOLD as a formative assessment tool, in order to align with the assessments being used in early learning programs.

Preschool-age Children

Rhode Island preschool children from age 3 to kindergarten entry have access to early learning programs through the State’s Child Care Subsidy Program, preschool special education (Part B, Section 619 services), state Pre-K, and state and federal investments in Head Start. During the 2009-10 school year, there were 2,728 preschool children receiving special education services through a local school district and another 126 preschool children (4-year-olds) participating in the State Pre-K program. Data from December 2010 show that there were 2,815 preschoolers receiving a child-care subsidy. In October 2010, there were 2,471 preschoolers enrolled in Rhode Island Head Start programs. In the chart below, the “unknown” category includes preschoolers in child-care centers and family child care homes in the private market as well as children in the care of families, friends, and neighbors who are not licensed by the state. At the current time, the data are not available to know what type of setting children are in unless they are in a publicly funded program, such as Head Start, state Pre-K, preschool special education classrooms, or the child-care subsidy system. While we know the total licensed child care capacity in every community in the state, we do not currently have data on actual enrollment numbers.



Child Care Subsidy Program

Rhode Island provides child care subsidies to working families who meet the income threshold and other eligibility criteria. Rhode Island has continued to serve all eligible families without any waiting list. Researchers have found that unregulated child care is often low quality. Rhode Island's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) policies have encouraged families to choose licensed care over unregulated care by ensuring that there is an adequate choice of program types, including center-based and family child care options. In 2010 in Rhode Island, 71 percent of child-care subsidies were for care in a licensed child care center, 28 percent were for care by a licensed family child-care home or group family child-care home, while only 1 percent was for care by a non-licensed relative, friend, or neighbor. More than 70% of family child care providers speak Spanish as their primary language. Family child care is often the provider of choice for Rhode Island's Latino families, partly due to cultural and linguistic capacity and partly due to the flexible hours that can accommodate second shift and non-traditional work hours.

Children's access to subsidized child care has been reduced in recent years as a result of State budget cuts and parents' job loss, which makes many low-income families ineligible for a subsidy. In 2007, eligibility for child-care assistance was reduced from 225 percent to 180 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. By helping families who work at low-wage jobs afford reliable child care, state child-care assistance programs enable parents to have the child care they need to maintain employment and to support their children's learning. Children benefit when they are enrolled in a high-quality early learning program with a consistent provider. In 2009 in Rhode Island (the most recent market rate survey), the average annual cost for full-time child care was \$11,374 for an infant in a center; \$9,119 for a preschooler in a center; and \$8,303 for a preschooler in a family child-care home. Using a federal affordability guideline indicating that families should spend no more than 10 percent of their gross income on child care, a Rhode Island family would need to make at least \$91,000 per year to afford the average cost of full-time child care for one preschooler in a licensed center.

The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* recognizes the importance of restoring eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy Program back to 225 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as a key strategy to increase access for children with high needs, and has

recommended an interim strategy of implementing differential entrance and exit eligibility standards. Implementation of differential eligibility criteria for entrance versus exit would enable low-income, working families currently enrolled in the Child Care Subsidy Program to retain their child-care subsidy as family income climbs above the 180 percent benchmark up to 225 percent of poverty. In the meantime, the R.I. Department of Human Services is implementing reforms designed to increase access to high-quality child care by:

- extending program eligibility to 12 months;
- expanding to 6 weeks the amount of time children can remain in the program after a parent's job loss; and
- requiring all programs receiving funding through the Child Care Subsidy Program to participate in BrightStars, the State's TQRIS.

Rhode Island Pre-K Program

The Rhode Island Pre-K Program, launched in the 2009-10 school year, was recognized by the National Institute for Early Education Research as one of only five state Pre-K programs nationally that meet all ten recommended quality benchmarks set forth by the National Institute for Early Education Research. Rhode Island's Pre-K Program incorporates high-quality program standards, including requirements that the lead classroom teacher have a bachelor's degree and early childhood teacher certification, that teaching assistants have a Child Development Associate certificate, and that no more than 18 children be in the class. Funding for the program, at approximately \$9,300 per child, is enough to enable programs to meet these high-quality standards and to pay teachers competitive wages.

The Rhode Island Pre-K Program takes advantage of our existing community-based infrastructure of programs for young children with classrooms operated by Head Start programs, public schools (including charter public schools), and private child-care and preschool providers. During the two-year Demonstration phase (school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011), the State Pre-K program served a total of 126 children per year (7 classrooms of 18 children). A Pre-K expansion plan that begins in State FY 2013 (school year 2012-2013) is built into the State's education funding formula and will expand the program over ten years to serve 1,100 children in up to 15 communities. The expansion plan for Pre-K targets communities with high needs first and allocates resources to ensure greater access in those communities. The measure used to

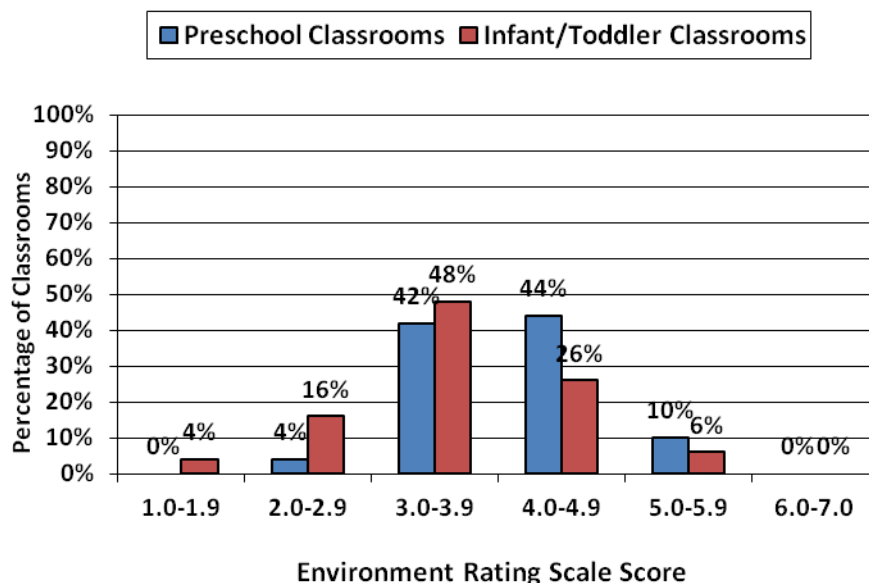
identify these communities is the percentage of children at kindergarten entry who are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch.

Access to High Quality Early Learning Programs - Baseline Program Quality

Over the past several years, Rhode Island has placed increasing emphasis on improving the quality of early learning programs in the state, particularly programs that serve Children with High Needs. Rhode Island has worked with the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, to conduct baseline studies of the quality of community-based early learning and child-care programs in Rhode Island. The 2009 statewide study of child-care centers, preschools, and center-based Head Start programs involved a random sample of 69 licensed early learning programs with in-depth Environment Rating Scale (ERS) observations conducted in 50 preschool classrooms and 50 infant/toddler classrooms. Many of the programs in this study (86 percent) served children whose families receive financial assistance through the State's Child Care Subsidy Program. *Rhode Island's 2009 Child Care Center & Preschool Quality Study* showed that:

- 6 percent of infant/toddler classrooms and 10 percent of preschool classrooms were providing high-quality experiences for young children (rated 5.0 and above on the ITERS-R or ECERS-R);
- 74 percent of infant/toddler classrooms and 86 percent of preschool classrooms were providing medium-quality experiences for young children (rated between 3.0 and 4.9 on the ITERS-R or ECERS-R); and
- 20 percent of infant/toddler classrooms and 4 percent of preschool classrooms were providing low-quality experiences (rated below a 3.0 on the ITERS-R or ECERS-R).

Quality of Center-Based Early Learning Programs Rhode Island, 2009



More information on the quality of child care and preschools in Rhode Island can be found in Appendix 4 – *Rhode Island's 2009 Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Study*.

The *2010 Rhode Island Family Child Care Study* involved a random sample of 50 licensed family child-care homes across Rhode Island, with 94 percent reporting that they served children whose families receive financial assistance through the Rhode Island Child Care Subsidy Program. The study showed that:

- No family child-care homes were providing high-quality experiences (rated 5.0 and above on the FCCERS-R);
- 36 percent of family child-care homes were providing medium-quality experiences (rated between 3.0 and 4.9 on the FCCERS-R); and
- 64 percent of family child-care homes were providing low-quality experiences (rated less than 3.0 on the FCCERS-R).

More information on the quality of licensed family child care homes in Rhode Island can be found in Appendix 5 – *Rhode Island's 2010 Family Child Care Quality Study*.

Rhode Island's Early Learning & Development Legislation, Policies & Practices

Below is a summary of key legislation that has been passed in support of the early learning and development of young children in Rhode Island:

Kindergarten Screening

The *Rhode Island Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act*, passed in 1987, requires “all school districts that provide elementary education to screen all children prior to, or upon, their first entry to school to determine their level of educational readiness . . . Screening shall address the child’s educational development and shall be used to determine whether he or she is educationally disadvantaged in terms of readiness for instruction in the literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, or mathematics.” These screenings and assessments are happening at the LEA level to inform kindergarten instruction using a variety of tools. The State does not currently collect school readiness screening/assessment data from LEAs, and there is wide variability in the tools and methods used for screening. The State is committed to a statewide comprehensive kindergarten assessment method that will be identified and implemented as described in this application.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

In 2007, the R.I. General Assembly passed legislation establishing “a *voluntary quality rating system*, which will assess quality in early care and education programs and school-age child care . . . to provide a mechanism to gather data about program quality . . . and report this information to parents, providers, and other persons interested in the quality of early care and education programs in Rhode Island.” The legislation also directs the four key State departments (including the R.I. Department of Human Services; the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families; the R.I. Department of Health; and the R.I. Department of Education) to “work cooperatively with the Rhode Island Quality Rating System . . . to ensure that all Rhode Island children have access to quality early care and education programs.” This law led to the establishment of BrightStars, Rhode Island’s Tiered QRIS, which is the foundation upon which much of this application is built. The fact that we have an established, research-based TQRIS is a strength that we will build upon and use as the foundation for an aligned system of high-quality

early learning and development programs and for increasing access to quality for Children with High Needs across the state.

State Pre-Kindergarten Program

In 2008, the R.I. General Assembly passed the *Pre-Kindergarten Education Act*, which recognized that “attending high-quality early childhood education programs helps children develop important social and cognitive skills and knowledge that prepares children to succeed in school” and directed the R.I. Department of Education “to begin planning an initial, pilot pre-kindergarten program that meets high-quality standards, builds on the existing early childhood education infrastructure in the state (including child care, Head Start, and public schools), and serves children ages 3 and 4 who reside in communities with concentrations of low-performing schools.” The law also directs the R.I. Department of Education to “work with other State departments and private philanthropy to establish a statewide, comprehensive, research-based early childhood workforce-development scholarship program to expand the numbers of early childhood educators with an associate’s or bachelor’s degree in early childhood education.” This law led to the establishment of the Rhode Island Pre-K Program and to the launch of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood workforce-development model in Rhode Island.

Education Funding Formula

In 2010, the R.I. General Assembly enacted an *education funding formula*, which includes a categorical allocation outside the district-aid formula distribution specifically designated to increase access to high-quality early childhood education for children. The funding formula will increase the state investment in the Rhode Island Pre-K Program through a ten year phase in that will grow to \$10 million per year, with priority for the highest-need communities.

Current Status in Key Areas that Serve as Building Blocks

Rhode Island’s past and current commitments include key investments that have created a strong foundation upon which we built the reform strategies outlined in this application. This foundation includes a history of collaborative governance, a focus on improving child outcomes across all domains of child development, attention to early learning and development standards, a commitment to improving the knowledge and competencies of the workforce, and a clear focus

on improving program quality. All of Rhode Island's past and present early childhood initiatives have benefited from the strong, consistent participation of the full breadth of our early childhood community, from Head Start to center-based and family child care associations, to children's health and development leaders and early childhood educators. System-building efforts are most successful when they have deep community connections to the early childhood teachers and caregivers on the front lines. Rhode Island also has a track record of engaging and supporting families in early learning and development programs and for ensuring that parent engagement and involvement are built into our program quality standards.

Rhode Island's early childhood system-building successes, including funding to establish BrightStars TQRIS, T.E.A.C.H., and the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund, have received the consistent financial support of private philanthropy, including the United Way of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Foundation, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, in addition to the critical public-sector funding from the Rhode Island General Assembly and core State agency partners.

Early Learning Standards – Current Status

The *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* were developed by a collaborative planning group under the leadership of the R.I. Department of Education and the R.I. Department of Human Services to define what preschool children should know and be able to do as they exit preschool programs to enter kindergarten. Efforts were made to align these standards with the *Head Start Child Outcomes* framework and *Grade Level Expectations for Kindergarten*. Current standards were released in 2003. These standards were developed with the input of Latino providers and parents, through participation in planning meetings as well as focus groups. Materials are available in both Spanish and English. More information on these standards can be found in Appendix 6 – *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for Preschoolers*.

A critical next step for Rhode Island is to expand the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and the accompanying supports (e.g., professional development, technical assistance, family engagement activities) to be used by programs serving infants and toddlers. Rhode Island has implemented focused strategies to ensure that the early learning workforce understands the standards and how to use them in preschool classrooms and programs. Currently, the State offers free, intensive training to support early childhood educators and administrators in

understanding and using Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. Additionally, a technical-assistance initiative for programs and training specifically for families were developed. These training and technical assistance initiatives will be addressed in detail in section C(1).

BrightStars, Rhode Island's tiered quality-rating and improvement system for child care and early learning programs, requires Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training certificates as evidence of teacher and administrator qualifications, and the system reviews curriculum to ensure alignment with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. In addition, the R.I Department of Education's preschool-approval program standards, the *Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards*, require that curriculum, child assessment, and family engagement be aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and require Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training certificates as evidence of teacher and administrator qualifications. More information on the preschool approval standards can be found in Appendix 7 - *Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards: Standards for the Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs*.

Rhode Island's workforce knowledge and competencies framework identifies knowledge and skills specific to understanding and using the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. More information on the competencies for teachers and teacher assistants in classrooms serving children birth to age 5 can be found in Appendix 8 – *The Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Care Educators*.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems – Current Status

Developmental Screening

Rhode Island has a strong foundation promoting access to regular developmental screening through medical homes. In 2008, changes were made to Rhode Island's Early Periodic Screening and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule, making it consistent with the American Academy of Pediatric recommendations that screening tests for children ages birth through three (B-3) should be administered regularly, at the 9-, 18-, and 30-month visits. This system is currently being enhanced so that providers are encouraged to include a specific social-emotional health screening. The strength of our developmental screening system is another example of cross-departmental partnerships that have resulted in improved practices that support school readiness.

Rhode Island's *Watch Me Grow Program* is managed by the R.I. Department of Health, in partnership with the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, to promote integrating systems of developmental screening and follow-up. Child-care providers and primary-care providers are supported to implement a system of regular developmental screening consistent with the enhanced EPSDT schedule, using standardized tools. Providers are also supported to collect data about the screening rates and results as well as to ensure that families receive appropriate follow-up. This program provides training and technical assistance to health-care and child-care providers to help them provide developmental screening to children, work with parents to access services for children if developmental problems are identified, and answer questions from parents about their children's development. Rhode Island recently adopted the developmental-screening schedule recommended by Bright Futures (AAP) through EPSDT so that health-care providers can bill for developmental screening during the early childhood years.

For children ages 3 through 5, developmental screening is universally available through each local school district's Child Outreach screening program. The Child Outreach screening program is designed to screen all children ages 3 to 5 years old annually. The screenings are conducted by local school districts using valid and reliable screening instruments that address each of the following areas: vision, hearing, speech/language skills, social/emotional development, and general development (including, but not limited to, gross and fine motor skills, language, and cognition). Rhode Island has a goal of screening 80 percent of 3- to 5-year-olds and has been making steady progress within the last several years. Currently, approximately 63 percent of Rhode Island's 3- to 5-year-old population is being screened, with some districts reaching higher percentages than others. More information on the Child Outreach Program can be found in Appendix 9 - *Child Outreach Screening Guidelines*.

Formative Assessments

A clear goal of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project is to ensure that children are making progress on each of the RIELS learning objectives so that they enter kindergarten with a strong foundation for learning. The alignment of child assessment practices with the RIELS learning goals for the purpose of informing curriculum development has been a core focus of the RIELS professional development mentioned above. In 2005, when the Office

of Special Education Programs began requiring early childhood special-education programs to report on child outcomes, one of the criteria that guided the selection of the State assessment tool was alignment with the RIELS. As a result, Rhode Island chose the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum and now uses the recently revised version, Teaching Strategies GOLD, to assess child outcomes. As of the 2010-11 school year, all Rhode Island school districts are using Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess the progress of children with disabilities. Programs and classrooms implementing the State's Pre-K Program are also required to implement a curriculum aligned with the RIELS and to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system to measure child outcomes. Approximately 3,000 children per year, ages 3 to 5 and participating in state-funded programs, are being assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD. In addition, five of the seven Head Start programs in the state have also chosen to use Teaching Strategies GOLD to monitor progress and child outcomes. This is a comprehensive base of information across all domains of child development that will be used as part of the state's Early Learning Data System that will be implemented through RTT-ELC.

More information on Teaching Strategies GOLD and the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards can be found in Appendix 10 – *Alignment of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards with Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning: Birth through Kindergarten*.

Measures of Environmental Quality

Rhode Island is actively using the Environment Rating Scales developed by the FPG Child Development Institute, at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, as tools to measure and inform program-quality improvement activities. The staff members using the instruments have been trained to national reliability standards by the authors of the instruments. These environmental-rating scales were selected because they have been shown to be reliable measures of key elements of process quality. Process quality includes the interactions, learning activities and materials, learning opportunities, and health and safety routines in early childhood settings. When process quality is rated higher, research shows that children develop more advanced language and mathematics abilities and social skills. Lower ratings of process quality have been linked to increased behavior challenges in the classroom.

Currently, BrightStars, the State's tiered quality-rating and improvement system for early learning programs, has a set of standards that are aligned across state departments (including the Early Learning Standards and state child care licensing) and also includes three environment rating scales to assess the quality of early childhood environments applying for a star rating. The *Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R)* (Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., 2005), is used in preschool classrooms. The *Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS-R)* (Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., 2003) is used in infant-toddler classrooms. The *Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R)* (Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R.M. (2007) is used in family child-care settings. Achieving an average score of a 5.0 or above on these tools, along with meeting additional BrightStars TQRIS standards, is required to achieve a 5-star rating in BrightStars. The ECERS-R is also used to assess the quality of preschool and kindergarten classrooms seeking R.I. Department of Education approval as a Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program. A score of 5.0 or above is required for each classroom seeking this approval.

Measures of the Quality of Teacher-Child Interactions

In addition to assessing the quality of classroom environments, Rhode Island uses measures of teacher-child interactions as a strategy to ensure that effective, intentional teacher-child interactions exist to support positive learning outcomes. The *Classroom Assessment and Scoring System*, or CLASS, (Hamre, B. K., Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Lacasle-Crouch, J., & La Paro, K. M., 2006) is used in both BrightStars (for center-based programs serving preschoolers) and as part of the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program approval process.

CLASS has also been used as a tool to strategically support program improvement in the technical-assistance initiative managed by the R.I. Department of Education to better understand the classroom environment and teacher-child interactions. This process includes annual training to support a cohort of CLASS observers to retain their reliability and to support additional individuals to achieve CLASS reliability. At this time, approximately 50 individuals have achieved CLASS reliability as a result of this effort.

Rhode Island also has some experience using two additional tools for measuring adult-child interactions in State Pre-K classrooms: the PRISM and the CASEBA. The *Preschool*

Rating Instrument for Science and Mathematics (PRISM; Boyd-Garcia, Brenneman, Frede, & Weber, 2010) is used to assess the classroom environment and teaching strategies in relation to mathematics and science in the preschool classroom. The mathematics concepts addressed by the PRISM are based on the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, as relevant for preschool-aged children. The science items in the PRISM reflect what current literature suggests are the best ways to support preschool children's science learning, and they also reflect the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework domain elements for science. PRISM captures the extent to which best practices are evident to support and encourage children's understanding of mathematic and scientific concepts and processes in the classroom. The *Classroom Assessment of Supports for Emergent Bilingual Acquisition* (CASEBA; Freedson, Figueras-Daniel, & Frede, 2010) is used to assess the degree to which preschool teachers and classrooms provide support for language and literacy development in preschool, and more specifically for whole-child development in Dual Language Learners (DLLs). The CASEBA items are based on what research indicates about effective language and emergent literacy supports for 3- to 5-year-old children who speak a language other than English at home and who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language, as well as for children who are learning only one language.

Health Promotion Practices – Current Status

Rhode Island has prioritized the importance of providing children and families with access to high-quality primary health care, and currently 93.5 percent of Rhode Island's children have health insurance coverage. One-third of our children are insured through Rhode Island's nationally recognized *RItE Care Program*. RItE Care provides comprehensive health benefits to children up to 250 percent of poverty and parents up to 175 percent of poverty. The R.I. Department of Human Services has recently adopted a new EPSDT Schedule that reflects the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition, Rhode Island's RItE Care program has a comprehensive benefits package and incentivizes the use of a medical home approach to care.

Rhode Island is implementing the *I am Moving, I am Learning* training and support program for early childhood education providers in a variety of settings. *I am Moving, I am Learning* (IMIL) is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity in children. Originally

developed for Head Start programs, IMIL aims to increase children's moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, improve the quality of structured movement activities facilitated by adults, and improve healthy nutrition choices for children.

Rhode Island's Child Care Support Network enhances the availability of high-quality child care for all children, including children with special health-care needs, by building partnerships with child-care professionals, providing individual and peer support, and facilitating connections with community resources. *Child-care health consultation* is available to all licensed child-care professionals working in family child-care homes and center-based programs in Rhode Island. Specially trained health and early childhood professionals offer consultation, technical assistance, and training to child-care providers (including family homes). *Child Mental Health Consultants* conduct on-site consultation in child-care settings across Rhode Island for a period of 12 months to provide assistance with program improvement, community-based referrals, and effective parent engagement.

Rhode Island Project Launch places early childhood mental-health clinicians in primary-care practices and child-care centers to address the needs of children aged birth to 8 years old and their families. RI-LAUNCH uses a comprehensive approach to health, including good nutrition and physical health. Through a combination of several standardized tools, children receive a wellness screening in community-based settings to assess overall health. If a screening indicates services are needed, the children receive follow-up care through RI-LAUNCH or other appropriate follow-up programs. This is another example of how we have leveraged federal grant funding for an initiative to build a sustainable system of care and resources for children and families.

Family Engagement Strategies – Current Status

Rhode Island places a high value on outreach to families of Children with High Needs as well as family engagement in all early learning programs. Head Start and Early Head Start are clearly the models for comprehensive family-engagement strategies. The *Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness from Prenatal to Age 8* is a vital tool for early childhood education and care providers seeking to build effective engagement strategies. Though the framework is intended for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, its lessons are useful and applicable to a much broader audience of

early childhood programs and will be used as a core part of our work on the Rhode Island Early Learning State Plan. When parent- and family-engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, families become empowered partners in learning and development, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school. Core outcomes include: family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions (e.g., to kindergarten and elementary school), family connections to peers and the community, and families as advocates and leaders. Though the framework recommends specific ways for programs to work toward these outcomes, the strategies are flexible and adaptable to local needs and will be actively used in Rhode Island.

In addition, the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and the R.I. Department of Education Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval Standards emphasize family engagement as a core component of quality. The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project and Ready to Learn Providence have partnered to develop a six-session training series, offered in Spanish and English, for parents and family members of preschool-age children. The training series, *Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers*, is based on the knowledge that parents have a critical role in preparing children for school success. The content of the training builds upon research and best practice in both early childhood development and parenting and the understanding that children learn best through play. Materials are available in English and Spanish. As a result of participation in this training, families are supported to discover new, enjoyable, and creative ways to support their child's growth and development; learn specific ways to support their child in the eight areas of learning addressed in the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards; create individualized Family Treasure Boxes with activities that reflect each family's unique culture and values; strengthen connections with community organization and public institutions such as the public schools, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, and more; and commit to ongoing involvement in their child's education.

Development of Early Childhood Educators – Current Status

In 2010, Rhode Island established the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship model to improve the educational qualifications of the workforce and to help address staff compensation

and turnover issues. The T.E.A.C.H. model is operating in 22 states and provides scholarships to early childhood educators to complete coursework in higher education, to pursue college degrees, and to receive increased compensation. In States across the country, T.E.A.C.H. participants are steadily accumulating college credits, earning degrees, and increasing their earnings while staying in the field. T.E.A.C.H. is operated by Ready to Learn Providence, which has recently completed a survey of professional development opportunities in Rhode Island that can be used to begin to assess resources and gaps.

Rhode Island is in the process of completing a Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC) framework with a four-level Career Lattice for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants. Final competencies for each role are anticipated by December 2011. A Professional Development Planning team of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council has been meeting to put together a State plan for a cross-sector comprehensive professional development system aligned with WKC frameworks. Key next steps for Rhode Island include expanding and customizing the WKC framework for family child-care providers, early childhood program administrators, and education coordinators. In addition, through the T.E.A.C.H. project, there has been some beginning work on articulation agreements with the State colleges to increase opportunities for early childhood educators to earn degrees. The Rhode Island Early Childhood Education & Training Project at CCRI provides academic training to address the needs of the field of early childhood education. Participants receive college coursework (12 to 18 credit hours in early childhood education), CDA support, and one-on-one mentoring.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment – Current Status

Rhode Island does not currently have a statewide, common Kindergarten Entry Assessment in place, but the need was clearly identified during Rhode Island's comprehensive early childhood data-systems planning effort, a part of the National Governors Association (NGA) *Ready States Initiative*, which began in April 2010. Rhode Island's Early Learning Data System Action Plan, the product of this effort, identified the following as one of its key recommendations and next steps: Work to develop a statewide kindergarten-entry assessment system using best practices for early childhood assessment with the goal of supporting kindergarten instruction. Rhode Island will use the opportunity of the RTT_ELC as an opportunity to move forward with the selection, piloting and implementation of a common

statewide Kindergarten Assessment tool linked with a comprehensive Early Learning Data System.

Simultaneous with the early learning data system planning effort, the Rhode Island Early Learning Council was formed (June 2010) and developed its strategic plan, used as the basis for federal funding from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to support the work of the Council. The application submitted to ACF in July 2010 specifically proposes the Council's plan to: 1) Explore best practices in other States to develop a statewide kindergarten assessment system that builds on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and 2) Use the statewide kindergarten assessment to guide practice and policy and inform kindergarten teachers of children's strengths and areas for growth as well as to understand progress across groups of children. In December 2010, planning for a kindergarten assessment began with the establishment of the Kindergarten Assessment Work Team of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. This group met initially to draft a set of general recommendations for the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. These recommendations were presented to and approved by the Early Learning Council in March 2011 and are outlined in Section (E)(1) of this application.

Effective Data Practices – Current Status

In April 2010, Rhode Island was selected to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) *Ready States Initiative* to plan for the development of coordinated and longitudinal data infrastructure for children ages birth to 8. Our state was recognized for having many of the critical building blocks in place and for having a strong planning team. Rhode Island has two universal data warehouses (the State Longitudinal Data System, managed by the R.I. Department of Education, and KIDSNET, the universal newborn screening and public-health data system, managed by the R.I. Department of Health) upon which a comprehensive early childhood data system will be built, with the capability to connect children's health and education information from birth through grade 12.

Currently in Rhode Island, key data about young children, early learning programs, and the early childhood workforce is stored in six separate databases managed by four separate State departments and one nonprofit organization: 1) Welligent for IDEA Part C programs, managed by the R.I. Department of Human Services, 2) InRhodes for Child Care Subsidy, managed by the R.I. Department of Human Services, 3) E-RIDE for preschool special education, state-funded

Pre-K, and preschool classroom approval, managed by the R.I. of Education, 4) RICHIST for child-care licensing, managed by the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families, 5) BrightStars for the state's quality-rating and improvement system, managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, under contract with the R.I. Department of Human Services, and 6) KIDSNET, managed by the R.I. Department of Health, as a universal database that includes newborn screening data as well as child-level demographic, risk, health, and some program-participation data (including home visiting and WIC) for all children born or living in Rhode Island since January 1, 1997.

Rhode Island leaders have developed a set of eight critical policy questions that require improved access to data: 1) How many children are in various early care and education settings? (access of unduplicated children by type of setting, location, and quality); 2) How much high-quality early care and education programming are children receiving? (attendance); 3) How many different programs do children attend before entering kindergarten? (stability); 4) Which early care and education programs are of high quality?; 5) Does program quality improve over time? What are the barriers for program-quality improvement?; 6) How many early childhood professionals are qualified, by meeting specific, established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g., core competencies, career lattice education levels)?; 7) What are the characteristics of the current workforce (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.); and 8) How many children are on track to succeed, during the early childhood years, at school entry, and beyond?

In June 2011, the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* approved a draft plan to build a more coordinated Early Learning Data System by building on the expertise and resources at the R.I. Department of Education (State Longitudinal Data System for K-12) and the R.I. Department of Health (KIDSNET universal database beginning at child's birth) under the leadership of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. This data system uses the framework of the Essential Data Elements and will track information on young children, early learning programs, and early childhood educators to answer the questions outlined above. Rhode Island is also committed to addressing data-system oversight, including data-system governance and transparency (as defined in the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Guidance) and to using a unique child identifier and a unique program identifier so that the data system can be used as a tool to track Rhode Island's progress in increasing access to high-quality programs for

Children with High Needs. Rhode Island is able to move forward with the Early Learning Data System in a cost-effective way as it will be supported by the existing resources being dedicated to the P-20 data system through both a federal SLDS grant and Rhode Island's Race to the Top K-12 initiative.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income¹ families, by age		
	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	4,219	38.5%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	8,789	38.5%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	13,705	38.5%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	26,714 (under age 6)	38.5%
<i>Source: Estimated from U.S. Census Data by multiplying the statewide percentage of children under age 6 living below 200% FPL (from the 2007-2009 ACS) by the total number of children in the state in each age group (from 2010 Census). In this calculation we assume that each age group has the same percentage of children in poverty as there is no breakdown of poverty levels by these age groups available. *Values may not sum to stated total due to rounding.</i>		

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays²	6,524	12.2%

¹ Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

² For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Are English learners³	5,103	9.5%
Reside on “Indian Lands”	Not available	Not available
Are migrant⁴	Not available	Not available
Are homeless⁵	644	1.2%
Are in foster care	608	1.1%
Are victims of child abuse or neglect	1,622	3.0%

[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data if needed.]

The total number of Rhode Island children ages birth to kindergarten entry used for this table is 53,562. This number is all active Rhode Island Department of Health KIDSNET records for children under age 5 as of 09/01/11. The cut-off date for Kindergarten entry in Rhode Island is age 5 on or before September 1.

Children who have disabilities or developmental delays is the number of children with an Individual Family Service Plan through a Rhode Island Early Intervention Provider (Part C of IDEA) in calendar year 2010 as reported by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (3,796) plus the number of preschool children who received special education services under Part B Section 619 during the 2009-2010 school year as reported by the Rhode Island Department of Education (2,728) from the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook.

Children who are English Language Learners is the number of children in KIDSNET under age 5 as of 09/01/11 who were born to a mother who did not speak English as collected during universal newborn developmental screening at the hospital. This data is an undercount as we do not have this data for children born outside of a Rhode Island hospital.

Children who reside on “Indian Lands” N/A

Children who are migrant N/A

Children who are homeless is the number of children under age 6 who stayed at a homeless or domestic violence shelter or a transitional housing facility with their family in calendar year 2010 as reported by the Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project for the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook.

³ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

⁴ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of “migratory child” in ESEA section 1309(2).

⁵ The term “homeless children” has the meaning given the term “homeless children and youths” in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
<p><i>Children who are in foster care is the number of children under age 6 in out-of-home placement (including children in foster care, group homes/residential facilities, medical facilities, and shelters) reported by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families as of January 5, 2011 from the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook.</i></p>		
<p><i>Other: Children who are victims of child abuse and neglect are children under 6 with an indicated investigation of child abuse or neglect in CY 2010 as reported by Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families from the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook.</i></p>		

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i> <i>Data Source and Year: Rhode Island Department of Education Pre-K Demonstration Program Enrollment for 2010-2011 reflecting 81 students below 185% of FPL. There are an additional 27 children who are above 185% of poverty but the number of these below 200% of poverty is not available.</i>	0	0	81	81
Early Head Start and Head Start⁶ <i>Data Source and Year: CLASP analysis of Head Start PIR data, 2010</i>	234	631	2,928	3,793
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year: Rhode Island Department of Human Services (Part C) and Rhode Island Department of Education (Part B, Section 619) reports to Rhode Island Kids Count for the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook</i>	1,101	2,695	2,728	6,524
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA Data Source and Year: <i>As reported in the RIDE Consolidated State Performance Report for 2009-2010 school year.</i>	8 (reported children in 0-2 age category)		573	581

⁶ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Programs receiving funds from the State’s CCDF program Data Source and Year: <i>Rhode Island Department of Human Services ACF – 800 for FFY 2010</i>	Reporting for ACF uses different age categories: Ages 0-1: 2,647 children Ages 2-3: 3,236 Ages 4-5: 2,602			8,484
<i>For Title I: Number may include children enrolled in IDEA preschool. If school is Title I Schoolwide, all students are counted in CSPR. Also includes services for preschool-age children (e.g. Parents as Teachers), but not necessarily a preschool program.</i>				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development

Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start⁷	\$3.3 million	\$3.3 million	\$800,000 + TANF	\$800,000 + TANF	\$800,000 + TANF
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i> <i>The state funded Pre-K Demonstration Program was launched in 2009-2010 and also included \$450,000/year in Title I funding from Providence and Central Falls School Districts. This will increase to \$10 M per year during the ten year Pre-K expansion plan as part of the Education Funding Formula, beginning in State FY2013.</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$700,000 + Title I	\$700,000 + Title I

⁷ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
State contributions to IDEA Part C <i>Average annual state funding for IDEA Part C is estimated from Medicaid match resources going to support Early Intervention services for families. State funding for program administration is not included.</i>	\$2.4 million	\$2.4 million	\$2.4 million	\$2.4 million	\$2.4 million
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total State contributions to CCDF⁸	\$29.7 million	\$12.8 million	\$7.1 million	\$7.1 million	\$9.3 million
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Exceeded by \$13.3 million	Exceeded by \$2,000	Met	Met	Met
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs⁹	\$28.2 million	\$29.8 million	\$29.2 million	\$19.7 million	\$23.2 million
Other State contributions <i>Specify: DCYF payments to DHS for child care for children in foster care</i>	\$5.7 million	\$5.2 million	\$4.7 million	\$4.2 million	\$4.4 million
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Social Services Block Grant funding for CCAP (federal dollars)</i>	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$2 million	\$1.3 million
Total State contributions:	\$70.6 million	\$54.8 million	\$45.5 million	\$36.9 million	\$42.1 million
<i>[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data, including the State's fiscal year end date. Include 2011 if data are available.]</i>					

⁸ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

⁹ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹⁰				
	2007	2008	2009 ¹¹	2010 ¹⁷	2011 ¹⁷
State-funded preschool (annual census count; e.g., October 1 count) <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	0	0	0	81*	81*
Early Head Start and Head Start¹² (funded enrollment)	3,098	2,869	2,831	2,979	Not available
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 (annual December 1 count)	4,428	4,556	4,399	4,599	4,592
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA (total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)	902	597	763	581	Not available
Programs receiving CCDF funds (average monthly served)	12,187	9,663	7,941	7,731	7,940
[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data if needed. Include 2011 if data are available. The final column of data should match that reported in Table (A)(1)-3.]					
For State-funded preschool: *Data reflects children who were under 185% of FPL. An additional 27 children are over 185% but it is unknown how many are between 185% and 200%. With the funding for PreK in the state Education Funding formula a total of 144 children will be served by state Pre-K in the Fall of 2012 and funding will be phased in to serve up to 1,100 children in ten years, with an emphasis on children in low-income communities.					
For Early Head Start and Head Start: Data is from Early Head Start and Head Start program reports to Rhode Island KIDS COUNT of October 1 enrollment, published in Rhode Island KIDS COUNT					

¹⁰ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹¹ Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

¹² Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹⁰				
	2007	2008	2009 ¹¹	2010 ¹⁷	2011 ¹⁷
Factbooks 2008-2011.					
For Title I: Data reflects number that may include IDEA preschools. If School is Title I Schoolwide, all students are counted in CSPR. Also includes services for preschool age children (e.g. Parents as Teachers), but not necessarily a preschool program.					

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards

Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness

Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development			X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)			X
Approaches toward learning			X
Physical well-being and motor development			X
Social and emotional development			X
[Enter text to explain or clarify information as needed]			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	X	X – Teaching Strategies GOLD	X – ECERS	X – CLASS	X – PRISM, CASEBA
Early Head Start and Head Start¹³	Federal requirements				
Programs funded under IDEA Part C		X – Required assessment of cognitive development, physical development (including vision and hearing), communication, social and emotional development, and adaptive development			X – Required assessment of Part C child outcomes and family outcomes
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619		X – Teaching Strategies GOLD			
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA					
Programs receiving CCDF funds					

¹³ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X (Tier 2,3,4,5 – information/links to screening systems through EI and Child Outreach)	X (Tier 4,5 no specific tool required)	X (Tier 3,4,5 – ECERS, ITERS or FCCERS)	X (Tier 4,5 – CLASS in preschool classrooms)	
State licensing requirements					
<i>[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	X	X	X		
Early Head Start and Head Start	Federal Requirements & Licensing				
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X – Certification standards	X	*see footnote		
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X – Basic Education Program (BEP)	X	X		
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X – Basic Education Program (BEP)	X	X		
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X – licensing and self-certification for license exempt providers				
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X – licensing compliance X – Environmental Rating Scores (ERS) at Tiers 3, 4, 5	X - information and referral to screening resources at Tiers 2, 3, 4,5	X – ERS scores at Tiers 3,4,5		
State licensing requirements	X				
<i>[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i> <i>*Part C: Health promotion is not formally required, but services and supports are individualized and provided as appropriate and necessary.</i>					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<p><i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i></p>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	State-funded preschool classrooms are required to meet RIDE's Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards. These standards require the following family-engagement strategies: parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, linkages with community supports, and parent involvement in decision making.
Early Head Start and Head Start	Federal requirements
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	Federal regulations and Rhode Island Early Intervention Certification Standards require parent involvement at every level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents consent to and participate in the eligibility evaluation and assessment; parents must be provided prior written notice of a proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of early intervention services. • Parents participate in the development of the Individualized Family Service Plan, which is focused on the desired outcomes of the family. Services are focused on coaching family members to implement strategies to improve their child's functioning in daily routines, activities, and places.
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	The Basic Education Program (BEP) regulations for PK-12 include the following family-engagement standards: communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful; parenting skills are promoted and supported; parents play an integral role in assisting student learning; parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought; parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<p><i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i></p>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Title I preschool programs must address parent-involvement requirements of the federal program. RIDE encourages aligning strategies with the national standards for family engagement, particularly effective communication strategies, and involvement in student learning at home. Schoolwide programs require a transition-to-kindergarten component.
Programs receiving CCDF funds	Licensing requirements: open-door policy, family handbook, directory of community resources, daily communication with parents of infants and toddlers
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	Tier 1: Compliance with licensing requirements: open-door policy, family handbook, directory of community resources, daily communication with parents of infants and toddlers Tier 2: Two of the following: monthly newsletter, quarterly family meeting/social event/workshop, quarterly suggestions/ideas for families to support learning at home, annual family survey Tier 3: Tier 2 requirements, plus parent-teacher conference two times per year Tier 4: No additional requirement beyond Tier 3 Tier 5: Tier 4, plus parent advisory board meeting quarterly
State licensing requirements	Open-door policy, family handbook, directory of community resources, daily communication with parents of infants and toddlers
<i>[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁴ currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Early Childhood Education Teaching Certificate	Not Available*	2,032	N/A	There are 2,032 people with active ECE Teaching Certificates in the State. Of that number, 498 are working in a public school.
RI Early Learning Standards PD Certificate - Intro	Yes	736	N/A	We do not have a good denominator for the number of early childhood educators in the State.
RI Early Learning Standards PD Certificate - Level I	Yes	24	N/A	2010-11 was the first year this training was offered
RI Early Learning Standards PD Certificate – Level II	Yes	1,088	N/A	
RI Early Learning Standards PD Certificate – Level III	Not available*	214	N/A	Workforce knowledge and competency framework for administrators has not been developed yet.
CCRI – Early Childhood Education Certificate (18 credits)	Not available*	16	N/A	
CCRI – Early Childhood Specialist Program Individuals who have completed 18 ECE credits and are eligible for CCRI ECE certificate.	Not available*	115	N/A	The Specialist program awards a Certificate of Completion from CCRI's Department of Human Services. The certificate issued is distinct from the official ECE certificate issued by the College. Individuals who complete the training program may formally apply for the College ECE Certificate

¹⁴ Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁴ currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
				through the Office of Enrollment Services. A fee is required before the certificate is issued.
Community College of Rhode Island – AA in Child Development and Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	150	N/A	
Rhode Island College – B.A. in Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	34	N/A	
Rhode Island College – B.S. in Early Childhood Education (for early childhood special education certificate)	Not Available*	59	N/A	
Rhode Island College – M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	5	N/A	
Rhode Island College – M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education	Not Available*	24	N/A	
University of Rhode Island – B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies/Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	122	N/A	
University of Rhode Island – MA/TCP in Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	9	N/A	
Salve Regina University – B.S. in Early Childhood Education	Not Available*	85	N/A	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁴ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]				
<i>*Rhode Island is working to complete and finalize Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers of children birth to k entry by December 2011. The process to align higher education offerings and teaching certificate requirements has not begun.</i>				
<i>Rhode Island does not have data on the total number of early childhood educators in the state so we cannot compute percentages.</i>				
<i>Data on the number of Early Childhood Educators with degrees from higher education institutions is from 2007-2011.</i>				

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
Community College of Rhode Island – Early Childhood Education certificate (18 credit hours)	8	Not Available*
CCRI – Early Childhood Specialist Program Individuals who have completed 18 ECE credits and are eligible for CCRI ECE certificate (Certificate not presently awarded**)	55	Not Available*
Community College of Rhode Island – AA in Child Development and Early Childhood Education	34	Not Available*

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators		
List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
Rhode Island College – B.A. in Early Childhood Education	9	Not Available*
Rhode Island College – B.S. in Early Childhood Education (for early childhood special education certificate)	20	Not Available*
Rhode Island College – M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education	0	Not Available*
Rhode Island College – M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education	10	Not Available*
University of Rhode Island – B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies/Early Childhood Education	18	Not Available*
University of Rhode Island – MA/TCP in Early Childhood Education	12	Not Available*
Salve Regina University – B.S. in Early Childhood Education	12	Not Available*
<p><i>*Rhode Island is working to complete and finalize Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers of children ages birth to K entry by December 2011. The process to align higher education offerings has not begun.</i></p> <p><i>**The Specialist program awards a Certificate of Completion from CCRI's Department of Human Services. The certificate issued is distinct from the official ECE certificate issued by the College. Individuals who complete the training program may formally apply for the College ECE Certificate through Office of Enrollment Services. A fee is required before the certificate is issued.</i></p>		

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? (Y/N)	Y	Y	N	N	N
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)	N	N			
Instrument(s) used? (<i>Specify</i>)	District choice	District choice			
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)	Unknown	Unknown			
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)	Unknown	Unknown			
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)	Unknown	Unknown			
How broadly administered? (<i>If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration</i>)	Required screening for school readiness prior to or upon first entry to school	Required screening for school readiness prior to or upon first entry to school			
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	N*	N			

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment

State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
<p><i>Note: Rhode Island State Law requires “all school districts that provide elementary education to screen all children prior to, or upon, their first entry to school to determine their level of educational readiness . . . Screening shall address the child’s educational development and shall be used to determine whether he or she is educationally disadvantaged in terms of readiness for instruction in the literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening or mathematics.” These screenings and assessments are happening at the LEA level to inform kindergarten instruction using a variety of tools. The state does not currently collect school readiness screening or assessment data from LEAs.</i></p> <p><i>*The state does collect information about students who are “below grade level” in reading and whether they have had a Personal Literacy Plan developed. These data are available for children in kindergarten.</i></p> <p><i>Rhode Island is proposing to adopt and implement a statewide, common kindergarten entry assessment that covers all essential domains of school readiness.</i></p>					

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State

List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	Place an “X” for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State’s data systems						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Welligent (Early Intervention)	X	X	X	X			X
RIDE K-12 Data Warehouse (IDEA Preschool and State Pre-K)	X	X	X	X	X		X

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State							
List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements <i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
In Rhodes (Child Care Subsidy)	X		X	X			X
KIDSNET (Department of Health universal newborn screening, primary health care and public health program database)	X			X			
RICHIST (Child Care Licensing)			X			X	
BrightStars database (TQRIS)			X			X	
<p><i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i></p> <p><i>Each data system uses its own unique child identifier, and educator identifier. We do not have statewide child identifiers. RICHIST, In Rhodes, and BrightStars use the same program identifier (DCYF PROVIDER ID).</i></p>							

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

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(2)

- The State’s goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
- The State’s goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
- The State’s goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.
- Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E).
- For each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), a description of the State’s rationale for choosing to address the selected criteria in that Focused Investment Area, including how the State’s choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)) and why these selected criteria will best achieve the State’s 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.

(A)(2) Rhode Island's Early Learning and Development Reform Agenda

Rhode Island is well-positioned and eager to use the *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge* (RTT-ELC) to build a more unified early childhood system that supports the healthy learning and development of all young children. Rhode Island has a track record of success with strategic initiatives across all early childhood sectors that have kept the focus on positive health, development, and educational outcomes for all children – with a laser-like focus on children with high needs, their families, and their caregivers. Throughout this application for the *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge*, the requested State Plan is referred to as the Rhode Island Early Learning Reform Plan (or Reform Plan). This Reform Plan builds on Rhode Island's strengths and pushes us to take the next steps in building a high-quality early learning and development system in Rhode Island that aligns work across state agencies and that leverages public and private resources to achieve outcomes for children.

Leadership Commitment

To achieve the ambitious goals and to accomplish the activities outlined in Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan requires effective leadership – and we have it. In the Honorable Lincoln Chafee, we have a Governor who is deeply committed to the success of Rhode Island's most vulnerable children. As a United States Senator, Chafee consistently supported increased funding for both Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Governor Chafee is supported by a team of leaders in the Governor's Cabinet, including Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist, Office of Health and Human Services (OHHS) Secretary Steven Costantino, Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Sandra Powell, Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Director Janice DeFrances, and Health Department Director Dr. Michael Fine, who share a common vision for the kind of high-quality programs and services that young children with high needs require in order to arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed. The leadership of the Rhode Island General Assembly has consistently championed Rhode Island's statewide efforts to improve children's health, development, and educational outcomes. The State has a high-profile, high-functioning *Early Learning Council*, co-chaired by Commissioner Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant, of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, that is taking the lead on cross-sector and cross-departmental strategies to

improve early learning and development systems and programs. The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* and the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE), as Lead Agency, will ensure that the plan set forth in this application is carried out with energy and high standards, that it is on track, and we will be held accountable for the outcomes described in the next section.

Rhode Island is well on its way to building 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 and to continue to succeed throughout the early school years. We have already made significant advances to integrate and align resources and policies across all the State agencies serving children and families. The work proposed here will accelerate that progress. Rhode Island has the advantage of a particularly strong cadre of early childhood intermediary organizations that are poised to work with the State to carry out critical aspects of this plan (including RIAEYC/BrightStars, Ready to Learn Providence/the Providence Plan, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT). There are strong community partners that have a tradition of establishing effective working partnerships with State agencies to advance the early childhood agenda. Every aspect of the plan put forth in this application is important on its own – but together these high-quality components become the singular strategy for achieving the result of having more of Rhode Island’s young children with high needs in high-quality programs that will improve their school readiness by kindergarten entry.

Rhode Island leaders have forged lasting public-private partnerships that have maintained a 15-year commitment to building a high-quality, effective early learning system. We have the full commitment of all of the participating State agencies and partners to implement Rhode Island’s Early Learning Reform Plan, which will accelerate and expand on the interagency work that we have been doing through the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*. Rhode Island is dedicated to a collaborative, cross-sector plan that keeps the children and families at the center of our vision and that uses a “whole-child approach,” which includes children’s early learning, health, and development. We know we need to reach across State agencies to create a sustainable and integrated infrastructure that supports the core reform goals that are the framework of the RTT-ELC challenge, including Successful State Systems; High-Quality, Accountable Programs; Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; a Great Early Childhood Workforce; and Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

As Rhode Island implements the Early Learning Reform Plan proposed here, we will be working with all types of early learning and development programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start, child-care centers, family child-care homes, public Pre-K, Early Intervention and special education preschools. We will embed strategies that support and engage families of young children with high needs. Our overarching goal is to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience high-quality early learning environments at home and in their community so that every child is on the path toward healthy development, beginning at birth, and so that every child enters kindergarten ready to succeed and is reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

(a) Ambitious Yet Achievable Goals

Rhode Island has identified a set of specific and measurable goals to guide the implementation of the *Early Learning Reform Plan* over the next four years. We believe that the following goals will result in more children with high needs arriving at kindergarten ready to succeed and reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Goals are outlined in three areas: program quality, improving child outcomes, and closing the readiness gap. **Please note that items marked with a diamond bullet are RTT-ELC required performance measures.**

The State's specific goals for improving **program quality** statewide over the period of this grant are as follows:

Program participation in the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System:

- ❖ The number and percentage of early learning programs regulated by the State and/or receiving funding through the State that participate in the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will increase from 93 (10 percent) as of September 1, 2011, to 1,079 (100 percent) as of December 31, 2013.

Note: 1,079 includes all licensed early learning/child-care centers (330), family child-care homes (688), and all preschool classroom-based programs run by public schools (61). See Table (B)(2)(c) on page 136.

Programs meeting high-quality benchmarks:

- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the number and percentage of State-regulated and/or State-funded early learning programs meeting high-quality benchmarks, as measured in

BrightStars TQRIS (Tiers 4-5), will grow to at least 10 percent of family child care homes (69), 30 percent of licensed centers (99), 100 percent of State Pre-K programs, 100 percent of center-based Early Head Start and Head Start programs (39), and 100 percent of preschool special education and Title I classroom-based programs run by public schools (61). See Table (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2) on page 156 and 157.

Note: Baseline numbers from September 1, 2011, are 22 (23 percent) participating programs meeting high-quality benchmarks in BrightStars (Tiers 4-5). The baseline number of programs at Tiers 4-5 includes 21 licensed centers, no public schools, and one family child-care home. Baseline data are from a voluntary TQRIS program and thus are skewed toward higher-quality licensed programs that have joined voluntarily.

Programs meeting medium-quality benchmarks:

- By December 31, 2015, the number and percentage of State-regulated and State-funded early learning programs meeting medium-quality benchmarks, as measured in BrightStars (Tier 3), will grow to at least 20 percent of centers and 10 percent of family child-care homes.

Programs meeting basic-quality benchmarks (above what is required through licensing):

- By December 31, 2015, the number and percentage of State-regulated and State-funded early learning programs meeting basic-level quality benchmarks, as measured in BrightStars (Tier 2), will grow to at least 25 percent of centers and 30 percent of family child-care homes.

Increasing the *qualifications and effectiveness of Early Childhood Educators* is a critical component of improving program quality. Our goals for improving the qualifications and effectiveness of the early learning workforce are as follows:

- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the number of Early Childhood Educators progressing to higher levels of credentials that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in the State Career Lattice will grow to at least 1,000 individuals at Level 1 (12 college credits in ECE), 700 individuals at Level 2 (AA degree in ECE), and 500 individuals at Level 3 (BA degree in ECE). See Table (D)(2)(d)(1) on page 224.

Note: At this time, Rhode Island's Career Lattice has not been finalized, and the State does not have a database of Early Childhood Educators, so baseline data is not available. The benchmarks identified above are in the current draft Career Lattice for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants.

- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework will grow to at least 150 individuals per year (100 percent of postsecondary credentials at CCRI, URI, and RIC), and the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving professional development aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework will grow to at least 2,500 individuals per year. See Table (D)(2)(d)(2) on page 225.

Note: At this time, Rhode Island's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework has not been finalized. Higher-education coursework and professional development have not yet been aligned. Baseline data on the workforce is not available.

The State's specific goals for **improving child outcomes** statewide over the period of this grant are as follows:

- By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have a cross-departmental, shared Early Learning Data System that includes all of the Essential Elements and is fully integrated with the State Longitudinal Data System and KIDSNET (the universal health-and-development database). This data system will enable the State to track child outcomes by population and program.
- By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have a statewide formative child-assessment system to track children's development and learning from birth to kindergarten entry.

The State's specific goals for **closing the readiness gap** between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry are as follows:

- By December 31, 2013, Rhode Island will have a cross-departmental, shared Early Learning Data System that includes all of the Essential Elements and is fully integrated with the State Longitudinal Data System and KIDSNET (the universal health-and-

development database). This data system will enable the State to better identify Children with High Needs, ages birth to kindergarten entry; to track participation in early learning programs; and to monitor children's learning and development. Rhode Island will use these data to assess and revise the Reform Plan as needed to focus resources to close the readiness gap.

- By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have identified, piloted, and begun to phase in a statewide comprehensive kindergarten-entry assessment to measure the status of children's knowledge and skills at kindergarten entry. The pilot will be implemented no later than the fall of 2014. Kindergarten Assessment Data will be part of the state Early Learning Data System.
- By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have a system in place across State Departments to use the Early Learning Data System and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to ensure that specific populations of Children with High Needs are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs and to address the readiness gap, including young children who are English learners, young Latino children, young children involved with the child-welfare system, and young children who have experienced homelessness.

Rhode Island's Children with High Needs

The demographics of Rhode Island make these goals real and urgent if we are serious about improving child outcomes and closing the preparation gap. Based on data from the 2007-2009 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 17.1 percent of Rhode Island's 225,000 children under age 18 are poor, and, in Rhode Island, the youngest children are the poorest children, with 18.4 percent of Rhode Island's children under age 6 living in poverty. Almost half of Rhode Island's poor young children live in extreme poverty, which is defined as half the poverty line or less (\$8,804 for a family of three). More than three-quarters of all poor children in Rhode Island live in one of the six core cities, and more than half of poor young children under age 6 live in the capital City of Providence.

Rhode Island has a public-private partnership among the State departments and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT with a 17-year track record of working together to analyze State data and to regularly report the data to inform policymakers and the public of the status of Rhode Island's

children – for the State as a whole, for an aggregate of the six poorest communities in the State (the “core cities”), and for each of Rhode Island’s 39 cities and towns. We track, identify, and monitor trends over time on more than 50 indicators of child well-being and early learning at the city and town level. By working with policymakers, opinion leaders and community leaders across the state, we mobilize action to reduce disparities between children with high needs and their peers. Examples of the early childhood indicators that are tracked annually statewide and for all 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island are in Appendix 11 – *Early Childhood Indicators from the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*.

Rhode Island’s six core cities (the six cities with child-poverty rates over 15 percent) have an aggregate child-poverty rate of 34 percent, as compared with a child-poverty rate of 7 percent in the remainder of the State and 17 percent in the State as a whole. More than half (58 percent) of the children in these six core cities are racial and ethnic minorities, and three-quarters of Rhode Island’s English-language learners live in these six communities. Rhode Island carefully tracks the number of “infants born at highest risk” in every city and town, defined as infants born to Rhode Island women under age 20, unmarried, and with less than a high-school diploma. In the core cities, 7 percent of infants are born at highest risk. According to the 2007 *National Children’s Health Survey*, 20 percent of Rhode Island children have at least one special health-care need, defined as the share of children under age 18 who are at increased risk of a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. Of all children in grades K-12 in Rhode Island schools, 17 percent are enrolled in special education. There are 3,796 infants and toddlers in Early Intervention programs and 2,728 children enrolled in special-education preschool programs in Rhode Island’s 36 public-school districts.

Rhode Island’s diversity is growing, particularly among Latino children, who now make up 21 percent of the State’s child population. More than one in ten (12 percent) students in Rhode Island’s core cities are English-language learners, including 16 percent of Providence students, 23 percent of Central Falls students, and 12 percent of Pawtucket students. Between 2007 and 2009, 22 percent of Rhode Island children ages 5 to 17 spoke a language other than English at home. Alarming, for 4th-grade reading levels, Rhode Island has the 5th-highest achievement gap in the country between White and Hispanic English Language Learners (ELL) students and the 2nd- highest achievement gap in mathematics (NAEP, 2011).

Rhode Island's K-12 student-achievement targets – including percent reading proficiently by the third grade, high-school graduation levels, and college completion rates – will be difficult to attain without significant improvements in the proficiency levels of Latino children, including those who are English learners. This will require a focused, sustained strategy to ensure that greater percentages of Latino children from birth to age 5 have access to high-quality early learning and development programs and services in order to close the preparation gap at kindergarten entry. In Rhode Island, many Latino families do not enroll their children in preschool, and those that do often choose family child-care homes rather than center-based programs. More than one-third (38%) of Rhode Island's Latino children live in families with income below the federal poverty level.

In Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls, there are 486 family child-care providers, most of whom speak Spanish as a primary language. Through Ready to Learn Providence, a community-based organization that works with community leaders and early learning providers to improve school readiness, Rhode Island has made a concerted effort to offer research-based professional development in Spanish to family providers. Through a unique partnership with the community college, 85 family child care providers have earned a total of 405 credits for early childhood education courses taken in Spanish. Spanish-speaking family child-care providers are the most represented group in our current TQRIS, and they have demonstrated an eagerness and passion for improving the quality of their home programs. With the support of Ready to Learn Providence, they have formed a professional association called “El Comite de Proveedores Infantiles de RI” which meets monthly for support and professional development. Increasing professional-development opportunities in Spanish, alternative pathways to gain college credit, and English-language supports are several of the priorities identified in our State's recently adopted professional-development plan.

Another group of high-needs children are young children in foster care. Almost half of Rhode Island's 3,414 victims of child abuse and neglect in 2010 were young children under age 6, and more than one-third (35 percent) were age 3 and younger. The six core cities have the highest rates of child victims of abuse and neglect, with an average of 21 per 1,000 children, compared with the statewide rate of 13.3 per 1,000 children. One in five (79 percent) child-abuse and -neglect cases were due to neglect, 13 percent to physical abuse, 4 percent to sexual abuse, 2 percent to medical neglect, and 3 percent to other reasons. The importance of adequate

capacity, affordability, and quality of child care, preschool, and other early childhood programs is underscored by the fact that more than one-third of all neglect cases were due to lack of supervision. Almost one-half (48 percent) of the 1,242 Rhode Island children in foster-care homes are ages birth to 5, including 120 infants under age 1. All of these children would benefit from access to a high-quality early learning program that addresses all domains of child development.

(b) Summary of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan

Rhode Island is ready to use RTT-ELC to do breakthrough work to increase the numbers of young children in high-quality programs, and we are committed to significantly improving outcomes for Children with High Needs, with particular attention to making progress for children who are low-income, English-language learners, children with special needs, and children who are vulnerable due to involvement in the child-welfare system. The focus on improving outcomes for children with high needs will be a very high priority as we work to close the significant achievement gap between high-needs children and their peers. Rhode Island State agencies and nonprofit organizations regularly analyze and publish State data on children with high needs: We know who they are, we know where they live, we know what the trends have been with each category of high-needs children, and we know what it takes to address their unique needs. The RTT-ELC will give us the opportunity to develop an Early Learning Data System that links data from multiple state agencies through a unique child identifier and a unique program identifier. The Early Learning Reform Plan proposed here will enable us to truly align and integrate the various components of Rhode Island's early learning and development system so that we achieve the best possible outcomes for young children. All children need high-quality early learning opportunities at home and in their community if they are to have the cognitive and literacy skills, physical health, social-emotional development, and approaches to learning that they need to thrive in kindergarten and the early school years.

The leadership across state agencies and through the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, combined with the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge investment will enable Rhode Island to build on its many strengths in order to create an effective, accountable early learning system that increases access to quality early care and development programs for the highest need children in our State.

Rhode Island's Reform Plan is the result of an extensive community-input process and the best thinking of key early learning leaders in the State. Our Reform Plan reflects a deliberate focus on selecting those systems changes that are most likely to significantly increase the number of Children with High Needs who participate in high-quality early learning programs. Taken together, the following components of the proposed work will enable Rhode Island to align resources across State systems and to accelerate our progress toward improved outcomes for Children with High Needs as they enter kindergarten. Rhode Island has a bold agenda that will move us a long way toward closing the readiness gap that currently exists in our State.

Core Systems Change Strategies to Achieve Impact

High-Quality, Accountable Programs

As part of *Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge* implementation, all licensed and publicly funded early learning programs will be in one common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) – which in our State is the research-based, BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. BrightStars includes the use of environmental rating scales at the higher tiers of quality and individualized Quality Improvement Plans:

- All licensed early learning programs will participate in BrightStars as a condition of DCYF licensing, including child-care centers, family child-care homes, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and community-based preschools.
- All early learning programs receiving State or federal funding from the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) will also be required to participate in BrightStars, including preschool special-education classrooms, Title I funded preschool classrooms, and state-funded Pre-K programs.
- The BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System, the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program Approval Standards and DCYF Licensing Standards will be aligned.
- A core strategy is to improve DCYF licensing and monitoring practices and expand the assessment and rating capacity of the BrightStars TQRIS.

- As Rhode Island moves to a system in which all early learning programs are required to participate in BrightStars, it will be critically important to validate the quality levels within the five-star rating system. We will work with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of BrightStars to validate its effectiveness at differentiating the quality of programs and to compare children's learning and development for those enrolled in lower-tier programs with those enrolled in higher-tier programs.

Promoting Access to High-Quality Early Learning and Development Programs, with a Specific Focus on Programs that Serve High-Needs Children

Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan is designed to focus on increasing access to high-quality programs for Children with High Needs, including children who are low-income, English learners, children who have disabilities or special needs, and children who are involved with the child-welfare system or have experienced homelessness. Access to high-quality programs for these children will be achieved primarily through investments in increased quality of existing programs:

- The proposal is built on a deep commitment to reaching children with high needs where they are, across all program types, including child care, family child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, State Pre-K, Early Intervention, and preschool special education.
- BrightStars expansion from a voluntary TQRIS to a program linked with licensing and funding will escalate the existing desire of programs for assistance to move up the quality levels. Therefore, this proposal prioritizes investments in direct support to programs in order to help them make the changes needed to increase quality. These supports include the following:
 - Focused technical assistance to programs through BrightStars, with priority for programs that serve Children with High Needs;
 - Program Improvement Contracts to programs for up to two years, in order to support the changes that are needed to move the programs up the levels in quality, with a priority for programs that serve Children with High Needs;

- Tiered Quality Incentive Payments through the DHS Child Care Assistance Program, which recognize early learning programs as they achieve higher levels of quality. These payments are tiered, based on the BrightStars ratings achieved and the number of children in the program who are enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program, the State's subsidized child-care program;
- Priority for technical assistance, improvement contracts, and professional development opportunities to those programs serving low-income children, English learners, and children with special needs, and in areas where it is determined that facility or space improvements will result in higher program quality or safer, healthier environments for children.

Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The ultimate goal of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan is to improve outcomes for children in order to close the readiness gap that exists at kindergarten entry. This requires attention to common standards for what children should know and be able to do as they develop along the birth-to-kindergarten age span. These standards need to be used by early learning professionals to inform program planning and classroom practice. Rhode Island will also build on a strong foundation of developmental screening by primary health-care providers and Child Outreach Developmental Screening programs in the community, who see so many of the children who are not enrolled in early learning programs. In this key area, the Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan focuses on several projects, in early learning settings and in primary care settings:

Early Learning Standards and Comprehensive Assessment in Early Learning Settings

- Rhode Island will update and revise the *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* for preschool-age children and will develop standards for infants and toddlers. The Early Learning Standards will be used as the foundation for program standards, Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks, curricula, and child assessments. These Standards will be the foundation for all early learning Program Standards across systems,

including Child Care Development Block Grant programs, child care licensing, RIDE Approval and the BrightStars TQRIS.

- Professional development to support the use of the *Early Learning Standards* by early childhood educators and the expansion of parent-engagement opportunities designed to support children's learning and development across all domains of child development are central to the State's strategy for improving child outcomes.
- Rhode Island will significantly expand the use of a comprehensive assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD, so that classroom teachers and Early Intervention providers can tailor instruction to the needs and strengths of individual children and groups of children. The State will provide professional development to educators to encourage more programs to use Teaching Strategies GOLD and to ensure that teachers are able to reliably assess children.

Developmental Screening, Early Literacy and Social-Emotional Development

- The R.I. Department of Health will expand *Watch Me Grow* to provide support for reliable developmental screening in primary health-care settings in communities with large numbers of high-needs children. This initiative will ensure that even children who are not currently enrolled in programs will be recognized if they have a disability or developmental delay that needs attention.
- In order to reach children and families that are not currently enrolled in early learning programs, including many Children with High Needs, the Reform Plan provides opportunities for contracts with community-based efforts that engage primary health-care providers in evidence-based interventions that address early literacy, social-emotional development, and family engagement in their child's healthy development and learning. The goal is to invest in programs that intentionally engage primary care providers in collaborative strategies that support parents' in their role as their child's first teacher.

A Great Early Childhood Workforce

The most important factor in high-quality early learning is having an effective educator in every setting every day. Rhode Island is committed to using the Race to the Top Early Learning

Challenge to meet that goal. Rhode Island has identified a number of key investments that will significantly increase the capacity of the State’s professional-development system to improve the knowledge and competencies of the early childhood workforce and ensure that people have the ability to move up a career lattice and receive higher-education credits for their training and education. Key investments in the professional-development system that are prioritized as part of the Reform Plan are as follows:

- Expand access to high-quality, effective professional development and increase the number of Early Childhood Educators with higher-education credentials aligned with the State’s Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
- Align higher-education coursework and professional-development opportunities with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
- Expand provider access to higher education by expanding the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program to serve more early childhood educators seeking A.A. and B.A. degrees and by expanding the Community College of Rhode Island’s Early Childhood Education Specialists program;
- Address the quality-improvement needs of Spanish-speaking and English-speaking family child-care providers who serve a large number of Children with High Needs, especially in the State’s six core cities with high child-poverty rates;
- Tailor professional development to build skills and competencies for individuals working with infants and toddlers as well as other specific populations of Children with High Needs;
- Build and strengthen cultural and linguistic competencies throughout the system; and
- Ensure that the State’s Early Learning Data System has mechanisms to track workforce professional growth and accomplishments and the progress toward attaining aligned credentials (workforce registry).
- Undertake a workforce study to get baseline data on the early childhood workforce in Rhode Island.

Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan includes attention to ongoing tracking of progress and monitoring of outcome for programs, children, the workforce, and the overall system. This process will be accomplished through three key projects:

- The Rhode Island Early Learning State Plan includes the development of a comprehensive, high-quality early learning data system that includes all early learning programs. The Early Learning Data System will include all of the Essential Data elements as well as data-oversight and transparency provisions that are outlined in the guidance. Rhode Island has been working for a year to develop the plan for the Early Learning Data System, which will be housed as part of the RIDE State Longitudinal Data System and for the first time will be linked to KIDSNET, the State's universal newborn-screening and child-health data warehouse, as well as to other key State data systems.
- Rhode Island will build on current work to implement a common, statewide formative child-assessment system to support children's learning.
- Rhode Island will identify a comprehensive Kindergarten Assessment instrument, pilot it in core districts, and phase in statewide implementation. These data will become part of the Early Learning Data System and we will use the data for measuring outcomes and progress in reaching child-outcome goals.

(c) Rationale for Focused Investment Areas

Focused Investment Area C: Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards

The investment the State has made to date to develop and support the use of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for preschool children is a significant strength. The State has established comprehensive, high-quality professional development and technical assistance opportunities for Early Childhood Educators and Early Learning and Development Programs in using the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards

are available in English and Spanish. An additional set of training modules specifically for families has been developed. The State has also developed mechanisms for certifying and supporting the individuals who provide the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training and technical assistance to ensure consistent and rigorous implementation of training modules. It is these investments that serve as the foundation for the State's rationale in choosing to address selection criteria C(1) in Focused Investment Area C as well as the clear connection between the establishment and effective use of early learning standards and improving outcomes for high-needs children. It is critical to move forward with the development and use of Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers.

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems

State investment to date has resulted in a strong foundation in each component of a Comprehensive Assessment System. Specifically, a framework exists to ensure that all children, birth through age 5, have access to regular developmental screening. A comprehensive formative-assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD, is used in all early childhood preschool special-education classrooms and state-funded Pre-K classrooms. A strong foundation also exists in the area of classroom quality assessments. The use of the Environmental Rating Scales and the CLASS in program-quality monitoring and program-improvement efforts is well established in Rhode Island, through both the RIDE Preschool Approval process and the upper tiers of the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System. Additionally, the State has started using tools that look more specifically at teacher-child interactions in the key instructional areas of language development and literacy, mathematics, and science instruction. All of these investments support the State's decision to address selection criteria C(2) in Focused Investment Area C.

Focused Investment Area D: A Great Early Education Workforce**(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials, and (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators**

It is clear that to meet our targets for Program Quality Improvement and Child Outcomes it is critical to invest in systemic efforts to support the early learning workforce and to develop Knowledge and Competency Frameworks that can be used across programs and across State agencies. The State has elected to address both of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area D. In the past year, the State has completed draft *Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Teachers and Teacher Assistants* and has developed a plan for implementing a comprehensive professional-development system. These two key pieces of work support the State's decision to address both criteria in this area as an opportunity to build upon, expand, and accelerate the implementation of the current efforts.

Focused Investment Area E: Measuring Outcomes and Progress**(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry**

The adoption of a kindergarten-entry assessment was prioritized by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council in its 2010 application for federal stimulus funding. In 2011, a set of preliminary recommendations was approved by the Council, with planning to begin this fall. The State has elected to address E(1) in this application to ensure that the current work moves beyond research and planning to support the effective implementation of a kindergarten-entry assessment, first as a pilot in several communities and then phased in statewide. The use of an effective assessment system is critical in order to improve outcomes for children with high needs because it will enable the State to have the data needed to inform program practice and policy decisions in order to improve outcomes across all domains of child development.

(E)(2) Building an Early Learning Data System

The State has elected to address this selection criterion because of the critical need to have access to child, program, and workforce data to inform public-policy decisions and program

planning. Through work on the Ready States initiative of the National Governors Association and participation on the Advisory Committee for the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative, Rhode Island has significant work completed to date and has a clear plan for the development of a comprehensive Early Learning Data System that will be fully integrated with the State's two universal data warehouses: the public-health data warehouse (KIDSNET) and R.I. Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data system. A comprehensive data system will build upon Rhode Island's already significant data sets for young children and will enable the State to gather data to inform instruction, plan policy, and better understand the early learning access and quality issues for different groups of children, including Children with High Needs. The state is committed to using a unique child identifier in order to link early learning data bases with the states P-20 longitudinal data system.

Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- ☒ (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- ☒ (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- ☐ (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- ☐ (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- ☒ (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- ☒ (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- ☒ (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- ☒ (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (A)(3)(a) and (b):

- For (A)(3)(a)(1): An organizational chart that shows how the grant will be governed and managed.
- The completed table that lists governance-related roles and responsibilities (see Table (A)(3)-1).
- A copy of all fully executed MOUs or other binding agreements that cover each Participating State Agency. (MOUs or other binding agreements should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix to the application).

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(1):

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates

which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(2):

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from other stakeholders. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State

(a)(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.

Leadership and oversight for implementation of the Rhode Island Early Learning Reform Plan that proposed here will be provided by the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* and managed by the Lead Agency, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE), and the Participating State Agencies: the R.I. Department of Human Services (DHS), the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), and the R.I. Department of Health. The *Early Learning Council* is co-chaired by Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, a nonprofit children’s public policy and research organization that has led major early childhood initiatives in the State of Rhode Island for the past 15 years by bringing together state agency partners and leaders from the early childhood community.

Governor Lincoln D. Chafee has designated the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) to be the Lead Agency to administer the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, serve as the fiscal agent for the grant, and serve as a Participating Agency. As Lead Agency, RIDE will be responsible for ensuring that the work plan of the grant is effectively carried out, that the overall budget for the grant is properly managed, and that the MOUs executed between RIDE and each of the Participating State Agencies, including the scope of work for each MOU, are carried out according to the timelines set forth in this application. RIDE has a strong track record of success. As a winner of the second round of Race to the Top, RIDE has the strong leadership of Commissioner Deborah A. Gist and the staff to ensure that this grant is carried out.

Rhode Island’s comprehensive early learning system building efforts are now being led by the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*, a high-level, high-functioning 24 member governance body consisting of the State Department Directors from all of the participating State agencies for this application, as well as leaders of early childhood intermediary organizations, philanthropy, higher education, pediatricians, and leaders from the early childhood education field, including Head Start, Child Care, Family Child Care, Pre-K, Preschool Special Education, and Early Intervention. The *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* benefits from the consistent,

high-level participation and leadership of all of the participating State agencies in this application: Director of Human Services Sandra M. Powell, Director of the Department for Children Youth and Families Janice DeFrances, Director of the Department of Health Dr. Michael Fine, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (OHHS) Steven Costantino, and all of its public and private sector members.

The *Early Learning Council* is taking the lead on cross-sector and cross-departmental strategies to improve early learning and development systems and programs. The *Early Learning Council* appointed a Work Group that has formed eight Work Teams that are advancing the ambitious system-building agenda set forth by the Early Learning Council in July 2010. The members of the *Early Learning Council* and Work Group have enthusiastically embraced the goals and plan set forth in this application. They will provide dynamic leadership, commitment, and a sense of urgency to ensure that Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge provides more children with high needs with high-quality early learning and development programs.

The work set forth in this grant application for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge is directly aligned with the work of the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*. The *Early Learning Council* is well-positioned to provide the ongoing leadership table to ensure that Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan is successfully implemented. The organizational structure for managing this grant can be found on the following page.

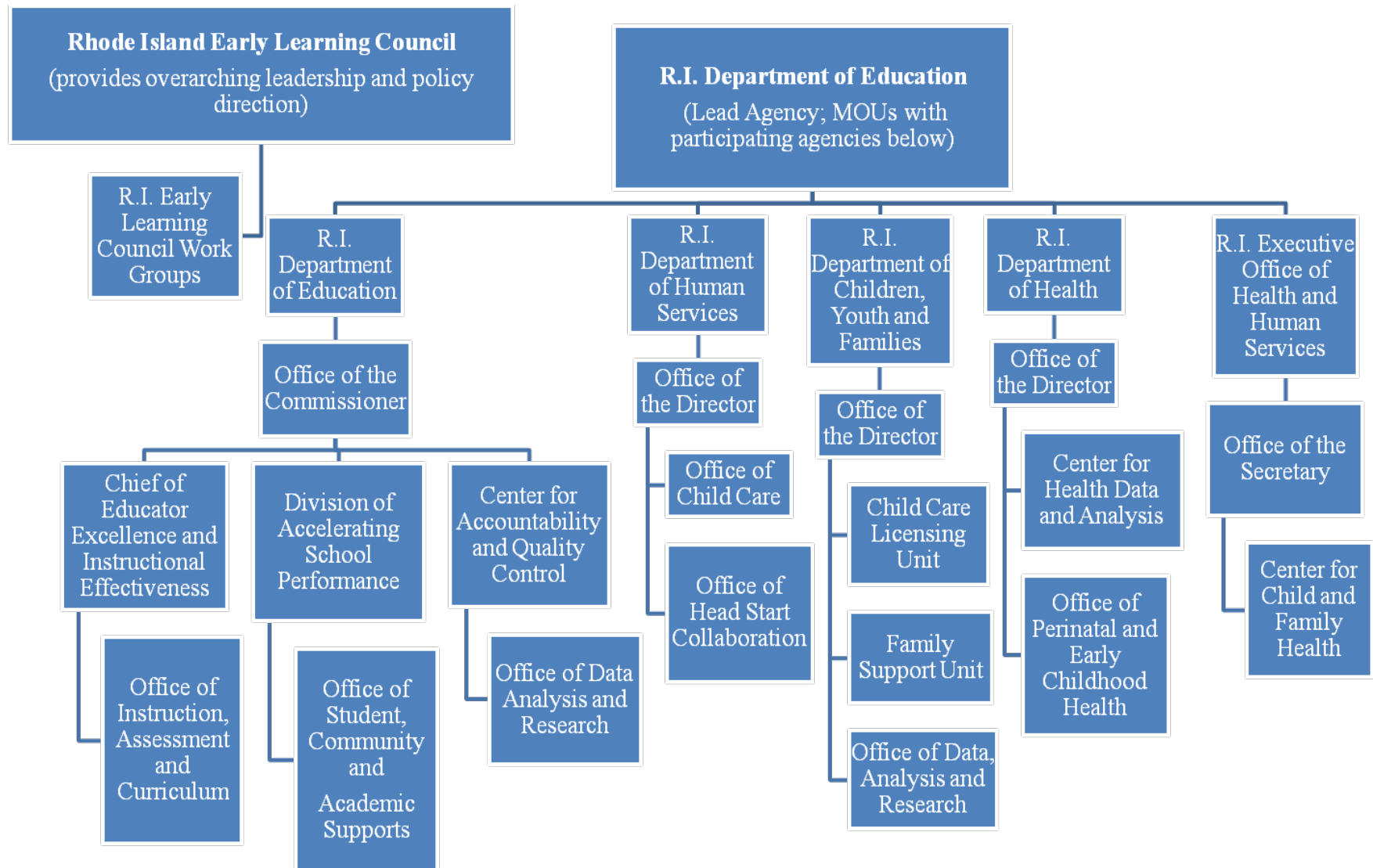
(a)(2) Governance related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, State Advisory Council, each participating State Agency, the State Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners.

The substantial reforms outlined in Rhode Island's Reform Plan under this grant application require a sound and structured governance system that is cross-departmental, includes clear decision-making protocols, is transparent, and allows for meaningful community engagement. Overarching cross-departmental and early learning community leadership will be provided by the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*. The *Early Learning Council*, which meets six times per year, and the Work Group and eight Work Teams, which meet monthly, will keep the implementation of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge reform strategies at

the top of the agenda and will offer public updates on the progress of implementing the grant, including sponsoring periodic public forums.

As Lead Agency, RIDE has executed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and with each of the Participating State Agencies: R.I. Department of Human Services; R.I. Department for Children, Youth and Families; and R.I. Department of Health. Each of these participating state agencies (including RIDE) has included in its MOU an assurance that the State agency will agree to use, to the extent applicable, 1) a set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards; 2) a set of statewide Program Standards; 3) a statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and 4) a statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

Rhode Island's application and the Lead Agency's MOUs with each of the Participating State Agencies demonstrate that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, to effective implementation of the State Plan, and to agreeing to terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the Early Learning Reform Plan. The Scope of Work descriptions attached to the MOUs for each of the Participating State Agencies include the set of activities that each agency will implement under this grant and describe efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become participating Programs, with the shared goal of increasing the number of Children with High Needs who participate in High-Quality Early Learning programs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Rhode Island Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Organizational Chart

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

Each Participating State Agency will have the authority to make decisions for the programs and services that fall under the jurisdiction of each agency. As the entity providing overarching leadership and direction to the implementation of Rhode Island's plan as set forth in this grant, *the Rhode Island Early Learning Council* will use a consensus style to make policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant. If disputes arise, the issue will go to the Participating State Agency directors and the Co-Chairs of the Early Learning Council for shared discussion, further input as needed, and resolution. The State Department Directors have a collaborative style of operating, with three of the participating State agencies all falling under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Inter-departmental disputes related to the implementation of Rhode Island's plan under this grant are not anticipated, but if they arise will be resolved by the Education Commissioner and the Secretary of OHHS.

(a)(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 this grant.

Under the auspices of the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council*, a wide variety of leaders from the early learning and development communities have participated in the development of this grant proposal, and all will have input into the ongoing implementation of this grant. The Early Learning Council includes leaders from the full array of Rhode Island's early learning and development programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start, Center-based and Family Child Care, pre-school special education, Early Intervention, Pre-K, pediatricians, higher education, and a variety of community members. During the process of writing this application, the *Rhode Island Early Learning Council* met with the Head Start Directors Association, the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care, the Latina Child Care Providers Association, Early Intervention Interagency Council, and a number of other early learning constituencies. The Council also held two public forums to gain broad-based input from a wide variety of early

childhood and community leaders, including special-education teachers, pediatricians, parents, and organizations working directly with high concentrations of high-need children.

During the implementation of the grant, the *Early Learning Council* will sponsor forums and focus groups to obtain input and feedback from parents and families, including parents of children with high needs. The Council will send representatives to meet periodically with important groups and associations, including among others the R.I. Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care, the Head Start Directors Association, the Child Care Directors Association, Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island, the Latina Family Child Care Association, the R.I. Interagency Council (for Early Intervention), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Special Education Directors Association, Service Employees International Union, the Rhode Island Autism Society, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network, and the Rhode Island School Principals Association.

(b) Commitment of Participating State Agencies to the State Plan

Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan has been shaped through the active participation of leaders from all of the State agencies that have responsibility for early learning and development. In addition, the Rhode Island Early Learning Council has provided significant input into the planning and the goals, both through the leadership of the co-chairs as well as through meetings of the full council, work groups and public input sessions to inform Rhode Island's application. Commitments from the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and each Participating State Agency are in Appendix 12 – *Fully executed MOUs between RIDE and each Participating State Agency*.

(c)(1) Commitment of Early Learning Organizations to the State Plan

All of Rhode Island's intermediary organizations for early learning were involved in the development of the Rhode Island Early Learning Reform Agenda, either through their participation in the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's RTT-ELC planning meetings or through their participation in public input meetings to inform Rhode Island's application. Rhode Island's application has the full support of every key early learning intermediary organization in the state, as represented by letters from the following groups: the Permanent Legislative

Commission on Child Care, the Rhode Island Head Start Association, the Rhode Island IDEA Preschool Leadership Network (Part B, Section 619 of IDEA), the Rhode Island Interagency Coordinating Council (Part C of IDEA), the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, the Rhode Island Child Care Directors Association, Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island, Ready to Learn Providence, Comité de Proveedoras de Cuidado Infantil de Rhode Island (Latina Family Child Care Network), the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. Individual letters from all of Rhode Island's early learning intermediary organizations are in Appendix 13 – *Letters of Support from Rhode Island Early Learning Intermediary Organizations*.

Of note, we have received individual letters of support from every single Head Start and Early Head Start agency in the State as well as many letters from other early learning and development programs. These individual agency letters are included in Appendix 14 – *Letters of Support from Other Stakeholders*.

(c)(2) Commitment of Other Stakeholders to the State Plan

Rhode Island has a strong base of collaboration across public and private sectors leaders who have a history of working together to reduce disparities and make change for children, especially Children with High Needs and their families. Evidence of the commitments from our State leaders to the goals of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan are in Appendix 14 – *Letters of Support from Other Stakeholders*. We have received letters in support of Rhode Island's RTT-ELC application from the following key leaders in our state: Governor Lincoln Chafee, Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts, Senator Jack Reed, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman James Langevin, Congressman David Cicilline, the Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, the President of the Rhode Island Senate, the Mayor of Providence, the Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, the Presidents of all three State institutions of higher education (the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island), The Rhode Island Foundation, United Way of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, the Rhode Island Association of

School Principals, the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators, and several public school superintendents. In addition, we have letters of support from key community-based and advocacy organizations, including Socio-Economic Development Center for Southeast Asians, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network, the Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement Now, and many early learning programs and early childhood educators.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)	<p>As Lead Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administer and serve as fiscal agent for the grant; • ensure that the work plan of the grant is effectively carried out; • ensure that the budget is properly managed; and • ensure that the MOU's executed between RIDE and each of the Participating Agencies, including the scope of work for each MOU, is carried out according to the timelines set forth in the application. <p>As a Participating Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in RIDE's scope of work, as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding. <p>Continue to co-chair the Early Learning Council.</p>
Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS)	<p>Ensure senior leadership participation in the Early Learning Council.</p> <p>Manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in DHS's scope of work as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.</p>
Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH)	<p>Ensure senior leadership participation in the Early Learning Council.</p> <p>Manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in DOH's scope of work as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.</p>

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)	<p>Ensure senior leadership participation in the Early Learning Council.</p> <p>Manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in DCYF's scope of work as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.</p>
Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)	<p>Ensure senior leadership participation in the Early Learning Council.</p> <p>Manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in EOHHS's scope of work as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.</p>
Other Entities	
Rhode Island Early Learning Council (i.e. Rhode Island's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care)	<p>Provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs.</p> <p>Facilitate overarching policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant.</p> <p>Refer disputes to the Participating State Agency Directors and the Co-Chairs of the Early Learning Council.</p> <p>Ensure public updates on the progress of grant implementation.</p> <p>Solicit broad-based public input and feedback on key aspects of the grant implementation.</p> <p>Send representatives of the Council to periodically meet with important groups and associations.</p>

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Rhode Island Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care	Y
Rhode Island Head Start Directors Association	Y

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Rhode Island IDEA Preschool Leadership Network (Public-school early childhood coordinators responsible for IDEA Part B, Section 619 programs)	Y
Rhode Island Interagency Coordinating Council (Part C of IDEA)	Y
Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (professional membership organization; agency operating the state Child Care Resource and Referral System and BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System)	Y
Rhode Island Child Care Directors Association	Y
Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island	Y
Ready to Learn Providence (agency focused on improving early learning outcomes for children with high needs who live in the core cities; agency operating T.E.A.C.H.)	Y
Comité de Proveedoras de Cuidado Infantil de Rhode Island (Latina Family Child Care Network)	Y
Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund	Y
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT	Y
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>	

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

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.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(4)(a):

- The completed table listing the existing funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan (see Table (A)(4)-1).
- Description of how these existing funds will be used for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Evidence for (A)(4)(b):

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).
- The narratives that accompany and explain the budget, and describes how it connects to the State Plan (also completed in section VIII).

(A)(4) Rhode Island's Budget to Implement and Sustain the Work of This Grant***A. Use of Existing Resources***

Like other states, Rhode Island's early learning system has evolved in pieces and parts based on various early childhood federal and state investments over several decades. Given the solid research-base on early childhood development that has emerged over the past decade, the time has come to align all of our state's early childhood programs into one integrated, effective, accountable system that has the capacity to better meet the early learning and development needs of our state's youngest children. As Rhode Island works to ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed in school and beyond, it is critical that we build on our strengths in order to close the gaps that exist between lower-income and higher-income children and that we achieve equity within our early learning system by ensuring that low-income, minority children and other Children with High Needs have access to high-quality early learning and development programs.

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge gives us the opportunity to weave the existing pieces and parts of our early learning landscape into a coherent state early learning and development system. Through the Early Learning Challenge, we will leverage our existing resources and we will build on our strengths, including the research-based BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System, the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Professional Development Series, statewide use of Teaching Strategies GOLD formative child assessment, our TEACH Early Childhood workforce development model, KIDSNET – our universal health and development database of all young children beginning at birth, and our strong data system infrastructure and management at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We will align existing resources and use Early Learning Challenge resources to address gaps and weaknesses in our system to leverage all the work to build a truly comprehensive and high-quality early learning system that is aligned, coordinated, and cohesive.

In particular, Rhode Island will align all Child Care Development Fund Quality Set-Aside resources to support our quality improvement goals measured by BrightStars, including resources set aside for licensing, infant/toddler quality improvement, resource and referral, child care facilities improvements, higher education access, and professional development. The Rhode

Island Department of Children, Youth and Families is committed to making significant improvements in child care licensing practices to improve oversight and enforcement of health and safety regulations. The Rhode Island Department of Education will work to integrate Preschool Approval standards and oversight with the BrightStars TQRIS (as detailed in Section B of this application). The Rhode Island Department of Human Services is committed to requiring that all licensed programs receiving Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) payments must participate in BrightStars (detailed in Rhode Island's biennial CCDF State Plan submitted August 1, 2011). Existing CCAP payments will be enhanced through a tiered quality incentive payment tied to BrightStars quality levels. Through the Early Learning Challenge, Rhode Island will be able to re-program the CCAP payment system to accommodate enhanced payments. The State is committed to maintaining these enhanced payments for higher quality programs after the Challenge Funds are expended.

Through the work of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, we are already working to align professional development resources across sectors (Child Care, Head Start, Pre-K, Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education) to ensure we are using resources effectively and efficiently. Common professional development opportunities will also help break down artificial barriers in our system and support a shared understanding of best practices in early childhood (e.g. professional development focused on best practices in preschool curriculum and child assessment and family engagement strategies can be shared across sectors). Eliminating duplication of professional development efforts will free up resources that can be re-invested in expanded professional development opportunities in critical areas, such as infant-toddler development and strengthening cultural and linguistic competence.

Rhode Island will also build on existing resources to expand the use of formative child assessment systems. Our state's Preschool Special Education programs have benefited from the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD as a statewide child assessment system monitoring child outcomes. We plan to expand the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD to additional programs, starting with Early Intervention, our IDEA Part C. We will support the use of this system by other key early learning programs, including high-quality child care and Head Start and Early Head Start programs. With more programs using the state system, the State may be able to negotiate a better rate per child to purchase access to this web-based assessment system.

Our state has implemented the recommended American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures developmental screening schedule through EPSDT. Health care providers are billing the RIte Care Health Plans for enhanced screening and are getting paid. These resources will help our state achieve higher developmental screening rates during the critical birth to age 3 period. Early Learning Challenge funds will be directed at training and supporting health care providers to use standardized tools and enter developmental screening data into KIDSNET, the statewide child health data system. Medicaid billing and KIDSNET resources are available now and will continue after the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Fund resources are expended.

Existing state and local resources will support on-going implementation and scale-up of our statewide, comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment system. Through the Basic Education Program regulations, school districts are required to implement a comprehensive assessment system in all grades PK-12. Early Learning Challenge funds will help the State do the work necessary to engage elementary schools and kindergarten teachers along with early childhood experts to identify a high-quality assessment system, create supports for implementation, conduct a pilot in a few districts and then begin statewide implementation that will be paid for primarily with existing resources.

Rhode Island's new Early Learning Data System builds on the existing resources of the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Rhode Island Department of Education. In addition, Rhode Island is a recipient of a 2009 State Longitudinal Data System grant from the U.S. Department of Education which has enabled us to build a first-class data warehouse that is sustained with existing Department of Education funds. Additionally, a significant portion of our 2010 Race to the Top (K-12) grant is supporting data system enhancements. We will build upon these existing resources as we create a new, shared, cross-departmental Early Learning Data System. The Department of Health's nationally-recognized KIDSNET database is an integral part of our State's health care delivery system and will be sustained into the future through existing Health Department resources. Our work through the Early Learning Challenge, will connect KIDSNET's comprehensive data on young children to and expanded and enhanced Rhode Island Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System to create a seamless data system with information on children birth to high school graduation – and beyond with connections to higher education and workforce data currently being built.

Rhode Island has strong philanthropic partners actively working to improve children's access to high-quality early learning programs. Both United Way of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Foundation have played an important role in catalyzing reform for Rhode Island's early learning system. United Way funded the research and development and pilot phases of BrightStars and continues to provide annual implementation funding for BrightStars. United Way also requires their funded child care and early learning agencies to participate in BrightStars. The Rhode Island Foundation played a critical role in funding the three baseline quality studies of early learning and child care programs. The Foundation also committed resources to launch the TEACH Early Childhood workforce development model in Rhode Island beginning in 2010. Also of note, in 2001 the Rhode Island Foundation and the United Way collaborated to launch the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Human Services leveraging another \$3 million in resources from the national Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). This program continues to operate to this day as a public-private partnership funded only in part by the RI Department of Human Services child care quality improvement resources.

B. Budget for the State Early Learning Challenge Plan

Rhode Island has developed our budget for the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge application by working closely with each of the state Departments that are Participating Agencies, seeking input from stakeholders on priorities, and discussing strategic options at Early Learning Council meetings.

The budget proposed here for the implementation of the Rhode Island Early Learning Reform Plan reflects consensus among the Participating State Agencies as well as each agency's commitment to sustainability. Our budget reflects a carefully crafted balance of infrastructure investments and high-impact quality improvement investments for programs serving Children with High Needs. The complete budget narrative can be found in section VIII of this application.

C. Sustainability

Rhode Island's sustainability plan is to maximize the use of existing resources and focus our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge investments to create lasting improvements in state systems and in the quality of early learning and development programs serving Children

with High Needs. State leaders are committed to sustaining the reform strategies, including institutionalizing the requirement that all programs participate in the TQRIS, using quality set-aside dollars and other investments to help programs achieve and maintain high-quality benchmarks, providing on-going access to high-quality, effective professional development, and aligning higher education opportunities for early childhood educators. The Early Learning Challenge will help the State leapfrog forward with our quality improvement and reform efforts that might otherwise take us ten or more years to achieve.

Through the RTT-ELC investment, Rhode Island will infuse an increased level of support for programs to improve quality levels in the BrightStars TQRIS. This enhanced level of support over the next four years will help to meet the spike in demand for assistance with quality improvements that will result from the major systems change of requiring all licensed and publicly funded early learning programs to be in BrightStars TQRIS. During the course of the implementation period, the Rhode Island Early Learning Council will work to secure additional financial support to sustain the increased level of financial incentives after the Early Learning Challenge implementation period ends.

Our reform strategies in 2012-2015 will continue expand children's access to high-quality early learning programs, primarily by leveraging quality improvements in existing programs as well as the expansion of State Pre-K. In addition, the Early Learning Council will take action on the set of access priorities that are being used to inform the development of the Governor's FY2013 budget. The Access Team of the Council will meet regularly to review the State's progress at maintaining and expanding access to high-quality early learning programs. Through Rhode Island's school funding formula, State Pre-K will be steadily expanded to serve more preschoolers in communities with concentrations of Children with High Needs. The advocacy community will keep up the pressure implement the Pre-K expansion plan, to restore eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program to serve children in low-income working families with incomes up to 225% of the poverty level, and to maintain state funding for Head Start.

Very recently, Children's Friend, our largest Head Start agency, was awarded a grant from the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services -- *Early Education Partnerships to Expand Protective Factors for Children with Child Welfare Involvement*. This grant was supported by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council

along with the Rhode Island Head Start Association and the Rhode Island Child Welfare Advisory Council. Funding will provide targeted support to establish and improve state infrastructure and collaboration between child welfare and the early education system. The project will focus on expanding enrollment of foster infants and young children into comprehensive, high-quality early care and education programs. Our Early Learning Council has also discussed the need to address access issues and improve transitions between the IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B programs and to ensure that all children under age 3 with a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect receive a complete assessment to determine eligibility for the Part C program, as required under the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). At least one member of our Council has made a strong case that the State make all children under age 3 with a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect categorically eligible for IDEA Part C services since so many have an identified developmental delay or disability and the remainder are among the children most at risk for poor education outcomes over the long-term.

By the end of 2015, when Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Funds have been expended, Rhode Island will have a state-of-the-art infrastructure in place that expands access to high-quality programs for Children with High Needs, as well as a system to monitor and support early learning programs so that they are able to achieve the highest quality benchmarks. Investments in our State's human capital must begin with a strong early learning system and a focus on meeting the needs of our most vulnerable children. The long-term success of our State depends on a vibrant, healthy, well-educated, and skilled workforce. Through the RTT-ELC, Rhode Island will have a system in place for professional development that supports a great early childhood workforce. The Rhode Island Early Learning Data System will be an effective tool to understand the needs of children, programs and the workforce so that we can measure progress and make improvements over time.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>State funding for Pre-K</i>	\$197,000*	\$1.4 million	\$2.4 million	\$3.4 million	\$7.2 million
<i>Title I of ESEA</i>	\$484,000 for State Pre-K	\$484,000	\$484,000	\$484,000	\$1.9 million
<i>IDEA Part B, Section 619</i>	\$133,626 \$69,000 state personal development grant	\$96,420	\$96,420	\$96,420	\$491,886
<i>IDEA Part C</i>	\$2.1 million	\$2.1 million	\$2.1 million	\$2.1 million	\$8.4 million
<i>State funding for Head Start</i>	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$3.2 million
<i>Head Start Collaboration</i>	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$500,000
<i>Child Care Assistance Program (federal and state resources for subsidies)</i>	\$21.3 million	\$21.3 million	\$21.3 million	\$21.3 million	\$85.2 million
<i>Child Care Assistance Program Quality Set-Aside</i>	\$1.9 million	\$1.9 million	\$1.9 million	\$1.9 million	\$7.3 million
<i>ARRA State Advisory Committee Funding</i>	\$50,000 – TEACH \$174,333 – support ELC work teams	\$50,000 – TEACH \$174,333 – support ELC work teams	\$50,000 – TEACH \$174,333 – support ELC work teams		\$673,000
<i>MIECHV</i>	\$1.7 million - formula \$3.3 million – competitive	\$1.8 million - formula \$3.3 million – competitive	\$2 million – formula	\$2.2 million – formula	\$14.3 million
<i>Title V MCH Block Grant</i>	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$800,000
<i>TANF</i>	\$165,000 NFP \$200,000 Head Start * annual funding for child care varies	\$165,000 NFP \$200,000 Head Start * annual funding for child care varies	\$165,000 NFP \$200,000 Head Start * annual funding for child care varies	\$165,000 NFP \$200,000 Head Start * annual funding for child care varies	\$660,000 NFP \$800,000 Head Start * annual funding for child care varies

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>Medicaid – health care provider billing for EPSDT developmental screening</i>	Estimate not available	Estimate not available	Estimate not available	Estimate not available	Estimate not available
<i>Child Welfare</i>	\$4.4 million	\$4.4 million	\$4.4 million	\$4.4 million	\$17.6 million
<i>Race to the Top Instructional Management System</i>	\$2,079,628	\$271,119	\$206,219	\$145,715	\$2,702,681
<i>United Way of Rhode Island</i>	\$150,000 - PreK \$100,000 - BrightStars	\$100,000 - BrightStars	\$100,000 - BrightStars	\$100,000 - BrightStars	\$550,000
<i>Rhode Island Foundation</i>	\$150,000 - PreK \$75,000 - TEACH	\$75,000 - TEACH	\$75,000 - TEACH	\$75,000 - TEACH	\$450,000
<p><i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i></p> <p><i>Funds listed in this table are aligned with the goals of our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge State Plan and will help us achieve our outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*State funding for Pre-K: Funding for Pre-K will be categorically allocated as part of the State’s new education funding formula pursuant to a 10 year Pre-K expansion plan beginning in FY 2013. In FY 2012, bridge funding for the Pre-K classrooms was provided by a blend of state funding, Title I funding and private, philanthropic resources (United Way and Rhode Island Foundation) to cover 6 classrooms operating during the transition from the Pre-K Demonstration Project Phase funded by the R.I. Department of Education to Pre-K being funded through the new mechanism of the education funding formula.</i></p> <p><i>Title I of ESEA: We anticipate that districts will continue to invest Title I funds in the state managed Pre-K program. We will work to expand the amount of Title I funds allocated for Pre-K.</i></p> <p><i>IDEA Part B, Section 619: Contracts have not yet been developed for 2014 & 2015, however the State anticipates providing consistent support.</i></p> <p><i>IDEA, Part C: Federal IDEA Part C grant funds at \$2.1 million per year support a comprehensive system of personnel development, family support staff, program administration, monitoring and oversight.</i></p> <p><i>State funding for Head Start: expands access to Head Start programs for low-income families</i></p> <p><i>Head Start Collaboration: supports partnerships and collaboration among Head Start agencies and other state early learning and development programs.</i></p>					

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<p><i>Child Care Assistance Program funding: a combination of state and CCDF federal funds to enable children in low-income working families to access child care.</i></p> <p><i>Child Care Quality Set-Aside funding: federal funding used to support quality initiatives, including \$350,000 for child care licensing, \$200,000 for child care resource & referral, \$200,000 for professional development, \$200,000 for BrightStars, \$200,000 for Rhode Island Early Learning Standards professional development, \$50,000 for Rhode Island Department of Education Preschool Approval, \$300,000 for the Child Care Support Network, \$200,000 for the Child Care Facilities Fund, and \$190,000 for the Early Childhood Education Specialists Program at the Community College of Rhode Island.</i></p> <p><i>ARRA State Advisory Committee Funding: funding awarded to Rhode Island to support the work of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. A portion is funding TEACH and the remaining will support on-going development of strategic plans aligned with our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge plan, including professional development system planning, higher education system planning, alignment of program standards, and quality improvement supports and incentives planning.</i></p> <p><i>MIECHV: Rhode Island is receiving annual formula funding and was recently awarded a 2-year competitive grant for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program. Funds are being used to expand access to evidence-based home visiting programs and to develop program quality standards, core competencies for home visitors, and monitoring systems.</i></p> <p><i>Title V MCH: Funding for community contracts to support the Rhode Island Department of Health's Priority Measures, one of which is expanding evidence-based parent education.</i></p> <p><i>TANF: Each year TANF funding is transferred to the Child Care Assistance Program to pay for low-income working family access to child care. TANF funding is also used to support the Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program (also supported with MIECHV funding) and to supplement state funding expanding access to Head Start.</i></p> <p><i>Medicaid: Health care providers can bill Medicaid for enhanced developmental screening schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Estimated annual amount was not available at the time this grant was submitted.</i></p> <p><i>Child Welfare: funding transferred from the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families to the RI Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program to pay for child care for children in foster care with families that have working parents. Annual funding is projected based on history.</i></p> <p><i>Race to the Top Instructional Management System: Resources supporting an Instructional Management System that provides accurate student assessment data, curriculum materials, and professional development modules.</i></p> <p><i>United Way of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Foundation: Resources to support critical infrastructure for Rhode Island's early learning system are projected based on history. Funding projections do not include grants given directly to early learning and development programs.</i></p>					

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

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 standards¹⁵ that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and
- (c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State

¹⁵ See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from: http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce, Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).
- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
 - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
 - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
 - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System Current Status**(a) Evidence of a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards**

Rhode Island has already designed and implemented a statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) through a joint partnership across the R.I. Department of Human Services; the R.I. Department of Education; the R.I. Department for Children, Youth and Families; and the R.I. Department of Health; and the United Way of Rhode Island. BrightStars is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children under contract with DHS. Rhode Island's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System uses a five-star rating system and is built on a strong research base, a deep and focused community input process that included parents and providers, and the dedicated efforts of public and private partners who have financed the planning, development, and launch of the BrightStars TQRIS from 2008 through the present. Currently, BrightStars is a voluntary program, and there are 100 participating programs across the state, including 10 percent of child-care centers, 25 percent of Head Start programs, and 9 percent of family child-care homes. BrightStars is managed and implemented by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, under contract with the R.I. Department of Human Services. BrightStars assesses programs in six quality domains: Child's Daily Experience, Teaching and Learning, Staff-Child Ratio and Group Size, Family Communication and Involvement, Staff Qualifications, and Program Management.

The Program Standards for BrightStars are tiered standards. BrightStars standards do not currently address "effective data practices," but the standards addresses the other five areas outlined in the guidance, including: (1) Early Learning and Development Standards; (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System; (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications; (4) Family engagement strategies; and (5) Health promotion practices. Cultural and linguistic competency is addressed as part of the BrightStars Program Standards. More information on the BrightStars Program Standards for Child Care Centers/Preschools; Family Child Care Homes; and School-Age Child Care Programs are in Appendix 15 – *BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*; Appendix 16 – *BrightStars Family Child Care Quality Framework*; and, Appendix 17 – *BrightStars School-Age Child Care (K-5) Quality Framework*.

In addition to the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, three other core sets of Program Standards exist in Rhode Island as follows:

- 1) ***Child Care Licensing***. The R.I. Department for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) regulates all community-based child-care and early learning programs (including center-based child care, community-based preschools and nursery schools, family child-care homes, and center-based Head Start programs). There are approximately 330 licensed center-based programs (including Head Start) and 688 licensed family child-care programs in Rhode Island. In 2011, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) ranked the quality of Rhode Island's center-based child-care regulations as the highest in the country; however, the State was ranked 46th for its monitoring and oversight of licensing standards. The State's overall rank for its family child-care regulations was 13th. Regulations address the following areas: enrollment and staffing; staff qualifications and development; health, safety, and nutrition; physical facilities; equipment and materials; program; parent relations; and administration.
- 2) ***Basic Education Program***. The R.I. Department of Education has statutory authority for early childhood programs operating in public schools. These programs are required to comply with the *Basic Education Program* (BEP) regulations. These basic education regulations for PK–12 were revised and approved in 2009. As of September 2011, there are 55 public schools providing preschool or Pre-K programs, primarily funded through IDEA Section B, Part 619. The BEP regulations set basic standards for: 1) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, 2) safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments, and 3) administration, management, and accountability.
- 3) ***Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards***. By act of the General Assembly in 1968, nursery schools and kindergartens were endorsed as the initial steps in early childhood education and were thereby made an integral part of the education system in Rhode Island. Chapter 48 of Title 16 of the General Laws of Rhode Island gives the Commissioner of Education responsibility for setting standards and for planning approval procedures for education programs serving children ages 3 to 6.

In 2008, the R.I. Department of Education began to revise the 1968 standards to create criteria for identifying and approving Rhode Island Early Learning Standards-based programs with comprehensive standards that reflect the substantive advances in the field in defining what constitutes high-quality education for children ages 3 to 6. The goal was to coordinate these standards and the approval process with DCYF licensing and BrightStars. The new *Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards* for programs serving children ages 3 to 6 were approved by the Board of Regents in January 2010 and went into effect on August 1, 2011.

The new standards represent the Board of Regents vision of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood education. The standards cover physical facilities, health and safety, class size and adult-child ratio, staff qualifications and ongoing professional development, program administration, curriculum, child assessment, differentiated teaching and learning, and family engagement. The standards align with national Pre-Kindergarten benchmarks, research, and evidence-based practice shown to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children. As part of the revision process, draft standards were sent to the following entities for review and feedback: the National Association for the Education for Young Children, National Child Care Information Center, the National Institute for Early Education Research, the Office of Head Start, PreK Now, and State agency staff from West Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina with preschool expertise in general and special education.

The standards are voluntary, and any type of early learning and development program may seek approval under these standards – provided they are in compliance with either DCYF child-care licensing or the Basic Education Program standards described above. Currently, 51 programs are seeking Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program approval for one or more preschool classrooms, but no classrooms or programs have been approved under the new standards.

In addition to the state standards described above, Head Start and Early Head Start programs are subject to the federal Head Start and Early Head Start program-quality standards and monitoring systems. A table that shows how the four sets of Program Standards align with the focus areas identified by Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge is presented in Appendix 18 – *Crosswalk of Rhode Island Program Standards with RTT-ELC Focus Areas*.

(b) Evidence that BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards¹⁶ that lead to improved learning outcomes for children.

In 2008, Rhode Island leaders engaged the services of the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill to oversee a field test of the draft BrightStars Program Standards, to build the capacity of the local implementing agency (the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, or RIAEYC) to collect program-quality information fairly and accurately, and to conduct three baseline quality studies.

First, the draft frameworks were pilot-tested with a cross-section of randomly selected Rhode Island programs (25 centers, 25 family child-care homes, and 25 school-age child-care programs) to determine how well the frameworks worked to differentiate meaningful quality levels and to serve as the basis for quality improvement. The field test of the BrightStars program standards and measurement criteria was conducted by FPG Child Development Institute and RIAEYC in order to collect data to revise the criteria and/or scoring rules in order to better support program-quality improvement. More information on the results of the pilot test is in Appendix 19- *Pilot Test of the Draft Rhode Island BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Framework*.

Data indicate that of all programs participating in BrightStars as of June 2011, programs offering Head Start services and those that are NAEYC-accredited are clustered at the top end of the BrightStars range. Neither NAEYC accreditation nor Head Start status gives programs an automatic high rating, but both NAEYC and Head Start have higher quality standards than basic

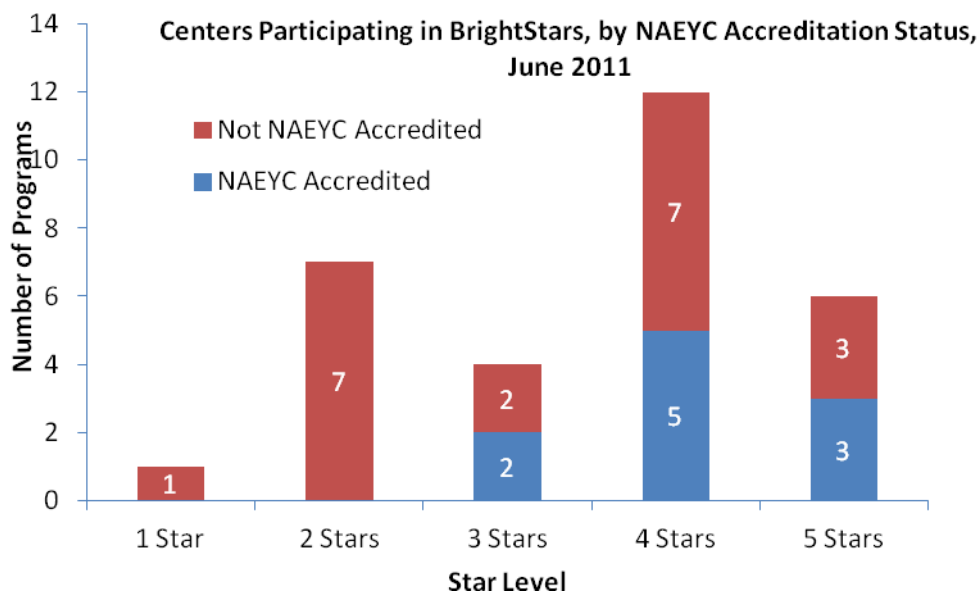
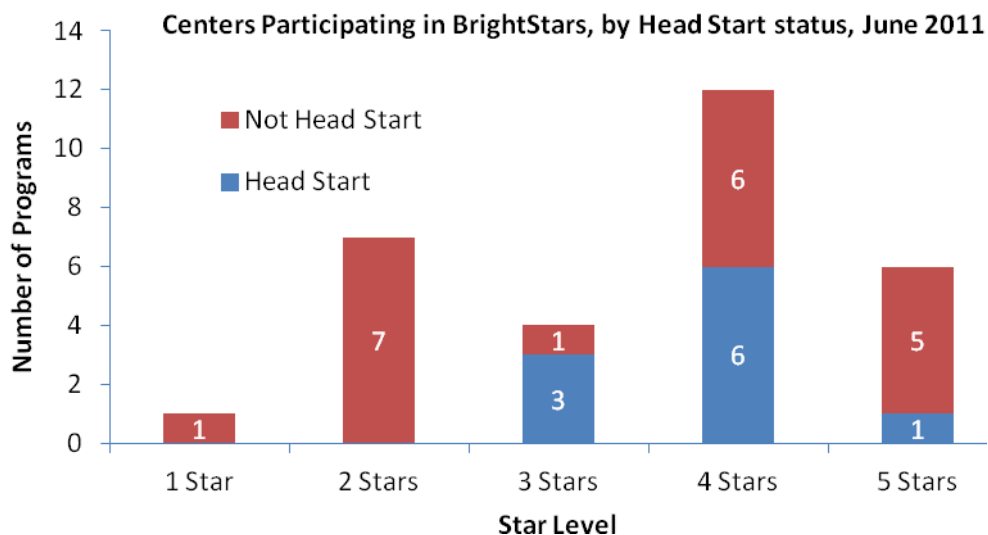
¹⁶ See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, *Child Development Programs (CDPs)*, January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from: http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs*. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

Rhode Island licensing standards. This finding supports the fact that BrightStars is effective at differentiating the quality of programs. The tables below show these data:



(c) Evidence that the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

State licensing forms the foundation and first tier of Rhode Island's QRIS, and BrightStars works closely with the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF),

which has statutory authority for child-care licensing. BrightStars communicates with DCYF in various ways, and agency leaders and administrators regularly take part in QRIS events, forums, and meetings. All programs participating in BrightStars must have a valid, regular license, issued by DCYF. A copy of the program license is required as part of their initial application and at the time of each annual report. Additionally, programs must demonstrate compliance in critical areas of licensing in order to achieve the first tier (Level 1). Compliance is demonstrated by submission of the program's most recent DCYF Monitoring Report. Programs may not have any indicated areas of non-compliance (non-compliance "checks") on the report.

The current BrightStars Program Standards are closely linked to the State's child-care licensing system, which licenses all child-care centers, family child-care homes, center-based Head Start programs, and private preschools and nursery schools in the State. During the pilot phase of BrightStars, the State worked closely with the National Association for Regulatory Administration to move toward the goal of requiring programs to be "in compliance with critical licensing standards" at all levels of BrightStars.

During the pilot period, BrightStars staff and early childhood leaders brought in consultants from the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) to work with the DCYF child-care licensing office to develop systems to determine how the State was going to measure "compliance with licensing" as the foundation of the BrightStars quality levels. Between November 2007 and March 2008, NARA provided comprehensive consultation and conducted a review of policy regarding licensing regulations and procedures and licensing-compliance policy related to implementing a Quality Rating and Improvement System. More information on NARA's review of State licensing requirements is in Appendix 20 - *Recommendations to Strengthen Rhode Island's Child Care Licensing Regulations and Compliance Procedures to Support a Strong Program Quality Rating System*. Key outcomes from the NARA systems review include the following:

- A recommended list of serious non-compliance violations was incorporated into child-care licensing enforcement procedures to guide decisions regarding negative sanctions and revocations of licenses. The recommended list includes violations in the areas of: 1) staff-child ratios and maximum group size; 2) supervision of children; 3) sleep positions; 4) prohibited disciplinary actions; 5) licensed capacity; 6) use of passenger restraints; 7) weapons; 8) pool and other water hazards; 9) reporting child abuse; 10) prohibiting

access to children by a person with a criminal record or a health or behavior risk; 11) administering medication to children; 12) room temperatures and heat sources; 13) qualified personnel; 14) safe indoor and outdoor equipment; and 15) physically safe environment.

- A new monitoring form and written policies and procedures that outline the expectations for licensing staff during monitoring inspections were developed.
- DCYF licensing staff now use the revised monitoring report form during program inspections to identify and document any serious non-compliance violations.
- Provider signatures are now required on monitoring reports, and DCYF provides copies of these reports to the facilities.

Rhode Island's High Quality Plan for Adopting a Common, Statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Key Goals

Goal 1: Use BrightStars as the State's unified Quality Rating and Improvement System with linkages to DCYF licensing and R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) preschool approval.

Goal 2: Ensure that BrightStars standards are clear and measurable and meaningfully differentiate quality, recognizing incremental progress toward national best-practice standards at the top tiers.

Goal 3: Re-design and clarify the roles and responsibilities of DCYF, RIDE, and BrightStars regarding program-quality measurement and monitoring to improve effectiveness and efficiency, ensure alignment, eliminate duplicate assessments, and streamline the process for participating programs.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Under the leadership of the *Early Learning Council*, Rhode Island will undertake a six-month collaborative process to revise BrightStars Program Standards to include critical components of DCYF licensing standards and RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards. The standards review will also include consideration of various accreditation processes used by early learning programs. This review will require DCYF, DHS,

BrightStars, and RIDE to improve alignment of their standards and to develop a coherent quality-improvement pathway for center-based early learning settings and family child-care homes serving young children from birth to kindergarten. After the six-month revision and realignment process, BrightStars, DCYF, and RIDE will have six months to put systems in place to measure the new standards before roll-out begins in early 2013.

The collaborative revision process will include a review of national best practices and updating and alignment of Rhode Island's program quality standards and criteria. BrightStars is in the process of gathering input from a wide range of stakeholders on the first three years of implementation, and this feedback will be used to inform the revision of BrightStars Program Standards. The process will also include a focused review of how to best align the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, new developmental screening and child assessment standards, educator qualification standards, family engagement standards, health promotion standards, and effective data practice standards as BrightStars is revised. The RTT-ELC will support this process which will also include a review of the use of program and classroom observation tools, including the Environment Rating Scales and CLASS tools. We will also look carefully at upgrading infant and toddler standards, working to incorporate indicators of quality reflecting the new, expanded Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for children ages birth to 3 (to be developed as described in Section C(1) of this application). We will also review staff: child ratios and group-size standards as well as program-management standards.

Licensing standards will also be upgraded to incorporate more up-to-date health and safety standards (e.g., physical-activity/outdoor-play standards, safe-sleeping standards) and improved measurement and monitoring practices by licensing staff. Through an update of licensing regulations and practices, Rhode Island will focus on improving data collection (e.g., requiring licensed programs to participate in a workforce registry [to be developed], standardizing and entering data regarding licensing violations and complaints, and collecting enrollment and exit data for participating children). Through BrightStars, we will consider requiring participating programs at higher levels to enter child-assessment data into a shared State data system.

The review, revision, and realignment process will include a core group of stakeholders and technical support from content and measurement experts to help ensure that standards are clear and measurable and that they meaningfully differentiate quality. The process will engage

community stakeholders (program directors, educators, and families) to gather input, ideas, and concerns. A key goal will be to develop standards that are aligned, measurable, and achievable for programs with support. We will work to re-design and clarify the roles and responsibilities of State agencies and organizations regarding program-quality measurement to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to streamline the process for participating programs. Revised and aligned quality-measurement systems in Rhode Island will help the State promote unified and clear messages to families and providers about program quality and program-quality improvement. The RTT-ELC investments will enable Rhode Island to undertake the evaluation and data work as well as the technical assistance needed to make this alignment a reality.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Convene collaborative Program Standards and measurement revision/realignment committee	RI Early Learning Council	DHS, RIDE, DCYF, DOH, BrightStars, Head Start Assn., United Way, Community Stakeholders RI KIDS COUNT	X			
Update licensing standards and improve monitoring systems	DCYF	RI KIDS COUNT , BrightStars, DHS, RIDE, DOH, Community Stakeholders	X	X		
Revise/Realign BrightStars standards and monitoring systems	BrightStars/DHS	RIDE, DCYF, DOH, RI KIDS COUNT, United Way, BrightStars Advisory Committee	X			
Revise/Realign RIDE preschool approval standards and monitoring systems	RIDE	DHS, DCYF, DOH, RI KIDS COUNT	X			

How this Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

This plan will improve and align the State's Program Standards, with the goal of establishing a more streamlined pathway toward a common vision of quality. The plan will help programs serving Children with High Needs understand and work toward achieving standards for high-quality early learning programs. Rhode Island will ensure that tiered standards are measurable, aligned, and research-based. The standards will be relevant to the needs of children with developmental delays and disabilities, children who are English learners, and children in low-income families and communities. Programs serving Children with High Needs will be given the highest priority for supports to achieve these standards. The over-arching goal is to have more Children with High Needs in high-quality early learning programs. Programs serving Children with High Needs will receive supports to achieve these standards, and parents will have access to BrightStars ratings through the Web site, enabling them to select higher quality programs for their children. In addition, higher quality programs will receive tiered quality payments based on their star ratings and programs at all levels will receive technical assistance and program grants that enable them to improve quality.

How this Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable

The revised BrightStars rating system will provide common benchmarks of program quality for licensed child-care programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (including centers and family child care), private preschools, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and public preschool programs. Family child-care providers, who serve many Children with High Needs, are a core part of the rating system and will also receive specialized supports to meet quality standards. The revised BrightStars ratings will be designed to include explicit recognition of classrooms that have attained RIDE Approval because they meet the high standards outlined in RIDE's *Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards*.

Through the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting competitive grant awarded in September 2011, Rhode Island will be developing core competencies and program-monitoring infrastructure for home-visiting programs serving families with young children. Home-based, individualized programs for young children such as Early Intervention (Part C of

IDEA), home-based Early Head Start, and early childhood home-visiting programs would benefit from this work, which will be aligned with our plan for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge activities. This is another example of how our work is systemic and seeks to create a seamless system from cradle to college, rather than silos of work that are isolated within one particular agency or sector of work.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
	Program Standards Elements¹⁷						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an “X” in that box</i>						
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
DCYF licensing standards – centers (1993) – <i>all community- based child care centers and preschools (including Head Start)</i>			X	X	X		
DCYF licensing standards – family child care homes (2007) – <i>all individuals regularly caring for 4 or more unrelated children.</i>			X	X	X		
DCYF licensing standards (2007) – <i>group family child care homes serving 9-12 children</i>			X	X	X		
RI Department of Education Basic Education Program Regulations – all public schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	

¹⁷ Please refer to the definition of Program Standards for more information on the elements.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Program Standards Elements¹⁷						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an “X” in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
BrightStars – Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Standards and Criteria (2008) – <i>voluntary for community-based licensed programs</i>	X	X	X	X	X		
BrightStars Family Child Care Quality Standards and Criteria (2009) – <i>voluntary for licensed programs</i>	X	X	X	X	X		
RI Department of Education Approval – <i>voluntary for community-based centers and public schools serving children ages 3 to through K entry</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>							

(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

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).

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (B)(2)(c).

(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.**Current Status**

The number of programs voluntarily participating in BrightStars increased from 20 in the first year of implementation to 100 programs as of October 1, 2011. This number represents about 10 percent of early learning programs licensed by DCYF. We have developed a plan to dramatically expand participation, through a combination of policy and regulatory levers, that will lead us to our goal of all early learning programs participating in the revised BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System. Rhode Island currently encourages voluntary participation in BrightStars by:

- Offering quality-improvement grants ranging from \$1,000 -\$4,500 per site, based on the number of children enrolled; funds for these grants currently come from the State’s Child Care and Development Fund ARRA funds. These grants are administered by the BrightStars implementing agency (RIAEYC) under contract with DHS. Programs must use these funds to support activities aligned with their quality-improvement plans required in BrightStars and developed in partnership with BrightStars quality-improvement specialists.
- Recognizing participating programs through local and statewide news releases.
- Celebrating and recognizing participating programs at “Starry, Starry Night,” an annual statewide dinner event held at the Providence Marriott. Top leaders from State departments and philanthropic partners attend, give welcoming remarks, and stay to recognize programs. Each participating program is recognized individually and receives a certificate on the stage. Programs are also individually recognized for moving up levels within BrightStars. More than 300 people attend the event, which is regularly covered in the *Providence Journal*.
- Requiring eligible programs receiving state Pre-K funding to participate in BrightStars.
- Requiring child-care and early learning programs receiving grants from the United Way of Rhode Island to participate in BrightStars.

- Prioritizing T.E.A.C.H. scholarship project and the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund resources to programs participating in BrightStars.
- Prioritizing enrollment in RI Early Learning Standards professional development opportunities for individuals employed in programs participating in BrightStars.

Rhode Island's High Quality Plan for Promoting Participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Key Goals

Goal 1: Promote 100% participation in BrightStars by using regulatory and funding levers.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Rhode Island will make changes to require all licensed programs to participate in BrightStars by assigning One Star to programs at license renewal and when a new license is approved, beginning in 2013 (after the Program Standards are revised in 2012). All licensed programs will automatically receive One Star unless they were already engaged in BrightStars and had achieved a higher level. Changes will be made to BrightStars Program Standards to support this plan. For example, BrightStars now requires evidence of compliance with critical areas of licensing at Level One. A specific plan for programs that are not in compliance with critical licensing areas or that are on probation will be developed. Another issue to address is the criterion that currently requires programs at Level One to have an approved Quality Improvement Plan. Initially there may be a capacity issue in developing Quality Improvement Plans at Level One, as many programs will be expected to enter BrightStars at this level as the State goes to 100-percent participation.

Rhode Island will also require participation in BrightStars as a condition for licensed programs receiving DHS Child Care Assistance Program payments. This requirement will be another parallel strategy to reinforce participation through licensing. A plan will be developed to preserve parent choice, as required by federal Child Care Development Block Grant regulations, while addressing programs that are not in compliance with licensing standards.

Beginning in 2014, Rhode Island will also require early learning programs receiving State or federal funding from RIDE to participate in BrightStars (including IDEA, Part B Section 619 preschool classroom-based programs, Title I-funded preschool-classroom programs, and State Pre-K programs). Early learning programs operated by public schools would also be expected to receive the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval on a prescribed timeline. Participating in BrightStars and the RIDE approval process will be aligned so that all programs are on a common pathway toward quality. A core part of our work through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge will be leveraging public and private partners to build the public will and undertake the strategic communications needed to engage all parts of the early learning and development community in this work.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Determine and implement changes needed to include all DCYF licensed and DHS CCAP funded programs in BrightStars	DHS/ BrightStars	DCYF, RIDE, DOH, Early Learning Council	X			
Determine and implement changes needed to include RIDE-funded programs in BrightStars	DHS/ BrightStars	DCYF, RIDE, DOH, Early Learning Council	X	X		
Require all DCYF-licensed and DHS CCAP-funded programs to participate in BrightStars	DHS DCYF	DHS/BrightStars, Early Learning Council		X	X	X
Require all RIDE-funded programs to participate in BrightStars	RIDE	DHS/BrightStars, Early Learning Council			X	X
Build capacity of BrightStars program-assessment and improvement systems to include more participating programs	DHS/ BrightStars	RIDE, DCYF, DOH, Early Learning Council	X	X	X	X

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

Requiring all early learning programs to participate in the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will ensure that all programs serving young children are on a common path toward quality. Improving program quality, with special attention to programs that serve Children with High Needs, is critical to improving outcomes and to closing the gap between Children with High Needs and their peers. Programs serving Children with High Needs will receive supports to move up the quality levels as they begin to participate in BrightStars as a requirement of licensing. Projects that provide resources and supports to programs to move to higher levels of quality are part of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan proposed here because we recognize that these supports will be critical to meeting the goal that more Children with High Needs be enrolled in high-quality programs. We will carefully target our efforts to ensure that we are reaching programs that serve the highest concentrations of high-needs children. Half of Rhode Island's children in poverty live in the capital city of Providence. All of the six core cities have high concentrations of children in poverty, minority children, and English language learners as well as a majority of the children involved with the child-welfare system and a significant number of children with disabilities or developmental delays.

How this Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

By December 31, 2013, all of Rhode Island's early learning programs will be required to participate in the revised BrightStars TQRIS. The supports available to programs will be tailored to the unique culture and characteristics of each type of early learning program and to the needs of their administrators, teachers and staff, and the families they serve.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	7	6	86%	8	100%	14	100%	20	100%	26	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ¹⁸	38	10	26%	20	53%	44	100%	44	100%	44	100%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	12	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	55	0	N/A	0	0%	55	100%	55	100%	55	100%
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	6	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%	6	100%	6	100%
Programs receiving CCDF funds	933	86	9%	233	25%	933	100%	933	100%	933	100%
Other <i>Describe: DCYF-licensed child care and early learning centers</i>	330	34	10%	82	25%	330	100%	330	100%	330	100%
DCYF-licensed family child care homes	688	59	9%	172	25%	688	100%	516	100%	688	100%
<p><i>[Please indicate if baseline data are actual or estimated; describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information; and please include any definitions you used that are not defined in the notice.]</i></p> <p>State-funded preschool: Baseline is the actual number of programs receiving funding for the State Pre-K Demonstration project in 2010-11 school year and actual participation in BrightStars as of September 1, 2011. Data for 2012 -2015 is projected to reflect the planned expansion of state-funded Pre-K classrooms and 100% participation in BrightStars required by DCYF licensing and RIDE Pre-K funding.</p> <p>Early Head Start and Head Start: baseline data is the actual number of center-based program sites</p>											

¹⁸ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
offering Early Head Start or Head Start services as of September 1, 2011, as reported by the Head Start Collaboration Director and the actual number of Early Head Start and Head Start programs participating in BrightStars as of September 1, 2011. Data for 2012-2015 is projected to reflect stable funding for Early Head Start and Head Start and 100% participation in BrightStars required by DCYF licensing by the end of 2013.											
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C: Baseline data is the actual number of certified Early Intervention providers as of September 1, 2011 as reported by the RI Department of Human Services. Data for 2012-2015 is projected based on federal guidance that Early Intervention programs may not be appropriate to participate in state QRIS as they offer one-on-one services primarily delivered in the child's home. Research based measures are not currently widely available to measure the quality of Early Intervention services.											
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, Section 619: Baseline data is the actual number of public schools providing preschool special education services in classroom settings as of September 2011 as reported by the R.I. Department of Education. Data for 2012-2015 is projected based on mandatory participation in BrightStars by the end of 2013.											
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA: Baseline data is the number of public schools operating Title I preschool classrooms as of September 2011 as reported by the R.I. Department of Education. Data for 2012 is projected based on mandatory participation in BrightStars by the end of 2013.											
Programs receiving CCDF funding: Baseline data is the actual number of early childhood centers and family child-care homes receiving Child Care Assistance Program payments in September 2011 as reported by the R.I. Department of Human Services and the actual number of these programs participating in BrightStars as of September 1, 2011. Data for 2012-2015 is projected based on a gradual increase in programs voluntarily participating in BrightStars in 2012 and then mandatory participation required through licensing by the end of 2013.											
Other: DCY- licensed child care and early learning centers: Baseline data is the actual number of licensed early childhood centers in January 2011 as reported in the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook and the actual number of these programs participating in BrightStars as of September 1, 2011. Data for 2012-2015 is projected based on a gradual increase in programs voluntarily participating in BrightStars in 2012 and then mandatory participation required through licensing by the end of 2013.											
Other: DCYF-licensed family child care homes: Baseline data is the actual number of licensed family child-care homes in January 2011 as reported in the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook and the actual number of these programs participating in BrightStars as of September 1, 2011. Data for 2012-2015 is projected based on a gradual increase in programs voluntarily participating in BrightStars in 2012 and then mandatory participation required through licensing by the end of 2013.											

(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs. (15 points)

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

B)(3) Rating and Monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs**Current Status**

Rhode Island leaders learned a lot from the pioneering States that have gone before us in building Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (particularly North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and the RAND analysis of pioneering states). We knew that it was important to:

- conduct a pilot test of the draft standards and measurement process prior to assigning ratings;
- minimize the use of data self-reported by programs;
- base the final standards and measurements on research;
- make the QRIS manageable to administer;
- carefully balance resources used for program-quality measurement with resources needed for program-quality improvement;
- make the QRIS standards, measurements, and levels understandable and achievable;
- recognize and reward incremental program-quality improvement;
- continue to gather data and to adjust supports available for programs to participate in the TQRIS and to move up the levels; and
- periodically review and revise the standards to reflect new research findings about program quality, to incorporate new tools to measure quality, and to reflect State priorities and strategies (e.g., Early Learning Standards).

(a) Use of valid and reliable tools for monitoring programs in the QRIS, 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:

Assessing Program Quality

The current BrightStars assessment process is a two-fold process that includes review of documentation submitted by the program and direct observation using research-based tools and site-visit checklists. All programs must complete and submit an application to participate in BrightStars. Programs are asked to indicate their desired star rating on the application and to provide clearly identified written documentation as evidence that they meet the standards

associated with that level (e.g., college transcripts of staff, copies of family-engagement materials, copy of license, copy of most recent monitoring report). The BrightStars application and documentation requirements were developed with consultation from the FPG Child Development Institute.

BrightStars uses the following research-based observation tools to measure and assess program quality in early learning programs:

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R);
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R); and
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R).

In addition, BrightStars is working to incorporate the use of the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*® (CLASS) in program-quality improvement planning, but BrightStars does not use CLASS scores to determine a program's star rating. BrightStars is conducting a study to inform the future use of CLASS® in its rating-assessment process. Between June 1 and September 30, 2011, BrightStars has been collecting data from currently enrolled programs to inform the possible future use of the CLASS® for TQRIS assessment, feedback, and technical assistance. In order to collect this information, CLASS® observations are being conducted in BrightStars 4- and 5-star-rated child-care centers and preschools that were participating in the TQRIS as of April 1, 2011. The observations are taking place in the program's preschool classrooms, randomly selected for observation with the ECERS-R during the program's initial assessment. All observations are completed by a CLASS®-reliable observer who is contracted to work with BrightStars.

Unannounced site visits are conducted beginning at the second tier of the TQRIS. Programs applying for 2 stars (second tier) receive a visit to verify the following structural criteria: staff-child ratio, staff-child ratio posted, maximum group size, group dividers, maximum group size posted, and teacher professional-development plans. Programs applying for 3 stars or higher (third tier) receive one or more unannounced site visits, which include administration of the Environment Rating Scales and verification of the structural criteria listed above as well as verification of additional criteria (e.g., verifying that individualized child-assessment information is being collected).

For child-care centers and preschools, an assessment visit is completed in 33 percent of the groups or classrooms by age group. This process may require multiple unannounced visits to complete appropriate ERS assessments (ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R). Observation visits are completed separately in at least one-third (33 percent) of infant/toddler classrooms and in one-third (33 percent) of preschool classrooms in early childhood centers or preschools. Classrooms are selected randomly at the site to participate in the ERS. A single unannounced assessment visit to the home is completed for family child-care programs to verify structural criteria and to administer the FCCERS-R.

Because approximately 70 percent of licensed family child-care providers in Rhode Island speak Spanish as their primary language, BrightStars strives to ensure that Spanish-speaking providers can participate. The BrightStars family child-care program standards and application are available in Spanish. Marketing materials and e-mails are translated into Spanish. The Starry, Starry Night celebration uses headsets and offers simultaneous Spanish translation of all speakers. BrightStars employs two full-time bilingual (English and Spanish) staff members, and BrightStars has the capacity to support participation of both monolingual and bilingual native Spanish-speaking providers. In addition, Ready to Learn Providence offers focused consultation and support in English and in Spanish to family child-care providers in the core urban region who want to participate and advance in BrightStars. As of September 2011, Spanish-speaking providers comprised more than half of all programs participating in BrightStars (57 out of 110) and 77% of the 74 family child care homes participating in BrightStars. Most materials and publications used by the BrightStars are available in Spanish as well as in English. Spanish-speaking professionals may access the QRIS application, assessment policies and procedures, information about the FCCERS-R, and quality-improvement materials in their preferred language. Bilingual BrightStars staff members trained to the anchor level on the FCCERS-R have extensive experience administering the FCCERS-R in Spanish-speaking homes. BrightStars staff members strive to use culturally relevant forms of communication to ensure that no group is marginalized and that QRIS is accessible to all.

Establishing and Maintaining Assessor Objectivity and Reliability

It is important that assessors are adequately trained and monitored over time to ensure reliability and consistency with the tools. There are two levels of training for BrightStars staff

using the ERS. The “anchor” level involves intensive training to reliability on each tool with an author or highly reliable, extensively trained staff member from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, in North Carolina. State anchors for the ERS tools may train other individuals to acceptable levels of reliability on the ERS tools. All assessment staff, excluding state anchors, must complete a minimum of three reliability checks with a state anchor and must have an average reliability score of at least 85 percent across their last three checks to be “signed-off” to conduct independent assessments.

Currently, BrightStars employs one full-time assessor who is a state anchor for the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R. The agency also employs a part-time staff member who has achieved the anchor level for the ITERS-R. The Director of the implementing agency is also trained to anchor level on the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R and is available to participate in reliability checks with assessment staff. The R.I. Department of Education also employs a program-assessment specialist trained to anchor-level reliability on the ECERS-R and CLASS.

Ongoing inter-rater reliability for the Environment Rating Scales is essential in maintaining accountability for BrightStars ratings. Reliability checks occur during observations when a second assessor is present. The paired observations, used to establish BrightStars inter-rater reliability, occur periodically and are part of the ongoing training process for all assessment staff. During a reliability check, a state anchor trained to reliability with the authors of the Scales joins the assessor who is due to have his or her reliability checked. Both assessors are present during all assessment procedures, during the entire observation, and during the teacher interview. Each assessor completes scoring independently. During debriefing, a consensus score is assigned to each item. The assessor’s reliability score is determined based on the percentage that his or her original scores agree with the final consensus scores.

All BrightStars staff members and consultants conducting assessments using any of the Environment Rating Scales participate in reliability checks for *each* scale that they use. State anchors participate in reliability checks with other State anchors. All other assessors participate in reliability checks with State anchors or other designated BrightStars staff members. After an assessor has been signed-off, they must have a reliability check on or before their sixth independent assessment. This process occurs for their first two reliability checks following sign-off. Following the successful completion of their first two reliability checks after sign-off, the

assessor then has his or her reliability checked approximately every twentieth assessment. State anchors engage in reliability checks approximately every twentieth assessment for each tool they are administering. BrightStars standards for reliability include an average score of 85 percent across the last three reliability checks. This base level of reliability establishes an assessor's ability to conduct independent assessments, and it ensures that assessors are using the Environment Ratings Scales accurately.

Frequency of ratings

BrightStars ratings are valid for three years from the date of the rating. To maintain a quality rating, participating programs must submit annual reports to BrightStars. The annual report consists of:

- current contact and demographic information;
- copies of program's current license and monitoring report;
- current copies of national accreditation certificates (if applicable); and
- updated program-quality improvement plan and summary.

Programs are required to notify BrightStars in writing within ten days of any change to the status of their license or accreditation. Programs that do not adhere to this policy or that have their license revoked will be suspended and will not be publicly identified as a QRIS-participating program. At the time of the annual report, the program may choose to request a review of its star rating. BrightStars will reassess requested standards and/or criteria to determine if the program is able to achieve higher tiers or levels in the QRIS. As a result of any requested reassessment, a program's star rating may be increased, decreased, or held at its original level.

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development

BrightStars shares and communicates information about quality ratings in the following ways:

- Through www.BrightStars.org, the QRIS Web site. A participating program's overall quality rating is displayed along with a "performance by standard" bar graph, which indicates how individual child-care and early learning programs are rated in each of the

different quality standards. Information about each standard is also published on this bar graph so that parents and the public may better understand the different aspects of quality.

- Through an external Web site, hosted by NACCRRA, that is searchable by parents and families and that displays all licensed programs in the State. BrightStars-rated programs are displayed at the top of each page (if available in that city or town), with a graphic that shows the program's quality rating.
- Programs are required to post their quality rating (displayed on a certificate) in a place that is easily visible to parents and the public.
- The implementing agency for the QRIS also hosts the State's Child Care Resource and Referral Center. Parents and families calling the referral line are provided with information about quality-rated programs over the phone by trained staff as well as through a follow-up e-mail, letter, or both.
- BrightStars has developed parent cards in English and Spanish, which are designed to provide information about BrightStars quality ratings.
- BrightStars employs social media marketing through Facebook and Twitter to share information about quality ratings with parents and with the public.

Currently, DCYF does not provide easily accessible information about a program's licensing status or compliance history. Families may access this information by contacting DCYF directly and requesting it. Licensing compliance data are not currently entered into a computer system. However, leaders in the early learning community and DCYF are working to resolve the barriers to entering this information into a database and reporting this information directly to the public. We anticipate that publicly reported data on licensing will be available as early as 2012.

Rhode Island's High Quality Plan for Rating and Monitoring the Quality of Programs Participating in the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Key Goals

Goal 1: Build the staff capacity of BrightStars to provide ratings for all eligible programs as the State moves to 100-percent participation by early learning programs.

Goal 2: Build the capacity of DCYF licensing to inspect licensed family child-care homes at least once per year.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Rhode Island will expand the capacity of BrightStars to rate the increased number of programs in Rhode Island while maintaining rater reliability. BrightStars will need to expand capacity to conduct program assessments as incentives for participation are ramped up (immediately after the grant award) and as requirements to participate are enforced (2 years after the grant award). BrightStars will ramp up capacity to conduct program assessments and to support program-quality improvement. All program-assessment specialists will be trained to anchor-level reliability with the authors (or author-designated trainers) of the Environment Rating Scale tools used in BrightStars (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R). The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) will also collaborate with BrightStars to conduct program-quality assessments to strengthen measurement capacity, improve efficiency, and streamline the process, particularly for those programs that require an environment rating for both RIDE approval and BrightStars.

During 2012, Rhode Island will review assessment and monitoring practices and systems for DCYF licensing, BrightStars, and RIDE approval, in consultation with national experts. We will seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of assessment and monitoring across the State. We will pay particular attention to the frequency of licensing inspections and the development of systems to manage licensing-compliance data. Currently, Rhode Island licensors visit family child-care homes only once every two years (while they visit centers at least two times every year) unless there is a complaint. Both NACCRRA and NARA recommend that States conduct health-and-safety inspections of family child-care homes at least once per year. There are 23 States and the District of Columbia that conduct routine inspections of licensed family child-care homes at least once per year. Rhode Island's recent baseline study of the quality of family child-care homes showed that 64 percent had FCCERS-R scores in the low-quality range (less than 3.0), which is associated with both health-and-safety and development-and-learning concerns for children.

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge will give Rhode Island the resources and impetus to increase the frequency of licensing inspections for family child-care homes to at least

once per year while maintaining two inspections per year for licensed centers. We will work to streamline licensing visits to improve efficiency so that DYCF is able to maintain inspection frequency. Licensing is the foundation of quality, and compliance with licensing is a key indicator in BrightStars.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Expand capacity of BrightStars to complete rating process for the additional programs that will require a rating when the State goes to required versus voluntary participation in the TQRIS	DHS/ BrightStars	DCYF	X	X	X	X
Review, strengthen, and improve efficiency of monitoring practices and systems	DCYF DHS/ BrightStars RIDE	Program Standards Revision/Realignment Committee Expert Consultants	X			
Increase the frequency of licensing inspection visits so that family child-care providers are routinely inspected at least once per year.	DCYF			X	X	X
Build data and information-sharing systems to share licensing compliance information with parents/public via the Internet	DCYF	DHS/BrightStars Early Learning Data System team (see section E2)	X			
Share licensing compliance information with parents/public	DCYF	DHS/BrightStars		X	X	X

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

This plan will support Children with High Needs by ensuring that program quality is measured fairly and accurately and that families have the information they need to choose the

best program for their children. Increasing the frequency of licensing inspections of family child-care homes will particularly benefit Children with High Needs, as low-income and disadvantaged children are frequently participating in family child-care homes (because they usually offer more flexible enrollment options and extended hours of care, and they tend to charge lower rates). Many children who are English-language learners are also participating in family child-care homes. Increasing licensing inspections and posting information about licensing compliance is a strategy used by other States, and this strategy has been proven to raise the quality of programs.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

This plan will improve monitoring practices and systems affecting all early learning programs in the State except for home-based, individualized programs, such as Early Intervention (Part C), home-based Early Head Start, and early childhood home-visiting programs. As noted earlier, Rhode Island has received a competitive MIECHV grant, and we will be developing monitoring systems for home-visiting programs with those resources.

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

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2).

(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning Programs for Children with High Needs.**Current Status*****(a) Rhode Island's policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve***

Early Learning Programs in Rhode Island are assisted in learning about and adopting best practices by each of the entities managing sets of program standards. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families and the Department of Education regularly refer programs to BrightStars and provide specific professional development opportunities related to understanding and using program standards. Programs participating in BrightStars identify benchmarks to guide program improvement, to develop a quality-improvement plan, and to access quality-improvement tools and resources. A BrightStars Quality Improvement Specialist (different from the Program Assessment Specialist) provides ongoing guidance and support to participating programs. A partnership between BrightStars and Ready to Learn Providence, funded by the United Way, provides intensive support and guidance to programs serving concentrations of Children with High Needs. A variety of resources is available in Rhode Island to support program-quality improvement, including:

- **The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project** focuses on programs serving preschoolers by providing professional development, consultation, and technical assistance in the areas of curriculum planning and implementation, developmentally appropriate instruction, authentic child assessment, and family engagement. Consultants frequently use the ECERS-R and CLASS tools.
- **The Child Care Support Network** provides early childhood mental-health consultation, health consultation, and infant/toddler technical assistance, using the ITERS-R tool.
- **The Child Care Facilities Fund** provides capital and technical expertise that child-care and early learning programs need to improve the quality and capacity of their physical space. The Fund provides a combination of training, technical assistance, and flexible, affordable financing.

- **The Rhode Island Early Childhood Education & Training Project at the Community College of Rhode Island** provides access to higher education to address the needs of the field of early childhood education. As part of the program, participants receive up to 18 credit hours of free college coursework in early childhood education, CDA support, and one-on-one mentoring.
- **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Rhode Island** provides scholarships to enable early learning educators to pursue degrees in early childhood education. T.E.A.C.H. connects this increased education with increased compensation, which leads to better teacher retention.
- **BrightStars Professional Development System** provides high-quality professional development opportunities to the early learning workforce in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island has been offering small Program Improvement Grants to programs, ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,500 per site, to incentivize participation in BrightStars and to support quality improvement. These grants have helped bring programs in voluntarily. Programs participating in BrightStars have been successfully making incremental quality improvements, and they have been moving up the levels. Between January 2010 and June 2011, 41 percent of eligible* programs increased their BrightStars star rating. (*Note: 19 programs of 46 eligible programs moved up one or more level.*) *Eligible means that programs had been enrolled in BrightStars for at least nine months. Programs that entered the QRIS at the 5-star level are excluded.

Unlike many other States, Rhode Island does not have tiered reimbursement rates for child care providers serving families participating in the DHS Child Care Assistance Program. Currently, all providers receive the same payment rates for child care, regardless of the quality of the care delivered. In addition, reimbursement rates have been frozen for several years at the average of the 2002 – 2004 market rate. Providers serving Children with High Needs have indicated that they do not have enough resources to meet the higher standards in BrightStars, particularly those programs serving infants and toddlers. Implementing tiered reimbursement payments tied to BrightStars quality levels would provide a more powerful incentive and financial support for programs to improve quality.

Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs

Almost all families receiving Child Care Assistance choose regulated care, with 71 percent choosing licensed child-care centers and 28 percent choosing licensed family child care. Rhode Island child-care licensing regulations have been recognized as setting high benchmarks; however, the system for monitoring and enforcing these regulations needs improvement. Developing and implementing a tiered reimbursement-rate system for Rhode Island's Child Care Assistance Program would help more families access higher-quality care, as higher rates would be paid to higher-quality programs, thus making serving these clients more financially attractive for programs.

Rhode Island's new State Pre-K program has been recognized as one of only five in the country that meets all ten quality benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research. The Rhode Island Pre-K program is implemented by a diverse group of community-based agencies, including child-care centers and Head Start programs. The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) requires State Pre-K programs to offer full-day child care or to link families to high-quality, full-day child care if they need it. Likewise, all of the Head Start programs in Rhode Island offer full-day child care for those families who need it, with many families qualifying for the Child Care Assistance Program.

Rhode Island's High-Quality Plan for Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs.**Key Goals**

Goal 1: Develop and implement tiered quality incentive payments for the Child Care Assistance Program with higher rates paid to higher-quality programs.

Goal 2: Strengthen and expand the resources available to programs to support continuous quality improvement.

Goal 3: Provide focused technical assistance to realign quality-improvement resources to meet the needs of early learning programs, with priority given to programs that serve greater proportions of Children with High Needs.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Rhode Island will develop and implement a tiered quality incentive payments system, with high-quality programs receiving higher payments. Programs participating in BrightStars will receive enhanced Child Care Assistance Program payments to help them achieve and maintain quality benchmarks. Payments will help support improved staff compensation and benefits, and these payments will cover the increased costs associated with operating a higher-quality program. Enhanced payments are budgeted at 10 percent above current rates for 2-star programs, 15 percent for 3-star programs, 20 percent for 4-star programs, and 25 percent for 5-star programs, for 2012-2015. In 2012, there will also be a small enhanced payment of 5 percent for 1-star programs to encourage voluntary participation in BrightStars. Enhanced payments for top-tier programs (4-5 stars) will bring rates up to the 75th percentile in the current market-rate survey. This system should incentivize and support program-quality improvement. Higher rates will also expand access to high-quality programs for Children with High Needs. Enhanced payments will enable children from low-income families to access higher-quality programs.

Rhode Island will also strengthen and expand the resources available to programs to support continuous quality improvement by developing and offering Program Quality Improvement Contracts to programs seeking to make improvements to move up one or more levels within BrightStars. Programs participating in BrightStars would be eligible for a program-improvement contract for one to two years at each level to support improvements necessary to achieve quality benchmarks at the next level. Budgets for contracts would be aligned with the Program Quality Improvement Plan. Programs serving up to 25 children with DHS child-care subsidies would be eligible for a \$1,000-per-year contract; programs serving between 26-50 children with DHS child-care subsidies would be eligible for a \$4,500-per-year contract; and programs serving 51 or more children with DHS child-care subsidies would be eligible for a \$10,000-per-year contract. Contracts would be renewable for up to two years, with evidence of program-improvement progress after Year One. After two years, a program would be expected to move up a level in BrightStars.

A vendor will be selected to provide technical assistance and program contracts, ranging from \$1,000 to \$30,000, focused on environmental enhancements (to include renovations and

improvements to indoor and outdoor space, room arrangements, and equipment and furnishings) for programs working to meet group-size requirements or to improve ERS scores.

Professional-development, training, and technical-assistance resources will be expanded statewide to help programs serving concentrations of Children with High Needs make necessary quality improvements and to meet higher-quality BrightStars benchmarks. The technical-assistance programs that will be expanded and better aligned with BrightStars are: the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project and the Child Care Support Network. Provider access to higher education will increase through the expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program so that it can serve more early childhood educators seeking A.A. and B.A. degrees.

Programs participating in BrightStars will also receive focused technical assistance to achieve quality benchmarks, with priority for programs that serve larger proportions of Children with High Needs. All DHS-funded technical assistance will be aligned with BrightStars and with identified program needs. Technical assistance will be coordinated by BrightStars Program Quality Improvement Specialists. Program Quality Improvement Specialists work with programs to develop an individual quality-improvement plan and to identify needs and link programs with needed technical assistance and resources. Specialized technical assistance (TA) will be available in the following areas:

- *Infant-Toddler Network:* Individual and Comprehensive TA for centers serving infants and toddlers, with a focus on improving ITERS-R scores and on using the new RIELS for infants and toddlers. This project will build on the work of the existing Child Care Support Network.
- *Preschool Network:* Individual and Comprehensive Preschool TA for centers serving preschoolers, with a focus on improving ECERS-R and CLASS scores and on using the RIELS for preschoolers. This project will build on work of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project and supports provided to State Pre-K programs.
- *Family Child Care Network:* Individual and Comprehensive TA for family child-care providers, with a focus on improving FCCERS-R scores, using the RIELS with mixed-age groups, operating a small business, and building basic provider skills in ESL/GED. This project will build on the work of Ready to Learn Providence, with particular attention to the needs of Latino family child-care providers.

- *Program Administrator Network:* Individual and Comprehensive TA for center administrators ,with a focus on leadership, management, human resources and supervision, staffing, budgeting, and program-improvement planning and will build upon, integrate, and support concepts promoted in the infant-toddler and preschool networks
- *Early Learning Facilities Network:* Individual and Comprehensive TA for center administrators and family child-care providers on indoor and outdoor environment issues that need to be addressed to support program-quality improvement. This project will build on the work of the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund at LISC and will also build upon, integrate, and support concepts promoted in the infant-toddler and preschool networks.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Implement tiered quality incentive payment system.	DHS	BrightStars	X	X	X	X
Expand and align technical assistance supports to help programs serving Children with High Needs meet quality benchmarks.	DHS	BrightStars Child Care Support Network RI Early Learning Standards Project Child Care Facilities Fund Ready to Learn Providence Rhode Island Early Learning Council	X	X	X	X
Offer Program Quality Improvement Contracts to help programs serving Children with High Needs meet quality benchmarks.	DHS	BrightStars Child Care Facilities Fund	X	X	X	X
Expand access to higher education to help programs serving Children with High needs meet quality benchmarks.	DHS RIDE	TEACH CCRI	X	X	X	X

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

All technical assistance and contracts will be prioritized and provided first to those programs serving low-income, at-risk, high-need populations and in areas where it is determined that facility and space improvements will result in higher program quality or safer, healthier environments for children.

This plan will help programs serving Children with High Needs by providing support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve and to achieve and maintain quality benchmarks in BrightStars. Resources will be carefully targeted to reach programs serving Children with High Needs. Implementing a tiered quality incentive system for the Child Care Assistance Program will help families access higher levels of care, and this process will help programs serving Children with High Needs to maintain higher quality levels.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

This plan will provide financial incentives and support to help all early learning programs in Rhode Island meet quality benchmarks – except for home-based, individualized programs, such as Early Intervention (Part C), home-based Early Head Start, and early childhood home-visiting programs. As noted earlier, Rhode Island has received a competitive MIECHV grant, and we will be developing monitoring systems for home-visiting programs with those resources.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.					
	Baseline (Today)	Target- end of calendar year 2012	Target- end of calendar year 2013	Target- end of calendar year 2014	Target- end of calendar year 2015
Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	93	255	1,079 (all licensed programs + public schools with preschool classrooms)	1,079 (all licensed programs + public schools with preschool classrooms)	1,079 (all licensed programs + public schools with preschool classrooms)

Number of programs in Tier 1 (lowest tier)	34 (37%)	77 (30%)	755 (70%)	540 (50%)	270 (25%)
Number of programs in Tier 2	23 (25%)	64 (25%)	108 (10%)	216 (20%)	270 (25%)
Number of programs in Tier 3	14 (15%)	51 (20%)	108 (10%)	162 (15%)	216 (20%)
Number of programs in Tier 4	16 (17%)	38 (15%)	54 (5%)	81 (7.5%)	162 (15%)
Number of programs in Tier 5 (highest tier)	6 (6%)	25 (10%)	54 (5%)	80 (7.5%)	161 (15%)

Include a row for each tier in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, customize the labeling of the tiers, and indicate the highest and lowest tier.

Baseline data is actual as of September 1, 2011, as reported by BrightStars. Projections for 2012 are based on increased voluntary participation in BrightStars related to new financial incentives and program supports available through Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge. Projections for 2013-2015 are based on mandatory participation in BrightStars for all State-regulated and State-funded early learning programs (including early childhood centers, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs, private preschools, center-based Preschool Special Education program, and licensed family child care).

Revised and updated standards for BrightStars will be completed in 2012 and rolled out in 2013. Programs currently participating in BrightStars will be given time to transition to the new standards by making any needed changes to keep their rating.

[Please indicate if baseline data are actual or estimated; describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information. Also, if applicable, describe in your narrative how programs participating in the current Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will be transitioned to the updated Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.]

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing 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.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target-end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: State Pre-K</i>	69	69	64%	92	64%	161	64%	230	64%	731	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ¹⁹	2,559*	515	20%	1,024	40%	1,535	60%	2,047	80%	2,559	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	3,796	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	2,106 in center-based programs	0	N/A	0	0%	1,053	50%	1,580	75%	2,106	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	108	0	N/A	54	50%	108	100%	108	100%	108	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program	7,940	244	3%	476	6%	794	10%	1,588	20%	2,382	30%
Other: Licensed early childhood centers	5,558	243	4%	333	6%	556	10%	1,111	20%	1,667	30%
Other: Licensed family child care homes	2,382	1	0%	24	1%	71	3%	119	5%	191	8%
<p><i>[Please list which tiers the State has included as "top tiers," indicate whether baseline data are actual or estimated; and describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information.]</i></p> <p><i>Top tiers for BrightStars are defined as Tiers 4-5. Baseline data are actual, based on data provided by BrightStars.</i></p>											

¹⁹ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing 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.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target-end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State Pre-K is funded by classroom. Classrooms are required to meet RIDE Preschool Approval standards. Programs operating State Pre-K classrooms are required to participate in BrightStars. BrightStars ratings reflect the quality of the overall program, including all classrooms and ages served.											
*Head Start and Early Head Start children are children enrolled in center-based programs (not-home based) – 39 sites.											
IDEA Part B, Section 619 children are children enrolled in center-based preschool special education programs operated by public schools – 55 sites.											
Title I children are children enrolled in Title I-funded preschool classrooms (6 classrooms).											
Children with High Needs in licensed early childhood centers and family child care represents the number of children receiving DHS Child Care Subsidy.											

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

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.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.**Current Status**

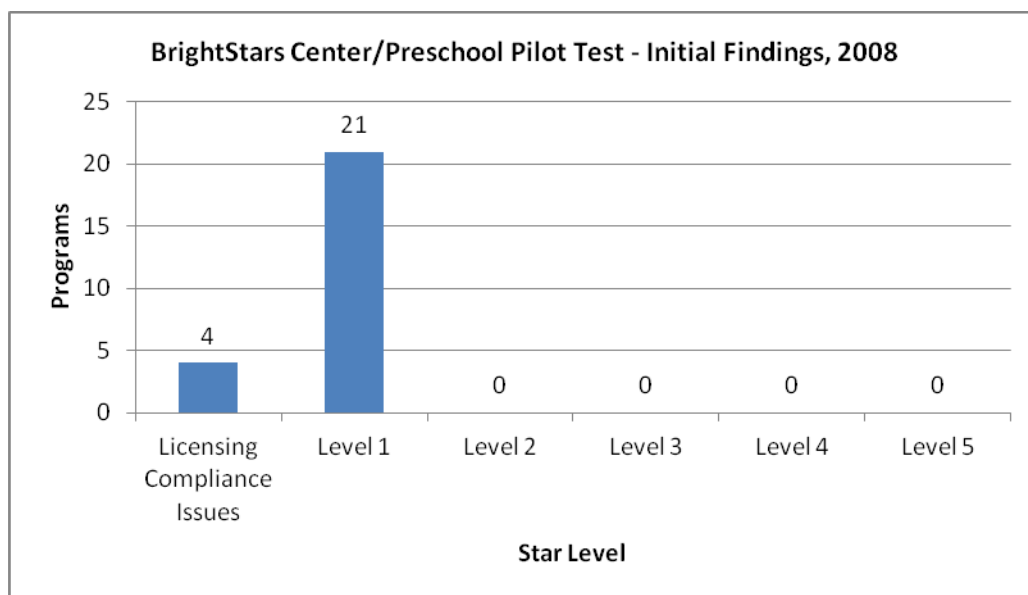
In 2008, Rhode Island leaders engaged the services of the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill to oversee a field test of the draft BrightStars Program Standards, to build the capacity of the local implementing agency (the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children or RIAEYC) to collect program-quality information fairly and accurately, and to conduct three baseline quality studies.

The pilot test used five types of data to measure standards for the 62 different aspects of program quality included in the draft framework:

- (1) review of existing program documents;
- (2) facility-observation checklist (developed by FPG and RIAEYC);
- (3) program-director questionnaire (developed by FPG and RIAEYC);
- (4) director- and teacher-qualifications form (developed by FPG and RIAEYC), including requesting college transcripts to verify director and teacher qualifications; and
- (5) licensing compliance data from the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

The Environmental Rating Scales were not used during the pilot test, as RIAEYC was working to first build local measurement capacity and to review and revise the structural standards. Environmental Rating Scales were used in the baseline studies conducted after the field test (see the summary of baseline study findings in section A1 of this application). The findings from the center and preschool field test of BrightStars standards indicated that the original draft framework, standards, and criteria did not work effectively to sort programs into meaningful quality levels. It is worth noting that BrightStars relies on a “building blocks” model for assigning a star rating. Within the building-blocks model, a program must meet *all* criteria for Level One to earn a 1-star rating. To earn a 2-star rating, a program must meet *all* criteria for Level One plus *all* criteria for Level Two. Using the building blocks model with the original framework, four programs were not eligible for a 1-star rating because they were not compliant with licensing standards. The remaining 21 programs in the pilot study earned a 1-star rating. It is also important to note that the pilot test was a test of the draft child-care center and preschool

framework, not of programs. As such, the findings were interpreted as limitations in the draft framework, not as assessment of the quality of individual programs.

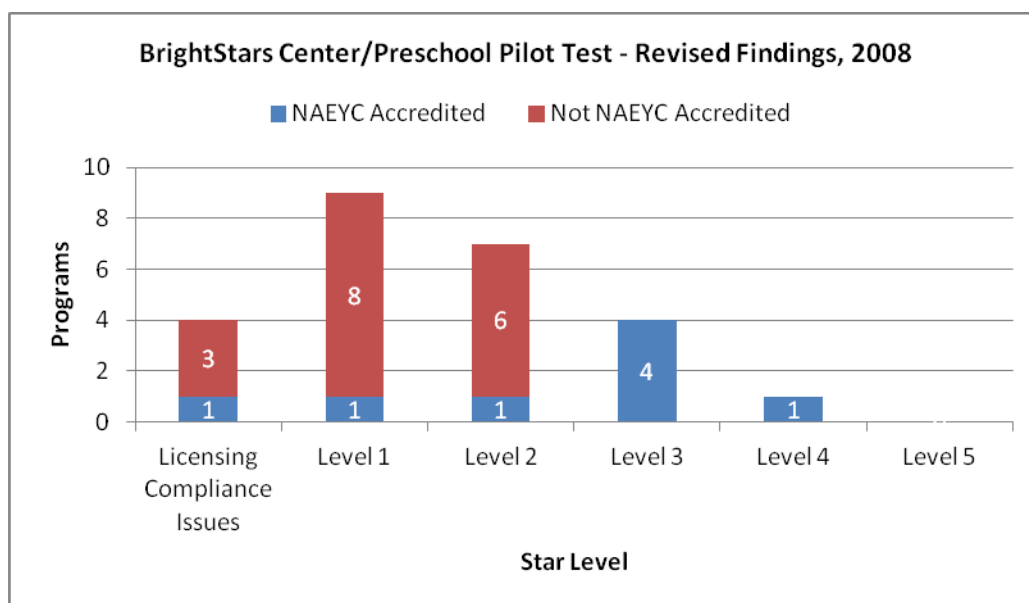


The FPG Child Development Center made three major recommendations to the BrightStars Steering Committee:

- **Reduce the number of criteria measured.** The pilot framework included more than 60 aspects of quality. Within a building-blocks model, such a large number of criteria makes it very difficult for programs to earn higher star ratings. It is also time-consuming for both BrightStars and programs to gather such an extensive amount of information. It was recommended that the framework standards and criteria be reduced and revised to reflect only those critically important, research-based aspects of quality that can be fairly and accurately measured.
- **Adjust the framework criteria.** Certain criteria were not met by any of the programs in the pilot, and some criteria were met by almost all programs. Some criteria were very difficult to measure. It was recommended that the BrightStars Steering Committee review the pilot data and adjust the framework to more accurately reflect a range of quality, as indicated by a range of star ratings.

- **Use the pilot data to test possible revisions to the framework.** Testing possible changes will enable BrightStars leadership to better understand the likely distribution of program ratings across the full range of levels and to inform decision-making in order to finalize the standards for launch.

After the findings and recommendations from the field test were reviewed, the BrightStars steering committee made some significant changes to the framework and reduced the number of standards and criteria, focusing on those criteria that could be fairly and accurately measured and that were strongly associated to improved child outcomes. Data from the pilot test were used to inform these revisions, with final criteria reflecting an improved distribution of quality ratings, with NAEYC-accredited programs (an indicator of program quality) clustered at the upper end of the range. The final 2009 BrightStars framework for centers and preschools includes 22 criteria measuring 9 program-quality standards: 1) child's daily experience; 2) teaching and learning; 3) curriculum and child assessment; 4) minimum staff-child ratio; 5) maximum group size; 6) family communication and involvement; 7) lead group-teacher qualifications; 8) center-director qualifications; and 9). program management. Data from the pilot test was used to inform these revisions, with final criteria reflecting an improved distribution of quality ratings, with NAEYC-accredited programs (an indicator of program quality) clustered at the upper end of the range.



Rhode Island’s High Quality Plan for Validating the effectiveness of BrightStars, the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Key Goals

Goal 1: Work with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of BrightStars to validate its effectiveness at differentiating the quality of programs and to compare children’s learning and development for those enrolled in lower-tier programs vs. higher-tier programs.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Rhode Island leaders will identify an independent evaluator to design and conduct a validation study of the re-designed and re-aligned BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System. The study would be conducted from September 2014 through June 2015, to allow time to get more programs into BrightStars and to finish collecting and analyzing the data before the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant period expires. The study will include a review of overall program quality and classroom observations conducted at lower-tier and higher-tier programs. It is anticipated that children’s learning and development will be tracked by comparing fall and spring data on a sample of children enrolled in preschool classrooms in lower-tier programs compared with higher-tier programs. Samples will need to be both comparable and large enough to compensate for the expected attrition of children during a school year. Children’s learning and development will be tracked using measures for social skills (such as the Social Skills Rating System) and language and literacy (such as the Peabody Picture/Vocabulary Test or the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement).

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Identify evaluator and design study	DHS/ BrightStars	RIDE, DCYF, DOH Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Rhode Island Early Learning Council		X		

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Conduct study (September 2014 - June 2015)	Evaluator	Evaluation committee			X	X
Analyze and release study findings	Evaluator	DHS/BrightStars Evaluation Committee				X

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

Ultimately, this plan will support Children with High Needs by providing valuable research data for the State and the nation about the effectiveness of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems to make a difference for children. Programs serving Children with High Needs will participate in the study, and the findings will be used to revise and improve the rating system and the supports for program-quality improvement.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

Due to limited resources for evaluation, we will most likely focus the evaluation on centers serving preschool-age children, although we will seek private-foundation resources to expand the validation study to include family child-care homes.

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

The 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

Note: The total available points for (C)(1) through (C)(4) = 60. The 60 available 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 in the Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points.

The applicant must address two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C).

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

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.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe

in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(1)(a) and (b):

- To the extent the State has implemented Early Learning and Development Standards that meet any of the elements in criteria (C)(1)(a) and (b), submit--
 - Proof of use by the types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State;
 - The State's Early Learning and Development Standards for:
 - Infants and toddlers
 - Preschoolers
 - Documentation that the standards are developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate for all children, including children with disabilities and developmental delays and English Learners;
 - Documentation that the standards address all Essential Domains of School Readiness and that they are of high-quality;
 - Documentation of the alignment between the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and the State's K-3 standards; and

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.**Current Status**

In 2000, in recognition that early care and education was being provided in a wide variety of settings and in programs governed by different regulations, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) and the R.I. Department of Human Services (DHS) developed a partnership and an agreement to develop early childhood standards for Rhode Island to define what children should know, understand, and be able to do. The *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* for preschool-age children were completed in 2003, and they reflect a shared understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in eight domains: Approaches to Learning, Language Development and Communication, Literacy, Mathematics, Social-Emotional Development, Science, Physical Health and Development, and Creativity. A copy of the standards for preschoolers is in Appendix 6– *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for Preschoolers*.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards were initially developed by an Early Childhood Task Force charged with creating a document based on current education research and practice and reflective of the priorities of practitioners in Rhode Island. Task Force members included representatives of early care and education programs, Head Start, the public schools, family child-care home programs, higher education, and parents. A Steering Committee was also formed, consisting of the RIDE, DHS, the R.I. Department of Health, and the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); along with the Head Start State Collaboration Project, the University of Rhode Island, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, to guide the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project in the work of establishing a set of expectations for preschool children as they exited preschool programs to enter kindergarten. During the development of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, alignment with the Kindergarten Grade Level Expectations was a criterion for the standards. Currently, the academic standards for children in grades kindergarten through grade 3 (K-3), are located in:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language, Arts & Literacy and History/Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects (“Literacy in the Content Areas”) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics. A full transition to aligning instruction with the Common Core Standards in the K-3 grades is anticipated by

the year 2014-15. More information on the timeline for the transition to the Common Core State Standards can be found in Appendix 21 – *Common Core Transition Timeline*.

- Rhode Island's grade-span expectations in the areas of science, engineering and technology, civics and government and Historical Perspectives, and fine arts, beginning with kindergarten.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards were piloted by a partnership of early childhood providers in five communities in order to ensure that the Learning Goals and Expectations were appropriate for the target preschool population. A series of professional-development sessions and mentoring sessions was provided to these communities to support the use of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards in their programs. Feedback from the pilot participants was used to refine the standards and to design more extensive professional development, which would be expanded statewide. In partnership with DHS and under RIDE leadership, a focused effort was implemented to ensure: 1) that the early learning workforce understood the standards and how to use them in classrooms and programs, and 2) that state systems and other sets of standards were aligned with the use of early learning standards. The R.I. Department of Education developed a system for supporting early childhood professionals serving the 3- to 5-year-old population to help them understand and implement the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards in their programs. This system has served 2,062 early childhood professionals since its inception in 2002. More recently, this system has been enhanced through the development of a technical-assistance initiative for programs and through engagement opportunities for families. This system includes:

- four levels of professional development that meet the diverse needs of professionals who hold different positions and are at different places in their career;
- partnership with the University of Rhode Island so that participants have an option of earning college credit;
- a cadre of highly skilled early childhood experts who implement training-course content that is rigorous, competency-based, and updated on a yearly basis in response to research and changes in the field;

- a strong monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that courses are implemented with fidelity to the original training content and that participants achieve learning outcomes;
- individualized technical assistance from expert consultants designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice; and,
- opportunities to engage families in their child’s learning and development in meaningful, culturally relevant, and cost-effective ways through the use of Fun Family Activity Cards and Trainings.

An analysis of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards database reveals that approximately 1,745 individuals have completed Early Learning Standards training. An additional 317 participants are currently enrolled in training. Of that number, approximately 68 percent of participants identified their place of employment as “child care,” which includes both center-based and family child care, 15 percent as “public school,” and 15 percent as “Head Start.” Approximately 38 percent of participants identified the location of their place of employment to be one of the six Rhode Island communities that serve the greatest number of Children with High Needs: Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Newport, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

- More information on the array of existing RI Early Learning Standards professional development opportunities can be found in Appendix 22 – *Current RI Early Learning Standards Professional Development Opportunities*.
- More information on the RI Early Learning Standards Fun Family Activities Cards and Parent Training can be found in Appendix 23 – *RI Early Learning Standards Fun Family Activities Cards and Parent Training*.
- More information on the reach of the RI Early Learning Standards professional development can be found in Appendix 24 – *Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Training Data*.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards work influenced the development of the BrightStars quality-rating system program standards and is reflected in the Rhode Island Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards, creating unified systems with common definitions of quality. BrightStars requires Rhode Island Early Learning Standards

training certificates as evidence of teacher and administrator qualifications, and BrightStars reviews curriculum to ensure alignment with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The Rhode Island Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards call for the alignment of curriculum, child assessment, and family engagement with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and it requires Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training certificates as evidence of teacher and administrator qualifications. Use of the RI Early Learning Standards has also been integrated into the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Rhode Island has developed a plan for creating or adopting a preexisting set of State standards for infants and toddlers. This plan is described in the scope of work agreement between the R.I. Department of Human Services and the R.I. Department of Education for the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project and in the strategic plan developed for the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. The plan will be supported with State stimulus funds awarded to the Early Learning Council. Those initial plans have been revisited and enhanced in response to the opportunities presented by the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge.

Rhode Island's High-Quality Plan to Develop and Use Statewide, High-Quality Early Learning and Development Standards

Key Goals

Goal 1: Update and revise the existing Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for preschoolers.

Goal 2: Develop a set of Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers.

Goal 3: Use statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards to improve program practice.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

The *Developing Early Learning Standards* plan, described here, represents Rhode Island's High Quality Plan to develop high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Rhode Island defines high-quality to mean: 1) efficient, comprehensive; reflective of the research that shows the standard relates to child outcomes; culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate; and evidence-based; 2) clear, understandable, and consistent so that educators, parents, and the general public know what they need to do to support children; 3) aligned horizontally with the Head Start Child Outcomes

Framework, State-approved curricula, and child assessments; and 4) aligned vertically with K-3 Common Core standards in mathematics and literacy. Rhode Island's plan is designed to meet these high measures of quality.

To begin the process of developing the standards for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, a broad-based Early Learning Standards Advisory Team will be convened to:

- identify existing resources to inform early learning standards development; and
- finalize and oversee a plan for the Early Learning Standards development.

This Advisory Team will include infant, toddler, preschool, and kindergarten teachers; special-education personnel (particularly Early Intervention providers); program administrators; parents; individuals with knowledge of English Learners and Children with High Needs; Early Head Start and Head Start staff, and representatives from higher education.

A national expert will be engaged as a research consultant to review the identified resources, including but not limited to the following: existing Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, Common Core State Standards, Teaching Strategies GOLD learning objectives, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, recommendations from nationally recognized experts with knowledge of English Learners and of children with disabilities, early learning standards for infants and toddlers of other states, publications from the National Research Council, and publications from national professional associations regarding early learning standards. The consultant will then use these resources to produce a detailed crosswalk and analysis in each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, as compared with the high-quality criteria described above.

Once the detailed crosswalk and analysis is complete, a Standards Development Work Teams in each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness will be formed to develop recommended Early Learning and Development Standards for infants, toddlers, and strengthen the standards for preschoolers. Broad-based community feedback on the recommended standards will be gathered through a series of statewide public forums targeting a wide range of stakeholders. Following the community forums, each of the Standards Development Work Teams will reconvene to review the community feedback and to make final revisions. The final step will be to design, publish, and distribute the standards.

This plan also includes efforts to ensure the widespread use of the Early Learning and Development Standards. Rhode Island's key activities are to: 1) ensure that revised program

standards and Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks incorporate the new Early Learning and Development Standards; 2) develop a process to approve curriculum resources aligned with the new standards; 3) ensure that assessment instruments being developed or identified align with the new Early Learning and Development Standards; 4) develop professional-development and technical-assistance opportunities to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards; and 5) expand the capacity to provide information on the new Early Learning and Development Standards to families. The key activities in this plan build upon the significant resources Rhode Island has developed to support the use of the existing Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, including the comprehensive array of Rhode Island Early Learning Standards professional-development opportunities and the Fun Family Activities Cards and the Fun Family Activities Parent Training. Additionally, an expansion of the existing process to train, support, and certify Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Certified Trainers and Fun Family Activities Parent Training facilitators supports the expanded delivery of the professional development proposed in this application while ensuring implementation of the training with fidelity to the content.

Systems Alignment

Rhode Island will incorporate the new Early Learning and Development Standards into program standards, the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System, and the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks. The primary goal is to ensure that there is clear reference to the new Early Learning and Development Standards as the work on the program standards revisions and the development of Workforce Knowledge and Competencies progresses. At this time, the BrightStars quality-rating system addresses the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for 3- to 5-year-olds. As this system is revised as proposed in Section (B)(1), attention will be paid to integrating information on standards for infants and toddlers.

Aligned Curricula

Rhode Island will develop a process for reviewing and approving published curriculum resources to ensure that they are aligned with the Early Learning and Development Standards, and will review and adapt processes that exist in other States, such as North Carolina, to accomplish this. There is a strong desire on the part of early learning and development providers

to have a resource that helps them to choose appropriate curricula for their population and adapt it to meet the needs of the children in their programs. An understanding of curriculum choices and implementation of various curricula will be part of the ongoing professional development system. Attention will be paid to cultural and linguistic competence and using the child assessment data at the program level in order to inform curriculum choice and classroom environment and instruction.

Aligned Assessments

Rhode Island recognizes that the implementation of a comprehensive assessment system includes the use of formative assessments and of a kindergarten-entry assessment that are aligned with the new Early Learning and Development Standards. Therefore, the supports that are developed relative to formative assessments and the implementation of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment must be based on the new standards. The formative-assessment tool now used by Rhode Island, Teaching Strategies GOLD, is research-based, reliable, valid, and aligned with the current learning standards. More information on the research foundations of Teaching Strategies GOLD can be found in Appendix 25 –*Research Foundation: Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System*. More information on the technical qualities of Teaching Strategies GOLD can be found in Appendix 26 –*Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System – Technical Summary*. Given the extensive research supporting the development of this assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD will be used as a key resource in the development of the new Early Learning and Development Standards. The development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment will begin after the new Early Learning and Development Standards are complete, in order to ensure alignment between and among systems.

Professional Development

By building on existing expertise and models in Rhode Island, training and technical assistance will be intentionally designed to meet the needs of programs, to be informed by data, and to share research-based training content. This research-based approach directly impacts classroom practice, resulting in stronger implementation of recommended practices regarding what children need to know and be able to do to succeed in kindergarten. New professional-development and technical-assistance opportunities will be designed to support the use of the

standards in all sectors of the early care and education systems. This process will include the development of new training and technical-assistance opportunities, as appropriate for professionals with different experience levels and varying roles, to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards in infant and toddler classrooms.

Existing training and technical assistance will also be revised to incorporate new information and approaches. The existing Train the Trainer process will be revised and expanded to include the certification of trainers for infant and toddler professional-development opportunities and to reflect the revised Early Learning and Development Standards. Annual training opportunities will be conducted to expand statewide training capacity and to infuse this knowledge throughout the early care and education communities. Special attention will be paid to ensuring there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of early learning programs in Rhode Island's core cities, where the majority of Children with High Needs reside. The newly developed infant and toddler professional development opportunities will be piloted in 2013-14, and final revisions will be made to the training content.

Family Engagement

The Fun Family Activity cards and Parent Training are key activities planned to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards by families. New Fun Family Activity Cards, based on the new Standards, will be developed with input from parent groups and parents of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. These cards will be printed and distributed and made available for download on the R.I. Department of Education web site. Additionally, new Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards with infants and toddlers will be developed. The Fun Family Activities Train the Trainer process will be revised and expanded to include the certification of facilitators for Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The revised Fun Family Activity Train the Trainers sessions will then be conducted statewide for a variety of groups, including but not limited to Early Head Start/Head Start, public schools, family child care providers, child care centers, Parents As Teachers, public libraries, and the Children's Museum. The new Fun Family Parent Activity Training sessions will then be piloted in communities serving high-need children to ensure that

the training content is appropriate for our economically, culturally, and linguistically diverse families. Final revisions to training content will be made upon completion of the pilot sessions.

The Fun Activities for Families has been a highly-valued strategy for parents to become engaged in working with their children across the domains of child development and has been consistently used by programs to be sure that parents understand what happens in terms of learning and development when their child participates in an early learning program. The Fun Activities for Families is used to systemically engage families and providers as working partners in supporting the early learning of children.

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

Individuals with knowledge of Children with High Needs, such as early childhood professionals working in the core cities, the Rhode Island Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and early childhood special educators, will be recruited to serve on the Early Learning Standards Advisory Team and the Standards Development Work Teams to ensure that the final Early Learning and Development Standards support the learning and development of Children with High Needs. Additionally, communities serving large numbers of Children with High Needs will be prioritized for professional-development opportunities and parent trainings supported by this grant. Use of Early Learning Standards enables parents, providers, and administrators to share a common understanding of child development and to inform adult-child interactions in order to improve outcomes for children.

How this Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

Professional development opportunities will be designed to reach all sectors of the early care and learning workforce, as they do at this time. Technology will allow for increased and improved participation by a range of providers, especially family child care providers who have asked for more online training opportunities.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Convene a broad-based Early Learning Standards Advisory Team.	RIDE		X			
Engage a national expert as a research consultant to review the identified resources and develop a detailed crosswalk.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team	X			
Convene Standards Development Work Teams in each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness to review the detailed crosswalk and analysis and to develop recommended Early Learning and Development Standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team	X			
Seek broad-based community feedback on the recommended standards through a series of public forums.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team, Standards Development Work Teams	X			
Reconvene Standards Development Work Teams in each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness to review the community feedback and to make final revisions.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team Standards Development Work Teams	X			

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Design, publish, and distribute the final standards.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team	X			
Incorporate the new Early Learning and Development Standards into existing program standards and Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF Executive Office of Health and Human Services Head Start Collaboration Office		X		
Develop a process to approve curriculum resources aligned with the Early Learning and Development Standards.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHHS Head Start Collaboration Office Early Learning Standards Advisory Team		X		
Convene a Curricula Review Team and review the initial list of nationally recognized curricula in use in the State and develop and post information regarding the aligned curricula identified.	RIDE	DHS, DOH, DCYF EOHH Head Start Collaboration Office Curricula Review Team		X		
Ensure that Teaching Strategies GOLD continues to align with the new Early Learning and Development Standards.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team, Standards Development Work Teams		X		

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Develop new professional development and technical assistance opportunities to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards in infant and toddler classrooms.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team, Standards Development Work Teams		X		
Revise existing professional-development opportunities to reflect the Early Learning and Development Standards.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team		X		
Revise and expand the existing Train the Trainer process to include the certification of trainers for infant and toddler professional-development opportunities and to reflect the revised Early Learning and Development Standards.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team		X		
Train cohorts of trainers to support trainings for infant toddler and preschool standards training.	RI Department of Education			X	X	X
Pilot new infant and toddler professional-development opportunities and make final revisions to training content.	RI Department of Education	Early Learning and Development Standards Trainers, Early Learning Standards Advisory Team		X		

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Implement revised professional-development opportunities to support Early Learning and Development Standards to preschool Educators.	RI Department of Education	Early Learning and Development Standards Trainers		X	X	
Develop new Fun Family Activity Cards based on the new Early Learning and Development Standards.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team, Standards Development Work Teams		X		
Develop new Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards with infants and toddlers.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team			X	
Revise existing Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities to support the use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards with preschoolers.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team			X	
Revise and expand the existing Fun Family Activities Train the Trainer process to include the certification of facilitators Fun Family Activity	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human			X	

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Parent Training opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.		Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; Early Learning Standards Advisory Team				
Conduct Train the Trainers sessions statewide for a variety of groups, including, but not limited to: Head Start, public schools, Parents As Teachers, public libraries, the Children's Museum.	RI Department of Education	Fun Family Activities Parent Training Facilitators			X	
Pilot new Fun Family Parent Activity Training sessions statewide and make final revisions to training content.	RI Department of Education	Fun Family Activities Parent Training Facilitators				X

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

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

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

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.**Current Status**

Rhode Island has a strong foundation upon which to build a statewide Comprehensive Assessment system, consisting of regular access to developmental screening, use of formative assessments, measures of environmental quality, and measures of the quality of teacher-child interactions. Rhode Island has a strong infrastructure for the developmental screening of children birth through age 3 in pediatric primary-care settings. In 2008, Rhode Island completed revisions to the Early Periodic Screening and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule, making it consistent with the American Academy of Pediatric recommendations. Screening tests for children ages birth through 3 are now administered regularly at the 9-, 18-, and 30-month visits. Because 97.3 percent of children in Rhode Island have access to health insurance, we have effectively established a system where the majority of infants and toddlers receive regular developmental screening. Through Watch Me Grow RI, a program supported by the R.I. Department of Health, primary-care providers and their staff receive on-site technical assistance in order to implement a system of regular developmental screening consistent with the EPSDT schedule, using standardized tools. Primary-care providers are also supported to report screening data and ensure that families receive appropriate follow-up care. This system helps to ensure that problems related to learning and development are identified as early as possible so that children's needs can be addressed. The practices supported by Watch Me Grow are consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for enhanced developmental screening. This system, Watch Me Grow, is currently being further enhanced by encouraging providers to include a specific social/emotional health screening. More information on Watch Me Grow can be found in Appendix 27 – *Early Childhood Screening (Watch Me Grow Rhode Island) Overview*.

For children ages 3 through 5, developmental screening is universally available through each local school district's Child Outreach screening program. The Child Outreach screening program is designed to annually screen all children, ages 3 to 5. The screenings are conducted by local school districts in the areas of: vision, hearing, speech/language skills, social/emotional development, and general development (including, but not limited to, gross and fine motor skills, language, and cognition), using valid and reliable screening instruments. Child Outreach screening serves as a critical statewide system to identify children who might have special needs

or who might be at risk for a learning problem and who could benefit from intervention, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rhode Island Special Education Regulations. Rhode Island's goal is to screen 80 percent of 3-5 year olds. This percentage continues to rise. In 2010, approximately 63 percent of the 3- 5-year-old population was screened, with some districts reaching higher percentages than others.

From its inception, the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project has worked to ensure that children are making progress on each of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards learning objectives and that children enter kindergarten with a strong foundation for learning. A core focus of Rhode Island Early Learning Standards professional development is the alignment of child assessment practices with the RIELS learning goals, for the purpose of informing curriculum development. In 2005, the RIDE Office of Special Education Programs began requiring early childhood special-education programs to report on child outcomes. Consequently, Rhode Island selected the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum as the State assessment tool because of its strong alignment with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and Rhode Island now uses the recently revised version, Teaching Strategies GOLD, to assess child outcomes. As of the 2010-11 school year, 100 percent of Rhode Island school districts use Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess the progress of children with disabilities.

In 2009-10, Rhode Island began investing state funds to implement the State's vision for high-quality pre-kindergarten. The Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classrooms are required to implement a curriculum aligned with the RIELS and to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system to measure child outcomes. Combined, approximately 3,000 children are being assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD in the current school year.

In addition to strong investments focused on assessing children's learning and development, Rhode Island has made considerable investments in adopting a variety of reliable assessments to measure the quality of the learning environments to support program-quality improvement and to ensure that children have access to early learning experiences that result in positive child outcomes. These assessments include:

- the Environmental Rating Scales;
- the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System;
- the Preschool Rating Instrument for Science and Mathematics; and

- the Classroom Assessment of Supports for Emergent Bilingual Acquisition.

As described in B(3), BrightStars, the State's quality-rating and improvement system for child care, uses the Environmental Ratings Scales to assess the quality of early childhood environments applying for a star rating. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R) is also used to assess the quality of preschool and kindergarten classrooms seeking R.I. Department of Education approval as a Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program. Staff conducting observations for both BrightStars and the R.I. Department of Education have been trained to reliability by the authors of the instruments.

In addition to assessing the quality of classroom environments, Rhode Island uses measures of teacher-child interactions as another strategy to ensure that effective, intentional teacher-child interactions exist in classrooms to support positive learning outcomes. Like ECERS-R, the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System, or CLASS, (Hamre, B. K., Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Lacasle-Crouch, J., & La Paro, K. M., 2006) is used in both BrightStars and as part of the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program approval process. The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards technical-assistance initiative, managed by the R.I. Department of Education, uses the CLASS as a tool to strategically support program improvement in. This process includes annual training to support a cohort of CLASS observers to retain their reliability and to support additional individuals to achieve CLASS reliability. At this time, approximately fifty (50) individuals have achieved CLASS reliability as a result of this effort.

In 2009, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), through funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, began studying the impacts on children from all income levels of the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Demonstration Project. As part of this study, NIEER conducted a variety of child assessments and assessments of program quality. Two of the program-quality measures used focused on teacher-child interactions in key instructional areas, namely, language and literacy, mathematics, and science. The *Preschool Rating Instrument for Science and Mathematics* (PRISM; Boyd-Garcia, Brenneman, Frede, & Weber, 2010) was used to assess the classroom environment and the teaching strategies in relation to mathematics and science in the preschool classroom. The mathematic concepts addressed by the PRISM are based on the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National

Association for the Education of Young Children relevant for preschool-aged children. The science items in the PRISM reflect what current literature suggests are the best ways to support preschool children's science learning as well as on the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework domain elements for science. PRISM captures the extent to which best practices are evident to support and encourage children's understanding of mathematic and scientific concepts and processes in the classroom.

The *Classroom Assessment of Supports for Emergent Bilingual Acquisition* (CASEBA; Freedson, Figueras-Daniel, & Frede, 2010) was used to assess the degree to which preschool teachers and classrooms provide support for language and literacy development in preschool, and more specifically for whole-child development in Dual Language Learners (DLL). The CASEBA items are based on what research indicates about effective language and emergent literacy supports for 3- to 5-year-old children who speak a language other than English at home and who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language, as well as for children who are learning only one language.

The use of PRISM and CASEBA encouraged Pre-Kindergarten Program teachers to reflect on their intentional teaching and to develop a more sophisticated understanding of meaningful instruction in these important content areas. The current investments made by the State to develop a comprehensive assessment system – including regular access to developmental screening, formative assessment aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and reliable methods of assessing the quality of the classroom environment and of teacher-child interactions – provide a strong foundation for the activities outlined below.

Rhode Island's High Quality Plan for Supporting Effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

Key Goals

Goal 1: Provide Professional Development Opportunities to Develop Reliability in Child Assessment and to Support the Use of Assessment Data to Inform Practice

Goal 2: Expand the Use of Teaching Strategies GOLD in Early Learning Programs

Goal 3: Increase Developmental Screening Rates to Identify Children with High Needs

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

The project titled *Comprehensive Assessment* described here represents Rhode Island's High-Quality Plan to develop and provide professional development to support more widespread use of the Comprehensive Assessment System described above and to align and integrate assessments statewide so as to avoid duplication. Rhode Island's key activities are to: 1) develop and implement a variety of professional-development opportunities aligned with Rhode Island's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks to support improved knowledge and competencies in early childhood assessment for Early Childhood Educators; 2) support the use of common, developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable screening instruments statewide; 3) increase the number of children ages birth through 5 who are regularly screened; 4) increase access to follow-up services in urban communities for children to support the learning and development of children with high needs; 5) use Teaching Strategies GOLD in all programs receiving State or federal education funding (IDEA Part C and B, State Pre-Kindergarten, Title I); and 6) incentivize the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD for private programs by incorporating these programs under the State license and State rate and by incorporating the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD into the upper levels of the Tiered QRIS for all programs. The key activities to support these goals, the associated timelines, and the responsibilities are detailed below.

Professional Development

The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Framework developed for Rhode Island Teacher and Teacher Assistants includes a domain focused on child assessment, "Observation and Assessment." The sub-categories included in this domain include:

- a. Knowledge of Early Childhood Assessment
- b. Conducting Developmentally Appropriate Authentic Assessments
- c. Conducting Formal Assessments
- d. Practicing Responsible Assessment
- e. Gathering Assessment Information from Multiple Sources Using a Variety of Methods
- f. Documenting Assessment Information

- g. Using Assessment Information in Curriculum Planning
- h. Communicating Assessment Information

The competencies outlined specifically address different purposes for and uses of child-assessment information in classrooms; selecting assessment systems; using approaches that are appropriate for target populations and purposes; using formative child-assessment practices, including using appropriate authentic assessment strategies and planning for ongoing classroom assessment; using child-assessment data to improve instruction in the classroom; and understanding and using standardized child-assessment data. Rhode Island does not currently have a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for program administrators and educational leaders, but plans to develop one (see Section D1 for details on the State's plan). At a minimum, the competencies related to comprehensive-assessment systems would address the different purposes and uses of child-assessment information at a program level; selecting assessment systems and approaches that are appropriate for target populations and purposes; interpreting and understanding classroom-quality measures and using that information to improve classroom quality; supporting effective, formative child-assessment practices in classrooms; and including using appropriate authentic assessment strategies and planning for ongoing classroom assessment. These professional-development opportunities will be developed and made widely available at no cost during the term of the grant.

Developmental Screening

More Children with High Needs will be identified earlier and connected with resources to ensure that their learning and development proceeds on a positive trajectory by increasing the capacity of primary-care providers to increase developmental screening rates and to include social and emotional screenings using the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social and Emotional*. The R.I. Department of Health public-health database, KIDSNET, is being modified to track developmental screening data from both primary-care providers and Child Outreach screening programs. Rhode Island will train providers to enter developmental-screening data to ensure that these data can be used to accurately calculate the number of children being screened and to identify the characteristics of those who are not, in order to more effectively develop plans to increase screening rates. Once data are entered into KIDSNET, mechanisms to use the

database to increase the numbers of children from birth to 5 years old who receive developmental screening will be developed, including the development of a targeted public awareness campaign to provide information on the value and availability of screening to hard-to-reach populations.

Rhode Island currently lacks capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate Child Outreach screening to young English learners statewide. The development of common, appropriate screening practices and procedures for this population is an important first step in ensuring that children are connected to appropriate resources to promote their learning and development. Rhode Island will prioritize training on practices and procedures for screening teams serving communities with concentrations of Children with High Needs. We will also work with the community to identify strategies to increase the screening rates among young English learners.

In addition to supporting increased rates of developmental screening, a pool of funds has been designated to support the availability of evidence-based interventions to engage primary health care providers in evidence-based strategies to engage families in the literacy and social-emotional development of their children.

Formative Assessment

Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) offers significant potential for use as a common, statewide formative assessment tool. It has a solid research foundation and has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure for assessing children ages birth through five, including children with disabilities and English learners. In addition to the strong technical quality of the assessment, the TSG system allows for the seamless transfer of child-assessment data between classrooms and programs. It allows teachers from multiple programs to contribute to the same assessment portfolio, thereby reducing duplicative efforts. These features provide significant potential to increase shared knowledge of children's abilities among multiple providers involved with the same child in different roles – thereby strengthening what all involved know about that child, as well as increasing the potential to improve the transition of children from one program to the next. TSG is already used by all preschool special-education classrooms and State-funded pre-kindergarten classrooms.

The R.I. Department of Education will require all preschool programs funded with Title I to use TSG as its formative-assessment measure. The R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services has committed to using TSG for children being served by its Early Intervention programs. These two systems will be incorporated under the R.I. Department of Education master license, affording them the reduced rate offered to the State. This same arrangement will be used to incentivize the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD for Head Start and private early Learning and Development programs. Currently, a number of Head Start programs have adopted the TSG system, setting the stage for transitions between programs, sharing of information as children enter kindergarten, and easily incorporating Head Start into a statewide system. Finally, the upper levels of the new Tiered QRIS for all programs will be revised to incorporate the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD. The R.I. Department of Education will develop a Memorandum of Understanding and a set of policies and procedures addressing the sharing, transfer, and use of child-assessment data in Teaching Strategies GOLD by the State and by multiple programs attended by the same child.

Additionally, new professional-development and technical-assistance opportunities will be developed to support the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD by IDEA Part C (Early Intervention) providers, by Head Start providers and by private early childhood programs that choose to use the TSG assessment under the State license, including achieving status as a reliable observer of child behavior. Finally, technological supports to facilitate seamless, effective child-assessment data entry that allows teachers to collect and enter child-observation data without redundancy of effort will be identified and used to incentivize reliable use of the Teaching Strategies GOLD system.

Classroom Quality Data

Rhode Island has a strong foundation in place regarding the use of measures of classroom quality; however, our plans to include all programs in the new tiered quality-rating and improvement system will require increased capacity to conduct these classroom quality assessments. To support this increased need, an expanded pool of assessors will be identified and trained to achieve reliability on the standardized classroom quality assessments used by the State. Policies and procedures to address the sharing, transfer, and use of classroom-quality data

within the State's Tiered Quality rating and Improvement System will be developed to reduce duplication of assessment between the multiple entities monitoring classroom quality.

Additionally, classroom-assessment tools, such as the CASEBA and PRISM, which dig deeper into adult-child interactions and which support stronger outcomes in science, mathematics and for English Language Learners, will be incorporated into the tiered quality-rating system. As described previously, professional development for teachers, program administrators, and education leaders to support understanding of each of these instruments and how to use the assessment results for program improvement will be developed and implemented.

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

Supports to Children with High Needs are prioritized in all the initiatives focused on increasing developmental screening rates and specifically in providing follow-up to children without access to early learning and development programs and for whom there are concerns about their learning and development. Children with High Needs will also be better supported if information about what they know and are able to do is as robust as possible and if this information comes from a variety of perspectives. Access to shared data leads to better-coordinated and more-effective services and to more-seamless transitions for Children with High Needs. Programs serving Children with High Needs, including IDEA Part C and B and Title I, have committed to using TSG. As described in Section B, programs serving Children with High Needs are prioritized for program improvement using identified, standardized measures of classroom quality.

Support for evidence-based strategies to promote early literacy and healthy child development in pediatric primary health care settings will provide exposure to best practices for literacy and healthy child development for families with children with high needs including low income children, children who are English learners, children with disabilities, and children in foster care.

How this Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

All learning and development programs can use TSG and can benefit from each of the standardized classroom assessments.

Timeline

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Develop and implement professional-development opportunities that address the different purposes and uses of assessment information in classrooms and selecting assessment systems and approaches that are appropriate for target populations and purposes.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services RI Department of Health Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement professional-development opportunities that address the different purposes and uses of assessment information at the <i>program</i> level and selecting assessment systems and approaches that are appropriate for target populations and purposes.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts		X	X	X
Develop and implement professional-development opportunities that address formative child assessment practices, including using appropriate authentic assessment strategies and planning for ongoing assessment.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement professional-development opportunities that address using assessment data to improve instruction at the program and classroom levels.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement a coordinated set of professional-development opportunities that	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health;		X	X	X

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
address interpreting and understanding classroom-quality measures and use that information to improve classroom quality.		Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts				
Develop and implement a coordinated set of professional-development opportunities that address understanding and use standardized assessment data.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; early childhood assessment experts	X	X	X	X
Modify the R.I Department of Health child-health database, KIDSNET, to track developmental screening data. Use the database to develop strategies to increase the numbers of children birth to 5 years old who receive developmental screening.	RI Department of Health	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Education; Head Start Collaboration Office	X			
Develop and provide training for providers to enter developmental screening data accurately.	RI Department of Health			X	X	X
Train regional ELL screening teams to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate Child Outreach screening to young English Learners.	RI Department of Education		X	X	X	X
Create a public-awareness campaign regarding the importance of regular developmental screening for children between birth and 5 years old and regarding how to access screening.	RI Departments of Education and Health	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; Head Start Collaboration Office		X	X	X

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Incentivize the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD for Head Start and private Early Learning and Development programs by incorporating them under the State license and affording them the State rate.	RI Department of Education	Head Start Collaboration Office	X	X	X	X
Revise State policy to require Title I-funded programs to use Teaching Strategies GOLD.	RI Department of Education		X			
Revise the upper levels of the Tiered QRIS for all programs to incorporate the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD.	RI Department of Human Services	RI Department of Education; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office	X			
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding and policies and procedures addressing the sharing, transfer, and use of child-assessment data in Teaching Strategies GOLD by the State and by multiple programs attended by the same child.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office	X			
Develop and implement a coordinated set of professional-development opportunities that address using Teaching Strategies GOLD system and achieving reliability status.	RI Department of Education			X	X	X
Develop new professional-development and technical-	Executive Office of Health	RI Department of Education;	X	X	X	X

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
assistance opportunities to support the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD by IDEA Part C (Early Intervention) providers.	and Human Services	Part C providers				
Identify and invest in technological supports to facilitate seamless, effective child-assessment data entry that allows teachers to collect and enter child-observation data without redundancy of effort.	RI Department of Education			X	X	X
Incorporate classroom-assessment tools, such as the CASEBA and PRISM, which dig deeper into adult-child interactions and support stronger outcomes in science and mathematics and for English Language Learners into professional-development system and program-quality assessments.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Education; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office			X	
Identify and train a pool of assessors to achieve reliability on standardized classroom-quality assessments.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office	X	X	X	X

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available 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 in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

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.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (D)(1):

- To the extent the State has developed a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that meets the elements in criterion (D)(1), submit:
 - The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
 - Documentation that the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework addresses the elements outlined in the definition of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in Definitions (section III) and is designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.**Current Status**

In 2001, Rhode Island began the work to develop a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for Rhode Island Early Childhood Educators. The effort had broad representation from all areas of early care and education (ECE) and youth development (YD) and resulted in the June 2003 draft version of Rhode Island's Core Competencies. In the fall of 2007, a second committee was convened by the R.I. Department of Human Services to revise the June 2003 draft in light of changes in the field, such as new research, new regulations, new NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice guidelines, and ongoing development of State initiatives, such as the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards (RIELS) and BrightStars. The 2007 committee was made up of major stakeholders representing the R.I. Department of Education; the R.I. Department of Human Services; the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families; the R.I. Department of Health; higher education, early care and education providers including center-based and family child care representatives; BrightStars; and the afterschool and youth-development field. This group made several significant design changes to the original document to allow greater specificity regarding what professionals should know and be able to do in relation to their role and to the type of program within which they work. The updates and improvements include:

- separate competencies for center-based, family child-care, and school-age workforces;
- separate competencies for teachers, teacher assistants, education coordinators, and administrators;
- shifting the lattice from six levels to four; and
- aligning the competencies with Bloom's Taxonomy

By developing separate but related sets of competencies, Rhode Island now has a set of workforce knowledge and competencies that addresses professionals who expand their knowledge and competencies while remaining in a specific role as well as those professionals who transition to new roles as their career progresses.

In 2010, under R.I. Department of Education leadership, a new work team was formed made up of State agency leaders from the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE); the R.I.

Department of Human Services (DHS); the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); professional-development providers; higher-education representatives from each State college; and early care and education providers to complete the work started by the 2007 workgroup. The process for developing Rhode Island's evidence-based competencies involved tapping the knowledge of the content experts serving on the workgroup and a review of key resources such as:

- accreditation standards from the National Association for the Education of Young Children;
- R.I. Department of Education certification regulations;
- Head Start Performance Standards;
- Child-care licensing regulations;
- preschool standards and guidelines; and
- competencies identified by other States.

The draft Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers were completed and presented for widespread review and input from July through September 2011. Nine feedback sessions were conducted: four sessions for teachers, two sessions for program administrators, one session for professional-development providers, one session for higher education, and one session for State-systems staff, plus a survey link was widely circulated to accept feedback from individuals who could not attend one of the scheduled sessions. Feedback was structured around the following questions:

- Does the document make sense to you?
- In your role as a _____, how useful is the teacher core competencies document right now and how could it be more useful?
Will you be able to use it to help you _____?
- Are there edits you would recommend in terms of how the various levels are defined?
What suggestions do you have to make it a more user friendly tool/document?
- Is each domain addressed comprehensively? If not, what are the gaps?
- What other feedback do you have?

The feedback from these sessions was reviewed by the development team in September 2011, and final revisions were completed. The draft Core Competencies for Early Childhood

Teacher Assistants was completed in September and will be presented for widespread review and input during the fall of 2011. Final competencies for each role are anticipated by December 2011.

The Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers are organized based on three core structures: the Career Lattice, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Six Domains important to the profession. The Teacher Career Lattice specifies the formal education, experience, professional development, and professional activities that correspond with a teacher who is at Levels I, II, III and IV. Early childhood teachers progress from one level to another through a combination of formal study, experience, and professional development.

Using Bloom's Taxonomy, the competencies address how knowledge and competencies should deepen over the four levels. Early stages correspond with foundational knowledge and understanding in a particular area, and the more advanced stages progress from basic knowledge and understanding to application of that knowledge and eventually to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. At the highest level of competency, professionals are critically reflecting on their knowledge, solving problems, mentoring, and advocating for change.

Finally, Rhode Island's core competencies for teachers are organized into Six Domains important to the profession. Each domain also has a number of sub-headings, which provide more information on the specific knowledge and competencies outlined in the document. These domains and sub-headings include:

(1) Health, Safety, and Wellness

- a. Knowledge of State and Federal Regulations
- b. Safety and Emergency Procedures
- c. Health
- d. Food and Nutrition

(2) Family Engagement

- a. Creating Respectful, Reciprocal Relationships with Families
- b. Engaging Families in Their Children's Development and Learning
- c. Utilizing Community Resources to Support Families

(3) Development and Learning

- a. Child Development
- b. Influences on Development

(4) Curriculum

- a. Content

- b. Process
- c. Teaching and Facilitating
- d. Context
- e. Building Meaningful Curriculum

(5) Observation and Assessment

- a. Knowledge of Early Childhood Assessment
- b. Conducting Developmentally Appropriate Authentic Assessments
- c. Conducting Formal Assessments
- d. Practicing Responsible Assessment
- e. Gathering Assessment Information from Multiple Sources Using a Variety of Methods
- f. Documenting Assessment Information
- g. Using Assessment Information in Curriculum Planning
- h. Communicating Assessment Information

(6) Professionalism

- a. Foundations: Identifying and Involving Oneself with the Early Care and Education Profession
- b. Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines
- c. Valuing Diversity
- d. Advocating for Children, Families, and the Profession
- e. Commitment to Ongoing Professional Development

Knowledge and competencies related to Early Learning and Development Standards are addressed in the Curriculum domain and include a specific focus on early mathematics and literacy development and instruction. The domain “Observation and Assessment” addresses knowledge and competencies related to child assessment, including the use of data to guide instruction. Knowledge and competencies related to behavior management are woven into the Development and Learning domain and the Curriculum domain, which focus on developing positive relationships and creating supportive environments. Both the Family Engagement and Professionalism domains address culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies.

Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teacher Assistants are organized based on two core structures: a Career Lattice and the Six Domains. The Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teacher Assistants domains align with the domains in the Teacher document, but the sub-headings are aligned with the role of the teacher assistant. The Teacher Assistant domains and sub-headings include:

(1) Health, Safety, and Wellness

- a. Knowledge of State and Federal Regulations
- b. Safety and Emergency Procedures
- c. Health
- d. Food and Nutrition

(2) Family Engagement

- a. Creating Respectful, Reciprocal Relationships with Families
- b. Engaging Families in Their Children's Development and Learning
- c. Utilizing Community Resources to Support Families

(3) Development and Learning

- a. Child Development
- b. Influences on Development

(4) Curriculum

- a. Content
- b. Process
- c. Teaching and Facilitating
- d. Context
- e. Building Meaningful Curriculum

(5) Observation and Assessment

- a. Knowledge of Early Childhood Assessment
- b. Contributing to Classroom Assessment
- c. Using Assessment Information to Inform Interactions with Children and to Contribute to Curriculum Planning

(6) Professionalism

- a. Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines
- b. Valuing Diversity
- c. Commitment to Ongoing Professional Development

More information on the DRAFT Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers Assistants can be found in Appendix 8 – *The Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Care Educators*.

Key Goals

Goal 1: Develop a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of aligned credentials.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Rhode Island has completed a comprehensive set of Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Teachers and Teacher Assistants, but companion documents for other Early Childhood Educators have not been completed. The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Development plan represents Rhode Island's comprehensive High-Quality Plan to develop outstanding frameworks so that key roles in Rhode Island's early childhood system are fully addressed. Rhode Island's key activities will be to: 1) develop core competencies for family child-care providers; 2) create an addendum to teacher competencies for preschool special educators and early intervention professionals; 3) develop competencies for program administrators and education coordinators; 4) develop competencies for professional-development providers and higher-education staff; 5) support the alignment of the competencies with credentials identified in the Teacher Career Lattice by higher education; and 6) support the use of the core competencies by other professional-development providers. The key activities, timelines, and responsibilities to support these goals are described below.

Core Competencies for Family Child Care Providers

Rhode Island licenses 688 family child-care providers. Sixty percent operate in the capital city of Providence and serve children with high needs. Another 13 percent of family child-care providers operate in one of the other 5 high-poverty core cities: Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. Approximately 70 percent of licensed family child-care providers speak Spanish as a primary language and, thus, serve many children who are dual-language learners. Rhode Island will prioritize the development of a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for family child-care providers as a critical first step toward raising the quality of these early-care and learning environments consequently, directly impacting the experience of Children with High Needs.

In 2010, the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies work group decided to develop a separate framework for family child-care providers to reflect the uniqueness of their role and the environments they create to support learning for children from birth to 5 years old and to support the afterschool population these providers serve. The development of these competencies will begin in January 2012 and will mirror the structure used to develop the Rhode Island Core

Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants. A development team consisting of State agency representation from the RIDE, DHS, DCYF, and the R.I. Department of Health; Higher Education representatives, early care and education providers, including center-based and family child-care representatives; staff representing the State's quality-rating and improvement system; and representatives from the afterschool and youth-development field will work together to develop a draft set of core competencies. The development team will use a variety of resources, including: the Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants, the Rhode Island Core Competencies for School Age Professionals, National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation guidelines, R.I. Department of Education certification regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, child-care licensing regulations, preschool standards and guidelines, and the competencies identified by other States. The draft competencies will be presented statewide for review and feedback, with final revisions completed by June 2012.

Early Childhood Special Education Addendum

The work of the team charged with developing workforce knowledge and competencies for early childhood special educators will:

- acknowledge the commonality between the workforce knowledge and competencies of early childhood special educators working in Part C and Part B programs and general early childhood educators; and
- include additional competencies associated with working with a special-education population.

The development work for these competencies will begin in January 2012 and will also mirror the development process used for the Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants. A development team consisting of State agency representation from the R.I. Departments of Education, the R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services (which oversees Part C of IDEA), and the R.I. Department of Health; Higher Education representatives; and early childhood special educators representing preschool special education (Part B) and Early Intervention (Part C) will work together to develop a draft set of core competencies. The development team will use a variety of resources, including: the Rhode

Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants, R.I. Department of Education certification regulations, Early Intervention program standards, state and federal IDEA regulations, and similar competencies identified by other States. The draft competencies will be presented for statewide review and feedback, with final revisions completed by June 2012. The final framework will be included as an addendum to the Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers.

Program Administrators and Education Coordinators

Early childhood programs in Rhode Island are administered using a variety of administrative structures. In some programs, the administrator functions as both the program director and the educational leader. In others, program management and education leadership are separate roles, held by different individuals. The Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework developed for this segment of the early childhood workforce will align with the framework for Teachers and Teacher Assistants and will address administrative and education-leadership responsibilities outlined in the Programs Standards developed for the Tiered Quality Rating System. The development work for this set of competencies will begin in June 2012 and will follow a process similar to that used by the other development teams. A development team consisting of state agency representation from the RIDE, DHS, DCYF, and the R.I. Department of Health; Higher Education representatives; early care and education administrators, including center-based and family child-care representatives; and staff representing the State's quality-rating and improvement system will work together to develop a draft set of core competencies. The development team will use a variety of resources, including: the Rhode Island Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Assistants, the Rhode Island Core Competencies for School Age Professionals, National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation guidelines, Head Start Performance Standards, child-care licensing regulations, preschool-program standards and guidelines, quality-rating system standards, and the competencies identified by other States. The draft competencies will be presented statewide for review and feedback, with final revisions completed by June 2013.

Professional Development Providers and Higher Education

The early care and education workforce needs to be supported by professional development providers and higher-education staff who themselves have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively support the growth and development of the workforce in areas identified in the frameworks. Within this evidence-based world, “knowledge mediators,” or faculty and professional development providers, are challenged to design, deliver, and evaluate professional development interventions that reach into the interactions between teachers and children in order to promote high-quality learning experiences. Faculty and trainers must move beyond the traditional approaches of in-service trainings, conferences, lectures, and one-day workshops, which are now viewed as “outdated and ineffective.”²⁰ (Hyson, 2001, p.60) The short-term, one-shot nature of many current, continuing education activities must be replaced by methods that use a long-term approach, supporting gradual and incremental change in practices in order to change the culture of teaching (Gallimore, 1996; Stigler & Hiebert, 1998, 1999; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).^{21 22 23} The Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that will be developed for professional development providers and higher-education staff will describe the essential knowledge and skills needed by individuals to provide different types of learning experiences for the workforce at different levels. In other words, the standards will address the research-based content knowledge and skills needed by the diverse early childhood workforce, while also addressing the pedagogical knowledge and skills that are needed to provide effective technical assistance and to develop and teach a college course for adult learners. The development work for these competencies will begin in June 2013 and will be structured

²⁰ Hyson, M. (2001). Better futures for young children, better preparation for their teachers: challenges emerging from recent national reports. *Young Children*, January, 60 - 63.

²¹ Gallimore, R. (1996). Classrooms are just another cultural activity. In D.L. Speece & B.K. Keogh (Eds.), *Research on classroom ecologies: Implications for inclusion of children with learning disabilities* (pp. 229-250). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

²² Stigler, J. & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York: Summit Books.

²³ Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

similarly to the development work of the preceding sets of competencies. A development team consisting of state agency representation RIDE, DHS, DCYF, and the R.I. Department of Health; higher-education representatives; professional development providers; and staff representing the State's quality-rating and improvement system will work together to develop a draft set of core competencies. The development team will use a variety of resources, including: the core competencies developed for each sector of the workforce, National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation guidelines, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education standards, as well the competencies identified by other States and a review of evidence-based professional development practice in the early childhood field. The draft competencies will be presented statewide for review and feedback, with final revisions completed by June 2014.

Alignment of Credentials and Degrees

Rhode Island's efforts to complete development of a final comprehensive set of Core Competencies for Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Family Child Care, and Early Childhood Special Educators will be completed by June 2012. At that time, representatives from the higher-education teacher-preparation programs will be assisted in reviewing their existing curricula by a team of independent consultants. This independent review will crosswalk the curricula with the competency frameworks. The reviews will be completed by December 2012. Once the reviews are completed, representatives from each higher-education program will be invited to a day-long planning conference, in January 2013, to use the results of the independent review to develop an action plan for aligning their curricula with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks. A second day-long conference will be scheduled in January 2014 for each program to showcase its revised curriculum content and associated alignment of resulting credentials and degrees.

Alignment of Professional Development

Once the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks are complete for each workforce sector, the focus will turn to supporting the alignment of professional development with each Framework. Rhode Island's specific plans for this work are detailed in section D(2), and will include opportunities for professional development providers to:

- gain knowledge about the competencies;
- be introduced to a process for aligning current and future professional development opportunities with the applicable core competencies; and
- advance their understanding of effective professional development pedagogy for the diverse population of adult learners in Rhode Island.

Professional development providers will be encouraged to use a standard format for describing the relationship between professional development opportunities and the core competencies. As the Frameworks become available, all professional development supported by State agencies will be required to align with the applicable Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

How This Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

The plan presented above prioritizes the development of core competencies for key sectors of the early care and learning workforce, which serves high numbers of children with high needs; specifically, for family child-care providers and for early childhood special educators. The completion of these competencies and the alignment initiatives that follow will provide a specific framework upon which effective professional development can immediately be aligned, resulting in a more prepared and effective workforce serving Children with High Needs.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

The plan presented above addresses the development of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks, which are aligned, but specific to the needs of all sectors of the early care and learning workforce.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Develop core competencies for family child care.	RI Department of Human Services	RI Department of Education; RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; higher education, family child care representatives	X			
Create an addendum to teacher competencies for special educators and early-intervention professionals.	RI Department of Education	Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; early childhood special educators, higher education	X			
Develop competencies for program administrators and education coordinators.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office		X		
Develop competencies for professional-development providers and for higher education.	RI Department of Education	RI Department of Human Services; Executive Office of Health and Human Services; RI Department of Health; Head Start Collaboration Office; higher education representatives; professional- development providers			X	
Review existing teacher-preparation program curricula against Core Competencies Frameworks.	RI Department of Education	Independent consultants		X		
Conduct a higher education alignment summit.	RI Department of Education	Higher education representatives			X	
Complete higher education alignments.	RI Department of Education	Higher education representatives				X

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

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.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (D)(2)(c)(1) and (D)(2)(c)(2).

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.**Current Status*****(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.***

As described in Section D1 of this application, Rhode Island is currently finalizing Workforce Knowledge and Competency (WKC) Frameworks for Early Childhood Teachers and Teachers Assistants. A plan to develop WKC frameworks for other critical professionals (e.g., family child-care providers, special educators) is also described in the previous section. Because Rhode Island has not had statewide WKC frameworks, our professional-development system has been fairly disorganized and dilute. The State needs to develop a coherent system to deliver effective professional development that improves child outcomes. This process requires a well-organized system of support that uses resources efficiently to address the needs of all who work with Rhode Island’s young children.

The features of effective professional development that are associated with positive impact are (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, Wallace, 2005; Joyce and Showers, 2002):

- content and sequence;
- intensity and duration;
- follow-up support and technical assistance from a high-quality consultant;
- competence demonstrated in the classroom or program; and
- linkage to program leadership and supervision.

In 2010, the Rhode Island Early Learning Council established a cross-sector Professional Development (PD) System Planning Work Team to develop an executable plan for a comprehensive professional-development system to build the skills and knowledge of the State’s early learning workforce. The team included representatives from child-care centers, preschools, State Pre-K, family child-care homes, Head Start, Early Intervention (Part C of IDEA), IDEA Preschool, higher education, and existing professional-development providers.

The Work Team was informed by NAEYC’s *Workforce Designs, A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems* and by NCCIC’s *Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Care and Education*. The Work Team embraced the

cross-sector goal highlighted in NAEYC’s blueprint: that “an integrated early childhood professional development system is a comprehensive system of preparation and ongoing development and support for all early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children.”

The team worked with an expert facilitator (Anne Mitchell) to put together a plan for all of the essential elements of a Professional Development System outlined below:

1) Professional Standards

- required and preferred qualifications, initial preparation, and continuing development in each/all sectors of the profession; and
- core knowledge base and/or core competencies underlying all standards in all sectors.

2) Career Pathways

- accessible routes for continuous progress of professionals, usually illustrated by a career lattice, show connections among, and requirements for, various roles in all settings;
- professional development (PD) advising and individual PD plans; and
- Workforce Registry containing data on all practitioners for system use and for each practitioner to track his or her own progress.

3) Articulation

- transfer of professional-development credentials, courses, credits, degrees, and student performance-based competencies from one program or institution to another without loss of credit, i.e., through articulation agreements at the program, institution, and/or statewide levels.

4) Advisory Structure

- coordinated oversight, at the State level, with authority itself or direct link to authority in State governance.

5) Data

- data for accountability, quality assurance, system impact, and system improvement.

6) Financing

- for professionals to access preparation and continuing education, e.g., scholarships;

- for workplaces to facilitate on-the-job preparation and continuing professional development and to support compensation parity; and
- for the infrastructure of the system to ensure its stability, quality, and effectiveness.

The vision for Rhode Island’s re-designed professional-development system is to “support the adults who educate and nurture infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families, and those who work with school-age children in out-of-school time programs. Through guidance and high quality opportunities for learning, the Professional Development System will support early learning and child care professionals to advance their skills and knowledge and develop sustainable careers.”

Building Blocks for an Effective PD System in Rhode Island

- The Rhode Island Early Learning Resource & Referral Center (the Resource Center) now serves as the primary coordinator of State-funded professional-development opportunities, funded by CCDF quality dollars. The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC) is responsible for the management of the Resource Center and is also responsible for the implementation of BrightStars. This centralization of resources supports the integration and alignment of Professional Development with the QRIS.
- Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP), a school-readiness initiative based in the capital city, has delivered free professional development – in English and Spanish – to more than 2,000 home- and center-based educators serving Children with High Needs. As a recipient of three federal U.S. Department of Education Early Reading First grants, R2LP has worked intensively with 14 early learning centers located in four high-poverty cities, providing high-quality professional development and mentoring support to help programs implement an early-literacy curriculum and add richness to their classrooms. In addition, through a \$3.2-million Early Childhood Educator Professional Development grant from the U.S. Department of Education, R2LP provided college-level courses and on-the-job coaching and mentoring to nearly 300 center-based and family-care providers from 2007 through 2010.

- Ready to Learn Providence has also worked to build relationships with 230 Spanish-speaking home child-care providers in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. R2LP's *El Club de Proveedoras de Cuidado Infantil de Rhode Island* provides day-long workshops for members, offering valuable training as well as an important professional and social network.
- The Educational Development Center (EDC) operates a Training & Technical Assistance Center (RITTA) for Rhode Island Head Start & Early Head Start programs, and it collaborates with local organizations to bring high-quality training to the larger early learning community.
- The State's three public colleges (University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and Community College of Rhode Island) are key providers of education and professional development for the workforce.
- The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) offers a popular 18-credit-hour Early Childhood Education Specialists program using a cohort model, coupled with intensive mentoring to assist students in achieving academic success.
- The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Professional Development Series (described in Section C1 of this application) offers comprehensive, community-based professional development for early learning programs (including public schools, centers, and family child-care providers serving preschoolers) statewide. Educators who complete a ten session series and an additional 15 hours of training are eligible for college credit at the University of Rhode Island.

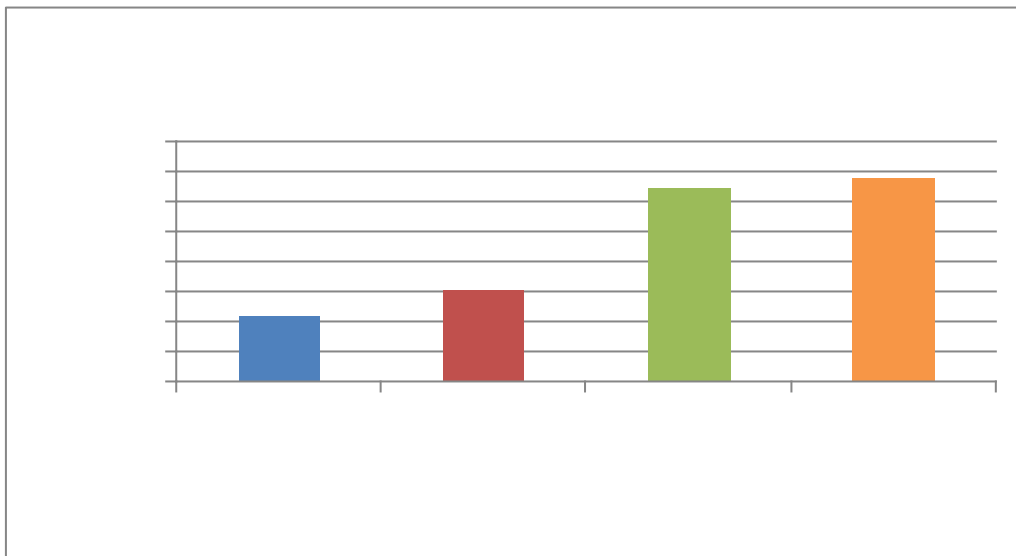
(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g. scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce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

Rhode Island is still developing and finalizing articulated career pathways for the workforce that will be aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks. Some

initial steps have been taken to provide support and incentives that improve access to professional development and career advancement along a career pathway.

In 2010, Rhode Island established the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood workforce-development model as a strategy to improve access to higher education, to address compensation disparities, and to reduce turnover of early learning educators. Ready to Learn Providence was selected to serve as the Rhode Island home of T.E.A.C.H, and received funding from the Rhode Island Foundation and the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's ARRA grant to launch the program. T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) is a proven workforce-development model operating in nearly two dozen states. T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships and other supports for early learning educators to access higher education. This increased education is then connected with increased compensation, leading to better teacher retention. The T.E.A.C.H. program in Rhode Island currently offers scholarships for students pursuing an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education and for individuals with a Bachelor's degree in a field unrelated to early childhood education who are pursuing post-baccalaureate early childhood education coursework at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Compensation issues for the early learning workforce must be addressed in order to build a stable, effective workforce. Recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for Rhode Island show just how great the wage disparities are between early learning educators who work in child care and community-based early education settings compared with those who work in the public schools.



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

Currently, Rhode Island has very limited data on the early learning workforce. We are not able to report aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention. The Rhode Island Early Learning Council is very aware of this gap in our system capacity. Both the Council's Early Learning Data System Team and the Professional Development System Planning Team have recommended that the State take steps to develop a workforce registry. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, we plan to build a robust Early Learning Data System (see Section E2 of this application) with comprehensive data on the workforce (including demographic information, verified qualifications, professional development, compensation, and retention). This data system will have the capacity to link individual educators to programs and classrooms and to the children they serve.

Rhode Island's High-Quality Plan to Support Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Key Goals

Goal 1: Increase the availability and accessibility of high-quality professional-development opportunities that are aligned with Rhode Island's new Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks.

Goal 2: Provide a continuum of supports that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway and that is designed to increase retention.

Goal 3: Collect and publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement, and retention (Workforce Study and Workforce Registry).

Key Activities and Implementation Plan

Increase the availability and accessibility of high-quality professional development opportunities that are aligned with Rhode Island's new Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks

The first step in supporting early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities is to ensure that the professional-development opportunities being offered are aligned with recognized standards. Within the first year of implementation of the Reform Plan,

Rhode Island will design and implement a structured Professional Development Approval Process for community-based professional development in order to identify those offerings that are aligned with (or could be aligned through revision and/or expansion) Rhode Island's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks. Professional development will be reviewed for content and sequence, intensity and duration, and to see whether the design incorporates adequate follow-up support and technical assistance to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills to real-world situations.

High-quality professional-development offerings that are aligned with these standards will be identified as Approved Professional Development. Rhode Island will also seek to identify and adopt high-quality, aligned professional development that has been developed and implemented in other states. Many states and national training centers have resources that could help Rhode Island. In particular, the focus will be to build local capacity to deliver high-quality professional development in the following areas:

- High-quality PD for educators serving infants and toddlers, aligned with workforce knowledge and competencies, and linked to technical assistance;
- High-quality PD for educators serving preschoolers, aligned with workforce knowledge and competencies, and linked to technical assistance;
- High-quality PD for program administrators, aligned with workforce knowledge and competencies and linked to technical assistance (including peer learning networks);
- High-quality PD for family child-care providers, aligned with workforce knowledge and competencies, and linked to technical assistance;
- High-quality PD to support cultural and linguistic competencies of early childhood educators;
- High-quality PD for mono-lingual Spanish-speaking educators (70 percent of family child-care providers in Rhode Island speak Spanish as a primary language); and
- Online or flexible PD for providers working long hours.

In addition to reviewing the content of professional-development offerings, we will also work to articulate and build the skills and knowledge of trainers and professional-development providers by creating a specialized knowledge and competency framework for those who train and support early learning educators (see Section D1 of the application). Rhode Island will

design and implement a system to identify and support skilled professional-development providers through a Trainer Registry. Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge resources will also enable us to access national train-the-trainer opportunities to build local professional-development capacity.

The Approved Professional Development list will include information about approved content as well as approved trainers. This list will be widely promoted to ensure statewide use and incorporation into each educator's Individualized Professional Development Plans, required for BrightStars and for RIDE Approval. The list of Approved Professional Development will also be used to identify gaps in the current delivery system.

Quality assurance for coursework and degree programs offered by institutions of higher education will be addressed through the Office of Educator Quality and Certification at RIDE. Rhode Island will ensure the quality of campus-based professional development by incorporating the use of the WKC framework into the approval process for 4-year teacher preparation programs. Additionally, Rhode Island will support national accreditation of CCRI's early childhood education Associate's-degree program as an additional indicator of quality. DHS and RIDE are key funders of community-based professional-development opportunities available for the workforce. This two-pronged approach will ensure that all professional-development providers, both campus- and community-based, will be providing professional-development opportunities aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks.

As we undertake the revision of Program Standards outlined in Section B of this application, we will incorporate differentiated levels of Approved Professional Development completion into BrightStars. Licensing regulations will also be updated to require Approved Professional Development as the source for meeting annual professional-development clock hours.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Conduct review of current PD offerings to ensure alignment with Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative	X	X		
Cross reference PD offerings so that educators can easily identify PD that is related to specific content with one or more of the standards	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative		X		
Design & Implement a Process for Approval of Training Content	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative, DCYF		X		
Design & Implement a Trainer Approval Process	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative		X		
Identify PD gaps and search for/adopt high-quality, aligned PD resources from other states or national training centers.	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative		X	X	X
Create and widely promote the information on Approved Professional Development	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, ELC, Head Start Collaborative, DCYF, DOH		X	X	X

Expand access to effective professional development opportunities and encourage the use of multiple delivery methods.

In order for educators to take advantage of high-quality professional-development opportunities, educators must first know that these opportunities are available. Having a centralized, accessible professional-development calendar for educators is an essential part of ensuring access to high-quality professional development. By designating The Resource Center to serve as the clearinghouse for high-quality, aligned PD resources, we can better support educators along a career pathway. The Resource Center is responsible for keeping educators informed about opportunities for professional development and for providing career advising.

Particular focus will be paid to recruiting and developing bilingual career advisors to serve as mentors to family child-care programs.

To ensure that supply meets demand, Rhode Island will immediately expand access to high-quality professional-development opportunities aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies through the use of newly developed or adopted professional development. Rhode Island will begin by creating or adopting new professional-development content to address gaps in the current system. The baseline-quality studies conducted through BrightStars have identified infant/toddler care and family child care as two areas in need of quality improvement. Professional development focused on using early learning and development standards and on family engagement will be expanded through the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project (as described in section C1).

To support the translation from knowledge to practice, Rhode Island will expand upon its current peer-support networks to include cross-sector support for educators at all levels. In addition to offering support, the peer networks are also a means of increasing opportunities for early learning professionals to strengthen their cultural competency by working with colleagues from backgrounds different from their own. Starting in the second year of the grant, Rhode Island will explore new initiatives for outreach to family, friend and neighbor care, starting with those license-exempt educators participating in the child-care subsidy program. In order to broaden our efforts beyond regulated programs, Rhode Island will design and implement a mandatory, pre-service health-and-safety training for all license-exempt educators participating in the child-care subsidy program. This training will be available both in-person and as an online module, and in multiple languages. Finally, Rhode Island will use the last two years of the grant to develop unique opportunities for leadership development through the use of peer networks, leadership academies, and cross-sector training opportunities for Administrators, Directors, and Principals.

The Early Childhood Education Specialists program at CCRI, a cohort model that utilizes peer networks, coaching, and mentoring combined with academic coursework, will be expanded to serve 70 additional students, twice the current program capacity. CCRI will also expand the course framework to incorporate the *I Am Moving, I Am Learning* curriculum and to include developmental math, writing, and literacy courses that will assist students as they make the transition to post-secondary coursework. CCRI will actively recruit and mentor Spanish-

speaking family child-care providers to participate in the program and will hire a bilingual career advisor to meet the needs of this population.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Promote the Resource Center as Centralized location for PD information	Resource Center/ DHS	ELC, RIDE, DCYF, DOH, Head Start, Early Intervention (EOHHS)	X	X		
Increase the Number and Frequency of current offerings of “Approved PD”	Resource Center/ DHS	ELC, RIDE, DOH, Head Start	X	X	X	X
Create new “Approved PD” Opportunities, to address gaps in system and areas identified as “high need”	Resource Center/ DHS	RIDE, DOH, Head Start		X	X	X
Comprehensive Approach to Career Advising	Resource Center/ DHS	ELC, RIDE, BrightStars		X	X	
Expand Peer Support Networks	Resource Center/ DHS	ELC, RIDE	X	X		
Incorporate Workforce Professional Development Indicators into BrightStars	BrightStars/ DHS	ELC, RIDE	X			
Ensure high-quality professional development opportunities are available for Spanish-speaking providers	DHS	CCRI, Resource Center/ DHS		X	X	X
Expand CCRI’s Early Childhood Education Specialist Program with recruitment and mentoring for Spanish-speaking providers	CCRI/ DHS	DHS, DCYF	X	X	X	
Create a mandatory, pre-service health & safety training for all license-exempt educators participating in the child-care subsidy program	Resource Center/ DHS	DCYF		X	X	

Provide a continuum of supports that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway and that are designed to increase retention

Financial assistance is perhaps the most important support for helping educators access college coursework, which leads to credentials and degrees along the career pathway identified in the development of workforce knowledge and competency frameworks. The Rhode Island Early Learning Council has formed a work team focused on Incentives and Supports for Quality Improvement. This team, with facilitation from national finance expert Anne Mitchell, plans to analyze the cost of delivering high-quality care in Rhode Island, and the team will develop a proposal for financial incentives and supports to help programs achieve and maintain quality standards. The work to identify incentives and supports, including those related to strengthening the qualifications of the workforce and to improving retention of effective, qualified Early Childhood Educators, is scheduled to begin this fall. After the work team's recommendations have been submitted and approved by the Council, Rhode Island will begin to develop and later implement one or more of the recommended incentives. Initiatives such as tax credits and loan-forgiveness programs are planned to be included.

Rhode Island will also use RTT-ELC funding to expand T.E.A.C.H. Rhode Island, which will allow for more scholarships to be offered and for more support for the full range of degrees outlined in a career lattice. The T.E.A.C.H project links progress in higher education with increased compensation and retention. All supports and incentives will target outreach and recruitment of educators serving Children with High Needs.

Additionally, the design of traditional teacher-preparation programs at institutions of higher education often presents a challenge for the current workforce. Alternate pathways that incorporate comparable rigor will help expand access and will improve educator qualifications. The current cross-sector workforce is more diverse than traditional teacher-preparation program graduates. Alternate pathways encourage the development of a diverse workforce. Rhode Island will develop alternate pathways to certification or earned college credits for the existing workforce as a means of assisting educators in moving along the career lattice. Along with the Higher Education work group of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, T.E.A.C.H. RI will coordinate a review of current credit for prior learning and experience initiatives within the first year of the grant, and the work group will then work with institutions of higher education to develop statewide articulation agreements and to investigate issues related to the expiration of

college credits. Additional efforts include identifying potential partnerships and/or dual-credit options with high school career-technical education programs to reach educators as they enter the field.

Finally, issues related to workforce retention are directly related to compensation disparities. A key strategy to address compensation disparities within the workforce will be to implement tiered quality-incentive payments tied to BrightStars levels (described in Section B). We will address compensation, and in turn retention, by implementing policies requiring that a percentage of the quality-incentive payments be directed toward wage increases that would support the retention of qualified, effective staff. By addressing educator compensation as part of the tiered quality incentive payments for CCAP subsidies, we are promoting a more stable and effective workforce in programs that serve Children with High Needs.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Research & Implement policies and financial incentives	ELC	DHS, RIDE	X	X	X	X
Expand TEACH RI	RIDE	ELC	X	X		
Explore alternate pathways for earning college credit / teacher certification	ELC	RIDE, DHS		X	X	X

Collect and publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement, and retention.

Rhode Island currently does not have a database or workforce registry for the early learning field and the Early Learning Challenge will enable us to address this large gap in our knowledge of Rhode Island's early childhood workforce. The development of a workforce registry has been recommended by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Data Work Team and the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Professional Development Planning Team. Through the development of a Workforce Registry, we will ensure that periodic needs

assessments can be conducted, that educators can identify individual training needs, and that State programs can access data to aid in licensing, monitoring, and technical assistance. Additionally, the workforce registry will include policies and incentives that will require and/or reward participation in the registry. The availability of aggregate data about the workforce will enable the use of information to drive future workforce investments and to inform public policy. A statewide, longitudinal early learning data system will be implemented as part of Rhode Island's early Learning Reform Plan. This system will include data from the Rhode Island workforce-registry and trainer-registry data. More information on the Rhode Island plans to develop a Registry, incorporated into a shared, cross-departmental Early Learning Data System, can be found in section E2.

Workforce surveys are another means of ongoing data collection. Due to funding constraints, Rhode Island has not conducted a workforce study, but is greatly aware of the need for more information that can be used to strengthen and support the early childhood workforce. To address this, DHS recently modified the biennial Market Rate Survey Instrument to include an evaluation of the early childhood workforce as part of the biennial data-gathering effort. Rhode Island will partner with a researcher in 2012 to perform a high-quality workforce study that will serve as baseline data on the current conditions of the workforce and that will be used to set specific targets and goals for incremental improvements. Findings from the study will also be used to inform policymakers of the need for increased supports for Early Childhood Educators. As we implement our workforce registry, we will be able to continue to assess the current workforce conditions and credentials and to compare this information with our baseline to measure the increasing number of educators who are receiving PD and credentials who are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Conduct professional workforce study and publicly report findings	DHS	ELC	X			
Create Workforce Registry as part of the shared RI Early Learning Data System	ELC	RIDE, DHS	X	X	X	

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Produce and disseminate annual reports the early learning workforce	ELC	RIDE, DHS, DCYF			X	X

How This Plan Supports Children with High Needs

The expansion of high-quality professional development and higher-education opportunities will build the skills and knowledge of the early learning workforce. Access to trainings, professional-development opportunities, and higher education will be prioritized for educators who work with Children with High Needs. Focused efforts will be made to develop and implement high-quality professional development for “high needs” educators serving Children with High Needs, including:

- professionals working with infants and toddlers in child-care centers; and
- family child-care providers, particularly those who speak Spanish as a primary language.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Councils’ Professional Development Planning Team addresses the needs of all types of early learning and development programs. Membership of the work team includes representation from all of the various program types, including Early Intervention, Head Start and Early Head Start, center-based and family Child Care, Public Pre-Kindergarten, and Preschool Special Education.

Setting Goals and Targets for Improving the Qualifications and Effectiveness of the Early Childhood Educator Workforce:

At this time, baseline data on the number of postsecondary institutions and professional-development providers with programs that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is unknown. There are four institutions of higher education providing teacher preparation programs in Rhode Island, and there are seven professional-development providers that are currently funded by CCDF. During the first year of the grant, Rhode Island

will undertake a review process for Higher Education (outlined in D1) and State-funded, community-based professional-development providers (outlined in D2) to analyze alignment with finalized and emerging Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks.

Professional-development providers that are not funded by the State will be incentivized to align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Framework as the gateway onto the Approved Professional Development list, which will be widely circulated and promoted as the central professional-development resource for Rhode Island.

Baseline data on the number of Early Childhood Educators in Rhode Island are not available. During the first year of implementation, Rhode Island will conduct a professional-workforce study in order to gather baseline data on the number of educators working in the field. From that point forward, Rhode Island will be creating a new, shared Early Learning Data System that will incorporate a workforce registry. Each educator will be assigned a unique identifier, and participation in the registry will be mandated through licensing. The workforce registry will begin tracking the demographic and educational data of the workforce as a whole, and the registry will enable Rhode Island to implement a credentialing system that will be based on a career lattice. In the baseline below, “Unknown/To Be Decided” has been indicated in relation to the number of educators with credentials aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for the additional reasons that these frameworks are not fully completed and the credentialing system is not yet in place.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework					
	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	Unknown	2	5	8	11
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	Unknown	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500
<i>[Please indicate whether baseline data are actual or estimated and describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information; and please include any definitions you used that are not defined in the notice. If baseline data are not currently available please describe in your High-Quality Plan in your narrative how and when you will have baseline data available.]</i> Baseline data are not available.					

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.										
Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Credential Type 1 <i>Specify: 12 credit hours in ECE</i> <i>Career Lattice Level 1 (lowest)</i>	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	500		1,000	
Credential Type 2 <i>Specify: Associate's degree in ECE</i> <i>Career Lattice Level 2</i>	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	350		700	
Credential Type 3 <i>Specify: Bachelor's degree in ECE</i> <i>Career Lattice Level 3</i>	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	250		500	
Credential Type 4 <i>Specify: Master's degree in ECE</i> <i>Career Lattice Level 4 (highest)</i>	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100		100	
<p><i>Include a row for each credential in the State's proposed progression of credentials, customize the labeling of the credentials, and indicate the highest and lowest credential.</i></p> <p><i>Baseline data are not available. Data on the Early Childhood Educator workforce will be incorporated into a new, shared Rhode Island Early Learning Data System to be developed through as part of this initiative which enables us to set targets for 2014 and 2015.</i></p> <p><i>Career Lattice Levels used for this chart are from the July 2011 Draft Core Competencies for Rhode Island's Early Childhood Teachers. The Career Lattice has not been finalized. Community input is still being gathered and levels may be adjusted.</i></p>										

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available 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 in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E).

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry.

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).

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry.**Current Status**

Rhode Island does not currently implement a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment as defined in this application, but we are committed to moving forward with development and implementation over the next four years. The R.I. Department of Education is explicitly committed to developing a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the internationally benchmarked standards that will provide data to inform curriculum and instructional decisions at the State, LEA, school, and program levels. The goal of Rhode Island’s existing comprehensive assessment system at the PreK-12 level is to increase student learning by producing actionable information that informs the learning process in addition to providing data to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and ensuring that all students are making progress toward achieving important learning objectives. This goal aligns directly with this key goal of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge competition: to implement kindergarten-entry assessments statewide that will provide information across all domains of early learning and development, inform efforts to close the school-readiness gap, and inform instruction in the early elementary-school grades. Additionally, three general purposes of assessment have been identified by RIDE in its focus on comprehensive assessment systems: to inform and improve instruction, to screen or identify (for interventions), and to measure outcomes (as part of an accountability system, for school-improvement planning, or for evaluation). The development of a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment clearly aligns with these purposes.

To assist districts in the development of a Comprehensive Assessment System, the R.I. Department of Education developed a document, the “Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance.” More information on the Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance can be found in Appendix 28 – *Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance*. The purpose of this document is to outline the elements and features of a comprehensive assessment system. In the document, a comprehensive assessment system is defined as a coordinated plan for monitoring the academic achievement of students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The comprehensive

assessment system is a critical component of the Rhode Island Department of Education's Strategic Plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*, and it is required through the Rhode Island Basic Education Program regulations (BEP). The BEP requires each LEA to develop a comprehensive assessment system that measures student performance and that includes formative, interim, and summative evaluations in each core content area. LEA data-based decision-making teams will access comprehensive assessment data and will use a problem-solving approach to develop, evaluate, and modify academic instruction and support services to ensure that each student reaches proficiency and is ready for success in college, careers, and life.

Rhode Island has a number of foundational pieces in place that can be built upon to create a common system that can be used to inform instruction and to evaluate statewide, district-level, community, and child outcomes. School districts are required by law to screen children prior to or upon school entry to "determine their level of educational readiness" for instruction in the "literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics." The law also stipulates that each district develop a Personal Literacy Plan for any child determined to be "reading below grade level." Districts are allowed to choose the screening tools, and there is not an approved list provided by the State, nor does the State collect information about which tools are being used.

Another current practice in LEAs is the use of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system in all preschool classrooms for children ages 3 to 5 with disabilities. Teaching Strategies GOLD is the only early childhood formative-assessment system approved by the State, and it is required as the measure to track the progress of children with disabilities. Teaching Strategies GOLD essentially functions as a statewide common assessment system for preschool classrooms located in public schools, with the exception of classrooms funded by Title I. The R.I. Department of Education has invested significant resources to support the basic use of this system, including the development of: 1) professional-development opportunities for teachers and administrators; 2) guidance documents; and 3) procedures to monitor and support data entry, both at the State and local level. Teaching Strategies GOLD can be used to assess infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners. Teaching Strategies GOLD is aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and has been aligned with the Common Core State Standards in both literacy and mathematics. More information on the alignment between RIELS and Teaching Strategies GOLD can be found in Appendix 10 – *Alignment of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards with Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and*

Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten. More information on the alignment between Teaching Strategies GOLD and the Common Core State Standards can be found in Appendix 29 – *Alignment of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy (Kindergarten) with Teaching Strategies GOLD* and Appendix 30 – *Alignment of the Common Core Strategies for Mathematics (Kindergarten) with Teaching Strategies GOLD.*

In addition to the strong focus on developing assessment systems to inform and improve instruction being supported by regulation and policy at the R.I. Department of Education, the need for a Kindergarten Entry Assessment was clearly identified during the State's comprehensive early childhood data systems planning effort, a part of the National Governors Association (NGA) *Ready States Initiative*, which began in April 2010. Rhode Island's Early Learning Data System Action Plan, the product of this effort, identified the following as one of its key recommendations and next steps: Work to develop a statewide kindergarten-entry assessment system using best practices for early childhood assessment with the goal of supporting kindergarten instruction.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Council's strategic plan used as the basis for the Council's application for federal funding from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) also identifies a need for a statewide kindergarten entry assessment system. The application submitted to ACF in July 2010 specifically proposes the Council's plan to: 1) explore best practices in other States to develop a statewide kindergarten-assessment system that builds on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards; and 2) use the statewide kindergarten assessment to guide practice and policy and to inform kindergarten teachers about children's strengths and about areas for growth as well as to help teachers understand progress across groups of children. In December 2011, planning for a kindergarten entry assessment began, with the establishment of the Kindergarten Assessment Work Team of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. This group met initially to draft a set of general recommendations for the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. These recommendations were presented to and approved by the Early Learning Council in March 2011. The approved recommendations addressed three areas:

Recommendation: Purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment

- Rhode Island should prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment that can be used to guide instruction and that can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).

Recommendations: Process

- Identify a core team to complete the following tasks:
 - review current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered; and
 - develop methods for gathering Rhode Island stakeholder information based on identified key issues.
- Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups:
 - Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff: administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; and community-based early childhood staff.
 - Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as the current state of kindergarten assessment.
- Analyze the information collected and develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment and for the communication of kindergarten-assessment information.

Recommendations: Implementation

- Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for the Rhode Island population.
- Assessment tools should be aligned with standards.
- Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan.
- Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in Pre-K, in 1st and 2nd grade.
- Assessment tools should address *all domains* of learning and development.
- Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g., professional development, cost, time).
- Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g., preschool teachers, family).
- Potential barriers should be considered (e.g., cost, time to implement).

- The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

When taken together, the components described above provide the base upon which Rhode Island will develop and implement a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

Rhode Island’s High Quality Plan for Understanding the Status of Children at Kindergarten Entry

Key Goals

Goal 1: Develop and implement a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment aligned with state standards across all domains of child development.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

The *Developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment* plan, described here, represents Rhode Island’s High-Quality Plan to develop a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and aligns with and expands upon the recommendations approved by the Early Learning Council. The key activities that will support Rhode Island’s goal: are 1) to develop or identify a valid, reliable, and appropriate Kindergarten Entry Assessment and a plan to implement the Kindergarten Entry Assessment by the school year 2014-15; 2) to develop clear policies and procedures to ensure the effective and appropriate use of Kindergarten Entry Assessment data; 3) to design comprehensive supports for kindergarten teachers and school administrators to ensure valid and reliable implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment; and 4) to pilot and implement the Kindergarten Entry Assessment by the school year 2014-15, with a phased in scale-up that builds on the results of the pilot.

Developing/Identifying the Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The Kindergarten Assessment Team of the Early Learning Council has identified key activities and timelines that support the goal of developing or identifying a valid, reliable, and appropriate Kindergarten Entry Assessment aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards and used to inform instruction in kindergarten and to guide the investment of resources during the early childhood years to help close the preparation gap

apparent at kindergarten entry. The first process recommendation is to identify a core Kindergarten Assessment planning team to review current research and national trends regarding key assessment issues. This core team will include a broad range of perspectives, including kindergarten teachers, pre-kindergarten teachers, special-education personnel, school and program administrators, parents, individuals with expertise in the assessment of young children, individuals with knowledge of English Learners and Children with High Needs, and higher-education representatives. At a minimum, this core team will begin by reviewing the following resources:

- National Research Council's report, *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*;
- National Education Goals Panel; *Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments*;
- National Association of the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education Joint Position Statement; *Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation: Building An Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8 (2003)*;
- National Conference of State Legislatures Technical Report, *State Approaches to School Readiness Assessment, 2010*;
- The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards;
- The Common Core State Standards in literacy and mathematics;
- Grade Span Expectations in Science, Engineering and Technology, Civics & Government and Historical Perspectives, and Fine Arts; and
- Teaching Strategies GOLD learning objectives.

The team will also review the kindergarten-assessment practices of other States, specifically Maryland and Washington. Maryland has been assessing kindergarten students for close to a decade, and it implements an assessment that aligns with Rhode Island's vision and with research-based best practices in early childhood assessment. Washington State recently began piloting a kindergarten-entry assessment after a comprehensive, multi-year development effort. Finally, the core team will review the current assessment practices in both preschool and kindergarten classrooms across Rhode Island. The purpose of these initial reviews will be to: 1) identify best practices in kindergarten assessment; 2) identify promising practices in other States;

3) identify promising practices in Rhode Island; and 4) develop a detailed crosswalk and analysis of current assessments, resources, and recommended practices related to kindergarten assessment to determine areas of commonality and existing gaps. The criteria for selecting a kindergarten entry assessment will include, at a minimum: age appropriateness for kindergarten children; ability to accurately assess the full range of skills and knowledge, including children who exhibit less and more advanced skills and knowledge; addressing all Essential Domains of School Readiness; alignment with the recommendations of the National Research Council reports on early childhood assessment; validity and reliability for the intended purposes and target populations in the State, including English Learners and children with disabilities; and alignment with Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards for pre-kindergarten children and with the learning expectations for kindergarten children.

The second process recommendation from the Early Learning Council addresses gathering stakeholder information using forums, surveys, and focus groups. Stakeholders will include diverse representation from LEA staff: administrators and teachers, both general and special education; parents; higher education; and community-based early childhood staff, early childhood experts, and stakeholders representing diverse populations. The purpose of this outreach is to gather input on the priorities of these key stakeholders in response to key assessment issues and features. Using the detailed crosswalk and the input from the stakeholder groups, the kindergarten-assessment planning team will determine what assessment(s) will be administered, by whom, and when. The team will also develop an implementation plan that will describe the funding and implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, beginning in the school year 2014-15. The work to identify a kindergarten assessment depends in part upon the development of the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards, which is slated to begin in 2012. Therefore, the work described here would begin in 2013, or as soon as the Early Learning and Development Standards have been completed.

Effective and Appropriate Use of Kindergarten Entry Assessment Data

Once the Kindergarten Entry Assessment has been identified, the next key activity will be to develop administration policies and procedures to ensure valid and reliable assessment results. This process will include determining the qualifications and training necessary to administer the assessment and determining the assessment window in which the assessment will be

administered. The process will include addressing the logistics involved with administering the assessment and ensuring provisions to collect and analyze assessment data. Policies and procedures developed will also include steps to ensure that everyone involved understands how to maintain the confidentiality of the assessment data. The kindergarten-assessment data will be incorporated into the R.I. Department of Education's Statewide Longitudinal Data System and into the Rhode Island Instructional Management System (IMS), and it will also be linked to the Early Learning Data System. The IMS, being built with existing Rhode Island RTTT funding, will be available to all educators in the LEAs beginning the 2012-13 school year. The IMS will provide a systematic, coherent, and ongoing combination of curriculum (including standards), instruction, and assessment information to support improvements in student achievement. In a single, Web-based platform, the IMS will provide a holistic, 360° view of each student to support fully informed, evidence-based decision making that drives personalized learning. Policies and procedures for reporting the data from the assessment will be developed to provide informative and valid interpretations of the assessment results. These plans will include specifications for how the data will be used and reported at the school, district, and state level, and the plans will also include ways the State will use the data on a regular basis, both to track progress in closing gaps in school readiness and to inform policy decisions related to investments to support early childhood initiatives to address persistent school-readiness gaps. In addition, professional development will be provided to teachers and administrators on using the kindergarten-assessment data to inform instructional practices at the student, class, and school levels. The timeline for this work to be completed is December 2013.

Supports to Ensure Valid and Reliable Kindergarten Entry Assessment Implementation

In order to ensure valid and reliable implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, comprehensive supports will need to be developed and implemented. These supports will need to be in place for both the individuals who will administer the assessments and for the administrators who will monitor the implementation. Supports for the individuals administering the assessments will include, at a minimum, professional development addressing the Early Learning and Development Standards, administration of the assessments including use of accommodations, valid and reliable assessment of young children, and appropriate use of assessment information. These supports will also include access to and training on technological

supports that will improve the quality and feasibility of assessments and logistical supports, including time and space to conduct assessments. Supports for the administrators who will monitor the implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment will also include, at a minimum, professional development addressing the use of the assessment tool, indicators of valid and reliable assessment of young children, and appropriate use of assessment information for professional-development planning and program-improvement planning to address persistent school-readiness gaps. The timeline for these supports to be developed is June 2014, with training conducted for pilot districts in the summer of 2014.

Piloting and Phasing-In the Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The final component of the *Developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment* project will be the implementation of the identified assessment. This work will actually begin in Year One, with the development and implementation of a legislative strategy to require the use of a common, statewide kindergarten-entry assessment identified by the State. The pilot of the assessment will be conducted during the 2014-15 school year, with revisions and modifications completed by July 2015. The pilot cohort of school districts will be selected from the core communities with the largest percentages of Children with High Needs as well as from at least one district from the remainder of the State, in order to build support for statewide scale-up. In the 2015-16 school year, a second tier of districts serving the next-highest concentrations of Children with High Needs will be phased in, along with any other districts that wish to voluntarily participate. Finally, in 2016-17, the remaining districts will begin implementing the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The budget for this grant is limited to the costs to develop/identify a kindergarten entry assessment and to develop supports to ensure valid and reliable implementation. It does not include costs to implement the assessment. The education funding formula passed by the RI General Assembly in 2009 and described previously was crafted in part to ensure LEAs a predictable, equitable funding stream that covers the costs of implementing the requirements of the Basic Education Program (BEP) regulations. As described in section C(2), the BEP requires that each LEA implement a Comprehensive Assessment System, including assessments conducted for the purpose of guiding instruction. As a result, ongoing funding for a kindergarten entry assessment is included in the education funding formula and has not been included in the budget for this grant.

How this Plan Will Support Children with High Needs

The Kindergarten Assessment planning team will include individuals with knowledge of Children with High Needs to ensure that the Kindergarten Entry Assessment meets unique needs of these children. The team will ensure that through the use of universal design and accommodations, the assessment is accessible, is a valid and reliable assessment of students with a variety of needs, and is free from bias. Additionally, the LEAs that would be supported to pilot and the first to implement this assessment would be the LEAs with the largest numbers of Children with High Needs. By prioritizing the pilot and the initial implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment in communities with high numbers of Children with High Needs, Rhode Island will obtain information on children's readiness and gaps in these communities and can begin to take immediate steps to address issues that emerge. As a result, resources and supports will be targeted more effectively to quickly begin closing these preparation gaps.

How this Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

Not applicable.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Design and implement a legislative strategy to require the use of a common, statewide kindergarten entry assessment by all LEAs	RI Department of Education	RI Early Learning Council; RI KIDS COUNT	X			
Identify a core Kindergarten Assessment planning team to review current research and national trends to identify key	RI Department of Education	Kindergarten teachers, Pre-kindergarten teachers, Special education personnel, School/program		X		

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
assessment issues to be considered.		administrators, Parents, Individuals with expertise in assessment of young children, Individuals with knowledge of English Learners and Children with High Needs, Higher Education representatives, RI Early Learning Council, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT				
Gather stakeholder information using forums, surveys, and focus groups.	RI Department of Education	Kindergarten Assessment planning Team		X		
Identify Kindergarten Entry Assessment.	RI Department of Education	Kindergarten Assessment planning Team		X		
Develop policies and procedures for administration of the assessment and the appropriate use of assessment data.	RI Department of Education	Kindergarten Assessment planning Team			X	
Develop supports for kindergarten teachers and administrators.	RI Department of Education	Kindergarten Assessment planning Team			X	
Train pilot districts using developed supports.	RI Department of Education	Training Consultants			X	
Pilot Kindergarten Entry Assessment.	RI Department of Education	Pilot districts				X

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

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.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

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

Current Status

Rhode Island leaders recognize that improved access to data on young children's development, learning, and participation in early learning programs will help the State:

- ensure that the children most at risk for poor outcomes have priority access to high-quality early learning programs while expanding access and ensuring quality for all young children;
- channel resources to improve the quality of early learning programs while ensuring that these programs remain affordable;
- develop and expand resources to stabilize, strengthen, and stretch the early childhood education workforce to deliver high-quality, developmentally appropriate educational experiences for young children and their families; and
- provide information about individual children to educators across systems (birth through grade 3) who can then use this information to improve and to individualize instructional strategies.

In April 2010, Rhode Island was selected to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) *Ready States Initiative* to plan for the development of coordinated and longitudinal data infrastructure for children ages birth to age 8. Rhode Island was recognized for having many of the critical building blocks in place and for having a strong planning team. An initial planning meeting was held in June 2010, with facilitation provided by staff from the NGA and the Early Childhood Data Collaborative. Additional planning meetings were held locally from July through November 2010 and again in May 2011. Rhode Island team members attended the *Ready States Policy Academy* meetings in July and December 2010 as well as a field trip organized by the Early Childhood Data Collaborative to Harrisburg, Penn., in June 2011 to learn more about Pennsylvania's Early Learning Network data system, which has been recognized for having more of the Essential Data Elements than any other State's early learning data system.

Rhode Island is nearly unique among States because we already have a universal database of young children, beginning at birth. The R.I. Department of Health's KIDSNET data system includes all children born since 1997 and assigns a unique identifier to children when they are born (through Vital Records and the Newborn Screening and Surveillance System) or when they first receive an immunization in the State. Medical providers throughout Rhode Island have access to KIDSNET and use it on a daily basis. Other important users of KIDSNET include: maternal and child-health programs, Head Start agencies and some selected child-care centers, public-school nurses, home visitors, certified lead centers, audiologists, and Managed Care Organizations. KIDSNET tracks the health and developmental history of all children, as part of our primary health-care system, and it includes:

- demographic information from birth certificates;
- newborn screening data;
- immunizations data;
- medical home;
- childhood lead-poisoning data (including screening) ;
- WIC participation;
- Early Intervention participation (Part C of IDEA);
- newborn home-visiting data, from First Connections; and
- foster-care participation.

Rhode Island is currently implementing two major federal grant efforts: the State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant and a Race to the Top (K-12) grant. Both of these projects are vastly improving the R.I. Department of Education's (RIDE) data infrastructure. As part of the SLDS grant, RIDE has begun linking higher education data to K-12 data in the R.I. Data Hub, a robust online data platform that provides the public and researchers with access to cross-agency data, linked at the individual student level but presented only in aggregate form. The SLDS has also provided RIDE with the resources to produce a common course coding system statewide, using the SCED codes, and to develop a common electronic transcript for all students. Perhaps most important, the SLDS grant is funding RIDE's Data Quality Training efforts, directed both at the LEA and SEA. The Race to the Top grant involves the development of several key products that have required a robust expansion of RIDE's data infrastructure. The

demands of a teacher-evaluation system that links individual student-level growth to educators, an instructional-management system that provides accurate data, curriculum materials, professional development modules, and common interim assessments that are administered online have led RIDE to embark on a complete redesign of the agency enterprise architecture.

RIDE's data infrastructure is being rebuilt to provide a broader set of data that can be served to user platforms in near-real time. Planned development at RIDE includes: the expansion of a custom-built automated data-transfer agent that is already functioning to collect data from multiple student-information systems as a scheduled process; a new, highly normalized operational data store adapted from the State Core Model; and a new role-based, single sign-on process that is maintained by RIDE. As a result of this work, RIDE is well positioned to be a center for high-quality data collection, validation, and presentation.

In addition, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT works very closely with the State agency administrative data systems and annually reports on more than 10 early childhood systems indicators at the State and city or town level (children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start, accredited ECE programs, children in Early Intervention, children receiving a child-care subsidy, licensed capacity of child-care or early learning centers and family child-care homes, and many others). This database, updated annually for 15 years, has provided Rhode Island with a strong foundation for analyzing community needs and program capacity.

Early Learning Data System Planning in Rhode Island

Through the Early Learning Data System planning process, Rhode Island leaders developed a set of **8 critical early learning and development-policy questions that require improved access to cross-sector data:**

1. How many children are in various Early Learning and Development programs (access of unduplicated children by type of setting, location, and quality)?
2. How much high-quality early care and education programming are children receiving (attendance)?
3. How many different programs do children attend before entering kindergarten (enrollment stability and overlap)?
4. Which early care and education programs are high-quality?

5. Does program quality improve over time? What are the barriers for program-quality improvement?
6. How many early childhood professionals are qualified by meeting specific, established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g., core competencies, career-lattice education levels)?
7. What are the characteristics of the current workforce (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.)?
8. How many children are on track to succeed, during the early childhood years, at school entry and beyond?

Currently in Rhode Island, key data about young children, early learning programs, and the early childhood workforce is stored **in 6 separate databases managed by 4 separate State departments and one nonprofit organization:**

1. **Welligent** for IDEA Part C programs, managed by the R.I. Department of Human Services and the R.I. Executive Office for Health and Human Services;
2. **In Rhodes** for Child Care Subsidy, managed by the R.I. Department of Human Services;
3. **The R.I. Department of Education Data Warehouse** for preschool special education, State funded Pre-K, and preschool-classroom approval, managed by the R.I. Department of Education;
4. **RICHIST** for child-care licensing, managed by the R.I. Department for Children, Youth, and Families;
5. **BrightStars** for the State's quality-rating and improvement system, managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, under contract from the R.I. Department of Human Services; and
6. **KIDSNET**, managed by the R.I. Department of Health as a universal database that includes child-level demographic, risk, health, and some program-participation data for all children born or living in Rhode Island since January 1, 1997.

In order to answer policy questions about children's access to high-quality early learning programs, Rhode Island needs to have a unified and consistent system for identifying individual children (CHILD ID) and programs (PROVIDER ID) and for tracking enrollment and attendance

and program-quality data across State agencies and funding streams. At this point, each early childhood data system is free-standing, and linking data is a challenge. Frequently, children participate in more than one early learning program. For example, a child may be enrolled in a 4-hour Head Start program and also receive a child-care subsidy for the afternoon hours and during the summer. A child may also be receiving Early Intervention or preschool special-education services while participating in a child-care or Head Start program.

In order to answer policy questions about young children's development and learning, Rhode Island needs to have a consistent system for identifying individual children (CHILD ID) and for tracking developmental-screening and child-assessment data gathered in a variety of settings. In order to track development and learning longitudinally into the public-school system and beyond, data systems used by early-childhood programs would need to link with RIDE data. In order to answer policy questions about professionals working in early learning programs, Rhode Island needs to have a consistent system for identifying individual educators (EDUCATOR ID) and for verifying qualifications and tracking professional-development plans. The data system should also link educators to programs and, ultimately, to classrooms and to individual children.

Rhode Island also needs to develop systems to gather critical data required to answer our policy questions. Important data currently missing from statewide data-management systems includes:

- Rhode Island has **very little data on children participating in Head Start and Early Head Start programs**. The eight Head Start and Early Head Start agencies maintain local databases to manage enrollment, attendance, and other data. Total enrollment data is shared with the federal Office of Head Start. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT gathers and publishes annual October 1st enrollment data by child residence from Head Start and Early Head Start providers.
- There are **no state data on Rhode Island children participating in early learning programs who are not participating in a government-funded programs (private-pay children)**. This group includes many of the typically developing children enrolled as “peer models” in public-school classrooms serving preschool children with IEPs. It is currently not possible to answer the question: “How many children are enrolled in child

care and early learning programs in Rhode Island?,” because we have enrollment information only on children participating in a government-funded program and much of that data is duplicated at the child level when a child is enrolled in more than one type of program.

- Currently, there is **no centralized, shared data system for children’s developmental screening information**. The R.I. Department of Health is currently **expanding KIDSNET** for the Watch Me Grow and Project LAUNCH initiatives to serve as a central, statewide repository for developmental screening data for children ages birth to age 3. RIDE currently collaborates with the R.I. Department of Health to identify and contact families of children ages 3 to 5 who are eligible for Child Outreach screening. Through the Early Learning Reform Plan, RIDE will begin to use KIDSNET as a shared database for Child Outreach screening data.
- **Child assessment information for children enrolled in early learning programs is limited**. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a key building block as it is used statewide by preschool special-education programs and by State-funded Pre-K programs. In addition, some Head Start programs in Rhode Island use Teaching Strategies GOLD to manage child-assessment data.
- There is no **statewide child-assessment information for children at kindergarten entry** or for children in grades K through 2. The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) is administered statewide beginning in grade 3.
- **Information on the quality of early learning programs is limited**. DCYF licensing information and the compliance history of programs is not easily available to the public. BrightStars, Rhode Island’s voluntary statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child-care and early learning programs has quality data on approximately 10 percent of licensed programs. States that have high participation rates for QRIS offer robust, on-going financial incentives to participating programs or make participation mandatory, or both.
- **There are limited data about early childhood educators working in Rhode Island’s early learning and development programs**. Rhode Island does not have a workforce

registry for early childhood educators, and the State has not conducted a statewide workforce study. A statewide workforce registry is an information system that captures workforce demographics and verified educational data about early childhood and school-age practitioners based on a state framework of career levels and professional development. Building blocks for a registry in Rhode Island include: ***DCYF licensing***, which collects self-reported staff education information (not entered into a database); ***BrightStars***, which collects and verifies key staff education information for programs voluntarily participating in the QRIS; ***Ready to Learn Providence*** which has a database of individuals who have participated in agency-sponsored trainings and has a another database of educators participating in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood project; ***the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) RI-CERT database***, which includes information on educators with an Early Childhood teaching certificate (Pre-K to grade 2) or an Early Childhood Special Education teaching certificate. RIDE also has data on individuals who have completed the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards professional-development courses.

In June 2011, Rhode Island’s Early Learning Council approved an initial plan developed by the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System team to build a coordinated early learning data system by continuing planning efforts using existing resources and focusing on linking existing State data systems. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge federal grant opportunity would give Rhode Island substantially more resources and increased accountability to create a coordinated data system.

Rhode Island’s High-Quality Plan to Build an Early Learning Data System

Key Goals

Goal 1: Create a governance structure and data-oversight process that ensures shared planning, access, and use of the Early Learning Data System across State departments, by early learning intermediary organizations, and by early learning programs.

Goal 2: Expand the R.I. Department of Education’s State Longitudinal Data System (the RIDE Data Warehouse) and build a strong link to the R.I. Department of Health’s KIDSNET database to track information on: 1) young children’s participation and

attendance in early learning programs; 2) young children’s learning and development; 3) early learning programs and classrooms; and, 4) the early learning workforce.

Goal 3: Expand the R.I. Department of Health’s KIDSNET database to track information on children’s developmental screening and follow-up action.

Goal 4: Build infrastructure to track data on young children’s development and learning from birth to kindergarten entry, including development and implementation of a statewide common formative child-assessment system during the early childhood years and at entry to kindergarten.

Overview of Key Activities and Implementation Plan

With the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) will lead the effort to build the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System as an expansion of the RIDE Data Warehouse. RIDE will build on the cross-departmental early learning data-system planning work accomplished to date with the support of the National Governors Association. The Rhode Island Early Learning Council will establish a cross-departmental, public-private **planning and governing body** for the Early Learning Data System development and implementation phase. The planning/governing body will work with RIDE to design the data system and to develop strategies to ensure shared data access and use across state agencies and by early learning intermediary organizations (e.g., BrightStars, professional development providers) and by early learning programs. The planning/governing body will work with RIDE to develop and share data privacy and security policies and practices to comply with federal, state, and local privacy laws. The governing body will include representation from all key State agencies and data systems (KIDSNET, RIDE, DHS – In Rhodes, DHS – Welligent, DCYF-RICHIST, BrightStars) as well as key data users.

Rhode Island will build on the RIDE data expertise and the infrastructure already built for the State Longitudinal Data System. RIDE has already constructed a logical model to track child enrollment (entrances and exits) and attendance in various schools and programs, to connect children with individual classrooms within schools and programs, and to track educator data by connecting staff to schools and programs, classrooms, and children, as part of the RIDE K-12 data system. Additionally, RIDE also has expertise in developing the physical model for a data warehouse and in developing data-transfer agents that can work with multiple-source data

systems to supply accurate and verifiable data. Building on the RIDE infrastructure will ensure that children's progress can be tracked from the early childhood years through high-school graduation (and beyond, as RIDE is building connections with higher-education data systems).

KIDSNET is also a critical state data hub for information about young children's health, development, and critical risk factors identified at birth. KIDSNET is the database that will track children's participation in evidence-based home-visiting programs funded through the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant. Rhode Island will build a strong linkage between the Early Learning Data System at RIDE and KIDSNET. Rhode Island is currently exploring the possibility of assigning a RIDE student identifier (SASID) to all children at birth in KIDSNET, which houses the universal newborn-screening data for every child born in the state after 1997.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Data System will include all of the Essential Data Elements:

- a unique child identifier (expansion of RIDE student ID system);
- a unique early childhood educator identifier (expansion of RIDE teacher ID system);
- a unique program-site identifier (expansion of RIDE school ID system)
- child and family demographic information (captured from KIDSNET birth certificate data and other sources);
- early childhood educator demographic information by program site (entered during licensing process for community-based programs) with verified data on professional development, educational attainment, and teacher certification (still to be determined how this data will be collected and verified);
- program-level data on structure (entered during licensing process for community-based programs) and quality (captured during BrightStars QRIS and RIDE Preschool classroom approval processes); and
- Child-level data on program participation and attendance data (entered directly by programs).

Data on child exits will be collected through the enrollment and attendance function so that we can begin tracking expulsions of children from early learning programs. Programs will be asked to report the primary reason for dis-enrolling a child from a list of exit codes (e.g., child

behavior, failure to pay, family moved). Systems to track staff compensation, retention, and work environment will be developed. The Rhode Island Early Learning Data System will track children's development and learning as measured through developmental screenings (housed at KIDSNET) and through formative child assessment, as measured through Teaching Strategies GOLD (a Web-based subscription database) for each individual child. Kindergarten-entry assessment data will also be linked into RIDE's Data Warehouse with the same unique student or child ID.

It will be absolutely essential to ensure shared access and use of the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System across State agencies and funding streams. It is also critical to ensure shared access by key early childhood intermediary organizations (e.g., agencies implementing BrightStars, T.E.A.C.H., and professional-development and technical-assistance organizations). To accomplish this, a plan for data integration and streamlined data entry will be developed. Links to existing data systems that must be maintained will be ensured, but the identification of any data that can be entirely housed within the new Rhode Island Early Learning Data System will also be evaluated. For example, maintaining child-care and early learning program-licensing data in RICHIST (a data system built to manage child-welfare data) will likely be unnecessary if all required licensing data can be housed within the new Early Learning Data System.

During the design phase, Rhode Island will develop standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions that can be used across State agencies and programs. The process will be informed by previous and ongoing work, including the efforts of the National Center for Education Statistics, to develop Common Education Data Standards and the efforts of the National Workforce Registry Alliance to develop and promulgate common data elements for early childhood and school-age workforce registries.

Rhode Island will identify and develop data-system reporting mechanisms for compliance reporting, continuous quality improvement, and key policy questions. It will be important to develop reports at the State level and by funding stream (e.g., Child Care Assistance Program, Head Start, Early Intervention). A key goal is to build reporting mechanisms so that individual early learning programs can access data about their own program to inform continuous improvement (e.g., individual programs could run enrollment and attendance reports or staff retention reports). Early childhood educators should also have access to information that will

inform instruction. Rhode Island will develop an early learning reporting mechanism for pediatricians and family physicians through KIDSNET so that health-care providers can help promote access to high-quality early learning programs.

Rhode Island will develop and implement training, technical support, and incentives for early learning programs and State administrators to support data entry and data transfers. An inventory of data capacity and a prioritized list of technology needs and upgrades to improve efficiency and data quality (e.g., computer access for family child-care providers to enter enrollment and attendance data, laptops or tablets for licensors to use on monitoring visits, laptops or tablets for Early Intervention providers to use during home visits for formative child assessments, computer access for early childhood educators in early childhood classrooms) will be developed. Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge resources will be used to build the technological capacity of data users statewide and to develop supports which will exist beyond the life of the grant to maintain the use of the high-quality early learning data system which is developed.

Timeline, Key Activities and Milestones

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
Establish cross-department, public-private planning and oversight body for the Early Learning Data System.	RIDE	DCYF DHS/BrightStars DHS DOH Rhode Island KIDS COUNT RI Early Learning Council Ready to Learn Providence RI Head Start Assn. Community Stakeholders	X	X	X	X
Inventory existing data systems and review data needs.	RIDE	DCYF DHS/BrightStars DHS (EI and Child Care)	X			

Key Activity	Agency/ Organization Responsible	Other Parties Involved	Year			
			1	2	3	4
		DOH RI Head Start Association Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Ready to Learn Providence				
Design data system and develop policies and strategies re: data access and quality.	RIDE	Planning/Oversight Body	X	X		
Build and pilot test data system in phases.	RIDE	Planning/Oversight Body Future Data System Users		X	X	X
Roll out data system in phases.	RIDE	Planning/Oversight Body Data System Users			X	X

How This Plan Will Support the Needs of Children with High Needs

Building an Early Learning Data System will vastly improve Rhode Island's capacity to focus resources to better serve Children with High Needs. The Data System will identify which children are enrolled in which programs and whether the programs are high-quality. Access to shared data will lead to better-coordinated and more effective services and to more seamless transitions for Children with High Needs. A centralized, shared data system for children's developmental-screening information and action from birth to kindergarten entry will be accessible by pediatricians and early learning programs, two groups with regular access to young children, and will help children access needed services. In addition, by linking to both universal newborn screening data and to the Rhode Island education data system, Rhode Island will have the ability to monitor the progress of children from birth through high-school graduation and to use this information to make more informed program and policy decisions.

How This Plan Will Address the Needs of the Different Types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable.

All sectors of the early learning and development field will be involved in the design, development, and testing of the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System. Key sectors have

been at the table for more than one year in the planning phase – including the DHS Child Care Subsidy Program, the DHS Early Intervention Program, DCYF child care licensing, RIDE Preschool Special Education, RIDE Pre-K, the Head Start Collaboration Office, the R.I. Department of Health, and key early childhood organizations (including BrightStars, Ready to Learn Providence, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT). Notably, Rhode Island’s Head Start programs have been active members of the planning team and have expressed an interest and willingness to enter child participation information into a shared, state data system. Rhode Island will plan to build Effective Data Practices into core Program Standards (e.g. BrightStars, licensing, and RIDE Preschool Approval) to incentivize and recognize programs that use the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System. Through licensing, we will require participation in a workforce registry to track workforce demographics, qualifications, and professional development.

VII. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Note about the Absolute Priority:

The absolute priority describes items that a State must address in its application in order to receive a grant. Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, they address this priority throughout their responses to the selection criteria. Applications must meet the absolute priority to be considered for funding. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority

Priority 1: Absolute Priority – Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.

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.

Note about Competitive Preference Priorities: Competitive preference priorities can earn the applicant extra or “competitive preference” points.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority – Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

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.

If the State chooses to respond to this competitive preference priority, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring this priority, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the priority is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); and the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority:

Rhode Island's High-Quality Plan to Include all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

A core priority of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan is to measurably increase access to high-quality early learning programs particularly by Children with High Needs. We will know we are making progress on this goal when there are more early learning programs serving Children with High Needs that receive a rating in the top tiers of quality (4 star and 5 star) when rated by BrightStars, Rhode Island's tiered quality rating and improvement system. A parallel goal is to decrease the number of early learning programs that are in the lower quality tiers. Improving program quality, with special attention to programs that serve Children with High Needs, is critical to improving outcomes and closing the gap between children with high needs and their peers. In this key area, the Rhode Island Early Learning Reform Plan focuses on three specific priorities:

1.) Include all licensed and state-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Currently, Rhode Island's tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, BrightStars, works with all community-based (not run by public schools), licensed centers, family child-care homes and school-age programs in the State. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning

Challenge, BrightStars will be revised and expanded to include all State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs, including all licensed child-care and early learning programs (child-care centers, preschools, nursery schools, family child-care homes, and center-based Early Head Start and Head Start) and all center-based early learning programs operated by the public schools (IDEA Preschool and Title I classrooms and any other State- or locally funded preschool classrooms). See Section B2 of this application for a detailed plan to require participation in BrightStars by the end of 2013 while dramatically expanding support for program-quality improvement (found in Section B4 of this application).

Bringing all early learning programs into one program-quality measurement and improvement system has several advantages:

- It will help parents understand all of the program-enrollment options for children at various ages. Including all programs in the same BrightStars database will help parents search for programs based on the age of their child, program location, and other factors (such as hours, costs, and type of services provided – e.g., state Pre-K, Head Start, child-care subsidy) and to review the quality of those programs based on an independent, valid, and reliable assessment of quality.
 - It will dramatically expand the real-time data available about program quality so that State leaders can better understand barriers to program-quality improvement and disparities in the early learning system. These data can then be used to better focus resources on improving the quality of programs serving Children with High Needs and to improve access to high-quality programs.
 - It will help to improve coordination and collaboration among community-based programs and public school-based programs. When all programs are in the same system, they can understand one another better and they can share resources for quality improvement.
- Rhode Island has already designed and implemented the research-based, statewide

BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is a joint partnership across the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, the Rhode Island Department of Health and the United Way of Rhode Island. The BrightStars TQRIS is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children.

BrightStars TQRIS uses a five-star rating system and is built on a strong research base, a deep and focused community input process that included parents and providers, and the dedicated efforts of public and private partners who financed the planning, development and launch of the BrightStars TQRIS from 2008 through the present. Rhode Island will build on this excellent foundation to ensure that all early learning and development programs in the state participate in and benefit from the BrightStars TQRIS and make significant progress in achieving high quality standards that we know produce better outcomes for children, especially the children with the most risk factors to healthy child development.

Rhode Island will require all early learning and improvement programs (Early Head Start, Head Start, child care centers, family child care homes, special education preschool, public Pre-K, and RIDE approved preschools) to participate in the BrightStars TQRIS. Child care licensing will be aligned within the BrightStars framework – essentially requiring all licensed programs to enter the TQRIS as part of the licensing process. RIDE Approval Standards, licensing standards, and BrightStars Program Standards will also be aligned so that there can be efficiencies in terms of staffing and clarity on what the ratings mean in terms of program quality across different approval and assessment processes. There will also be a clear way to inform parents when a program has a RIDE Approval for preschool classrooms as well as a BrightStars rating.

As Rhode Island moves to a system in which all early learning programs are required to participate in BrightStars, we will validate the quality levels within the five star rating system. We will work with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of BrightStars to validate its effectiveness at differentiating the quality of programs and compare children's learning and development for those enrolled in lower tier programs vs. higher tier programs. This will enable us to make revisions in the standards as needed to ensure the validity of the levels in terms of the quality and the impact on child outcomes across all domains of child development.

Support Program Improvement and Increase Access

Professional development, training, and technical assistance resources will be expanded statewide to help programs serving concentrations of Children with High Needs make necessary quality improvements and meeting higher-quality BrightStars benchmarks. Technical assistance programs that will be expanded and aligned with BrightStars include the Rhode Island Early

Learning Standards Project and the Child Care Support Network. Rhode Island will also expand provider access to higher education by expanding the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program to serve more early childhood educators seeking AA and BA degrees. Focused technical assistance and training resources will be developed and funded to address the quality improvement needs of Spanish-speaking and English-Speaking family child care providers serving Children with High Needs and infant-toddler programs serving Children with High Needs. Technical assistance and program improvement grants will be prioritized to those programs serving low-income, at-risk, high-need populations and in areas where it is determined that facility/space improvements will result in higher program quality or safer, healthier environments for children.

Rhode Island will also strengthen and expand the resources available to programs to support continuous quality improvement by developing and offering program improvement grants to programs seeking to make improvements to move up one or more levels within BrightStars. Rhode Island will implement tiered quality enhancement payments for the programs serving children with child care subsidies, with programs at higher levels of quality receiving higher payments. This system will incentivize and support program quality improvement. Higher rates will also expand access to high-quality programs for Children with High Needs.

Strengthening Licensing

Rhode Island currently licenses family child-care homes caring for four or more unrelated children. Though there is agreement with the goal of bringing smaller family child-care providers into the licensing system, Rhode Island has decided that its first priority is to strengthen licensing practices and policies for the programs that are already regulated. Therefore, at this time, Rhode Island does not plan to expand family child-care regulation to include providers caring for 2 or 3 unrelated children until we have completed several reform strategies outlined below.

Rhode Island intends to work closely with the National Alliance of Regulatory Administration (NARA), a national organization dedicated to promoting excellence in human-care regulation and licensing through leadership, education, collaboration, and services. A key goal is to strengthen our monitoring and enforcement policies and procedures, since Rhode Island has been ranked near the bottom of State rankings for child-care licensing oversight and

enforcement. In 2008, Rhode Island worked with NARA to identify “critical licensing violations” and to develop and implement new monitoring forms and procedures for licensing staff. This work was necessary in order to develop a reliable measure for “compliance with critical licensing regulations” for BrightStars. State leaders are eager to work with national experts again to help us upgrade the licensing system for early learning and development programs, with a focus on improving monitoring and enforcement systems.

Our primary goals for Licensing in the next four years are to:

- **Update center and family child-care regulations** to ensure young children’s health and safety and to serve as the foundation for early learning program quality. RI center regulations were last updated in 1993 and family child-care regulations were updated in 2007.
- **Upgrade licensing inspection, monitoring, and enforcement** processes and procedures to conform with nationally recommended practices.
- **Increase the frequency of routine inspections of family child-care homes to at least once per year.** There are 23 States and the District of Columbia that conduct routine inspections of licensed family child-care homes at least once per year. Rhode Island currently inspects family child-care homes only once every two years, unless there are complaints. The recent baseline study of family child care in Rhode Island revealed that many currently licensed family child-care providers are struggling to meet basic health, safety, and child well-being standards, with 64 percent scoring below 3.0 on the FCCERS-R.
- **Integrate data collection for licensing with the new Rhode Island Early Learning Data System** so that there is more easily accessible information about early learning program capacity, enrollment, and structure, and so that basic information about the workforce is collected.
- **Establish a system to share compliance information with families and the public through the Internet.** There are 27 States that post information about child-care licensing compliance history on the Internet. NARA recommends making inspection and complaint reports available online. NARA also recommends requiring posting of all inspection reports and sanction notifications in the facility where current consumers and

personnel can readily see them. Rhode Island does not currently have a system to post inspection reports on the Internet or to require posting of reports and sanctions on site.

All of the action areas listed above have been identified as priorities to be implemented before Rhode Island expands family child-care regulation to include smaller family child-care homes.

Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority – Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry. (10 points)

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 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.

For Competitive Preference Priority 3, a State will earn all ten (10) competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. A State earns zero points if a majority of reviewers determines that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.

Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, applicants address Competitive Preference Priority 3 either in Table (A)(1)-12 or by writing to selection criterion (E)(1).

Under option (a) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the reviewers determine that the State has not implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); under option (b) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the State earns a score of less than 70 percent of the maximum points available for selection criterion (E)(1).

Specify which option the State is taking:

- ☐ (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met.
- ☒ (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).

Note about Invitational Priorities: Invitational priorities signal areas the Departments are particularly interested in; however addressing these priorities will not earn applicants any additional points.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades.

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe the State’s High-Quality Plan to sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years, including by--

- (a) Enhancing the State’s current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards across all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Ensuring that transition planning occurs for children moving from Early Learning and Development Programs to elementary schools;
- (c) Promoting health and family engagement, including in the early grades;

- (d) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do mathematics at grade level by the end of the third grade; and
- (e) Leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Council focuses on the full birth to age 8 continuum in order to maximize impact on each of the key stages of child development, close the readiness gap at school entry and ensure that the gains made in the early years are sustained in the early elementary school years. The Rhode Island Early Learning Council and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as lead agency for Rhode Island's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Application, will address each of the core elements of Invitational Priority 4 as part of Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Agenda. The Council Co-Chairs will establish a work team of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council to take the lead in this area to ensure that the work of the Early Learning Reform Plan is connected comprehensively to the K-3 system so that early learning outcomes are sustained.

As Rhode Island works with urgency to implement the Early Learning Reform Plan set forth in this application, we know we must work concurrently to ensure that the improved school readiness that is achieved when children with high needs have greater access to high quality early learning and development programs is supported and enhanced by high quality education in Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classrooms. Rhode Island will address the following goals:

Increase the percentage of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade

Reading proficiency is fundamental to attain the skills and knowledge needed for success in school and in the workforce. Students with poor reading skills experience difficulty completing academic coursework, graduating from high school and finding and maintaining employment later in life. When reading difficulties are not identified early, children often need expensive and intensive interventions in order to read proficiently. Once they fall behind, most children never catch up to their grade level peers. As stated in the recent report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Early Warning: Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, up until the

end of third grade most children are learning to read, and beginning in fourth grade they are reading to learn.²⁴ They are expected to have the reading skills to learn content in all academic subjects. Yet in the nation, 83 percent of low-income students are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

Rhode Island is on the way to increasing the percentage of students reading at grade level by the end of third grade in the following critical ways. The Reform Plan set forth in this application will accelerate Rhode Island's urgent goal to close the preparation gap by increasing access to high quality early learning programs prior to kindergarten entry. We will work on state policy changes needed to ensure that transition planning is happening as children leave these early learning programs and enter kindergarten. We know that higher-income young children that have had access to high-quality early learning programs, including high quality pre-k, arrive at the kindergarten door with a level of readiness that is sorely lacking in their disadvantaged peers that have not have had access to high quality early learning programs.

Once children enter the K-3 grades it is essential that they have a highly effective teacher in every grade. Students placed with high-performing teachers achieve at demonstrably higher levels.²⁵ Rhode Island is one of 12 states to win the federal Race to the Top K–12 competition. A major focus of Rhode Island's Race to the Top K–12 plan is improving educator effectiveness through a new educator evaluation system, human capital development, and new training opportunities and classroom tools for teachers designed to increase the numbers of highly effective teachers.

Rhode Island currently requires schools to screen and review the reading achievement of every student, every year in order to identify students who are not succeeding with regular reading instruction. The Rhode Island Pre-K-3 Literacy Policy defines children who are struggling with reading in school as those who exhibit one or more of the following characteristics: limited oral language proficiency, poor decoding skills, poor fluency, limited

²⁴ *Early warning! Why reading by the end of third grade matters: A KIDS COUNT special report.* Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

²⁵ Barber, M. & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best performing school systems come out on top.* Boston, MA: McKinsey and Company.

vocabulary, limited background knowledge, limited content-area knowledge, poor comprehension. Rhode Island educators use a systematic problem-solving cycle documented in a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) to provide students who are identified as struggling with reading in the general education system with interventions and supports.

We have also identified core strategies that build on the Rhode Island Pre-K to 3 Literacy Policy in order to further increase the percentage of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Rhode Island will work across state agencies to leverage existing Federal, State, and local resources (including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA) in order to ensure that early learning programs and K-3 classrooms are high-quality teaching and learning environments, including the following core strategies:

- Ensuring that evidence-based literacy instruction is integrated into early childhood and K-3 teacher preparation programs, professional development opportunities, and ongoing classroom supports for teachers and early learning providers.
- Expanding effective professional development opportunities for infant-toddler staff, early childhood teachers and early elementary teachers, with specific attention to developing the instructional skills, classroom environment and teacher-child interactions that support oral language, literacy and social-emotional development.
- Having high expectations for special populations and developing teacher preparation programs and data monitoring systems that support effective instruction and the attainment of high standards by English Language Learners, dual language learners and children with special educational needs.
- Developing and using early warning systems to identify children who are falling behind. Valid, reliable screening and assessment tools should be used to track the language and reading skills of young children. Regularly and frequently monitoring individual student progress and modifying instructional strategies and intensity is needed to meet high standards. Reading specialists must also be made available to support classroom teachers.
- Providing dedicated time for program, classroom, school and district level planning. Aggregate data on children's reading and literacy skills can be used to align resources and implement evidence-based instructional strategies.

- Finding, developing and deploying practical and scalable solutions to chronic absence from school and summer learning loss, two significant contributors to the underachievement of children from low-income families.

Alignment of Early Learning Standards with K – 3 and Transitions

A growing body of evidence suggests that gains for young children are greater when high quality early learning in the preschool years is connected and aligned to kindergarten, first, second, and third grade.²⁶ Best practices need to include enhancing the States' current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards for infants, toddlers and preschool age children across all domains of school readiness. As part of our response to this invitational priority, Rhode Island will work on state policy changes that ensure that effective transition planning promotes positive transitions when children move from early learning and development programs to elementary schools. Rhode Island will use the Rhode Island Early Learning Council to promote social and emotional health and family engagement during the early grades as well as during the early childhood years prior to kindergarten entry. Rhode Island's Early Learning Reform Plan will develop comprehensive Birth to Five Early Learning Standards that address all domains of school readiness, including standards for infants and toddlers and revisions to our current preschool early learning standards. During the process of finalizing the Early Learning Standards, the alignment between the Early Learning Standards and current standards for K–3 will be addressed.

26 Kauerz, K. (2006). *Ladders of learning: Fighting fade-out by advancing PK-3 alignment*. Washington, DC: New America Foundation Early Learning Initiative.

VIII. BUDGET

AWARD INFORMATION

Budget Requirements: To support States in planning their budgets, the Departments have developed the following budget caps for each State. The Secretaries will not consider for funding an application from a State that proposes a budget that exceeds the applicable cap set for that State. The Departments developed the following categories by ranking every State according to its share of the national population of children ages birth through five years old from Low-Income families and identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category²⁷.

Category 1--Up to \$100 million--California, Florida, New York, Texas.

Category 2--Up to \$70 million--Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania.

Category 3--Up to \$60 million--Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin.

Category 4--Up to \$50 million--Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.

In addition to considering other relevant factors (see 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3)), the selection of grantees may consider the need to ensure that early learning and development systems are developed in States with large, high-poverty, rural communities (including States with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas and States with high absolute numbers of high-poverty individuals in rural areas). Awards may be granted to high-quality applications out of rank order to meet this need.

Grant Period: The grant period for this award is December 31, 2011 through December 31, 2015.

²⁷ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2009. American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

In the following budget section, the State is responding to selection criterion (A)(4)(b). The State should use its budgets and budget narratives to provide a detailed description of how it plans to use Federal RTT-ELC grant funds and funds from other sources (Federal, State, private, and local) to support projects under the State Plan. States' budget tables and narratives, when taken together, should also address the specific elements of selection criterion (A)(4)(b), including by describing how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan and do so 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

The budget narratives should be of sufficient scope and detail for the Departments to determine if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable. For further guidance on Federal cost principles, an applicant may wish to consult OMB Circular A-87. (See www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).

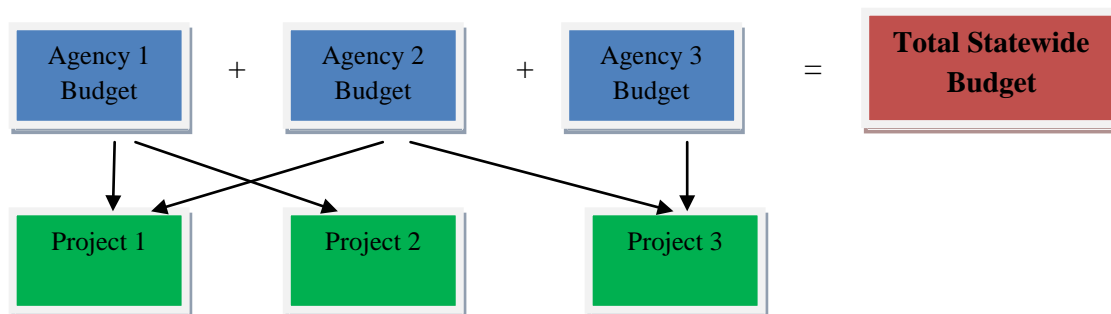
We expect the State to provide a detailed budget by category for each Participating State Agency that rolls up into the total statewide budget. We further expect that the budgets of each Participating State Agency reflect the work associated with fully implementing the High-Quality Plans described under the selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 and describe each Participating State Agency's budgetary role²⁸ in carrying out the State Plan.

For purposes of the budget, we expect that the State will link its proposed High-Quality Plans to "projects" that the State believes are necessary in order to implement its plans. The State might choose to design some projects that address only one criterion's High-Quality Plan, while other projects might address several similarly-focused criteria as one group. For example, the State might choose to have one "management project" focused on criterion (A)(3), organizing and aligning the early learning and development system to achieve success. It might have another "workforce project" that addresses criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) under the Great Early Childhood Education Workforce section.

Some projects may be done entirely by one Participating State Agency, while others may be done by multiple agencies in collaboration with one another. The State, together with its Participating State Agencies, will define the projects required to implement the State Plan and

²⁸ Participating State Agency's budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency's MOU or other binding agreement.

will determine which Participating State Agencies will be involved in each project, as shown below.



To support the budgeting process, we strongly suggest that applicants use the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets prepared by the Departments to build their budgets. These spreadsheets must be submitted together with, but in a file separate from, the application.²⁹ These spreadsheets have formulas built into them that are intended to help States produce the budget tables required within this section.

The following information must be included in the State's budget:

- I. **Budget Summaries:** In this section, the State provides overall budget summary information by budget category, Participating State Agency, and project.
 - a. **Budget Summary by Budget Category.** This is the cover sheet for the budget. (See Budget Table I-1.) States should complete this table as the final step in their budgeting process, and include this table as the first page of the State's budget. (Note: Each row in this table is calculated by adding together the corresponding rows in each of the Participating State Agency Budget by Category tables. If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically.)
 - b. **Budget Summary by Participating State Agency.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each Participating State Agency. (See Budget Table I-2.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-1 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II: Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically for the State.
 - c. **Budget Summary by Project.** This summary lists the total annual budget for each of the projects. (See Budget Table I-3.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-2 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II: Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically for the State.

²⁹ See Application Submission Procedures, section XV. Please note that the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets will not be used by the reviewers to judge or score the State's application. However, these spreadsheets do produce tables that States may use in completing the budget tables that the State submits as part of its application. In addition, the budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

- d. Budget Summary Narrative. This budget narrative accompanies the three Budget Summary Tables and provides the rationale for the budget. The narrative should include, for example, an overview of each Participating State Agency's budgetary responsibilities and descriptions of each project that the State has included in its budget.
- II. Budgets for Each Participating State Agency. In this section, the State describes each Participating State Agency's budgetary responsibilities.³⁰ The State should replicate this section for each Participating State Agency and for each Participating State Agency complete the following:
- a. Participating State Agency By Budget Category. This is the budget for each Participating State Agency by budget category for each year for which funding is requested. (See Budget Table II-1.)
 - b. Participating State Agency By Project. This table lists the Participating State Agency's proposed budget for each project in which it is involved. (See Budget Table II-2.)
 - c. Participating State Agency Budget Narrative. This budget narrative describes the Participating State Agency's budget category line items and addresses how the Participating State Agency's budget will support the implementation of each project in which it is involved.

The State should replicate Budget Part II for each Participating State Agency as follows:

- For Participating State Agency 1: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative
- For Participating State Agency 2: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative

³⁰ Participating State Agency's budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency's MOU or other binding agreement.

BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY**BUDGET PART I -TABLES**

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.

<u>Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	1,748,601	1,936,892	1,779,660	1,665,920	7,131,073
2. Fringe Benefits	930,298	1,025,075	949,188	894,774	3,799,334
3. Travel	9,800	9,800	9,800	9,800	39,388
4. Equipment	123,200	22,100	0	0	145,300
5. Supplies	87,260	62,610	64,210	62,760	276,840
6. Contractual	1,232,033	1,086,175	1,217,765	1,187,285	4,723,258
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	37,360	28,500	7,800	5,700	79,360
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	4,168,552	4,171,152	4,028,423	3,826,427	16,194,554
10. Indirect Costs*	376,306	401,411	373,420	326,884	1,478,020
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	3,972,290	7,505,418	8,976,069	11,473,649	31,927,426
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	8,617,148	12,177,981	13,477,912	15,726,959	50,000,000
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	27,469,328	25,661,119	25,596,219	25,535,715	104,262,681
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	36,086,776	37,839,100	39,074,131	41,262,674	154,262,681

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency--*The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.*

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Participating State Agency	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
R.I. Department of Education	6,196,599	5,126,947	4,984,257	5,138,209	21,446,012
R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families	709,875	716,210	723,920	731,190	2,881,195
R.I. Department of Human Services	26,491,280	29,365,117	30,725,578	32,743,062	119,325,037
R.I. Department of Health	381,022	322,826	332,376	342,214	1,378,438
R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	9,232,000
Total Statewide Budget	36,086,776	37,839,100	39,074,131	41,262,674	154,262,681

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project--*The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.*

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Projects	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	378,321	245,223	249,560	254,046	1,127,150
Using the Early Learning Standards	455,333	696,042	665,864	674,708	2,491,947
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	1,020,292	1,043,902	1,053,452	1,063,290	4,180,936
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	64,019	93,666	48,666	11,973	218,324
Early Learning Data Systems	3,400,487	1,812,877	1,221,104	887,329	7,321,798
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	144,243	181,079	170,007	173,446	668,777
DCYF Administration	709,875	716,210	723,920	731,190	2,881,195
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	849,274	858,973	869,909	892,975	3,471,130
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	979,366	1,253,435	1,217,805	1,222,292	4,672,899
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	500,000	2,028,800	2,028,800	2,028,800	6,586,400
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	90,000	100,000	300,000	300,000	790,000
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	464,625	1,239,000	1,858,000	2,168,250	5,729,875
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families	22,664,415	23,330,393	24,112,544	25,814,874	95,922,226
Higher Education	1,106,500	1,159,500	1,474,500	1,959,500	5,700,000
Professional Development	3,260,025	3,080,000	3,080,000	3,080,000	12,500,025
Total Statewide Budget	36,086,776	37,839,100	39,074,131	41,262,674	154,262,681

BUDGET PART I -NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including

- *A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;*
- *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
- *For each project:*
 - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
 - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
- *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*

Early Learning Reform Plan Budget

Rhode Island will use the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to implement each of the high-quality plans detailed in each section of the State's application. Sixty-six (66) percent of Race to the Top funds are allocated for activities which will directly impact early learning programs and educators. These funds specifically support the program quality improvement projects, professional development opportunities, and access to higher education opportunities described in sections B(4), C(1), C(2), and D(2). Twenty-two (22) percent of grant funds will be used to hire state staff to manage the components of the State Plan which are limited to the time of the grant, including; build the early learning data system, E(2), developing the Early Learning Standards and the accompanying revised and new professional development opportunities aligned with the (ELS), and training cohorts of trainers to implement the new trainings, C(1), developing new professional development opportunities supporting the use of a Comprehensive Assessment System, including the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, C(2) and E(1), and managing the overall work of the grant, A(3). Nine (9) percent of grant funds will be used to contract with individuals, primarily meeting facilitators and researchers, to support the development work of the grant outlined in sections C(1), D(1) and E(1). Resources to support the development work of the grant, including costs for meeting space and supplies, make up .7% of requested funds, and equipment for the construction of the early learning data system accounts

for .3% of requested funds. These funds will be allocated to the following State agencies in alignment with their responsibilities as outlined in each of the identified project plans:

- The Department of Education (RIDE)
 - Race to the Top ELC Grant Management – A(3) - \$2,455,789
 - Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments – B(3) - \$578,999
 - Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment and Validation – B(5) - \$790,000
 - Early Learning Standards Development – C(1) - \$1,127,150
 - Using the Early Learning Standards – C(1) - \$1,691,947
 - Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2) - \$1,970,498
 - Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1) - \$193,555
 - Higher Education – D(2) - \$3,647,500
 - Kindergarten Entry Assessment – E(1) - \$668,777
 - Early Learning Data Systems - E(2) - \$4,619,117
- The Department of Human Services (DHS)
 - Race to the Top ELC Grant Management – A(3) - \$1,015,341
 - Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments – B(3) - \$3,893,900
 - Program Quality Improvements – Focused Technical Assistance (TA) – B(4) - \$6,586,400
 - Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants – B(4) - \$5,729,875
 - Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Young Children – B(4) – \$10,722,226
 - Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1) - \$24,770
 - Higher Education – D(2) - \$1,292,500
 - Professional Development – D(2) - \$3,300,025
- The Department of Health (DOH)
 - Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2) and E(2) - \$1,378,438
- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

- DCYF Administration – B(3), E(2) and Competitive Priority 2 - \$1,481,195
- Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
 - Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2) - \$832,000

Race to the Top Grant Management

The RI Department of Education has been designated as the Lead Agency for the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge by the Governor. As such, it will administer and serve as fiscal agent for the grant, ensure that the high quality plans detailed in the grant are effectively implemented, and ensure that the MOUs executed between RIDE and each of the Participating Agencies, including the scope of work for each MOU are carried out according to the timelines set forth in the application. Within the Department of Human Services, the Office of Child Care has been identified as the project lead for a number of activities outlined in Rhode Island's Reform Plan. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, both agencies will hire and support staff to oversee the management and implementation of the projects described below.

Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessment

As more early learning programs enter the revised tiered quality rating system (BrightStars TQRIS), both the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education will expand program assessment capacity and maintain the current pool of reliable classroom quality assessors to facilitate address the influx of early learning programs entering BrightStars TQRIS.

DCYF Administration

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families licenses child care programs in Rhode Island and will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to change Family Child Care Homes monitoring visits from bi-annual home inspections to annual home inspections.

Program Quality Improvement – Focused Technical Assistance

In order to improve the quality of early learning programs serving children with high needs, the Department of Human Services will work to support programs in the CCDF child care subsidy

program in their quality improvement efforts. A focused technical assistance system will be implemented to help programs develop and implement program improvement plans to support their advancement within BrightStars TQRIS.

Program Quality Improvement –Program Improvement Grants

The Department of Human Services will support the implementation of program improvement plans by offering small Program Improvement Grants to early learning programs, ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,500 per site, to support incremental program quality improvements.

Program Quality Improvements - Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families

The Department of Human Services will implement a tiered quality incentive payment program for child care providers serving families participating in the DHS Child Care Assistance Program. The tiered incentive payments tied to BrightStars quality levels will provide financial support for programs to improve and maintain quality.

Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment and Validation

The RI Department of Education will use Race to the Top resources to contract with two national experts to support the alignment and revisions to the State's existing TQRIS. These contractors will demonstrate expertise in child care licensing regulations, state QRIS systems, and Pre-K program standards. Additionally, a professional facilitator will be identified and hired to lead the revision/realignment process. Finally, once the TQRIS standards have been revised and implemented, RIDE will contract with a researcher to design a study to examine the validity of the tiered quality levels as related to child outcomes.

Early Learning Standards Development

The RI Department of Education will lead the State's effort to develop a set of high-quality Early Learning Standards for children ages birth to five. RIDE will hire 1 FTE to coordinate the Early Learning Standards Development and to implement key activities promoting the use of the Early Learning Standards (described next). Race to the Top funds will also be used to convene (costs for space and meeting supplies) and manage (meeting facilitators) the Early Learning Advisory groups, the Standards Development Teams, and the Stakeholder Feedback sessions. A national

expert will be hired to support the development work with research and an assessment of the alignment of existing resources. Finally, funds are allocated for the design, printing, and distribution of Standards booklets, posters, and family resources.

Using the Early Learning Standards

The RI Department of Education will lead the State's effort to promote the use of the early learning standards using a variety of activities. The FTE mentioned above will also assume responsibility for revising existing professional development and family engagement resources and ensuring the standards are incorporated into Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks and Program Standards, and will design and manage the Curriculum Review Process. Two additional FTEs will be hired; one to develop new professional development and family engagement resources based on the new infant toddler standards, and one to coordinate the increased number of professional development and family engagement opportunities supported by the RTT funds. Finally, the funds will also be used to support the increased capacity of the State to provide Early Learning Standards training via Train the Trainer opportunities and increased access to Early Learning Standards professional development opportunities.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems

The State's efforts to support the use of Comprehensive Assessment Systems will be managed by the Departments of Education and Health, and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The funds will be used to:

- hire and support staff who will also support the State's Plan to develop/identify and implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (described below).
- develop or identify and implement professional development experiences to support the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies in child assessment for teachers and administrators and to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system reliably
- develop and implement Train the Trainer supports to expand the capacity of professional development providers to support the workforce in this important area.

- support primary care providers to implement systems of standardized developmental screening for children birth to age 3
- increase developmental screening of 3-5 year olds through the development of a public awareness campaign and the regional training of screeners to conduct screenings appropriate for English learners
- fund community-based efforts that engage primary health care providers with families in evidence-based interventions
- ensure data collection, entry, and analysis of developmental screening data
- identify and train a pool of assessors to achieve reliability on standardized classroom quality assessments.
- identify and invest in technological supports to facilitate seamless, effective child assessment data entry that allows teachers to collect and enter child observation data the
- implementation of the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) assessment system in all Early Intervention Programs statewide without redundancy of effort and to incentivize the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development

The Department of Education will lead the State's effort to develop the Workforce Knowledge and Competency (WKC) Frameworks for special educators, administrators/education coordinators, and higher education/professional development providers. The Department of Human Services will develop the WKC framework for family child care providers. Race to the Top funds will be used to contract with researchers and meeting facilitators during the development and to support the final document design and publication.

Higher Education

The Department of Education will contract out RTT funds to support the expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program. The Department of Human Services will expand The Early Childhood Education & Training Certificate program at CCRI, a cohort model that utilizes peer

networks, coaching, and mentoring combined with academic coursework, to serve a cohort of 70 additional students. In addition to these expansions, DHS will ensure that the Associate's degree program in Early Childhood Education at the Community College of Rhode Island seeks NAEYC accreditation.

Professional Development

The Department of Human Services will use Race to the Top funds to contract with a researcher to perform a high-quality workforce study within the first year of the grant. DHS will design a structured Professional Development Approval Process for community-based professional development in order to identify those offerings that are aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks and will review existing professional development opportunities. DHS will then expand access to aligned, high-quality professional-development opportunities.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The RI Department of Education will lead the State's effort to develop a common, State-wide Kindergarten Assessment. This work will be managed by the FTE who will also support the State's Comprehensive Assessment Plan. Race to the Top funds will also be used to convene (costs for space and meeting supplies) and manage (meeting facilitators) the Kindergarten Assessment Planning Team and the Stakeholder Input sessions. A national expert will be hired to support the development work with research and an assessment of the alignment of existing resources. Funds are also allocated for the development of policies and procedures for administration of the assessment and the appropriate use of assessment data. Finally, RTT funds will be used to train trainers and technical assistance providers to support the implementation of the kindergarten assessment in the core cities.

Early Learning Data System Development

The RI Department of Education will implement the State's Plan to develop an Early Learning Data System which links with the Department of Health public health data system. The development of the Data system will be supported by four FTEs over the course of the grant. RTT funds will also be used to purchase equipment, software, and licenses, necessary to complete the work. Funds have also been allocated to support state-wide training on the use of

the new data system once developed and to incentivize participation in training and use of the data system.

1) Personnel - \$7,131,073

The following Participating State Agencies will hire staff to support RTT projects.	# FTE	Base Salary
<u>Department of Education</u>	13 – 100%	\$83,600 - \$100,000
<u>Department of Human Services</u>	2 -100% 1-50%	\$40,000- \$60,000
<u>Department of Health</u>	2 - 100%	\$56,508- \$60, 862
	2-50%	\$28,254
<u>Department of Children, Youth and Families</u>	3 – 100%	\$43,157- \$71,383

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$1,748,601	\$1,936,892	\$1,779,660	\$1,665,920	\$7,131,073

2) Fringe Benefits - \$3,799,334

Includes health, vision, dental, social security, assessed fringe benefits costs, retirement, and retirement health, calculated at the fringe rate for each state agency.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$930,298	\$1,025,075	\$949,188	\$894,774	\$3,799,334

3) Travel – \$39,388

This is \$0.51 per mile for in-state travel during the grant. Information pertaining to anticipated miles is available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative.

4) Equipment – \$145,300

- RIDE: \$128,300

- DCYF: \$7,500
- DHS: \$9,500

Details available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative

5) Supplies - \$276,840

- RIDE: \$209,240
- DCYF: \$18,000
- DHS: \$20,600
- DOH: \$29,000

Details available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative

6) Contractual - \$4,723,258

- RIDE: \$3,579,890
- DHS: \$264,920
- DOH: \$46,448
- EOHHS: \$832,000

Details available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$1,232,033	\$1,086,175	\$1,217,765	\$1,187,285	\$4,723,258

7) Training Stipends —No Request

8) Other \$79,360

- RIDE: \$78,760
- DHS: \$600

Details available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$37,360	\$28,500	\$7,800	\$5,700	\$79,360

9) Total Direct Costs - \$16,194,554

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$4,168,552	\$4,171,152	\$4,028,423	\$3,826,427	\$16,194,554

10) Indirect Costs - \$1,478,020

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$376,306	\$401,411	\$373,420	\$326,884	\$1,478,020

Rhode Island's official negotiated cost rate of 13%.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws—\$31,927,426

- RIDE: \$3,847,500
- DHS: \$28,079,926

Details available in each Participating State Agency Budget Narrative

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance— \$400,000

13) Total Funds Requested - \$50,000,000

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$8,617,148	\$12,177,981	\$13,477,912	\$15,726,959	\$50,000,000

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY

The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

BUDGET PART II -TABLES

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.*

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency's budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

1) Personnel

Provide:

- The title and role of each position to be compensated under this grant.
- The salary for each position.
- The amount of time, such as hours or percentage of time, to be expended by each position.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The importance of each position to the success of specific. If curriculum vitae, an organizational chart, or other supporting information will be helpful to reviewers, attach in the Appendix and describe its location.

2) Fringe Benefits

Provide:

- The fringe benefit percentages for all personnel.
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

3) Travel

Provide:

- An estimate of the number of trips.
- An estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs for each trip.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the travel, how it relates to project goals, and how it will contribute to project success.

4) Equipment

Provide:

- The type of equipment to be purchased.
- The estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased.
- The definition of equipment used by the State.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The justification of the need for the items of equipment to be purchased.

5) Supplies

Provide:

- An estimate of materials and supplies needed, by nature of expense or general category (*e.g.*, instructional materials, office supplies).
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

6) Contractual

Provide:

- The products to be acquired and/or the professional services to be provided.
- The estimated cost per expected procurement.
- For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award.
- A brief statement that the State has followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose and relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

7) Training Stipends

Note:

- The training stipend line item only pertains to costs associated with long-term training programs and college or university coursework that results in a credential or degree, not workshops or short-term training supported by this program.
- Salary stipends paid to teachers and other early learning personnel for participating in short-term professional development should be reported in Personnel (line 1).

Provide:

- Descriptions of training stipends to be provided, consistent with the “note” above.
- The cost estimates and basis for these estimates.

Explain:

- The purpose of the training.

8) Other

Provide:

- Other items by major type or category.
- The cost per item (printing = \$500, postage = \$750).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the expenditures.

9) Total Direct Costs

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures, across all budget categories in lines 1-8, for each year of the budget.

10) Indirect Costs

Provide:

- Identify and apply the indirect cost rate. (See the section that follows, Budget: Indirect Cost Information.)

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Provide:

- The specific activities to be done by localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners.
- The estimated cost of each activity.
- The approximate number of localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners involved in each activity.
- The total cost of each activity (across all localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of each activity and its relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Department expects that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Provide:

- The amount per year set aside for this Participating State Agency.

Note: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

13) Total Funds Requested

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 9-12, for each year of the budget.

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

Provide:

- A description of the sources of other funds the State is using to support the projects in the State Plan.
- A description of how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used for activities and services described in the State Plan, if applicable.
- Any financial contributions being made by private entities such as foundations.

Explain:

- Each funding source, the activities being funded and their relation to the State Plan or specific project, and any requirements placed on the use of funds or timing of the activity.

14) Total Budget

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 13 and 14, for each year of the budget

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Education</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	1,268,800	1,441,964	1,273,043	1,147,325	5,131,132
2. Fringe Benefits	624,884	710,167	626,955	565,039	2,527,045
3. Travel	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,688	10,188
4. Equipment	106,200	22,100	0	0	128,300
5. Supplies	47,710	53,260	54,860	53,410	209,240
6. Contractual	742,320	868,290	999,880	969,400	3,579,890
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	36,760	28,500	7,800	5,700	78,760
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	2,829,174	3,126,781	2,965,038	2,743,562	11,664,555
10. Indirect Costs*	260,297	294,047	263,000	213,932	1,031,276
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	477,500	885,000	1,000,000	1,485,000	3,847,500
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	3,666,971	4,405,828	4,328,038	4,542,494	16,943,331
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	2,529,628	721,119	656,219	595,715	4,502,681
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	6,196,599	5,126,947	4,984,257	5,138,209	21,446,012
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations,</p>					

<u>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Education</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p>Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Education</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	378,321	245,223	249,560	254,046	1,127,150
Using the Early Learning Standards	455,333	696,042	665,864	674,708	2,491,947
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	431,270	513,076	513,076	513,076	1,970,498
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	39,250	93,666	48,666	11,973	193,555
Early Learning Data Systems	3,400,487	1,812,877	1,221,104	887,329	7,321,798
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	144,243	181,079	170,007	173,446	668,777
DCYF Administration	0	0	0	0	0
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	594,554	610,273	616,400	634,562	2,455,789
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	185,641	189,710	199,580	204,067	778,999
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	90,000	100,000	300,000	300,000	790,000
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education	477,500	685,000	1,000,000	1,485,000	3,647,500
Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Total Budget	6,196,599	5,126,947	4,984,257	5,138,209	21,446,012

Rhode Island Department of Education Budget Narrative

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to implement a variety of key activities proposed and detailed in the following project areas of the State's application:

- Race to the Top Grant Management – A(3)
- Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments – B(3)
- Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment and Validation – B(5)
- Early Learning Standards Development – C(1)
- Using the Early Learning Standards – C(1)
- Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2)
- Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1)
- Higher Education – D(2)
- Kindergarten Entry Assessment – E(1)
- Early Learning Data Systems - E(2)

Race to the Top Grant Management

The RI Department of Education has been designated as the Lead Agency for the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge by the Governor. As such, it will administer and serve as fiscal agent for the grant, ensure that the high quality plans detailed in the grant are effectively implemented, and ensure that the MOUs executed between RIDE and each of the Participating Agencies, including the scope of work for each MOU are carried out according to the timelines set forth in the application. To accomplish this work effectively, RIDE will hire four FTEs during the grant period; one grant coordinator, two grant officers, and one administrative support staff. RIDE's experience managing the work of it existing Race to the Top award provided the rationale for the level of support requested.

Program Quality Improvement-Program Assessment

The RI Department of Education will participate in the revision and realignment of the State's existing Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. One FTE will be hired to participate in this process and to manage the resulting work as it relates to the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards, including revisions to the standards and approval process, redesigning approval documents, and establishing coordinated approval protocols. This person will also conduct approval application reviews which are expected to increase in number over the

course of the grant as more programs receive the resources they need to improve and more are required to participate in the TQRIS.

Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment and Validation

The RI Department of Education will use Race to the Top resources to contract with two national experts to support the alignment and revisions to the State’s existing TQRIS. These contractors will demonstrate expertise in child care licensing regulations, state QRIS systems, and Pre-K program standards. The cost for these experts is based on the State’s past experience using national experts to design its current QRIS. Additionally, a professional facilitator will be identified and hired to lead the revision/realignment process. Finally, once the TQRIS standards have been revised and implemented, RIDE will contract with a researcher to design a study to examine the validity of the tiered quality levels as related to child outcomes.

Early Learning Standards Development

The RI Department of Education will lead the State’s effort to develop a set of high-quality Early Learning Standards for children ages birth to five. RIDE will hire 1 FTE to coordinate the Early Learning Standards Development and to implement key activities promoting the use of the Early Learning Standards (described next). Race to the Top funds will also be used to convene (costs for space and meeting supplies) and manage (meeting facilitators) the Early Learning Advisory groups, the Standards Development Teams, and the Stakeholder Feedback sessions. A national expert will be hired to support the development work with research and an assessment of the alignment of existing resources. Finally, funds are allocated for the design, printing, and distribution of Standards booklets, posters, and family resources. The costs for each of these expenses is derived based on like efforts - particularly the recent development of RI Core Competencies for Teachers and Teacher Assistants.

Using the Early Learning Standards

The RI Department of Education will lead the State’s effort to promote the use of the early learning standards using a variety of activities. The FTE mentioned above will also assume responsibility for revising existing professional development and family engagement resources and ensuring the standards are incorporated into Workforce Knowledge and Competency

Frameworks and Program Standards, and will design and manage the Curriculum Review Process. Two additional FTEs will be hired; one to develop new professional development and family engagement resources based on the new infant toddler standards, and one to coordinate the increased number of professional development and family engagement opportunities supported by the RTT funds. Finally, the funds will also be used to support the increased capacity of the State to provide Early Learning Standards training via Train the Trainer opportunities and increased access to Early Learning Standards professional development opportunities.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems

The RI Department of Education's efforts to implement the State's Plan to support the use of Comprehensive Assessment Systems will be managed by one FTE who will also support the State's Plan to develop/identify and implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (described below). This person will develop or identify professional development experiences to support the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies in child assessment for teachers and administrators and to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system reliably. This person will also develop Train the Trainer supports to expand the capacity of professional development providers to support the workforce in this important area. The Race to the Top funds will support these Train the Trainer sessions and will also support the implementation of the assessment trainings statewide by these training consultants. The RTT funds will also be used to increase developmental screening of 3-5 year olds through the development of a public awareness campaign and the regional training of screeners to conduct screenings appropriate for English learners. Additionally, funds will be used to identify and train a pool of assessors to achieve reliability on standardized classroom quality assessments. The cost for these trainings is based on the State's current efforts to support the use of assessment and the estimated cost to enhance and expand those efforts. Finally, funds will be used to identify and invest in technological supports to facilitate seamless, effective child assessment data entry that allows teachers to collect and enter child observation data without redundancy of effort and to incentivize the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development

The RI Department of Education will lead the State's effort to develop the Workforce

Knowledge and Competency (WKC) Frameworks for special educators, administrators/education coordinators, and higher education/professional development providers. Race to the Top funds will also be used to convene (costs for space and meeting supplies) and manage (meeting facilitators) the Workforce Knowledge and Competency development groups and the Stakeholder Feedback sessions. A national expert will be hired to review the alignment of higher education curricula with the final WKC Framework for Teachers and Teacher Assistants. RTT funds will support two Summits (space and facilitation costs) to engage higher education in the alignment of their curricula. Finally, funds are allocated for the design, printing, and distribution of the WKC Frameworks. The cost for each of these expenses is based on the recent development of RI Core Competencies for Teachers and Teacher Assistants.

Higher Education

The RI Department of Education will contract out RTT funds to support the expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program as follows:

Year One:

- o Bachelor's Degree Program- 30 students
- o Associates Degree Program- 30 students

Year Two:

- o Bachelor's Degree Program 40 students
- o Associates Degree Program- 50 students

Year Three:

- o Bachelor's Degree Program- 50 students
- o Associates Degree Program- 75 students

Year Four

- o Bachelor's Degree Program- 75 students
- o Associates Degree Program- 110 students

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The RI Department of Education will lead the State's effort to develop a common, State-wide Kindergarten Assessment. This work will be managed by the FTE described earlier who will also support the State's Comprehensive Assessment Plan. Race to the Top funds will also be used to

convene (costs for space and meeting supplies) and manage (meeting facilitators) the Kindergarten Assessment Planning Team and the Stakeholder Input sessions. A national expert will be hired to support the development work with research and an assessment of the alignment of existing resources. Funds are also allocated for the development of policies and procedures for administration of the assessment and the appropriate use of assessment data. Finally, RTT funds will be used to hire trainer trainers and technical assistance providers to support the implementation of the kindergarten assessment in the core cities.

Early Learning Data System Development

The RI Department of Education will implement the State's Plan to develop an Early Learning Data System which links with the Department of Health public health data system. The development of the Data system will be supported by four FTEs over the course of the grant.

RTT funds will also be used to purchase equipment, software, and licenses, necessary to complete the work. Funds have also been allocated to support state-wide training on the use of the new data system once developed and to incentivize participation in training and use of the data system.

1) Personnel - \$5,131,132

The following position(s) will be created to support RIDE's RTT projects.	% FTE	Base Salary
<u>Early Learning Standards Coordinator</u> The Early Learning Standards Coordinator will be hired to manage the development of the new early learning standards, manage the design and printing of documents, develop new Fun Family Activity Cards, incorporate Standards into existing program standards and WKC, develop and manage curriculum review process 3-5, ensure alignment with TSG, revise existing professional development opportunities, manage Train the Trainer sessions, and revise existing Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities.	100%	\$83,600

<p><u>Early Learning Standards Infant Toddler Specialist</u></p> <p>The Early Learning Standards Infant Toddler Specialist will be hired to develop new infant toddlers professional development and technical assistance opportunities, develop and manage curriculum review process B-3, ensure alignment with TS GOLD B-3, revise and expand the existing Train the Trainer process to include the certification of trainers for infant and toddler professional development opportunities, pilot new infant and toddler professional development opportunities and make final revisions, train cohorts of trainers to support trainings for infant toddler teachers, develop new Fun Family Activity Parent Training opportunities for parents of infants and toddlers, and revise and expand the existing Fun Family Activities Train the Trainer process to train infant/toddler facilitators.</p>	100%	\$83,600
<p><u>Early Learning Standards Professional Development Specialist</u></p> <p>The Early Learning Standards Professional Development will be hired to train cohorts of trainers to support trainings for preschool teachers and manage the expanded numbers of RIELS training opportunities</p>	100%	\$83,600
<p><u>Early Childhood Assessment Specialist</u></p> <p>The Early Childhood Assessment Specialist will be hired to develop/identify professional development experiences to support the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies in child assessment for teachers and administrators and to use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system reliably, develop Train the Trainer supports to expand the capacity of professional development providers to support the workforce in this</p>	100%	\$83,600

important area, develop contracts and manage the funds allocated to providing professional development in assessment, Child Outreach Screening, and classroom quality assessments, and lead the state's development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment.		
<p><u>Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Approval Specialist</u> The Approval Specialist will participate in the revision and realignment of the State's existing Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, to manage the resulting work as it relates to the Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards, including revisions to the standards and approval process, redesigning approval documents, and establishing coordinated approval protocols, and conduct approval application reviews which are expected to increase in number over the course of the grant as more programs receive the resources they need to improve and more are required to participate in the TQRIS.</p>	100%	\$83,600
<p><u>Early Learning Challenge Grant Coordinator</u> The Early Learning Challenge Grant Coordinator will be hired specifically to lead the overall facilitation and implementation of the Race to the Top plans. This position will work with RIDE staff to facilitate the completion of grant activities and will provide support to RIDE's Office of Human Resources to recruit and hire up to required FTEs.</p>	100%	\$83,600
<p><u>Early Learning Challenge Grant Officer</u> Administration, review, and coordination of federal funds and for associated duties pertaining to the management of</p>	100%	\$83,600

education funds in accordance with accounting and grants management principles and Federal and State rules and regulations.		
<u>Early Learning Challenge Grant Officer</u> Administration, review, and coordination of federal funds and for associated duties pertaining to the management of education funds in accordance with accounting and grants management principles and Federal and State rules and regulations.	100%	\$83,600
<u>Business Analyst</u> The Business Analysts are responsible for gather the business requirements for all software development projects. This includes collecting functional requirements from subject-matter experts, defining data elements required to meet these needs, developing workflow and process flow maps for software use, and possibly developing technical specifications in partnership with applications developers. This is an essential role in our application development that ensures new software is able to meet the all of the functional needs of all stakeholders/users. The influx of new data collections and analyses will required detailed documentation of reporting and analyses needs for the Early Childhood Data priorities.	100%	\$100,000
<u>Applications Developer</u> The Applications Developer will be responsible for expanding RIDE's current data collection systems to include the unique needs of the Early Childhood data. This includes expanding our automate data transfer tool which is used with K-12 districts to receive data in disparate formats on a regular schedule, developing automated data validations for quality control, writing an interface for data review and editing, and writing the	100%	\$100,000

software to dynamically present data to stakeholders in useful reports.		
<u>Database Administrator</u> The Database Administrator is an essential role for building the physical and logical data model, loading the data, tuning the database parameters, and maintaining smooth operations of the expanded database systems required for data collection and analyses.	100%	\$100,000
<u>Collections Manager</u> Collections Managers play an essentially day-to-day role in maintaining the timeliness of data and supporting the collections process. They are responsible for providing technical support for the collection software to the Early Childhood Learning Centers and Programs, managing the collection schedule, and are the first –line of defense in our fight for high-quality data.	100%	\$100,000
<u>Early Learning Challenge Administrative Support</u> The Early Learning Challenge Administrative Support assistant will provide administrative support to RIDE staff leading Early Learning Challenge projects.	100%	\$83,600

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$1,268,800	\$1,411,964	\$1,273,043	\$1,147,325	\$5,131,132

The 3% increase represents an annual cost of living adjustment that is consistent with the budget planning values that are distributed by the State Budget Office. These cost of living adjustments are aligned to state employee collective bargaining agreements.

2) Fringe Benefits - \$2,527,045

Includes health, vision, dental, social security, assessed fringe benefits costs, retirement, and retirement health, calculated at 49.25% of salary for each program staff.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$624,884	\$710,167	\$626,955	\$565,039	\$2,527,045

3) Travel – \$10,880

This is \$0.51 per mile for approximately 5,333 miles of driving during each year.

4) Equipment – \$128,300

Standard equipment cost for a RIDE employee is \$2,500 in year one of employment to cover a computer, phone and a share of printer/fax/scanner. This budget reflects the one-time cost of \$22,500 for 9FTEs.

Using the Early Learning Standards - \$9,200 in equipment to support increased and enhanced trainings, i.e. video cameras (1600 x 2) and LCDs (1,200 x 5)

Early Learning Data System Equipment-- \$2,900 per FTE for computer, monitor, software licenses, desk, and phones, and other equipment. Additionally, technology infrastructure would require four servers-- a test server, a staging server, a production server, and a reporting server at a total cost of \$50,000. For participation in RIDE's storage array, there is a \$10,000 cost.

Software licenses are estimated at \$25,000. The total one-time infrastructure costs are estimated at \$85,000.

5) Supplies - \$209, 240

Standard supplies cost for a RIDE employee is \$1,500 per year to cover office supplies (paper, toner, postage, printing, etc.). This budget reflects the four year cost of \$78,000 for 13 FTEs.

Standard supply cost for one training for 25 people is estimated at \$50 per session and \$850 for 10 session trainings. The supplies for the 6 session Fun Family Activity Parent Training is \$530. This includes costs for copied meeting or training materials and folder or binders.

Early Learning Standards Development – C(1)

- Meeting Costs – supplies \$50 per meeting x 116 = \$5,800.00

Using the Early Learning Standards – C(1)

- Meeting Costs – supplies \$50 per meeting x 80 = \$4,000.00
- Training materials for 10 session training - \$850 x 97 = \$82,450.00
- 6 session FFA Parent Training - \$530 x 48 = \$25,440.00

Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2)

- Meeting Costs – supplies \$50 per meeting x 180 = \$9,000.00

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1)

- Meeting Costs – supplies \$50 per meeting x 56 = \$2,800.00

Kindergarten Entry Assessment – E(1)

- Meeting Costs – supplies \$50 per meeting x 35 = \$1,750.00

6) Contractual - \$3,579,890

Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment and Validation – B(5)

- Expert Consultant - BrightStars QRIS & RIDE Alignment \$30,000
- Expert Consultant - Licensing \$30,000
- Consultant - Facilitator \$30,000
- Validation study involving approximately 100 classrooms - \$700,000

Early Learning Standards Development – C(1)

- Meeting Facilitators \$100/hr x 714 = \$71,400.00
- Researcher \$150/hr x 100 hours = \$15,000.00
- Meeting Recorders – \$80/hr x 39 = \$3,120.00
- Booklet Designers - \$150/hr x 48hrs = \$7,200.00
- Spanish Translation booklets/poster –\$1,550.00
- Spanish Translation parent brochure-\$400.00

Using the Early Learning Standards – C(1)

- Meeting Facilitators \$100/hr x 72 = \$7,200.00
- Trainers- \$80/hr x 6,003= \$480,240.00

- Design FFA cards English - $\$150 \times 50 = \$7,500.00$
- Spanish Translation – $\$95 \times 50 = \$4,750.00$

Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2)

- Trainers- $\$80/\text{hr} \times 3,300 = \$264,000.00$
- Developmental Screening Public Awareness Campaign - $\$25,000.00$
- CLASS training - 3,000 per yr for 8-10 people $\times 4$ years = $\$12,000.00$
- PRISM training– 5,000 per yr for 8-10 people $\times 4$ years = $\$20,000.00$
- CASEBA training– 5,000 per yr for 8-10 people $\times 4$ years = $\$20,000.00$
- Evidence-based interventions in primary care -Year 1 = $\$258,000.00$
- Evidence-based interventions in primary care Year 2-4 $\$314,000 \times 3 = \$942,000$
- Technology contract to incentivize use of TS GOLD – $\$100,000 \times 4 = \$400,000$

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1)

- Booklet Designers - $\$150/\text{hr} \times 135\text{hrs} = \$20,250.00$
- Meeting Facilitators- $\$100/\text{hr} \times 840 = \$84,000.00$
- Researchers $\$150/\text{hr} \times 400$ hours = $\$60,000.00$
- Meeting Recorders – $\$80/\text{hr} \times 117 = \$9,360.00$

Kindergarten Entry Assessment – E(1)

- Meeting Facilitators $\$100/\text{hr} \times 156 = \$15,600.00$
- Researcher $\$150/\text{hr} \times 100$ hours = $\$15,000.00$
- Meeting Recorder – $\$80/\text{hr} \times 39 = \$3,120.00$
- Trainer- $\$80/\text{hr} \times 383 = \$30,640.00$

Early Learning Data Systems - E(2)

- Trainer- $\$80/\text{hr} \times 157 = \$12,560.00$

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$742,320	\$868,290	\$999,880	\$969,400	\$3,579,890

7) Training Stipends —No Request

8) Other \$78,760**Early Learning Standards Development – C(1)**

- Meeting Costs- space \$100 per meeting x 12 = \$1,200.00
- Print 3000 English booklets- \$10,230.00
- Print 2000 Spanish booklets- \$6,820.00
- Print 3000 English posters -\$4,800.00
- Print 2000 Spanish posters-\$3,200.00
- Print 2000 English parent brochures-\$1080.00
- Print 2000 Spanish parent brochures-\$1080.00

Using the Early Learning Standards – C(1)

- Meeting Costs- space \$100 per meeting x 74= 7,400.00
- Print 2,000 English FFA cards – \$10,000.00
- Print 2,000 Spanish FFA cards– \$10,000.00

Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation - C(2)

- Meeting Costs- space \$100 per meeting x 56= \$5,600.00

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development – D(1)

- Meeting Costs- space \$100 per meeting x 50 = \$5,000.00
- Print WKC booklets – 2,600 booklets- \$9,850.00

Kindergarten Entry Assessment – E(1)

- Meeting Costs- space \$100 per meeting x 25= \$2,500.00

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$36,760	\$28,500	\$7,800	\$5,700	\$78,760

9) Total Direct Costs - \$11,664,555

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$2,829,174	\$3,126,781	\$2,965,038	\$2,743,562	\$11,664,555

10) Indirect Costs - \$1,031,276

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$260,297	\$294,047	\$263,000	\$213,932	\$1,031,276

Rhode Island's official negotiated cost rate of 13%.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws—\$3,647,500

Higher Education – D(2)

- TEACH Scholarships Year One:
 - Bachelor's Degree Program- \$8500/yr x 30 students = 255,000
 - Associates Degree Program- \$5000/yr x 30 students =150,000
 - Administration- \$72,500
 - **Year One Total:\$477,500**
- TEACH Scholarships Year Two:
 - Bachelor's Degree Program- \$9000/yr x 40 students = 360,000
 - Associates Degree Program- \$5000/yr x 50 students = 250,000
 - Administration- \$75,000
 - **Year Two Total:\$ 685,000**
- TEACH Scholarships Year Three:
 - Bachelor's Degree Program- \$9500/yr x 50 students = 475,000
 - Associates Degree Program- \$6000/yr x 75 students =450,000
 - Administration- \$75,000
 - **Year One Total:\$1,000,000**
- TEACH Scholarships Year Four
 - Bachelor's Degree Program- \$10,000/yr x 75 students = 750,000
 - Associates Degree Program- \$6000/yr x 110 students = 660,000
 - Administration- \$75,000

- **Year Four Total: \$1,485,000**

TOTAL: \$3,647,500

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance— \$400,000

13) Total Funds Requested - \$16,943,331

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$3,666,971	\$4,405,828	\$4,328,038	\$4,542,494	\$16,943,331

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Human Services</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	120,000	122,400	124,848	127,345	494,593
2. Fringe Benefits	88,616	90,388	92,196	94,039	365,239
3. Travel	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	10,000
4. Equipment	9,500	0	0	0	9,500
5. Supplies	6,200	4,800	4,800	4,800	20,600
6. Contractual	246,920	6,000	6,000	6,000	264,920
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	600	0	0	0	600
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	474,336	226,088	230,344	234,684	1,165,452
10. Indirect Costs*	32,154	28,611	29,165	29,729	119,659
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	3,494,790	6,620,418	7,976,069	9,988,649	28,079,926
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	4,001,280	6,875,117	8,235,578	10,253,062	29,365,037
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	22,490,000	22,490,000	22,490,000	22,490,000	89,960,000
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	26,491,280	29,365,117	30,725,578	32,743,062	119,325,037
<p><u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p><u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning</p>					

<u>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Human Services</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p>Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Human Services</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	0	0	0	0	0
Using the Early Learning Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	0	0	0	0	0
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	24,770	0	0	0	24,770
Early Learning Data Systems	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	0	0	0	0	0
DCYF Administration	0	0	0	0	0
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	254,720	248,699	253,509	258,413	1,015,341
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	793,725	1,063,725	1,018,225	1,018,225	3,893,900
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	500,000	2,028,800	2,028,800	2,028,800	6,586,400
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	464,625	1,239,000	1,858,000	2,168,250	5,729,875
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families	22,664,415	23,330,393	24,112,544	25,814,874	95,922,226
Higher Education	629,000	474,500	474,500	474,500	2,052,500
Professional Development	1,160,025	980,000	980,000	980,000	4,100,025
Total Budget	26,491,280	29,365,117	30,725,578	32,743,062	119,325,037

Rhode Island Department of Human Services Budget Narrative

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to implement a variety of key activities proposed and detailed in the following project areas of the State's application:

- Race to the Top Grant Management – A(3)
- Program Quality Improvement- Program Assessments B(3)
- Program Quality Improvement- Focused Technical Assistance B(4)
- Program Quality Improvement- Program Improvement Grants B(4)
- Program Quality Improvement- Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families B(4)
- Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development D(1)
- Higher Education D(2)
- Professional Development D(2)

Race to the Top Grant Management

Within DHS, the Office of Child Care and the Head Start Collaboration Project will continue to work in partnership towards meeting the goals outlined in Rhode Island's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge State Plan. The DHS Office of Child Care currently employs an Administrator and a Child Care Specialist to carry out the day to day operations of the child care subsidy program and the management of CCDF quality initiatives. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, the DHS Office of Child Care will hire a Program Support Specialist, an Administrative Assistant, and a Systems Support Technician to assist in managing and implementing the projects outlined in the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Reform Projects, as detailed below.

The Director of the RI Department of Human Services will attend the quarterly meetings of the full Early Learning Council or designate a senior level staff alternate to the Council to represent them when they are not available to ensure cross-departmental input and accountability for the Early Learning Council overall and the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Reform Agenda in particular.

Program Quality Improvement- Program Assessments

In order to promote participation in the BrightStars TQRIS, the Department of Human Services will require all early learning programs participating in the CCDF child care subsidy program to participate in BrightStars' TQRIS. As more early learning programs enter the system, DHS will expand program assessment capacity and maintain the current pool of reliable classroom quality assessors to facilitate address the influx of early learning programs entering BrightStars TQRIS. DHS will work to maintain and strengthen monitoring practices for program quality ratings and will collaborate with the RI Department of Education to conduct program quality assessments to strengthen measurement capacity, improve efficiency and streamline the process for providers seeking Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program approval from RIDE.

Program Quality Improvement- Focused TA

In order to improve the quality of early learning programs serving children with high needs, the Department of Human Services will work to support programs in the CCDF child care subsidy program in their quality improvement efforts. A focused technical assistance system will be designed to help programs advance within BrightStars TQRIS. This TA system will include: 1) an Infant/Toddler TA Network for centers, 2) a Preschool TA Network for centers, 3) a Family Child Care TA Network, 4) a Program Administrator TA Network, and 5) a Facilities TA Network.

Program Quality Improvement- Program Improvement Grants

The Department of Human Services will continue to offer small Program Improvement Grants to early learning programs, ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,500 per site, to support incremental program quality improvements.

Program Quality Improvement- Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families

The Department of Human Services will implement a tiered quality incentive program for child care providers serving families participating in the DHS Child Care Assistance Program. Implementing tiered incentive payments tied to BrightStars quality levels will provide a powerful financial support for programs to improve quality.

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development

The Department of Human Services will prioritize the development of a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for family child-care providers as a critical first step toward raising the quality of these early-care and learning environments.

Higher Education

DHS will expand The Early Childhood Education & Training Certificate program at CCRI, a cohort model that utilizes peer networks, coaching, and mentoring combined with academic coursework, to serve a cohort of 70 additional students. The *I Am Moving, I Am Learning* curriculum will be institutionalized and incorporated into the current coursework, as will developmental courses (math, writing, etc...) to assist students in their transition to post-secondary coursework. Spanish-speaking family child-care providers will be actively recruited to participate in the program, and a bi-lingual career advisor/mentor will be retained to assist these students. In addition to these expansions, DHS will ensure that the Associate's degree program in Early Childhood Education seeks NAEYC accreditation.

Professional Development

In order to gather baseline data on the current conditions of the workforce, the Department of Human Services will partner with a researcher to perform a high-quality workforce study within the first year of the grant.

During this same timeframe, DHS will design a structured Professional Development Approval Process for community-based professional development in order to identify those offerings that are aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks. Professional development will be reviewed for content and sequence, intensity and duration, and to see whether the design incorporates adequate follow-up support and technical assistance to support transfer of knowledge and skills to real-world situations. High-quality professional-development offerings that are aligned with these standards will be identified as Approved Professional Development. The *Approved Professional Development* list will include information about approved content as well as approved trainers, and will be available on the Early Learning Resource and Referral Center professional development calendar.

DHS will expand access to high-quality professional-development opportunities aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies through the expansion of Approved PD currently in place and the implementation of newly developed or adopted professional development. The DHS Office of Child Care will design and implement a mandatory, pre-service health-and-safety training for all license-exempt educators participating in the child-care subsidy program, in an effort to broaden our professional development efforts beyond regulated programs.

Professional development focused on family engagement will be expanded through the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards project, and by the design and implementation of training for staff serving families participating in the CCDF child care subsidy program and the DCYF foster care system. The training will be designed to assist staff in educating families on the importance of high quality early learning experiences.

Staff from DHS' Office of Child Care and the Head Start Collaborative will participate on the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Incentives and Supports for Quality Improvement work team. This team plans to analyze the cost of delivering high-quality care in Rhode Island, and develop a proposal for financial incentives and supports to help programs achieve and maintain quality standards. After the work team's recommendations have been submitted and approved by the Council, DHS will examine the feasibility of implementing one or more of the recommended incentives.

1) Personnel \$494,593

Provide:

The following position(s) will be created to support this project.	% FTE	Base Salary
<u>Programming Services Officer:</u> This position will be focused on the day- to -day operations of the agency's the Race to the Top plans. This position will meet weekly with the Child Care Specialist to look at progress indicators and	100%	\$60,000

make decisions on how to best support the projects.		
<u>System Support Technician:</u> Will assist in the development of a shared statewide early childhood data system.	50%	\$40,000
<u>Administrative Assistant:</u> The Administrative assistant will provide administrative support to the Office of Child Care and Head Start Collaboration team.	100%	\$40,000

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$120,000	\$122,400	\$124,848	\$127,345	\$494,593

The 2% increase represents an annual cost of living adjustment that is consistent with the budget planning values that are distributed by the State Budget Office.

2) Fringe Benefits \$365,239

Includes annual costs per employee for health, vision, dental, social security, assessed fringe benefits costs, retirement, and retirement health, as calculated below:

Retirement	23%
FICA	8%
Assessed Fringe	4%
Retiree Health	7%
Medical	\$14,720
Dental	\$783
Vision	\$148

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$88,616	\$90,388	\$92,196	\$94,039	\$365,239

3) Travel \$10,000

- The Programming Services Officer and the System Support Tech would travel to participate in the work teams as outlined in the scope of work. Costs are based on 250 miles per month for the Programming Services Officer and 150 miles per month for the System Support Technician for a total of 400 miles per month.
- The department reimburses for travel at the federal government rate which is currently at \$.51 per mile.

4) Equipment \$9,500

- One time costs for equipment (computer, phone, etc...) for each new staff @ \$2500 each = \$7500
- A laptop (\$1000), projector (\$800), and screen (\$200) will be purchased to assist with trainings and public meetings.

5) Supplies \$20,600

- General office supplies (paper, pens, calendars, etc), printing costs @ \$1600/year per staff
- Year One costs include meeting costs for the development of core competencies for family child care; \$100 per meeting x 6 = \$600
- Year One costs include meeting costs for community feedback forums on FCC competencies; \$100 per meeting x 8 sessions = \$800

6) Contractual \$264,920

- Year One costs include meeting facilitator for the development of core competencies for family child care; \$100/hr x 20hrs/mo x 6mo. = \$12,000
- Year One costs include meeting costs for community feedback forums on FCC competencies; \$100/hr x 6hrs/session x 8 sessions = 4,800.00
- Year One costs include costs of Meeting Recorder for community feedback forums on FCC competencies; \$80/hr x 3hrs/session x 8 sessions = 1,920.00

- Year One costs include costs of Meeting Recorder for community feedback forums on FCC competencies; \$80/hr x 15hrs to compile feedback = 1,200.00
- Upgrade DHS CCAP system information; \$227,000 in one time costs and \$6,000 per year for maintenance (x 3 years)

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$246,920	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$264,920

7) Training Stipends –none requested

8) Other \$600

- Year One costs include space costs for meetings for the development of core competencies for family child care; space \$100 per meeting x 6 = \$600

9) Total Direct Costs \$1,165,452

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$474,336	\$226,088	\$230,344	\$234,684	\$1,165,452

10) Indirect Costs \$119,659

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$32,154	\$28,611	\$29,165	\$29,729	\$119,659

Rhode Island's official negotiated cost rate of 13%.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. \$28,079,926

- *Program Quality Improvement- Program Assessments (B2)*
 - Includes \$2,693,900 for the expansion of TQRIS to add 5 Program Assessment Specialists and 1 manager in year 1 (\$493,725), 10 Program Assessment Specialists and 1 manager in year 2 (\$763,725), and 10 Program Assessment Specialists plus and 1 manager per year in years 2-4 (\$718,225/year). This number reflects salary, fringe, staff training (years 1 & 2), travel, supplies, and equipment.
- *Program Quality Improvement- Focused Technical Assistance (B4)*
 - Programs participating in TQRIS will receive focused *technical assistance* to achieve quality benchmarks. Includes hiring Quality Improvement Specialists work with programs to develop an individualized quality improvement plan and identify/link programs with needed technical assistance and resources, with specialized resources in the form of infant/toddler TA network, family child care TA network, preschool TA network, and Early Learning Facilities Network. 14 specialists @\$78,000/year (salary& fringe) 3 years (years 2-4) plus administrative costs @ 40% = \$4,586,400
- *Program Quality Improvement- Program Improvement Grants (B4)*
 - Programs participating in the child care subsidy program (serving low income children) will be receive *Program Improvement Grants* to implement quality improvement activities that will assist them in achieving increasing levels of quality in the TQRIS. Grants will be based on the population of subsidy children enrolled. Small grants are available to programs serving 1-25 CCDF-served children, medium grants for programs serving 26-50 CCDF-served children, and large grants for programs serving 51 or more CCDF-served children. Estimated costs are as follows:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Small CCAP Population (\$1000)	\$90,000	\$240,000	\$360,000	\$420,000	\$1,110,000.00
Medium CCAP Population (\$4500)	\$202,500	\$540,000	\$810,000	\$945,000	\$2,497,500.00
Large CCAP Population (\$10,000)	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$600,000	\$700,000	\$1,850,000.00
Administration (5%)	\$22,125	\$59,000	\$88,000	\$103,250	\$272,875
TOTAL	\$464,625	\$1,239,000	\$1,858,000	\$2,168,250	\$5,729,875.00

- *Program Quality Improvement- Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families (B4)*
 - Upgrade InRhodes programming to allow for quality incentive payments to be included in calculating and processing CCAP payments. Includes creation of separate secure web portal that will allow BrightStars to enter program ratings, thereby restricting access to confidential DHS client information - \$227,000 x 1 year = 227,000.
 - System/Portal Maintenance - \$6000/year x 3 years = \$18,000
 - The Incentive Payment budget of \$10,477,226 assumes stable numbers of children receiving CCAP subsidies at current reimbursement rates and current full-time/part-time status.

- **2012:** 25% of DHS children in participating programs (30% at level 1, 25% at level 2, 20% at level 3, 15% at level 4, 10% at level 5) with 5% incentive payment for 1 star, 10% for 2 star, 15% for 3 star, 20% for 4 star, and 25% for 5 star.
- **2013:** 50% of DHS children in participating programs, (30% at level 1, 25% at level 2, 20% at level 3, 15% at level 4, 10% at level 5) with no payments to 1 star programs and 10% for 2 star, 15% for 3 star, 20% for 4 star, and 25% for 5 star.
- **2014:** 100% of DHS children in participating programs, (50% at level 1, 20% at level 2, 15% at level 3, 7.5% at level 4, 7.5% at level 5) with no payments to 1 star programs and 10% incentive payment for 2 star, 15% for 3 star, 20% for 4 star, and 25% for 5 star.
- **2015:** 100% of DHS children in participating programs, (25% at level 1, 25% at level 2, 20% at level 3, 15% at level 4, 15% at level 5) with no payments to 1 star programs and 10% incentive payment for 2 star, 15% for 3 star, 20% for 4 star, and 25% for 5 star,

Funds distributed to programs:

2012	2013	2014	2015
\$1,137,415	\$2,024,393	\$2,806,544	\$4,508,874

- *Higher Education (D2) -*

- **Expansion of Early Childhood Education & Training Certificate Program:**
70 student cohort to receive 12-18 college credits in ECE, opportunity to earn a CDA + additional support for developmental coursework (e.g. basic reading, writing, math). \$212,500 x 4 years = \$850,000
- **CDA Fees:** \$350 x 70 students = \$24,500 (pre-paid year one)
- **Bilingual Career Advisory:** \$72,000 (salary and fringe) x 4 years = \$288,000
- **Associate's Degree Program Accreditation by NAEYC:** \$130,000 (year one)

- *Professional Development (D2)*
 - \$100,000 for professional workforce study
 - Crosswalk current state-funded PD with WKC's, RIELS, and newly revised & aligned program standards to identify domain-specific areas of alignment, and inform gaps in PD offerings that support these standards. Researcher@ \$150/hr x 100 hours = 15,000.00
 - Develop policies & procedures for Professional Development Approval Process (PDAP). Includes a Meeting Facilitator-@\$100/hr x 20hrs/mo x 6mo. = \$12,000 and supplies @ \$50 per meeting x 6 = \$300
 - Design & Implement Approval Process for PD providers, based on WKC's. Includes a Meeting Facilitator-@\$100/hr x 20hrs/mo x 6mo. = \$12,000, supplies @ \$50 per meeting x 6 = \$300, and space costs @ \$100 per meeting x 6 = \$600
 - Create Cross-Referenced approved PD list using information from crosswalk ; Marketing and Development of centralized, statewide *Approved Professional Development* list and PD Calendar for early childhood educators - \$24,225
 - Increase the number and frequency of Approved PD currently being delivered \$200,000/year x 4 years = \$800,000
 - Expand Access to High-Quality, Aligned Professional Development for Programs Serving Children with High Needs through Rhode Island's Early Learning Resource Center. Includes High-quality PD to support cultural and linguistic competencies, Family Engagement, Obesity Prevention, mono-lingual Spanish-speaking educators, educators serving infants& toddlers, and educators serving preschoolers \$200,000 x 4 years = \$800,000
 - Create cross sector leadership network for program administrators \$100,000 x 4 years = \$400,000
 - Develop & Implement Professional Development Innovation fund to support the use of multiple methods and languages in PD delivery. Development = \$5000 (year one); implementation = \$270,000 x 4 years
 - \$1,085,000 Training for License Exempt Providers - Development and Implementation of Health and Safety Training for license exempt providers participating in the CCAP program (including development of online training

module). Development costs: \$20,000 (year one). Implementation: \$10,000 x 3years = \$30,000. Total: \$50,000

Total Funds to be Distributed:

2012	2013	2014	2015	2012
\$3,494,790	\$6,620,418	\$7,976,069	\$9,988,649	\$28,079,926

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance – No Request

13) Total Funds Requested \$29,365,037

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
4,001,280	6,875,117	8,235,578	10,253,062	29,365,037

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	185,923	193,434	197,302	201,249	777,908
2. Fringe Benefits	117,131	121,863	124,301	126,787	490,082
3. Travel	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	19,200
4. Equipment	7,500	0	0	0	7,500
5. Supplies	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	18,000
6. Contractual	0	0	0	0	0
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	319,854	324,597	330,903	337,336	1,312,690
10. Indirect Costs*	40,021	41,613	43,017	43,854	168,505
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	359,875	366,210	373,920	381,190	1,481,195
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,400,000
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	709,875	716,210	723,920	731,190	2,881,195
<u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category. <u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years. <u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional					

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency**(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))*****R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families***

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p>services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	0	0	0	0	0
Using the Early Learning Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	0	0	0	0	0
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning Data Systems	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	0	0	0	0	0
DCYF Administration	709,875	716,210	723,920	731,190	2,881,195
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Total Budget	709,875	716,210	723,920	731,190	2,881,195

Department of Children, Youth, and Families Budget Narrative

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families licenses child care programs in Rhode Island and will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to Below is changing Family Child Care Homes monitoring visits from bi-annual home inspections to annual home inspections. The budget includes salaries for two (2) additional Social Caseworkers for the Division of Licensing. Funds will also be used to hire one (1) Systems Support Technician to assist in the development of a shared statewide early childhood data system.

1) Personnel - \$777,908

The following position(s) will be created to support this project.	% FTE	Base Salary
<u>Social Caseworker II</u> Will support annual licensing visits to Family Child Care Homes.	100%	\$71,383
<u>Social Caseworker II</u> : Will support annual licensing visits to Family Child Care Homes.	100%	\$71,383
<u>Systems Support Technician</u> Will assist in the development of a shared statewide early childhood data system.	100%	\$43,157

The 2% increase represents an annual cost of living adjustment that is consistent with the budget planning values that are distributed by the State Budget Office.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$185,923	\$193,434	\$197,302	\$201,249	\$777,908

2) Fringe Benefits – \$490,082

The fringe benefit percentage for all DCYF personnel is 63% with an annual increase of 2% over the life of the grant.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$117,131	\$121,863	\$124,301	\$126,787	\$490,082

3) Travel – \$19,200

\$4,800 per year for each of the Social Caseworkers for in-state travel to visit Family Child Care Homes. This is \$0.50 per mile for 9,600 miles of driving during each year.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$4,800	\$4,800	\$4,800	\$4,800	\$19,200

4) Equipment – \$7,500

Standard equipment cost is \$2,500 in year one of employment to cover a computer, phone and a share of printer/fax/scanner. This budget reflects the one-time cost of **\$7,500** for 3FTEs

5) Supplies – \$18,000

Standard supplies cost \$1,500 per year to cover office supplies (paper, toner, postage, printing, etc.). This budget reflects the four year cost of **\$18,000** for 3 FTEs.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$18,000

6) Contractual – No Request

7) Training Stipends —No Request

8) Other —No Request**9) Total Direct Costs - \$1,312,690**

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$319,854	\$324,597	\$330,903	\$337,336	\$1,312,690

10) Indirect Costs – \$168,505

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$40,021	\$41,613	\$43,017	\$43,854	\$168,505

**11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations,
Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements,
contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws—No Request**

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance— No Request**13) Total Funds Requested - \$1,481,195**

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$359,875	\$366,210	\$373,920	\$381,190	\$1,481,195

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Health</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	173,878	179,094	184,467	190,001	727,441
2. Fringe Benefits	99,667	102,657	105,736	108,909	416,969
3. Travel	0	0	0	0	0
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	28,850	50	50	50	29,000
6. Contractual	34,793	3,885	3,885	3,885	46,448
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	337,188	285,686	294,138	302,845	1,219,857
10. Indirect Costs*	43,834	37,139	38,238	39,369	158,580
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	381,022	322,826	332,376	342,214	1,378,438
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	381,022	322,826	332,376	342,214	1,378,438
<u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category. <u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years. <u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional					

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency**(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))*****R.I. Department of Health***

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p>services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Department of Health</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	0	0	0	0	0
Using the Early Learning Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	381,022	322,826	332,376	342,214	1,378,438
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning Data Systems	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	0	0	0	0	0
DCYF Administration	0	0	0	0	0
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low-Income Families	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Total Budget	381,022	322,826	332,376	342,214	1,378,438

Rhode Island Department of Health Budget Narrative

The Rhode Island Department of Health will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to support two key activities proposed in the Comprehensive Assessment System project and detailed in sections C(2) and E(2) of the State's application. The first activity expands the capacity of primary care providers to increase developmental screening rates and include social and emotional screenings. By year four of the grant, the goal is to have expanded the Department of Health's Watch Me Grow program to support 94 additional pediatric offices. The Department of Health proposes to accomplish this work by adding 1 FTE to support the additional practices to implement and sustain a system of developmental screening during the time of grant and .5 FTE to provide leadership and expertise to the Early Learning Council Team convened to make funds available to community-based efforts that engage primary health care providers with families in evidence-based interventions to increase children's healthy development and early learning. The experience to date, implementing developmental screening in primary care practices is that approximately 2 days per week for one month of staff time is necessary to prepare a practice to begin developmental screening. Practices also need between 2 to 3 hours of support bi-monthly in the first year once the system is implemented. The costs in this budget support the implementation of developmental screening in 25 practices per year with on-going support for the first year of implementation. After the first year of support the need diminishes and existing HEALTH staff will take over this role. One half time FTE will support the Early Learning Council in its community based efforts to engage pediatricians in contracting for evidence-based interventions to support families. The individual in this role will support coordination between the Child Outreach System and primary care providers and ensuring screening efforts are not duplicative and coordinate with the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Additional costs budgeted for this work cover the cost of developmental screening materials. The second key activity addresses the accurate entry of developmental screening data accurately into KIDSNET and operationalizing the link between KIDSNET and the Rhode Island Early Learning Data System. The Department of Health plans to accomplish this work by adding 1 FTE to support developmental screening data collection and quality training and a .5 FTE to work collaboratively with the RI Department of Education to operationalize the link between KIDSNET and RIDE and to expand the capacity KIDSNET data system to collect developmental screening information from Child Outreach screening programs.

The FTE is needed as the number of practices engaged in developmental screening increases rapidly to ensure that data collection and entry can begin when screening begins. This position will initially support data entry either at the practice level if practices have this capacity, or initially at HEALTH, transitioning to practice level data entry, as changes to KIDSNET make it easier for practices to enter data. Experience with newborn screening data quality assurance has demonstrated that until a system of data collection, entry and analysis has been used for one to two years proper staffing for quality assurance is essential. This position will dedicate 30% time to working with practices to ensure data entry, 50% time to data quality assurance, reporting and analysis, and 20% time to working with the KIDSNET staff and consultants, to ensure that any changes made to the KIDSNET system meet the needs of RIDE, HEALTH, and providers. One half time position will be needed at HEALTH to support the expansion of KIDSENT. This position will be needed to work with HLN (25%) which is the agency contracted to make changes to the KIDSNET system, this position will also work with the data and programming staff at HEALTH (25%) in the Center for Health Data Analysis to make needed programming changes to KIDSET, oversee the process as it is field tested . These costs were based on the experience of past changes/enhancements to KIDSENT and the hours needed to make and field test similar changes.

1) Personnel - \$727,441

The following position(s) will be created to support this project.	% FTE	Base Salary
<u>Watch Me Grow Specialist:</u> Will support primary care providers to implement systems of standardized developmental screening for children birth to age 3. Will also provide ongoing support throughout the first year of a practice implementing developmental screening	100%	\$60,862
<u>Early Learning Council Liaison:</u> Will provide leadership and expertise to the Early Learning Council Team charged with funding community-based efforts that engage primary health care providers with families in evidence-based	50%	\$28,254

interventions. Will also participate with other governing or advisory entities as needed to ensure coordination of new community based efforts with existing systems or programs		
<u>Developmental Screening Data Specialist:</u> Will ensure data collection, entry, and analysis of developmental screening data. Will develop systems for practices to enter data, and will be responsible for all data quality assurance of developmental screening data.	100%	\$56,508
<u>Data System Specialist</u> Will work with the agency contracted to make database changes/enhancements to KIDSENT and will work with HEALTH staff to make programming changes within the system at HEALTH and field test these changes.	50%	\$28,254

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$173,878	\$179,094	\$184,467	\$190,001	\$727,441

2) Fringe Benefits - \$416,968

Fringe benefits include retirement plan (21.64%) of salary, retirement health insurance (6.74%) FICA (7.65%), payroll assessment (4.27%), year-end accrual (.40%), medical (15.55%), vision (.18%) and dental (.89%). Average overall rate is 57.32%.

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$99,667	\$102,657	\$105,736	\$108,909	\$416,968

3) Travel – No Request

4) Equipment – No Request

5) Supplies - \$ 29,000

- 90 kits for primary care practices at \$320.00 each = \$28,800.00 for year 1 (HEALTH has 10 kits currently available and 4 of these can be used to support this application.
- Additional materials needed for ongoing support = \$50.00 per year x 4 years = \$200.00. (Materials include information about community resources in local communities, additional screening materials if needed, other materials to support implementing the system)

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$28,850	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$29,000

6) Contractual - \$46,448

Cost to Design and implement denormalized data extract from KIDSNET intended for loading into the RIDE Data Warehouse and Design and Implement new screening tool in KIDSNET

Project Manager III at \$195.15/hr * 40 hours = \$7,806

Programmer Analyst III at \$162.70/hr * 120 hours = \$19,524

Specialist II at \$158.80/hr * 47 hours = \$7,463

Total \$ 34,793

Ongoing support for changes to KIDSNET as reports are designed and ongoing system support for project years 2,3,4.

Project Manager III at \$195.15/hr * 5 hours = \$976

Programmer Analyst III at \$162.70/hr * 13 hours = \$2,115

Specialist II at \$158.80/hr * 5 hours = \$794

Total \$3,885

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$34,793	\$3,885	\$3,885	\$3,885	\$46,448

7) Training Stipends —No Request**8) Other —No Request****9) Total Direct Costs - \$1,219,857**

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$337,188	\$285,686	\$294,138	\$302,845	\$1,219,857

10) Indirect Costs - \$158,581

Rhode Island's official negotiated cost rate of 13%.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws—No Request

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance— No Request**13) Total Funds Requested - \$1,378,438**

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$381,023	\$322,825	\$332,375	\$342,215	\$1,378,438

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	0	0	0	0	0
2. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0	0
3. Travel	0	0	0	0	0
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
5. Supplies	0	0	0	0	0
6. Contractual	208,000	208,000	208,000	208,000	832,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	208,000	208,000	208,000	208,000	832,000
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	208,000	208,000	208,000	208,000	832,000
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	8,400,000
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	9,232,000
<u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category. <u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.					

<u>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services</i>					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<p><u>Line 6:</u> Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p><u>Line 10:</u> If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p><u>Line 11:</u> Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p><u>Line 12:</u> The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p><u>Line 13:</u> This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p> <p><u>Line 14:</u> Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.</p>					

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Learning Standards Development	0	0	0	0	0
Using the Early Learning Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Comprehensive Assessment System Development and Implementation	208,000	208,000	208,000	208,000	832,000
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning Data Systems	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Entry Assessment Development	0	0	0	0	0
DCYF Administration	0	0	0	0	0
Race to this Top ELC Project Management	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Assessments	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Focused TA	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Revision/Realignment	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Program Improvement Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Program Quality Improvement – Quality Incentives for Programs Serving Low- Income Families	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education	0	0	0	0	0

<u>Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency</u> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <i>R.I. Executive Office of Health and Human Services</i>					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Professional Development	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	8,400,000
Total Budget	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	2,308,000	9,232,000

Executive Office of Health and Human Services Budget Narrative

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services manages the IDEA Part C, Early Intervention, program in Rhode Island and will use Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds to support the implementation of the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) assessment system in all Early Intervention Programs statewide, as proposed in the Comprehensive Assessment System project and detailed in sections C(2) of the State's application. EOHHS plan to increase the administrative support contracts of certified Early Intervention programs by approximately \$52 per child. This increase covers the cost of the annual TSG subscription and the cost to attend training and enter data using TSG. The cost was derived by adding the rate of an annual TSG subscription under the State license held by the RI Department of Education and the estimated cost for attending TSG training developing a total annual cost which was then divided by the estimated number of children enrolled in Early Intervention. The costs for developing and implementing training are included in the RI Department of Education budget.

1) Personnel – No Request**2) Fringe Benefits – No Request****3) Travel – No Request****4) Equipment – No Request****5) Supplies – No Request****6) Contractual - \$832,000**

Funds will be paid out to certified Early Intervention programs through an increase of \$52 per child to existing administrative support contracts. This cost was derived as follows:

- Approx 4000 children enrolled annually x \$12 per child registration= \$48,000

- Approx 4000 children x 2 hours time per child annually for data entry/training =
\$8000 x \$20/hr= \$160,000
- \$208,000 annually/4000 children = \$52 per child

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$832,000

7) Training Stipends —No Request

8) Other —No Request

9) Total Direct Costs - \$832,000

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$832,000

10) Indirect Costs – No Request

**11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations,
Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements,
contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws—No Request**

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance— No Request

13) Total Funds Requested - \$832,000

Project Year 1 (2012-2013)	Project Year 2 (2013-2014)	Project Year 3 (2014-2015)	Project Year 4 (2015-2016)	Total Cost
\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$208,000	\$832,000

BUDGET: INDIRECT COST INFORMATION

To request reimbursement for indirect costs, please answer the following questions:

Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?	
YES	<input checked="checked" type="radio"/>
NO	<input type="radio"/>
If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:	
Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):	
From: 07/01/2010	To: 09/30/2011*
Approving Federal agency: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> ED <input type="checkbox"/> HHS <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
(Please specify agency): US Department of Education	
(*RIDE has a new Indirect Cost Rate Agreement pending with US Department of Education)	

Directions for this form:

1. Indicate whether or not the State has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government.
2. If “No” is checked, the Departments generally will authorize grantees to use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted salaries and wages subject to the following limitations:
 - (a) The grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency within 90 days after the grant award notification is issued; and
 - (b) If after the 90-day period, the grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency, the grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

If “Yes” is checked, indicate the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED, HHS, or another Federal agency (Other) issued the approved agreement. If “Other” was checked, specify the name of the agency that issued the approved agreement.

IX. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) The State's application must be signed by the Governor or an authorized representative; an authorized representative from the Lead Agency; and an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency. The State must provide the required signatures in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(b) The State must submit a certification from the State Attorney General or an authorized representative that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation. The State must provide this certification in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(c) The State must complete the budget spreadsheets that are provided in the application package and submit the completed spreadsheet as part of its application. These spreadsheets should be included on the CD or DVD that the State submits as its application.

Note: The budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews. However, the reviewers will not judge or score these budget spreadsheets. Reviewers will limit their evaluation of the State's response to (A)(4)(b) to the information provided by the State in the budget section of the application (see section VIII, Budget).

(d) The State must submit preliminary scopes of work for each Participating State Agency as part of the executed MOU or other binding agreement. (See section XIII in this application.) Each preliminary scope of work must describe the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement. If a State is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. (See section (k) of the Program Requirements, section XI in this application.)

(e) The State must include a budget that details how it will use grant funds awarded under this competition, and funds from other Federal, State, private, and local sources to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan (as described in selection criterion (A)(4)(a)), and how the State will use funds awarded under this program to--

(1) Achieve its targets for increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs that are participating in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(2)(c)); and

(2) Achieve its targets for increasing 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 State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(4)(c)).

(f) The State must provide an overall summary for the State Plan and a rationale for why it has chosen to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area, including—

- How the State's choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)); and
- Why these selected criteria will best achieve the State's 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.

(g) The State, within each Focused Investment Area, must select and address--

- Two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
- One or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

(h) Where the State is submitting a High-Quality Plan, the State must include in its application a detailed plan that is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and includes, but need not be limited to--

(1) The key goals;

(2) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation;

(3) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;

(4) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;

(5) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;

(6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;

(7) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;

(8) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and

(9) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A State receiving funds under an RTT-ELC grant must submit an annual report that must include, in addition to the standard elements, a description of the State's progress to date on its goals, timelines, and budgets, as well as actual performance compared to the annual targets the State established in its application with respect to each performance measure. Further, a State receiving funds under this program is accountable for meeting the goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets established in the application; adhering to an annual fund drawdown schedule that is tied to meeting these goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets; and fulfilling and maintaining all other conditions for the conduct of the project. The Departments will monitor a State's progress in meeting the State's goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets and in fulfilling other applicable requirements. In addition, we may collect additional data as part of a State's annual reporting requirements.

To support a collaborative process with the State, we may require that applicants who are selected to receive an award enter into a written performance or cooperative agreement. If we determine that a State is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, we will take appropriate action, which could include establishing a collaborative process or taking enforcement measures with respect to this grant, such as placing the State in high-risk status, putting the State on reimbursement payment status, or delaying or withholding funds.

XI. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A State that receives a grant must meet the following requirements:

(a) The State must continue to participate in the programs authorized under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA; in the CCDF program; and in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program (pursuant to section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)) for the duration of the grant.

(b) The State is prohibited from spending funds from the grant on the direct delivery of health services.

(c) The State must participate in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS, individually or in collaboration with other State grantees in order to share effective program practices and solutions and collaboratively solve problems, and must set aside at least \$400,000 from its grant funds for this purpose.

(d) The State must--

(1) Comply with the requirements of any evaluation sponsored by ED or HHS of any of the State's activities carried out with the grant;

(2) Comply with the requirements of any cross-State evaluation--as part of a consortium of States--of any of the State's proposed reforms, if that evaluation is coordinated or funded by ED or HHS, including by using common measures and data collection instruments and collecting data necessary to the evaluation;

(3) Together with its independent evaluator, if any, cooperate with any technical assistance regarding evaluations provided by ED or HHS. The purpose of this technical assistance will be to ensure that the validation of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and any other evaluations conducted by States or their independent evaluators, if any, are of the highest quality and to encourage commonality in approaches where such commonality is feasible and useful;

(4) Submit to ED and HHS for review and comment its design for the validation of its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criteria (B)(5)) and any other evaluations of activities included in the State Plan, including any activities that are part of the State's Focused Investment Areas, as applicable; and

(5) Make widely available through formal (*e.g.*, peer-reviewed journals) or informal (*e.g.*, newsletters) mechanisms, and in print or electronically, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities.

(e) The State must have a longitudinal data system that includes the 12 elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act by the date required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) grant and in accordance with Indicator (b)(1) of its approved SFSF plan.

(f) The State must comply with the requirements of all applicable Federal, State, and local privacy laws, including the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act, and the privacy requirements in IDEA, and their applicable regulations.

(g) The State must ensure that the grant activities are implemented in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

(h) The State must provide researchers with access, consistent with the requirements of all applicable Federal State, and local privacy laws, to data from its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the State's coordinated early learning data system (if applicable) so that they can analyze the State's quality improvement efforts and answer key policy and practice questions.

(i) Unless otherwise protected as proprietary information by Federal or State law or a specific written agreement, the State must make any work (*e.g.*, materials, tools, processes, systems) developed under its grant freely available to the public, including by posting the work on a Web site identified or sponsored by ED or HHS. Any Web sites developed under this grant must meet government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

(j) Funds made available under an RTT-ELC grant must be used to supplement, not supplant, any Federal, State, or local funds that, in the absence of the funds awarded under this grant, would be available for increasing access to and improving the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs.

(k) For a State that is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days from the grant award notification date to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. These final scopes of work must contain detailed work plans that are consistent with their corresponding preliminary scopes of work and with the State's grant application, and must include the Participating State Agency's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures for the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement.

XII. CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES

Generally, all procurement transactions by State or local educational agencies made with RTT-ELC grant funds must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition, consistent with the standards in section 80.36 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). This section requires that grantees use their own procurement procedures (which reflect State and local laws and regulations) to select contractors, provided that those procedures meet certain standards described in EDGAR.

Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

XIV. SCORING RUBRIC

I. Introduction

To help ensure inter-reviewer reliability and transparency for the RTT-ELC applicants, ED and HHS have created and are publishing a rubric for scoring State applications. The pages that follow detail the rubric and allocation of point values that reviewers will be using. The rubric will be used by reviewers to ensure consistency across and within review panels.

The rubric allocates points to each criterion. In all, the RTT-ELC scoring rubric includes 17 selection criteria and two competitive preference priorities. These collectively add up to 300 points. The selection criteria are divided into two sections: Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas.

- Applicants must respond to all of the selection criteria within each of the two Core Areas: (A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs.
- Applicants have more flexibility within each of the Focused Investment Areas: (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress. In these sections, applicants may select which selection criteria to address, focusing on those that the State believes will have the most impact on school readiness for its Children with High Needs, given that State's context and the current status of its early learning and development activities. The Focused Investment Areas must be addressed as follows.

Focused Investment Areas

- The applicant must select and address--
 - At least two selection criteria from Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
 - At least one selection criterion each from Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.
- Each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E) is worth a specific number of points; these points will be evenly divided across the selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that section.

Priorities

Applicants address the absolute priority throughout their applications; they do not write separately to this priority. The absolute priority must be met in order for an applicant to receive funding.

Applications that choose to address a competitive preference priority will earn extra points under that priority if the reviewers determine that the response is of high quality. Applicants may choose to write to invitational priorities to extend the scope of the application; applicants are invited to address these and may apply funds from this grant to implement activities under them, but do not earn additional points for doing so.

Reviewers will be required to make thoughtful judgments about the quality of the State’s application and will be assessing, based on the criteria, the comprehensiveness, feasibility, and likely impact of the State’s application. Reviewers will also be asked to evaluate, for example, the extent to which the State has set ambitious but achievable annual targets in its application. Reviewers will also need to make informed judgments about the State’s goals, the rationales for the Focused Investment Areas, the activities the State has chosen to undertake, and the timelines and credibility of the State’s plans.

This appendix includes information about the point values for each criterion and priority, guidance on scoring, and the rubric that we will provide to reviewers.

II. Points Overview

The chart below shows the maximum number of points that are assigned to each criterion.

	Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview		
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	
(A)(2) Articulating the State’s rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	
Core Area A Subtotal	65	23
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	
(B)(5) Validating the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
Core Area B Subtotal	75	27
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		

		Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview			
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal		60	21
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce			
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)		
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators			
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal		40	14
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress			
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)		
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system			
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal		40	14
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria		280	
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS		10	
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding status of learning and development at Kindergarten Entry		10	
Grand Total		300	

III. About Scoring

General Notes about Scoring

There are two terms that we use repeatedly in the notice: High-Quality Plan and “ambitious yet achievable” goals or targets. These are anchor terms for both applicants to understand and reviewers to use in guiding their scoring. We discuss each below.

- *A High-Quality Plan.* In determining the quality of a State’s plan for a given selection criterion or competitive preference priority, reviewers will assess the extent to which the plan meets the definition (as provided in the notice) of a High-Quality Plan, including whether it is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and contains the following components--
 - (a) The key goals;
 - (b) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up to achieve statewide implementation;

- (c) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;
- (d) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;
- (e) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;
- (f) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;
- (g) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;
- (h) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- (i) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

Using the information provided to them in the application, reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed plan in a specific selection criterion is a High-Quality Plan that is credible, feasible to implement, and likely to result in the outcomes the State has put forward.

- *Ambitious yet achievable.* In determining whether a State has ambitious yet achievable goals or targets for a given selection criterion, reviewers will examine the State's goals or targets in the context of the State's plan and the evidence submitted (if any) in support of the plan. Reviewers will not be looking for any specific targets nor will they necessarily reward higher targets above lower ones with higher scores. Rather, reviewers will reward States for developing goals and targets that, in light of each State's plan and the current context and status of the work in that State, are shown to be "ambitious yet achievable."

About Assigning Points

Reviewers will assign points to an application for each selection criterion in Core Areas (A) and (B) and for each selection criterion that the State has chosen to address within Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E). Reviewers will also assign points to the competitive preference priorities. Points for a selection criterion or priority (e.g., (B)(4) or Priority 2) are assigned by reviewers for the totality of the applicant's response; that is, reviewers need not divide the total available points equally across the sub-criteria.

There are two scoring rubrics to guide reviewers when awarding points:

- The Quality Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for high-, medium-, and low-quality responses to specified selection criteria; and
- The Quality and Implementation Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and competitive preference priority two where reviewers are assessing the quality of both plans and existing implementation.

The chart below indicates which rubric the State will use for each criterion or competitive preference priority.

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	Quality
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	Quality
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	Quality and Implementation
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	Quality
Core Area A Subtotal	65	
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	Quality and Implementation
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	Quality and Implementation
(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality
Core Area B Subtotal	75	
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal	60	
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce		
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators		
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal	40	
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress		
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system		
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal	40	
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS	10	Quality and Implementation
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	10	Addressed in Table (A)(1)-12 or in selection criterion (E)(1)
Grand Total	300	

Quality Rubric

The following scoring rubric will be used to guide the reviewers in scoring selection criteria governed by the Quality Rubric. (See “General Notes about Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.)

	Percentage of Available Points Awarded
High-quality response	80-100%
Medium/high-quality response	50-80%
Medium/low-quality response	20-50%
Low-quality response	0-20%

Quality and Implementation Rubric

This scoring rubric provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 where reviewers are assessing both plans and existing implementations. In reviewing the elements for each selection criterion, reviewers will need to consider the degree of implementation; more points are awarded for implementation efforts in the implementation phase than those that are in the planning stages, and more points are awarded for efforts where implementation is complete or closer to completion. When evaluating the degree of implementation, reviewers will consider:

- The extent to which each element in the selection criterion is implemented in the State;
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs, if applicable.

The reviewers will also need to make a determination about the quality of the response to each element. High-quality responses are rewarded over low-quality responses. Therefore, elements that are fully implemented with high quality are rewarded over plans that are of fully implemented but of lower quality. (See “General Notes About Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.) The chart below shows how points will be awarded.

	Not or Minimally Implemented	Partially Implemented	Substantially or Fully Implemented
High-quality response	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%
Medium-quality response	1-40%	10-60%	20-80%
Low-quality response	0%	0-10%	0-20%

About Priorities

There are three types of priorities in the RTT-ELC competition.

- Applicants should address the absolute priority across the entire application and should not address it separately. It will be assessed by reviewers after they have fully reviewed and evaluated the entire application, to ensure that the application has met the priority. If an application has not met the priority, it will be eliminated from the competition. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority.
- The competitive preference priorities earn points in a manner similar to selection criteria.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 2 is worth up to 10 points and will be assessed using the Quality and Implementation Rubric.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 3 is worth 10 points; all 10 points are earned if the competitive preference priority is met. A State will earn competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. No points are earned if a majority of reviewers determine that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.

A State meets the competitive preference priority for—

 - Demonstrating , by verifying that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 have been met, that the State has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); or
 - Writing to selection criterion (E)(1) and earning a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.
- The invitational priorities are addressed in their own separate sections. While applicants are invited to write to the invitational priorities, these will not earn points.

In the Event of a Tie

If two or more applications have the same score and there is not sufficient funding to support all of the tied applicants, the applicants' overall scores on Core Area (B) will be used to break the tie

XV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Please note that you must follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

Submission Information and Deadline.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted by mail or hand delivery. The Departments strongly recommends the use of overnight mail. Applications postmarked on the deadline date but arriving late will not be read.

The deadline for submission of applications is October 19, 2011.

Application Submission Format.

The Secretaries strongly request the applicant to limit the application text narrative to no more than 150 pages and limit appendices to no more than 150 pages. A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Line spacing for the narratives is set to 1.5 spacing, and the font used is 12 point Times New Roman. Each page in the application should have a page number. The Secretaries strongly requests that applicants follow the recommended page limits, although the Secretaries will consider applications of greater length.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted in electronic format on a CD or DVD, with CD-ROM or DVD-ROM preferred. In addition, applicants must submit a signed paper original of section IV of the application and one copy of that signed original. Autopen, copies, .PDFs (Adobe Portable Document Format), and faxed copies of signature pages are not acceptable originals. Section IV of the application includes the Application Assurances and Certifications.

We strongly request the applicant to submit a CD or DVD of its application that includes the following files:

1. A single file that contains the body of the application, including required budget tables, that has been converted into a .PDF (Portable Document) format so that the .PDF is searchable. Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.

2. A single file in a .PDF format that contains all of the required signature pages. The signature pages may be scanned and turned into a PDF.

3. Copies of the completed electronic budget spreadsheets with the required budget tables, which should be in a separate file from the body of the application. The spreadsheets will not be reviewed by peer reviewers but will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Each of these items must be clearly labeled with the State’s name and any other relevant identifying information. States must not password-protect these files.

We must receive all grant applications by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. ***We will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.*** Therefore, we strongly recommend that applicants arrange for mailing or hand delivery of their application in advance of the application deadline date.

Submission of Applications by Mail.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by mail (either through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) should use the following mailing address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

We must receive applications on or before the application deadline date. Therefore, to avoid delays, we strongly recommend sending applications via overnight mail. ***If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.***

Submission of Applications by Hand Delivery.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by hand delivery (including via a courier service) should use the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.

Envelope Requirements and Receipt.

When an applicant submits its application, whether by mail or hand delivery--

(1) It must indicate on the envelope that the CFDA number of the competition under which it is submitting its application is 84.412; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to the applicant a notification of receipt of the grant application. If the applicant does not receive this notification, it should call the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

In accordance with 34 CFR 75.216(b) and (c), an application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program.

XVI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your application is complete:

Formatting Recommendations (instructions)

- ☐ Are all the pages 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides?
- ☐ Are all pages numbered?
- ☐ Is the line spacing for the narratives set to 1.5 spacing, and the font to 12 point Times New Roman?

Application Assurances and Certifications (page 3)

- ☐ Is all of the requested information included on the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge Application Assurances and Certifications page?
- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed and dated the Application Assurances and Certifications?
- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has an authorized representative from the Lead Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications?
SIGNATURE REQUIRED -- Has an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications? (Note: all Participating State Agencies must sign the application. See definition of Participating State Agency, page 17)

State Attorney General Certification (page 5)

- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the State Attorney General or his/her authorized representative signed the Certifications?

Accountability, Transparency, Reporting, and Other Assurances and Certifications (page 6)

- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed the other Assurances and Certifications?

Eligibility Requirements (page 7)

- ☐ Has the State Provided a list of the Participating State Agencies?
- ☐ Has the State completed an MOU with each Participating State Agency?
- ☐ Does each MOU include the necessary assurances?
- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has every Participating State Agency signed an MOU that includes a preliminary Scope of Work, using Exhibit I or an equivalent model?
- ☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Lead Agency counter-signed every MOU and preliminary Scope of Work?
- ☐ Has the State certified that it has an operational State advisory council that meets the necessary requirements?

- ☐ Has the State certified that it is participating in the home visiting program, consistent with the requirement on page 25?

Selection Criteria

Core Areas (page 9)

(A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs

- ☐ Has the State responded to each of the selection criteria in Core Areas (A) and (B)?

Focused Investment Areas

(C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children (page 56)

- ☐ Has the State responded to at least two of the selection criteria in section (C)?

(D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce (page 64)

- ☐ Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (D)?

(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress (page 68)

- ☐ Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (E)?

OPTIONAL: Competition Priorities (page 236)

- ☐ Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, if the State has chosen to respond.
- ☐ Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry, if the State has chosen to respond.
 - ☐ If yes, has the State provided the necessary information in Table (A)(1)-12 or written to (E)(1)?
- ☐ Invitational Priority 4: Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades
- ☐ Invitational Priority 5: Encouraging Private-Sector Support

Budget (page 325)

- ☐ Has the State completed the following elements of the Budget?
 - ☐ Budget Part I: Summary Tables and Narratives
 - ☐ Budget Part II: Participating State Agency Budget Tables and Narratives, for each Participating State Agency
 - ☐ Indirect Costs form
- ☐ Has the State created its budget spreadsheets?

Appendix (page 344)

- ☐ Has the State created a table of contents for its appendix?
- ☐ Has the State included all required documents per the instructions in the application?
- ☐ OPTIONAL: Has the State included supporting information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers?

Application Requirements (page 325)

- ☐ Has the State fulfilled all of the application requirements?

Application Submission Procedures (page 338)

- ☐ Has the State complied with the submission format requirements, including the application deadline for submission?
- ☐ Has the State submitted a single .PDF file of the entire application that was created in a format that is searchable? Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.
- ☐ Has the State submitted originals of all the required Signature pages?
- ☐ Has the State submitted its budget spreadsheets?

XVII. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Appendix must include a complete Table of Contents, which includes the page number or attachment number, attachment title, and relevant selection criterion. A sample table of contents form is included below. Each attachment in the Appendix must be described in the narrative text of the relevant selection criterion, with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the narrative and the location of the attachment in the Appendix.

Appendix #	Attachment Title	Relevant Selection Criteria
1	Rhode Island Early Learning Council Roster	(A)(1)
2	Rhode Island Early Learning Council Access Priorities	(A)(1)
3	Successful Start, RI's Comprehensive Early Childhood System Plan	(A)(1)
4	Rhode Island's 2009 Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Study	(A)(1)
5	Rhode Island's 2010 Family Child Care Quality Study	(A)(1)
6	Rhode Island Early Learning Standards for Preschoolers	(A)(1)
7	Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards: Standards for the Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs	(A)(1)
8	The Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Care Educators: For Teachers and Teacher Assistants Who Work With Children Birth Through Age 5 and Their Families in a Classroom Setting	(A)(1) (C)(1) (C)(2) (D)(1)
9	Child Outreach Screening Guidelines	(A)(1) (C)(2)
10	Alignment of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards with Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten	(A)(1) (C)(2) (E)(1)
11	Early Childhood Indicators from the 2011 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Fact Book: a) Infant and Preschool Child Care Capacity b) Children Enrolled in Head Start c) Children Enrolled in Early Head Start d) Children Enrolled in Early Intervention e) Children Enrolled in Full Day Kindergarten f) Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies g) Percentage of private preschools, licensed child care centers and family child care homes in Rhode Island that are nationally accredited and/or are participating in BrightStars.	(A)(2)
12	Copies of all fully executed MOUs:	(A)(3)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Education b) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. c) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services d) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. e) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Health f) Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services. 	
13	Table of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization that submitted letters support with copies of their letters.	(A)(3)
14	Table of other stakeholders that submitted letters of support with copies of their letters.	(A)(3)
15	BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework	(B)(1)
16	BrightStars Family Child Care Quality Framework	(B)(1)
17	BrightStars School-Age Child Care (K-5) Quality Framework	(B)(1)
18	Crosswalk of Rhode Island Program Standards with RTT-ELC Focus Areas	(B)(1)
19	Pilot Test of the Draft Rhode Island BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Framework.	(B)(1)
20	Recommendations to Strengthen Rhode Island's Child Care Licensing Regulations and Compliance Procedures to Support a Strong Program Quality Rating System.	(B)(1)
21	Common Core Transition Timeline	(C)(1)
22	Current RI Early Learning Standards (RIELS) Professional Development Opportunities	(C)(1)
23	Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers and Parent Training	(C)(1)
24	Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Training Data	(C)(1)
25	Research Foundation: Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System	(C)(1) (C)(2)
26	Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System – Technical Summary	(C)(1) (C)(2)
27	Early Childhood Screening (WATCH ME GROW Rhode Island)	(C)(2)

	Overview	
28	Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance	(E)(1)
29	Alignment of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy (Kindergarten) with Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten	(E)(1)
30	Alignment of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (Kindergarten) with Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Development and Learning: Birth Through Kindergarten	(E)(1)

XVII. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (Executive Order 12372)

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to strengthen federalism--or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government--by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) process and a list of names by State can be found at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372--CFDA# 84.412, U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200. 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR §75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 p.m. (eastern time) on the closing date indicated in the notice.

Important note: The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. **Do not send applications to the above address.**

Not all States have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located in a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to the Department as described in the *Federal Register* notice.